

BRITISH POLICY AND THE KURDISH  
QUESTION IN 'IRAQ,  
1918-1932

by

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## THESIS ABSTRACT

After World War I, in common with other minorities in the former Ottoman Empire, the Kurds wished to form their own nation-state, a sentiment which Britain did much to encourage. Yet, Britain also manipulated Kurdish separatist tendencies in ways calculated to strengthen her hold over 'Iraq as a viable and united country and hence did much to prevent the formation of a Kurdish state. This dissertation will investigate why Great Britain pursued this seemingly contradictory policy. It will examine this many-faceted question in the light of newly available archival sources. The thesis is primarily concerned with the local and regional factors which shaped Britain's policy in Kurdistan.

From 1918 to 1923, Britain's Kurdish policy was indecisive, inarticulate and provisional. This was due mainly to rapid developments in the Kurdish regions of 'Iraq, Turkey and Iran. The lack of a peace treaty between Turkey and Britain as a mandatory power in 'Iraq, also contributed to the uncertainty in Britain's policy in 'Iraqi Kurdistan. With the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 Britain's policy in Kurdistan began to develop. This policy aimed at reconciling Kurdish national aspirations with Britain's desire to strengthen Iran, 'Iraq and Turkey in order to prevent Bolshevik Russia's southward advance to the Gulf.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACH: Acting High Commissioner  
Adv. Min.: Advisor to Ministry of Interior  
A.I.: Administrative Inspector  
Air: Air Ministry  
APO: Assistant Political Officer  
BDFA: British Documents on Foreign Affairs  
BSOAS: Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies  
BHCF: British High Commission Files  
Cab. Pap.: Cabinet Papers  
CC: Civil Commissioner  
CO: Colonial Office Files  
Const.: Constantinople  
DBFO: Documents on British Foreign Policy  
Desp: Despatch  
E.I.: Encyclopedia of Islam  
FO: Foreign Office Files  
GHMF: General Headquarters Mesopotamia Force  
HC: High Commissioner  
IJMES: International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies  
JRCAS: Journal of Royal Central Asian Studies  
JESHO: Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient  
JRAS: Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society  
MEJ: Middle East Journal  
Memo.: Memorandum  
MES: Middle Eastern Studies  
PMC: Permanent Mandate Commission  
RAF: Royal Air Force  
S.S.O.: Special Service Office  
S.S. Col.: Secretary of State for Colonies  
S.S. for India: Secretary of State for India  
Teleg.: Telegram

## NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

1. When an Arabic, Turkish or Kurdish word or name has become commonly used in English, such as Shaikh, it is not transliterated. Well-known place-names, such as Baghdad, have not been transliterated. Arabic, Turkish or Kurdish names or words appearing without diacritical marks in works published in English or other European languages have been left as they appear in the original.

2. Arabic, Turkish or Kurdish names, places and words which are not commonly used in English have been transliterated in this thesis according to the Library of Congress transliteration system, except as noted above.

3. 'Iraqi Kurdish names and words which have Arabic forms have been transliterated as Arabic words. For instance, the Arabic name Sulaymaniya has been substituted for the Kurdish name of that city, Sulaimani, because the former is more commonly used in English.

4. The Kurdish idāfa is transliterated as it is in Persian, for example in titles like Rozh-ī Kurdistān.

## PREFACE

A combination of the chronological and thematic approaches has been followed in this study to discuss and analyze the events in southern Kurdistan during the British occupation and mandate in 'Iraq.

A comprehensive and analytical study of British policy and the Kurdish question in 'Iraq is long overdue. During the last few years, the Kurdish question in Turkey, Iraq and Iran has begun to assume considerable significance in Middle East politics and it is expected to have a greater impact on the politics of the area in the coming decade. Although the roots of this explosive and complex issue are traced to the nineteenth century, it has taken its final shape during the 1920s. The eighteen years which are studied here are the most crucial and are of utmost importance in understanding the Kurdish question during monarchical and post-revolutionary Iraq.

With the exception of W. Jwaideh's unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Its Origin and Development (Syracuse Univ., 1960), which has yet to be superseded as a standard book, no thorough study has been conducted in the area. Jwaideh's study raises several issues and questions with regard to the regional impact on British policy in Iraqi Kurdistan which can serve as a guideline for future research. This dissertation is an attempt to tackle some of these. Although Jwaideh's study has a wider scope than mine, it does not address the crucial years of 1926-1930 of the British mandate. Moreover, I was

fortunate to see some of the archival and contemporary Kurdish materials which he did not see.

Recently some archival studies on Iraq's history during the 1920's have been conducted. Most of these studies have paid only marginal attention to the Kurdish question in the north. Peter Sluglett, in his study Britain in Iraq 1914-1932 (London, 1976), gives some attention to the Kurdish question. During a meeting which I had with him in 1988 in London, he said that British policy in Kurdistan is still an undeveloped area. Other relevant works such as the unpublished doctoral dissertations by Khadim Niama, "The Anglo-Iraqi Relations During the Mandate", (Univ. College of Wales, 1974), and Noel, Walter Spencer, "The Diplomatic History of Iraq 1920-1932", (Univ. of Utah, 1979), serve as typical examples for others in treating the Kurdish question only in passing. A reading of the scattered notes in these studies and in most other secondary materials, reveals the existence of confusion in the existing literature on British policy in Kurdistan. This thesis attempts to collect and synthesize the scattered notes in the secondary sources in light of these new archival materials. Therefore, the dissertation is an attempt to contribute to the historiography of British policy in Iraq. The study will also supplement the valuable work done recently on Turkish Kurdistan by Robert Olson, The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism 1880-1925 (Univ. of Texas Press, 1989). It is hoped that this thesis will add to the state of knowledge in Kurdology.

The plan of study included two trips to the United Kingdom and one to Iraqi Kurdistan. In the U.K. I conducted four months research in the archives of the

Public Record Office. I brought an immense amount of documents back to Toronto and spent a considerable amount of time indexing and researching them. During the research in the Public Record Office I came across hundreds of documents. The Foreign Office files were especially helpful in providing interesting information about the international and regional aspects of the Kurdish question in Iraq. The Colonial Office records were equally rich in furnishing an immense amount of data on Kurdish society, including several memoirs on Shaikh Mahmud and Shaikh Ahmad, and the annual reports on the Kurdish provinces. After the Cairo Conference of 1921, the Air Ministry was in charge of British administration in 'Iraq until the end of the mandate. The files in the Air Ministry, especially the fortnightly intelligence reports, provide much information on the strength of the Kurdish nationalist movement, tribal politics and detailed reports on Shaikh Mahmud's revolts in 1919, 1923 and 1930-1931. The Air Ministry records on 'Iraq have been enriched with intelligence reports coming from French intelligence services in Damsacus, Angora (Ankara) and Tehran.

Professor Sluglett, who had researched in the India National Archives in New Delhi had generously lent me the files dealing with Kurdistan. These contained correspondence between the Baghdad High Commissioners and officials in London. Of special significance to this thesis was the ten volume collection entitled "Events in Kurdistan", British High Commission Files No. 13/14. This material, like those in the Public Records Office, was hitherto not fully utilized by any Kurdologist on 'Iraqi Kurds during the period of this study.

The thesis has used material in the numerous collections of published documents. The collection entitled The British Documents on Foreign Affairs, Reports and Papers From Foreign Office Confidential Print, The Near and the Middle East, 1856-1939, ed. Robin Bidwell (University Publications of America, 1984), contains numerous important and hitherto unused documents on 'Iraqi Kurdistan during the 1920s. University Publications of America in the United States has also recently published a series of State Department documents on the Middle East. Of special significance to this dissertation were the collections: Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files and Confidential U.S. Diplomatic Post Records 1925-1941 (1983); both collections have sections on 'Iraq and the Kurds. These were unexpectedly rewarding. They contain numerous detailed diplomatic dispatches from the American Consulate in Baghdad about events in Kurdistan. These sources, which have not been utilized as of yet by any specialist on 'Iraqi Kurds, were useful for corroborating the accounts of British officials in 'Iraq.

The British administration in 'Iraq published ten annual reports on the progress of 'Iraq under the mandate. Although these reports are generally pièces justificatives for British policy, they are an indispensable source for any serious study of the Kurdish question. The League of Nations and the Permanent Mandate Commission issued several reports on 'Iraq which are equally rich with data on the Kurds. The League of Nations' report "Question of the Frontier Between Turkey and 'Iraq" issued in 1924, contains a considerable amount of useful and

authoritative information on Kurdish politics and economics.

The memoirs, biographies and the autobiographies of the British and 'Iraqi officials provide first-hand information on the events in Kurdistan. C.J. Edmonds' work, Kurds, Turks and Arabs (Oxford, 1957) provides a valuable study on Kurdish society. The author, as an architect of British policy in Kurdistan had the advantage of being close to the events and personalities he mentions in his study. Other works by British officials such as A. T. Wilson's Loyalties (London, 1930), S.H. Longrigg's, Iraq 1900-1950 (London, 1953) and W. R. Hay's, Two Years in Kurdistan (London, 1921), are sources of important information on British policy in Kurdistan. Memoirs of contemporary 'Iraqi officials such as Tawfiq al-Suwaidi, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qassab and Yasin al-Hashimi, are of no less significance for the study of the Kurdish question. However, the memoirs of these officials and those of the British were used with caution, for they tend to justify the policies which the authors initiated and carried out. The data in this material was subjected to some scrutiny and used only after corroboration by the information in the archival materials.

Finally, during my trip to 'Iraqi Kurdistan I found numerous invaluable source materials on the Kurdish question. These included the memoirs of contemporary Kurdish personalities and the Kurdish periodicals which were published during the 1920s in Sulaymaniya. The Yadasht (memoirs) of Rafiq Hilmi (Baghdad, 1958) is exceptionally important for this study. The author was a close confidante of Shaikh Mahmud and a keen observer of the events. Likewise, Ahmad Taqi's,

Khabāt-i Galī Kurd (Baghdad, 1970), and Chim Dī (Sulaymaniya, 1972) by Ahmad Khawaja are of equal significance, for both authors were participants and eye-witnesses to the events they write about. Their views and those of Hilmi give the Kurdish nationalists' perspective on Britain's policy in Kurdistan. The periodicals of the period, Peshkatin, Bang-i Kurdistan, Rozh-i Kurdistan, Umayidi-Kurdistan, Zhiyān and Zhiyānawa, are indispensable sources for the study of the Kurdish nationalist movement and the reaction of the local inhabitants to the policies pursued by the British. These Kurdish sources have been almost neglected by other writers. Since these periodicals were either published by Shaikh Mahmud's government or the British political staff, they should be treated with caution.

This study has some limitations. Due to recent events in 'Iraq, I was unable to go to 'Iraq. Although the British High Commission Files in New Delhi and the Colonial Office records have numerous enclosures from the court and the accounts of the 'Iraqi cabinets, no future work on 'Iraqi Kurds could do without the rich archival materials currently housed in the 'Iraqi National Archives in Baghdad. I also did not have the opportunity to use the archival materials in Turkey. The latter is equally important for further future studies on the Kurds.

## Chapter 1

## GEOGRAPHY AND SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN KURDISTAN

Geography

Southern Kurdistan is a geographical term used by the Kurdologists to refer to the Kurdish regions of 'Iraq in the north.<sup>1</sup> The area corresponds roughly to the old Ottoman wilāyah of Mosul. It is bounded on the north and the northeast by three international frontiers--those of Syria in the Jazīra, Turkey within the southern end of Taurus, and Iran where the frontier generally runs with the crest of the main ridge of the Zagros. The internal administrative boundary with the former wilāyah of Baghdad is formed in the southeast by the Sīrwān river and on the southwest by Jabal Ḥamrīn, a low mountain ridge of about 500 feet above the plain and by a straight line up and westward across the Jazīra back to the Syrian frontier.<sup>2</sup>

Southern Kurdistan is rich with water resources. The heavy snow and rain on the mountains turn the latter into a huge basin for numerous streams spreading throughout the area. Dijla (the Tigris) River has a course of 410 kilometers in northern 'Iraq. The river flows at a level in a wide plain which makes it easy for the growth of several towns on its banks. The Khābūr is the first tributary of the Tigris. It flows from Deryānū Dāgh, a mountain ridge in southeastern Turkey and after entering 'Iraq the stream flows in a southwestern direction. Having received water from several smaller streams, the river takes a northwesterly direction and passes through the town of Zakho. West of Zākho, the Khābūr receives its last

stream, the Hayzal, then it joins the Tigris north of Fishkhābūr.<sup>3</sup>

The Greater Zāb flows from Ḥakkārī mountain in southeastern Turkey. The river enters 'Iraqi territory in its southward direction near the village of Chal to the north of 'Amādīya. Then it flows in a torrential course with deep gorges which cut through several high ridges in the Bārzān. The Greater Zāb has five major tributaries. The Shams Dīnan Robarī Kuchuk, the Robarī Rawāndūz, and the Pastura Chay join the river from the eastern side while the Khazar, the largest of the tributaries joins the river from the west side. The Greater Zāb joins the Tigris 49 kilometers south of Mōsul.<sup>4</sup> The river is of limited use in this region because its course flows in a gorge far below the altitude of its surrounding area.<sup>5</sup>

The Lesser Zāb rises in Persia on the eastern slopes of Zagros, southwest of Lake Urmīya in northwestern Iran. It runs for eight miles on a parallel with the frontier mountain chains. It has two main tributaries, the Bāna stream which forms the 'Iraq-Iran frontier for fifteen kilometers, and the Mawat river, which flows through 'Iraqi territory. The Lesser Zāb runs in a northwest direction through the chains of mountain ridges to the west of Sulaymaniya. Having passed by Qal'at Diza and Rāniya, the river turns south to pass through Darband Dokān, and flows through the deep canyon and high mountain ranges,<sup>6</sup> before leaving the mountainous region near Ṭaqtaq, south of Haybat Sultān ridge. The Lesser Zāb, like the Greater Zāb, is virtually of no irrigational use because it flows at a lower altitude in comparison to the banks.<sup>7</sup> Entering the lower hilly country, the Lesser Zāb passes through the town of Altūn Kopru and takes a southwest direction to

pass through Jabal Ḥamrīn and join the Tigris. Although the waters of the Lesser Zāb in the lower hilly country during the British mandate in 'Iraq were "practically useless", it has always been an artery of communication for floating timber and rafts of inflated sheepskin called kalak.<sup>8</sup>

'Aḍaim is another affluent of the Tigris. This river, having drained great amounts of rain and snow on the high mountain ridges east of Sulaymānīya, flows through Qara Dāgh ridge at Darbandī Basīra. Taking a southward direction into the plain past Ṭāwūq where it is known as Ṭāwūq Chay, it is then joined by two streams that rise in the foothill region, the Khāṣa Chay in the west and 'Aq Su which passes through Ṭūz Khurmātū, in the west. The united stream goes through Jabal Ḥamrīn to join the Tigris about seventy miles upstream of Baghdad.<sup>9</sup> Unlike the other affluents of the Tigris which are all perennial in their lower course, the 'Aḍaim tends to dry up during the summer for it depends to a large extent upon the rain in the area.<sup>10</sup>

Diyāla (Awī-Sīrwān river as it is known in Kurdistan) is the last important tributary of the Tigris. This affluent is formed when the Tānjarū stream which drains the mountains east of Sulaymānīya, joins with another stream, Awī-Sīrwān whose source lies in Iranian territories to the southeast of Sulaymānīya. The united stream passes Darbandī Khān in the Qara Dāgh mountain ridge. Having entered the hilly country the river takes a southwestern direction and flows through Jabal Ḥamrīn to join the Tigris eighteen miles downstream of Baghdad. The upper course of the river is at a high altitude, therefore, it is of little irrigational value

in the mostly Kurdish regions."<sup>11</sup>

Southern Kurdistan forms, in many respects, a distinct geographical unit within 'Iraq. Topographically this area is, in general, mountainous and hilly country. The average altitude is 300 meters and only three meters in the south. The climate of the area is considerably different from that of the rest of 'Iraq. Kurdistan has a snow-fall which lasts for two weeks whereas there is no snow-fall in the rest of 'Iraq. In the Kurdish region, the rainfall is 300 to 1,000 millimeters, whereas southern and middle parts of 'Iraq are within the range of 50 to 200 millimeters.<sup>12</sup> For these reasons Kurdistan has a distinct agricultural character; southern Kurdistan is within the rain-fed zone in contrast to the rest of 'Iraq which is in the irrigation zone.<sup>13</sup>

There are two different types of regions in Kurdistan: the mountainous and the semi-mountainous (hilly country area). They are separated by chains of mountain ridges, Qara Dāgh to the east, Haybat Sultān in the centre and the ridges of Bīkhair and Abyaḍ to the west. The hilly country takes a crescent shape and constitutes 75% of northern 'Iraq with an altitude which ranges from 200 to 1,000 meters. The width of this area is 80 to 180 km. and 500 km. in length. Jabal Ḥamrīn, which is made up of three low ridges of sandstone, separates the hilly country from the alluvial plain of Mesopotamia and constitutes the southern frontier of the Kurdish region in the hilly country. The southern frontier of the Kurdish hilly country is arid, rugged and barren.<sup>14</sup>

The hilly country to the east of the Tigris has fertile soil. There is a cultivated

belt which passes through Mosul, crosses the Greater Zāb into the plain of Arbīl and extends through a fertile low land irrigated by rain or by springs until it reaches the Diyāla river. This region is filled with well-settled villages and towns.<sup>15</sup> To the west of the hilly country (west of the Tigris) lies a region of undulating plains with wide expanses of flat country traversed by ranges of hills which

are low, with the exception of Jabal Sinjār. South of this area the plains become increasingly arid until they turn further westward into a hard desert surface composed of gravel, gypsum, marl and sand. The lower hilly country, east of Arbīl, Kirkuk and Kifrī, consists of plains which are open steppes of clay and gravel covered with grass in the spring. The districts of Chamchamāl, Gil (Qādir Karam), Sangow and Qara Ḥasan are located in this lower hilly country.<sup>16</sup>

To the southwest of Arbīl, Qara Choq Dāgh, between the two Zābs is a waterless area with some fertile soil, which could be cultivated with sufficient rain and springs, while to the south there is an extremely fertile region with plenty of rainfall and springs to the north. The country beyond Qara Choq Dāgh is divided into two parts by a watershed. The northern part, which drains into the Greater Zāb is called Shamāmik, while the southern half, known as Kindinawa, is a strip of country averaging fifteen miles in width and about thirty miles long. To the east and southeast of Kindinawa lies the Zurga Zirau, a low range of hills which separates the Kindinawa plain from the Dashtī Hawlair (Arbīl Plain). The latter is a great expanse which stretches about fifty miles from the Greater Zāb to the

Lesser Zāb and is twenty-five miles in width. The northern part of the plain is very undulating and rather stony but the main portion between Arbīl and Kirkuk road to the east, is a fertile land. The Arbīl Plain is chiefly irrigated by "Karizes" or "Kahrizes".<sup>17</sup>

The southern ends of the hilly country have a subsoil which is rich with minerals, particularly petroleum deposits. This area extends from 'Ayn Zāla in Mosul across Bābā Gur Gur in Kirkuk to the Khānaqīn oil fields. The area also produces a considerable amount of wheat and barley which are exported to Mosul and Baghdad.<sup>18</sup> There is a road which links Kirkuk to Arbīl and Mosul. In addition, there is also a railway which was built before World War I to link Kirkuk to Baghdad.<sup>19</sup>

The mountainous area covers 23,270 square kilometres, which is 25% of southern Kurdistan and 5% of 'Iraq's total land. Its lowest altitude is 800 meters. Jabal Abyaḍ to the west and Qara Dāgh to the east constitute its southern frontier. The Zagros mountain chain form its northern end. The area is traversed by four principle parallel steep limestone ridges, each an anti-cline, with an axis southeast to northwest: Bernan Binzird (4,500-5,300 feet); Azmīr Qarasird (4,900-5,600 feet); and Kurhabazhaw-Gojar (6,000-8,000 feet). In addition, there is the chain of Magistrale Zagros. In the southeast these chains of Zagros are known as Hawramān. In the centre of this mountainous region (near Rāniya and Rawāndūz) these lofty ranges continue and take different names: Kurkur-Asos-Kewarsh.<sup>20</sup> Further west of this area, the mountain ridges of Rust, Chiya Gira and Rushnī

form in the extreme north the 'Iraqi-Turkish boundary.<sup>21</sup>

To the east of the mountainous country lies the district of Sulaymānīya, which is surrounded by mountain chains: to the east Butarīya, to the north Hawramān, and to the west Azmar Dāgh. Sulaymānīya Plain broadens towards the southeast direction until it reaches Shahrizor Plain, which is forty-five km. in length and fifteen to twenty km. across. The important market town of Ḥalabja stands on the southern slopes of Hawramān mountain in the southern end of the Shahrizor Plain.<sup>22</sup>

There are several deep valleys and gorges in the area to the east of the mountainous region. These have fertile soil and generally are well watered by several streams which drain the melted snow of the high mountains as well as the sufficient rainfall in the area. The rocky land, which is rich with minerals, capable of maintaining mountain humidity for long periods, dry heat weather and an abundance of water makes the plains of Shahrizor and Sulaymānīya ideal places for the production of tobacco, cotton, rice, wheat and barley. Tobacco production in the area, in particular, is a major export crop and plays a significant role in the economic life of the region.<sup>23</sup>

For the most part the mountainous region to the east is inaccessible except for a few roads. The town of Sulaymānīya is approached from Kirkuk by a single road fit for wheels, which goes through Chamchamāl and passes through Qara Dāgh ridge by the Darband Bāzyān, and over Baranān ridge by Taslūja Pass into the Tanjaro Valley. The road continues down the Valley and across Shahrizor to

Ḥalabja. The other important mule tracks from Khānaqīn and Kifrī go up the valley of Sīrwān to Ḥalabja from Kifrī through Ibrāhīm Khānchī and then over Qara Dāgh and Baranān by Sagirm and Galazarda to Sulaymānīya. Further north a more frequented caravan route connected Koī Sanjaq with Rāniya, Qal‘at Diza and Sardasht in Persia. These are ancient caravan routes. The road from Sulaymānīya to Ḥalabja was narrow and the rainy season would make it impassible for frequent periods. Most of the district had to be reached by mule track or footpaths.<sup>24</sup>

Sulaymānīya is an important town in Kurdistan. Before World War I and throughout the British Mandate, it was the mercantile capital of the region. The principal trade of the area, such as carpets, samovars, china and dyes, were brought from throughout the Kurdish region of ‘Iraq and Iran to the town’s bazars for sale. In addition, the primary crafts in Sulaymānīya such as the manufacture of rifles, swords, daggers, and bullet belts made of cotton also had markets in Persia. For these reasons, the traders and merchants of Sulaymānīya had a wide variety of links with their counterparts in the Persian towns of Bāna, Sinna, Karmanshāh, and Mosul and Baghdad in ‘Iraq.<sup>25</sup>

The area between the two Zābs in the mountainous country to the west of Sulaymānīya district is also traversed by a parallel of ridges separated by deep and narrow well-watered valleys with a fertile soil. The ridges are covered with oak and scrub and it is drained by the two and their affluents. The most eminent ridge is Kurkur-Asos-Kewarash, which separates the plains of the Qal‘at Diza to the east

and Matinah and Marga to the west. Qandīl Dāgh is also a notable mountain chain in the region which runs parallel to the 'Iraq-Iran border.<sup>26</sup> The plains of Rāniya, Ḥarīr, Pizhder and Bitwain have ideal soil and climatic conditions, similar to that of the Sulaymānīya region in the east, for production of cereals and tobacco which are exported to Arbīl and Mosul.<sup>27</sup>

The Rawāndūz district in the central mountainous region, which is roughly "a leg of mutton in shape", is surrounded by the Bastora Chāy, a small stream, and Safīn Dāgh to the south; to the east lies a mass of tangled high ridges which form the 'Iraq-Iran frontier. To the southwest lies the fertile plain of Dashī Ḥarīr which is an expanse of country twenty miles long and averaging eight miles in width. This region contains several flourishing agricultural centres such as Shaqlāwa, Hirān and Nazanīn. The area is rich with poplar plantations, chinara (oriental plane), walnuts, mulberries, peas, cotton, barley, wheat, tobacco and vineyards. Further north of Rawāndūz lies the rugged mountainous country of Barādost which is near the Iranian frontier.<sup>28</sup>

The central mountainous region, in general, is too rugged for roads and railways. In the northern part, the country was impassable except for footpaths and pony tracks. Rāniya and Rawāndūz are linked to Arbīl by roads fit for wheels. However, the ruggedness of the country, heavy rainfall, snow and frequent floods, used to cause the area to be isolated from the central authorities in Arbīl during the British Mandate for weeks in the winter and spring.<sup>29</sup>

The area between the Khābūr and the Greater Zāb constitutes the western part

of the mountainous region. The most northern ends of this region are made up of several parallel ridges which form the 'Iraq-Turkey boundary. The mountain ridges of Chiya Girī, Sharnish and Rushnī are enclosed between the Greater Zāb and the Khābūr. Between the Greater Zāb and Robar-ī Kochuk lies the ridges of Shirīn and Koh-i Zir.<sup>30</sup> Further west the area between the Khābūr and Hayzal is crossed by several mountain ridges. To the west of Hayzal lie the foothills of Fishkhābūr. The frontier with Turkey is defined from the junction of the river Tigris and the Khābūr in the midstream, along the rivers of Tigris and Khābūr. To the southwest lies Sahl Sindī, a plain with an average width of six km. which is enclosed between Jabal Chiya Girī to the north and Bīkhair to the south.<sup>31</sup>

The 'Aqra district is situated on the slopes of a ridge which is a continuation of Kewa Resh and the northern part of the Greater Zāb. The hilly country to the northwest of the Greater Zāb is the Zībār region. Across the Greater Zāb in this region, lies the region of Bārzān. The latter is a deep and narrow valley and is enclosed between the mountain chains of Biris to the west, and Shirīn to the east. The Robar-ī Kochuk river forms its southeastern boundary.<sup>32</sup> Bārzān is extremely rugged country and is a sub-district of 'Aqra which was a district within Mosul Liwa' (division) during the Ottoman rule and later under British Mandate in 'Iraq.<sup>33</sup>

Similar to the rest of the eastern region, the western mountainous region (Bahdīnān) is rugged with high summits. This confined travel and communication mainly to the Kalaks and ponies; only the major towns of Dihok, Zākho, 'Aqra

and 'Amādiya were linked by a stony road to Mosul. Most of these roads were frequently cut off during the winter. The main wealth of the region lay in the flocks of sheep, but a certain amount of cereal as well as rice was produced in the valleys. The mountains were thickly wooded with oak, walnut and mulberry trees. Baghdad and Mosul draw the bulk of their timber from these regions. The logs were either floated down the Khābūr and Hayzal to the Tigris at Fishkhābūr, and then to Mosul or carried by donkeys and mules to Mosul.<sup>34</sup>

It is clear from this geographical survey that Kurdistan was, on the eve of British occupation, an agricultural society. Its main products were wheat, barley, rice, cotton and tobacco. Tobacco was the main cash crop and took third place in the total crop production in the area. It was grown as a summer crop in small plots and in well-irrigated places. Millet, oak groves, pistachio trees, poplar and mulberry trees were found in the mountainous region. Cotton and rice were cultivated but to a lesser extent because of the lack of a proper irrigation system. The soil of the small and narrow valleys provides ideal conditions for the cultivation of vineyards, fruit orchards, apples, peaches and apricots.<sup>35</sup> This survey has also demonstrated that the economy of southern Kurdistan at the turn of the century was strongly linked to the rest of 'Iraq, especially Mosul liwā'.

The administrative system in Kurdistan, like the rest-of the Ottoman Empire, was based on the wilāyah system according to which each wilāyah (province) was governed by a Wālī (Lieutenant-governor). 'Iraq was divided into three wilāyahs; Baghdad, Basra and Mosul. As stated earlier, most of southern Kurdistan was

incorporated in the wilāyah of Mosul. Each wilāyah was divided into smaller administrative units, sanjaq (liwā'), and these were governed by a mutasarrif (commissioner). A sanjaq was also divided into further smaller units, qadā's (district) which was administered by a qā'im-maqām (deputy commissioner). Each qadā' consisted of several nāhiya (sub-district) which were governed by a mudīr (subdivisional officer). The nāhiya consisted of a number of villages each administered by a mukhtār (village headman) who provided the only direct contact between the government and the tribesmen. The function of the mukhtār in Kurdish regions was to register names of the villagers and their property for conscription and taxation purposes. Except for a few minor changes, the administrative division of Kurdistan remained much the same under the British Mandate. The term of wilāyah was no longer used, the mutasarrif of the liwā' was given tasks which were performed earlier by the wālī, and a few qadā's were either detached or annexed to the existing liwā's. During the latter part of the Ottoman rule most of the Kurdish regions of 'Iraq were included in the wilāyah of Mosul which was divided into three liwā's: Mosul, Kirkuk and Sulaymānīya.<sup>36</sup> In 1918, Arbīl was created as a new liwā' after detaching it from Kirkuk. The two Kurdish qadā's of Khānaqīn and Mandalī were included in wilāyah of Baghdad during the Ottoman rule but the British attached them to the liwā' of Diyala.<sup>37</sup> (See Map No. 1)

### Tribal Formation

Kurdish tribes have been defined by Hay as "a community or a collection of communities which exist for the protection of its members against an external aggression and for the maintenance of the old racial customs and way of life."<sup>38</sup> It is true that the family has played a significant role in the formation of most communities, however, it would "be wrong to believe that the Kurdish tribes are an enlarged family." Among the Kurdish tribes it is the soil which plays the decisive role played by ansāb (kinship) among the bedouin Arabs in the formation of the tribe. This is not to say that kinship has no role to play in the tribal structure. In fact, a great number of the Kurdish tribesmen believe they have a common descent with their fellowmen in the tribe.<sup>39</sup> However, there were many cases where the tribesmen rallied around a religious chief (shaikh or sayyid) who was not one of their kin, and identified themselves as a tribe. This is the case with the Shaikhān of Barzinja, Ṭalabānids and the Bārzānids for instance. The simultaneous migration of several groups belonging to different tribes to a certain piece of land for reasons of war, famine and availability of water supply or fertile land, forms another basis for the formation of a new tribe. This was the way in which the Bilbās tribe came into existence.<sup>40</sup>

Kurdologists concur on the fact that there is a certain amount of confusion in the use of terms describing Kurdish tribal divisions. This is explained partly by the improper use of Arabic terms by the Kurds, and partly by the variation in Kurdish terms used by Kurds in various regions for their tribal divisions. In

Rawāndūz district, for instance, the term tīra is used for a group of closely related individuals (lineage). Several fīras form a tā'ifa. But not all members of the tā'ifa necessarily have blood ties. The 'Ashīra is made up of several tā'ifas. In this district, the word 'Ashīra has the same function as the word "qabīla" has among the Arabs. In addition, 'Ashīra among the Kurds refers to both the district and the people. To sum up:

Tīra - Ta'ifa 'Ashīra

Lineage - clan-tribe<sup>41</sup>

In another study about the Jāf tribe in Sulaymānīya district, a different terminology and order is used to describe the tribal divisions. Jāf is used here as a term for every individual who belongs to this large tribal federation, which is referred to as an 'Ashīra. The Jāf tribe is divided into a certain number of groupings known as tīra. The latter is not to be confused with Hoz, a smaller tribal unit whose individuals have the same lineage. A tīra is divided into many khels and each khel is composed of twenty to thirty households (tents) united by economic as well as family links. The chief of the tīra is known as the Ra'īs, and that of the khel as the Khīka.<sup>42</sup> Entirely different vocabularies have been employed in another work for the different sections of the tribe. A group of families residing together in the same place are referred to as a māl (an extended family). The union of several māls forms a ber, which is equivalent to a clan. The collection

of several bers constitutes an 'Ashīra. Each ber is headed by a māzin ("big man"). The chief of the 'Ashīra is called the Agha.<sup>43</sup>

Similar to the Arab tribe, Kurdish tribes have several socially distinct groups. The most recognizable is that of the ruling family or clan. In most cases, the latter is a member of the tribe which they rule over. However, one can find ruling families who are not original members of the tribe. The Dizā'ī is a case in point.<sup>44</sup> The other recognizable feature of Kurdish society is the obvious distinction between villagers of a tribal origin and those who are not. The latter is known under different titles in different regions of Kurdistan. The terms "Misken", "Gorān", and "Karmanj" are used to refer to non-tribal Kurds.<sup>45</sup> Miskens are thought to be aboriginal people of southern Kurdistan who were conquered by warlike tribesmen who held them in low esteem. Miskens were treated by their chiefs as if they were "serfs".<sup>46</sup> Occupation was another criteria to distinguish the various social stratas within Kurdish society. The ruling clans, Beqzādeh, were rarely involved in any work other than the collecting of taxes and entertaining of guests. The second class of significance were the pishtamāla, the regular militia of the shaikh. They were the force with which the shaikh exercised his influence over the tribe. Another related class was that of the sipāhīs. These were the tribesmen whom the shaikh would equip and send to the Beg or Pasha of the tribal federation or the government in time of war. There were the sapān who were a class of landless labourers used primarily during the harvest time by the well-to-do peasants on the plain in return for a low wage or lodging and food.<sup>47</sup>

C. Rich, a British Resident in Baghdad, 1808-1821, described the peasantry as:

"the peasantry in Koordistan are totally a distinct race from the tribesmen, who seldom, if ever, cultivate the soil, while on the other hand, the peasants were never soldiers. The clannish call themselves Sipah in contradistinction to the peasant Kurds who has another denominational, Ra'yahs."<sup>48</sup>

The chief is the central figure in the Kurdish tribe. He has a wide range of responsibilities and enormous privileges. The head of an average Kurdish tribe is usually called the Agha. The chiefs of the most powerful tribes of Jāf and Herkes, who were able to establish an Imārat (principality), a tribal confederation, were raised by the government to the rank of Pasha, in recognition of their prestige. An Agha usually receives the rank by heredity but this is not always the case. Nevertheless, the Kurdish tribes seem to have developed a tendency to prefer the younger brother, provided that the latter proves more gifted. If the ongoing Agha or his heir proved incompetent, the chiefs of the clans or a council of elders (reshsep-i) convened and they declared the Agha deposed. If the Agha defied them, he could be removed by violence. The succession to the post of Agha sometimes created instability in the area and the government used the opportunity to appoint its own nominee.<sup>49</sup>

There is a general agreement that the Kurdish Agha had limitless power over

his tribe. Leach argues that the Aghas of the powerful tribes in the mountainous region seem to have more power over their subjects than those in the lower hilly land.<sup>50</sup> Nikitine describes the Kurdish Agha as a patriarchal despot whose authority had no limit. He removed the peasants from their land as he saw fit, and even owned their lives and property. The peasant had no choice but to accept this despotic rule, for there was an agreement among the various chiefs to extradite anyone who ran away. In spite of this the Kurdish tribesman was known to be "unswerving in his fidelity to his master".<sup>51</sup> Khaṣṣbāk, al-'Azzāwī and Edmonds agree with these writers that the Aghas in Kurdistan were ruthless despots.<sup>52</sup>

The duties of the Aghas were important to the tribe. In addition to being a tax collector in the village and representative of the tribe with the government, he supervised the cultivation process through his deputies. In each village within the sphere of influence of the tribe, there were some junior members of his household installed as the Agha or squire of that village. In some cases he appointed a nominee from among the villagers to represent his interest in the village. The Agha's representative was called a kokha. The latter's function in the village was similar to that of the sarkāl in southern 'Iraq.<sup>53</sup> The Kurdish Aghas also led their tribe in time of war, administered their villages and maintained law and order during time of peace. The Agha was also an arbitrator in disputes among the villages. Moreover, he maintained the guest house in the village or in his tent. This latter function provided him with a pretext to levy a multitude of taxes to make up for his supposed expenses in the guest house as well as the amount of

money he paid annually to the government as taxes or fines in the name of the tribe; the Agha had given himself the right to take taxes from the villagers known as Aghātī, either the traditional 'ushres (tithe) on all revenues or the Koda tax on livestock, which was one out of every fifty heads. Tribesmen were also obliged to give gifts to the Agha on certain occasions such as feasts and marriages. Also the tribal villagers had to work for a certain number of days free of charge on the Agha's farm and house, and dredging. This forced labour corvee was known in Kurdistan as begar.<sup>54</sup>

### Tribal Customs

Kurdish tribes seem to have most of the customs and traditions of the tribal Arabs. However, some variation in the quantity, not the quality, occurs in the Kurdish area. For instance, in the case of crime, the fines paid by the murderer is twenty dinars if the murderer is poor and forty dinars if he is rich. This fine is called khūyin (blood money). Horses and women are acceptable in al-fasl (settlements). If the murder was committed in an affair related to the tribe, the latter contributes to the khūyin. Otherwise, it is up to the fakhd, which consists of the nearest of the kinsfolk of a man up to the first five generations, to assist in paying the fine. Panah is equivalent to al-dakhālah (giving protection) among the Arab tribes, and it is known among the Kurdish tribes too. Vengeance, as among the Arab tribes, was very much entrenched in the minds of the Kurdish tribesmen as illustrated by the following saying: "the enemy of the father will never be the

friend of his son."<sup>55</sup>

### The Leadership in Kurdish Society - Agha, Shaikh and Efendi

On the eve of the British occupation of southern Kurdistan, Kurdish society was led by men from three classes: the Aghas, the Shaikhs and the Efendis (the secular elite trained in the tanzimat schools of the Ottoman Empire). The socio-political and economic transformations which took place in 'Iraq during the last phase of Ottoman rule had enhanced the position of the Aghas, Shaikhs and Efendis vis-à-vis the government and the Kurdish peasants.

Although the introduction of the tanzimat reforms (1839-76) in 'Iraq, particularly land reform and centralization of the administration were intended to break the power of the traditional elite and to establish direct contact between the tribesmen and the government, the way in which these reforms were carried out had the opposite effect in 'Iraq and Kurdistan. Until World War I the land system which was in force in southern Kurdistan was regulated by the Ottoman Land Code (1858).<sup>56</sup> The evolution of the old Ottoman land practices and the implementation of the 1858 Land Reform by Midhat Pasha, Wālī of 'Iraq (1868-71), led to the emergence of these categories of land holdings in Kurdistan: mulk property, in the absolute form the raqabah (servitude) of the land in addition to its taşarruf (usufruct) was registered by a title deed; mīrī, state land, whose taşarruf and raqabah were held by the state for either direct use or for renting it out to individuals; tāpū land is mīrī land recognized by a deed called tāpū senad;

waqf land was a religious endowment; matrūka was public property for the use of all, such as roads and the village common; and finally mawāt was the dead land such as desert and empty land which belonged to the state.<sup>57</sup> According to the new

land law the land revenue system in Kurdistan was to be based on the following:

firstly, vergu, which was a fixed sum imposed on every village and the villagers had to divide it among themselves; secondly, the tithe which was to be sold yearly by auction and the buyer had a share of 10 percent of the gross production of all produce. The tax farmers were generally recruited from the town notables.<sup>58</sup>

In Kurdistan Mīdhat Pasha's land policy had faced the same difficulties it had to encounter in the south of 'Iraq and it also had the same consequences for the future development of land tenure.<sup>59</sup> Before the introduction of the tāpū system, 75% of the land in the liwā's of Kirkuk, Sulaymāniya, Arbīl and Mosul was held by small peasant proprietors with holdings up to 200 donum (the 'Iraqi unit of area is the mishara or donum, equal to 0.25 hectares and 0.62 acres.<sup>60</sup> With the introduction of tāpū, the Aghas and city magistrates found an opportunity to defraud the peasants of large quantities of land. This was brought about by a multitude of means--deceit, coercion, mortgage and finally the Kurdish peasant among the tribes was in need of protection which only the Agha could provide. Therefore, he registered it in the name of his Agha.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, most of the land had passed into the hands of large proprietors. Van Bruinessen describes the situation as follows: "...many villages appear to be wholly or partially registered as the personal possession of the local notables without any consideration of the

immemorial rights of those who had regularly occupied and tilled the land..."<sup>62</sup> For instance the Jāf princes managed to register most of the arable land lying between Qizil Robāt in the extreme southeast and Penjwīn in the north in their name as mulk. Hence the Aghas controlled the land of the tribesmen either as tax farmers or as ṭāpū holders. In fact, in some areas such as the tobacco growing regions of Sulaymānīya and Shahrizor, they were recognized as mallāks (owners) of the land. In these regions, the Aghas acquired "absolute authority over the peasantry." Each of these mallāks had under his domination, from 5,000 to 6,000 peasants who "obey him and are willing to sacrifice their life for him...the officials of the government are at the mercy of the mallāk."<sup>63</sup>

To summarize, the implementation of the 1858 Land Code in Kurdistan had the following effect: 1) the reduction of the communal features of the tribal economy; and 2) increased economic stratification within the tribe. Many Aghas became landlords, while their tribesmen turned into share-croppers and in the course of time this had provided the Agha with an "inordinate" power over the commoners; 3) the emergence of a new class with a new lifestyle--the Kurdish urban based landlords; 4) a new form of cooperation and patronage developed between the urbanized landlords and tribal Aghas who remained in the villages. Every chief became a client of one or the other of the town's notables. Aghas used to travel to town and stay in the urban landlord's guest house. In exchange for hospitality, he was expected to look after his patron's interest in the event of any tribal disturbances, while the latter would act as the chief's representative in

the town; and finally, a great number of the tribal peasants turned into frustrated, hard-pressed and miserable landless labourers.<sup>64</sup>

Furthermore, the condition of the peasants was worsened as a result of the implementation of the Tanzimat. The tax farmers or government officials who were appointed as government agents to collect taxes, were uncertain about the tenure of their office. Therefore, they "squeezed as much out of the peasantry as they could."<sup>65</sup> Moreover, the Aghas began to use the availability of government control in their own interests. Thus the gendarmarie (police force) helped the Aghas' personal guards to extract as much tribal dues as possible. Also the Aghas became more oppressive of their followers.<sup>66</sup> As a result of these reforms, the Ottoman administration was able to reassert its power in Kurdistan and started to levy taxes directly in some regions. This did not mean a reduction but a further aggravation of the burden on the peasantry. The government was strong enough to take its own taxes but not sufficiently strong to prevent the tribal chieftain from levying his own as well, so the peasantry was doubly taxed.<sup>67</sup>

The most far-reaching consequences of the Tanzimat in Kurdistan was the destruction of the rule of the native princes in the region. Throughout the Ottoman rule, southern Kurdistan was divided between three principalities who were constantly competing among themselves and with the central government for control of Kurdistan. These were the Bābānids (fell in 1843) in Kirkuk and Sulaymāniya; the Şorāns (1534-1833) in the region between the two Zābs; and the Imārat Bahdīnān al-'Abbāsīyah (1402-1843) in the Kurdish region of Mosul

Liwā'. The destruction of these Imārats made the Aghas more indispensable for the Kurds. The Aghas became the intermediaries between the Kurdish peasants and the foreign Turkish civil servants placed over them, resulting in the consolidation of the position of the new aristocracy.<sup>68</sup>

The destruction of the semi-independent Kurdish Imārats also led to the disappearance of justice and order. Influential, as well as petty Kurdish chieftains, who were eager to fill the power vacuum left by the disappearance of the powerful Kurdish princes, were constantly feuding. The Ottomans were too weak to be able to impose their rule. During those uncertain times, religion and the religious shaikhs were the only refuge of the Kurdish commoners. Therefore, shaikhs emerged as the only indigenous authority able to check tribal disputes and to become the rallying point of the oppressed peasantry. Thus the Shaikhs of Barzinja began to play the dominant role which the Bābān princes had played in Sulaymānīya region, and the Shaikhs of Bārzān filled the vacuum which was left by the destruction of the 'Abbasid Imārat of Bahdīnān. The Ṭalabānid Naqshbandi Shaikh became the champion of the landless peasantry of Kirkuk liwā'. The rise of these shaikhly families to positions of power among the Kurds indicates the respect which Kurdish society had for the shaikhs. It also shows that after the overthrow of the Kurdish Imārats there was no secular person capable of commanding the Kurds on a national level.<sup>69</sup>

The implementation of land reform also contributed to an increase in the material power of the religious shaikhs. In many regions, the shaikhs were in

collusion with the government officials and had registered the land in their names. Land acquired in this manner was supplemented by the land grants from the government and their followers as well. Moreover, they were the administrators of the waqf land and in the latter phase of Ottoman rule they began to treat it as if it was their private land.<sup>70</sup> From the second half of the nineteenth century until the end of the mandate in 'Iraq, the religious shaikhs, who in many cases had cross-tribal followers, were the most powerful elements in the Kurdish leadership and they demanded strict obedience from their numerous followers. In some cases the religious order turned into a tribe. This is particularly true with regard to the Talabānids, Bārzānids, Jabbārīs and the Barzinja.<sup>71</sup>

The efendis, who had studied in the secular schools established during the Tanzimat period in 'Iraq, were a distinct class within Kurdish society. For economic and political reasons, the Kurdish efendis class was slower in growth than its counterpart, the Arab efendi class in 'Iraq. Very few schools were established in the Kurdish regions of 'Iraq. Besides, the young Turks continued to depend on the Kurdish Aghas and urban aristocracy as intermediaries in the region instead of allowing the emergence of a secularly educated Kurdish elite. Moreover, the constant tribal warfare in Kurdistan hindered the development of trade and consequently the indigenous merchant class was weak; the trade of the region was managed mainly by the Armenians and the Jews. In Kurdistan the lack of a developed mercantile and urban aristocracy, which was the breeding-ground of the efendis in other parts of 'Iraq, led to a delay in the emergence of a large

efendi class in the region. Thus, the most Kurdish efendis were products of the urban centres outside Kurdistan, such as Constantinople, Baghdad and Mosul.<sup>72</sup>

The efendis in Kurdistan have been described by Hay in the following terms:

"All Turkish Government Offices contained swarms of effendis, most of them lazy and corrupt, to be seen any day hanging about the coffee shops with unclean faces, dirty collars, badly tied ties, and two or three trouser buttons undone...Kirkuk and Arbil, especially the former provided large numbers of officials to the Turkish Government who favoured them owing to their knowledge of the state language."<sup>73</sup>

Bribery and corruption was common among officials during the Young Turk period in Kurdistan. There were many reasons for this. In the upper echelons of the administration, posts were bought, and their holders, unsure of the length of their tenure, tried to make as much profit as possible. In the lower echelons salaries were insufficient and irregular. Besides, there was no effective system of supervision. Aghas were always able, for instance, to evade paying government dues, or being tried for offenses by bribing the needy efendis.<sup>74</sup>

