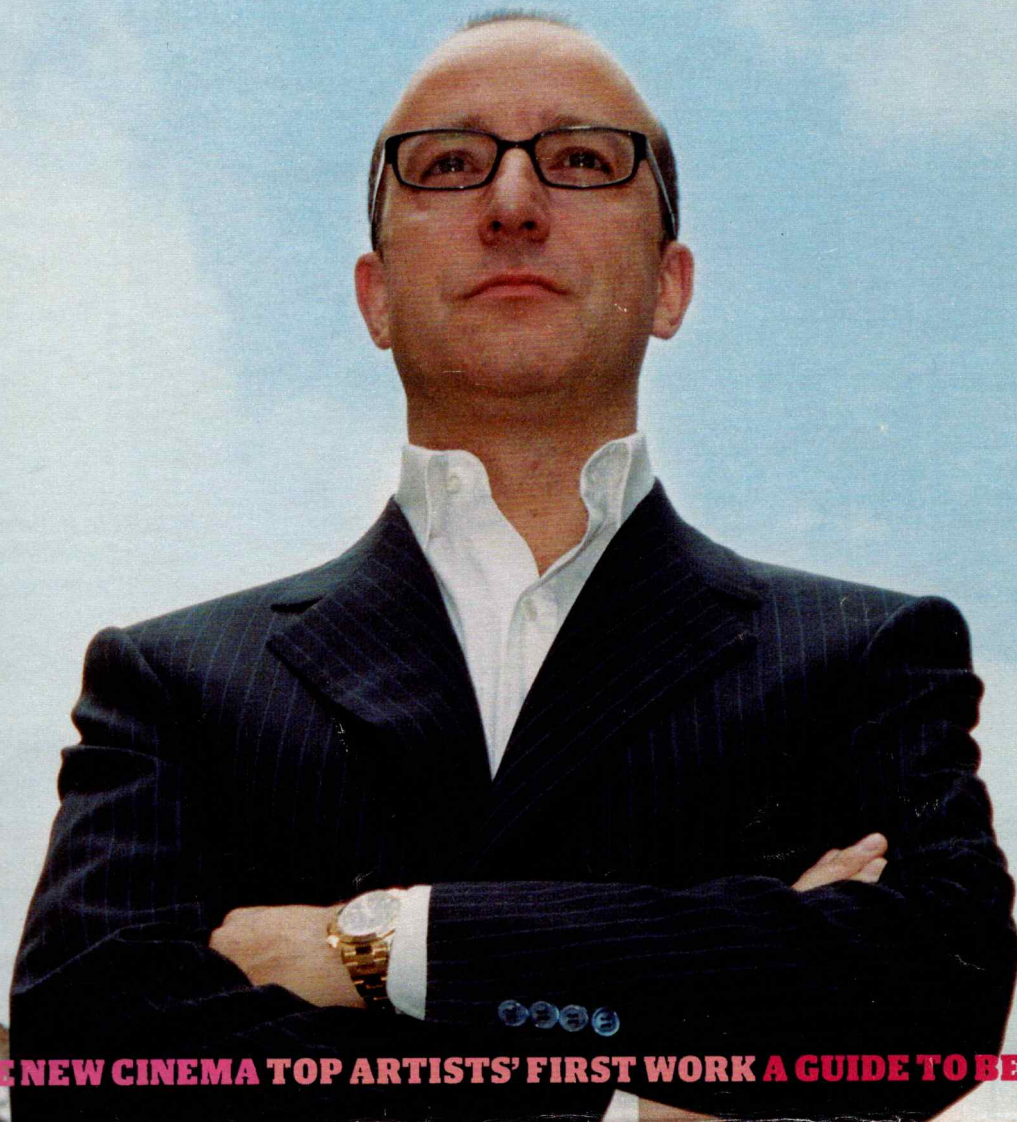


theguardian
WEEKEND
20.05.06

**CAN
PAUL MCKENNA
STOP ME
WORRYING?
BY JON RONSON**



PLUS TV: THE NEW CINEMA TOP ARTISTS' FIRST WORK A GUIDE TO BEING DUMPED

guerrillas
sing PKK songs to raise
morale as they hide
from US helicopters
in mountains above
their camp

As skirmishes between Turks and Kurds on the Iraqi border intensify, Anastasia Taylor-Lin

AWAITING T



Winner of the first Weekend/Windows XP photographic prize, focuses on Kurdish guerrilla

THE INVASION

PROMOTION



Date Memory...

a fascinating insight
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BBC2 series Who Do
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Windows xp



Within one minute, a camp that was filled with teenagers - soon to be fighters - is empty. Two commanders, one male and one female, see them off in a disorderly file

while another crouches on the ground filling the magazine of her AK-47 with bullets. What we thought was thunder is the sound of Turkish rockets landing.

An estimated 10,000 PKK (or Kurdistan Workers' party) guerrillas currently live in the mountains of northern Iraq. A third of them are women, living and dying alongside the men. The first women guerrillas fought hard for this right, battling prejudices within the PKK that reflected those within Kurdish society.