### Ethnic and Religious Minorities

Kurdistan is made up of a mosaic of races and religious sects. Turkomen are the second racial group after the Kurds in the region. They live on the old caravan

route, Tel 'Afar, Mosul, Arbīl, Pirdy (Altūn Kopru), Kirkuk, Ṭāwūq, Tūzkhurmātu, Kifrī and Qara Tappa. The Turkomen and Turks of modern Turkey are of the same origin. They came to the area with the coming of the Seljuqs under Sultan Tughrul Beg.<sup>75</sup> In 1925, the League of Nations' estimate of their number was 38,550 persons.<sup>76</sup> Kirkuk city is considered to be their main centre. The leading aristocratic families in the town, such as the Naftchīzadas and the Ya'qubīzadahs are Kurds who have been Turkified.<sup>77</sup> The Arabs were the third major racial group in the region. They were and still are members of the Arab tribes of Tai, the Jubūr, the 'Ubaid, the 'Azzah and the Shammar Jarbah. The Arab population of the Wilayah of Mosul was estimated by the League's enquiry in 1925 to be 166,220 persons.<sup>78</sup> Mosul city has been considered by the League's enquiry as purely an "Arab town in character". The Shammar tribesmen inhabit the Jazīra to the west of Mosul near the Syrian border.<sup>79</sup>

The Muslim Sunni Kurds are the most dominant religious sect in Kurdistan. Turkomen and Arabs are, for the most part, Sunnis also. A considerable proportion of the Turkomen who were residing in Ṭāwūq, Tūzkhurmātu, Kirkuk and villages around Mosul, were originally qizilbāsh, a heterodox Shi'i sect converted to twelver Shi'ism during the last century.<sup>80</sup> But there is still a dozen villages in Mosul Liwā' near Jabal Maqlūb whose inhabitants are adherents of heterodox Shi'ism. These are called Shabak. Although there was some ambiguity regarding their ethnic origin, modern scholars are of the view that they are a Kurdish tribe whose language has been influenced by Persian and Turkish usage.<sup>81</sup> There is another heterodox Muslim

sect among the Kurds which is known in the Tāwūq region east of Kirkuk, as Kākā'īs. This sect, whose adherents during World War I were around 400 families, is called Ahl-ī Ḥaqq in Iran, where it originated. From there it spread to Turkey and southern Kurdistan. There are seven villages of Ahl-ī Ḥaqq adherents, which are situated on the banks of the Greater Zāb near its confluence with the Hayzal. These villages are known in the region as Sarli.<sup>82</sup> The last heterodox Muslim sect in the region is the Yazīdis. Their doctrine is a strange mixture of Islam, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Judaism. They venerate Satan, who is referred to as Malak Tā'ūs. They were never recognized during the Ottoman rule as a "millet", a self-governing sect, but were considered a heretical sect. In 1925, there were 26,100 Yazīdi Kurds in Mosul Liwā' mainly in the Jabal Sinjār region.<sup>83</sup>

The Wilāyah of Mosul also had, and still has, several Christian sects. These are the Jacobites, Latin and Syrian Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Protestant Armenians, Chaldeans and the Nestorian (also known as Assyrians). Except for the last two sects, which had fairly large communities, the rest were few in number. In 1925, the total number of Christians in the Wilāyah of Mosul was around 60,300.<sup>84</sup> The Christian population was thinly spread throughout Kurdistan. In Mosul, Zākho, Talkaif, Al-Qosh and 'Amādiya, small Christian communities were to be found. In Arbīl Liwā' there were two Chaldean<sup>85</sup> Christian villages, 'Ainkāwa (2,500) three miles north of Arbil, and Amuta, just outside of Koī. There were also Christian communities of a considerable size in Shaqlāwa and Koī itself. In Kirkuk Liwā' the Christians settled in the city itself which was the

centre of the Nestorian Bishopric during the Sassanid rule.<sup>86</sup> Communities of Jews were also found in Kurdistan during the mandate period in 'Iraq. These were confined largely to large towns and cities such as Sulaymānīya (5,550), Arbīl, Kirkuk and several villages in the 'Amādīya region. Moreover, out of a total population of 4,000 in Zākho, half were Jews. The Jews of Kurdistan were mainly involved in crafts, commerce and finance.<sup>87</sup>

### Major Kurdish Tribes of Southern Kurdistan

The Kurds in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were either nomads or semi-nomadic settled villagers. However, the tendency towards a rapid settlement was mainly dictated by political considerations. The process of settlement was further accelerated during the war and the post-war efforts of border delineation among 'Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria. After their settlement, they maintained their tribal structure and even nontribal Kurds used to seek the protection of nearby powerful tribes. Nomadic Kurds have well defined winter and summer quarters. Moreover, they cultivate the land in their summer quarters.<sup>88</sup>

An important southern Kurdish tribe was the Bājlān tribe in the Khānaqīn qaḍā'. Their habitat lay in Jamūr and Qazanlū, south of the Qaṣr-ī Shirīn-Karmanshāh high road and west of the Sīrwān river. The strength of the tribe was 480 cavalry but its political influence among the southern Kurds went far beyond its military strength. The ruling class was bitterly anti-Turk and pro-British.<sup>89</sup> The Qara'ūlūs is the most southern tribe. They engaged in agriculture

and animal breeding in the qaclā' of Mandalī near the eastern Persian frontier and Ab-ī Naft to the west. The tribe had 200 infantrymen and 70 cavalry.<sup>90</sup> The Zand was an important border tribe which resided on the plain bounded by the Sīrwān river in the east and by the Kifri Khānaqīn road to the west. They had 200 cavalry and 500 infantrymen. There are Zands beyond the 'Iraqi border as well. The 'Iraqi Kurdish Zands are Sunnis, while those of Iran are extremist Shi'is.<sup>91</sup> The Dīlū tribe resided in the towns of Khānaqīn and Kifri. They were 600 families, and frequently revolted during the latter part of the Ottoman rule. They had 250 cavalry and 250 infantrymen.<sup>92</sup> (See Map No. 2)

The important tribes of Kirkuk Liwā' were the Zanganah, Ṭalabān Daūda, Shuwān and Ismā'īl 'Uzairī. The habitat of the Zanganah was the region to the south and east of Kifri and Ibrāhīm Khānchī on the high road between Sulaymāniya and Baghdad. They were settled peasantry, and the strength of the tribe was 520 rifles. The Zanganah was an important tribe during the Safavid rule in Iran. The Iranian Zanganahs are Shi'is and those of 'Iraq are Sunnis.<sup>93</sup> Further south of the Zanganahs' habitat lies the tribal region inhabited by the Daūda tribe. The boundaries of their location were Ṭāwūq Chay to the north and the main Baghdad-Kifri-Kirkuk road. They had 600 cavalry and 700 infantrymen. The tribe had a history of frequent revolts against the Ottomans. They were always on friendly terms with their northern neighbours, the Ṭalabānids.<sup>94</sup> This latter tribe was the most influential in the Liwā' of Kirkuk. They were settled on the plain enclosed between Kirkuk and Khānaqīn districts. In 1920, Shaikh Hamid, their

leader, was the most influential religious chief in southern Kurdistan. Ṭalabānid shaikhs and Barzinji sayyids were constantly struggling for influence over the peasantry throughout southern Kurdistan. Therefore, when the Barzinjis took a pro-Ottoman stance during World War I, the Ṭalabānids stood with the British. The tribe consisted of 400 cavalry and 300 infantrymen. The tribesmen were either pastoral or involved in agriculture. The Ṭalabāni princely family was known for its intense animosity towards the Young Turks.<sup>95</sup> Jabbārī is another typical Kurdish tribe which was founded by a certain Sayyid Husain Jabbārī from the Barzinja village north of Sulaymāniya. The Jabbārī tribesmen were similar to the Ṭalabānids, one of several tribes in the region. This tribe's villages were bounded by Khāṣa Shuwān to the north, Lailān Su to the south and Kirkuk city to the west. It had 200 cavalry and 200 infantrymen.<sup>96</sup> The Shuwān was a semi-nomadic tribe whose habitat lay within Khāṣa Chay to the south and the Lesser Zāb to the east and the Shaikh Bizainī tribe to the north and northwest. It consisted of 500 cavalry and 1500 infantry. The tribe was in close alliance with the Hamāwands to the southeast.<sup>97</sup> The Shaikh Bizainī was a sedentary tribe which inhabited a string of twenty-five villages on the lower banks of the Lesser Zāb, about forty miles in a northeasterly direction. Their territory was enclosed between the qadās of Koī, Chamchamāl and Kirkuk city. Its strength was 400 cavalry and 300 infantrymen. The members of this tribe were known for their warlike character and frequently rebelled during the later part of Ottoman rule.<sup>98</sup>

The Jāf was the most important tribe in Sulaymāniya Liwā' and the largest

tribe in southern Kurdistan. The residence of the tribe extended from Penjwīn, Halabja, Kirkuk and along both sides of the river Sīrwān up to Qizil Robāt. A great portion of the tribe also resided in the Zohāb region in Iran. The Jāf used to reside mainly in Juwānrū, in northwestern Iran. During the second half of the seventeenth century, several hundred of them sought refuge with the Bābānid Pasha. In order to encourage their stay in 'Iraq, the Ottomans usually pursued a lenient policy. Whenever the government tried to impose its authority on them, they defied the government by refusing to pay taxes, cutting off roads and uprooting telegraph lines. The Jāf were a constant threat to peace and order in northern 'Iraq. With the fall of the Bābān Imārat, which was described as a "regulator" for this large and troublesome tribe, the Jāf revolted frequently. In an attempt to reconcile them, the Ottoman authorities granted the title of Pasha to their paramount chief.<sup>99</sup> Their nomadic style of life was a continuous source of tension between the Ottomans and the Iranians. The ruling clan was called Begzādah. The Beg was always left by the Ottoman to administer the internal affairs of the tribe and, in return, he paid an annual sum of money to the government known as "maqtū'". The strength of the tribe lay in its 10,000 families.<sup>100</sup> The Hamāwand was the most noted fighting tribe of all Kurdistan. They had been the most troublesome for the Ottomans throughout the latter's reign in 'Iraq. The tribe resided on the undulating plain of Chamchamāl and Bāzyān. Their military strength was hardly above 300 cavalry. During the reign of Midhat Pasha, 1869-71, they continued to destabilize southern Kurdistan.

Midhat Pasha sent a force of 500 Circassians against them, and it was routed by the fierce Hamāwand. During the last years of their rule in 'Iraq, the Ottomans pursued a policy of appeasement with the Hamāwand, who disrupted the peace in the region just before the commencement of World War I.<sup>101</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century and during the Young Turks' rule in 'Iraq, the Hamāwand terrorized their neighbours, and the Persian border tribes. Consequently, in 1896, the Ottomans and the Persians launched a joint military operation to end the Hamāwand threat to peace on the border between the two empires. The chieftains and a considerable portion of the tribe were arrested and exiled to North Africa and Adana. But the Hamawands managed in less than a decade to fight their way back from exile to their tribal residence in Kurdistan in an epic manner. The tribe was also known for their strict loyalty to and strong alliance with the Bābānid rulers. 102

Rāniya and Qal'at Diza were the habitat of the Pizhder tribe, which was the most powerful tribe in southern Kurdistan. The princely family of this tribe named Nūr-ad-Dīnī and Ahmed Bebeh, in particular, was the founder of the Bābānid Imārat. During the 1920's the tribe was able to mobilize 2500 fighters within a few days. The Pizhder had many misken (non-tribal villagers) as their subjects. The tribe's main disadvantage was the internal rivalry between the different sections of the ruling class. 103 The Bilbās was a confederation of five tribes--the Mangūr, Mānish, Pīrān, Sinn and Ramk--and was an important border tribe. The tribe traces its origin to the powerful Rozkī tribe which resides in the Ḥakkārī

region in southeastern Turkey. In the seventeenth century the tribe migrated first to Iran and then to the Bābānid Imārat. The tribe was so powerful and troublesome that the Bābānid princes were forced on several occasions to seek the Baghdad Pasha's help to subdue them. Like the Pizhder, the Bilbās was plagued with internal rivalry. A large proportion of the Bilbās tribe resides beyond the Iranian frontier on the banks of the Lesser Zāb. The Ako was another loose tribal confederation. The area of their residence lay between Nawdasht and Shuwur, east of Rāniya and north of Qal'at Diza. They occupied forty-seven villages in the region. Also, the nomadic groups such as the Boles and Baboles were members of the federation. The princely family of the Ako was called Bashaghai and resided in Sarkabān, four miles northwest of Rāniya. 104 The Hawramī tribe was the last important tribe of Sulaymāniya Liwa. This tribe was only second in significance to the Jāf in the Ḥalabja region. The Hawramī tribe occupied both sides of a border ridge which carried the same name. Hawramān used to be an important Imārat within the Ardalan Imārat, which was a dependency of the Safavids. In the Zohāb Treaty of 1639 between the Safavids and the Ottomans, the Hawramān land was divided and approximately 18 villages were given to 'Iraq. The Begzādah family of the tribe, who were in Iran, continued to exercise their influence on the 'Iraqi Hawramān. 105

In Arbil, the following were the important tribes of the Liwa: the Dizā'ī, Khoshnaw, Surchī, Herkī, Bālik, Shīrwān and Barādost. The Dizā'ī tribe was the most numerous of all. The boundaries of this tribe were defined by the Greater

Zāb to the north, the Lesser Zāb to the south, Alṭūn Kopru-Arbīl road to the east and the flat lowland towards the Tigris to the west. Their strength was estimated to be 4,000 cavalry and 5,000 infantrymen. The tribe has also been defined as the richest tribe in southern Kurdistan. The tribe was rather peaceful in comparison to the other tribes in the region during Ottoman rule. However, they resented the administration of the Young Turks. 106 The Dizāṭī resided in approximately 150 villages divided between the qaḍās of Makhmūr, Kindināwa and Qush Tappa. More than half of the arable land in the Arbīl district was owned by the Dizāṭī aghās who had no lineage ties with the peasantry.<sup>107</sup>

The district of Shaqlāwa was entirely the habitat of the powerful Khoshnaw. Some Khoshnaw communities were also to be found in the western ends of Kōī and Rāniya. The Khoshnaw were 10,000 strong, and they resided in approximately one hundred villages. The Khoshnaw had 1,000 cavalry and infantrymen. The princely clan had no blood ties with the largely (non-tribal) Karmanj peasantry.<sup>108</sup> The Surchī was an equally powerful semi-nomadic tribe. Their residence stretched on the Greater Zāb from Rawāndūz in a northwesterly direction towards 'Aqra. The ruling shaikhly clan of the tribe claimed descent from a holy man. They had about forty villages. An equal part of the tribe resided across the Iranian frontier.<sup>109</sup> The second numerous tribe in Kurdistan, after the Jāf, was the Herkī tribe. They were a semi-nomadic tribe and mostly scattered between Arbīl Liwā' in 'Iraq, Urmīya in Iran and the wilāyah of Ḥakkārī in Turkey. This tribe usually

spent the greater part of the year on the mountainous border region. They were noted for their bravery and cruelty. Their destructive manner of migration has been compared to the "invasion of a flock of locusts".<sup>110</sup> Bālik or Bālikian was a semi-nomadic tribe whose habitat lay on the upper hilly parts of the Rawāndūz river. They had sixty villages and the fact that they commanded the truck road from Rawāndūz to Persia gave them some significance.<sup>111</sup> Finally, both the Shīrwān and the Barādost were two tribes who were settled in the extreme northern mountainous region of the Rawāndūz district. The pre-war strength of the Barādost was 3,000 families but the war inflicted heavy casualties on this tribe, which was reduced to half of its pre-war size. The Barādost and the Shīrwān tribesmen, who together had 8,000 souls, were wild and warlike in nature and the inaccessibility of their region gave them added strength. A certain Naqshbandi Shaikh, Rashīd Lolān, was a powerful chief during the 1920s.<sup>112</sup>

Until the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century, the area which corresponds to the modern Liwā' of Dihok, added to the qadā' of 'Aqra, was ruled by the Imārat of Bahdīnān which was established in the sixteenth century by a certain Bahā'-ad-Dīn of 'Abbasid origin. The Imārat was in constant conflict with the Imārat of Şorān but was usually on cordial terms with the Bābānids. In 1850, the Imārat was destroyed by the forces of the Pasha of Baghdad. The powerful nomadic Herkīs which used to roam throughout Bahdīnān, the Zībār, Doskī, Mezūrī, Berwārī, Sindī and 'Ashā'ir al-Sab'a, were the important tribes of the Imārat. The Mezūrī was a powerful tribe residing largely in the Dihok and

‘Amādīya districts. The strength of the tribe was 1,700 families who resided in seventy-nine villages. The Berwārī was a powerful tribe of ‘Amādīya in a nāḥiya which carried the same name, and they had sixty-one villages.<sup>113</sup> The Doskī was a sedentary tribe whose strength was 1,200 families, and their habitat was the northwestern parts of the Dihok Liwā.<sup>114</sup> The Zībārī was a large tribe residing between ‘Aqra and the Greater Zāb. It has 1,200 families. The ruling clan did not have blood ties with the tribesmen and was very oppressive. Therefore, a Naqshbandi shaikh from the tribe which was residing in the region of Bārzān began to champion the cause of the oppressed peasantry against the Zībārī aghās. This sufi religious order developed into an influential Imārat with cross-tribal followers and they constantly challenged the Ottoman administration. The warlike traits of the tribesmen, inaccessibility of the Bārzān region, and the strict allegiance to the shaikhly family of Bārzān, made the tribe the most feared by neighbouring tribes and by the central government in Baghdad.<sup>115</sup> In ‘Aqra, the ‘Ashā’ir al-Sab‘a was the most numerous tribe and their habitat formed a nāḥiya with the same name within the ‘Aqra district. This nāḥiya was enclosed between the Greater Zāb and Kara rivers to the southwest of ‘Aqra. The strength of the tribe was estimated at 900 families.<sup>116</sup> In the Zākho district, the Sindī tribe, whose strength was 2,130 families, was the biggest tribe of the region. The habitat of the tribe was enclosed between the Hayzal and the Khābūr rivers. Being a nomadic border tribe, their summer residence was in Turkish territory.<sup>117</sup>

In the Wilāyah of Mosul, the Arab tribes had their own tribal dīra (areas)

while in other regions they lived side by side with the Kurdish and Turkomen tribes. The Ḥawīja district in Kirkuk Liwā' was entirely Arab and there were twenty-five villages in the Liwā' which were half Arab and half Kurd. The Arabs of Kirkuk were largely members of Albū Ḥamdān and Jubūr tribes. In the Tūzkhurmātu district, the Kurdish and Turkomen tribesmen shared villages with the Karawī and Bayat Arabs. In the south and southwest of Arbīl Liwā' lay scattered Arab villages, mostly belonging to the Ṭai Arabs. In addition, on the left bank of the Tigris, the area between the two Zābs was solidly Arab, occupied by the Jubūr tribe.<sup>118</sup> In Mosul Liwā' the right bank of the Tigris on the whole was Arab, excepting the Yazīdis of Jabal Sinjār and the Turks of Tel A'far. The upper part of the Jazīra to the west of Mosul was the domain of the Shammar, a powerful bedouin tribe of 'Iraq.<sup>119</sup> The Jubūr and the 'Azzah Arab tribes resided at the southern end of the Wilāyah of Mosul. And finally, the 'Ubaid also resided on both sides of the Tigris in the area stretching from Mosul to Baghdad.<sup>120</sup>

The main feature of the physical geography of Kurdistan is its mountains. This has had an impact on the historical development of Kurdish society. The inaccessible mountain strongholds enabled the Kurdish tribesmen to constantly defy the central authorities, and made the imposition of law and order a difficult task. The geographical survey has also demonstrated that the semi-nomadic and agricultural economy of southern Kurdistan was strongly linked to the economy of the rest of 'Iraq, and especially to Mosul city. These two main factors have resulted in a dilemma for the Kurds of 'Iraq: the yearning for autonomy from

central authority versus economic dependence on 'Iraq. Throughout the Ottoman rule in Kurdistan they tried to reconcile these two contradictory factors. During the British Mandate the authorities in Iraq were faced with the same dilemma and tried to follow the same policy as the Ottomans had; reconciling the Kurds' desire for autonomy and the interdependence of southern Kurdistan with Iraq.

## Notes for Chapter 1.

1. Muhammad Amīn Zakī, Tārikh al-Kurd wa Kurdistān, I, (Cairo: Sa'adah, 1939), p. 1. Although it is called southern Kurdistan, the region occupies a central position within the land inhabited by the Kurds and the term is a purely geographical one. See Ismet Vanly, "Kurdistan in Iraq" in People Without a Country (London: Zed Press, 1978) p. 153. In this paper the terms "Kurdistan", "the north" and "southern Kurdistan" are used to refer to the same region.
2. Cecil J. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs: Politics, Travel, and Research in North-Eastern Iraq (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 9.
3. Shākir Khaṣbak, al-'Irāq al-Shimālī (Baghdad: Shafīq Press, 1973), pp. 98-9 .
4. M. Kenneth, "Central Kurdistan", Geographical Journal, Vol. LIV (1919), p. 338.
5. Jāsīm al-Khalaf, Jugrafiyat al-'Irāq (Cairo: Ma'rif Press, 1965), p. 183; W.R. Hay, Two Years in Kurdistan: 1918-1920 (London: Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd., 1921), p. 16.
6. Khaṣbak, al-'Irāq al-Shimālī, pp. 100-1.
7. B. Dickson, "Journey in Kurdistan", Geographical Journal, Vol. XXXV (1910), pp. 375-6.
8. Ibid., p. 377.
9. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 18-9; Khaṣbak, al-'Irāq al-Shimālī, p. 103.
10. Khaṣbak, al-'Irāq al-Shimālī, p. 105.
11. F. Maunsell, "Kurdistan", Geographical Journal, Vol. III (1894), pp. 88-9; "Diyalah" in Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition, p. 981.
12. Khaṣbak, al-'Irāq al-Shimālī, p. 6.
13. Khalaf, op. cit., p. 240.
14. Ibid., p. 240.
15. Major H.I. Lloyd, "The Geography of Mosul Boundary", Geographical Journal

- LXVIII (1926), p. 3; Such notable towns are Makhmūr, Arbīl, Altūn Koprū, Kirkuk, Tāwūq, Tūzkhurmātu and Kifrī (see Salih Haider, "Land Problems of Iraq", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1942.), pp. 3-4.
16. Khalaf, p. 70.
17. Hay, Two Years, pp. 19-21; The kahrīz or qanāt is an ingenious method of moving water without having to lift it to the surface. Its construction does not need any precise surveying or levelling. The essential condition is an inclined terrain, usually alluvial with an underlying water table. (See: "Water Supplies in Iraq: Kahriz", Geographical Journal, XCIII, June to July 1939), p. 277.
18. Foreign Office, Mesopotamia (London: H. M. Stationary Office, 1920), pp. 84-5.
19. Ibid., p. 31.
20. Khaṣbak, al-‘Irāq al-Shimālī, p. 25; cf. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 17, 215.
21. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 17.
22. W. Fisher, The Middle East: A Physical, Social and Regional Geography, 7th ed. (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1978), pp. 373-9; Khaṣbak, al-‘Irāq al-Shimālī, pp. 30-2; Kenneth, p. 337; cf. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 17.
23. Shakir Khaṣbak, al-Akrād: Dirāsah Juḡhrāfiyah Ethnografiyah (Baghdad: Shaffiq Press, 1972), pp. 300-1.
24. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 19.
25. Maunsell, p. 92; Foreign Office, Mesopotamia, p. 922.
26. Kenneth, pp. 338-40; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 214-5.
27. Khaṣbak, al-Akrād, pp. 290-1.
28. Kenneth, p. 341.
29. Kenneth, p. 340; There were two main roads in this region. The more northern road started from Ṣaujbulāq in Iran, crossed the frontier and passed through the valley of Rawāndūz Chay and Rawāndūz itself, and through the gorge across Daštī-Ḥarīr and into Arbīl. This road was used by the Russians during their 1917

attack on Rawāndūz. The British authorities in Iraq during the Mandate made extensive efforts to improve the road, hoping for a smooth establishment of their authority in the region. (See: Hay, Two Years, pp. 28-9; and the detailed work on the subject by Archibald Milne Hamilton, Road through Kurdistan (London: Faber & Faber, 1937).)

30. Khaṣbak, al-'Irāq al-Shimālī, p. 26.

31. Lloyd, pp. 108-9.

32. Khalaf, pp. 80-1; Hay, Two Years, p. 180.

33. Hay, Two Years, p. 179; United States, State Department, Confidential Diplomatic Records, U.S. Legation, December 19th, 1931. No. 97, p. 3.

34. Lloyd, p. 109.

35. League of Nations, Question of the Frontier Between Turkey and 'Iraq. Report submitted to the Council by the Commission instituted by the Council Resolution of September 30th, 125. C.400.M.147.1925, vii, p. 29; For a detailed study on the state of agriculture in Kurdistan, see: Frederick Barth, Principles of Social Organisation in Southern Kurdistan (Oslo, 1953).

36. Hay, Two Years, p. 369; The significant population centres in the area by the end of World War I were: Mosul (70,000), Kirkuk (20,000), Arbīl (6,000), Sulaymānīya (12,000), Rawāndūz (5,000), Altūn Kopru (3,000), Tūzkurmātu (1,200), Zākho (4,000), 'Amādīya (3,000) and Kifrī (4,000). See: Foreign Office, Mesopotamia, p. 15.

37. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 9.

38. Hay, Two Years, p. 65.

39. 'Abbas al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-'Irāq al-Qadīmah. 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdīya, II (Baghdad: Baghdad Press, 1937), p. 139; Khaṣbak, al-'Irāq al-Shimālī, p. 175; Thomas Bois, The Kurds, tr. W. Welland (Beirut: 1966), p. 32; Basile Nikitine writes that the Kurdish tribe is an "enlarged family and has two elements in its formation. The permanent member who has, or they conceive themselves to have blood ties, and individuals who have joined the tribe for "protection" (See: Basile Nikitine, al-Akrād, Arabic tr. (Beirut: Rawā'i, 1967), pp. 110-11); M. van Bruinessen defines the Kurdish tribe as "socio-political and generally also territorial, and therefore an economical unit based on descent and kinship real or potentative" (See: M. van Bruinessen, Agha, Shaikh and State: On the Social and Political Organization of Kurdistan (Utrecht: 1978, p. 40).

40. al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdīya, p. 13; The title of "Shaikh" was given to a holy man, if he was an ordinary citizen who had gained a reputation for piety and wisdom, and his heirs would automatically receive the title. The title of "sayyid" was given to those religious chiefs and their descendants who claimed a real or imaginary descent from the Prophet Muhammad. (See: Hay, Two Years, p. 38.)
41. R.E. Leach, The Social and Economic Organization of Rowanduz Kurds (London: School of Economic and Political Science, 1940), pp. 11-12; Wadi Jwaideh, The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Its Origins and Development, 2 Vols (Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1960), pt. 1, pp. 71-6.
42. Barth, pp. 40-4; V. Minorsky, "Kurds, Kurdistan", Encyclopedia of Islam, rev. ed. 4 Vols., II, p. 422; The term tā'ifa is an Arabic word used among the Kurds to refer to a fictitious kinship, very similar to the word "brotherhood" which is used by some social and religious groups. In some regions the word hoz is used instead. The term is also often used to refer to religious groupings. For example, the Ahl-ī Ḥaqq, an extremist Shi'ī group in the region is referred to as tā'ifa Ahl-ī Ḥaqq. (See: van Bruinessen, pp. 53-4.)
43. Bois, pp. 32-3; A. Shamilov, a Soviet Kurdish scholar, uses the term 'ayil instead of māl. He writes that several 'ayils form a ber, and the heads of the bers form the tribal council of the qabīla. (See: Ḥawla Mas'alat al-'Iqtā' Bayn al-Kurd. tr. Kamāl Maḍhar (Baghdad: Hawādith, 1984), p. 98.) Most of the terms used by the Kurds, except for a few, seem to have an Arabic origin. None of the terms have been used consistently to refer to any level of organization. The term tā'ifa, for instance, has different meanings in the minds of Kurdish tribal men in different regions. It may imply lineage, clan or even the tribe. (See: van Bruinessen, pp. 54, 57, and Leach, Rowanduz, pp. 26f.)
44. van Bruinessen, p. 99.
45. "Jāf" referred to the tribal Kurds as opposed to the nontribal Kurds, who were called "Goran". In Nosul and Arbil regions, the non-tribal Kurds were referred to as "Karmanj", but in Sulaymaniya and Kirkuk Liwā's the non-tribal Kurds were known as "Misken". (See: Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 10-12, 42.) The word "Gorān" should not be confused with "Gurani", a Kurdish dialect spoken by Kurdish tribes living in the region between Karmanshāh and Khānaqīn. (See: Sharaf Khān Bidlīsī, al-Sharafnāmah fī Tārikh al-Duwal wal Imārat al-Kurdīya. Tr. M. 'Awnī (Baghdad: al-Najāh, 1953), p. 124; V. Minorsky, "Gurani", Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (BSOAS), xi, 1943, p. 4-8. Among the Kurds, to say "I belong to a tribe" conveyed a meaning similar to "civis romanus sum", and entitled one to respect. (See: Hay, Two Years, p. 65.)
46. There was a noticeable difference in the physical appearance and manners

between the non-tribal Kurdish peasantry and the tribal Kurds. The former tended to be generally short, broad and wiry. (See: Hay, Two Years, p. 40.) The non-tribal Kurds were looked upon by tribal Kurds as men unworthy to be warriors, productive assets not unlike a flock of sheep. They were also called ra'iyah. Miskens were not necessarily poor. In fact, some of them possessed farms that were so large that they had to hire labourers. However, they were mainly share-croppers of the Agha or the tribal Kurds. (See: van Bruinessen, pp. 97-8, 117.) Mukarram Talabani, a Kurdish scholar, argues that there is no relationship between the Arabic word "miskīn" and the Kurdish term "misken". "Miskin" means "poor", while "misken" does not necessarily have that meaning. Talabani traces the origin of "misken" to the Babylonian term "mosk-in-kok", which meant, according to Article Eight of Hammurabi's law-code a peasant tied temporarily to a piece of land belonging to an aristocrat and unable to leave it until he paid all his obligations to the owner of the land. The Kurdish miskens tilled the land under the same conditions. (See: "Le Baray Binju Binawaluni Wishayyi Misken awa le Zmani Kurdiyyida", Govar-i Kor-i Zaniyyar-i Kurdi, Vol. IV (1976), pp. 71, 78.) Khaşbak disagrees with Talabani in this regard and points out that in Arabic "miskin" also can mean a share-cropper. (See: al-Akrād, p. 202.)

47. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 13; Nikitine, al-Akrād, p. 120.

48. James Claude Rich, Narrative of Residence in Koordistan, 2 Vols., II, (London: James Duncan, 1836-37), p. 89; Hay, Two Years, p. 100; Khaşbak does not regard the non-tribal Kurds as different in race from the tribal Kurds. He attributes all physical, social and economic differences to occupation. (See: al-Akrād, p. 200.)

49. Rich, Residence, I, p. 152; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. I, p. 85; Leach, p. 25; Minorsky, "Kurds, Kurdistan", p. 472; Traditionally, when the tribal council deposes the Agha they bring him a new pair of shoes. He puts them on and leaves, indicating his acceptance of the decision. (See: Nikitine, al-Akrād, pp. 33-4.)

50. Leach, Rowanduz, pp. 119-20.

51. Nikitine, al-Akrād, pp. 108-9; Rich expresses a similar view when he writes that "I was told that Kaikhosroo Beg, who is the chief of all Jaf nation, may kill or punish at pleasure, that he has no council for consulting... If the pasha requires a sum of money or a levy of troops... he summons the chief of the Tiras and divides the burden equally among them." (See: Residence, I, p. 123; Hay, Two Years, p. 63.)

52. al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdiyya, p. 15; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 14

53. al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdīya, p. 15; For understanding the role of the sarkāl in 'Iraqi society (See: A. Jwaideh, "Tribalism and Modern Society; Iraq a Case Study" in Introduction to Islamic Civilization, ed. R.M. Savory, Cambridge, 176, pp. 160-61; A. Jwaideh, "Aspects of Land Tenure and Social Change in Lower Iraq During Late Ottoman Times" in Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East, ed. Tarif Khalidi (Beirut: 1984), pp. 343-50.)
54. Nikitine, al-Akrād, pp. 127-30; (See: Minorsky, "Kurd, Kurdistan", p. 742; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 13-14, 223-24; van Bruinessen, pp. 81-2.)
55. al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdīya, pp. 241-42; van Bruinessen, p. 62.
56. For detailed information on the 1858 Land Law (See: Salih Haider, "Land Problems of 'Iraq'; A. Jwaideh, "Aspects of Land Tenure and Social Change in Lower Iraq" in Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East, ed. Tarif Khalidi (Beirut: American University Press, 1984), pp. 340-48; A. Jwaideh, "Midhat Pasha and the Land System of Lower Iraq", St. Antony's Papers, No. 16, Middle Eastern Affairs, No. 3, ed. Albert Hourani (London; 1963), pp. 106-36.
57. For detailed information on the 1858 Land Law (See: Salih Haider, "Land Problems of 'Iraq"; A. Jwaideh, "Aspects of Land Tenure and Social Change in Lower Iraq" in Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East, ed. Tarif Khalidi (Beirut: American University Press, 1984), pp. 340-48; A. Jwaideh, "Midhat Pasha and the Land System of Lower Iraq", St. Antony's Papers, No. 16, Middle Eastern Affairs, No. 3, ed. Albert Hourani (London: 1963), pp. 106-36.
58. Haider, "Land Problems of Iraq", pp. 290-91.
59. Steven Longrigg, Four Centuries of Modern Iraq (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), p. 308; Midhat Pasha intended his land policy: 1) to induce the tribesmen to settle; 2) to provide security in tenure and encourage cultivation; 3) to distribute small and large tracts of land to the holders of farmāns, and to the villagers who cleaned a canal or planted a garden; 4) to legally register the land, thus eliminating an important cause of dissension among the tribes; and 5) to establish direct contact with the peasantry and limit the power of the tribal chiefs. For detailed information on the subject (See: A. Jwaideh, "Midhat Pasha and the Land System of Lower Iraq"; Ernest Dowson, An Inquiry into Land Tenure and Related Questions (Letchworth: Garden City Press Limited, 1931); Tom Nieuwenh, Politics and Society in Early Modern Iraq, Haugue & Martinus, 1982.
60. D. Warrinor, Land and Poverty in the Middle East (London: Oxford University Press, n.d.), p. 108; In Kurdistan mulk holdings were rare. Most of the land was considered Arādī Amīriya. Moreover, the true waqf, that is, waqf granted by the

Sultan from mulk land was also rare. (See: Haider, "Land Problems of Iraq", pp. 172-73; D. Warrinor, Land Reform and Development in the Middle East, pp. 138f.)

61. Foreign Office, Review of Civil Administration of Mesopotamia, 1914-1918 (London: Stationary Office, 1920), p. 54; Khaşbak, al-Akrād, p. 252; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 145.

62. Agha, Shaikh and State, p. 231.

63. van Bruinessen, pp. 231-33; Haider, "Land Problems of Iraq", pp. 288-90.

64. van Bruinessen, p. 232.

65. van Bruinessen, p. 211.

66. Hay, Two Years, p. 67.

67. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 214; Haider, "Land Problems of Iraq", p. 183.

68. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 223.

69. van Bruinessen, pp. 293-94; W. Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 1, pp. 212-14.

70. van Bruinessen, p. 295, Halkawt Ḥakīm, "Ab'ād Zuhūr al-Ṭarīqa al-Naqshbandīya fī Kurdistān fī Awā'il al-Qarn al-Tāsi' 'Ashr", Studia Kurdica, No. 1 (1884), pp. 5g-67. For standard scholarly works on the emergence and influence of this Sufi order in Kurdistan (See: Halkawt Ḥakīm, "La Confrerie des Naqshabandi en Kurdistan en XIX siecle, these de Troisieme Cycle" (Sorbonne: Université de Paris, 1983); Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 59-69; van Bruinessen, Capt. IV, pp. 249-324; Ely Bannister Soane, To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise (London: 1912); Şiddīq Damalūjī Imārat Bahdīnān (Mosul: Ittihad Press, 1952), pp. 61-88.

71. Ely Bannister Soane, Notes on the Tribes of Southern Kurdistan, tr. ed. Fu'ad H. Khorshid (Baghdad: Hawadith, 1979), pp. 79, 128-30; Muḥammad Mullākarīm, "Aqīday Kurđī Mawlāna Khālid Naqshbandī", Govārī Cor-ī Zanyār-ī 'Irāq, Dast-ī Kurd, Vol. VIII (1981), pp. 199-20; W. Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 1, pp. 127-132, 136-141, gives interesting information and analysis concerning the influence of these shaikhs.

72. Siyamand 'Uthmān, "Mulāḥazāt Tārikhiya Ḥawla Nash'at al-Ḥaraka al-

Qawmiya al-Kurdiyya", Studia Kurdica, No. 1 (1984), pp. 26-7; "Efendi" is a Turkish term which when used as a form of address is equivalent to the English word "sir". It is used for addressing any respectable man. In Kurdistan it came to refer to government officials who wore Western dress, especially members of the professional class in the large towns. (See: Hay, Two Years, p. 85.)

73. Hay, Two Years, pp. 85-6.

74. Damalūjī, Imārat Bahdīnān, pp. 68-9.

75. Steven Longrigg, Iraq from 1900 to 1950: A Political, Social and Economic History (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 9; Haider, p. 174; At present there is no scholarly consensus concerning the origin of the 'Iraqi Turkomen and the date of their arrival. Edmonds offers the following theories: 1) They were probably brought from Anatolia by the Great Seljuks; 2) They are descended from the 100,000 Turkish prisoners captured by Tamerlane and saved from death by the intercession of the Shaikh of Ardabil, the head of the Safavid Order (1392-1405); 3) They were brought to Kurdistan by Sultan Selim I and Sulaiman I (1512-66) to protect the caravan road; 4) They are descendants of the Azerbaijanis from Marāgha who were sent to Kurdistan to man the garrisons by Shah Isma'il Safavi (1502-24), or of the Azerbaijanis sent by Nadir Shah (1730-47). (See: Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 287-68.) According to the Report by the League of Nations, they came to Kurdistan during the reign of Tughrul Beg. (See: League of Nations, Question of Frontier, p. 48.)

76. League of Nations, Question of Frontier, p. 77.

77. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 266; Most middle class Arbalis were also Turkomans or Turkified Kurds. However, the Turkomans in Arbīl resembled the Kurds in manners, housing, food and dress. (See: Hay, Two Years, p. 83.)

78. League of Nations, Question of Frontier, pp. 77.

79. Hay, Two Years, pp. 90-1.

80. Qizilbash, or "red-heads" originally referred to nine Azerbaijani tribes who wore red turbans and formed the bulk of the Safavid army which brought Shah Isma'il to the throne. Later this term was also used to refer to members of the heterodox Baktashi Shi'i Sufi order. (See: Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 268-69); W. Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 1, pp. 49-51.

81. League of Nations, Question of Frontier, p. 51; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 195; Longrigg, Iraq, p. 9; Minorsky, "Kurd, Kurdistan", p. 275; The Shabak had close ties with the Baktashi Order. Their doctrine was a strange

mixture of Shi'ism and other Eastern religions. 'Ali b. Abi Talib, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, was considered to have god-like attributes. Christian influence is evidenced by their belief in a trinity and their confession of sins. They abstained from the Muslim prayers, alms-giving and fasting. (See: A. Ḥamīd al-Ṣarrāf, al-Shabak min Firaq al-Ghulāt (Baghdad: Ma'ārif, 1954), pp. 44-6 , 91.

82. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 191, 195; Minorsky, "Kurd, Kurdistan", p. 275; van Bruinessen, pp. 32, 131; The doctrine of the Kākā'ī or Ahl-ī Ḥaqq, "the people of the truth", is syncretic, like the Qizilbash and the Yazīdis. The influences of gnosticism, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Islam are apparent in the Kākā'ī faith. Their central belief is in the successive manifestations of the divinity, which are seven in number. The first is Khawandagar, the creator of the world who in pre-eternity was concealed in pears. The second is 'Ali b. Abi Talib. However, the most important of them is Sultān Ishāq, a Kurd from Barzinja village, south-east of Sulaymānīya (See: V. Minorsky, "Ahl-i Hakk" in Encyclopedia of Islam, pp. 262-3; M. Mokrī, tr. A. Hindawi, "Wilādat 'Alim 'Ind al-Akrād min Madhab Ahlī Ḥaqq", al-Thaqāfa al-Kurdīya, No. 1 (October 1988), pp. 65-77; W. Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 1, pp. 51f.

83. League of Nations, p. 77; The Yazīdis are a Kurdish tribe which is also known as the Dasnī. Their doctrine is a "peculiar synthetic religion". It borrows from the Persians the concept of good and evil principles. The annual sacrifice of a bull near the temple of Shams ad-Dīn can probably be traced to Mithraism. From Judaism they have adopted the idea of identifying Ahriman, the Persian principle of evil, with Satan. They also revere the Old and New Testaments, and the Qur'an. Their name is derived from Yazdān, the "Supreme Being", not from Yazid b. Mu'awiya, the Umayyad Caliph, as some scholars have claimed. (See: 'Abbas al-'Azzāwī, Tārikh al-Yazīdīyah wa 'Aqīdatahum (Baghdad: Baghdad Press, 1975), pp. 195-96; Th. Mezel, "Yazidi" in Encyclopedia of Islam, old ed., pp. 162-65; W.A. Wigram and D. Lambeth, The Cradle of Mankind: Life in Eastern Kurdistan (London: A & C Black Ltd., 1922), pp. 87-100. W. Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 1, pp. 47f.)

84. League of Nations, Question of Frontier, pp. 51, 77.

85. The Chaldean Uniate Church is a comparatively modern offshoot of the Nestorian Church, which was founded by Nestorius in opposition to the Imperial Orthodox Church of Byzantium. The former maintained that it was possible to distinguish the two persons as well as the two natures of Christ, as opposed to the Western doctrine of the incarnation. The Chaldeans accepted the Pope's authority, and in 1845 separated from the Nestorians and were recognized by the Ottomans as a separate "millet". (See: A.H. Gansden, "Chaldean Communities in Kurdistan",

Geographical Journal, 64 (1947), pp. 80-1).

86. Hay, Two Years, p. 86; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 266.

87. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 267, 426; Hay, Two Years, p. 87; 'Uthman, "Mulāḥazāt", p. 26; Sayyid 'Alī Gūrānī, Rihla Min 'Ammān ilā al-'Amādiya (Cairo: Sa'adah Press, 1939), pp. 150-51; Damalūjī, Imarat Bahdinan, p. 152.

88. Nomadic Kurds differ from Arab bedouin in many respects. Arab nomads breed horses, camels and sheep, and do not cultivate the land. They roam the desert according to the fluctuations and changes in the seasons. (See: League of Nations, Question of Frontier, p. 41.)

89. Ely Bannister Soane, Notes, pp. 2-3. The ruling clan is originally from Diyarbakr in Turkey. They had settled there when the Treaty of Zohāb was signed. Their followers were settled peasantry from different tribes. The tribe is Sunni Muslim. al-'Azzāwī 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdiya, p. 183; Amīn Zakī, Khulāsat, p. 378.

90. Soane, Notes, p. 27; al-'Azzāwī thinks they were originally of Turkish descent. (See: 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdiya, p. 182.) Amin Zaki considers them to be of Kurdish origin. (See: Khulāsat, p. 377.)

91. Amīn Zakī, Khulāsat, p. 399; One of their chiefs, Karīm Khān Zand, was able to rule Iran from 1750 to 1794. Soane, Notes, pp. 37-8; al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdiya, pp. 173-74.

92. al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdiya, pp. 171-72; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 279, 367; Gūrānī, p. 29; Soane, Notes, p. 7.

93. Soane, Notes, pp. 36-7; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 272; al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdiya, pp. 174-76. The Sharafnamah mentions this tribe as important during Shah Isma'il Safavi's reign in Iran (1502-24). (See: Bidfīsī, p. 16.)

94. al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdiya, pp. 175-76; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 272-73; Soane, Notes, pp. 6-7; M. Sykes, The Caliph's Last Heritage, ed. Lady Sykes (London: n.p., 115), p. 557.

95. Soane, Notes, pp. 32-33; This tribe was founded originally by a certain Shaikh Ahmad, from the Qadiri Sufi Order, who resided in the village of Ṭalabān northeast of Chamchamāl. Though the family was originally a shaikhly family, its members had lost their religious reputation and had become urban aristocrats. (See: Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 269-71; van Bruinessen, p. 280.)

96. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 39.

97. Soane, Notes, p. 30; al-'Azzāwī is of the view that this tribe may be Arab in origin, from Shwan. The members of the tribe lived in seventy-two villages in a nāhiya of the same name. (See: al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdiyya, p. 163.)

98. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 39-40; Soane, Notes, p. 111; Shaikh Bizainī is mentioned in the Sharafnamah (p. 159) as a member of the Jazīra tribe. al-'Azzāwī thinks the possibility that they migrated from Jazīra is remote and suspects that they may be of Lur origin. (See: 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdiyya, pp. 60-61) Fu'ad Hama Khorshid confirms Sharaf Khan's view concerning the origin of the tribe. According to Khorshid, there are still Shaikh Bizainī communities in Bahdīnān. (Soane, Notes, p. 111) Sykes gives the number of 4,000 families as their original size. This indicates that the war affected the tribe very adversely. (See: Caliph's Last Heritage, p. 557.)

99. M. Mardukh, Mezhu-ī Kurdo Kurdistān (Sanandaj: Hiwa Press, 1958), pp. 145-69; van Bruinessen, p. 49; Soane, Notes, p. 20; al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdiyya, pp. 28-30; Longrigg, p. 22.

100. Soane, Notes, pp. 13-20, 60-64.

101. al-'Azzāwī, 'Ahsā'ir al-Kurdiyya, pp. 70-8.

102. al-'Azzawī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdiyya, pp. 94-7; Muḥammad Amīn Zakī, Tārikh al-Duwal wa al-Imārat al-Kurdiyya fī al-'Ahd al-Islāmī (Cairo: Sa'adah Press 1948), pp. 416-17; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 217-20.

103. van Bruinessen, p. 95.

104. Soane, Notes, pp. 29-30; Hay, Two Years, p. 44; Bidfīsī, pp. 386-7; al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdiyya, pp. 100-103.

105. al-'Azzāwī 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdiyya, pp. 85-8; Unlike many other ruling clans in Kurdistan, the Begzādah of the Hawramān trace their origin not to the Prophet Muhammad, but to a certain Takmurath, a prince of the legendary Kayani dynasty of Persia. The Hawramīs speak a Gūrānī Kurdish dialect. Some scholars believe that they are not Kurds, but another ethnic group similar to Kurds and Persians. (See: Nikitine, al-Akrād, p. 150). However, the Hawramīs consider themselves to be true Kurds and many scholars agree. (See: Minorsky, "Gurani", pp. 73, 88-9; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 10, 153; Khaṣbāk, al-Akrād, pp. 200-03.)

106. Soane, Notes, pp. 49-52; This tribe intermarries with the Jubur Arabs. (See: Sykes, The Caliph's Last Heritage, p. 557.)

107. Hay, Two Years, pp. 77-8.
108. Mardukh, p. 123; Hay, Two Years, pp. 66-7; Amīn Zakī, Khulāṣat, p. 385; Soane, Notes, p. 93.
109. Hay, Two Years, pp. 66, 78; Soane, Notes, p. 127; al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdīya, p. 137.
110. Hay, Two Years, p. 79; Sykes, The Caliph's Last Heritage, p. 560; Soane, Notes, pp. 71-3; M. 'Abbāsī, Imārat Bahdīnān al-'Abbāsīyah (Mosul: Jumhūriyah, 1969), pp. 30-3.
111. Hay, Two Years, p. 79; al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdīya, pp. 36-39; Amin Zaki, Khulāṣat, p. 386.
112. Hay, Two Years, p. 79; Mardukh, p. 108; Sykes, The Caliph's Last Heritage, p. 560.
113. Gūrānī, pp. 171-73; Amīn Zakī, Tārīkh al-Duwal, pp. 38, 72-77; al-'Abbāsī, pp. 30-1; Damalūjī, 137-40.
114. Damalūjī, pp. 123-30; F.O. 371/6349, "Intelligence Report", dated 15th Dec. 1920.
115. Damalūjī, pp. 130-33; Air 23/184 "Report on the Present Situation in Barzan", Mosul, 13th February 1928.
116. al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdīya, p. 194; Damalūjī, pp. 140-42; Amīn Zakī, Khulāṣat, p. 386.
117. al-'Abbāsī, p. 202-3; al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdīya, p. 193.
118. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 274, 278-9.
119. Hay, Two Years, pp. 90-1.
120. See Map No. 2 for the location of the tribes; Haider, p. 287; al-'Azzāwī, 'Ashā'ir al-Kurdīya, 151, 162-6.

## Chapter 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH INTEREST  
IN THE KURDS PRIOR TO 1918

Kurds in the Anglo-Russian Rivalry of the 19th Century

The Kurds in general, and those living in northern 'Iraq in particular attracted the attention of the British Empire throughout the nineteenth century and prior to World War I. The British seem to have viewed them as a destabilizing element throughout the period. At that time the British were pursuing a policy in the East which aimed at maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and their policy towards the Kurds should be viewed within this context. There were several other factors which accounted for the British policy towards the Kurds, the foremost of which was Anglo-Russian rivalry and the strategic position of Kurdistan within this rivalry. Secondly, the strategic position of 'Iraq with regard to the British Empire in India was equally significant in shaping British policy toward the Kurds.

Anglo-Russian rivalry in the Ottoman Empire and Iran had a direct impact on the policies pursued by the British toward the Kurds. In October 1813, Persia ceded to Russia in the Gulistān Treaty the Caucasian regions of Darband, Bākū, Sherwān, Karabāgh, parts of Talish, Dāghistān and Abkhāsia. In 1828, the Treaty of Turkomanchāy between Persia and Russia confirmed these Russian advances

in the Caucasus, and Yerevan and Nakhchivan were added to Russia's gains. The latter treaty inaugurated the Anglo-Russian rivalry in the Middle and Near East. Russia wanted to continue the southward advance, and the British put up equal resistance to this. The British thought that Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf were the main targets of Russia's southward expansion. Hence, the British Empire in India was at stake.<sup>1</sup> In 1833 the Ottoman Empire, having suffered defeat at the hands of Ibrahim Pasha, son of Muhammad 'Ali Pasha of Egypt (1805-1848), was forced to sign the Treaty of Unkiar Eskelesi in 1833, which gave Russia a dominant position within the Ottoman Empire. This treaty contributed to a large extent to the Anglo-Russian rivalry. Harold W. Temperley writes that "It bred in Palmerston a fatal hostility to Russia and converted even Whigs to the Tory policy of bolstering up Turkey." Palmerston, the British prime minister, and Stratford Canning, British ambassador to Constantinople viewed this treaty as a major step towards the dismemberment of Turkey.<sup>2</sup> From then on, maintaining the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire was the cardinal policy of Great Britain. From the 1820's until World War I, Britain considered the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire to be in the interest of Russia and a major disruption in the balance of power in Europe.<sup>3</sup>

The territories settled by Kurds along the Ottoman-Russian-Persian frontiers had gained considerable strategic significance in Anglo-Russian rivalry. For instance, the wars of 1803-13, 1823-25, 1853, and 1878-80 between Russia and the Ottomans were fought in northern Kurdistan. In addition, most of the

Ottoman-Persian wars in the nineteenth century were also fought along the border in the Kurdish regions. Therefore, James Claudius Rich came to the realization that Kurds as "a mountain people worked an important influence upon Turco-Persian relations."<sup>4</sup> For these reasons, both Russia and Great Britain devised policies which aimed at either winning the Kurds over or neutralizing them. Russia's interest in the Kurds had developed earlier than that of Great Britain. From the middle of the seventeenth century until the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, Russia and the Ottoman Empire fought ten wars which altogether lasted thirty years. The main object of Russia in these wars was to reach the shores of the Black Sea, the Caucasus and its extensions. For this reason, the Russian Command in the Caucasus paid special attention to the study of the geography and society of Kurdistan, and the region was toured by Russian intelligence officers, diplomats and travellers. This resulted in an enormous amount of literature about the Kurds and made Russian scholars such as Basile Nikitine, N. Khalfin, P. Averianov and Vladimir Minorsky pioneers in Kurdology.<sup>5</sup>

Prince Paskevich, who was in charge of the Russian Command in the Caucasus during the Turco-Russian war of 1828-29, laid the foundation of his country's policy toward the Kurds. He paid special attention to the Kurds in his strategy for the conquest of eastern Anatolia. The policy pursued by Paskevich was based upon developing a friendly relationship with the feudal Kurdish chieftains settled on the frontiers. Money and gifts were generously used to win the favour of the influential chieftains. The Russian prince was skillful in

manipulating Sultan Mahmud II's desire to curb the Kurdish chieftains' influence in the region. Paskevich resorted to the practice of hiring Muslim advisors. This gave him easy access to the Kurdish chieftains, and he was also sensitive to the religious sentiments of the Kurds.<sup>6</sup>

Although the Kurds for the most part remained a doubtful factor throughout the war of 1828-29, their neutrality gave Paskevich "all the advantage which Napier enjoyed nearly forty years later in Abyssinia, when a passive but potentially dangerous mountain people allowed a relatively small force to advance to Magdala in the heart of the Ethiopian highland."<sup>7</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, the successive Turkish defeats in the wars with Russia, and Ottoman losses in the Balkans created the impression among the discontented Kurds that they could revolt. But the Russians, in general, failed to capitalise on this feeling among the Kurds, for Russia's policy toward the Kurds was handicapped by her Armenian policy in eastern Anatolia. Russia was espousing the establishment of an Armenian state in eastern Anatolia, which also included a great part of the Kurdish land. The incompatibility of Armenian and Kurdish interests precluded the development of a pro-Kurdish policy in Russia. On several occasions, Russia refused requests of the Kurdish leaders for their support of a revolt against the Ottomans.<sup>8</sup> On a few occasions, some Kurdish chieftains fought alongside the Russians; nevertheless, for the most part the Kurds remained on the Ottoman side, furnishing soldiers and irregular tribal forces.<sup>9</sup>

The British interest in the Kurds dates back to the second half of the

eighteenth century. In 1758, a physician of the East India company<sup>10</sup> visited the Kurdish regions of 'Iraq. Both Dr. D. Campbell and T. Howell, two officers of the company, also visited southern Kurdistan in 1797. In 1820, James Claudius Rich, the British Resident in Baghdad, made an extensive tour of the Kurdish regions of 'Iraq and Iran. His tour resulted in a standard pioneer work on Kurdish society and history, called Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, (2 vols., London, 1912). During the 1830's, Major H. Rawlinson, a British officer who was serving in Iran made a tour of the Kurdish regions on the Turco-Persian frontier and wrote several reports on the Kurds for the British embassies in Tehran and Constantinople. During the early 1840's, Henry Layard, a distinguished British diplomat scholar travelled to the Kurdish regions of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>11</sup>

In 1843, the establishment of the Frontier Commission for the delimitation of the Persian-Ottoman border provided both Russia and Britain, who were represented on the Commission along with the Ottoman Empire and Persia, ample opportunity for information gathering concerning the tribes settled on the Turco-Persian frontier, who were mostly Kurds in the northern sector. The interest of the British government in the commercial potential of the region can be discerned from Sir Stratford Canning's instructions to Mr. Williams, the British representative on the Commission. Canning asked Williams to view the work of the Commission: "beyond the territorial claims of the two governments...to assist in extending the sphere of useful knowledge, and eventually in new channels of commercial intercourse." In reference to commerce, the British delegation was

instructed to see whether it was possible to find a new trade route between Persia and the Ottoman Empire through Kurdistan. Canning also directed Williams to make the necessary enquiries into Kurdistan's potential for production of mineral resources, vegetables, as well as "dyes used by Kurds, which are well known for their brilliancy and durability, and specimens obtained of the herbs and flowers." Finally, Canning asked his representative to obtain the necessary information on the physical geography, religious observances, languages and manners of the Kurds and other religious minorities in the region.<sup>12</sup>

Having been watched and their activities carefully analysed, the Kurds were perceived by British statesmen as an unstable element within the Ottoman Empire which had to be subdued. Kurdish tribesmen's frequent raids across the border into Persia and Russian-held territories helped to perpetuate a state of war between the Ottoman Empire and her neighbours.<sup>13</sup> The British government thought that Russia "stood to gain the most" from any conflict on the Turco-Persian frontiers,<sup>14</sup> for Russia had often used the lawless Kurds' raids on her dominions as a pretext for the gradual extension of her control in Kurdistan.<sup>15</sup>

From the early nineteenth century, Sultan Mahmud II, as a part of the implementation of his reforms, wanted to suppress the semi-independent Kurdish principalities. The former Grand Vizier, Rashid Pasha, was nominated to carry out this task. In his efforts, Rashid Pasha was also aided by Muhammad Pasha of Kurdistan, and 'Ali Pasha Rida, the wālī of Baghdad (1831-1842). The British government gave unwavering support to Sultan Mahmud's Kurdish policy. British

support for the Ottoman suppression of the Kurdish principalities was due to her concern for stability in the region, and also to her realization that the best environment for the control of the border tribes would be through the establishment of direct control by the central authorities, for a central authority could be held responsible for its acts, "but not the Kurdish Amirs." In addition, if the peaceful penetration of the region by British trade and commerce was to be achieved, tranquility had to prevail there.<sup>16</sup>

#### British Interests: 'Iraq and the Kurds

The growing British political and commercial interests in 'Iraq during the latter part of the nineteenth century also had its impact on Britain's policy towards the Kurds. In 1789, Napoleon's move towards the east was perceived as an attempt to conquer India, and Russia's ceaseless southward advances towards the Persian Gulf both alarmed the British and caused them to intensify efforts to consolidate their commercial and political interests in the Persian Gulf and its extensions. 'Iraq was viewed by the British government as a significant extension of the Gulf region.

In 1764, the East India Company had established its headquarters in Basra. Harford Jones, Resident at Basra in 1798, was transferred to Baghdad with the title of Permanent Resident, and he was to carry out two tasks: to arrange with the Pasha of Baghdad to use 'Iraq as a short-cut between India and the Persian Gulf for the transmission of official dispatches, and to counter the efforts of the French

agent in Baghdad. By 1822, the East India Company's Resident had acquired political status in 'Iraq.<sup>17</sup>

To emphasize the strategic significance of 'Iraq for the British Empire, Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, was quoted during the late nineteenth century as saying:

"Are we prepared to surrender control of the Persian Gulf and divide that of the Indian Ocean? Are we prepared to make the construction of the Euphrates Valley Railroad or some kindred scheme an impossibility for England and an ultimate certainty for Russia? Is Baghdad to become the new Russian capital to the south? Lastly, are we prepared to see a naval station within a few days sail to Karachi?"<sup>18</sup>

In addition to its strategic position, by the end of the nineteenth century, 'Iraq had gained commercial importance in the trade of the British Empire. To demonstrate the immense importance of the Baghdad-Khānaqīn trade route to British trade, it suffices to mention here that in 1898 the value of British trade carried on this route was 700,000 pounds sterling.<sup>19</sup> The development of canal and river navigation added to the importance of the Mesopotamian valleys. Ireland writes:

"The protection of the Indians engaged in trade at Basra and Baghdad... the

irrigation schemes projected by Sir William Willcocks in 1911, and executed by the British companies, and above all, the encouragement and protection of commerce and river navigation continued to be methods by which British influence and position were maintained and extended."<sup>20</sup>

These strategic interests of Great Britain within the Ottoman Empire and 'Iraq in particular necessitated that the British government should adhere to a policy of firm support for the Ottoman Empire, and therefore aid the latter's efforts to suppress the Kurdish uprisings. A brief review of the Kurdish uprisings during the nineteenth century, with special emphasis on the stand taken by the British government will be helpful in explaining the nature of the Kurdish question and in uncovering many of its persistent features which manifested themselves in a more developed form during the Mandate period in 'Iraq.

The tour of Kurdistan by Rich in 1820 produced the earliest sign of friction between the 'Iraqi administration and the British officials in 'Iraq over their respective Kurdish policies. Rich maintained that his visit was merely "to escape the intense heat of Baghdad." However, Dawud Pasha, then governor of 'Iraq (1817-1831) wrote to Constantinople complaining that Rich "had stirred up the Koords and the Persians against him."<sup>21</sup> Although Rich denied this claim, he did not hide his disagreement with the Ottomans Kurdish policy, which he described as "arrogant, treacherous, and blind for not taking advantage of the fervent Sunnism of the bigoted Kurds who detest the Persian sect."<sup>22</sup>

Before his departure to southern Kurdistan, the relationship between Rich and Dawud had not been cordial. The Pasha was insistent on subjecting the British merchants, protégés and merchandise to several taxes, which was bitterly resented by the Political Resident. Rich was an imperialist, who surrounded himself with all the ceremonial of an oriental monarch, and dreamed of having all 'Iraq under the control of the British Empire in India. The Political Resident was aware of the separatist tendencies then prevailing in the Bābān dominion of Sulaymānīya, and he wanted to manipulate this tendency in Mahmud Pasha of Bābān to weaken Dawud's rule in 'Iraq.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, after the departure of Rich from Sulaymānīya the Bābānid prince transferred his allegiance from 'Iraq to Persia, and a fight ensued between the armies of Bābān and Dawud Pasha, which ended in the defeat of the former and Mahmud Pasha's flight to Persia. (24) Amīr Nizām, the Prince Governor of Kermanshāh, who also had close ties with Rich, mobilized an army to aid Mahmud Pasha and restore him to power in Sulaymānīya. A new round of fighting took place and Mahmud Pasha was reinstated, ruling Sulaymānīya until 1834.<sup>25</sup>

Upon his return to Baghdad in March 1821, Rich's relationship with Dawud Pasha further deteriorated due to the latter's insistence on levying a new tax on British merchandise. Rich considered the new tax to be unfair and provocative, and made it known that he would resist it. A tense situation developed in Baghdad, because the British Resident had the support of many local notables and

a hired local army. Dawud Pasha sent his troops to surround the Political Residency, and Rich fortified his headquarters. However, the intervention of the British Ambassador at Constantinople with the Porte helped to ease the situation. Rich was permitted to peacefully leave Baghdad, and R. Taylor was appointed as the new Political Resident. Shortly after that, a treaty was signed by Dawud Pasha and Taylor which confirmed the former British privileges and granted new concessions to the Political Residency.<sup>26</sup>

The British government's involvement in the 1833-36 uprising of Mir Muhammad Kur in southern Kurdistan is an example of the official British attitude towards Kurdish separatism in 'Iraq. In 1830, Mir Kur, the Pasha of Şorān Imārah in Rawanduz had a twenty-thousand-strong standing army, which enabled him to be the supreme leader of all Kurds in southern Kurdistan. In October 1831 and July 1832, Mir Kur corresponded with Ibrahim Pasha, who was leading the Egyptian army in Syria against the Ottomans. Mir Kur agreed with Ibrahim Pasha that they would make a simultaneous attack on northern Kurdistan.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, in mid-1833, the Mir's forces had crossed into the Persian territory of western Azerbaijan, occupying a large portion of the Urumia region with the aid of the Kurds there. This was an embarrassment to the Ottomans, as they wanted to avoid a rupture in their relations with Persia. By 1836, the Mir's force grew in strength and the Mir declared his intention of uniting all Kurds under his command. The Ottomans sent three armies against him. The first army marched from Diyarbakr under the command of Rashid Pasha, the second army from Mosul and the third

army was sent by 'Ali Rida Pasha, the wālī of Baghdad. Hard-pressed by three armies marching on his capital, the Mir declared his allegiance to the Shah of Persia. This was an apparent attempt to play off the Persians against the Ottomans.<sup>28</sup>

Taylor, the British Political Resident in Baghdad, and Ponsonby, the British Ambassador in Constantinople were alarmed by the possible secession of Kurdistan: they were afraid that Ibrahim Pasha might use the opportunity to his own advantage. Therefore, Captain Sheil, the British consul in Urumia was instructed to convey a letter from Amir Nizam, the governor of Karmanshāh to Rashid Pasha suggesting a joint Persian-Ottoman attack on the Mir's army. However, Rashid Pasha, being sure of the final victory, did not want to share the spoils with the Iranians. Therefore, he declined the offer.<sup>29</sup> Ponsonby also sent Richard Wood, the British Consul in Aleppo with a message to Mir Kur advising the latter to surrender to the Ottomans in return for British intervention on his behalf in Constantinople. Having suffered several defeats and deprived of outside support, in 1837 Mir Kur surrendered to Rashid Pasha.<sup>30</sup>

The reason for British support of the Ottomans against the Mir's separatist movement are many. The foremost has already been mentioned: it was not in the strategic interest of Great Britain to allow the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire at that time. Secondly, the British viewed this particular uprising as an unwelcome burden on the Ottoman army, which they felt should be freed from the Kurdish war to be used in future against Muhammad 'Ali of Egypt, or to be ready

for deployment if another war broke out with Russia, an ever-present danger. In addition, the British feared that the Mir might, in desperation, give his allegiance to Muhammad 'Ali.<sup>31</sup> Thirdly, the British wanted stability in the region, and the Mir's uprising was causing a major disruption in Turco-Persian relations.<sup>32</sup> Finally, the British government thought that the establishment of Ottoman control in southern Kurdistan was the only guarantee of peace and order in the region. For this reason. Taylor said that should the Ottoman army succeed in defeating the defiant Kurdish prince "...a fine portion of the country will be freed from the ascendancy of some remorseless banditti who have ever retained it in protracted suffering and misery."<sup>33</sup>

For these reasons, British support for the Ottomans against the Mir's revolt was mainly due to their desire to uphold the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Instead of manipulating the revolt, the British government aided the efforts of the central government to suppress the Kurdish insurgency. This clarifies a different aspect of the British stand on the Kurdish question: Kurdish interests were subordinate to the broad strategic interests of Great Britain in the Ottoman Empire.

After the defeat of Mir Kur, the Baghdad wālī failed to establish direct rule of the Şorān principality. Therefore, Rasul Beg, a brother of Mir Kur was appointed governor of Rawāndūz. Rasul Beg tried to reestablish his authority over all Şorān principalities. This was resented by Najib Pasha, the wālī of Baghdad (1842-1847). In 1846, Najib sent an army against Rasul Beg. The latter was

defeated and took refuge in Persian territory. The defiant Şorān prince began to use the frontier regions of Persia as a base for raids into 'Iraqi territory, and Najib Pasha was forced to solicit the British Resident's help in dislodging him. The British authorities intervened with the Persian government, and Rasul Beg was removed from the border region. Shortly after, the Political Resident used his influence to bring about a reconciliation between Najib Pasha and Rasul Beg.<sup>34</sup> The British wanted Rasul Beg to return to Rawāndūz, but Najib Pasha insisted that the prince should stay three years in Baghdad. Apparently the British wanted to have some influence in southern Kurdistan through the appointment of Rasul Beg with their aid as governor of Rawāndūz and Najib Pasha was aware of this. Therefore, an Ottoman was appointed to govern Rawāndūz, and two hundred years of rule by Şorān Kurdish princes came to an end.<sup>35</sup>

With the end of the Şorān principality, the Kurdish challenge in southern Kurdistan once again shifted to Sulaymānīya. Ahmad Pasha of Bābān (1838-47), an energetic, reformist and ambitious prince led the last major challenge to the authority of the Baghdad wālī. Through reforms in the local administration and army, Ahmad Pasha built his power base. These reforms brought prosperity to the region, and the Pasha wanted to buy independence through offers of money to Constantinople. In 1846, he offered Constantinople 750,000 piastres a year in return for independence from Baghdad. Ahmad Pasha also had a close relationship with H. Rawlinson, who had arrived in Baghdad in 1843 as Consul General of Baghdad and Turkish Arabia. Through Rawlinson, Ahmad appealed to Stratford

Redcliffe, the British Ambassador in Constantinople to intervene on his behalf with the Porte. However, the British officials in Constantinople and Baghdad were opposed to the autonomous tendencies of the Kurdish chieftain. Rawlinson was only willing to ask Najib Pasha to make Sulaymānīya, like Mosul, financially independent from Baghdad while remaining subordinate in matters of national policy. Moreover, Najib Pasha was determined to establish direct Ottoman rule in southern Kurāistan. To achieve this end, Najib resorted to increasing revenue demands from Sulaymānīya, making complaints about administrative irregularities, and giving support to Ahmad Pasha's enemies in Sulaymānīya. In 1846, Ahmad Pasha declared independence from Baghdad, so Najib Pasha sent an army against Sulaymānīya, forcing him to seek refuge in Persian territory. From there, Ahmad Pasha's forces pillaged, and disorder prevailed on the frontier between 'Iraq and Iran. However, with the signing of the 1847 Second Treaty of Erzurum Iran agreed, under pressure from the British government, not to intervene in the affairs of Sulaymānīya. Therefore, Ahmad Pasha was removed from the frontier region to prevent him from disrupting the peace between the Ottoman and the Persian empires.<sup>36</sup>

During the Crimean War the Kurdish question once again came to the fore. Rawlinson had been in constant contact with Ahmad Pasha for a decade, and he always described him as "the best friend of the British in Kurdistan." In 1853, Rawlinson suggested that, should the European Powers decide to divide the Ottoman territories, the British should immediately occupy the part of 'Iraq

inhabited by Arabs and allow Ahmad Pasha to lead an autonomous Kurdish state in the north. This state was envisaged as a buffer between the Russian sphere of influence in northern Kurdistan and the British-held region of non-Kurdish areas of 'Iraq.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore, British aid to the Ottomans in the removal of the two rebellious Kurdish chieftains, Rasul Pasha of Şorān and Ahmad Pasha of Bābān from the Turco-Persian frontier region, was motivated primarily by concern for stability in the region. Moreover, the role which Rawlinson envisaged in 1853 for the Kurds in the event of the division of the Ottoman Empire was almost the same role which the British authorities wanted the 'Iraqi Kurds to play immediately after World War I.

### The British Government and Kurdish Uprisings

The British government played a considerable role in the suppression of the Kurdish uprisings which took place during the second part of the nineteenth century. Although the revolts did not take place in the southern part of Kurdistan, they had an impact on the southern Kurds. The story of the major Kurdish uprisings of the period has been eloquently told in Professor Wadi Jwaideh's above-mentioned study. However, a few additional remarks on the role of Great Britain are in order.

From 1842 to 1847, Prince Badr Khan, the prince of Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar on what is now the Turco-'Iraqi frontier, was in revolt. Like Mir Kur, Badr Khan was

hoping to form a Kurdish autonomous state within the Ottoman Empire. He declared himself leader of all Kurds, and he managed to extend his control to Ḥakkārī Province in northern Kurdistan, most of the Persian Kurdish regions, and the Kurdish regions of Mosul district. The British were opposed to his attempts for two main reasons. First, they thought that Badr Khan's movement was instigated by the Russians, and, secondly, the success of the revolt would have meant the succession of a large portion of northern Kurdistan from the Ottoman Empire. No less than seventy-six regiments of the Ottoman Cavalry Corps were composed entirely of Bohtān and Jabal Jūdī Kurds, who came from the region where the uprising was taking place. The success of the revolt would have meant the total loss of this vital force which was desperately needed in the ongoing Russo-Turkish war.<sup>38</sup>

In order to prevent such a serious blow to the Ottomans, the British government instructed her officials to give all the support needed to suppress Badr's successionist movement. The presence of several thousand Chaldean Christians, and American missionary schools in Badr's principality provided them with the necessary pretext for intervention.

Mar Sham'un, the Assyrian religious as well as temporal head, was visited by Dr. Grant, an American missionary who had close ties to British officials. Grant told him to disobey Badr and refuse to pay taxes. Also, Mar Sham'un received promises of aid from British officials in Mosul and Constantinople should he decide to revolt.<sup>39</sup> Consequently, in 1843 the Christian villages in the region were

in revolt, and Badr's supporters attacked them. As a result, atrocities and massacres took place, perpetrated by both Kurds and Assyrians, but the latter suffered the most. These massacres were widely reported in Europe. In 1847, seeing that public opinion in Europe was outraged by these events, Great Britain, with the support of other European powers, made a strong appeal to the Ottomans to take action against Badr. The Ottomans sent a strong army against him, which ended the revolt. Badr was taken prisoner, and the last independent Kurdish principality in the Empire fell.<sup>40</sup>

In 1854, Yezdan Shir, a nephew of Badr, found the Kurds resentful of direct Ottoman rule, which had led to an increase in taxes, and conscription. Also, the Crimean War had had a destructive effect on the Kurdish regions. Therefore, the time was ripe for a revolt against the Ottomans. He contacted Kurdish chieftains throughout the Ottoman Empire, and received positive responses in favour of a general insurrection. By the summer of 1854, "Kurds from Van in northern Kurdistan to the southern extremes of Mosul Wilayah" gave their allegiance to him, and he had an army of 100,000 under his command.<sup>41</sup> Both Great Britain and France feared that Yezdan Shir's Kurdish state would be a major cause of instability in the region, and that it might fall under Russian influence. Therefore, they coordinated the Ottoman Empire's efforts to quell the rising.<sup>42</sup>

For this reason, in 1855 Namrud Rassam, a British emissary set off from Mosul with "plenty of cash in his coffers" to buy off Kurdish chieftains, and to convince them to desert Yezdan Shir. This he did, with great success, and then

tried to convince Yezdan Shir to end his revolt and negotiate with the Porte, promising British support for Kurdish demands. Meanwhile, the Ottomans sent three strong armies, two from eastern Anatolia and one from 'Iraq, against the Kurdish prince. Yezdan Shir repeatedly appealed to Russia for aid, but receiving none, decided to accept the British government's advice to him that he negotiate. He was taken as a prisoner to Constantinople and remained there.<sup>43</sup>

In 1880-81 Shaikh 'Ubaidullah's uprising was the last serious Kurdish challenge to the Ottomans. By 1880, the Turco-Russian war of 1878-80 had come to northern Kurdistan. This war brought much ruin and starvation, and the situation was worsened by the behaviour of the demoralized and defeated Ottoman army and the greedy and corrupt Ottoman officials in the region. For these reasons, the prevailing conditions were similar to those which followed the Crimean War. In August 1880, Shaikh 'Ubaidullah, a Naqshbandi religious chief who resided in Nehrī on the Turco-Persian frontier, presided over a meeting of 200 Kurdish chieftains. At this gathering, war was declared on both the Persian and Ottoman empires. Shaikh 'Ubaidullah sent armies to occupy Rawanduz, Tabriz, and the Persian-held regions of Kurdistan. Most of the fighting was confined to Persian-held Kurdish territory.<sup>44</sup>

Jwaideh is of the opinion that 'Ubaidullah had the tacit support of the Ottoman Sultan, for the Ottomans wanted to use the Kurdish uprising to evade the implementation of the 1878 Treaty of Berlin, which called for reforms in northern Kurdistan such as giving the Armenians and other Christian minorities a greater

role in the administration of the region. In addition, the Sultan wanted to use the Kurdish army to annex Azerbaijan.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, the Russians considered the Kurdish attack on Persian territory as a plot of Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire to weaken Persia, which was under Russian influence at the time.<sup>46</sup>

A close examination of the events give local factors more weight than the external factors in Shaikh 'Ubaidullah's uprising. From the beginning, the Shaikh made it clear that the uprising was a jihād against both the Ottoman Empire, which had fallen under European, particularly British, influence, and the heretical Shi'ites of Persia. Persia was attacked first because "it was the weakest of the two empires and because of Iran's preoccupation then with a war against Turkoman tribes."<sup>47</sup>

The British attitude to this uprising was the same as for previous ones. Nicolson, the British Ambassador at Constantinople was quoted as saying: "Our policy is to endeavour to maintain and consolidate Turkish rule in Asia Minor."<sup>48</sup> The British were afraid that the Kurdish revolt might induce Persia and Russia to take joint action against the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, strong pressure was brought to bear on the Sultan by the British Ambassador so that the Ottomans would take "firm and prompt measures" to end 'Ubaidullah's revolt. Moreover, the British showed readiness to coordinate efforts with the Russians in the suppression of the uprising.<sup>49</sup> In fact, it was the strong British pressure which forced the Sultan to send an army against 'Ubaidullah in 1881. The latter found himself in a desperate situation. The Persian army, supplied with Russian officers and

armaments was able to regroup and attack 'Ubaidullah's army, while on its right flank the latter army was facing a strong Ottoman force. Therefore, 'Ubaidullah decided to surrender to the Ottoman army.<sup>50</sup>

It is apparent from this brief survey of the Kurdish revolts outside southern Kurdistan during the second part of the nineteenth century that the British played a leading role in coordinating the efforts of both the Ottoman Empire and Persia to suppress the Kurdish successionist movements, in order to preserve regional stability.

In 1891 Sultan 'Abdul Hamid (1876-1908) ordered the formation of the *Ḥamīdiya* Kurdish units. These were irregular cavalry units composed of Kurdish and Arab tribesmen organized in squadrons, regiments and divisions on the pattern of the Russian Cossacks.<sup>51</sup> Large tribes would provide one or more regiments led by the tribal chieftain, and each regiment had between 800 to 1000 men. Military training was provided by officers of the regular army. Several explanations have been offered for the formation of these units on the part of Sultan 'Abdul Hamid. Stephen Duguid writes:

"The eastern Anatolia region was one of the most strategic in the Empire, being bordered by Russia and Persia, having a large Christian minority with contacts in Europe, and a large Muslim minority of questionable loyalty. In order to properly defend this area the cooperation of the local population, or at least part of it, was essential. This was probably the most important

reason for the formation of the Hamidieh, the government believing it to be a potential counter to the Russian Cossacks, and was the reason the government had no desire to rule the area on the basis of sheer strength."<sup>52</sup>

Miss Bell, the Oriental Secretary to the British High Commissioner in Baghdad during the early 1920's, writes that the Sultan wanted to use the Ḥamīdīya as a device to bring "the turbulent and restless Kurdish tribes under some sort of control and channel their warlike activities into more law-abiding ways."<sup>53</sup> M. Lazarev, a Russian Kurdologist, maintains that Sultan 'Abdul Hamid wanted to evade the implementation of Article 61 of the 1878 Treaty concerning reform in eastern Anatolia. The Sultan thought that the implementation of the reforms would eventually lead to the formation of an Armenian state, and more European intervention in eastern Anatolia; therefore, the Ḥamīdīya was formed to preclude such an eventuality. The chief mandate of the force was the suppression of Armenian nationalists and the creation of an atmosphere in which the implementation of the reforms in the region would be difficult. In addition, Lazarev argues that the Ḥamīdīya was intended to be a reserve army for future wars with Russia.<sup>54</sup>

Madhar and Lazarev maintain that the experiment was a failure due to a cool response from the Kurds, lack of discipline and insufficient armaments.<sup>55</sup> Others argue that there was an overwhelming response from the Kurds. The Kurdish Cavalry Corps has "a brilliant record" in the history of the Ottoman army. In

1897, during the Turkish operations against Greece in Thessaly and later against the Bulgarian insurgents, the Ḥamīdīya "upheld the great tradition of Kurdish martial nobility." They were given "the best possible" training under the direct supervision of Marshal Von der Goltz, the German officer who was working with the Ottoman army as an advisor.<sup>56</sup> In general, the events from 1890 to 1908 show that the force seems to have played an active role in foiling Armenian nationalist plans to create a power-base in eastern Anatolia, and the Ḥamīdīya did serve as a deterrent reserve force in the Turco-Russian frontier region.<sup>57</sup> There is no doubt that the Kurds in northern Kurdistan were receptive to 'Abdul Hamid's call to join the Ḥamīdīya units. However, in southern Kurdistan the call seems to have been answered only by a few tribes on the extreme northern fringes of 'Iraq.<sup>58</sup> The important tribes of Pizhder, Jāf, Hamāwand, and Shaikh Mahmud's followers refused to join the Ḥamīdīya regiments.<sup>59</sup>

The bloody encounters between the Armenians and the Kurds during the 1890's brought the Kurds once again to the attention of Great Britain and the European powers. Kurds were described in Britain as "fanatic savages" who were constantly committing atrocities against the "peaceful" Christian Armenians.<sup>60</sup> In 1894, several hundred Armenians were killed as a result of civil strife between the Kurds and Armenians in the town of Sasun in eastern Anatolia. The British Foreign Office spokesman, commenting on the event, announced that "Europe would not stand this any longer", and that the Porte must find some way of controlling the Kurds.<sup>61</sup> In 1896, Great Britain, induced by the strong

pro-Armenian sentiments of the public, openly warned the Sultan of the consequences of allowing the Kurds to kill more Armenians, and even "suggested the eventual necessity of employing force..."<sup>62</sup> However, the British officials in eastern Anatolia were quite convinced that the Ottomans were doing their best. The situation there was "beyond the control of the central government" in their opinion.<sup>63</sup> In fact, there was close cooperation between the British officials and the Ottoman authorities in eastern Anatolia. With the intervention of the British officials in Constantinople one hundred Kurdish chieftains from Diyarbakr and ten from Mush were exiled from Kurdistan for their alleged role in anti-Armenian activities.<sup>64</sup>

#### British Policy and the Kurdish Question: 1900-1914

During the period from 1900 to 1914, British interest in the Kurds of 'Iraq greatly increased. This was due to the growth of British commercial interests in 'Iraq, the Anglo-German rivalry in the Ottoman Empire, and the Turkish misrule of southern Kurdistan which was facilitating Russian penetration of the area.

From 1900 to 1914, Germany had supplanted Russia in rivalry with Great Britain for influence in the Ottoman Empire. The British were determined to resist the growth of German interests in Mesopotamia in particular. The German attempts to gain influence within the Ottoman Empire culminated in the Baghdad Railway concession. On March 5, 1903, a convention was signed between the Ottoman government and the Baghdad Railway Company, which was owned by

the German-owned Deutsche Bank. The company was granted the right to build a railway line from Asia Minor to the Persian Gulf. The concession also provided that the company had the right to work out all minerals found within twenty kilometres on either side of the new railway line, together with the right to navigate the rivers in the service of the railway.<sup>65</sup>

The British government viewed these German advances in Mesopotamia with alarm, and efforts were intensified to enhance British political and commercial interests in 'Iraq. In addition, trade with and via Mesopotamia increased considerably. The average annual trade of Baghdad during the period from 1903 to 1914 was estimated to be £3,250,000, and the British share of this trade was very large. In 1911, Lord Curzon told the House of Lords that "nearly 90 percent of the trade that goes to Baghdad was British or Indian. In Baghdad itself we had a resident 100 years ago, eighty years before the representatives of other foreign powers appeared on the scene."<sup>66</sup>

While Great Britain was trying to extend her influence in Mesopotamia through trade and commerce, she blocked all German efforts to build the Mesopotamia section of the Baghdad Railway. From 1903 to 1913, in order to block the project the British government refused to consent to an 11 percent increase in Ottoman customs dues, and in this way deprived the Ottomans of the funds needed to build the railway. In December of 1913, the British government managed to obtain the Lord Inchcape concession from the Ottomans, which confirmed the British-owned Lynch Company's navigation rights on

Mesopotamia's rivers and eliminated foreign competition with British steamers. Finally, in June 1914, Great Britain secured British control over the Mesopotamia section of the railway.<sup>67</sup>

The struggle for the oil resources of Mesopotamia between Britain and Germany was a part of the controversy over the Baghdad Railway. In 1912, Sir A. Nicolson, the British Ambassador at Constantinople stated that the oil regions of northern 'Iraq were of "supreme importance" for Great Britain. German control of the oil resources of the region would enable them to have enormous political influence at the expense of the British in regions which were of "supreme importance to India", Nicolson claimed.<sup>68</sup> In 1914, the Ottoman Empire announced the formation of a state-owned oil company. The British government viewed this as a front for German capital interests, and as a serious threat to her interests in Mesopotamia. Therefore, the British government sent an ultimatum to the Porte asking that the Anglo-Persian Oil Company be granted at least 50 percent of the shares in any oil company formed to exploit the oil of the Wilāyah of Mosul. On March 19, 1914, the Turkish Petroleum Company was formed, with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company holding 50 percent of the shares. Sixty days later, the British government, on the initiative of Winston Churchill, Lord of the Admiralty, purchased the controlling percent of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's shares. On June 19, the Turkish Petroleum Company obtained an oral promise from the Turkish Prime Minister to grant it the exclusive right to exploit the oil of Baghdad and the Wilāyah of Mosul. Thus the British government through its shares in the

Anglo-Persian Oil Company, which had 50 percent of the shares of the Turkish Petroleum Company, became directly involved in the exploitation of oil in northern 'Iraq.<sup>69</sup>

For these reasons, Anglo-German rivalry in 'Iraq from 1900 to 1914 brought about direct British involvement in the Kurdish regions of northern 'Iraq, where oil was expected to be found in great quantities. Moreover, the growth of the transit trade which the British had via Baghdad with Persia made the Baghdad-Khānaqīn trade route of strategic importance for Britain. As this trade route passed through the southern portions of southern Kurdistan, the British had to be concerned about peace and order in this region.

However, Turkish misrule of the area was hardly conducive to peace and stability. The Ottomans had always followed a tribal policy in their dealings with the Kurds which aimed at subjugating them through the policy of divide and rule, and fomenting inter-tribal warfare. Henry Layard writes:

"The Turks, wise in their generation, have pursued their usual policy successfully in Kurdistan: the dissensions of the chiefs have been fomented, and thus divided, they have fallen one by one victims to the treachery or to force. It is indeed fortunate for the Sultan that this warlike population extending from the Black Sea to the neighbourhood of Baghdad has never obeyed one head, but has been split into a thousand clans, ever engaged in their petty bloodfeuds, and opening for the sake of private

revenge, their almost inaccessible valleys and mountains to the common enemy."<sup>70</sup>

This policy left Kurdistan in constant rebellion and inter-tribal fighting, and made the populace distrustful and disrespectful of the central authorities. Kurds are described by Bell as "scourges" not only to the Government, but also to their own settled tribesmen. The Turks, writes Bell, "proceeded to deal with their gentry using one to undermine the powerful, laying a stealthy hand on another, subsidized a third till his power waxed and called for correction."<sup>71</sup> This destructive policy continued until the reign of Sultan 'Abdul Hamid, who pursued a conciliatory policy towards the Kurds. The Sultan wanted to create a moral link between himself and the Kurds through the *Ḥamīdīya* units, and through showering honour and gifts upon the Kurdish chieftains. Inter-tribal warfare was to cease, and their warlike energies were to be directed against the outsiders, namely the Russians and the Armenians.<sup>72</sup> During 'Abdul Hamid's reign, it was the practice "to reward the Kurdish offender, pardon the exiled leaders, and generally turn the other cheek to the Kurdish acts of lawlessness."<sup>73</sup>

In contrast to the policy of 'Abdul Hamid, the reign of the Committee of Union and Progress (1908-1918) in southern Kurdistan was very stormy. The desire on the part of CUP officials to impose direct rule on the region accounted for the turmoil and instability which characterized their reign. The high-handed manner with which the CUP officials dealt with the defiant Kurdish chiefs,

disillusionment following the hopes raised by the stated CUP principles of liberty and equality, and the appointment of corrupt officials with unlimited powers to implement an outdated and collapsing administrative system upon the reluctant Kurds contributed to further aggravate the situation.<sup>74</sup>

The expectations of the Kurds, like those of other non-Turkish ethnic groups, were high. In 1887, two of the four founding members of the CUP were Kurds. In 1902, the first Congress of the CUP was attended by several Kurdish leaders who were from aristocratic urban families such as the Badr Khanids and the Bābānids. However, the Turkification and centralization policies of the CUP alienated the Kurds, and the latter began to form their own nationalist organization. Many prominent Kurdish princes and chieftains supported the Liberal Party which called for decentralization, and was bitterly anti-CUP.<sup>75</sup>

Corruption was the most salient feature of the CUP rule in southern Kurdistan. An official of the time, Şiddîq Damalūjî, describes the conditions prevailing then in these words:

"The treasury of the province was administered by the daftardar (comptroller of the public revenue). This office was looked upon as a means to rob people of their possessions. The daftardar issues financial regulations at his whim. Any defiance of his arbitrary regulations was penalized by confiscation, imprisonment, and torture. Mudir Mals (superintendent of revenue or treasury) purchase their posts at the value

decided according to the size and richness of the administrative unit. These muḍir mals had to re-purchase their posts annually.<sup>76</sup>

Most of the government taxes were farmed out (given by iltizām or sold annually by auction to the highest bidder (the multazim). The implementation of law and order was entrusted to the zabūya, the ill-paid police force whose power was rarely recognized beyond the limits of the small towns.<sup>77</sup> Finally, the men in the civil service were "hardened ruffians without principles and training."<sup>78</sup>

For these reasons, the CUP reign in southern Kurdistan was marred by major upheavals. In 1908, Shaikh Sa'id, the powerful Barzinjī religious chief of Sulaymāniya revolted, demanding the removal of the CUP officials and the return of Sultan 'Abdul Hamid.<sup>79</sup> But the uprising of Shaikh 'Abdul Salam al-Barzani (1908-1914) was a more serious challenge to the CUP rule. In 1908, the head of the Naqshbandi Sudi order in the Kurdish region of Mosul district, Shaikh 'Abdul Salam, wrote to the Forte asking for: 1) the removal of the corrupt CUP officials from the Kurdish regions and their replacement by efficient Kurdish administrators; 2) the abolition of non-legal taxes; 3) the use of Kurdish in the administration of the Kurdish areas; and 4) proper implementation of the Shari'ah. The Ottoman government refused to respond to his demands. Consequently, the whole of the region of Bahdīnān was in turmoil from 1908 until 'Abdul Salam's arrest and execution in 1914.<sup>80</sup> In 1910, the Turkish officials tried to collect taxes from the Jāf, the most powerful tribe in southern Kurdistan. When the tribe failed

to provide the exact amount demanded by the government, its chieftain, Muhammad Pasha was arrested, and virtual anarchy prevailed in their region. In 1912, a similar attempt to collect taxes was tried with the tribesmen of Bajlan, in the 'Iraq-Persia frontier region, but in vain. Again, the chief of that tribe, Mustafa Pasha was arrested.<sup>81</sup>

Just prior to the outbreak of World War I, the CUP officials realized that their Kurdish policy was flawed and costly. Therefore, in 1913 a scheme was devised to pacify the country by expanding the Ḥamīdīya units, which had been reduced to a small force called 'Ashiret Alaylari (tribal regiments). The new Kurdish irregular regiments, called Frontier Companies, were modelled on the Ḥamīdīya. Few Kurds joined. In southern Kudistan only a small number of men from the Dizā'ī, Jāf, and Hamāwand tribes were recruited. As a result, the scheme failed to bring about a substantial improvement, and the Kurdish region continued to be unstable.<sup>82</sup> In 1914, due to the success of the nationalist uprisings in the European parts of the empire, the Turkish government tried to appease both the Arabs and the Kurdish nationalists. The CUP held a conference to review its Kurdish policy, and decided to revise its old policy in favour of a degree of decentralization in Kurdistan. However, the estrangement between the CUP and the Kurds was already beyond repair. Madhar claims that "if it were not for the outbreak of World War I, there would have been a general insurrection and Kurdistan would have become another Balkans."<sup>83</sup>

The 1908 CUP coup did not change the traditional British stand regarding the

Ottoman Empire: until the beginning of the War maintaining the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire remained British policy. For this reason, the British government was displeased by the instability in southern Kurdistan, for this hindered the commercial penetration of the region. Also, the Baghdad trade, in which the British had considerable interests, was greatly dependent on the trade of the Wilāyah of Mosul. Furthermore, the instability and lawlessness posed a serious threat to the Baghdad-Khānaqīn trade route.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, the British consul in Baghdad was supportive of the wālī Nazim Pasha's conciliatory policies towards the Kurds during the years 1911 to 1912.<sup>85</sup> The British officials in Baghdad and Constantinople complained about the high-handed policies of the "degenerate and corrupt" CUP officials in Kurdistan, maintaining that "all Kurds are sick and tired of Turkish misrule."<sup>86</sup>

The British unease about Turkish misrule in southern Kurdistan was also due to their fear that such a policy might drive the Kurdish chiefs into the arms of the Russians, who were seeking every opportunity to expand southwards towards Mesopotamia by winning over the Kurds. During the last decade of the nineteenth century, the Russians had made considerable progress among the Kurdish tribes of western Azerbaijan on the frontiers of southern Kurdistan. By the turn of the century, the Russian Consul General and his deputy in Mosul were directing their efforts at the north of 'Iraq, but for the most part, Russian penetration of southern Kurdistan was arranged from Van and the Russian-dominated Urumia region of western Azerbaijan.<sup>87</sup> Initially, the Russians had only modest success in the region;

however, the repressive policies of the CUP induced Kurdish chiefs to review their attitudes to Russia:

"Before the War the attitude of the Kurdish tribes towards Russia all along the eastern frontier of Turkey was not clearly defined, but on the whole it may be said that while there existed a fundamental suspicion of Russia, resulting in a reluctance to respond to her overtures, Ottoman misrule tended to force the Kurds against their will into her arms. Thus the chiefs in Mosul area, such as the Shaikh of Barzan, after holding out for several years against Russian invitations were in the end obliged to seek refuge in Russian territory, and in the spring of 1914, it was rumoured that the Hamwand, Jaf and Dizai, despairing of receiving from the Ottoman government the reforms they desired, were prepared to call in Russian aid."<sup>88</sup>

The British government tried to counter the Russian moves by sending several intelligence officers to southern Kurdistan to establish ties with the Kurdish chiefs. The British officials in Mosul were also involved in an effective campaign among the Kurdish tribes, sending emissaries to them describing the benefits of the association of 'Iraq and the Wilāyah of Mosul with Great Britain, and "large sums of money were distributed liberally to buy off several prominent Kurdish chieftains."<sup>89</sup> Moreover, in 1909 with the aid of the British Consulate in Mosul the

Mosul Medical Mission, which belonged to the English Church Missionary Society in Mesopotamia resumed its activities in the Wilāyah.<sup>90</sup>

These efforts bore some fruit. Before the beginning of the War, Mustafa Pasha of Bajlān, the chief of a tribe settled near the Khānaqīn-Baghdad trade route, became fervently pro-British, and the Yazīdi shaikhs of Jabal Sinjār were no less supportive of the British cause in southern Kurdistan. Mark Sykes, a British traveller who toured northern Mesopotamia and Syria prior to the War, was able to recruit Ibrahim Pasha, the chief of the powerful Millī tribe in northern Mesopotamia. The Pasha asked the British "to annex northern Mesopotamia" because he wanted to be in a position similar to that of the Shaikh of Kuwait vis-à-vis the British instead of being constantly threatened by the Turks. While Sykes was in Mosul district, the powerful Husain Agha of Zākho also approached him for protection against the Turks.<sup>91</sup> W. Wigram, a British traveller who toured the Bārzān region in 1909 was also approached by Shaikh 'Abdul Salam. He reports that the shaikh said to him: "You have gone to India, you stay there, though you are not wanted, why you cannot come to us who do want you?" He says that "the shaikh volunteered to accompany us to see King George at Windsor with whose aid he made no question he could arrange for the settlement of Kurdistan."<sup>92</sup>

The period 1900 to 1914 was characterized by the beginning of direct British commercial involvement through the oil concession in southern Kurdistan. The growth in the volume of transit trade on the Baghdad-Khānaqīn trade route

increased the strategic significance of southern Kurdistan for the British. During this period there was disagreement between the CUP administration in 'Iraq and the British officials there over their respective Kurdish policies. The Turks favoured direct rule and strict implementation of the centralization policies of their government, while the British officials were inclined to advocate a more conciliatory policy towards the Kurds. Finally, Turkish misrule led to unrest among the Kurds, which brought about increased British involvement with the Kurdish tribes.

#### During the War: 1914-1918

The division of the land of the Kurds among Turkey, Russia and Great Britain, large-scale depopulation as a result of famine and forcible migration, and the acquisition of arms and ammunition were the most salient features of World War I in Kurdistan.

The previous rivalry between Germany and Britain over influence within the Ottoman Empire ended in apparent advantage for Germany. When the war broke out, the Germans had already won the most prominent members of the CUP to their side, especially Anwar, Tal'at and Jamal Pasha. On August 2, 1914 Germany signed a secret military and political pact with Turkey. Turkey was allowed to maintain apparent neutrality during the first few weeks of the War, but by November of 1914 the deterioration of the German position at Marne in France, and the Russian invasion of the eastern part of Germany led the German

government to ask the Ottoman government to declare war on the Allies. The German government expected that the Turkish forces would be able to pin down a substantial proportion of the Russian forces in the Caucasus, and would also compel Britain to maintain a large army in Egypt, to Germany's advantage in the European theatre.<sup>93</sup>

Due to the strategic position of Kurdistan, winning over the Kurds became a concern of the belligerent powers. German propaganda officers were actively involved in aiding the Sultan's efforts to recruit the Kurds under the pretext of jihād. Although the Kurds were not the only people who heeded the call for jihād, their response to the Sultan's call had no equivalent in any other part of the Empire.<sup>94</sup> The factors accounting for this are many. The Kurdish region was relatively close to Constantinople, enabling the German intelligence officers and the CUP officials to disseminate pro-Central Power propaganda easily. The Turks skillfully manipulated the religious sentiments of the Kurds, who had remained for the most part conservative in character and generally unaffected by the secularization and reforms of the Tanzimat period. Also, the CUP promised autonomy to the Kurds after the War.<sup>95</sup>

The Turks were able to maintain the loyalty of the Kurds throughout the war due to Russia's poor treatment of the Kurds in the conquered regions and her inability to control the Armenian revolutionary volunteers. The latter plundered and carried out several massacres in the towns which fell to the Russians in the years 1916 and 1917. Longrigg observed that despite the Russian successes in

gaining Kurdish contacts before the war the behaviour of their forces in Kurdistan "resulted inevitably in driving all Kurds of the neighbourhood back to the milder Turks with a tragic loss of goodwill."<sup>96</sup> Muhammad Ahmad Zaki, an Ottoman general during the War and a noted Kurdish historian, writes that during the War Kurds were a major element of the Ottoman forces. The ninth army in Erzurum, the tenth in Sivas, the eleventh in al-'Aziz, and the twelfth in Mosul were predominantly made up of Kurds. Also, the Kurds provided 135 cavalry regiments.<sup>97</sup> In addition, in April of 1915, 15,000 Kurdish cavalymen led by Shaikh Mahmud al-Barzinji fought alongside the Ottoman forces in Shu'aiba in southern 'Iraq against the invading British forces. However, the demoralizing effect of the defeat and the unfriendly attitude of the CUP officials forced the Kurds to return home.<sup>98</sup>

With the entrance of the Ottomans into the War, the British reversed their policy of maintaining the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The War made the division of the Ottoman Empire inevitable. Since the turn of the century British policy in the Middle East was based on the view that control of the Persian Gulf and its extensions, the Tigris and the Euphrates valleys should be obtained at all costs. Should peaceful means fail, the British government was ready to resort to force of arms. On November 2, with the Ottoman declaration of war against the Allies, the British India government immediately sent an expeditionary force to occupy Faw, the southernmost point of 'Iraq, to protect British interests in the Gulf. Prior to the War, Lord Curzon had stated that the western frontier of

India ended across the Euphrates, and British control of Mosul was in his view essential for the security of British interests in 'Iraq. However, the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force D did not have a mandate beyond the occupation of Faw.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, on June 30, 1915, the British War Cabinet met to define the British war-time objectives in the Middle East. The Cabinet issued a report, "British Desiderata in 'Turkey in Asia". With regard to 'Iraq, the report stated that "British desiderata would be adequately met by the annexation of the vilayets of Basra, Baghdad and the greater part of Mosul."<sup>100</sup>

For this reason, Baghdad was occupied in May of 1917. After the occupation of Baghdad the British had to deal with the Kurds, with two aims in view. It was necessary to aid the Russian forces, which had been facing grave difficulties since 1916 in the Kurdish regions of Persia at the hands of the powerful pro-German Sanjābī Kurdish tribes. Also, any further advances towards the north required the cooperation of the tribes of southern Kurdistan. To achieve these two aims, the occupation of Khānaqīn was deemed necessary. A small detachment was sent there, which received a warm welcome from the starving population, and Major Soane was posted in Khānaqīn as the first Political Officer in the Kurdish region.<sup>101</sup>

Major Soane managed to establish good relations with the Kurdish chieftains on the 'Iraq-Persia frontier. A tribal militia of two hundred men was formed, and its main duty was the protection of the important Baghdad-Khānaqīn trade route. In his dealings with the tribal chieftains in the region, Major Soane demonstrated

his ingenuity and understanding of tribal politics. He was able to recruit the chieftain of the Kalhūr tribe, the second most powerful tribe residing in the frontier region along the Khānaqīn-Karmanshāh trade route, for the British cause. Financed, supported and equipped by the British, the Kalhūr were able to deliver several blows to the pro-German Sanjābīs.<sup>102</sup>

Before the March 1917 revolution in Russia, Russians were distrustful of the Kurds and thought that they could only deal with them by using force. The Russian forces committed many atrocities in southern Kurdistan, and the chieftains of Khānaqīn and Rawāndūz were humiliated and imprisoned. However, after the revolution, V. Minorsky, the Russian Consul in Tehran tried to alter his nation's Kurdish policy. He wrote to his government, arguing that the surest way to occupy the wilāyah of Mosul was to enlist the support of the Kurdish tribesmen in the region. This would in turn "grant Russia the control over the section of the Baghdad Railway which runs parallel to the zone where Russia has interests." Minorsky was of the view that Russia should take advantage of the growing sentiments of nationalism among the Kurds by promising them autonomy in the post-War period. This conciliatory policy came too late to change Russia's negative image in Kurdistan, however.<sup>103</sup>

The October Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 led to Russia's withdrawal from the War, and this brought about political as well as military changes in Great Britain's war objectives in 'Iraq. Throughout the nineteenth century, the British tried to prevent the borders of her eastern Empire from having proximity to the

frontiers of Russia. Thus, in the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement, Great Britain agreed to make the Wilāyah of Mosul within the French sphere of influence. The primary object of this was to create a buffer state under French protection, between Russia to the north and a British protectorate in Mesopotamia to the south. Southern Kurdistan was to play a role similar to that of Siam and Afghanistan, becoming a buffer between Russian-held territories and British dominions. Russia initially opposed this arrangement, because she was unwilling to have France on the immediate frontier of the Kurdish territories she held on the Persian side, but later she agreed on the condition that the region of northern Kurdistan which lies between Bidlīs and Van to the north and Diyarbakr to the south would be included in the Russian zone. With the withdrawal of Russia from the War and the abandonment of her ambitions in eastern Anatolia, "the sole justification of the arrangement ceased to exist."<sup>104</sup>

Therefore, a fresh plan for Mesopotamia was to be drawn up, and the British authorities embarked on a campaign to occupy southern Kurdistan. The territory to the north of 'Iraq had difficult terrain inhabited by warlike tribesmen, and the size of the British armed force in Mesopotamia did not allow for a major allocation of troops in operations in the north. Therefore, it was clear that the Kurds could not be subdued by brute force. For this reason, an intensive propaganda campaign to win over the Kurds was necessary.

As early as January of 1918, Major Soane, by then fluent in Kurdish, began to publish a Kurdish newspaper, Teygayshtini Rasti (Understanding the Truth).

The mandate of the paper was to convince the Kurds that the Ottoman Turks were oppressors of the Kurds and the British were the liberators of all eastern people (see Teygaystini Rasti, Jan. 5, 1918), that the Kurds should not allow the Turks to manipulate their religious sentiments and that they should revolt against the Turks "who deviated from Islam", as should the Arabs and all other non-Turkish ethnic groups (Teygaystini Rasti, Feb. 23, 1918). Also, the British sought to develop direct links with the Kurdish chieftains. Captain Noel, an energetic British intelligence officer who had considerable expertise and experience in tribal politics due to his earlier assignment among the Bakhtiyaris of Persia, whom he successfully mobilized against the Germans during the early years of the war, was given the task of mobilizing the Kurds against the Turks. Noel managed, like Soane, to win the confidence of many Kurdish chieftains, and he soon became fluent in Kurdish.<sup>105</sup>

The British were successful in winning the most powerful Kurdish chiefs to their side during the War. After the occupation of Khānaqīn and the surrounding area, the British authorities immediately began a campaign of relief for the starved population. They also employed the famine-stricken Kurds of Khānaqīn Liwā' for the transfer of supplies, and the building of railways and ports in southern 'Iraq.<sup>106</sup> This helped them to improve their image in the eyes of the Kurds, who had endured plundering and brutality under Russian occupation and the cruelty of the demoralized Turkish army in retreat.<sup>107</sup>

By the spring of 1918, the British military authorities in 'Iraq had received

letters of loyalty from many prominent chieftains of southern Kurdistan. Shaikh Hamid Ṭalabānī, for instance, who commanded the support of all chiefs of Kirkuk Liwā', such as the heads of the Daūda, Zanganah and Jāf tribes, was in contact with Soane and pledged his firm support to the British. Shaikh Ṭalabānī asked for the immediate advance of the British troops to his liwā'. Shaikh Mustafa Bajlān, a powerful chieftain of the Kifrī region, who had the support of the Bayat and Bajlān tribes settled in Qizil Robaṭ, Tuz, and Sharaf Bayanī, made a similar submission to the British.<sup>108</sup> Amir Isma'īl, the religious head of the Yazīdis of Jabal Sinjār came to Baghdad to request British aid for attacks on Turkish supply lines.<sup>109</sup> In addition, many chieftains of southern Kurdistan sent their flocks to remote regions of Upper Mesopotamia in order to deprive the Turkish army of food and supplies.<sup>110</sup> In addition, those tribesmen who remained serving in the Turkish army were not favourably inclined to the Turks. The latter did not trust them, and they "nearly all deserted" when operations in southern Kurdistan commenced.<sup>111</sup>

In the spring of 1918, realizing that the Kurds of southern Kurdistan were solidly on their side and that the Ottoman Sixth Army in the region was demoralized, the British forces began their advance towards the north of 'Iraq. On May 7 Kirkuk was temporarily occupied. Many prominent chieftains who had secretly been in contact with the British publicly announced their support for the occupation forces. In Sulaymānīya, Shaikh Mahmud also declared his allegiance to the British. However, due to the difficulty of maintaining supply lines, the

British forces had to quit Kirkuk two weeks later. The Turkish reoccupation of the town led to much suffering for the populace, and the pro-British chieftains were penalized.

When they took Kirkuk, the British forces led the Kurds to understand that their occupation of the town was permanent. Their subsequent withdrawal was tragic from the viewpoint of local relations, and "raised the distrust of the British." Kirkuk was reoccupied on October 23, 1918.<sup>112</sup> Although Shaikh Mahmud was displeased with the earlier British troop withdrawal from Kirkuk, which led to his public humiliation by the Turkish commander, he sent a letter in the name of the Kurdish tribes in Sulaymānīya Liwā' indicating his submission to the British. The surrender of Sulaymānīya Liwā' to the British was primarily due to the famine raging there and causing scores of deaths on a daily basis; the Shaikh wanted to avoid the total destruction of the Liwā'.<sup>113</sup>

Since the beginning of October of 1918 the British authorities in 'Iraq had been of the view that an armistice with the Ottoman Empire was imminent. Therefore, they had instructed their forces to "score as heavily as possible" on the Tigris towards the north, because they wanted to create a de facto occupation of the Wilayah of Mosul before "the whistle blew".<sup>114</sup> In order to obtain the same goal, during the negotiations of the Modros Armistice of October 1918 the British government managed to include Articles 7 and 16, which ensured the total withdrawal of Ottoman troops from the Wilayah of Mosul. Article 16 provided that "all the Turkish garrisons in Mesopotamia... should forthwith surrender to the

nearest Allied commander," and Article 7 entitled the Allies "to occupy any strategic point in the event of a situation arising which threatens the security of the Allies." The British used both articles to force the remaining Turkish troops out of the Wilāyah of Mosul.

‘Ali Ihsan Pasha, the Commander of the Sixth Ottoman Army, put up strong resistance to his troops’ withdrawal from the Wilāyah of Mosul on the grounds that it was not part of Mesopotamia.<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, he tried to convince General Marshall, the commander of the British forces, that the British would not be able to govern the Kurdish regions due to the inexperience of the British officials in dealing with the tribesmen. However, General Marshall asked Ihsan Pasha to quit all points in southern Kurdistan and leave the administration of the region to British officials.<sup>116</sup> The events of 1919, which will be discussed below, indicate that Ihsan Pasha’s doubts about the ability of the British to administer the area were legitimate.

One of the most apparent effects of the War on southern Kurdistan were the famine, and dislocation of the population. The administrative report of the Khānaqīn district in 1918 describes the situation in the following terms:

"In no part of Mesopotamia had we encountered anything comparable to the misery which greeted us at Khanaqin. The country harvested by the Russians had been sedulously gleaned by the Turks, who, when they retired left it in the joint possession of starvation and disease."<sup>117</sup>

In Khānaqīn, two-thirds of the people had perished or left the town due to the brutality of the Russians. More than five thousand civilians of the district had been slaughtered by the Russian occupying forces. The surrounding countryside was struck by similar famine, and "a huge influx of people" poured into Khānaqīn to be fed by the British forces there.<sup>118</sup>

Throughout Kirkuk region famine also prevailed. This was caused by high inflation and the forcible acquisition of all means of livelihood of the peasants by the retreating Turkish troops. This situation was worsened by the decision of the Kurdish chieftains in the region to send their flocks into the mountains to avoid outright confiscation. In addition, half of the arable land in southern Kurdistan was left uncultivated.<sup>119</sup>

The famine which struck Sulaymānīya Liwā' was far worse. Throughout the liwā' there was incredible decay and impoverishment. "Eighty percent of the population in the town of Sulaymaniya had disappeared, and most of the town was in ruin." Inflation was running at seven hundred percent. Consequently, most of the inhabitants of Sulaymānīya Liwā' were migrating southward to the towns of Muqdādīya, Khalis and Diyāla.<sup>120</sup>

Rawāndūz district was also in a state of ruin due to the combined effects of Russian occupation and famine. In June of 1916 Russian soldiers and Armenian irregulars had plundered the town, and no less than five thousand civilians were massacred. The extent of the destruction could be seen for a decade following the War. Out of the three thousand houses which were standing before the Russian

occupation, only sixty remained after the Russian withdrawal. In the Bālik region to the north of the district, of one hundred villages "all but three or four were burned to the ground" by Armenian irregulars. In the Barādost region to the north-east, thirty villages were completely wiped out. The powerful tribe of Barādost, 1800 families before the War, was reduced to 157 families by the end of the War.<sup>121</sup> Bahdīnān region was also in chaos; famine and endemic diseases had forced hundreds of people out of their villages and towns. "Men and women were flying from the region only to die in the streets of Mosul."<sup>122</sup>

One of the most far-reaching impacts of the war according to Arfa was:

"The supply of modern small arms, rifles, Lewis guns etc....and a great amount of ammunition which they obtained by disarming the small parties of Turkish stragglers as they retreated through the mountain passes or by appropriating to themselves the important war material abandoned by Russian soldiers weary of fighting and in a hurry to go back to Russia after the 1917 revolution. Reserve cavalry Kurdish units (former Hamidiyah) which were well armed kept their rifles after their formation and took them into mountain retreats."<sup>123</sup>

To sum up, the preservation of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, concern for stability in the Middle East, Anglo-Russian rivalry, and the strategic and commercial significance of Mesopotamia for the British Empire in India, were

the major factors which accounted for the policies pursued by the British towards the Kurds during the last century and the years 1900 to 1914. The main features of these policies were: 1) the aiding of the central governments in Baghdad and Constantinople in their drive against Kurdish separatism; 2) manipulation of the Kurdish factor in order to weaken the 'Iraqi administration when the latter tried to resist British influence in the country; 3) and co-ordination of the efforts of the regional governments in subduing the Kurds, who were perceived by the British to be an element which endangered the stability and security of the region.

By the end of 1918, the British government had inherited a tribal population in southern Kurdistan which was plagued by famine and inter-tribal warfare, resentful of the central authorities, constantly yearning for autonomy, and finally, armed to the teeth.

## Notes for Chapter 2

1. Saleh Zaki, Mesopotamia, 1600-1914 (Baghdad: Al-Ma'rif Press, 1957), pp. 148-49.
2. England and the Near East, the Crimea (London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd., 1964), p. 74.
3. Maurice Harari, "The Turco-Persian Boundary Question: A Case Study in the Politics of Boundary-Making in the Near and Middle East", Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University, 1958, pp. 73-74; Temperly, pp. 74-75.
4. J. Malone, "The Kurdish Factor in Turco-Persian Relations", A paper presented in MESA Conference, Louisville, USA, 1975, p. 1.
5. Kamāl Maḍhar's standard work, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt al-Ḥarb al-'Alāmīya al-'Ulā, tr. M. Mullākarīm (Baghdad: Majmā' al-'Ilmī, 1977) contains a detailed account of the works of the Russian scholars in the field, and presents a vivid but exhaustive discussion of Russian policy towards the Kurds from the second half of the nineteenth century to the end of World War I.
6. Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 1, pp. 332-33; Maḍhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, pp. 43-44.
7. W. Allen and Paul Muratoff, Caucasian Battlefields (Cambridge: University Press, 1937), pp. 36-37.
8. Nikitine, Al-Akrād, p. 95; Maḍhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, pp. 65-67; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 1, pp. 350-51.
9. Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 1, p. 377.
10. In 1600, British commercial interests formed the East India Company to enhance British trade with Far Eastern countries and India. The Company was a pioneer in furthering Great Britain's political interests in the East and acquired considerable political weight before its abolition in 1859. (Maḍhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, p. 33.)
11. Harari, p. 230.
12. FO, 78/2732, Canning to Williams, Therapia, December 9, 1848, cited in Harari, pp. 91-93.

13. C.J. Edmonds provides a good review of descriptions of Kurdistan written by 19th century British travellers and diplomats. (See: Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 22-28.)

14. Malone, p. 1; Maḍhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, p. 44.

15. British Documents on Foreign Affairs, ed. Robin Bidwell, Pt. 1. Ser. B, The Near and Middle East 1856-1914, IV, University Publications of America, 1984, p. 103. Doc. No. 83. Enclosure in Doc. 80. From Captain McCalmount to Lieut. General Sir C. Dickson. Oct. 15, 1887, p. 84, Constantinople, Dec. 4, 1877; Henry Finnis and B. Lynch, Armenia Travel & Studies, 2 vols (London: Longman Green, 1901) II, p. 434.

16. Jaḥl Jalīlī, Min Tāriḫ al-Imārat al-Kurdīya fī al-Imbratūriya al 'Uthmāniya, tr. M. al-Najjār (Damascus: al-Ahali Press, 1987), pp. 129-30; The British were mistaken in their assumption that the abolition of Kurdish principalities could bring peace to the region, for the Turkish government failed to fill the vacuum. The only solution for the resulting chaos was the periodic sending of punitive expeditions against the defiant chiefs. More often than not this resulted in further violence. The destruction of the Kurdish principalities had an adverse impact on the tranquility of the region. Hence trade was also adversely affected. (See: Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 1, p. 213.)

17. Philip W. Ireland, 'Iraq, A Study in Political Development (New York: Russell & Russell, 1937), pp. 36-37; M.E. Yapp, "The Establishment of the East India Company Residency at Baghdad." Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, xxx, 1967, pp. 326; Tom Nieuwenhuis, Politics and Society in Early Modern Iraq (The Hague, 1982) pp. 84f.

18. Ireland, p. 41.

19. British Documents on Foreign Affairs, Reports and Papers from Foreign Office Confidential Print, pt. 1, Series B. The Near & Middle East, University Publications of America, "Report on the Trade of Mesopotamia", p. 123.

20. Ireland, p. 47; In 1860, all the river transport was in the hands of the British-owned Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company, which was founded by the Lynch Brothers and had enjoyed virtual monopoly until World War I. The Company had the British government's firm support to the extent that in 1913 an 'Iraqi daily, al-Misbah, called it an agent of British colonialism in 'Iraq and called upon the 'Iraqis to fight against the Company before their country became another India. (See: Zaki, Mesopotamia, pp. 193-94.)

21. Rich, I, p. 2.

22. Ibid., p. 72, 89.

23. 'Abd al-'Azīz Sulaymān Nawār, Tārīkh al-'Irāq al-Hadīth (Cairo: Dar al-Kātib, 1968), p. 201; Zaki, Mesopotamia, p. 133. Nieuwenhuis, pp. 82-3; Muḥammad Aḥmad al-Husainī, Rihlat al-Munshī' al-Baghdādī, trans. from Persian by 'Abbās al-'Azzāwī, Baghdad, 1948, pp. 19-21. The author was employed at the British Residency in Baghdad. He accompanied Rich to Kurdistan and later to Shīrāz where the latter died of cholera in 1821.

24. N. Khalfin, Khabat Le Rey Kurdistan, tr. Jalal Taqī (Sulaymāniya: Raparīn Press, 1971), pp. 50-51.

25. The Bābānid Pashas of Sulaymāniya had always played an important role in the political life of the Baghdad Pashalik. 'Abdul Rahman Pasha (1789-1813), for instance, has been described as a "kingmaker" in Baghdad. His army was instrumental in dethroning Kochuk Sulayman Pasha (1807-1810), and installing 'Abdullah Pasha as Pasha of 'Iraq. (See Jalili, Min Tarikh, pp. 59-60; Longrigg, Four Centuries, pp. 226-30.) Khalfin quotes J. Fraser, a British traveller who toured southern and eastern Kurdistan in the 1820's, as saying that the Kurds are the best tools for any power which wishes to destabilize the region, or unseat the Qajar Daynasty in Iran. (See Khabat, p. 40.)

26. Longrigg, Four Centuries, pp. 255-56; Saleh Zaki, p. 134; al-Husaini, pp. 19-21.

27. Husayn Huzni Mukriani, Mezhuway Miran-ī Sorān (Arbil: Kurdistan Press, 1962), pp. 67-68; M. Lazarev, "Keyshakani Kurd Le Salani Nawati Saday Nuzdaymda", tr. Kaws Qaftān, Roshīn Birī Nwe, No. 114, June (1987), p. 145; Nawār, Tārīkh al-'Irāq, pp. 101-102.

28. Kendal, "The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire", p. 27-28.

29. Lieut. Col. J. Sheil, "Notes on a Journey from Tabriz through Kurdistan, via Van, Bitlis, and Arbil to Sulaymaniyeh, in July and August 1836", Journal of the Royal Geographic Society, Vol. 3, December 1839, p. 67; India Office Factory Records: "Persia & Persian Gulf", Vol. 54, 1836, "Sheil Reports to England", No. 1, August 16, 1836, cited in Nawar, Tarikh al-'Iraq, p. 107.

30., Letters from Persia, R. Taylor to Secret Committee, August 1837, cited in Malone, p. 4.

31. Malone, p. 3; Letters from Persia, R. Taylor to Court of Directors, October 21, 1831.

32. Khalfin, p. 69: Letters from Persia, R. Taylor to Supreme Government, Fort William, July 22, 1835, cited in Malone, p. 4.

33. Letters from Persia, R. Taylor to Secret Committee, June 22, 1834, cited in Malone, p. 3; Taylor's description of the reign of the defiant Kurdish prince as "remorseless banditti" is contradicted by Dr. Ross, a physician of the Residency who visited the Mir in Rawanduz in the early 1830's. Dr. Ross is quoted by Fraser as saying that peace and economic prosperity were in evidence throughout his principality. (James Baillie Fraser, Travels in Kurdistan, Mesopotamia, 2 vols., London: Richard Bentley, 1841, Vol. 1, pp. 68-78.) Longrigg expresses a similar view about the Mir's reign: "...impeccable discipline was kept by just severity, such security had been never known: all contrast with lawless confusion in 'Iraq." (See Four Centuries, p. 286.)

34. F.O. 195/237 H. Rawlinson to J.D. Redcliffe, May 13, 1854, cited in Malone, p.-6.

35. India Office Records, FR, Persia & Persian Gulf, Vol. 53, pp. 103-5, Sheil to Palmerstone, September 21, 1847, cited in Nawar, Tarikh al-'Iraq p. 109.

36. India Office, FR, "Persia & Persian Gulf", vol. 82, pp. 189-192, cited in Nawar, Tarikh al-'Iraq, p. 117.

37. F.O. 78/957, Rawlinson to Addington, June 14, 1853, cited in Nawar, Tarikh al-'Iraq, p. 119.

38. S.A. Waheed, The Kurds and Their History (Lahore: Univ. Book Agency), pp. 143-5.

39. Khalfin, pp. 218-18. The British officials in the Ottoman Empire maintained a close relationship with the missionaries in Kurdistan. Kojanis School in the Hakkari region was at one time run by the British Consul in Van. As British commercial and political interests grew in eastern Anatolia, the number of missionaries and their institutions increased to the same extent. In 1845, there were seven mission schools with 135 students. By 1914, there were 675 such schools and centres and the number of students attending them was 35,000. These missionary institutions were useful tools for the information-gathering activities of the British. See: Madhar, Kurdistan fi Sanawat, pp. 70-73. Most Kurdish writers attribute the Assyrian revolt against Badr to the work of Ottoman agents. They argue that the Sultan wanted to create disunity in Kurdistan between the Christians and the Muslim Kurds in order to destroy the Kurdish uprising. (See Hāfiz Qadī, "Mezhuway Badr Khān", Hewa, No. 7, January 1958.)

40. Khalfin, p. 81; Kendal, "Kurds under Ottomans", p. 29; Lazarev, pp. 71-72;

- Layard, Discoveries, Vol. 1, p. 153; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 1, p. 201.
41. Khalfin, p. 104-8; Kendal, p. 30.
42. Khalfin, p. 102.
43. Jalīlī, Min Tārikh, pp. 80-1; Khalfin, pp. 104-5.
44. Khalfin, pp. 180-1. Consul Clayton estimated that more than 10,000 people died in Kurdistan during the famine which followed the 1878-80 Russo-Turkish War. (See Clayton, Van to Trotter, letter dated June 30, 1880. F.O. 24/1107, cited in Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 1, p. 155.
45. Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 1, pp. 282-3.
46. Khalfin, p. 184.
47. 'Azīz Shamzīnī, Julanaway Rizgārī Nistimānī Kurd (N/P: Ibrahim 'Azu Press, 1985), p. 60.
48. Joseph Heller, The British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire: 1908-1914 (London: Frank Cass, 1983), p. 87.
49. Shamzīnī, p. 60-1; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 1, pp. 266-8.
50. G. Curson, Persia and the Persian Question (London, n.p. 1892), p. 554; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, pp. 260-1.
51. The Ḥamīdīya were not permanently mobilized and received pay only when on active duty. However, they were given Amīrīya land and their families were exempted from many taxes. There was a gradual increase in the size of the force; there were forty regiments in 1892, in 1893 there were fifty-six, and in 1899 there were sixty-three. (See: van Bruinessen, pp. 234-5.)
52. "The Politics of Unity: Hamidan Policy in Eastern Anatolia", p. 151.
53. Review of Civil Administration, p. 58.
54. Lazarev, pp. 36-9.
55. Madhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, pp. 88-89; Lazarev, pp. 39-40.
56. Waheed, pp. 148-49.

57. Duguid, pp. 148-9, 151-2.
58. Longrigg, Four Centuries, pp. 309-10.
59. Maḍhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, p. 89.
60. W. Miller, The Ottoman Empire and its Successors, 1800-1927 (Cambridge: University Press, 1927), p. 427; Lord Kinrose, The Ottoman Centuries (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1977), pp. 557-58; The idea that the Kurds were the aggressive party in the Armenian-Kurdish conflict from 1890 to 1908 has been refuted by scholars who have based their research on the archival materials of both the Ottoman and British Empires. According to them, the Armenian revolutionaries were equally provocative and bloody in their dealings with the Kurdish peasantry. (See; Stanford J. Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, 2 vols., (Cambridge; University Press, 1977), II, pp. 203-07; Hassan Arfa, The Kurds: An Historical and Political Study (London; Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 24; Duguid, p. 147.
61. Heller, p. 88.
62. Miller, pp. 428-29.
63. Duguid, p. 144.
64. Documents on British Foreign Affairs, Turkey, Iran and the Middle East, ed. Robin Bidwell, pt. 2. Ser. B. Vol. 19, p. 162, Telegram by Sir N. O'Conner, dated July 1904, No. 553.
65. For background studies on the British stand concerning the Baghdad Railway project, (see: E.M. Earl, Turkey, Great Powers and the Baghdad Railway Company (New York; Macmillan Company, 1923); M. Chapman, "Great Britain and the Baghdad Railway", V. Holma and P. Sidney, eds., Smith College Studies in History, Vol. XXXL, Massachusetts, 1948; J.B. Wolf, The Diplomatic History of the Baghdad Railway (New York; Octagon Books, 1973.))
66. House of Lords, Parliamentary Debate, 5th Session, Vol. II (1911), pp. 586-87.
67. Zaki, Mesopotamia, pp. 233-36; In the Anglo-German convention signed on June 15, 1914, Britain agreed to support the 11 percent increase in the Ottoman customs tax which she had earlier opposed in order to obstruct the building of the Railway. In return, two British representatives approved by their government were to be admitted to the board of the Baghdad Railway Company. German and British representatives

were to be equally represented in the Baghdad section of the Railway, and the terminus of the Railway was to be at Basra, not at the Persian Gulf. Thus, the Germans were deprived of direct access to the Gulf. (See: Chapman, pp. 124-27.)

68. J.C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Middle East (New York: Octagon Press, 1972), I, p. 222.

69. Helmut Mejcher, Imperial Quest for 'Iraq: 1910-1926 (London: Ithaca Press, 1976), pp. 16-17. For detailed studies on British oil interests in Iraq, (see: S. Longrigg, Oil in the Middle East, Its Discovery and Development (London, 1954); B. Shwadran, Middle East Oil and the Great Powers (New York, 1973); Colin Davies, "British Oil Policy in the Middle East, 1912-1932", unpub. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1973; and William Stivers, Supremacy and Oil: Iraq, Turkey and Anglo-American World Order, 1918-1930 (Cornell University Press, 1982.))

70. Henry Layard, Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon (London: John Murray, 1853), p. 376; J. Wellsted, a British traveller who toured Iraq in the 1830's, writes that the Ottoman policy towards the Arab tribes was the same. "For had they not done so, the Arabs by confederating together, would have speedily driven them from the country." (See: City of the Caliphs, 2 vols. (London: Colbourn Pub., 1840), pp. 197-8.) Longrigg's assessment of Ottoman tribal policy was equally critical. He writes that the Pashas of Baghdad were trying to forcibly transform the tribesmen from "wild outlaws into obedient citizens without showing them how." (See: Four Centuries, pp. 289-90.)

71. Review of the Civil Administration, pp. 57-58.

72. Maḍhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, pp.87-8; Nikitine, Al-Akrad, p.172-3; Arfa, pp.24-5.

73. Duguid, p. 145.

74. Bell, Review of the Civil Administration, p. 42.

75. Maḍhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, pp. 117-19. In 1909, the Kurd Ta'ali Wa Taraqqi Organization, a nationalist group which had been formed with widespread support among the Kurdish notables in Istanbul and the Kurdish urban centres, was closed down. In 1912, Hevi, another Kurdish nationalist organization was formed by Kurdish students who were graduates of the Tanzimat military and science schools. They called for decentralization in greater Kurdistan, and published a journal, Rozh. (See Jalīl Jalīlī, Nahdat al-Akrād al-Thaqāfīyah, tr. B. Nāzī (Beirut: Dar al-Katib, 1986), pp. 79, 97-9.)

76. Imārat Bahdīnān, pp. 85-6.

77. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, pp. 54-7; Damalūjī, Imārat Bahdīnān, pp. 80-3; Madhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, p. 83-4; In 1908, Major Soane, who was touring southern Kurdistan, accompanied a government convoy from Kirkuk to Sulaymāniya, and he writes that four hundred soldiers who were supposed to accompany the convoy had not been paid for several months, and went on strike. Two hundred more soldiers who were appointed to replace them, "had flatly refused to face the Hamawand..." To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise, p. 136.

78. Damalūjī, p. 86.

79. Soane, Report on Sulaymania, pp. 99-100; Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 43; for detailed information on this revolt, see: M.R. Hawar, Shaikh Mahmūdī Qaramān (London: Jaf Press, 1990), I, pp. 145-9.

80. Damalūjī, pp. 92, 131-3.

81. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 43.

82. Ibid., p. 43.

83. Madhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, p. 128.

84. Zaki, Mesopotamia, p. 202.

85. In 1910, Nazim Pasha became the Wālī of Iraq and the country was in turmoil, especially Kurdistan. He followed a conciliatory policy towards the revolting Kurdish tribes. Thus, peace was arranged with both Shaikh Mahmud al-Barzanji and Shaikh 'Abd al-Salam al-Barzani. Indemnities were offered to both Sulaymaniya and Barzan for previous Turkish governmental attacks on these regions, and peace prevailed during his reign, until 1911. With his removal from the Pashalik of Baghdad, all previous agreements were broken and the region plunged into a new wave of turmoil. (See Air/513, "North Kurdistan", report #18, March, 1920.)

86. F.O. 371/5067, British High Commissioner, 2 Feb, 1920, Baghdad, Dispatch No. 1781.

87. F.O. 371/5067, January 2224, 1920, Dispatch No. 3, Tehran.

88. Bell, Review of the Civil Administratin, p. 44.

89. Maḍhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, pp. 39-40.
90. G.R. 'Attiya, Iraq 1908-1921, A Socio-Political Study (Beirut: 1973), p. 75.
91. Cabinet 27/206 "British Desiderata in Turkey in Asia" Report. Appendix IV, March 15, 1915, p. 101.
92. Wigram & Lambeth, pp. 145-6.
93. Howard, pp. 110-11, 113-4; Maḍhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, pp. 140-1.
94. David Lloyd George, War Memoirs of David Lloyd George, 6 vols., IV, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co, 1934) pp. 144-6, 47.
95. Maḍhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, pp. 144-7.
96. Iraq from 1900-1950, p. 96. After the Russian army won the Battle of Sari-Qamish, north of Qars in eastern Anatolia in 1915, they let loose the irregular Armenian battalions, which were from the Caucasus and Asia Minor, to kill and plunder at will. The Armenian irregulars were led by "the fierce Andranik, a blood-thirsty" man. In order to avenge their compatriots who had been massacred by the Kurds, the Armenian volunteers committed "all kinds of excesses", and as a result, tens of thousands of Kurds perished. (See Arfa, p. 26.) Also, the Ottomans were not confident of the loyalty of the Kurds, so from 1914 to 1918, no less than 600,000 Kurds were forced to migrate to other parts of Turkey. Most of these died on the way. (See Shirko Belech, al-Qadiya al-Kurdiya, pp. 73-5.)
97. Khulāṣat, p. 258.
98. Jamīl Rozhbayānī, "Shaikh Mahmūdu wa Yadashtakānī Shaikh Qadrī Hafid," Roshīn Bīrī Nuay (113) 1987; Hawār, Shaikh Mahmudī Qaramān, p. 185-6.
99. For detailed studies on the objectives of the Mesopotamia Expedition Force and its performance during the War see: John Moberly, The Campaign in Mesopotamia (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1927); Nāḍīm Shukry Mahmūd, Harb al-'Irāq (Baghdad: 1966); and Ireland, Chapter 3.
100. Cab. 27/206 "British Desiderata in Turkey in Asia".
101. F.O. 371/3397 Fortnightly Report No. 4, 15 December 1917. In December, 1915, the Russian forces were approached by the British officers in Iraq to advance southward towards Iraq in order to occupy Baghdad and relieve the encircled British force in Kūt in Lower Mesopotamia. Accordingly, the Russians advanced on Iraq in a three-pronged assault on southern Kurdistan. However, all

these assaults were foiled due to the activities of the Sanjābī Kurdish tribe, which had been recruited by the Germans to attack Russian supply lines in the Iraq-Persia frontier region. Nonetheless, by 1916 some Russian forces managed to advance to Khānaqīn and Penjwīn and occupy those two regions temporarily. In Penjwīn a combined Turkish and Kurdish force led by Shaikh Mahmud of Sulaymānīya was able to force the Russians out of Penjwīn into Persian-held Kurdish territory. (See: Arfa, pp. 27-28.) Major E.B. Soane (1881-1923) was an expert on Kurdish history, literature and language. He visited southern Kurdistan before the War as a British intelligence officer, disguised as Mirza Hussein Ghulam-i Shirazi. He worked for a few years as a secretary of Persian language for the Jāf Amir, 'Usman Pasha in Halabja, and his wife 'Adila Khanim. He was fluent in several Kurdish dialects. (See: Soane, To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan); M. Lazarev, al-Mas'ala al-Kurdiya, 1917-1923, trans. A. Hājī (Beirut: Dār al-Rāzī, 1991), pp. 25-6.

102. F.O. 371/3397, Fortnightly Report, May 15, 1918; Moberly, I, p. 158.

103. Maḍhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, p. 171-2.

104. A. Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 53; Cabinet, 27/206, "British Desiderata in Turkey in Asia", "Memorandum by Lord Kitchener", pp. 94, 105; Sergei Dmitrievich Sazonov, The Fateful Years (London: Kravs Reprint Company, 1971), p. 260.

105. Rafīq Hilmī, Yadāsh, 5 vols., II, (Baghdad: Ma'arif Press, 1956), p. 69; Maḍhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, pp. 186-87.

106. Arfa, p. 108.

107. Maḍhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, p. 227.

108. F.O. 371/3397, Fortnightly Report, No. 15, June 1918.

109. F.O. 371/3397, Fortnightly Report, No. 16, July 15, 1918.

110. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 46.

111. F.O. 371/3397, Fortnightly Report, No. 15, 1918.

112. Longrigg, Iraq 1900-1950, pp. 91, 96-97; Moberly, p. 171; G.R. Driver, "The Kurdish Question", Persia Magazine, No. 3, September 1921, p. 108.

113. "Mezhuway Lam Bash Niya", Hewa, Vol. 11 (1958), pp. 48-49; F.O. 371/9915 Telegraph from Political Officer to Foreign Office, 18 November, 1918.

114. A. Wilson, Loyalties, II, pp. 32-33.
115. Longrigg, Centuries, pp. 94-97.
116. Mayson, p. 344.
117. Colonial Office, Report of Administration for 1918--Khanāqin District, London, HMS, 1919, pp. 32-33.
118. F.O. 371/3397, Forthnight Report, No. 4, December 1917; Mayson, p. 331.
119. Amīn Zakī, Khulāsat, p. 262; Maḍhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, p. 229; Air 20/512, No. 9227, Nov. 16, 1918.
120. Air 20/512, Telegram from Political Officer in Sulaymaniya, No. 15, to Secretary of State for India, November 16, 1918. Before the War Sulaymāniya had 40,000 people. By December 1918, the population had fallen to 9,000. Hundreds of corpses were lying in the street and people "were eating their babies". (See Mayson, p. 345.) Soane gives different estimates for the population of Sulaymāniya during the War. He writes that in November 1914 the population was 20,000, and by November of 1918, only 2,500 had survived. See Soane, Administrative Report on Sulaymania Division. 1919, p. 22.
121. Mayson, pp. 331-32; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 1, pp. 365-6.
122. 'Azīz al-Hāj, Al-Qadīyah al-Kurdiyyah fī al-'Ishrīnāt (Beirut: al-Mu'assasah al-'Arabīyah li al-Nashr, 1984), p. 91.
123. Kurds, p. 28.

## Chapter 3

## IN SEARCH OF A POLICY

Shaikh Mahmud's First Governorship: The Tribal System

The main concern of the British in their Kurdish policy from 1918 to 1920 was the need to secure safe and viable frontiers for Mesopotamia. This period was characterized by constant search for a policy which would secure this objective, and also be acceptable to the Kurds. The British lacked a coherent and definite policy on the Kurdish question, wavering between direct and indirect control and the formation of ad hoc policies in reaction to local and regional developments.

Sir Arnold T. Wilson, and most of the staff of the British administration in 'Iraq who had been drawn from the British India Empire were adherents of the so-called India school colonial theory, which did not consider the inhabitants of the colonies ready for self-rule. The natives had to be trained by colonial agents, and they claimed that this could be accomplished through the establishment of direct rule in the colonies. The role of the natives would be confined to the provision of advice to the rulers through the municipal and divisional councils. Efficiency of rule, they thought, should always override political considerations.<sup>1</sup>

In southern Kurdistan, where a tribal society similar to that of India's North-West Frontier prevailed, the administration wanted to emulate the British experiment in controlling the troublesome Baluchistani tribesmen through the establishment of native rule. This was a subsidized tribal regime headed by a

paramount native ruler. This system was referred to as the Sandeman system, after Sir Robert Sandeman. It aimed at extending British control over Baluchistan in order to protect the inhabitants of the Sind borderland from the attacks of the turbulent hill-people who used their rugged mountains as a sanctuary. The paramount native leader was the absolute ruler of his people and was accountable only to the British India government.<sup>2</sup> However, the unruly tribesmen of the North-West Frontier were a constant thorn in the side of the government of India. British officials in 'Iraq were aware that the Kurds had the potential to cause similar problems for the government in Mesopotamia, as indicated in a telegram from the India Office dated 24th August 1919.<sup>3</sup>

Commenting on the future of Kurdistan in 'Iraq at a meeting held at the Foreign Office in April 1920, E.S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India opined that anything would be preferable to the establishment of an administration in northern 'Iraq similar to that of the North-West Frontier Province in India. Lord Curzon, then Foreign Secretary agreed with Mr. Montagu on the issue; however, he suggested that Kurdistan should be treated like Mohmand country and the independent tribal areas lying to the west of the Chitral Road in India. This was a completely independent region, with which the government of India had occasional trouble. On the other hand, Waziristan, a tribal region in India with which the British India government had a permanent connection was a constant source of annoyance. Lord Curzon was of the view that if the Kurds were given an independent administration they would not come down from the mountains to

raid Mesopotamia.<sup>4</sup>

However, the policies pursued by Wilson, Soane, Leachman and Hay in southern Kurdistan from 1918 to 1920 aimed closely at direct rule, and they disregarded the warnings of Montagu and Curzon. By 1920, the British administration in Mesopotamia began to experience problems with the Kurds similar to those which they had in India with the tribes of the North-West Frontier. The problem continued throughout the Mandate period, as will be discussed in further detail below.

Professor W. Jwaideh argues that the failure of the Sandeman system to bring the Mahsud tribes of the Indus Valley in the North-West Frontier under the control of the British India government did not deter the British administration in Mesopotamia from implementing the same system there, despite the striking similarities between the Mahsud and the Kurds. The Kurds, he says:

"...like Mahsud have always been passionately attached to their freedom and have ever been in conflict with those who tried to control them. Similarly, since the days of Shaykh Ubaidullah, the Kurds, like the Mahsuds have been dominated by their religious leaders, the Shaykhs rather than by their secular chieftains."<sup>5</sup>

By the end of October 1918, the British government had defeated the Ottoman army in southern Kurdistan. In November of that year, the Ottoman mutaşarrif of Sulaymānīya was instructed by 'Ali Ihsan Pasha,

commander of the Ottoman troops in 'Iraq, to quit southern Kurdistan and to surrender the affairs of the region to the authority of Shaikh Mahmud, who had already established himself as the sole powerful leader in the region during the war. Shaikh Mahmud, impressed by the British defeat of the Ottomans, wrote to Arnold T. Wilson expressing a desire to rule southern Kurdistan in the name of the British government in 'Iraq. Since the Shaikh was politically the strongest personality in the region the British did not have a better option. Otherwise they would have to had provide sufficient force to garrison Sulaymāniya and maintain order in the outlying mountainous districts. This the government in Baghdad did not have the means to do. Therefore, the Shaikh's offer was accepted with relief. Major E.W. Noel, a British intelligence officer who had had much experience in dealing with the southern tribes of Persia, was sent to Sulaymāniya to assist the Kurdish chieftain's efforts to restore law and order in the region.<sup>6</sup> The instructions issued to Noel before his departure to Sulaymāniya are of special interest for they indicate the nature of the British policy he was to apply in Kurdistan:

"You have been appointed Political Officer, Kirkuk Division, with effect from November 1st. The Kirkuk Division extends from the Lesser Zab to the Diyalah and north-east to the Turco-Persian frontier. It forms part of the Mosul Wilayat, the ultimate disposal of which is under the consideration of His Majesty's Government. For the present it must be considered as falling within the sphere of military occupation and administration of this force, and you should proceed on this assumption in your dealings

with the local chiefs, bearing in mind that it is improbable that the military authorities will see their way to detach troops permanently to Sulaimaniyah or to other places east of our present line... and on the understanding, which should be made clear to the chiefs, that any arrangements you may make are of necessity provisional. It should be explained to the tribal chiefs with whom you enter into relations that there is no intention of imposing upon them an administration foreign to their habits and desires..."<sup>7</sup>

Major Noel was enthusiastically received in Sulaymāniya and immediately began to put the new administrative system into effect. Shaikh Mahmud was appointed hukumdar (governor) of the district, and the other chiefs who were working under the guidance of British political officers were instructed to administer various sub-divisions.<sup>8</sup>

In order to become more informed about the situation in southern Kurdistan and to bolster the British position in the area, Wilson proceeded to Sulaymāniya where he attended a grand Kurdish tribal conference in December 1918. The conference was arranged by Shaikh Mahmud and attended by most of the prominent chieftains in southern Kurdistan as well as several influential Kurds from Persia. Various political issues were discussed. Shaikh Mahmud as hukumdar gave the following document to the Acting Civil Commissioner, indicating what the Kurds expected from the British authorities:

"His Majesty's government, having announced their intention to liberate the Eastern peoples from Turkish oppression and to grant assistance to them in the establishment of their independence, the chiefs, as the representative of the people of Kurdistan, beg the government to accept them also under British protection and to attach them to 'Iraq so that they may not be deprived of the benefits of that association. They request the Civil Commissioner of Mesopotamia to send them a representative with the necessary assistance to enable the Kurdish people under British auspices to progress peacefully on civilized lines. If the government extends its assistance and protection to them, they undertake to accept its order and advice."<sup>9</sup>

In return, Shaikh Mahmud was given a letter by Wilson which confirmed his appointment as the "governor" of southern Kurdistan. By the end of December, Shaikh Mahmud had managed to extend his power to Rawāndūz, Rāniya and Koī, with the assistance of Noel. However, some sections of the Jāf tribe in Ḥalabja, a section of the Pizhder tribe in Rāniya district, and some chieftains of Kirkuk and Kifrī refused to join the Kurdish tribal federation.<sup>10</sup>

Wilson's above-mentioned instructions to Noel and the manifesto issued by the Kurdish chieftains' conference in Sulaymāniya indicate that the goals and interests of the British administration in 'Iraq differed significantly from the aspirations of

the Kurds. The two documents were not a formal agreement between two equal and sovereign states. The British regarded Shaikh Mahmud's tribal regime as a loose and temporary working compact with a powerful local chief to secure their short-term objective of preserving law and order in Mesopotamia.<sup>11</sup> The Kurdish manifesto makes reference to the Kurdish chieftains as "representatives of the people of Kurdistan," and spells out clearly the desire of the Kurds for independence. Although Wilson assures the Kurds that his government has "no intention of imposing upon them an administration foreign to their habits and desires," he deliberately remains vague about the nature of the administration which he intends to establish in Kurdistan. There is no mention of the source and the nature of the Shaikh's power. Although the Shaikh always maintained that he had a mandate from all the Kurds of the Wilayah of Mosul, the British strongly rejected this claim. Wilson went further to point out that such power as the Shaikh was to have was conferred upon him by the British government, making it clear that he could enjoy British support only as long as he acts as their agent. The Acting Civil Commissioner's promise to the Kurds can only be understood in the context of the many other hastily-made promises given by the British to the Armenians, Arabs and Jews during the war. Shaikh Mahmud ruled with a council of ministers, and Noel acted as his hakimi siyasi (political advisor). The latter, according to R. Hilmi, a close confidant of Shaikh Mahmud, had "a high regard for the Shaikh."<sup>12</sup> Tribal chieftains were held responsible to the British for the maintenance of law and order in their respective domains through Shaikh

Mahmud. Each chieftain was supposed to receive a subsidy of 2000 rupees<sup>13</sup> per month, and 5000 rupees for the maintenance of 50 suwaris (mounted police). Shaikh Mahmud himself received a "generous subsidy," and was told to raise 600 suwaris.<sup>14</sup> The tribal system established by Shaikh Mahmud has been described as follows:

"Every man who could be described as a tribesman was placed under a tribal leader. The idea was to divide southern Kurdistan into tribal areas and tribal leaders. Petty village headmen were unearthed and discovered as leaders of long dead tribes. Disintegrated sedentary clans in the hot countries of Kifri were told to reunite and remember that they had once been tribesmen. Tribal chiefs were found for them. Revenue was to be paid on the estimation of this chief. Law was to be administered by this chief, who only had to recognize Shaikh Mahmud as hukumdar and benevolent despot of Kurdistan in return he should be subsidized."<sup>15</sup>

The tribal system was primarily intended to facilitate revenue collection and the maintenance of law and order. Tribal chieftains were nominally accountable to Shaikh Mahmud; however in chief was put under the supervision of the British Assistant Political Officers (APOs) residing in the qadās (districts) of southern Kurdistan. However, all attempts at revenue collection through tribal chieftains led either to "preposterous delay or intolerable unfair treatment" of the peasants.

Nonetheless, law and order was restored, and villagers stricken by famine and war were enabled to resettle and cultivate their land.<sup>16</sup>

Shaikh Mahmud was determined to consolidate his hold over the region brought under his control as hukumdar. He tried to assure the loyalty of the tribal chiefs by distributing funds made available to him by the British, and used his position as hukumdar to enhance his standing among the tribes. In order to control the administration he gave government posts to his relatives and supporters. The levies, the only effective fighting force in southern Kurdistan were made to give allegiance to him. Even the chief of police and the judge in Sulaymaniya were his appointees.<sup>17</sup>

The British were aware of Shaikk Mahmud's tactics, but at that time they needed to make use of him. Thus, the new tribal regime was accepted. Major Soane strongly criticized his administrative policies, pointing out its evils and making it clear that the British, who had created the system and were supporting it, and Shaikh Mahmud, the one chosen to implement it were at cross-purposes.<sup>18</sup>

By March of 1919, the British in 'Iraq felt it necessary to reappraise their policy with regard to Shaikh Mahmud. Sir Arnold Wilson held a conference, which was attended by R. Leachman, PO of Mosul Division, W. Hay, APO in Arbil, Major Noel, and S. Longrigg, PO of Kirkuk Division. The conference agreed on two measures: that Shaikh Mahmud's power should be gradually curtailed, but if possible in such a way as to "avoid open breach" and that Major Soane should replace Noel as PO in Sulaymāniya in order to implement this

policy.<sup>19</sup>

Major Soane was determined to confine Shaikh Mahmud's power to Sulaymānīya city alone. The Jāfs in Ḥalabja and Kifrī were told that they were no longer subjects of Shhaikh Mahmud. In Rānīya Shaikh Mahmud's representative was ousted as a result of Soane's intrigues with the local notables.<sup>20</sup> The Arbīl Division was created, and administered directly by the British Political Officer. Even in Sulaymānīya city, Soane managed to gradually force the Shaikh's appointees out of government posts and replace them with his own nominees, who were for the most part Afghans and Indians.<sup>21</sup> In addition, he was on good terms with the Young Kurds, the small westernized elite which was discontented with Shaikh's Mahmud's alliances with the mullas (religious functionaries) and the traditional landed aristocracy.<sup>22</sup>

Observing all this, Shaikh Mahmud came to the conclusion that he would soon lose his position if he did not act swiftly. Thus, in May 1919, the Shaikh launched a coup in Sulaymānīya. Major T.S. Greenhouse, who had been left in charge by Soane in the absence of the latter, and a number of British officers were captured and imprisoned. The Shaikh declared Kurdistan an independent state, seized the treasury and raised his own flag. The action was swift, and the small levy force which had been raised by the British, the only government force there, joined the rebels.<sup>23</sup> The events of the revolt have been narrated and analyzed very well in a number of sources.<sup>24</sup> However, a brief sketch of the revolt and a few comments on it are still in order.

Wilson ordered an infantry force of 2400 men, most of whom were Indians, together with loyal Kurds to march from Kirkuk, a town seventy miles south of Sulaymānīya against the rebels. The force reached Tasluja Pass, twelve miles from Sulaymānīya, where it was pursued by the rebels and soundly defeated. Colonel Longrigg made a desperate but unsuccessful attempt to assist the advancing force. The rebellion spread into Persian-held territory and several tribes rose against the government in support of Shaikh Mahmud. Wilson observed that this "regrettable incident" confirmed the belief which was gaining ground among 'Iraqis, particularly among the Kurds, that the British were unable to "control the events."<sup>25</sup>

#### The Fall of Shaikh Mahmud's Administration

The British considered the revolt in southern Kurdistan a serious matter, for it posed a threat to the whole British design for Mesopotamia, and threatened to destabilize 'Iraq and Persia. If the revolt was not suppressed quickly, it would also lead the Arab tribes of 'Iraq to believe that British authority in Mesopotamia could be defied.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, by mid-June the Southern Kurdistan Force was formed under the command of General Theodore Fraser. On June 17 British troops, aided by Mushir Agha, a Kurdish Hamāwand chieftain who had defected to the British side, surrounded Shaikh Mahmud's troops at Bazyan Pass in the Qara Dagħ range, twelve miles north-east of Chamchamāl. The Kurdish tribal force was expecting a frontal, Turkish-style attack and was overwhelmed to find itself surrounded on

all sides. In the ensuing fight the Kurds were defeated. Shaikh Mahmud was captured and put on trial. He was sentenced to death. However, later his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment and he was exiled to Andawan Island in India. The pacification of southern Kurdistan was completed in forty-five days, and Major Soane took firm control of Sulaymānīya Division.<sup>27</sup>

The failure of Shaikh Mahmud's first revolt can be attributed to several factors. He had not gained the support of the majority of the population; his movement essentially represented the interests of the agha class, which was only four percent of the population. The agha class was viewed with contempt by the rest of the Kurdish population, for whom the idea of a united independent Kurdistan meant little, and who recognized no authority other than their own tribal chiefs. Despite this, Shaikh Mahmud made the coup without sufficient consultation with the tribal chiefs.<sup>28</sup>

The primary reasons for the fall of Shaikh Mahmud's first government were:

- 1) the conflict of interest between the Shaikh's scheme for an independent Kurdistan and the British government's design for Mesopotamia;
- 2) the mutual lack of trust between Shaikh Mahmud and the British;
- 3) disunity among the Kurds;
- 4) the British government's lack of a coherent, definite policy towards the Kurds;
- 5) and finally, the existence of unfavourable regional factors.

The fact that British and Kurdish interests in Mesopotamia were far from being identical was a significant factor leading to the fall of the autonomous tribal regime in southern Kurdistan. In July 1919, the British High Commissioner in

Baghdad wrote that the "primary question at stake" was the securing of a safe and satisfactory frontier for Mesopotamia. The realization of this led the British to a corollary, the Kurdish question. The region in which the Kurds wanted to build their independent state was vital to Mesopotamia. The India Office viewed the potential revenue of the oil-producing regions of the Wilāyah of Mosul as essential to 'Iraq's future development.<sup>29</sup> Also, the British administration in 'Iraq maintained that the frontiers of Mesopotamia could not be viable if they were drawn through the plains. The Kurdish-inhabited mountainous region was deemed vital for the defense of 'Iraq from the uncertainty then prevailing in Persia and Turkey.<sup>30</sup> The British also feared that if the "recalcitrant", mountain-dwelling Kurdish tribesmen were left to their own devices they would be a perpetual menace to the peace and stability of 'Iraq.<sup>31</sup>

#### Lack of Trust Between Shaikh Mahmud and the British

The distrust, miscalculation and lack of understanding which characterized the relations between the British and Shaikh Mahmud contributed significantly to the failure of the former's Kurdish policy. The distrust between the two parties was due in part to the events surrounding the brief occupation of Kirkuk by the British near the end of World War I. In May 1918, the Kurds, impressed by the rapid advances made by the British troops in southern Kurdistan, held a meeting in Sulaymaniya under the leadership of Shaikh Mahmud to discuss the situation. Those present decided to support the British, and Shaikh Mahmud wrote a letter

to Sir Arnold Wilson asking the British to occupy southern Kurdistan.<sup>32</sup> The British quickly attacked Kirkuk and occupied the city. Shaikh Mahmud and other leading Kurdish notables and aghas publicly declared themselves on the British side. However, in less than a fortnight the British were forced to quit Kirkuk, and the Young Turks troops reoccupied the region. Shaikh Mahmud and several Kurdish chieftains were imprisoned for a short time, and suffered public humiliation and ridicule.<sup>33</sup> Wilson, writing about the repercussions of this first encounter between the British government and the Kurds, remarks:

"It seemed clear to them that the assurances of support, freely given by some irresponsible officers, and implicit in the more cautious advances made at Kirkuk by Bullard and at Kifri by Longrigg, were not to be relied on: we were, it seemed to them, playing the Russian game of using unsophisticated tribesmen as cats-paws. Their leaders, some of whom, including the principal Hamawand chief, were on their way to Kirkuk when the withdrawal took place, returned to their homes in high dudgeon. They felt that they had been betrayed by us: we induced them to show their hand to their enemies the Turks, and had left them in the lurch. The Hamawand leaders, in particular, never forgave us, and remained hostile to us for many years after."<sup>34</sup>

Although this temporary withdrawal from Kirkuk was unavoidable, and was dictated by military considerations relating to the situation outside Mesopotamia,

it led to a distrust among the Kurds of the British. Driver points out that the withdrawal caused the British administration in Mesopotamia "incalculable damage... if they could have been convinced that we were honest in our declared policy of remaining in Kurdistan, Shaikh Mahmud's rebellion would have been impossible."<sup>35</sup> Longrigg draws a similar conclusion. He considers the withdrawal to be "tragic" in terms of relations with the Kurds.<sup>36</sup>

It was against this background of distrust that in November 1918, Shaikh Mahmud was forced to deal with the advancing British army. His doubts were further confirmed when the pro-British Kurdish chieftains in Kirkuk and Kifri refused to join his administration, and he attributed this to British intrigues against him. The appointment of Soane, with a clear mandate to curtail the Shaikh's power, and Soane's open confrontation with him left no doubt in his mind that the British were determined to end his rule.<sup>37</sup>

British officials, for their part, did not trust Shaikh Mahmud. His past record did not inspire confidence; he had led several revolts against Turkish rule. The Acting Civil Commissioner writes that Shaikh Mahmud was:

"In ignorance, but not in innocence he was a child, with great ambition and much natural cunning. He was given to sudden fits of passions and outbursts of cruelty, which suggested to so cool an observer as Soane that he was not always responsible for his actions."<sup>38</sup>

G.M. Lees, who was surrounded by the Shaikh's men for several days in

Ḥalabja during the May revolt, writes bitterly about Shaikh Mahmud:

"The evil reputation of Shaikh Mahmud for treachery and dishonesty was well known... unfortunately he was trusted too implicitly and allowed too complete control of his large subsidy. Intoxicated by his sudden acquisition of power and wealth, Shaikh Mahmud's ambitions soon commenced to soar beyond their prescribed limits..."<sup>39</sup>

Edmonds too did not have a positive view of Shaikh Mahmud. He writes that during the rule of the Young Turks the Shaikh had "terrorized the town through his gang of roughs and, now that he was officially the Ruler, he was quite incapable of understanding the restraints put upon him..."<sup>40</sup>

In addition, it was the firm conviction of most British officials that Shaikh Mahmud had little popularity among the southern Kurds. They contended that he was tyrannical, treacherous, and disliked by all except his immediate followers, who were mostly tenants living on his large estates in Sulaymānīya division. The only reason those peasants gave him their support, they opined, was due to the fact that there was none to protect them from his vengeance. Furthermore, the British officials in the region believed that any support which the Shaikh had was due mainly to the belief of many Kurds that the British government was going to force them to accept his authority. The British administration claimed that as soon as it became clear to the Kurds that they had no intention of so doing, Shaikh Mahmud's influence began to decline "rapidly."<sup>41</sup>

Soane expresses a similar view, however, he offers another reason for the initial Kurdish support for the establishment of the tribal system under Shaikh Mahmud:

"...so anxious were the Kurds at the time for peace, so reduced by privation, that they were ready to sign any document or make any statement to procure tranquility and food. Thus tribe after tribe which hitherto had been barely cognisant of Shaikh Mahmud or at best known him as an unworthy descendant of a good man, signed the stereotyped memorial praying for inclusion in the new state under Shaikh Mahmud..."<sup>42</sup>

These descriptions of the Shaikh by his British opponents clearly underestimate his true standing among the Kurds.<sup>43</sup> The Kurdish sources present an entirely different picture of his status. Since 1908, they say, Shaikh Mahmud had been the spiritual leader of the influential shaikhly family of Barzinjī,<sup>44</sup> the largest and most powerful shaikhly family in southern Kurdistan for a century. The religious status of the family was high due to the academic eminence and piety of Shaikh Ma'ruf Nade (1753-1833), Shaikh Mahmud's great-great-grandfather. Kak Ahmad Shaikh (1793-1887), the grandfather of Shaikh Mahmud, and Shaikh Sa'id, Mahmud's father, were two saints most venerated by the Kurds throughout the Ottoman Empire, and were highly esteemed by Sultan 'Abdul Hamid himself.<sup>45</sup> In 1908, Shaikh Sa'id was assassinated in an obscure

incident which was apparently instigated by the Young Turks in Mosul, because he was reluctant to support the government of the Committee of Union and Progress. This incident sparked an uprising throughout southern Kurdistan. Hundreds of tribesmen marched on Mosul, and the government was forced to depose Zaki Pasha Chalabi, wālī of the wilāyah of Mosul. Consequently, Shaikh Mahmud emerged as the leader of the Barzinjīs and the most powerful man in Kurdistan.<sup>46</sup> To his religious prestige and wealth, Shaikh Mahmud added courage, determination, military talents, modesty, diligence and ambition. As a young tribal leader of the Barzinjīs, the Shaikh had distinguished himself in the numerous battles with the Jāfs, the traditional rivals of the Barzinjīs.<sup>47</sup>

During World War I, the Kurds of southern Kurdistan turned to his leadership. In March 1915, he led 2000 Kurdish suwaris (cavalrymen) at Shu'aiba on the lower Euphrates, fighting alongside the Ottomans against the British Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force, and he was the commander of the Kurdish militia force which repulsed several Russian attempts to occupy southern Kurdistan.<sup>48</sup> The British were aware of the Bazinjīs' standing among the Kurds. In October 1918, the Secretary of State for India was told by the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force that the British authorities were doing their best to win the Barzinjīs to the British side, for their cooperation would "make all the difference to the success or failure of our Kurdish policy."<sup>49</sup>

Hilmi, who generally presents a critical but positive picture Shaikh Mahmud's administration, comments on the Shaikh's popularity: in 1918, within less than a

week sixty-two chieftains from southern and eastern Kurdistan responded to his call to hold an all-Kurdistan national congress in Sulaymānīya. This was achieved without any help from the British government, whose representative had just arrived there, and the latter did their best to deter the Iranian Kurds from attending the congress, in vain.<sup>50</sup> Kurdish writers generally concur with Hilmi that Shaikh Mahmud's popularity in Kurdistan was beyond question. They claim that the only opposition to his authority came from small sections of the Jaf and Pizher tribes.<sup>51</sup> W. Jwaideh tends to agree with the Kurdish scholars that Shaikh Mahmud had the support of most of the Kurdish tribesmen in southern Kurdistan. However, he contends that the Shaikh failed to use this potential support effectively in his confrontation with the British.<sup>52</sup>

It is reasonable to argue that the British officials' portrayal of Shaikh Mahmud was to a certain degree inaccurate. It is equally plausible to argue that the Kurdish scholars' claims about the standing of Shaikh Mahmud among the Kurds are exaggerated. As will be shown, the opposition among the Kurds to the Shaikh was considerable.

Shaikh Mahmud failed to make a realistic estimation of his strength *vis-à-vis* that of the British government. He seems to have overestimated his power, and thought that he was too powerful to be dislodged from Sulaymānīya by the small British military force in southern Kurdistan. He underestimated the determination of the British to depose him, and regarded his administration as indispensable to the British in their efforts to maintain peace and stability in the region.<sup>53</sup>

This miscalculation on the part of Shaikh Mahmud was due to his lack of political experience, and also the confusion which surrounded British policy in Kurdistan and Mesopotamia. The Shaikh was not a capable administrator, nor did he have the advisors he needed to help him to deal with the interplay of the complex local, regional and international circumstances which were determining the fate of the Kurds during that period. He was surrounded by a clique of greedy and illiterate syncophants who encouraged him to take an uncompromising attitude toward the British government.<sup>54</sup> The influence of the agha class in the Shaikh's court appears to have been a crucial factor in pushing him into open conflict with the British. British officials claimed that the aghas feared that British control would lead to "awkward questions as to landownership." In most cases the aghas had acquired their land by means of forcible possession, and had no title deeds. Though the British wished to curb the power of the sayyids and the aghas, who held most of the land illegally, they were in no position to do so, for these traditional elites were needed to control the unruly tribesmen. In order to allay their fears, the British ordered that no tāpū registers be sent from Kurdistan to Baghdad, where they would have been subjected to inconvenient scrutiny.<sup>55</sup>

In 1919, Ahmad Taqi, a prominent member of the Young Kurds, brought an urgent message to Sulaymānīya from Shaikh 'Abdul Qadir al-Nehri of Constantinople. The latter was the president of the Ottoman State Council, and an ardent supporter of the Kurdish cause. He was well informed of the overall British designs for the Ottoman Empire. Shaikh 'Abdul Qadir advised Shaikh Mahmud

to deal cautiously with the British, and to avoid armed confrontation which might have a negative impact on the Kurdish cause.<sup>56</sup> Perhaps this was the only good advice Shaikh Mahmud ever received, and he chose to ignore it.

Tensions were already very high in Kurdistan, due in part to the provocative policies of Major Soane and in part to the nationalist uprisings taking place in the region. The Turkish nationalists had already begun to defy the British in Asia Minor. In April 1919, the Goyan Kurds, who lived just beyond the Armistice Line in the Zakho region, revolted and killed British soldiers and officials, demonstrating that the British government could be defied. The Kurds in Persia were also in armed revolt against their central government, which was being assisted by the British. The Turks had sent several messages to Shaikh Mahmud informing him of the "imminent" Turkish march on Mesopotamia and advised him to mobilize the Muslim Kurds to fight against the "infidel" British.<sup>57</sup> Finally, the Shaikh also misread the resolve of the British to remain in Mesopotamia. Wilson writes:

"Troops were leaving the country in large numbers every month, but there was no corresponding reduction of military duties... Merchants and others returning from Basra and Baghdad to Sulaimani told of soldiers leaving daily by ships and train, and in the minds of many the belief that we would once more evacuate Kurdistan and leave the inhabitants to their own devices, or to the machinations of rival claimants to power, hardened into certainty."<sup>58</sup>

Furthermore, there was mutual misunderstanding about the role which Shaikh Mahmud was to play within the British design for Mesopotamia. The Shaikh's interpretation of his role as hukumdar was quite different from the British understanding of that role. The British viewed Shaikh Mahmud merely as a Kurdish raj whose role was to assist the British government's efforts to establish law and order in the region. Shaikh Mahmud thought of himself as a leader of a proud people, and he was influenced by the Wilsonian principle of the right of self-determination. On January 8, in his address to the joint session of Congress and Senate, President Wilson said:

"The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be secured and assured sovereignty; but the other nationalities which are not under Turkish rule should be assured...opportunity of autonomous development..."<sup>59</sup>

Thus the Shaikh was under the impression that the British would eventually assist him to establish an independent Kurdistan under their auspices. Edmonds provides some interesting insights into the mind of Shaikh Mahmud and his followers:

"I have no doubt that Shaikh Mahmud saw himself as another Abdul Rahman Pasha, with a benevolent British government intervening, not to exercise any control over his autocratic rule, but only to prevent the

Persian and the future Arab governments from interfering in the manner of the governments of Kirmanshah or the Pashas of Baghdad. But at Sulaimani there was present in addition, among all classes of population, an abiding conviction, rooted in their history, that the town contained the germs of a revived and extensive Kurdish state of which it was the fore-ordained capital."<sup>60</sup>

Therefore, Shaikh Mahmud's mind appears to have been dominated by the belief that the Kurds were entitled to an independent state and that it was fore-ordained that he should be the leader of this state. He saw his right to rulership of Kurdistan as stemming from the leading role which the Barzinjī sayyid family had played in southern Kurdistan. Consequently, he resented any attempt on the part of the British to curb his power, and could not fully comprehend the strength of their resentment of his efforts to defy their authority.<sup>61</sup>

#### Lack of Unity Among the Kurds

The tribal nature of Kurdish society, the lack of an articulate nationalist feeling among the Kurds, and the disagreements among the Kurdish leaders seem to have weighed heavily in the minds of the British policy-makers when they devised their Kurdish policy from 1918 to 1920. During this period the Kurds were to some extent devoid of racial solidarity and the only loyalty they knew was that of the tribe. They are frequently described by British officials as having "wildness", "rapacity", and dislike of submission to any form of government.<sup>62</sup> The patriarchal

domination of the aghas, which was described above, remained intact to a large extent during the immediate post-war period. This had a profound impact on Shaikh Mahmud's administration. The Kurdish chieftains loyal to the Shaikh were constantly demanding gifts and privileges but showed great reluctance to subordinate themselves to his government officials. "Their political conceptions and experience, their social background, their character and level of evolution all forbade the possibility that Shaykh Mahmud's empire could, even at the lowest and loosest standard of government, be coherent and lasting."<sup>63</sup>

The geography of southern Kurdistan has contributed greatly to the formation of a tribal society, and precluded the emergence of Kurdistan as a country, and the Kurds as a nation. Kurdistan, as described above, is a long belt of mountains so arranged that there can be no unity among its inhabitants, who are a collection of tribes having little contact with each other. Each section must contact and trade with its adjacent non-Kurdish neighbours to the south and west in the plains.<sup>64</sup>

The authority of the aghas was a major obstacle to the extension of the power of government. In 1919 Colonel Nalder, a British Assistant Political Officer in 'Amādīya, observed that:

"The position of the average Kurdish agha... is incompatible with our own, or any other Government. Like the feudal Barons of the Middle Ages, he keeps a body of armed retainers and tyrannizes over cultivators at his will."<sup>65</sup>

The establishment of any form of government was against the entrenched position of the aghas. To these people government was synonymous with tyranny, law with injustice, order with bondage, and they opposed anything which threatened their despotic hold on their society. Therefore, many Kurdish chieftains embraced the idea of an independent Kurdistan in order to oppose the British government's efforts to establish law and order in the region. For the aghas, independence meant freedom from all laws, and permission to "indulge in an unrestricted rapine and licence."<sup>66</sup>

For these reasons, the British officials in Kurdistan held the aghas and shaikhs responsible for the anti-British tribal unrest in the area. They thought that the aghas and shaikhs, were motivated purely by greed and ambition, manipulated the ignorance, fanaticism and the wild and independent character of the Kurds to cause the unrest.<sup>67</sup> They further maintained that there was not a single Kurd who would "stir a finger for any ideals" such as religion or the cause of Kurdish nationalism. They perceived the individual Kurd as not being particularly devout, but thought that his "simple and superstitious nature makes him particularly susceptible to the influence, whether for good or evil" of the shaikhs.<sup>68</sup> Impatience with control and reluctance to submit to any foreign government, characteristics which had marked the Kurds throughout history, led them to resist the British government's attempts to establish law and order in the region.

The lack of a coherent and articulate national feeling among the Kurds influenced the British stand on the Kurdish question. The British officials in the

Foreign Office, Constantinople and Baghdad, were firmly convinced that the Kurds lacked a corporate feeling. In 1920, Lloyd George, then Prime Minister, was quoted as saying that "he tried himself to find out what the feelings of the Kurds were. After inquiries in Constantinople and Baghdad, he had found it impossible to locate any Kurds who had a national backing." No Kurd appeared to represent anything more than his own particular class.<sup>69</sup> A telegram from the Office of the High Commissioner in Constantinople stated that no sense of a coherent public opinion could be said to exist among the Kurds.<sup>70</sup> The British officials in Mesopotamia too were adamant that the Kurds completely lacked "anything approaching a national feeling." This was a factor in the failure of Shaikh Mahmud to rally the Kurds around him, for he appealed to Kurdish nationalist sentiments, which were almost non-existent among the chieftains and the peasants.<sup>71</sup>

In April 1920, Lord Curzon declared that it was the desire of his government to meet with the representatives of Kurdish public opinion in order to hear their views on the form of the autonomous government which they desired and the commitments which the British government expected if an independent Kurdistan was formed. Enquiries were directed to both Constantinople and Baghdad regarding this matter, but the replies were not encouraging. The High Commissioner in Constantinople responded that he had always believed that no true representative of the Kurds through which the British could arrange for an independent Kurdistan under their auspices existed. The Civil Commissioner at

Baghdad informed the Foreign Office that "no Kurd was competent to speak" for all of Kurdistan.<sup>72</sup>

The fall of Shaikh Mahmud's administration has also been attributed to the disunity among the Kurdish chieftains in southern Kurdistan during the immediate post-war period. The fact that the Kurds were divided among mutually jealous chieftains, who were separated by impassable mountains, made Shaikh Mahmud's drive to establish a Kurdish state almost impossible. Mulla Muhammad Efendi, an influential religious scholar in Arbīl division was reported to have said that Kurdistan could not ever be an independent nation due to the bitter dissensions among its chieftains, each of whom wanted to be the supreme power in his region and was reluctant to submit to any other.<sup>73</sup> Reverend W.A. Wigram provides a vivid illustration of this state of affairs by comparing the Kurds to the Scottish Highlanders. In both cases, no chief could ever subdue the others, but all were willing to owe their allegiance to some external "potentate who was willing not to enforce any of his commands."<sup>74</sup>

The short period of Shaikh Mahmud's administration and the abortive revolt in May 1919 demonstrates the sharp division within the ranks of the southern Kurds. The Jaf tribe, which was the largest tribe in the Sulaymaniya division, for the most part refused to acknowledge the Shaikh's authority. Their begzādah chieftains, who were the traditional enemies of the Barzinjī sayyids were intriguing with the British officials in order to undermine Shaikh Mahmud's rule. In the Kirkuk and Kifrī divisions, the Kurds were under the influence of the

Ṭalabānī shaikh, another rival of the Barzinjī sayyids, and they too refused to join the Shaikh's administration.<sup>75</sup> In Rāniya and Qal'at Diza, the powerful Pizhder tribe, under the leadership of Abu Bakr Agha was equally reluctant to join the government of Shaikh Mahmud. During the May revolt, Abu Bakr supported the British against the Shaikh. In Arbīl division, the Dizā'ī tribe, the largest tribe in the region, did not recognize any authority other than their own chieftains, who preferred to deal directly with the British officials.<sup>76</sup>

Hama Agha Ghafuri of Koī Sanjaq was a staunch supporter of direct British rule and strongly resisted Shaikh Mahmud's efforts to include Koī in his administration.<sup>77</sup> Even within Sulaymāniya itself, Shaikh Mahmud's power was by no means unquestioned. The merchants of the Sulaymāniya bazār had cemented an alliance with the Young Kurds, and these two groups aided the British efforts to undermine the Shaikh's rule in the city.<sup>78</sup> Finally, Shaikh Ahmad of Bārzān, the most influential chieftain in Bahdīnān, refused to cooperate with Shaikh Mahmud to any degree, for he suspected the latter of being a British agent.<sup>79</sup>

### The Lack of a Definite British Policy

The lack of a definite and clearly articulated policy on the part of the British government toward the Kurds from 1918 to 1920 led to the adoption of policies which were indecisive, contradictory, confused and provisional. The inability of the British government to formulate a clear policy toward the Kurds stemmed from the complicated nature of the Kurdish question, the lack of sufficient

information concerning the region and its peoples, the rapid and unpredictable unfolding of events in Mesopotamia, Kurdistan, Turkey and Persia, the delay in the signing of a peace treaty between the Allies and Turkey, and finally the diffusion of responsibility for Mesopotamia among the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, the War Office, and the India Office, and disagreements between these Offices and the British administration in Mesopotamia. Furthermore, there were also differences among the British officials within the Mesopotamia Civil Commissioner's Office.

Mr. H. Asquith, the British Prime Minister during the war was quoted as saying that the Kurdish question was one of the "most difficult questions which had ever faced the British India Empire."<sup>80</sup> Similar remarks were made in March 1920 by Mr. Bonar Law, a British statesman to the effect that the Kurdish question was one of those which "are most deeply absorbing the attention of the Allied representatives" during the peace talks in Paris. This issue was multi-dimensional, and had its direct impact on the overall British policy in the Middle East, especially the British government's relationships with Turkey, the Armenians, and the Arabs of Mesopotamia.<sup>81</sup> What made this delicate issue more complicated was the lack of necessary information. In June 1919, in Constantinople, Syria and Mesopotamia the chief complaint of the British officials was that the available information regarding the inclinations, groupings and leaders of the Kurdish tribes was insufficient for them to use as a basis for formulating a definite Kurdish policy for the consideration of the British government. The War

Office in Britain also found it extremely difficult to put forward any definite view for the assistance of the Foreign Office because of a "dearth of information." According to the British officials in the region, the lack of detailed information was largely due to the difficulty of ascertaining what the Kurds wanted. "Nowhere could one hear of any representative or a group of individuals which could be summoned to give a definite and moderately accurate expression to the wishes" of the Kurds.<sup>82</sup>

The confusion and inaction of British policy in southern Kurdistan was due to the lack of a definite policy on the part of the British government for Mesopotamia as a whole. Sir Arnold Wilson, Acting Civil Commissioner, was trying to establish direct British control of 'Iraq, and thought that 'Iraq should eventually become a part of the British India Empire. The only role which Wilson saw for the 'Iraqis in the administration of Mesopotamia was an advisory one, through the establishment of municipal and divisional councils. This policy was opposed by the officials in the British Foreign Office, and Miss Bell, the Oriental Secretary at Baghdad. They favoured less direct British control of Mesopotamia, and the formation of an 'Iraqi state under the leadership of one of the sons of Sharif Hussain, a descendant of the Prophet and custodian of the Holy Places of Makka and Madina in the Hijaz. No definite policy was decided upon Mesopotamia, and Wilson doggedly continued his policy of indianization of 'Iraq until the anti-British Mesopotamia insurrection broke out in August of 1920.<sup>83</sup>

Lord Curzon explains the lack of a clear policy for Mesopotamia thus:

"When we had originally despatched a force to Basrah, we had no intention of holding Mesopotamia permanently. We had been gradually drawn to Baghdad and to mountain districts which lay between Baghdad and Mosul and the Persian border."<sup>84</sup>

The delay in signing a peace treaty between Turkey and the Allies left the status of the predominantly Kurdish-inhabited wilāyah of Mosul in limbo. This had a direct impact on the Kurdish question. On one hand, it created a certain degree of uncertainty and anxiety among the Kurds, while handicapping the British administration's attempts to work out a definite Kurdish policy. The British officials in Kurdistan were instructed to remain "deliberately vague" in their discussions with the Kurds, and to refrain from any action which would give the impression that the status of the wilāyah had been determined.<sup>85</sup> The officials in Kurdistan were told to take a non-committal attitude with the Kurdish chieftains who were asking for an independent Kurdistan. They were under instructions to be "very cautious and slow" in their dealings with them.<sup>86</sup> In this ambiguous situation, British officials in Kurdistan resorted to ad hoc policies in order to provide some sort of administrative system in the area. For this reason, the establishment of Shaikh Mahmud's tribal confederation in November 1918 was a provisional measure only. The British officials were not at pains to conceal this fact. Longrigg, PO at Kifri, writes that the problem of southern Kurdistan was that

of installing a regime better than anarchy.<sup>87</sup> In November 1918, Noel was instructed by Wilson to bear in mind:

"...that it is improbable that the military authorities will see their way to detach troops permanently to Sulaimaniyah... and on the understanding, which should be clear to the chiefs, that any arrangements you may make are of necessity provisional..."<sup>88</sup>

This is a clear indication that the British dealings with Shaikh Mahmud were dictated by purely military considerations, and were on an ad hoc basis. Edmonds, then PO in Kirkuk expresses a similar view when he writes that Kurdish autonomy under Shaikh Mahmud "was imposed upon His Najesty's Government by military rather than political considerations."<sup>89</sup> Driver, a high-ranking British general in southern Kurdistan, states that Shaikh Mahmud's influence "was too useful to be lightly set aside."<sup>90</sup> During the period 1918-1919, the British government was under strong domestic pressure to reduce military responsibilities in the colonies to a minimum. Therefore, the British government manipulated Shaikh Mahmud's influence to spare Britain a difficult undertaking in a most unfavourable local, regional and international atmosphere. Miss Bell spells this out very clearly:

"Without the full measure of co-operation and assistance which he was giving us, it would have been necessary to bring in a strong garrison, which at the time was out of the question. From a political point of view

it was of great importance that we should maintain order in the area, and at the time should avoid the appearance of using force for this."<sup>91</sup>

It seems that the British policy in Kurdistan was pursued on the basis of trial and error from 1918 to 1920. Immediately after the fall of Shaikh Mahmud's experiment in May 1919, the British contacted Sayyid Taha al-Nehri, a grandson of 'Ubaidullah al-Nehri, and asked him to establish a Kurdish autonomous regime in southern Kurdistan. Rawāndūz town, where the Sayyid had some influence, was to be the centre of his tribal confederation. The role which was to be allotted to him was very similar to that of Shaikh Mahmud; he was to form an autonomous Kurdish entity and be responsible for it to the Civil Commissioner in Baghdad. Realizing that the British government was going to use his influence merely to pacify the southern Kurds, while in fact his role was not going to be much different from that of Shaikh Mahmud, Sayyid Taha declined the offer.<sup>92</sup>

As they were unable to find a Kurdish leader who could play a role similar to that of Shaikh Mahmud, enabling them to establish indirect British control of the region, from June 1919 to July 1920 the British tried to establish direct control of southern Kurdistan. This policy proved to be a disaster, and a number of uprisings ensued in various parts of the region as will be discussed in more detail below. Therefore, in 1920, it was the view of the Acting Civil Commissioner that direct rule of southern Kurdistan was not possible.

Thus Hamdi Beg Baban, a Bābānid Prince and long-time resident of Baghdad,

was asked to establish an autonomous Kurdish regime in southern Kurdistan. Hamdi Beg made a British-sponsored trip to the region to enlist the support of the tribal chieftains. Rafiq Hilmi, a pro-British Young Kurd, was also instructed by the British government to form the Komelayī Serbekhoyī Kurd, a Kurdish club intended to enlist popular support for Hamdi Beg. The latter told the British government that he would like to rule Kurdistan as an enlightened monarch on behalf of the British. However, he expressed great concern that the "indianization of Kurdistan," which had been taking place since the fall of Shaikh Mahmud's administration, would make his task very difficult. Consequently, he said that only a very loose British supervision of the Kurdish state could be tolerated by the Kurds. The British officials, who had vested interests in maintaining their direct hold on the region, declared that the Babanid prince was not qualified to lead the Kurds. They maintained that his long absence from Kurdistan meant that he was not fully aware of the political realities of the region. As a result, direct rule of the region continued, and the Hamdi Beg experiment was dropped.<sup>93</sup> However, the formulation of the Komelayī Serbekhoyī Kurd was the first instance of British sponsorship of the cause of Kurdish nationalism in southern Kurdistan.

The lack of a coherent policy on the part of the British government was due in large measure to the division of responsibilities for eastern policy among the Foreign Office, the India Office and the War Office. Also there were great differences between the views of the British officials in London and those who were in Mesopotamia. Sir Arnold Wilson, the Acting Civil Commissioner, in

particular developed and followed a Kurdish policy which was not in accord with the views of the British government at home from 1918 to 1920. From November 1918 to August 1919, it was the view of the Foreign Office that troops should be withdrawn from Sulaymāniya. In 1919, Wilson was instructed to proceed with the "creation of the Arab province of Mosul fringed by the autonomous Kurdish states under the Kurdish chiefs," who were to be advised by the British political officers.<sup>94</sup> But the India Office supported Wilson's view that the presence of British troops there was necessary for the maintenance of peace and security in Mesopotamia. Therefore, until August 1919, the India Office allowed the Acting Civil Commissioner for Mesopotamia to evade the implementation of the Foreign Office's Kurdish policy.<sup>95</sup>

However, Shaikh Mahmud's uprising of 1919, and the anti-British tribal unrest in Bahdīnān region, as will be explained below, contributed to a change of attitude at the India Office to their policy toward the Kurds. On August 24, 1919, Wilson received the following reply to his request for the extension of the railway from Baghdad to Kirkuk:

"They have hitherto supported the policy of extending British influence in South Kurdistan because they believed that the inhabitants themselves welcomed it, and on this understanding they sanctioned the proposal made in your telegram of May 9th to create a fringe of autonomous Kurdish states under Kurdish chiefs. It would now appear that belief was misplaced

and that inhabitants, so far from welcoming British influence are so actively hostile that strategic railways are required to keep them in check. Might it not in these circumstances be a better course to withdraw our Political Officers, &c., and leave Kurds to their own devices?"<sup>96</sup>

Thus the views of the Foreign Office and the India Office became basically the same; they both favoured withdrawal from southern Kurdistan. Wilson argued that the abandonment of Kurdistan would have a disastrous impact on the overall British policy in Mesopotamia and Persia. He thought that Sulaymānīya division from the perspective of geography and strategy belonged to Mesopotamia rather than to Kurdistan. Also, Wilson contended, peace in the frontier region was very fragile, and the Persian government could only maintain peace within its borders if the British government continued to govern the 'Iraqi side of the frontier. Also, he claimed, if the Kurds were left to the mercy of their own, they would constitute a "permanent menace" to Mesopotamia. This would mean more serious tribal unrest, forcing the British to deploy more troops in the region.<sup>97</sup>

Between August 1919 to April 1920, the Foreign and India Offices had sent the Acting Civil Commissioner in Baghdad a series of orders asking him to investigate the means of disengagement from southern Kurdistan and rendering moral and material support to the Kurds to enable them to establish their own government. Wilson had skillfully managed to evade following them.<sup>98</sup> For instance, on March 24, 1920, the Secretary of State for India telegraphed Baghdad

that the British government favoured complete withdrawal from Kurdistan, and asked Wilson's view of the issue. In his reply, dated March 25, Wilson warned that the policy which they were about to pursue was:

"...likely before long to prove fatal to the retention of Mesopotamia... I beg that Government will even at this moment re-consider a policy which must within a few years either be reversed at great expense and loss of life, or lead to a series of incidents which will very possibly involve the abandonment of the whole of Mosul Vilayet and possibly of Mesopotamia."

Sir Arthur Hirtzel, Assistant Under-Secretary of State at the India Office, was apparently irritated by Wilson's reply, and wrote back:

"You must surely realize that Government will not allow themselves to be threatened. I sympathize with you but you will make a great mistake if you do not take orders regarding Kurdistan seriously. Government will not include Kurdistan in their Mandate..."<sup>99</sup>

The disagreement over policy with regard to the Kurds was evidenced in the interdepartmental meeting which was held on April 13, 1920 in London. General B. Radcliffe of the War Office suggested that a forward policy should be pursued in Kurdistan. With the agreement of Wilson, he proposed an "air scheme" which

would allow the air force to play a leading role in maintaining order in the region. The proponents of the air scheme were among the staunchest supporters of direct rule and favoured the establishment of a "greater 'Iraq" in Mesopotamia and southern Kurdistan. It was assumed that this scheme would facilitate the effective and inexpensive control of southern Kurdistan: instead of maintaining troops in the region, "if a town or a village became rebellious, it could be dealt with more easily from air than the ground. It was anticipated that the air scheme would offer a way out of the dilemma in Kurdistan, where both direct rule through the allocation of force in the region and indirect rule through the Kurdish chieftains had proved to be impractical.<sup>100</sup> In fact, the success of the experiment in Kurdistan was hoped to be far-reaching:

"The air scheme policy in 'Iraq and in Kurdistan was to be one of the first examples of harnessing air power to the imperial policies of Great Britain throughout its possessions in non-Western areas and the Third World. It allowed Great Britain to pursue a "forward policy" in some areas and to consolidate its power in other areas even as it retreated in still other parts of the world. Kurdistan was the first testing ground of this great post-war experiment."<sup>101</sup>

Lord Curzon objected to the air scheme on the grounds that the inexperienced air force staff could not deal with the tribesmen. The implementation of the

scheme also implied permanent occupation of southern Kurdistan, which the Foreign Office opposed on the grounds that Curzon had already promised the French Foreign Minister, Philippe Bertholet, that Great Britain was about to withdraw from Kurdistan. During the meeting the Foreign and India Offices presented their solution, which was the establishment of an independent Kurdistan. Wilson reiterated his earlier stand that such a policy would have an adverse impact on the overall British policy in the Middle East. In the end, Wilson's view prevailed. The meeting concluded with the following decisions: Britain would regard southern Kurdistan as a part of Mesopotamia, and Turkey would be allowed to retain northern Kurdistan. (102) On May 14, 1920, Wilson wrote concerning these decisions:

"As for Kurdistan, Lord Curzon has been induced to capitulate, and we have got as much as we can expect, and I am well content... I hate to be in the position of hearing from Government that they propose to do something, and promptly objecting, but I am constantly forced into that position by the foreign office. I regard it as nothing short of a calamity that Mesopotamia cannot be run, policy, administration, and all, by a single Office at home."<sup>103</sup>

From April 1920 Wilson instructed Major Soane to rule southern Kurdistan on administrative lines similar to the ones established in other parts of Mesopotamia.<sup>104</sup>

There was also a considerable degree of disagreement among the British officials in Mesopotamia with regard to the policies to be pursued toward the Kurds. While Wilson, who was in charge of Mesopotamian politics, was no advocate of a Kurdish state, Major Noel,<sup>105</sup> who was in charge of the British government's Kurdish policy from 1918 to 1919, was strongly committed to the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in southern Kurdistan, and parts of Kurdish-inhabited territories occupied by Turkey and Persia.

Wilson's main concern was the securing of a viable frontier in the north for 'Iraq, and this could not be achieved without the inclusion of all southern Kurdistan in the future 'Iraqi state to be established under British auspices. He saw that the Kurdish nationalist movement of that time barely existed--it was still in its infancy, and it was not pro-British. Also, Wilson firmly believed that the southern Kurds would soon join Turkey's crusade to expel the British from Mesopotamia. Finally, a Kurdish state would necessarily be an anti-Armenian one, for the Armenians, who were British allies during the war, were claiming the same territories which the Kurds claimed.<sup>106</sup>

Major Noel, on the other hand, argued that the Kurds had been oppressed by the Turks for the past four hundred years, and genuinely desired independence from Turkey. A Kurdish state, he thought, would weaken Turkey, so that it would not oppose the formation of an Armenian state. Furthermore, the Kurds had been strongly influenced by the Wilsonian principle of self-determination, and they would not rest until they achieved their independence. Therefore, Noel thought,

Great Britain, as a civilizing power (and himself as an agent of that power) was destined to help the Kurds to achieve this age-old ambition.<sup>107</sup>

Throughout the year 1919, the British government wavered between the views of Wilson and Noel, and remained undecided. In 1920, however, the anti-British uprisings in Kurdistan convinced the government that "Noel's Kurdistan was a chimera, while Wilson's 'Iraq was a going concern." It was hardly likely that the British government would jeopardize 'Iraq's security and stability to set in motion Noel's much criticized plan for an independent Kurdistan.<sup>108</sup>

Personal commitment to the views in question was an important factor in the differences over policy in Kurdistan. Wilson was inclined to claim as much as he could for 'Iraq, just as Noel did for Kurdistan. The Acting Civil Commissioner constantly complained to the India Office about Noel being "too deeply" committed to the cause of the Kurds, and to a particular line of policy which was "averse to the British interests" in Mesopotamia.<sup>109</sup>

Wilson was not alone in criticizing Noel's commitment to the Kurdish cause. Edmonds was equally bitter. The latter writes that it was inevitable that a great difference of opinion should arise between Noel and himself over policy in Kurdistan as Noel "tended to look at the problem too unquestioningly through Sulaimani spectacles."<sup>110</sup> Colonel Leachman, PO in Mosul, claimed that Noel was biased against the Christian communities in the Wilāyah of Mosul in favour of the Kurds. M. Mohler, the British Political Officer in Constantinople openly shared the feeling of the other British officials that Noel was trying to achieve for Kurds

what T.E. Lawrence wanted to achieve for the Arabs.<sup>111</sup> Incidentally, in 1919 T.E. Lawrence wrote to the Foreign Office protesting against Noel's "flirt with the Kurds who have no corporate feeling" and no capacity for autonomy or nationality. Lawrence thought that Noel's pro-Kurdish policy was futile, and would only serve in the end to drive the Arabs into an anti-British alliance with the Kamalist forces in Turkey.<sup>112</sup>

The differences in attitude toward the Kurds led to confusion and uncertainty among the Kurds, and contradictions in the policies which were followed in the region. On one hand, Wilson treated Shaikh Mahmud merely as his representative in Sulaymāniya division and discouraged any appearances of Kurdish nationalism and separatism. On the other hand, Noel treated Shaikh Mahmud as his protégé, ruler of an independent Kurdistan-in-the-making. This was reflected during Shaikh Mahmud's inauguration in his post as hukumdar. Noel encouraged the Kurds to hold a lavish ceremony "fit only for the birth of a nation-state." Moreover, the title of hukumdar did not denote the position of a governor; Shaikh Mahmud appointed a mutaşarrif of his own and had a cabinet.<sup>113</sup> However, when Shaikh Mahmud, with the help of Noel, tried to expand his power into the outlying qadās in southern Kurdistan, the political officers in Mosul, Kirkuk, Rāniya, and Rawāndūz hindered this process with the implicit consent of Wilson.<sup>114</sup> The March 1919 appointment of Major Soane, with a clear mandate to gradually curtail the Shaikh's power gave rise to a lot of confusion in the region. The British government did not and could not have made this policy clear to the Kurds.<sup>115</sup> The

following conversation between Major Greenhouse, a deputy of Soane, in Sulaymānīya and 'Abbas Mahmud Agha, the leader of the pro-Shaikh Mahmud section of the Pizhder tribe provides a glimpse of the confusion of the Kurdish chieftains at the time. Greenhouse had asked 'Abbas Agha what he was doing in Sulaymānīya. The chief replied: "It is strange that a few months ago, you induced us to come here to give homage to Shaikh Mahmud. Now you are asking me why I am in Sulaymānīya. Do you think that we are monkeys who will play as you wish?"<sup>116</sup>

The British officials were aware that their policies were confusing to the Kurds. Hawrami quotes Wilson's portrayal of the situation:

"The dilemma which faced the Kurds at this time was based on the fact that on the one hand the British could not make up their mind as to what to do with Mosul Wilayat and consequently they refused to step in and establish direct British rule, yet on the other hand they were not willing to go along with other Kurdish plans for the establishment of an independent Kurdistan."<sup>117</sup>

Miss Bell expresses a similar opinion about the confusion of the Kurds in the face of the indecisiveness of the British:

"The real difficulty here is that we don't know exactly what we intend to do in this country. Can you persuade people to take your side: when you are not sure in the end whether you'll be there to take theirs? No wonder

they hesitate; and it would take a good deal of potent persuasion to make them think that your side and theirs are compatible."<sup>118</sup>

For this reason, even Wilson, who was the most bitter critic of Shaikh Mahmud, admits that the British government shared a certain degree of responsibility for the failure of their policy of dealing with Shaikh Mahmud. He writes:

"Shaikh Mahmud was treated leniently because he had not molested British political prisoners, and because the policy of the British Government in the disputed Mosul Wilayah was such as not to justify the execution of a rebel leader."<sup>119</sup>

Shaikh Mahmud's first governorship was a tribal regime which was devised by the India Office to administer southern Kurdistan. This was an ad hoc policy to maintain law and order among the unruly Kurdish tribesmen, and it was heavily influenced by the British experience in India. The policy failed to achieve its intended objectives due to the lack of understanding between Shaikh Mahmud, upon whom the success of the policy depended, and the British. The indecisive and confused nature of British dealings with the Kurds, the lack of nationalism among the general population and disunity among the chieftians are equally significant factors which brought about the fall of Shaikh Mahmud's government.

The break-up of the tribal regime and the resulting war in Kurdistan enhanced the position of the British officials in Mesopotamia and Kurdistan who favoured direct rule. The failure of the policy had also created, as will be discussed below, a favourable atmosphere for the growth of non-indigenous political ideas. Kurdish nationalism, Turkish-sponsored ideas disguised as pan-Islamism, as well as Bolshevik and Sharifian propaganda all influenced the population of southern Kurdistan in the years that followed.

## Notes for Chapter 3

1. This school of thought viewed Arab politics in terms of the needs of India. It aimed at the absorption of the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia through championing the cause of the Wahhabis of Arabia. It was opposed by the so-called Anglo-Egyptian school (or Hashimite School), which advocated the cause of Arab nationalism, and aimed at placing friendly Arab chieftains, especially the descendants of Sharif Husain of Makka, as leaders of independent Arab states under the indirect rule of the British Empire. The former school wanted to fight French influence in Syria, facilitating British protection of the Suez Canal and the land routes to India. (For a detailed discussion of these colonial schools of thought and their relevance to the Arab world in general and 'Iraq in particular, see: Khadim Hashim Niama, "Anglo-Iraqi Relations During the Mandate," unpub. Doctoral Dissertation, University of College of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1974, pp. 25-9; Ireland, pp. 101-2; 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Hasanī, Tārikh al-'Iraq al-Siyāsī al-Hadīth (Sidon: 'Irfan Press, 1957), pp. 56-7; Peter Sluglett, Britain in 'Iraq (London: Ithaca Press, 1976), pp. 25-7; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, pp. 274-6.
2. For detailed studies on the topic see: R.I. Bruce, The Forward Policy and Its Results or Thirty-Five Years' Work Amongst the Tribes on Our North-West Frontier of India, 2 vols. (London: Green and Company, 1900); T.H. Thornton, Colonel Sir Robert Sandeman: His Life and Work on Our India Frontier (London: J. Murray, 1895).
3. Loyalties, II, pp. 142. As early as March 1916, H. Asquith, then Prime Minister, had compared the Kurds to the Pathan tribes in India, and warned the British forces in Mesopotamia not to consider occupation of southern Kurdistan. He rightly predicted that the Kurds would constitute a perpetual menace to the British troops in Mesopotamia, just as the Pathans did in the Punjab valley. [See: H. H. Asquith, Letters to Venetia Stanley, ed. M. Michael and F. Brock (London: Oxford Press, 1982), p. 510.
4. F.O. 371/5067, Inter-Departmental Conference On Middle Eastern Affairs, Draft Minutes of a Meeting Held at the Foreign Office on Tuesday, April 13, 1920. I.D.C.E., 37th, "Minutes," p. 5.
5. Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, p. 478.
6. Air 20/512. Teleg. from Political Baghdad (POL) to India Office (I.O.), No. 9351, 1-Nov. 1918; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, pp. 471f.
7. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, pp. 59-60; Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 128; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, pp. 473f.

8. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, pp. 60-1.
9. Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 129; F.O. 371/5069 Teleg. from Civil Commissioner (C.I.) to I.O. un. numbered 3, July, 1920; Bell, Review of Civil Administration, pp. 60f; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, pp. 480f.
10. Longrigg, Iraq from 1900 to 1950, pp. 103-4; Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 60; Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 130.
11. Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, p. 483.
12. Yadāsht, I, p. 67.
13. Rupees were the currency used in 'Iraq from 1918 to 1932. One pound sterling was equal to fifteen rupees. (See; William Spencer, "The Diplomatic History of Iraq, 1920-1932," un.pub. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Utah, June, 1979, p. 73.)
14. Air 20/512 Letter. Pol. Sulaimani. to Pol. Baghdad Nov. 19, 1918.
15. E.B. Soane, Administrative Report on Sulaymania Division 1919 (London; H.M.G. Stationery Office, 1920), pp. 2-3; Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 60.
16. F.O. 371/5069, Office of Civil Commissioner, Report on Kirkuk Division (London: H.M.G. Stationery Office, 1920), pp. 3-4.
17. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 64; Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 135.
18. Soane, Administrative Report, p. 4; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, pp. 487f.
19. G.M. Lees, "Two Years in South Kurdistan," JRCAS, xv (1928), pt. iii, p. 225; Wilson, Loyalties, II, pp. 134-5.
20. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 64.
21. Aḥmad Taqī, Khabat-ī Galī Kurd (Baghdad; 'Arabiya Press, 1970), p. 92.
22. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 30; Hawramī, "Shaikh Mahmud and the Kurdish Question, 1917-1920," pt. 1, Kurdish Journal vi (1969), No. 2, p. 62.
23. Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 1, pp. 517-8.

24. For a detailed account of the battles of the May 1919 revolt, see: Gūrānī, Rihla, pp. 100-107; Wilson, Loyalties, II, pp. 137-9; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 31, 35-7; 'Abd al-Mun'im Ghulāmī, Thawratunā fī Shimāl al-'Irāq 1919-1920 (Baghdad: N/P, 1966), pp. 91-98; Longrigg, Iraq 1990 to 1950, pp. 104-5; Air 20/716, Memo. "Operations in South Kurdistan" G.H.Q., 18th Division, July 26, 1919; Bell, Review, p. 64f.
25. Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 137.
26. Bell, Review, pp. 68-9; Hay, Two Years, pp. 160-1; Madḥar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, p. 511.
27. Air 20/716, Memorandum, General Head Quarters Mesopotamia Force (GHQMF), No. G/696, 26-7-1919; Bell, Review of Civil Administration, pp. 65-6. On the rebel side the casualties were: fifty dead, ten wounded, and one hundred and twenty taken prisoner. Kurdish sources put the British casualties at two hundred men. (See Taqi, pp. 28-29.) The treason of Mushir Agha, leader of a pro-Shaikh Mahmud tribal force, has been given considerable weight in Kurdish sources as a reason for the defeat of the Kurds. (See: Ahmad Bagi Sahibgiran, Diwān-i Hamdī (Sulaymānīya, Sarkawtin Press, p. 6.); Taqi, p. 29.) Edmonds recognizes the role of Mushir Agha, who knew the region and the strength of the rebels, in the battle. He argues that Mushir was used according to the principle of using one thief against another. (See: Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 85.) Wilson pressed for the execution of Shaikh Mahmud, for he thought that as long as the Shaikh was alive he would be a threat to the stability of Kurdistan. However, the British government considered it immoral to execute him, because he had not molested the British prisoners of war in Sulaymaniya. (See: Loyalties, II, p. 132.) Also, the British government thought that Shaikh Mahmud's execution would earn them the eternal enmity of his powerful shaikhly family in southern Kurdistan. (See: Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 48.)
28. Air 20/513, "Note on the Political Situation in Southern Kurdistan," Major Soane, 28-7-1920; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, pp. 527-8.
29. British Documents on Foreign Affairs 1919-1939, ed. E. Woodward, R. Butler, Vol. IV, The Near and Middle East, 1st Ser. 1952. Teleg. from Admiral S. Calthrop to Earl Curzon, No. 1437, 10-7-1919, p. 679.
30. B.D.F.A., IV, Teleg. from M. Mohler to J. Tilley, unub., Constantinople, 7, 21, 1919; Cab. 23/20, "Minutes of Cabinet Meeting," March 25, 1920; FO. 371/5067, Teleg. cc. Baghdad, to 1.0. 4, 2, 1920.
31. Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 44.

32. Wilson, II, p. 86; Shaikh Mahmud wrote to Wilson: "On behalf of all the Kurdish people on either side of the frontier," offering to rule Kurdistan as the representative of the British administration. (See: Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 68.)
33. Wilson, Loyalties, p. 87; G. R. Driver, "The Kurdish Question", Persian Magazine (1921) September, No. 3., p. 255. Shaikh Mahmud's letter to Wilson was intercepted and sent to the Turkish Chief of Staff. The Shaikh was sentenced to death. However, the verdict was commuted to imprisonment for fear that his execution might lead to a popular uprising in the region, when the Turks were fighting desperately against the British troops. Ihsan Pasha took an unprecedented and far-sighted approach to the issue. He declared amnesty for the Shaikh and the Kurdish chieftains associated with him. The Shaikh was given 3000 gold coins and the task of raising a tribal militia to protect the eastern flank of the Turkish army which was fighting the advancing British troops along the Tigris. (See: Hilmi, Vol. I, p. 53.) The reasons for the sudden British withdrawal from Kirkuk were that the British government was under pressure to divert much of their forces towards the Caucasus and Azerbaijan, and British military officers thought that an advance on Mosul along the Tigris would be easier than taking the long Kirkuk-Mosul highway, which would involve risks of engagements with the Kurds. (See: S. Nāḍim, Harb al-'Irāq 1914-1918 (Baghdad: Dar al-Tazamun, 1966), pp. 181-82.)
34. Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 88, quoted in Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, pp. 469-70.
35. "The Kurdish Question," pp. 255-6.
36. 'Iraq from 1900 to 1950, p. 91.
37. Hilmi, I, p. 92; Cf. Wilson, Loyalties, II, pp. 134f; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, p. 490; Bell, Review, p. 64.
38. Loyalties, II, p. 134. From 1908 on Shaikh Mahmud was the leader of the Barzinji family and led several revolts against the Young Turk regime in Sulaymāniya division. The Hamawand tribe was his closest ally in his defiance of Turkish rule. (See: Gurani, p. 99.)
39. "Two Years in South Kurdistan," pp. 253-254.
40. Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 30.
41. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, pp. 59, 64; Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 135; FO. 371/5068 Sulaimania, 11-7-1920. Joining Shaikh Mahmud's tribal

confederation was viewed by many Kurdish chieftains as beneficial to them. "Following allegiance came allowances in ready cash and a system whereby the tribal chieftains assessed their own goods and those of their tribe without the critical eye of government officials." (See Soane, Sulaymania Division, p. 1.)

42. Soane, Sulaymania Division, pp. 1-2, quoted in Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, p. 489.

43. The harsh verdict which the British officials passed on the Shaikh's character was partially due to his "shattering" of their image of the Kurds, and their frustration with a man whom they considered to be a major hindrance in their efforts to serve Kurdish interests, which some of them had taken to heart. The British servicemen in Kurdistan were for the most part "very honest, sincere, self-sacrificing and were fired with zeal and enthusiasm." (See Waheed, pp. 163-4.)

44. The family takes its name after the village of which lies three miles to the east of Sulaymaniya. The founder of this shaikhly family was a certain 'Isa Nurbakhsh, son of Baba 'Ali of Hamadan, nephew of Baba Tahir Hamadani, a celebrated mystic poet of Iran. Nurbakhsh was said to be a sayyid from among the descendants of Musa al-Kazim, the 7th Shi'i Imam. Sayyid 'Isa was apparently told while on Hajj to build a tekiya in Barzinja village, which he did. (See: Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 69.)

45. During the 1876 Ottoman-Russian war the Barzinja shaikhs were instrumental in rallying the Kurds throughout the Ottoman Empire to the Sultan's call for jihād. He rewarded them by granting them large estates in Sulaymaniya division. In 1899, Shaikh Sa'id was invited by the Sultan to visit Constantinople, and Shaikh Mahmud accompanied his father on this trip, which sowed the seed for his later affection for court life. It is also reported that while Shaikh Mahmud was in Constantinople he had contacts with the Young Kurds. In a gesture of great confidence and honour, Sultan 'Abdul Hamid made the secret code of direct contact with the court available to Shaikh Sa'id. (See: Muḥammad Amīn Zakī, Tārīkh Sulaymāniya (Baghdad: Nashr Press, 1950), pp. 218-19; Jamil Rozhbayani, "Shaikh Mahmud Hafīd Zādeh," Karwān (1987), No. 113, pp. 57-58; Hawramī, pt. 2, p. 35; Kamāl R. Muḥammad, "Muqābala Farīda Mā'a Shaikh Mahmūd al-Ḥāfid," reproduced from Habaz Būz (an 'Iraqi weekly), 1934, Karwan 96 (1984), November Issue, p. 120; Taqi, pp. 16-17; Hilmi, I, pp. 48-49.) Shaikh Mahmud was held in the highest esteem by the Kurds. One of his followers was reported to have said: "Before God... I have seen bullets pass right through his body. Yet Shaikh Mahmud remained unharmed. He cannot be killed in war." (See: Hamilton, p. 201.) Arnold Toynbee compares the status of Shaikh Mahmud among his people to the popularity of Idrisi Sayyid of Sabya in North Africa, and Shah Isma'il of Ardabil. These three men's popularity was due mainly to the religious status of their ancestors. (See: Royal Institute of International Affairs, Survey of

International Affairs - The Islamic World Since the Peace Treaty (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 482.)

46. The Young Turks in Sulaymaniya, aided by the powerful merchants of the city who resented Shaikh Mahmud's family's monopoly of the Sulaymaniya bazar, bribed the Mosul officials to call Shaikh Sa'id to Mosul city. While in Mosul, Shaikh Sa'id and his company were attacked and killed by a stone-throwing mob. The behaviour of the mob has been attributed variously to government officials in Mosul, greedy merchants, and the provocation of the people in the bazaar when a certain Baha'addin Effendi, a drunken clerk who accompanied the Shaikh, flirted with a woman of Mosul, who in turn called upon her country-men to defend her honour. (See: Soane, To Mesopotamia in Disguise, p. 192; Hilmi, I, p. 39; Latif Barzinji, "Shaikh Mahmudi Hafid, Karwan (1984), No. 26, pp. 2-4; Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 43; Taqi, pp. 18-21; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 77-8.)

47. Hilmi, I, pp. 38-40; Taqi, p. 16.

48. Hawrami, pt. 1, p. 58.

49. Air 20/512, Teleg. from Pol. Baghdad to Secretary of State (S. of S.) for India, No. 9267, 30, 10, 1918.

50. Yadāsht, I, p. 101.

51. Latīf Barzinjī, "Shaikh Mahmudī Namir", Karwān (1984), No. 26, p. 5; Rozhbayānī, pp. 62-63; Shamzīnī, p. 110; Hawramī, pt. 1, p. 135; Taqi, p.16; Gūrānī, pp. 99-100.

52. Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. II, p. 528.

53. Waheed, The Kurds, p. 161.

54. Hilmi, I, pp. 83-85.

55. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 63; also quoted in Jwaideh, Kurdistan Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, p. 496.

56. Khabātī, p. 15.

57. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 64; Taqi, p. 29; Longrigg, Iraq 1900 to 1950, p. 101; Mayson, p. 342; Driver, p. 113. Shaikh Mahmud's intransigent and hasty attitude towards the British government can only be understood in the context of the bewildering state of affairs in Mesopotamia, the spread of

unfamiliar ideologies such as Bolshevism, currents and cross-currents of political intrigue among different rival political groups, Turkish agitation, pan-Islamic propaganda, and finally Sharifian intrigues from Syria. All these were sufficient "to tax the minds and hearts of most men" in Kurdistan. (See: Jwaideh, Nationalist Movement, pt. II, p. 506.)

58. Loyalties, II, p. 135.

59. See: Royal Institute of International Affairs, Memorandum on the Termination of the Mandate (London: 1932), p. 3. Of the various wartime declarations to the Middle Eastern peoples, the November 8, 1918 Anglo-French Declaration was the most relevant to the Kurds. It said: "The object aimed at by France and Great Britain in prosecuting in the East the war is... the complete emancipation of the people so long oppressed by the Turks and the establishment of National Governments and administrations deriving their authority from the initiations and free choice of the indigenous population." (See: Ibid., pp. 3-4.) The Young Kurds, who like their Turkish and Arab counterparts were graduates of the Tanzimat schools of Constantinople, Baghdad and Sulaymaniya, embraced the Wilsonian principles of the right of the ethnic groups of the Ottoman Empire to independent nation-states. (See: Air 20/513 Intelligence Office Report No. 499 I.C. Intelligence Office, Constantinople, July 13, 1919.)

60. Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 59.

61. Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. II, pp. 502-5.

62. Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 127.

63. 'Iraq from 1900 to 1950, p. 104.

64. N. Spencer, pp. 123-4.

65. Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 154.

66. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 63; Noel, Diary, p. 15; Wilson, Loyalties, II, pp. 148-9.

67. Lees, p. 254.

68. FO. 371/5068, "A Note on Rowanduz" by W. Hay, 26, 12, 1919.

69. FO. 371/5069, memorandum, from I.O. to FO. No. 1124, 21-2-1921; Harold Nicolson, Curzon: The Last Phase, 1922- 1925 (New York: Harcourt Comp. 1939, p. 3299); Halmreich, pp. 301-2; In 1915, Sir Mark Sykes had told a cabinet

meeting that there was to a certain extent a Kurdish question, but that a Kurdish question similar to the Bulgarian, Albanian, Irish and Polish questions did not exist. He argued that the Kurds "had no sense of race of any kind whatever. They had a subconscious sense of race and certain tribal instincts, but are entirely uninfluenced by the idea of nationality as modern Europeans understood it. Kurds had been ruled by different governments, and they had never a tradition of a Kurdish nation, "similar to Armenians and Jews." (See: Cab. 27/206, "British Desiderata in Turkey in Asia," June 30th, 1915, Appendix, "Remark on Sir Hirzel's Note" by Lieut. Colonel Sir M. Sykes, pp. 100-1.) Sir Arnold Wilson had a similar understanding of the history of the Kurds. He writes that they were up to the turn of the century mainly tribal people, and a great proportion was even nomadic. Throughout history, Kurds did not have their own state. They gave allegiance to the Shahs and Sultans in Baghdad, Persia and Constantinople. The idea of territorial boundaries was secondary to their allegiance as tribesmen, who livelihood could not be expected to defer to an artificial frontier line. (See: Wilson, South West Asia, p. 107. )

70. F0. 371/5068~ "Turkey" Teleg. from Admiral De Robeck to F0. No. 302, 3-29-1920.

71. Lees , p . 254 ; Wilson, Loyalites, II, p. 133

72. F0. 371/5067, Inter-Departmental Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs, Minutes, 13-4-1920, p. 3.

73. Air 20/512 "Note" prepared by Nasir Efendi, Dragoman to Major Noel, 5-8-1919; Wilson, Loyalities, II, p. 133; Hay, Two Years, p. 174.

75. Wilson, Loyalities, II, p. 129; van Bruinessen, p. 280; F0. 371/5069 "Administrative Report of Kirkuk Division" for period January 1st, 1919 to December 31st, 1919, pp. 4-5.

76. Hay, Two Years, p. 141.

77. 371/5069, A. G. Rundale A.P.O. "Administrative Report on Koi Sanjaq for the Year 1919," 15-1-1920, pp. 19-30; Hay, Two Years, pp. 160-1.

78. Kamal Nuri Ma'ruf, "Shaikh Mahmud Namir: Khabat-i Dizhi Ingliz", Peshkawtin January, 1980, No. 41, p. 3; Hilmi, I, pp. 72-3, 78.

79. Ḥamza, 'Abdullāh, Bārzān (Sulaymānīya: Zhin Press, 1959), p. 16; The disagreement among the Kurds in southern Kurdistan was a reflection of overall disunity among the Kurds throughout the Ottoman Empire. Prominent Kurdish chieftains and notables were unable at this time to sink their differences in

furtherance of a common goal. There was--if any--an ineffective degree of coordination between Shaikh Məhmud in Sulaymāniya, Simko in Persian Kurdistan, the leaders of Kurd Ta'ali wa Tarraqi Jam'iati (Kurdish Club) in Constantinople, and Sharif Pasha, the Kurdish representative in the Paris Peace Conference. Simko was jealous of Shaikh Mahmud's growing power. (See: Air 20/512, Teleg. from Bristow, Tabriz to Tehran No. 333, 25-1-1919.) In Constantinople, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Nehri, the president of the Kurdish Club, who represented the traditional aristocratic Kurdish leadership, was constantly quarrelling with the Badr Khanids. The latter represented the newly emerging Kurdish intelligentsia who were pressing for total independence from Turkey, whereas 'Abd al-Qadir was calling for autonomy for the Kurds, with a nominal allegiance to the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph. This led to an open split within the Kurdish Club, and paralyzed its activities. (See: FO 371/5068, Teleg. from Admiral De Robeck (HC in Const.) to FO. No. 401, 3-5-1920; Air 20/517, memo., GHQ (Bagh.) 17-6-1919; Air 20/513 "Northern Kurdistan" report 18-2-1920, pp. 1-2; FO. 371/6469 "Turkey" annual report, 1920, pp. 42-44.) General Sharif Pasha, who was an ex-Ottoman diplomat in Stockholm and a son of a Sulaymaniya notable, lacked credibility with the Allies. The British government in particular viewed him as an untrustworthy opportunist. Sharif Pasha was a staunch supporter of Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid, and had only recently joined the Young Turks. Since his childhood he had lived in Paris, and it was the view of many British officials that he was "more familiar with Paris" than with Kurdistan. Therefore, he had no credible political base. During the fighting within the Kurdish Club, Sharif Pasha sided with 'Abd al-Qadir's faction, and this led the other faction to expel him from the Club and declare him as no longer their representative in Paris. Finally, while the peace talks were still going on in Paris, the British discovered that Sharif Pasha had once again changed sides and joined the anti-British Islamic Society in Paris. (See: FO. 371/6469, "Turkey" annual report, 1920, p. 4243; FO. 371/5068 left. from CC. Baghdad. to FO. 25-3-1920; FO. 608/97 "Sharif Pasha", A Note by Toynbee. 1-6-1920; FO. 371/5061, Inter-Departmental Conference, 13-4-1920, "Minutes", p. 3.)

80. Madhar, p. 175.

81. FO. 371/5062, "Parliamentary Debate, Turkey", 10-3, 1920.

82. Air 20/512 Teleg. from GHQ to CC. No. C2735, 3-7-1919.

83. 371/5069, Teleg. from CC. to I. O. No. 4916, 17-7-1920. For a detailed discussion on British policy in Mesopotamia during the years 1918 to 1920, see: Ireland, pp. 109-12; Niama, pp. 25-7; Sluglett, pp. 35-8.

84. FO. 371/5067, Inter-Departmental Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs, "Minutes", 4-13-1920, p. 3.

85. Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 124. The delay in signing the peace treaty in Paris has been attributed to the procrastination and acrimony in the Anglo-French negotiations over Syria. French and Arab claims to Syria was the most thorny issue in Anglo-French negotiations during this period. Once this issue was solved, the negotiation of the terms of the Peace Treaty with Syria went smoothly. However, the United States' government's indecision, and subsequent reluctance to take the responsibility of a mandate in eastern Anatolia, was another factor causing the delay in the Paris Peace Talks. (See: Halmreich, pp. 328-29; Temperly, p. 28.)
86. BDFP, Ist. Ser. Vol. IV. letter from Mohler to J. Telly, Constantinople, July 21st, 1919, p. 695; Teleg. from Admiral s. Calthrope (Constantinople) to Earl of Curzon, 10/7/1919, No. 1437, p. 679.
87. 'Iraq from 1900 to 1950, p. 103.
88. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, pp. 59-60.
89. Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 59.
90. Driver, "Kurdish Question", p. 109.
91. Review of Civil Administration, p. 63.
92. Hawramī, pt. II, p. 46; Hilmī, I, p. 46; Hay, Two Years, pp. 353-4.
93. FO. 371/5069, letter from APO, Koi to CC. Air 20/513 "memo" by Hamdi Beg to Lieutenant Colonel Sir Arnold T. Wilson, Baghdad, 6-8-1920; Hawrami, pt. II, p. 100.
94. Air 20/513, Teleg. from Pol. Bagh. to S. S. for India, No. 9267, 30-10-1918; Edmonds, p. 303; Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 123.
95. FO. 371, Teleg. S. S. for India to CC. 23,3,1920; "Kurdistan", India Office Recommendations, memo. No. P.7701, 20-12-1919.
96. Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 142.
97. Ibid., p. 143.
98. FO. 371/5067, Teleg. from CC. to I.O., No. 1558, Baghdad, 4,2,1920.
99. Quoted in Marlow, p. 175.

100. Robert Olson, The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and Shaikh Sa'id's Rebellion 1881-1925 (Austin: University of Texas, 1989), pp. 55-6; FO. 371-5067, Inter-Departmental Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs, "Minutes", 13-4-1920; pp. 1-2.
101. Olson, p. 57.
102. Inter-Departmental Conference, 13-3-1920, "Minutes", pp. 2-4, 8-10; Longrigg, Iraq from 1900 to 1950, p. 107.
103. Quoted in Marlow, p. 176.
104. Inter-Departmental Conference, "Minutes", April 13, 1920, p. 10; FO. 371/4191 from CC. to SSI, 26th & 29th April, 1920.
105. Edward William C. Noel had "a very long, fruitful and adventurous career" in the Middle East. As a British intelligence officer, he worked in the Caucasus during World War I, among the Jangalis of Mirza Kutchak Khan in Gilan in 1919, and among the Bakhtiyaris and Kurds. He was also active among the Pathans and the tribes of the North-West Frontier of India. Noel wrote a seventy-seven page treatise on his reconnaissance and espionage among the Kurds: Diary of Major Noel on Special Duty in Kurdistan, from June 14th to September 21st, 1919. (See: Olson, pp. 194-95.)
106. Hawramī, "Shaikh Mahmud", pt. I, p. 61.
107. Noel, Diary, p. 1; Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 71; Air 20/513, Noel, Malatra to Political Baghdad, und.; "Northern Kurdistan", by G. L. B., 18-2-1920; Taqi, p. 24.
108. L/P & S/10/781 from A. T. Wilson teleg. to Hertzell 27th November, 1919; Cab. 23/20, "Cabinet Meeting", March 23rd, 1920.
109. FO. 371/5068, letter from CC to FO., 19-5-1920.
110. Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 303.
111. Br. Doc. Vol. IV, 1919-39, letter from F. Mohler to J. Teilly, Cons., July 21, 1919, p. 695; Air 20/512 from Political Mosul to Noel Rowanduz Teleg. No. 178, 11th Jan., 1919; Leachman wanted to expel one thousand Kurdish families from Dihok district and settle Christian refugees from Turkey in their place. (See: Madhar, Chand, p. 154.) Noel wrote to Leachman, "Your desire to get rid of Kurds is only equalled by mine to get rid of the Christians. Perhaps we could do an exchange; I will give 2 Assyrians or Christians for one Kurd." See: Air 20/512,

Noel, Rowanduz to Mosul Pol. 12th Jan. 1919.

112. FO. 371/4159, from H. C. De Robeck, cons. teleg. to FO. 7th Sept. 1919; T. E. Lawrence memorandum, und. received Sept. 15th, 1919; FO. 371/6469, "Turkey", Annual Report No. 428, 27-4-1921.

113. Hawramī, pt. I, p. 61.

114. Taqī, pp. 24-5.

115. Afra, p. 113; Shamzini, pp. 109-10; Hawrami, pt. I, p. 61.

116. Taqī, pp. 37-38.

117. Hawramī, pt. 2, p. 61.

118. Burgone, Lady Bell 1914-1920, II, p. 43.

119. Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 145; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, p. 528.

## Chapter 4

## THE PERIOD OF DIRECT RULE: 1919-1920

Major Soane's Administration in Southern Kurdistan

After the fall of Shaikh Mahmud's tribal confederation and the failure of the British government to find a chieftain who would be trustworthy and would facilitate indirect British rule in Kurdistan, the British administration in Mesopotamia opted for direct rule of the region. With Major Noel out of the region since May 1919, Major Soane in Sulaymānīya, Edmonds in Kirkuk, Captain Hay in Arbīl, and Colonel Leachman in Mosul, all Political Officers (POs) who advocated direct rule, attempted to revitalize the slightly modified centralized regime which the Young Turks had established in the area.

Major Soane was a strong critic of indirect rule through the Kurdish chieftains. He considered such a system to be regressive. The tribal system, Soane observed:

"...would result in granting lawlessness more latitude, the dishonest more scope, the tribal chieftains more power for tyranny... in short, it fostered and furthered detrimentals and depressed the beneficial democratic elements."<sup>1</sup>

Captain Hay also maintained that it was impossible to hold Kurdistan without force, and he argued that "direct rule" was the only way to rule the Kurds. The following observation by Hay provides some insight into the attitude of many of the British officials in the region:

"If we hold Arbil, it is absolutely necessary for us not only to keep under our influence but directly to hold Rowanduz. The more I see of the Kurds the more convinced am I that neither do they want nor are they fit for self-Government. They said to me at Rowanduz ["When there is no Government there, we are like sheep without a shepherd; we can't get on without a Government."] This applies not only to the town, but to the tribes. The tradesmen and cultivators fear Aghas and Aghas fear each other. There must be some force present from outside to maintain the balance... The Kurd has the mind of a school boy, but not without a school boy's innate cruelty. He requires a beating one day and a sugar plum the next. Too much severity or too much spoiling renders him unmanageable... If he sees his master has a cane, he will behave. If he sees two companies of infantry in Rowanduz he will become as obedient as you can wish..."<sup>2</sup>

Under direct British rule, the Ottoman administrative divisions were preserved with slight modifications. In each division the British Political Officer carried out the duties of the Ottoman mutaşarrıf, and the Assistant Political Officer functioned

as a qā'immaqām, but the nominal positions of mutasarrif and qā'immaqām were preserved. Moreover, northern 'Iraq was no longer a single wilāyah. The region was divided into several divisions administered directly by the Civil Commissioner in Baghdad. Each division was divided into several qadās (districts). In each qadā there was a qādī (religious judge), a military force of 24 horsemen, and a mudīr māl (comptroller). Each district in its turn was divided into revenue nāhiya under a ma'mūr māl who was responsible to the mudīr māl. In addition, in each nāhiya there was a mudīr, a clerk and a small troop of horsemen. Each nāhiya was divided into smaller administrative villages which were under the control of a mukhtār (elected elder). The latter was given the task of settling disputes, and assisting the ma'mūr māl in the estimation of the crops. In return, the mukhtār was to receive a percentage of the goods of the merchants, and three percent of the winter crop.<sup>3</sup>

The taxation system under direct British rule did not differ much from that of the Young Turks. During the Young Turks' rule, the iltizām system was used; tax collection was auctioned through farming out the government share of each village to the highest bidder. There was a small class of multazims (tax farmers) who did the annual bidding for the right to collect the taxes of the smaller villages. Initially, the British method of collection of taxes was "first see by eye then collect direct." However, the British administration in Kurdistan could not afford to hire the staff required to implement this method of taxation. Therefore, it was eventually decided to resort to the iltizām system. Where iltizāms could not be

conferred, a certain price was charged on each village which was to be collected directly. The koda, the tax on livestock during the Young Turk period of 9 1/2 piastres a head was also preserved. However, a certain amount of money was to be paid to the ma'mūr māls who were collecting the koda tax.<sup>4</sup>

The period of direct British rule was characterized by the firm implementation of laws concerning taxation. As soon as relative calm was restored in Kurdistan a comprehensive plan for the assessment of taxes on different products was drawn up. The tax of the winter crop on mulk land was the usual Ottoman ten percent. If the land was irrigated by government water, i.e. the natural flow from a spring or a river, a further ten percent was added.

On mīrī land the government collected two types of taxes; one as its share as landowner and the other was its share in the produce. This varied according to the crop from one-tenth on daim wheat (where no government-owned irrigation means were used) to one-third or one-half on rice, when government-owned means of irrigation were used.<sup>5</sup> Not only were all taxes strictly and thoroughly collected, but also new taxes were introduced as soon as Shaikh Mahmud's revolt ended. For instance, under Major Soane's rule the tobacco farmers had to pay fifteen times more than the amount which they had paid during the reign of the Young Turks.<sup>6</sup> Undoubtedly these measures were unpopular with the Kurds. The British appear not to have taken into consideration the fact that only a few years before the region had suffered famine and ruin.

Moreover, the subsidizing of the Kurdish chieftains, inaugurated during the

rule of Shaikh Mahmud was abolished. The Jāf and Pizhder Aghas were told not to claim the allegiance of their subjects. The POs and APOs were to establish direct links with the Kurdish tribesmen. In an attempt to undermine the power of the Kurdish chieftains, the latter were denied the right to collect revenues. The British government adopted direct control of the population through salaried officials, and the system of administration was "practically that of the Turkish government properly arranged."<sup>7</sup>

The British considered their attempt at direct rule to be a success, particularly Major Soane's regime in Sulaymānīya from May 1919 to November 1920. In April 1920, the Civil Commissioner wrote to the Foreign Office saying that no division in Mesopotamia was in better order, and nowhere did the British government's rule have a greater "degree of popular acquiescence." The Civil Commissioner maintained that the acreage under cereal cultivation had doubled and that of tobacco had trebled.<sup>8</sup> Wilson writes that in Sulaymaniya after Shaikh Mahmud's brief administration, which was characterized by anarchy and tyranny, the task of organizing the civil administration on Kurdish lines with Kurdish officials under effective British supervision was proceeding well. To substantiate his point, Wilson reported that in 1920 Soane was able to procure £20,000 surplus in Sulaymaniya's annual budget.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, in September 1920, the Civil Commissioner reported to the Secretary of State for India that the general insurrection in Mesopotamia had no effect on Sulaymānīya. He considered Sulaymānīya the "quietest" district in Mesopotamia. Wilson also echoed Soane's

oft-repeated contention that 99 percent of the Kurds in Kurdistan "wish no change" to direct British rule.<sup>10</sup>

Although Soane opposed Shaikh Mahmud's separatist tendencies, he wanted to nurture a Kurdish nationalism of a different brand. In his efforts in this regard, he managed to gain the cooperation of a clique of secularized Kurds such as Tawfiq Wahbi, Rafiq Hilmi, Jamal 'Irfan, and Shaikh Nuri. Soane was personally involved in the writing, editing and printing of Peshkawtin (Progress), the first Kurdish journal published in Sulaymāniya disseminating the idea of Kurdish nationalism under the auspices of the British Empire. What Soane wanted to achieve was the difficult task of transforming the Kurds from a collection of tribes into a nation with a system of government which would be an emulation of the Western system.<sup>11</sup>

But Wilson, who had much admiration for Soane's dedication to the British cause in Kurdistan, could not support the latter's espousal of Kurdish nationalism. Therefore, the Civil Commissioner tried persistently, against Soane's will, to gradually integrate Kurdistan into the British-established administration of 'Iraq, by appointing Arab officials in the region. This was strongly resented by Soane. In 1921, when he realized that the British government was determined to annex Kurdistan to Mesopotamia, Soane decided to quit his post in Sulaymaniya. He was quoted by Lees as saying that he handed in his resignation to protest the Kurdish policy of Sir Percy Cox, the first British High Commissioner in 'Iraq. Soane considered Cox's attempt to incorporate Kurdistan into 'Iraq to be against the

"ideals for which he had struggled so long", and detrimental to the welfare of the Kurds.<sup>12</sup> Despite this disagreement between Soane and other British officials in 'Iraq, the British government had high praise for his work among the Kurds, saying that it was "as important as that of Lawrence" among the Arabs.<sup>13</sup> Thus, one of the consequences of direct British rule of southern Kurdistan was the sowing of the seeds of Kurdish nationalism in the region.

Soane's career in southern Kurdistan has been viewed from a different perspective by Kurdish scholars. They claim that direct British control was strongly resented by most Kurds, and most of them contend that the main means by which Soane maintained control of the region was his skillful use of coercion. After Shaikh Mahmud's revolt had been put down, Major Soane implemented an iron fist policy. Many prominent shaikhs, chieftains and notables who revolt were exiled and their property confiscated. In Sulaymaniya division, no voice of dissent was tolerated.<sup>14</sup> Lees, a close associate of Soane, concedes that Soane ruled Kurdistan "with the hand of a medieval despot." He goes on to add that "despotism was a necessary evil in Kurdistan."<sup>15</sup>

The tribal nature of Kurdish society meant that it never responded positively to any external power which tried to establish control of Kurdistan, and the entrenched position of the aghas and shaikhs, which would be threatened by direct rule of the region, were factors which probably contributed significantly to Kurdish resentment of Soane's rule. However, Soane's personal style of rule was also an important factor in accounting for the unpopularity of direct rule. The

socio-economic policies which were pursued during this period also undoubtedly alienated many Kurds. There seemed to be a tendency on the part of Soane to squeeze as much as he could from the inhabitants. Under direct British rule, the Kurdish tribesmen, who had for decades avoided paying taxes due to the weakness of the Ottomans, and had paid only lip service to the central government's authority, were forced to pay in full. In many regions the villagers were made to pay taxes which had been due for years. The increase in taxes and the firmness of their collection was not matched by a rise in municipal services in the area, however. In 1919, for example, the British government was able to collect 3,200,000 rupees (£250,000) as revenue from Sulamāniya division. Only 63,000 rupees of this amount, that is, only two percent was spent on education. In 1920, the number of schools and students in Sulaymāniya division was still less than what had existed before World War I.<sup>16</sup> One may wonder how Major Soane managed to send £20,000 surplus to Baghdad in 1919 from a region which was still affected by famine and widespread ruin as a result of the war and tribal upheaval.

Furthermore, the behaviour of the British officials in Kurdistan at this time was perceived by the aghās, and to some extent by the population in general, as provocative. The young, inexperienced officers, drawn from British India staff, often did not deal very sensitively with the proud, individualistic tribesmen. They took Christians and Jews, who had been until then ra'īvyā (subjects) of the Kurds, as advisors and allocated them top administrative posts, which infuriated the

Kurdish aghas. In their campaign against the Turks, the British government had appealed to the religious sentiments of the population, claiming that it was fighting to protect Islam from the deviations of the Turks. However, after the war the British officials did not pay much attention to this aspect of Kurdish life. In 1919, the British government allowed the open sale of alcohol in Sulaymānīya, and a brothel was opened in Arbīl in 1920, indicating the inability of the British officials to understand the feelings of the majority of the Kurds on these issues.<sup>17</sup> Finally, the uncompromising resolve to establish direct rule of Kurdistan, the increase and firmness in collection of the taxes without due regard for the prevailing conditions, and the insensitivity of the officials in dealing with the Kurds, led to the failure of the British government's overall policy in the region. These factors, which accounted to a considerable degree for the resentment of the Kurds toward British rule, were also important in preparing the ground for the 1920 anti-British Mesopotamia insurrection.<sup>18</sup>

For these reasons, the British government's desire to establish direct rule in Kurdistan led to the alienation of the Kurds from the British government, and Shaikh Mahmud's May 1919 revolt was only one manifestation of this. From 1919 to 1920 there were several instances of unrest in the region, which is a further indication of the failure of British policy, and puts the claim of the British officials in attributing the revolt in Sulaymānīya to the intrigues of Shaikh Mahmud in question.

### Bahdīnān in Revolt

Shaikh Mahmud's tribal confederation did not appeal to the Kurds of Mosul division, who speak a different dialect of Kurdish. Therefore, this region, which is locally called Bahdīnān, remained under the authority of the Political Officer in Mosul, Colonel Leachman. The Colonel was an advocate of direct rule, and rejected rule through subsidized Kurdish chieftains. He strongly disagreed with Noel's activities in Kurdistan, and asked the latter not to contact the Kurdish chieftains within his division.

The Kurds strongly resented the rule of Colonel Leachman. On April 6, 1919, Captain Pearson, the APO in Zakho, who was touring Goyan country on the frontier with Turkey, was ambushed and murdered by the Kurds. The British officials held the Goyan agha, who was motivated by anti-British sentiments, and the desire to plunder Christian villages in the region, responsible for the murder.<sup>19</sup> Ghulami, an 'Iraqi scholar, maintains that Pearson was not very sensitive to the feelings of the Kurdish aghās and he preferred to control them through the appointment of Christian and Jewish officials to the top administrative posts in the region. These officials apparently exploited the tribesmen.<sup>20</sup>

The murder of Captain Pearson was followed by tribal unrest in Zakho district, where Christian villages were attacked. This open defiance of the Kurds was considered by the British government as a dangerous trend which had to be "nipped in the bud" before it could spread to other Kurdish regions.<sup>21</sup> However, the Goyan tribal area was beyond the armistice line, and because it was

inaccessible to the British, they could not carry out large-scale military operations there. However, many air-raids were carried out against Goyan villages to suppress the revolt.<sup>22</sup> Although the revolt was confined to a small area, and it was put down, it demonstrated to the Kurds that British power could be defied.

The July 15, 1919 uprising in 'Amādiya, fifty-five miles northeast of Mosul, was a more serious challenge to British rule in southern Kurdistan than the May revolt in Sulaymāniya division. This tribal unrest engulfed almost all the Kurdish regions of Mosul and lasted for three months, with great losses on both sides. This revolt, like the ones in Sulaymāniya and Zākho, was caused mainly by tribal resentment of the central government. In June, the British government, due to difficulties in communications and supply services, decided to withdraw its troops from 'Amādiya to Sawara Tuka base, eighteen miles west of 'Amādiya. This left Captain Willey, the APO, with Lieutenant Macdonald and Sargeant Troup, in 'Amādiya with only a small levy force. Captain Willey, who was a newly appointed and inexperienced officer, was a strong advocate of the so-called forward policy in Kurdistan, like his superior in Mosul, Colonel Leachman. In addition, there had been a long-standing feud between two leading notables of 'Amādiya, each of whom had their armed followers. In a bid to demonstrate his power, Willey disarmed both leaders and took cash security from them to ensure their future good conduct. This action turned all the aghas in the region against him.<sup>23</sup>

The aghas were further infuriated by Willey's efforts to raise a gendarme

force from among the local tribesmen, and the British government's distribution of seeds and money to the peasants. These two measures were part of the government's efforts to establish direct communication with the Kurdish peasants, and this was viewed with alarm by the aghas, who considered these measures as an attempt to undermine their power. Willey, already unpopular with the tribesmen, further alienated them by informing them that their land was soon to be given to Christian refugees. Colonel Leachman strongly advocated establishing a pro-British Christian enclave on the border with Turkey, and he had instructed Willey to settle Christian refugees from Ḥakkārī in the region. Moreover, the Kurds thought that the British officials were showing favouritism toward the Christians in their distribution of seeds and loans.<sup>24</sup> The British officials, however, charged that these claims of favouritism were baseless rumors spread by the aghas and shaikhs. They also maintained that their rule in Kurdistan was not resented by the majority as long as their activities were confined to the distribution of loans and other advantages, but when they began to collect taxes from the remote mountainous region of 'Amādīya, which had hitherto avoided paying, opposition began to develop. Also, they claimed that the aghas and the shaikhs of the region, who had for years lived off the villagers with the support of the Turkish government, feared that their privileged positions were threatened, and began to spread the anti-British propaganda which was emanating from across the border.<sup>25</sup>

For these reasons, the aghas decided to resist the British authorities in the region. They sent a delegation to Bamamī, a few miles west of 'Amādīya, to get

a fatwa (edict) from Shaikh Baha'addin, the most influential religious dignitary in the area, for the declaration of a jihād (crusade) against the British. The Shaikh gave the uprising his blessing. Colonel Leachman was aware that an uprising was being planned, and he demanded that the leading aghas and notables of 'Amādiya district come to call on him in Mosul. When they came, he harshly rebuked them and warned that any uprising would bring "dire consequences". This did not deter them from action, and on July 14 in the evening they held a meeting, and agreed to begin the uprising. The rebels surrounded Captain Willey in his headquarters in 'Amādiya, and after a brief shoot-out Willey, Macdonald and Troup were killed. The levy force joined the rebels. Christian villages and British troop concentrations throughout 'Amādiya district became targets of hostile action. 'Amadiya district was in a state of insurrection for the second half of July and throughout August. On August 3, Leachman led a large expeditionary force to Bamarnī, surrounding and burning the whole town, including the tekīya (religious centre) of Shaikh Baha'addin. The latter was humiliated and imprisoned in Mosul. This incident outraged the Kurds and brought all the wavering chieftains of Mosul to support the uprising.<sup>26</sup>

Several military encounters took place between the Kurds and the British India army supported by the Assyrian levies. The British suffered heavy casualties, with 1,000 dead and an equal number wounded. The Kurdish casualties were not less than that. After they had lost a few battles to the Kurds, the British sent more troops to the region, and the British Air Force began an intense bombardment of

the villages. This forced the aghas to abandon their burned villages, and 'Amadiya itself, and to take refuge in the mountains surrounding the town.<sup>27</sup>

The British succeeded in suppressing the revolt, and most of its leaders were forced into exile in Turkey. Then, they proceeded to carry out a three-month intensive campaign to pacify the region. Several leading aghas were executed, and dozens of villages were ruined. This was intended to create among the Kurds "a wholesale fear and conviction that the rising had been a mistake and that they had been fairly beaten on their ground."<sup>28</sup>

The British sources tend to minimize the significance of the uprising in 'Amādiya. Local sources provide a more detailed, though somewhat exaggerated account of the events.<sup>29</sup> The following comment by Sir George MacNunn, the chief of the British forces in Mesopotamia, quoted by Wilson, about the battles in 'Amadiya leaves no doubt about the seriousness of the challenge:

"Had they taken place prior to the Armistice, such operations and achievements, mainly the work of a new troops, would not only have preoccupied the contemporary press, but would undoubtedly have gained a permanent and detailed chronicle in the official history of Mesopotamia campaigns."<sup>30</sup>

However, the firmness of the British in 'Amadiya district did not deter the Kurds of 'Aqra district, which is to the west of 'Amādiya, from defying British

rule. Only two months after the rising in 'Amādīya, the Zībārī, Surchī and Bārzānīd tribes formed a temporary alliance to drive the British forces out of their district. In October, Colonel Bell succeeded Leachman as PO at Mosul. Bell, like his predecessor, was an advocate of the forward policy in Kurdistan. In November, while Bell and Scott, an APO in 'Aqra, were touring the district, they imposed fines on Faris Agha, the paramount chieftain of Zībār, and Abu Bakr Agha of Bira Kapra near 'Aqra, because their followers had been sniping at the British forces there. While he was in Bira Kapra, Colonel Bell convened a tribal chieftains' meeting in which he delivered a speech. The aghās perceived his speech as "insulting". This forced the Zībārīs and the Bārzānīs to set aside their traditional rivalry and form a temporary alliance against the British. Shaikh Ahmad in his turn was also resentful of Captain Scott's decision to attach the Bārzān region to 'Aqra, which was under the influence of his arch-enemy Faris Agha of Zībār. Therefore, a combined Barzani and Zībārī force ambushed Colonel Bell and Scott just outside Bira Kapra and both men were killed. The rebels also attacked and captured 'Aqra.<sup>31</sup>

In mid-November, British troops recaptured 'Aqra, and troops were sent to pacify the countryside. On December 6, 1919, Captain Kirk, the new APO at 'Aqra, led an expedition against the rebel Surchī tribe led by Shaikh Raqib. During a decisive encounter, the British troops were severely beaten, with 300 killed and wounded. This induced the British government to send more troops to the district. After several days of air bombardment, the Surchīs were forced to

disperse and join the Bārzānī and Zībārī rebels in the remote mountains.<sup>32</sup>

The uprisings in Sulaymānīya, Zākho, 'Amādīya and 'Aqra were caused by the conflict of interest between the Kurdish aghās, who wanted to retain their privileged position in Kurdish society, and the British government, which desired to establish the rule of the law in Kurdistan by pursuing a forward policy. The British government's attempt to establish direct rule in Kurdistan, imitating the policy of the Young Turks in the region, led to the same consequences: the alienation of the Kurds and armed uprisings in the region.

The occurrence of four major uprisings in less than eight months convinced the India and Foreign Offices that despite the repeated reassurances from the British administrators in Mesopotamia, direct rule was strongly resented by the Kurds. By the end of 1919, the British administrators were forced to quit the mountainous region of the frontier west of the Greater Zab, and resorted once again to establishing indirect rule of the region. By December 1919, the British forces and administration were withdrawn from 'Amādīya, Zībār country, 'Aqra, Goyan country, and Rawāndūz. Native rulers were appointed, and they were allowed to raise Kurdish levies to assist them in the administration of the region.<sup>33</sup> For this reason, throughout the year 1920, the mountainous region which was administered through subsidized Kurdish chieftains remained calm. However, the rest of the region which was still under direct rule, including Kirkuk, Arbīl, Sulaymānīya, and Kifrī, was in revolt.

### Unrest in Arbīl and Kirkuk Divisions: 1920

Arbīl division, which had remained relatively calm throughout the 1919 uprisings in Sulaymāniya and Bahdīnān, became the centre of a new Kurdish challenge to British rule in 1920. Nuri Bawil Agha, a tribal chieftain from Rawāndūz,<sup>34</sup> assumed a role similar to that of Shaikh Mahmud. Nuri Agha managed to rally the major tribal groups in his district, such as the Surchī, Khoshnow and some sections of the Dizā'ī, to his anti-British crusade. This tribal anti-British uprising was waged under the banner of pan-Islamism. In September 1920, Nuri's followers from various tribes, supported by the Surchīs, surrounded the city of Rawāndūz. When Captain Hay tried to raise a pro-British tribal force to end the siege of Rawāndūz, Kurdish mullas issued a fatwa which rendered this impossible. Therefore, the British quit Rawāndūz, and Nuri's followers elected a tribal council to administer the town.<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile, in Koī, a small town to the east of Arbīl, the Kurdish Society, an anti-British group with pan-Islamic and Kurdish nationalistic tendencies, declared jihad against the British administration of the town.<sup>36</sup> This forced the government to quit the whole district. On September 15, under pressure of numerous tribal assaults, the British were forced to withdraw their last major troop concentration outside Arbīl city, and British control was confined to Arbīl city alone. The position of Captain Hay was precarious also. Dizā'ī chieftains, who carried much weight in the politics of the city, were dissatisfied with the British administration. They made contact with Nuri Agha and asked him to enter Arbīl. Consequently,

a tribal force composed mainly of Surchīs and Khoshnow attacked and captured several suburbs of Arbīl. Hay was instructed by Wilson to quit the city.

However, Hay preferred to send only the contents of the treasury and the government records to Kirkuk, and tried to negotiate in order to divide the rebels. Wilson made a sudden visit to Arbīl to boost the morale of the wavering pro-British Kurds. He held several meetings in the town, and succeeded in winning a Dizā'ī chieftain and several leading notables of Arbīl to the British side. Also, the immediate dispatch of two regiments to the town enhanced the British position. This forced the rebels to lift the siege on Arbīl.<sup>37</sup>

The reasons for the uprising in Arbīl division were similar to those which had accounted for the uprisings in Sulaymānīa and Bahdīnān. The Dizā'ī chieftains, who had always played a major role in the administration of Arbīl in Ottoman times, felt that they had been deliberately ignored by Hay in his administration of the affairs of the town. Captain Hay had appointed non-Kurdish māl ma'mūrs (salaried officials) in Dizā'ī territory to collect taxes. These officials were accused by Dizā'ī chieftains of being corrupt, and using unfair methods of collecting taxes. The Dizā'ī leaders were also discontented because Captain Hay deprived them of the advantages which Jāf and Pizhder chieftains were enjoying under British control within their respective tribal domains. In addition, on September 8, several Dizā'ī chieftains were asked by Hay to visit him in Arbīl. Captain Hay, like Colonel Leachman and Major Soane, detested the aghas. Therefore, he rebuked them harshly for their failure to comply with government orders in the

administration of their regions, and the aghas were asked to pay two hundred rifles and to surrender a deposit of £1,500 for six months, with the proviso that they had to remain in Arbīl until the term has been fulfilled. This was the last straw for the chieftains.<sup>38</sup>

The lack of a definite British policy with regard to the Kurds, and the foreign agitation which had played a role in the Sulaymānīya uprising, were equally important factors in the Arbīl uprising. Former Ottoman officials--Turks and Turkified Kurds--formed an anti-British Islamic Society, and were in contact with the Turkish nationalist forces. Members of this organization wrote leaflets which appealed to the pan-Islamic tendencies of the Kurds. They also spread rumors that the Turks were going to return to the region. This led many to be reluctant to cooperate with the British administration.<sup>39</sup> The lack of an articulate British stand on the Kurdish question also strained relations between the Kurds and the British administration in the division. During his September visit to Arbīl, the Acting Civil Commissioner observed that the inability of the British government to make a clear statement with regard to the future of the wilāyah of Mosul was causing enormous tension among the Kurds. Wilson was pressed by the leading notables of Arbīl to make a statement to the effect that his government would not allow the Turks to return. This Wilson could not guarantee. The Kurds told him that if the Turks return, "they will kill us, rape our women."<sup>40</sup>

The 1920 anti-British Mesopotamia insurrection also had an impact in Kurdistan. Wilson denies any connection between the Mesopotamia insurrection

and the uprising in Arbīl. Nevertheless, many British officials made reference to agitators who were spreading propaganda in Arbīl in favour of the 'Iraqi uprising. Leaflets were widely distributed in the division expressing solidarity with the jihād declared against the British government. Apparently, these "agitators" had been active in Arbīl region since August, and were able to gain the support of several influential Arbīlīs.<sup>41</sup>

The Mesopotamia uprising made an impact in Khānaqīn, Kifrī, and Kirkuk as well. In August, most of the Kurdish tribes residing in the area between Baghdad and Kirkuk to the east of the Tigris were in revolt. On August 22, the Kurdish tribes attacked and burned the Anglo-Iranian oilfield facilities at Khānaqīn. Rebels burnt the British flag and raised the Ottoman flag. In Kifrī, north of Khānaqīn, the Delu and the Jāf tribesmen combined their forces to oust the British administration from the region. By the end of August the revolt had spread further north to engulf the region between Tūzkhurmātu and Kirkuk, which is inhabited by the Dawida, Bayāt and Zangana tribes, and the al-'Azzī Arab tribe. Finally, the eastern part of Kirkuk district fell to the Kurdish rebels. The British government was forced to quit most of these districts and confined its control to the towns.<sup>42</sup>

The insurrection in Kirkuk and Khānaqīn districts, like the Mesopotamia insurrection, was motivated by a variety of reasons. The preaching of the Shi'i 'ulama emanating from the Shi'i holy holy places in 'Iraq had an impact on the Shi'i Kurds in Khānaqīn and the southern portion of the Kirkuk division. Members of the al-'Ahd, an 'Iraqi nationalist group in Damascus, were also active among

the Kurds in the region. Some agitators were Bolsheviks, who combined the "fieriest xenophobia" with ideas of national liberation, and others were disseminating pan-Islamic ideas which came from Turkey. Finally, others were followers of Shaikh Mahmud, who hoped that the unrest in the region might induce the British to restore his rule.<sup>43</sup>

Nevertheless, through a series of preventive measures, the British were able to contain the uprising and prevent its spread to the volatile regions of Sulaymānīya and Bahdīnān. Longrigg, the PO at Kirkuk, had managed to use Shaikh Habib Talabani, who had considerable influence among the Kurds who resided between Kirkuk and Khānaqīn, to calm the situation, and pacify those tribesmen who put up armed resistance. Longrigg's effort in this regard was also aided by the British government's recruitment of seven hundred Sanjābī and Kalhūrī Iranian Kurds from the frontier, who played a leading role in dislocating the rebels from their positions in Kifrī and Khānaqīn districts.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, as a pre-emptive measure, the Sulaymānīya division was "shut off from Mesopotamia" and the division was administered throughout 1920 independently by Major Soane.<sup>45</sup> The latter had taken a further preventive measure in Sulaymānīyah by bringing a five hundred-strong armed force from the Pizhder tribe into the town. The force remained there throughout the unrest in Mesopotamia, and it was an important deterrent.<sup>46</sup>

Thus, the uprisings of 1920 in Arbīl, Khānaqīn, and Kirkuk were caused by the same factors which had brought about the uprisings of 1919 in Sulaymānīya

and Bahdīnān: Kurdish resentment of the British government's efforts to establish direct rule of their region. The Kurds, who detested the centralization policy of the Young Turks, unanimously desired British rule at the end of World War I. Having experienced three years of direct British rule, they demonstrated through a series of uprisings that British rule, which turned out to be similar in many ways to Turkish rule, was equally unacceptable to their tribal society.

### External Factors

During the years 1918 to 1920, external regional factors had a considerable impact on the formation of British policy towards the 'Iraqi Kurds and on the events in southern Kurdistan. These factors were: pan-Islamism, Bolshevism, Kurdish nationalism in Turkey and Persia, the British concern for stability in Persia and Turkey, and finally, Anglo-French rivalry in the Middle East.

As early as January 1919, General Ihsan Pasha started to mobilize the northern Kurds beyond the Armistice line with Turkey for his struggle to force British troops out of the wilāyah of Mosul. Due to his experience as the ex-commander of Ottoman troops in Mosul, Ihsan Pasha knew the Kurdish chieftains on the frontier. He used pan-Islamic slogans to recruit Kurds for his anti-British campaign. In 1919, the government of the Young Turks was convinced that the granting of autonomy to the Kurds would deprive the British government of the opportunity to play the Kurdish card against Turkey. Moreover, autonomy for "Greater Kurdistan" was perceived by some Ottoman officials as a first step

towards the formation of a confederation of Muslim states under the authority of the Sultan-Caliph.<sup>47</sup> The Kurdish nationalist groups in Turkey, who were alarmed by reports from the Paris Peace Conference to the effect that the proposed Armenian state in eastern Anatolia would include Kurdish provinces in south-eastern Anatolia, turned to the Young Turks to foil British and Allied designs for their region. In January 1919, the Ottoman government told the Kurdish nationalist groups to demand that the Allies allow the formation of an autonomous Kurdish state. This support for the Kurdish cause by the Ottoman Empire was aimed "at embarrassing the Allies", who were contemplating the establishment of an Armenian state.<sup>48</sup> Also, the Kurdish nationalists, who were generally "corrupt and degenerate notables and for most part ex-CUP members," had supported the cause of a Turkish-sponsored independent Kurdistan from motives of self-interest. With the defeat of Turkey, they were faced with the prospect of the total collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and they hoped to continue to live off the Kurdish masses under the guise of Kurdish autonomy. Furthermore, the Kurdish chieftains were also attracted to the idea of an autonomous Kurdish state, for remote and ineffective Ottoman rule would offer them a better chance to continue the exploitation of their subjects than an effective and direct British rule of their region.<sup>49</sup> In mid-1919, the cause of pan-Islamism was greatly enhanced with the emergence of Enver Pasha in Caucasia with the forty thousand-strong Green Army. Enver Pasha had established contacts with the 'Iraqi Kurdish chieftains on the frontier, and he promised them an imminent march on

Mesopotamia, with the re-establishment of the authority of the Sultan-Caliph.<sup>50</sup>

The pan-Islamic propaganda which was emanating from Turkey was an important factor in causing the anti-British uprisings during the year 1919. On March 25, 1919, for instance, the Kurds held a conference at Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar, in the frontier region, to discuss how to provoke the Kurds of the Mosul wilāyah to rise against the British. It was agreed to send a secret delegation with letters to the Kurdish chieftains and Shaikh Mahmud, urging them to join the Caliphate movement, and to declare jihād against the "British infidels."<sup>51</sup> A certain 'Abd al-Rahman Tatar of Sharnakh, a leading advocate of the Caliphate movement in the frontier region, was the main instigator of the April anti-British uprising in Zākho district. The latter had considerable influence on the Goyan tribe.<sup>52</sup>

In May 1919, the Greek invasion of Smyrna and the subsequent massacre of Turks added further fuel to the anti-Christian feeling among the Kurds. The events were blamed on the British, and the Kurds were invited to apply the analogy of Smyrna to their own situation. Rumours were spread that a British-supported Armenian army was going to come, massacre the Kurds and occupy their land. A leaflet which was widely distributed in the frontier region among the Kurds stated that it would not be long "before your ears will be deafened by the sound of the bells. The voice of mu'azzen (the caller to prayer) will no longer be heard."<sup>53</sup> These fears of the Kurds were further confirmed when they saw that British Relief Officers in the region were compiling names of Kurdish chieftains who were alleged to have played a role in the Armenian massacres during the War. Noel

writes that this policy and many pro-Armenian pronouncements by British statesmen during this period had a very bad effect on the Kurds.<sup>54</sup> Consequently, the 'Iraqi Kurds were very susceptible to the anti-Christian message coming across the frontier. Since early 1919, the Turkish qā'immaqām at Van, along with Sito Agha, the influential agha of the Orāmār tribe, were instigating Shaikh Ahmad to rally the Kurds against the British presence in 'Aqra. Moreover, Shaikh Ahmad was led to believe by by Sito Agha that Enver Pasha's march on Mesopotamia was quite imminent and that an Islamic caliphate would be established after the expulsion of the British from Mesopotamia.<sup>55</sup>

The 'Iraqi nationalists who were based in Damascus also had a role in 'Aqra affairs. Since May 1919, Faris Agha of Zībār and Raqib Agha Surchī had been in contact with the Jam'iat al-'Ahd in Mosul. The leaflets of this organization called upon the Kurds to drive out the British, and they were widely distributed among the Kurds in Bahdīnān, Arbīl and Kirkuk. In November 1919, the members of al-'Ahd in Mosul wrote to their headquarters in Damascus: "The 'Iraqi population in general seems to be passive towards the British rule, and the Kurds are the only elements who are giving the British daily problems. Therefore, we should instigate them..."<sup>56</sup>

In 1920, the Turkish-sponsored pan-Islamic and anti-British movement gained further strength with the emergence of the Turkish nationalist forces under the command of Mustafa Kamal. By late 1919, the pan-Islamist Turks had formed the Association for the Defense of Eastern Anatolia under the leadership of Sulayman

Nazif. The activities of this movement were concentrated in the Kurdish region. In September of 1919 a Turkish Nationalist Pact was signed in Sivas which declared all non-Arab parts of the Ottoman Empire, including Kurdistan of 'Iraq, to be an "indivisible" part of a new Turkey. In April 1920 this pact was confirmed by the Ankara government. The Kamalist movement had gained widespread support by using pan-Islamic slogans, and Kurds had played a leading role in its success.

Three out of eight leaders of the Erzurum Congress of the Kamalist Movement were Kurds. Moreover, the Kurds formed the bulk of the Kamalist forces before the capture of Angora (Ankara). During his campaign in eastern Anatolia, Mustafa Kamal emphasized the Islamic brotherhood of Kurds and Turks and promised Kurds equal rights after the defeat of the Greek and British forces in Anatolia.<sup>57</sup>

Having recaptured Smyrna, Mustafa Kamal decided to pursue a forward policy on the Turco-'Iraqi frontier, and he hoped to use the Kurds to conquer northern Mesopotamia. Therefore, he sent several envoys to tour the 'Iraqi Kurdish regions, and there they discussed the means of driving the British out of southern Kurdistan. These agents were particularly active in Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar on the frontier, and in the towns of Arbīl and Kirkuk.<sup>58</sup>

The threat to Mesopotamia was further complicated by a series of victories achieved by the Bolsheviks in the Caucasus. The British administration in Mesopotamia began to fear a Bolshevik attack through north-western Azerbaijan on 'Iraq. The news of a Bolshevik-Kamalist alliance and rumours of a combined

effort being agreed upon to drive the British out of Mesopotamia had a disquietening effect on the Kurds and the British officials. Throughout the year 1920, Bolshevik agents were active among the Kurds in the north-western provinces of Persia, which are adjacent to the Kurdish regions of 'Iraq.<sup>59</sup> In the absence of an central authority in Persia, the British government officials in Mesopotamia felt it necessary to take the burden of combatting Bolshevism in the region on their shoulders. In August 1920, the Civil Commissioner in Baghdad wrote to the Secretary of State for India, saying that the situation in the north-western provinces of Persia was turning against British interests in Mesopotamia. He went on to say that the success of Bolshevik propaganda among the Kurds in Persia "had already some reflex" in southern Kurdistan.<sup>60</sup> Throughout 1919 and 1920, Simko, a Kurdish chieftain of the Shikāk tribe with a substantial following on the Turco-Persian frontier, led the Kurds of Persia in a struggle for independence from Persia. Simko had some ties with the Bolsheviks and the Kamalist forces. He rallied the Kurds to the banner of pan-Islamism, but the British perceived his movement as "a form of Bolshevism dressed in pan-Islamic garb."<sup>61</sup>

For these reasons, during the years 1918 to 1920, a British-sponsored Kurdish state appeared to be a suitable tool to counteract the pan-Islamic and Bolshevik influences among the Kurds, and to safeguard the frontiers of Mesopotamia. A Kurdish state was seen to serve as a buffer between British-controlled 'Iraq and Turkey. In November 1918, Major Noel, who was the most enthusiastic proponent

of a Kurdish state, writes that the national movement "is so virile that I do not foresee much difficulty" in creating an independent Kurdistan under British auspices, stretching from southern Kurdistan up to the shores of Lake Van in eastern Anatolia. Such an enterprise, Noel argued, would be economically profitable as well: the net profit of the Ottoman Empire from the region before World War I was £250,000 per annum, and the area was considered to be an untapped fertile field for British trade and commerce.<sup>62</sup> In fact, in late November 1918, Noel was convinced that an independent Kurdistan was inevitable. He advised the British government to make a declaration of Kurdish independence at once "to head off a fait accompli."<sup>63</sup>

In April 1919, Noel was sent by the British government for a tour of the Kurdish provinces beyond the Mosul frontier in order to obtain the necessary information with regard to Turco-Kurdish relations, the strength of the pan-Islamic movement among the Kurds, the condition of the Christian communities in south-eastern Anatolia, and the extent to which the Kurds were fit for self-rule. Noel was accompanied on this tour by two Badr Khanid princes and a certain Jamal Pasha, a Kurdish nationalist.

Noel's findings were that the Kurdish national movement was not anti-British, and that relations between the Kurds and the British would improve greatly if the Kurds were assured that Great Britain did not intend to pursue a "vindictive policy" against them for their role in the 1915 massacre of the Armenians. The growth of pan-Islamism among the Kurds was due to their fear of a

British-sponsored Armenian rule. Finally, Noel found that the Kurds wanted to be rid of Turkish rule and to establish a Kurdish state under British auspices. In fact, the tour stimulated the growth of nationalism among the Kurds, who began to think that the British government had taken their national aspirations under its aegis.<sup>64</sup>

Therefore, Noel was instructed by the Secretary of State for India to give the Kurds assurances that "no vindictive policy will be pursued towards Kurds... with regard to acts committed during the War." On June 23, 1919, he was instructed to inform the Kurds that their interests were by "no means being lost sight of" at the Peace Conference, and that this question would be settled according to the principle of self-determination.<sup>65</sup>

Nevertheless, by the end of 1919, it was realized by both British officials at home and in the Middle East that Noel's scheme for a united independent Kurdistan was impractical. Sir Montagu, Secretary of State for India, and T.A. Wilson pointed out that the complete expulsion of the Turks from northern Kurdistan was no longer possible. Therefore, they suggested the establishment of a friendly Kurdish state headed by a Badr Khanid prince with Jazirat Ibn 'Umar as its capital. The implementation of this scheme necessitated the occupation of the Jazira town and the provision of some money to assist the Badr Khanid prince in establishing his rule. If this recommendation was carried out, the British government hoped that the "frontier of Mesopotamia will be secured from aggression" by the Turks on the north-west by a friendly Kurdish state at Jazira

on the north by the garrisoned defenses of Mosul, and on the north-east by a free southern Kurdish state which was to be separated from Turkey and Persia by the mostly impassable mountain ranges.<sup>66</sup>

The India Office believed that the fulfillment of this scheme was not too difficult, for British officials in Mosul had reported that the Kurdish national movement in northern Kurdistan, especially in Jazīra and Diyarbakr region was very powerful, and had the support of no less than twenty thousand men with rifles. The Kurds in the region wanted an independent Kurdistan under a Badr Khanid prince, and Shaikh Sulayman Agha Tatar had strong tribal support and was an anti-Kamalīst Kurdish nationalist.<sup>67</sup> The British government's support for the Kurdish state was also dictated by her concern that a Kurdish state would deprive Turkey of many resources in terms of land and man-power, and this would preclude the re-emergence of Turkey as a power which could threaten a British-sponsored state in eastern Anatolia, and British-controlled 'Iraq to the south.<sup>68</sup>

During the year 1920, the idea of an independent Kurdistan was still being discussed. The independence movement in Persian Kurdistan, which had begun in 1918, gained in strength, and the Political Department of the British administration in Mesopotamia was convinced that the Persian Kurds would achieve independence soon. Mr. M.J. Ross at the Kurdish Bureau of the Department suggested the creation of a pro-British independent Kurdistan with Urumia as its centre. Although this suggestion on the part of Mr. Ross was in violation of the

1919 Anglo-Iranian Treaty,<sup>69</sup> the latter based his argument on his belief that this was the only real option available to the British government in 'Iraq in order to stabilize the north-eastern frontier of Mesopotamia and avoid future raids by Persian Kurds on southern Kurdistan. He observed:

"...for we can hardly be expected to prop up for ever a decadent Persian Government under which when our support is finally withdrawn, affairs will again revert to the same condition of chaos... As far as can be seen at the present the Persian Government will eventually be thrown out by the Kurds unless we actually intervene. If this section of the Kurdish nation frees itself from Persian rule which it dislikes and then turns and asks to be included in the independent Kurdish state to which it naturally belongs, are we to say "no" and be prepared to keep it out by force?...Moreover any attempt to coerce the Kurd to remain under the Persian Government from which he is trying to free himself, will shake to the core our influence throughout those parts of Kurdistan where we are not prepared to keep our authority with troops, for the Kurds feel that the Persian Government is rotten to the core..."<sup>70</sup>

In 1920, the formation of a Kurdish state was perceived by the British government as a useful tool with which to combat Bolshevism and the Kamalist threat from Turkey. In September 1920, Sayyid Taha, the leader of the Kurdish movement on the Turco-Persian frontier held a conference which was attended by

several prominent chieftains, to discuss the issue of independence. The conference agreed that Sayyid Taha should coordinate efforts with Simko in order to establish a confederation of Kurdish states for Kurds within Turkey and Persia. As such a scheme would be opposed by both Persia and Turkey, Simko and Sayyid Taha agreed to seek British support. Therefore, Sayyid Taha paid a visit to Baghdad where he asked the British government for a British Liaison Officer, money and ammunition, and he told them that a Kurdish state on the Turco-Persian frontier would serve the interests of the British Empire. The British officials were supportive of Sayyid Taha's proposal, for they hoped that a Kurdish state would be "a strong barrier" against the incoming tide of Bolshevism and "save Mesopotamia from invasion."<sup>71</sup> The British authorities had always maintained that Sayyid Taha was a trustworthy chieftain. It was Wilson's view in particular that cooperation with Sayyid Taha would give the British administration a weapon with which to counter Turkish propaganda in southern Kurdistan. During the 'Aqra rising in 1919, Sayyid Taha's influence was instrumental in discouraging many Kurdish tribes on the frontier with Turkey from joining the revolt.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, in November 1920, the Secretary of State for Colonies wrote to the Civil Commissioner in Baghdad saying that in view of a possible Turkish invasion of Mesopotamia in 1921, the formation of a Kurdish confederation headed by Sayyid Taha on the Turco-Persian frontier would weaken the Kamalist forces in Turkey. Therefore, the Sayyid's effort to establish a Kurdish state under British auspices should be given favourable consideration.<sup>73</sup>

In February 1920, the British High Commissioner in Constantinople was also considering the formation of an independent Kurdistan from the six Kurdish provinces of south-eastern Turkey. This proposal, which was made by Shaikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Nehri, president of the Kurdish Club in Constantinople, had the support of Farid Pasha, the Grand Vizier. In April and July 1920, the proposal was given serious consideration by the British government, who saw it as an effective arrangement to stop further Bolshevik advances on the Turco-Persian region, and a way to fight the Kamalist forces in eastern Anatolia, who were hindering the Ottoman government's desire to sign a peace treaty with the Allies. Farid Pasha's view was that Kurdistan was to be an autonomous state within Turkey. He told Admiral de Robeck, the British High Commissioner in Constantinople: "You hate Mustafa Kamal because he does not want your Treaty...Kurdish leaders hate Mustafa Kamal because he wants to bring Bolshevism in to support him... Let's therefore together use Kurds against him." The High Commissioner was supportive of the proposal, but he indicated that French cooperation was needed.<sup>74</sup>

By the end of 1920, however, an independent Kurdistan had proved to be impractical. This was due to a multitude of factors, particularly the British desire to promote stability in the countries bordering Mesopotamia, Persia and Turkey in particular. Anglo-French rivalry in the region, as well as disunity among the Kurds were also having an adverse effect on the British government's attempts to establish a Kurdish state.

During the years immediately following the War, it was the view of the British

government that stability in the Middle East was the best guarantee of British interests there. For this reason, it was feared that an independent Kurdish state in southern or northern Kurdistan might have a destabilizing impact on the Kurds in Persia. Before 1918, the British stand on Persia was regulated by the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention, according to which both governments promised to maintain the territorial unity of Persia, and had established respective zones of influence in the country. The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution brought an abrupt end to the Convention. Immediately after the Revolution, both powers reverted to their centuries-old rivalry in Persia, and the traditional imperial Russian policies, which had long threatened British interests in Persia as a buffer state for the defense of India, were now reinforced, and "spurred into relentless action by the messianic tenets of communist ideology."<sup>75</sup>

Therefore, the signing of the 1919 Anglo-Iranian Treaty reiterated the traditional British commitment to the integrity of Persia. The concern to maintain the territorial unity of such a strategically located country weighed heavily in the minds of British government officials when they were forming their Kurdish policy. The establishment of an independent Kurdish state in southern Kurdistan would have induced the Kurds in Persia, who were already in revolt, to secede, and facilitated the disintegration of that country. Bearing this in mind, in December 1918, at the Sulaymānīya conference of the Kurdish chieftains, British officials had refused to accept the allegiance of the Persian Kurds to Shaikh Mahmud, and told them to obey the central government in Persia. In May 1919,

Sayyid Taha was told by the British government officials that His Majesty's government was totally committed to maintaining the integrity of Persia, and he was advised to discontinue cooperation with Simko.<sup>76</sup> In August 1919, Wilson writes that "we were to discourage by every means in our power any attempt on the part of Kurds in Persia to disassociate themselves from the rule of the Persian government."<sup>77</sup>

Moreover, the Anglo-Iranian Agreement called for the British government's support of the Persian government's endeavours to rectify the Turco-Persian border in favour of Persia. During the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, Nosret ad-Dawla, the Foreign Secretary of Persia, had asked the British government to aid his country's efforts to gain the northern Kurdish provinces of Turkey as well as a substantial part of southern Kurdistan to form a "united Kurdistan" province within Persia.<sup>78</sup> But the British government was reluctant to support Persian demands on Kurdistan due to the existence of an open revolt in Persian Kurdistan, a clear indication that the Kurds did not want to be put under Persian rule.<sup>79</sup>

Furthermore, the British officials in Tehran were of the view that unless their government rendered immediate and effective help to Persia, the Kurds would secede and achieve their independence. In January, Stevens, the British Consul in Tabriz, reported that the areas of Khoi to Salmas (in North-Western Persia) were under the firm control of Simko, and this could encourage other rebels to emerge in Persia, leading to the disintegration of the country. Therefore, he suggested that Simko, who was considered by the British as the "most notorious" Kurdish

chieftain, be either "wiped out or very severely dealt with."<sup>80</sup> In November 1919, it was the view of Sir Percy Cox, the British Minister to Tehran, that the Foreign Office should immediately dispatch troops to aid the Persian government's fight against the Kurdish rebels. Cox and the British officials in Mesopotamia thought that any success of the Kurds in Persia in gaining independence would "seriously" destabilize the Kurdish areas within 'Iraq, for Simko was not only appealing to the Persian Kurds. His pan-Islamic and pan-Kurdish call was receiving a response throughout Kurdish lands.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, the direct presence of the British administration and British troops in southern Kurdistan was equally significant for the Persian government to maintain law and order in their part of Kurdistan. An independent Kurdistan, or an autonomous Kurdistan on any part of the 'Iraq-Persia border was seen as a threat to British interests.<sup>82</sup> Lees most eloquently expressed the delicate situation in 1919:

"So long as relations between the three countries concerned remain friendly the divided nature of Kurdistan need not cause either friction or embarrassment provided that each country is able to control effectively its section. But were the present dictatorial forms of government to collapse in either Persia or Turkey, this control would create automatically a state of affairs which would react unfavourably on the border territories in 'Iraq."<sup>83</sup>

As long as the Peace Conference in Paris was holding its deliberations with

regard to Turkey, the British government wanted calm and stability to prevail in that country, for it was thought that any armed resistance on the part of the Kurds in Turkey would have a destabilizing impact on the 'Iraqi Kurds. With this end in mind, in June 1919, Noel was sent on his second tour of the Kurdish region north of the Armistice Line. He was told to "impress on the tribes the necessity for maintaining order" so as to secure the tranquility of Mesopotamia's northern frontier and its vicinity.<sup>84</sup> In order to facilitate his task, Noel took two influential Badr Khanid princes along with him, and hoped that "their influence could be used to promote peace in a troubled region," while the Peace Conference was still going on. Moreover, in May 1919, Kurdish leaders held a meeting in Malatya in eastern Anatolia in order to discuss the means of mobilizing the Kurds against the Turkish nationalist forces in the region. However, Colonel Bell, the Chief of British Intelligence in Aleppo, was immediately dispatched to the region to prevail upon the Kurdish leaders to disperse, and not to organize an armed resistance to the Turks while the Paris talks were going on. Colonel Bell told the Kurds that the Allies would settle the Kurdish question according to the expressed wish of the Kurds, provided that they did not destabilize the region. The meeting was accordingly cancelled.<sup>85</sup>

Throughout the years 1919 and 1920, Colonel Bell sought the cooperation of the French authorities in order to prevent the anti-Kamalist activities of the Kurdish nationalist organizations such as the *Jam'iyat al-Istiqlāl al-Kurdī*.<sup>86</sup> In addition, from the middle of 1919 to the end of 1920, British officials in both

Constantinople and Mesopotamia were under instruction from the Foreign Office not to aid the efforts of any Kurdish groups which were seeking to put up an armed resistance to Turkey. For instance, in 1919, Shaikh' Abd al-Rahman of Sharnakh made several appeals to the Political Officer at Mosul asking him for arms and ammunition to use for an armed assault on the Kamalist forces in eastern Anatolia, but in vain.<sup>87</sup> The Political Officer in Mosul was already under orders to adopt a non-committal attitude to those who sought his material and political support for the purpose of any anti-Kamalist move.<sup>88</sup> In December 1919, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Nehri was about to mobilize the Kurds in eastern Anatolia in collaboration with the Ottoman Grand Vizier against the Kamalist forces. However, the Kurdish leader was warned by the British High Commission in Constantinople that the enterprise was risky, and that the Kurdish cause would be seriously damaged at the Peace Conference. The British government maintained that it was in the interest of all parties that peace and stability be preserved in the region.<sup>89</sup> As Olson rightly points out, Great Britain was not willing to support a Kurdish independence movement in Turkey which would lead to the dismemberment of the country:

"But British policy until the middle of 1920 was to encourage the Kurds to think that they would support independence efforts. During this period, the British supported these efforts in Turkey with the conviction they would not result in an independent state but that the Kurds would be useful in obtaining concessions from the Turkish nationalist movement

favourable to the British, especially along the 'Iraqi-Turkish border.'<sup>90</sup>

This manipulative use of the Kurds on the part of the British government to procure political gains in the region was a continuation of their pre-War practice of using the Kurds, within the Ottoman Empire and 'Iraq in particular to obtain their political ends.

The French claim to Kurdistan was another factor which accounted for the hesitation of the British government in forming a Kurdish state. According to the 1916 Sykes-Picot agreements, most of the wilāyah of Mosul was to form a French zone, provided that British oil interests in the region were protected. Most of northern Kurdistan was to be within the Russian sphere of influence.<sup>91</sup> However, in November 1918 it became clear that the 1916 Agreements required fresh consideration, because the political situation had radically changed. The new British concern about the wilāyah of Mosul was conveyed to French officials. In fact, since the British had taken control of Mosul, French officials had been forbidden to distribute "subventions" to the local authorities and notables.<sup>92</sup> The great majority of the inhabitants were Kurds, and they had earlier told Major Noel that the traditional position of France as protector of the Christian communities disqualified her in their eyes for the task of creating and fostering a Kurdish confederation.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, during the War the British officials in Mesopotamia had managed to win the loyalty of the traditionally pro-French Christian leaders in the region, and the Jewish community had also given their allegiance to the

British government.<sup>94</sup> The cessation of the wilāyah of Mosul, in which the British-controlled Turkish Petroleum Company had obtained a concession for all oil exploitation in 1914, was a "serious mistake", for this implied placing the territory and British interests in an awkward position: vital British economic interests under French political control would have created a "highly volatile situation." In December 1918, in order to rectify the situation, Lloyd George had prevailed upon Clemenceau, the French Prime Minister, who was on a visit to London, to give his consent for the annexation of the wilāyah of Mosul to the British zone in return for some concessions on Franco-German borders and in Syria.<sup>95</sup>

During the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, the French stand on the Kurdish question was that the British should have southern Kurdistan as a part of British-controlled Mesopotamia, and northern Kurdistan should be divided into French and British zones. Two autonomous Kurdish states were to be established in the mandated region, but the sovereignty over the area was to be theoretically vested in Turkey.<sup>96</sup> The British stand on the Kurdish question was spelled out by Curzon in December 1919 at the Tripartite Conference in London. The British Foreign Secretary based his Kurdish policy on the following principles: 1) no mandate, whether English or French, was possible or desirable for Kurdistan as a whole, except for the more settled areas in southern Kurdistan; 2) Turkish rule should not continue in Kurdistan even in a nominal form; 3) the Kurds were quite capable of devising a working arrangement with the Assyrians and the Armenians;

the Kurdish question could therefore be considered apart from the formation of an Armenian state on which the French and British were agreed; 4) the Kurds should be left to decide whether they would form a single state or a number of small, loosely-knit areas, and 5) the Kurdish state should be guaranteed protection against Turkish aggression, but should preferably not have formally appointed advisors, whether French or British.<sup>97</sup>

Although the Tripartite Conference (attended by Italy, France and Great Britain) resolved many delicate issues, the Kurdish question remained unsettled. Since the British government was already in actual control of southern Kurdistan, there was little question of whose influence would predominate in the Greater Independent Kurdistan. Therefore, the British pressed for a quick settlement of the issue during the Conference. Realizing that the formation of an independent Kurdish state under those circumstances would be favourable to the British, the French government managed to obtain the British government's consent to leave the Kurdish question unsettled.<sup>98</sup>

Meanwhile, throughout 1919 and 1920, the French government tried to win the support of prominent Kurdish personalities. In February 1920, for instance, Shaikh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Nehri received a French offer for an independent Kurdistan under French mandate. Some Badr Khanid princes were also contacted by the French officials in Syria for the same reason. However, these efforts failed to win the Kurds to the French side,<sup>99</sup> for the acceptance of this offer would have implied that the Kurds accepted the division of their country into French and British zones.

The Kurdish leaders whose goal was a united, independent Kurdistan under British auspices were reluctant to cooperate with the French government.<sup>100</sup> The delay in settling the Kurdish issue and the widespread rumours that Kurdistan was to be divided between the French and the British had given birth to distrust and suspicion within the pro-British Kurdish National Movement. The British government was afraid that the uncertainty surrounding the fate of the Kurds after the Tripartite Conference might drive the Kurdish leaders into an alliance with the Turks. Therefore, a policy announcement was made to the effect that His Majesty's government's stand on the Kurdish question was that Kurdistan should not be divided into British and French protectorates, nor into a group of Kurdish states; an autonomous Kurdistan severed completely from Turkish control was still the official British goal.<sup>101</sup>

During the April 1920 British Cabinet discussion on the Kurdish question the French factor was the foremost consideration of the British government. Lord Curzon stated that one of his "chief objections" to the establishment of an autonomous southern Kurdistan under British auspices was that the French might be tempted to establish a similar state under French advisors in northern Kurdistan. The British Foreign Secretary stated that he had to "fend M. Berthelot off the area" and the argument he had employed with the French Foreign Minister was that the British government was preparing to leave southern Kurdistan.<sup>102</sup>

The solution which was ultimately reached at the San Remo Conference in April 1920, constituted a French diplomatic victory. The British were forced to

forsake their previous advocacy of an independent Kurdistan with no links to Turkey, and consented to the French plan which called for the continuation of Turkish sovereignty over all Kurdish territories subject to the provision guaranteeing a degree of local autonomy. This French plan was formulated by a joint French, Italian and British commission, and was included in section 3 of the abortive Treaty of Sèvres signed on August 10, 1920 between the Allies and the Ottoman government. Articles 62 to 64 of the Treaty dealt with Kurdistan. Article 62 stated:

"A commission sitting at Constantinople... shall draft within six months from coming into force of the present Treaty a local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas lying east of the Euphrates, south of the southern border of Armenia as it may be hereafter determined, and north of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia..."<sup>103</sup>

Article 63 obliged the Turkish government to accept and execute Article 62. Article 64 indicated when and how the Kurds could apply to the Council of the League of Nations indicating their desire to obtain independence from the Ottoman Empire. This article also had some relevance to the Kurds of Mesopotamia, for it provided that following the independence of northern Kurdistan, the Principle and Allied Powers would raise no objection to "the voluntary adhesion to such an independent Kurdish state of the Kurds inhabiting

that part of Kurdistan which has hitherto been included in the Mosul Wilayet."<sup>104</sup>  
 (See Map No. 3.)

It is apparent from these Articles that Great Britain had renounced all claims to the Kurdish areas outside the wilayah of Mosul. This basic change in the British stand was the result of rapidly changing conditions within the Ottoman Empire in general, and in Kurdistan in particular. By mid-1920, the British government at home and the British officials in the Middle East began to develop a more realistic approach to the Kurdish question. The fall of Shaikh Mahrud's administration, and the rebellious attitude of the southern Kurdish tribes in Arbīl, Zākho, 'Amādiya, and 'Aqra to British control had convinced both the India and Foreign Offices that the assumption of some officials earlier that the Kurds welcomed a British mandate was not an accurate evaluation of the situation.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, the Kamalist forces' firm control of eastern Anatolia had convinced the British government that the Kurdish nationalist groups in Constantinople, who were cut off from the Kurdish region, could no longer claim the allegiance of the northern Kurds, who had for the most part joined Mustafa Kamal's pan-Islamic anti-Allied struggle.<sup>106</sup> Besides, the anti-British Mesopotamia uprising of 1920, the unfavourable turn of events in post-War Transcaucasia, Persia, Afghanistan and the Middle East was proof of how undesirable a further obligation "to defend the undefendable was."<sup>107</sup>

For these reasons, the British concern to safeguard Mesopotamia's frontiers from external threat was the key to her policy in southern Kurdistan. The British

government's desire to maintain stability in the region during the immediate post-War period was of equal importance in shaping the policy towards Kurds in general and in southern Kurdistan in particular. Anglo-French rivalry in the Middle East also had its impact on Great Britain's policy in Kurdistan.

Although British rule in southern Kurdistan during the years 1918 to 1920 showed a strong tendency for direct rule, the policy lacked decisiveness and coherence. The swift appointment of Shaikh Mahmud as hukumdar for all southern Kurdistan and the sudden introduction of basic changes to this policy only five months later point to the confused nature of the policy. In the absence of Shaikh Mahmud, after a short experiment with direct rule under Soane in Sulaymānīya, the British administration realized that indirect rule through Kurdish chieftains might be the only option available to them. This realization was apparent in their attempts to install Sayyid Taha and Hamdi Beg Baban as hukūndar of Kurdistan in order to implement the same policy which had failed with Shaikh Mahmud. This is a further indication of the lack of a clear policy with regard to the Kurds. This was further complicated by disunity among the Kurds, and Shaikh Mahmud's hasty and short-sighted policies. But the outbreak of anti-British uprisings in Kurdish regions which were beyond Shaikh Mahmud's dominions, and after the latter's departure, discredits the claims of British officials in Mesopotamia that the main cause of the failure of their policy in Kurdistan was Shaikh Mahmud's "folly". In fact, the failure of British policy in Kurdistan was part of the overall failure of the British design for Mesopotamia during the

immediate post-War period.

In addition, the British stand concerning the Kurds during this period shows some continuity with their stand on the issue before the War. Various British plans which were discussed during this period to use the Kurds as a buffer between British-controlled Mesopotamia and Turkey were essentially the same ideas put forth by British statesmen during the last century. The British government's attempts to use Kurdish nationalism to counteract the impact of pan-Islamism and Bolshevism in the region is also reminiscent of the use of the Babanids to further British interests in 'Iraq. The dispersion of the Kurds among Persia, Mesopotamia, and Turkey which was accomplished during this period put them in a position in which they were easily manipulated by external and regional powers, as happened during the 1920's. From 1921 to 1922, Mustafa Kamal made effective use of the Kurds in an attempt to dislodge the British from the wilāyah of Mosul. To foil this plan, the British government resorted to the old tactic of encouraging Kurdish nationalism. In 1922, Shaikh Mahmud was brought back to rally the Kurds to a pro-British Kurdish state. Thus, the second administration of Shaikh Mahmud began.

## Notes for Chapter 4

1. Soane, Administrative Report on Sulaymania Division, p. 32.
2. FO. 371/5081, W.R. Hay, "Note on Rowanduz," 26-12-1919, p. 4.
3. Office of Civil Commissioner, Administrative Report on Iraq 1920, p. 48.
4. Soane, Administrative Report on Sulaymaniya Division, p. 5.
5. Soane, Ibid, p. 14; Peshkawtin 192 (1920) June, p. 17.
6. Maḍhar, Chand, p. 189.
7. Soane, Sulaymania Division, p. 5.
8. FO. 371/4151 Teleg. from Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, April, 1920.
9. Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 143.
10. Cab. 24/111 Teleg. from CC. to Sec. of S. for India, No. C-P, 1857, 7-9-1920.
11. Maḍhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, p. 155; Peshkawtin, No. 14, June 1981, Kamāl Nūrī Ma'rūf, "Shaikh Maḥmūdī Namir: Khabāt-ī 'Dizhī Inglīz", p. 2; Hamilton, Road, p. 202.
12. Lees, "Two Years in Kurdistan", p. 269.
13. Main, p. 51.
14. Taqī, pp.- 42-44; Hilmī, I, pp. 36-37. Although Soane did not carry a stick, the disrespect he had for the Kurds, especially their chieftains, and his harsh treatment of the population was similar to the way Major Greenhouse treated the 'Iraqis of Najaf during the same period, or to James Claudius Rich, British Resident at Baghdad a century before. Soane presented himself to the Kurds as if he was an Oriental potentate who had to be held in high esteem. He demanded that the Kurdish chieftains and tribesmen stand up whenever he passed them. His body-guards would beat those who did not stand up, or who disobeyed any of his orders. [See: Hilmī, I, 36-37; Hawār, Kurawary, p. 65.]
15. Lees, "Two Years in Kurdistan", p. 269.

16. Maḍhar, Chand, pp. 180-81; Hawār, Kurawary, p. 65.
17. Maḍhar, Chand, pp. 90-91.
18. Ireland, pp. 118-21.
19. Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 147; Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 62.
20. Thawratunā fī Shimāl, p. 37.
21. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 62.
22. Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 147.
23. Air 20/513, "Northern Kurdistan", p. 5; Wilson, Loyalties, II, pp. 71-72.
24. Air 20/512, "Memo" from P.O. Mosul to C.C. Baghdad, No. 575, 2nd Feb., 1919; Ghulāmī, pp. 42-44; Bell, Review of Civil Administration, pp. 70-71.
25. Air 20/513, "Northern Kurdistan", p. 5; Bell, Review of Civil Administration, pp. 71-72; Times, London, August 8, 1919, "Kurdish Rising"; Air 20/716, "Amadiya Affairs", Pol. Mosul, 7-10-1919; Memo. No. G/696, GHQ, 7, 26-1919.
26. Ghulāmī, pp. 43-46.
27. Ghulāmī, pp. 50-52, 55-56; FO. 371/6349, "Personalities Mosul, Arbil and the Frontier"; Wilson, Loyalties, II, pp. 150-51.
28. Air 20/513, "Northern Kurdistan", pp. 5-6; Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 73
29. Whereas Maḍhar and Ghulāmī put the British and Assyrian casualties at a hundred, Bell mentions only a few casualties on the British side. Wilson puts the casualties at 137 killed and 331 wounded. [See: Ghulāmī, pp. 56-57; Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 73; Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 151.]
30. Wilson, Loyalties, II, pp. 150-51.
31. Hay, Two Years, pp. 180-81; Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 154; Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 73.
32. Ghulāmī, pp. 75-76, 83-85.
33. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, pp. 75-76; Noel, Diary, p. 23;

Halmreich, p. 204.

34. A son of a Rawāndūz notable named Bawil Agha was an officer in the British-run gendarmerie in 1919. Due to his pan-Islamic and Kurdish nationalistic beliefs, in 1920 he began a revolt and went to the countryside around Rawanduz to rally the Kurdish tribesmen to his cause. The British government declared him an outlaw, and Hay regarded him as a serious threat to British authority in Arbīl division. Nuri Bawil was an admirer of Shaikh Mahmud and a bitter opponent of Hay. Although the latter expended much energy to arrest him, Nuri Agha was very skillful in his hit-and-run attacks. Hay admired his resolve and his "honest manly character." [See: FO.371/5068, W. Hay, "Note on Rowanduz"; B71/6349, "Personalities - Mosul, Arbil, and Frontier", p. 24; Hay, Two Years, pp. 261-287.]

35. Hay, Two Years, pp. 303-5.

36. Hay, Two Years, pp. 87-89; Cab. 24/111, Teleg. from Civil Commissioner to S. of S. for India, C.P. 1892; Ghulami, pp. 89-90.

37. Wilson, Loyalties, II, pp. 286-87; Maḍḥar, "Al-Kurd fī Thawrat al-'Ishrīn," pp. 527-29.

38. Air 20/513, "Report on Arbil", S. Murray, APO Erbil, 15-7-1920; 20/512, "Note on Unrest Amongst the Diza'i Kurds"; Hay, Two Years, pp. 87-89.

39. Hay, Two Years, p. 161.

40. Wilson, Loyalties, II, pp 287-88 .

41. Wilson, Ibid., p. 285; Hay, Two Years, pp. 296-97; Maḍḥar, "Al-Kurd fī Thawrat al-'Ishrīn", p. 528.

42. Edmonds, Kurds, turks and Arabs, p. 299; Wilson, Loyalties, II, pp. 284-85; Maḍḥar, "Al-Kurd fī thawrat al-'Ishrīn", pp. 525-26.

43. Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 290; Maḍḥar, "Al-Kurd fī Thawrat al-'Ishrīn", p. 524.

44. Khawja, Chim Dī, III, pp. 20-21; Office of Civil Commissioner, Report on Iraq 1920-1922, p. 3; Maḍḥar, "Al-Kurd fī Thawrat al-'Ishrīn", p. 520.

45. Longrigg, 'Iraq from 1900 to 1950, p. 125; Cab. 24/111 Teleg. from Civil Commissioner, Baghdad to Sec. of State for India, 10-9-1920.

46. Maḍḥar, "Al-Kurd fī Thawrat al-'Ishrīn", p. 535.

47. Suḥayba Badr Khān, Al-Qadīya al-Kurdiya, p. 80; Air 20/512, Teleg. from Special Service, Mosul to GHQ, Baghdad, No. 181, 17-2-1919; Driver, p. 108.

48. Air 20/513, Teleg. from Policy Cairo to GHQ, Baghdad, No. 39805, 6-8-1919; From GHQ to I.O. "Report", 15-8-1919; Air 20/512, Teleg. from GHQ, Mesopotamia Force to India Office, August 5th, 1919. At the end of the War, public opinion in Europe and the United States was very much in favour of the Armenians, and there was a great deal of concern about their fate. Their pro-Allied stand during the War and their sacrifices convinced the Allied Powers in the Paris Peace Talks to consider the establishment of a state for the Armenians, to be carved out of the eastern Anatolian provinces of Erzurum, Trabzon, Van and Bidlis. The Armenian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference led by Nawar Pasha had managed to incorporate the right of the Armenians to establish a homeland into the Treaty of Sèvres. However, due to massacres, migration and famine, the Armenian population had dropped from four hundred thousand to only twenty thousand by 1919. Even in 1914, the area which was claimed by the Armenians was a predominantly Kurdish region. In addition, the emergence of Mustafa Kamal and his firm control of eastern Anatolia rendered the establishment of an Armenian state there impractical. Therefore, in 1923 the Treaty of Lausanne, which replaced the abortive Treaty of Sèvres, the idea of Kurdish and Armenian states in eastern Anatolia was dropped. [See: 5. Shaw, pp. 300-01; Afra, pp. 28-30.]

49. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, pp. 66-68.

50. Air 20/513, "Northern Kurdistan", report, pp. 5-6; FO. 371/5068, "Sulaimaniyah", by E. B. Soane, 11-6-1920. Enver Pasha was one of the three most influential leaders of CUP in Turkey. During the last year of the War, he went to the Caucasus in order to rebuild the Ottoman empire by re-establishing Turkish control of Caucasia, Central Asia, and Mesopotamia. In 1919, he made an alliance with the Bolsheviks and formed the Green Army in order to fight the British occupation of formerly Ottoman provinces. [See: FO. 371/5069, Memo. No. SC. 33897, 25th Sept. 1919 from Pol. Arbil to CC. Baghdad; Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, II, pp. 326-27.

51. FO. 371/5068, Teleg. from CC. to S.S. Col., 6-4-1920, No. 4205; Driver, p. 111.

52. Air 20/512, Teleg. from HC to GHQ, No. 20, 12-5-1919; Mayson, p. 344; Driver, p. 111.

53. Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 131.

54. Noel, Diary, p. 2.

55. Air 20/513, memo. from S. S. Mosul to CC., 29th Dec. 1919; Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 73; Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 152.

56. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 72; Ghulami, p. 32; Maḍhar, "Kurd wa Dawruhum fi Thawrat al-'Ishrīn", p. 112.

57. Air 20/513, Teleg. from Intelligence Office Const. to General Staff, HQ, Bagh. No. 572, 4-8-1919; Maḍhar, Chand, pp. 72-75; Silopi, pp. 58-61.

58. FO. 371/5069, Teleg. from De Robeck (Const. to FO. 28-7-1920; Maḍhar, Kurdistan fi Sanawāt, pp. 174-75; Martin Gilbert, Sir Horace Rumbold: Portrait of a Diplomat (London: Heinmann, 1973), pp. 229-30; Roderic H. Davison, "Turkish Diplomacy from Modros to Lausanne", in Diplomats, ed. A. Gordon, Craig & Flex Gilbert, Vol. I (Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 180.

59. FO. 371/5061, Teleg. from High Commission (HC) Baghdad, to Sec. of S. for Colonies, 12-11-1920; FO. 371/5068, "Sulamaniyah", E. B. Soane, 11-1-1920.

60. Cab. 24/111, Teleg. from CC. Bagh. to S. S. for India, 10-8-1920. The British Consul in Tabriz was actively involved in aiding the efforts of the Persian government in combatting the dissemination of Communist ideas. A certain Shaikh Ibrahim, for instance, was exiled from Sinna, a Kurdish town on the frontier, to Tehran with the aid of the British government. [See Air 20/512, Teleg. from Senna to Tehran u/d.]

61. FO. 371/4191, Teleg. from Sec. of S. for India to FO. 20-4-1919; Teleg. from Under S. S. for India to FO., London, No. 5803, u/d.

62. Air 20/512, Teleg. Noel, "Sulaymania", to Pol. Baghdad, 17-1 1-1918.

63. FO. 371/5067, Teleg. from Pol. Bagh. to India Office, 16-11-1918.

64. Noel, Diary, pp. 1-3; Air 20/512, Teleg. from Pol. Bagh. to Egyptian Force. No. 2849, 11-3-1919. Noel's tour of eastern Anatolia was arranged at the same time as Damad Farid Pasha had unsuccessfully attempted to attack the Kamalist rebels from the Kurdish region. Therefore, Noel found himself in an awkward situation in Malatya. The tour confirmed the Kamalists' belief that Farid Pasha and the British were plotting together to destroy their movement and dismember Turkey. [See: Noel, Diary, pp. 1-9; FO. 371/6469, "Turkey", annual report, 1920, No. 428, by Horace Rumbold, Const. Ap. 27, 1921, pp. 42-43; Air 512, Teleg. from Pol. Bagh. to Egypt. Force. No. 2849, 11-3-1919; Air 20/513, "Northern Kurdistan", report, p. 1; Air 20/512, Teleg. from GHQ, Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force, 19-5-1919, No. 0/1962/63.

65. Air 20/513, "Northern Kurdistan", report, pp. 5-6. In 1915, the Armenian communities in eastern Anatolia had supported the Russian and Allied attacks on the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the Young Turk regime decided to relocate the Armenian communities on the frontier to other parts of Turkey. It is claimed that over a million Armenians perished during these forcible migrations. There is a strong claim that the Kurds were used by the Ottoman government in its reprisals against the Armenians. Wigram, an American missionary in the region, writes:

"The programme of massacre was identical in practically every district. First, the chief local leaders of the Armenians (parliamentary deputies and so forth) were quietly entrapped and assassinated... then those who had been called for military service were disarmed, drafted into labour battalions and set to road-making and other tasks in remote and sparsely populated districts, where they were soon worn out with hard work, exposure, and starvation, or shot down at leisure in idle sport by their armed guards. Then all the better class townfolk--doctors, teachers, and merchants... marched away from their homes ostensibly for some distant destination. It was arranged that armed Kurds or their own escort should fall upon them during the journey..." (Cradle of Mankind: Life in Eastern Kurdistan, p. 338.)

The role of the Kurds in the Armenian massacre during the War has been questioned by many scholars, who claim that the Kurds themselves were the victims of a brutal massacre which was no less in extent and scope than the Armenian one. The number of Kurds who perished during the War due to massacre by the Armenians, famine and forcible migration, has been put between 700,000 and 1,000,000. [See: Afra, The Kurds, pp. 28-29; Shaw, pp. 300-05; Aḥmad Zakī, Khulāṣat, pp. 262-64.] Noel rightly points out that the Armenians, due to their powerful lobby abroad, were able to bring their case to the attention of the world. However, European public opinion was not informed about the Armenian massacre of Kurds under the cover of the Russian advance on eastern Anatolia. These "atrocities on the Muslim population... in ferocity and thoroughness equal anything they had experienced themselves." (Noel, Diary, p. 3.)

Kurdish nationalist scholars admit that Kurds played a role in the massacres. However, they claim that the Kurds were acting under orders from the Ottomans. [See: Maḍhar, Kurdistān fī Sanawāt, pp. 262-64.] But the Turkish officials who admit that the massacre took place hold the Kurds solely responsible for the affair. (See: Silopi, p. 54.) The fact of the matter is that Turkish officials, bigoted and greedy Kurdish aghās, as well as foreign-instigated Armenian militants should be held responsible for the massacres inflicted on both Armenian and Kurdish civilians during the War.

66. FO. 371/5068, "Kurdistan", India Office, P. No. 7701, 20-11-1919; FO.

371/3657, Teleg. from HC (Const.) to FO., 5-1-1919.

67. Air 20/512, from Special Secret Service (SSS) Mosul, Captain A. Launder to SHQ. Mesopotamia, Bagh. 12-2-1919.

68. Noel, Diary, p. 1, Robert Olson, "The Second Time Round: British Policy Towards the Kurds (1921-22)", Die Welt des Islam, 47 (1987), pp. 93-4.

69. The August 9th, 1919 Anglo-Iranian Treaty provided that the British government would respect the territorial integrity of Persia. The British also undertook to provide expert advisors to Persia, and a loan of £200,000. [See Ramazani, Foreign Policy of Iran 1900-1914 (Charlottesville: University Press, 1966), p. 161.

70. Air 20/512, "A Note on the Kurdish Claims to the Urmia District of Persia", M.J. Ross, Baghdad, I/C Kurdish Bureau, 8-7-1919.

71. FO. 371/5069, Memo., No. SC33897/12 from Pol. Arbil to CC. Bagh. 25-9-1920; Hay, Two Years, pp. 333-34; Bell, Review of Civil Administration, p. 69.

72. Air/512, Teleg. from CC. to GHQ, Mesopotamia, 18-4-1919; Teleg. from APO Rowanduz to Pol Bagh. 17-4-1919.

73. FO. 371/5068, Teleg. from S. S. for Col. to HC. Bagh. 26-11-1920.

74. FO. 371/5067, Memorandum, by Mr. Ryan, Const. to FO. 24-2-1920; Teleg. from Admiral De Robeck, Const. to FO., 28-7-1920.

75. Ramazani, p. 139, 160-61; Br. Doc. 4; memo. by Earl Curzon on Persia, No. 114911/150/33, 9-8-1919, p. 1121. Lord Curzon, in defending the signing of the Treaty, was quoted as saying that Persia's integrity "...must be regarded as a cardinal precept to our imperial creed..." In the chain of buffer states stretching between India and Europe, Iran was considered "the weakest and the most vital link." In August 1919, emphasizing the significance of Persia for the British Empire in the post-War period, Curzon wrote:

"Why Persia should not be left to herself and allowed to rot into picturesque decay, the answer is that her geographical position, the magnitude of our interests in the country, and future safety of our Eastern Empire renders it improbable for us to disinterest ourselves from what happens in Persia. Moreover, now that we are about to assume the mandate for Mesopotamia, which will make us coterminous with the western frontiers of Persia, we cannot permit the existence, between the frontiers

of our India Empire in Baluchistan and those of our new protectorate, a hotbed of misrule, enemy intrigue, financial chaos, and political disorder. Furthermore, if Persia were to be left alone there is every reason to fear that she would be overran by Bolshevik influence from the north. Lastly we possess in the south-western corner of Persia a great asset in the shape of oilfields..."

76. Bell, Review of Civil Administration, pp. 69-71; Hay, Two Years, pp. 353-54; FO. 371/5069, Memo. No. SC33897/12, 25/9/1919 from Bl. Bag. to Pol. Arbil; High Commission, 'Iraq, Administrative Report 1920-1922, pp. 69-70.

77. Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 142.

78. Br. Doc. 4, Nesret ed Dawla, Foreign Minister of Iran, Teleg. from Earl of Curzon to Earl of Derby (Paris), No. 127, 25-10-1919; Persian Minister to Earl Curzon, 17-11-1919, No. I53036/150/34, p. 1238.

79. Br. Doc. 4, Teleg. from Earl of Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran), un. nob. 28-11-1919, p. 1248; letter from Persian Minister to FO., No. 877, tr. p. 1272.

80. Air 20/512, "Ismail Agha Simko" in "Personalities - Mosul, Arbil and Frontier", 19-2-1919; SS. Mosul to GHQ, 29-12-1919; Teleg. from Tabriz to Tehran, No. 89, 7-4-1919.

81. Br. Doc. 4, Teleg. from Sir P. Cox to Earl of Curzon, No. 747, 21-11-1919, p. 1242; Air 20/512, "Note by Major Ross" to I.O., No. 20627, 2-7-1919.

82. FO. 371/4151, Teleg. from CC. Bag. to FO. 5-4-1920.

83. Lees, "Two Years in South Kurdistan", p. 253.

84. FO. 371/5068, "Sulaimaniyah", by E. B. Soane, 19-1-1919; Air 20/513, "Northern Kurdistan", report, pp. 4-5; Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 146; Br. Doc. 4: Teleg. from Admiral De Robeck (Const.) to Earl Curzon, No. 2271, Enclosure in No. 616, "Memorandum" by Ryan, 4, 12, 1919, pp. 921-22.

85. Noel, Diary, p. 1; Br. Doc. 4: Teleg. from Admiral De Robeck to Earl Curzon, No. 2271, 4-12-1919, enclosure, No. 616, memo. by Ryan, p. 922.

86. Suṛīya Badr Khān, pp. 140-41; Shirko, p. 83.

87. Air 20/513, letter from Sulaymani Agha Tatar, Reis of Ashirat Shernakh to PO Mosul, 25-6-1820.

88. FO 371/5069, Teleg. from HC. Bagh. to S. S. Col. No. 115, 23-12-1820.
89. Br. Doc. 4: Teleg. from Admiral De Robeck (Const.) to Earl of Curzon, 9-12-1919, p. 927.
90. Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism, p. 25.
91. Cab. 27/206, "British Desiderata in Turkey in Asia", 6-30-1915.
92. FO. 371/8593 letter from Louis Mallet to French Ambassador in London, 14-11-1918.
93. Air 20/512, Teleg. from Pol. Bagh. to I.O., 9967, 30, 10, 1918.
94. 'Attiya, p. 75.
95. Br. Doc. 4: Teleg. from Grey to Cambon, No. 788, 15-5-1919; Lloyd George, Truth, p. 1038; Shawdran, p. 193-96; Halmreich, From Paris to Sèvres (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1974), pp. 206-07; Busch, pp. 69-70; Henry H. Cumming, Franco-British Rivalry in the Post-War Near East (West Point: Greenwood Press, 1938), pp. 67-68.
96. Br. Doc. 4: French Note on Kurdistan, M. Berthelot, (No. 1661 33/3050/44), Londres, Le 23rd December 1919, p. 960.
97. Br. Doc. 4: "Third Meeting - Turkish Settlement", (No. 166415/1516711/44), pp. 966-67.
98. FO. 371/5068 Teleg. from S. S. for India, 23-3-1920; Br. Doc. 4: memo. No. 7/1069, 2-17-1920, p. 159.
99. FO. 371/5067, Teleg. from De Robeck to Curzon, 2/24/1920. Cited in Halmreich, p. 301.
100. FO. 608/95/19828, 24/10/1919.
101. FO. 371/5067, Teleg. from FO to HC. (Const.), 26-3-1920.
102. FO. 371/5068, Interdepartmental Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs, "Minutes", 13-4-1920, p. 5.
103. Br. Doc. VIII, "Notes of a Meeting of the British, French and Italian Delegations", San Remo, on April 18, 1920. I.C.P. 95, pp. 11-13, 41-43; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. II, pp. 380-84.

104. Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 1, p. 380-82.

105. Halmreich, p. 204.

106. FO. 371/6469, H. Rumbold, "Turkey" Annual Report, No. 428, 27-4-1920; FO. 371/5068, Indepartmental Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs, "Minutes", 13-4-1920, p. 5; FO. 371/4193, Teleg. from T. A. Wilson to I.O., unumb. 27-11-1919; Busch, p. 187; Wilson, Loyalties, II, p. 142.

107. Busch, pp. 238-39.

## Chapter 5

### FROM CAIRO TO LAUSANNE, 1921-1923

Between 1921-23 British policy in southern Kurdistan aimed at securing 'Iraq's northern frontier against the Turkish threat. A two-pronged policy was followed. On one hand, Kurdish nationalism was fostered in order to counter Turkey's pan-Islamic appeal to the Kurdish population. On the other hand, the British government had to reconcile the aspirations of the Kurdish nationalists with the needs of British policy within 'Iraq; the consolidation of King Faisal's government in Baghdad and the maintenance of the territorial integrity of 'Iraq so that it would become a viable state.

#### The Cairo Conference of 1921

The outline of British policy had been worked out at the Cairo Conference in March 1921. The losses incurred by the rebellion in 'Iraq in 1920 caused an intensified campaign in England for the reduction of expenditure on commitments abroad. Moreover, the rapidly growing anti-British Kamalist forces based in Anatolia were "battering Lloyd George's Turkish policy to pieces." A hostile Turkey was posing an unrelenting challenge to the British hold on northern 'Iraq. Therefore, the public demand at home for reduction of expenses abroad had to be reconciled with the British strategic needs in 'Iraq. Hence on the initiative of Mr. Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies, a conference was called in Cairo

in March 1921 to examine the situation in the Middle East and devise measures for remedying it. In 'Iraq, it was agreed that the British government would hand over the administration to an Arab government, use their influence to secure the nomination of Faisal as King of 'Iraq, and enter into negotiations with the new government for the conclusion of a treaty of alliance to replace the mandate. This would make it possible for the British government to reduce their garrisons considerably and economise.<sup>2</sup> British expenses were to be reduced in stages, from £32 million per annum in 1921 to £4-5 per annum by the end of the 1920s. British troops in 'Iraq would be reduced from thirty-seven battalions to only four; the British officers would raise and lead a native army (the Levies) which would fill the gap pending the formation of a regular 'Iraqi army. The Levies, meanwhile, would be backed up by eight squadrons of the British Royal Force.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, in order to satisfy Arab national sensitivities in 'Iraq with regard to the Mandate, the conference contemplated the adoption of a treaty relationship with King Faisal's government. It was anticipated that the treaty would provide King Faisal with a means to cooperate unreservedly with London.<sup>4</sup> Also it was hoped that a peace treaty between Turkey and Britain would be signed in the near future. This would enable 'Iraq's government to develop its oil resources in the Wilāyah of Mosul, and would entail the flow of royalties to 'Iraq which would in turn enable Britain to make 'Iraq a client state that could pay for itself.<sup>5</sup>

The Cairo strategy pre-supposed peace in southern Kurdistan and a friendly relationship with Turkey. Therefore, the Kurdish question was one of the major

items discussed at the conference and was the most controversial one, for there were several views among the British officials as to the policy to be pursued in southern Kurdistan. The discussion centred on two lines of policy: the first one called for the establishment of a separate Kurdish entity under the mandatory supervision of Britain, and the second one called for the formation of an autonomous Kurdish region within 'Iraq. Churchill and several leading British statesmen advocated the first policy. Churchill argued that since the Treaty of Sèvres, which envisaged the formation of an independent Kurdistan in southeastern Anatolia, with the Kurds of the Wilāyah of Mosul being given the choice to join, was rendered inoperative by the of the Kamalist forces in Turkey, the British government should establish a Kurdish state in southern Kurdistan. This Kurdish regime, which was to be formed of the non-Arab areas of Mosul province, was to be interposed between 'Iraq and Kamalist Turkey. All cities which did not have an Arab majority were to join the Kurdish state.<sup>6</sup> Churchill and other officials who shared his views, contended that there was strong antipathy among the Kurds towards the Arabs. The Kurds would be disappointed if the British government delivered them from the Turks only to surrender them to the Arabs, who, they argued, were not "far more" civilized than the Turks. A hostile Kurdish population in northern 'Iraq would render it difficult to defend Persia from Bolshevik designs to absorb the region gradually into their new Russian Empire.<sup>7</sup> Besides, "If we alienate the Kurds," Churchill wrote, it would make the task of defending the Wilāyah of Mosul "extremely costly". If Turkey chose to

attack, all Kurdistan would rise up, and would favour Turkey, the Secretary of State for Colonies maintained.<sup>8</sup>

Sir Percy Cox, the High Commissioner in Baghdad and most of the British officials in 'Iraq, on the other hand, subscribed to the second policy. Cox did not favour a Kurdish state for several reasons, the foremost of which was his concern about the indefensible nature of 'Iraq's frontier minus the Kurdish mountains to the north and northeast.<sup>9</sup> Miss Bell shared Cox's concern, and she persistently argued that it was essential for the new 'Iraqi state to secure the strategic frontier of the armistice line, without which the whole of the Mesopotamian plain down to Basra would be open to the Turkish forces. Moreover, she maintained, if southern Kurdistan was detached from 'Iraq, the oil fields of the area would eventually fall into the hands of Turkey to the ruin of 'Iraq, and even the oil fields of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company would be threatened.<sup>10</sup>

Besides, a Kurdish state would be opposed by the Arab nationalists at Baghdad, who were already entertaining some doubts about British policy in Kurdistan. In fact, a considerable section of 'Iraqi nationalists thought that Britain was "grinding an axe" in Kurdistan at the expense of 'Iraq by her attempts to build a stronghold in Kurdistan from which it could threaten the defiant 'Iraqi nationalists.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, King Faisal would be reluctant to accept the formation of a Kurdish state in northern 'Iraq, because it would have undermined his position in the eyes of 'Iraqi nationalists. He would be seen as a tool in the hands of the British in dismembering 'Iraq. "The best and in fact the only weapon we

shall have...to combat a possible Turco-Bolshevik attack...will be a solid block of Arab nationalism and our policy must be to foster that to the utmost," wrote Cox.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, Cox, who was familiar with the local situation, like his predecessor Sir Arnold Wilson, thought that the Kurds were not ready for self-rule. He contended that they were too divided and lacked a coherent national feeling.<sup>13</sup> Stephen Longrigg, the administrative Inspector at Kirkuk Liwā, agreed. He also viewed the Kurds as divided into numerous tribes led by mutually jealous rival tribal chieftains who had no national feeling.<sup>14</sup> Miss Bell was equally convinced that any Kurdish enterprise in northern 'Iraq was a futile experiment, she writes:

"...Your material is so damned. Most of them are holy men, half-witted and half-starved, wholly barbarous anyhow; and each one hates the other like the devil. How are you going to create a Kurdish state?"<sup>15</sup>

Realizing the delicacy of the issue, upon the request of Cox, the Cairo Conference delayed the final decision on the Kurdish question and agreed to let matters take their course. With the Kurdish question "left in limbo" in Cairo, Cox was determined to pursue a policy which aimed at a gradual and ultimate fusion of the Kurdish districts with 'Iraq. There was unanimity among the British officials in Cairo that any attempt to force the purely Kurdish districts under the

rule of an Arab government would inevitably be resisted. The conference, accordingly recommended that until such time as a representative body of Kurdish opinion might opt for inclusion in 'Iraq, Kurdistan should be placed under the direct supervision of the British High Commissioner and kept separate from 'Iraq.<sup>16</sup>

It seems that both Churchill and Cox had left Cairo with the impression that the other party had accepted his views with regard to their respective Kurdish policies. Cox wrote to the Secretary for Colonies saying that in accordance with the policy they had agreed upon at the Cairo Conference, shortly after his return to 'Iraq, he held a conference of local British experts to hear their views regarding the policy to be pursued in southern Kurdistan. The British High Commission had also proceeded to ascertain the wishes of the Kurdish districts in regard to their possible inclusion in 'Iraq. Both inquiries, according to Cox, confirmed his view that Kurdistan wanted, and had to be, part of 'Iraq. The High Commissioner told the Colonial Office that he was in the process of developing a regime whereby Kurds would enjoy full autonomy within 'Iraq.<sup>17</sup> In an attempt to allay Churchill's apprehensions regarding possible future Turkish approaches to the 'Iraqi Kurds, Cox wrote. "I realize that our programme must be more attractive" than any alternative Turkey might offer, and must be broad enough to satisfy the more ambitious Kurdish nationalists."<sup>18</sup> Churchill in reply wrote that he was convinced that it was not in the interests of the British government to place Kurds under any form of Arab rule. He adds,

"I carried away from Cairo rather a different impression of a balance of opinion with regard to our Kurdish policy...I had in mind a picture of a buffer state."<sup>19</sup>

'Iraq was to be protected by a strong buffer zone of Kurdish states. A buffer of this nature was hoped to give the 'Iraqi frontier with Turkey and Iran some protection, and free 'Iraq from the task of defending itself with a strong army.<sup>20</sup> Churchill's plan to make Kurdistan a buffer zone between 'Iraq, Turkey and Iran was a revival of a proposal which was made to the same effect in 1853 by Sir Henry Rawlinson. Nevertheless, Cox persistently refused to heed his minister's instructions. Local circumstances were having an impact on his policy. King Faisal, assisted by other British officials in 'Iraq, exerted a tremendous amount of pressure concerning the Kurdish policy of the High Commissioner. The King argued convincingly that the formation of a separate Kurdish state would deprive 'Iraq of a great proportion of its Sunni population and this would make his rule in a predominantly Shi'i country extremely difficult.<sup>21</sup> Faisal maintained that as an Arab he could not accept the separation of southern Kurdistan from 'Iraq. However, Major Young did not support King Faisal's claim to Kurdistan. He reminded him that the latter did not claim Kurdistan when he was offered the throne of 'Iraq in London. "We promised to encourage Arab nationalism not Arab imperialism," Young told the King.

Nevertheless, the High Commissioner appreciated the strength of King Faisal's

argument and he thought that British interests would be best served by strengthening 'Iraq. Cox wrote to Churchill saying,

"We must never lose sight of the fact that the Kurdish question is secondary to the Arab question. Unless we establish our friendly influence over Arabs of Iraq, we cannot hope to exercise any influence over 'Iraq... 'Iraq constitutes our passage to Kurdistan."<sup>23</sup>

By August 1921, Cox had managed to convince Churchill to support his Kurdish policy. On August 25, Churchill wrote to assure Cox that the main thing was to secure King Faisal's position while other issues should be handled in subordination to this. However, he advised Cox to adhere to the principle of not putting Arabs over Kurds in southern Kurdistan. The Secretary for Colonies instructed Cox to go ahead with his plan to grant the Kurds "extensive local autonomy" for two years until the position of King Faisal was consolidated.<sup>24</sup> The differences between Churchill and Cox were a continuation of those between Curzon and Wilson on the same issue from 1918-1920, a further indication of the absence of a definite Kurdish policy. Perhaps this was partly due to the fact that the peace treaty with Turkey had not yet been signed.

Cox's plan for autonomy consisted of three major points: 1) the formation of a Kurdish sub-Liwā' (sub-province) comprising the four Kurdish qadās (districts) of Mosul Division, namely, Zībār, 'Aqra, 'Amādiya and Dihok. This province was

to be placed temporarily under the jurisdiction of a British assistant mutaşarrif until such time as a competent Kurdish administrator would be available; 2) Arbīl sub-Liwā' would include Koī Sanjak and Rawāndūz and would be jointly administered by British and 'Iraqi officials. In all important government appointments due regard would be given to the wishes of the Kurds; 3) the Sulaymānīya Division would be governed by a mutaşarrif in Council. The British Political Officer would temporarily fill the post of mutaşarrif. The High Commissioner would be the link between the mutaşarrif and the Council of State in Baghdad.<sup>25</sup> Captain Goldsmith, the PO in Sulaymānīya told Kurdish chieftains that the British government's policy was to gradually educate the Kurds to govern themselves. However, for the time being British officers would directly administer Kurdistan until self-governing institutions would develop.<sup>26</sup>

King Faisal and many 'Iraqi Nationalists remained suspicious about Britain's policy in Kurdistan and Cox's plan was viewed by them as a step toward the establishment of a Kurdish state in the north. In October 1921, King Faisal expressed his concern about the British Government's Kurdish policy by approaching Cox with the following questions: 1) Was Britain prepared to undertake to defend Kurdistan if attacked from outside and consequently to guarantee 'Iraq against attack though Kurdistan? If so, for how long?; 2) Was she prepared to accept responsibility to prevent internal disorder in Kurdistan which might be a danger to 'Iraq? If so, for how long? Some Kurdish communities had expressed a desire for inclusion in 'Iraq, was it the intention of Britain to compel

them to separate from 'Iraq?; 3) And in the event of separation what form of government did Britain have in mind for Kurdistan?<sup>27</sup> Churchill responded to the King's questions by reiterating that the British government was not anticipating the establishment of a Kurdish state but was thinking of attaching southern Kurdistan to 'Iraq in the form of a federation. Britain had also no intention to prevent any Kurdish districts from being part of 'Iraq. Moreover, the policy of granting Kurdistan autonomy was meant primarily to discourage the Kurds from responding to the Turkish propaganda coming across the frontier.<sup>28</sup>

The questions which were addressed to Cox by King Faisal demonstrate a good understanding on the part of the latter of the delicate situation which the British faced in Kurdistan. King Faisal was aware that the British government was not in a position to undertake new responsibilities in Kurdistan and perhaps he wanted them to let 'Iraq's government establish its rule in the area. Moreover, Churchill's reply makes it clear that even the policy of autonomy (or federation) was not a matter of established policy. This policy seems to have aimed primarily at containing the impact of Turkish propaganda among the Kurds.

The success of the Cairo strategy presupposed peace in Kurdistan, friendly relations with Turkey, and no opposition from the French authorities in the Middle East.<sup>29</sup> The discontent with the British policy, which was exacerbated by Turkish appeals to the pan-Islamic feelings of the Kurds, had a disquieting effect in the area. This discontent had manifested itself in both the preliminary enquiry held by Cox in May and the subsequent referendum on King Faisal's accession to the

throne of 'Iraq. Upon his return from Cairo, the High Commissioner tried to ascertain the wishes of the Kurds with regard to their association with King Faisal's government. The Kurdish nationalists in Sulaymānīya, a small but vocal elite, pressed for a Kurdish state and refused any association with Baghdad. They were fully aware of the economic ties between Kurdistan and the rest of 'Iraq. However, they saw these economic ties as indications of interdependence, not dependence on the part of Kurdistan as Britain contended, and thought that they could be maintained through the establishment of a relationship between two sovereign states.<sup>30</sup> They considered Cox's claim that the Kurds' disunity disqualified them for the formation of a nation-state invalid. Kurds asked Major Goldsmith, the Political Officer at Sulaymānīya, "why it is not possible for His Excellency the High Commissioner to weld the Kurdish districts of the mandatory territory into a separate Kurdish state, and, to give them the same help and guidance in the formation of a national and indigenous government as is being given to Iraq."<sup>31</sup> But Kurdish notables and chieftains in Kirkuk, Arbil and Mosul Liwa' had opinions which ranged from total adhesion to 'Iraq, to an autonomy under British mandate.<sup>32</sup>

The June 1921 referendum on King Faisal's candidacy for the throne of 'Iraq provides a further indication on the Kurds' attitude towards union with the new 'Iraqi government. The Kurds of Sulaymānīya refused to participate in the referendum at all. The votes of the Kirkuk Kurds accounted chiefly for the four percent dissenters in the referendum.<sup>33</sup> In Arbīl there was a general official

acceptance of the King. However, this was "worked out" by Captain Lyon, the Assistant Political Officer there.<sup>34</sup> Although Kurdish notables of the Mosul Liwa' had voted for King Faisal, their acceptance of him was conditional on: 1) the British mandate continuing in 'Iraq; 2) recognition of the Kurdish language as the official language of education, justice and administration; 3) the provision of a legal guarantee of Kurdish rights within 'Iraq; 4) and the Kurds were to reserve their right to join northern Kurdistan whenever the latter became an independent state as provided for by the Treaty of Sèvres.<sup>35</sup> In order to indicate their refusal to accept Faisal as their King, no Kurdish delegation from either Sulaymāniya or Kirkuk attended King Faisal's accession ceremony.<sup>36</sup>

The May enquiry by Cox and the June referendum in 'Iraq demonstrate that the Kurds of Sulaymāniya, Arbīl and Kirkuk, which accounted for more than two-thirds of southern Kurdistan's population, were almost unanimous in their rejection of King Faisal. This was probably not a surprise to King Faisal, for neither was he familiar with them nor did they know him well. The contradictory signals which were given to the Kurds from London by Churchill and from Baghdad by Cox partly accounted for the negative vote in Kurdistan. This also indicated that the King would not easily reconcile the Kurds to his government. It was this visible discontent among the Kurds which was effectively manipulated by Turkey in her attempt to regain control over the Wilayah of Mosul.

### The OzDemir Affair

From June 1921 to September 1922, the discontent among the Kurds with Britain's Kurdish policy, new developments in Angora and favourable external factors, enabled Turkey to foment general unrest in northern 'Iraq with the hope of eventual takeover of the Wilāyah of Mosul.

It should be recalled that in their National Pact the Kamalist government in Turkey claimed that the Wilāyah of Mosul was an 'indivisible' part of the Turkish homeland. On June 5, 1921, the extreme nationalists in Angora were able to push the moderates aside. Bakir Sami, the moderate Foreign Minister was forced to resign. The new cabinet persuaded Mustafa Kamal to pursue an anti-foreign and expansionist foreign policy. The new Foreign Minister advocated a forward policy on the Mesopotamian frontier.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the Kamalist foreign policy strategy in the past had been based on applying pressure on each of Turkey's enemies at once--first, against the French occupation of Silicia, and second, against the Greeks on the Sakaria River to recapture occupied Smyrna. Inspired by these successes, and having freed a large proportion of the army, which had been hitherto occupied in wars with Greece and France, Mustafa Kamal thought the time was right to apply pressure on 'Iraq's frontier in order to recapture the Wilāyah of Mosul.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, in June 1921, the Soviet government in Russia had made its policy on Turkey known. It expressed solidarity with Mustafa Kamal's design to recapture the 'indisputable' Turkish territories of Armenia, Batum, eastern Thrace, Kurdistan, and the territories with "mixed population" (the

last phrase was a clear reference to the Wilāyah of Mosul).<sup>39</sup> Besides, Mustafa Kamal realized that 'Iraq was "the weak link" in British Foreign policy. This weak link had to be attacked in order to bring pressure on the British government, which was perceived by Turkey as the main obstacle to the signing of a peace treaty between Turkey and the Allied Powers.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, Mustafa Kamal believed that the British were using the Kurds to destabilize his regime in Turkey. In July 1921, there was a Kurdish uprising in the southeastern provinces of Turkey. A Turkish Parliamentary Investigation Committee alleged that British authorities in 'Iraq and King Faisal were involved in the uprising. Both Britain and the King denied the Turkish allegation and argued that the Parliamentary Committee which toured the area was misled by French agents.<sup>41</sup> While Turkey was in a position to mobilize no less than thirty-six thousand for a Mesopotamian campaign, the British government was being pressed at home to cut the number of troops stationed in 'Iraq and was not in a position to fight a new war with Turkey over the Wilāyah of Mosul.<sup>42</sup> Finally, an attack on Mosul province and the recapture of southern Kurdistan would deprive Britain of a possible future use of the Kurds and Kurdish nationalism as a lever in future disputes with Turkey.<sup>43</sup>

The resentment towards Britain among the Kurdish chieftains and the Kurdish nationalits in southern Kurdistan provided Mustafa Kamal with a ready and effective tool to exert pressure on the British authorities in 'Iraq. Kurdish nationalists who for the most part had been alienated due to the 1919 suppression of Shaikh Mahmud's revolt, and the subsequent iron-fist policy of Major Soane

and Captain Hay, began to turn to Turkey for help in 1921 in order to resist the British government's effort to place them under King Faisal's rule. The anti-British Kurdish forces were centred around the newly-formed Kurdish Secret Society (Komel-y Nihen-ī Kurd), which had many ex-Turkish civil servants and officers in its ranks, as well as the pro-Turkey Kurdish chieftains. The Society was centred in Sulaymāniya and Rawāndūz, and Ahmad Taqi, Karim Fattah Beg, Nuri Bawil Agha, and Abbas-i Mahmud Agha were the leading members.<sup>44</sup> It also had the support of Shaikh Ahmad of Bārzan, Shaikh Amin Sundolan of Raniya, and Faris Agha of Zibar. In April 1921, the Society sent Ahmad Taqi to Turkey to co-ordinate the activities with the Kamalist officials on the frontier. The Kurds were so disgruntled with British rule that they authorized Taqi to invite the Turks to Rawāndūz. The Wālī of Van, a Turkish province on the frontier, was told by the Kurds that they were ready to pay for the expenses of the Turkish force which would be despatched to southern Kurdistan. The Kurdistan Society thought that the presence of Turkish soldiers in Kurdistan would assist its efforts to mobilize the Kurds against British rule, for pro-Caliphate sentiment was strong among the Kurds.<sup>45</sup>

Mustafa Kamal left the task of recapturing the Wilāyah of Mosul to a certain 'Ali Shafiq, nicknamed OzDemir (the iron shoulder) a general of Circassian origin, who had already distinguished himself while in Egypt and Cilicia. OzDemir's plan to recapture the Wilāyah of Mosul consisted of applying pressure on the British authorities in 'Iraq by creating unrest in southern Kurdistan. The

salient features of the plan were the frequent sending of irregular forces in a campaign of hit and run operations inside northern 'Iraq. The Turkish intrigue with Kurdish chieftains and notables had never ceased, and preceded OzDemir's coming to Rawāndūz. As early as January 1921, Turkish officials in Van in southeastern Turkey sent letters to the leading personalities throughout Kurdistan promising the return of the Turkish authorities to the region soon. The chieftains of Hawramān, Jāf, Pizhder and Hamāwand were told to start a revolt to prepare for a Turkish advance on the region. The dissemination of anti-British and pro-Caliphate propaganda among the Kurds, sending gifts to the influential pro-Turkish Kurdish chieftains and blackmailing those who agreed to cooperate with the British government.<sup>46</sup>

Upon the invitation of the Kurdish nationalists in June 1921, OzDemir had managed to establish a pro-Turkey Kurdish administration in Rawāndūz, and in Pizhder country. The Turkish irregular force was also increased to eighty and was joined by a certain Ramzi-Beg who was appointed as Turkish qā'immaqām of Rawanduz.<sup>47</sup> In December, as a result of OzDemir's intrigue with Shaikh 'Ubaidullah of Surchī, who had six hundred armed followers, a British force was attacked in the south of Rawāndūz Gorge east of Arbil. Two British officers and several Levy members were killed. The government's prestige in the region was at stake. Therefore, the British government mobilized a five-thousand strong force, mainly Assyrian, Arab and Kurdish Levies, some of whom were hurriedly brought from southern 'Iraq. This force was able to defeat the Surchīs. However,

OzDemir's ability to move was not totally checked.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to regular hit-and-run expeditions, OzDemir established a network of contacts with the influential Kurdish notables in the towns of Sulaymānīya, Kirkuk, Arbīl, 'Aqra and Mosul. In his contacts with them, OzDemir told the Kurds of an imminent Turkish advance on the Wilāyah of Mosul and promised a certain degree of self-rule within Turkey.<sup>49</sup> In his propaganda campaign, he also appealed to the religious sentiments of the Kurdish tribesmen. A leaflet by him states:

"It is necessary that all our co-religionists should work to achieve the unity which the Ottoman Government has designed...Your deficiency in ammunition and other necessities is receiving consideration. All will be provided shortly. May the curse of the Polytheists fall upon those who have sold their religion to the English and upon Faisal and upon his followers."<sup>50</sup>

It is clear that King Faisal was a major target of his attacks, and he instigated the Kurdish and Arab tribes of the frontier to rise in revolt. In his attacks on the King OzDemir seems to have received the moral and financial support of French local officials in Syria. This aid went primarily to finance the campaign of Shaikh Ahmad al-Sanusi, a prince from North Africa who was presented by Mustafa Kamal as an alternative candidate for the throne of 'Iraq. In 1921, al-Sanusi was

residing on the frontier and establishing contacts with King Faisal's opponents in the Wilāyah of Mosul.<sup>51</sup>

In May 1922, OzDemir's intrigues with the Kurds began to have results. The chief of the Jabbārī tribe, near the vicinity of Chamchamāl, went into open rebellion. The neighbouring influential Hamāwand tribe joined the anti-British revolt. Consequently two British officers and several