Men and women sleep in separate *mangas*, or huts, but often eat and train together. Women are educated separately for those subjects which the commandants

say younger recruits feel uncomfortable talking about in front of the men - how to reconcile teenage angst with their life as guerrillas, for example, and how to cope with their emotions while training to kill.

The PKK live off the land, but are well supplied with arms and necessities, based in a country that turns a blind eye to their presence. This is despite a history of violence between the PKK and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), founded in 1975 by Iraq's current president, Jalal Talabani. Life in summer can be almost idyllic. Goatherds, themselves PKK fighters, tend herds, which provide meat, cheese and milk, and return to camp to sleep. Guerrillas play volleyball on makeshift pitches; men and women drink sweet tea in the shadow of the mountains. Winter is harsh, often with deep snow. All year round groups of fighters disappear along mountain paths covertly to cross the border to attack Turkish military targets. All year, from radios crackling in the guerrillas' pockets, come reports of casualties from these skirmishes.

The PKK was founded in 1978 by six students»



Above left: A mule train arrives at Karaga camp, northern Iraq, with supplies of tea leaves and oats.
Left: Zilan, a 20-year-old Turkish Kurd, watches a storm through the door of her *manga*, or hut.
Top: Polythene is used to waterproof *mangas*, and to create separate rooms.
Above: Young guerrillas graduate to become soldiers. During the ceremony, they pledge allegiance to the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' party). Guerrillas can be 16 years old when they arrive, but they're not allowed to fight until they reach 18

CONTENT PROMOTION



Passionate professional

Professionals really embrace change in working practice – especially when change equals a faster, more efficient business. Other professionals are much slower to adapt. Journalism is part work, part art. Journalism can be even more fragile than digital cameras first came along. Many of the photography names threw their hands up and said never to touch these professions.

After a couple of decades in the profession now and you'll find professional photographers still clinging on to their film cameras. The professional photographer is studio-based or magazine-based. Digital has revolutionised photography: it's made the whole process more accurate, immediate and, most importantly, cost-effective. The most significant advances in photography practice have happened in the last 10 years, as many of our photographers would testify. Film is a medium which reacts very easily to changes in light, temperature, moisture in the air and so on. Naturally, if you find yourself in the middle of Africa or in Iraq, this can prove problematic. Digital photography removes these worries from the equation. It's more, digital images can be shared in seconds, making it easier to tell news stories as they happen. We've even had the ability to do this with all of us, with many of our photographers both professional and amateur, simultaneously to illustrate

A great operating system for photography enthusiasts

Many of the common functions in digital photography (like downloading your photos to your computer or printing), are easily done with Windows XP. Windows XP guides that walk you through the process. Windows XP also supports more third-party software than other operating systems. This gives you more choice in the software you're using for digital photography.



Windows XP



Gunesih (left), one of the guerrillas, makes flat bread at the bakery in Karaga. The fighters take it in turns to cook. Right: The entrance to Sehit Beritan Academy for women, near Karaga. Below: PKK territory, Behdinan province. 'We don't want a utopia,' says one guerrilla. 'We simply want the right to enjoy our culture and use our language – to live as Kurds'



from Ankara University. They vowed to fight for an independent state for the Kurds, a people divided between four countries – Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq – and in each of them denied basic human and political rights. Six years later, the PKK took up arms, sparking a 15-year armed struggle. An estimated 37,000 lives have been lost. After a period of relative calm, tensions are again mounting.

Attacks on Turkish bases in the Hakkari province of south-east Turkey have become more frequent since June 2004, when a five-year ceasefire ended. The number of Kurds fleeing Turkey to join the PKK is rising. Many come from villages close to the border, which Turkey has been systematically destroying in a bid to undermine PKK support in the region. They claim 3,000 villages have been razed to date.

Kurds also make the journey from neighbouring states or from Europe in support of the estimated 12 million Kurdish people living in Turkey. "They call us Mountain Turks and insist that we speak their language and live by their culture," one commander tells a new recruit from Germany. "They

say that everybody who lives in Turkey is a Turk."

The European court of human rights has ruled that the 1999 trial in Turkey of the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan was "neither impartial nor independent"; though a death sentence was lifted, he is still imprisoned. The PKK continues to fight, funded by supporters worldwide. Its aim now is not an independent state, but basic human rights for Kurdish people in Turkey. Branded terrorists by the British and US governments, PKK soldiers are dying at a rate of three a day. Turkey, a valuable ally in Bush's War on Terror, is putting pressure on the US to take military action against PKK bases. Iraqi authorities have so far ignored repeated calls from Turkey for permission to attack.

Meanwhile, the PKK remains poised for an invasion like that of 1997, when many thousands of Turkish soldiers poured into the Zap valley, defended by mere hundreds of guerrillas. One female fighter explained: "We don't want a utopia. Like all people around the world, we simply want the right to enjoy our culture and use our language – to live as Kurds."

Katie Scott

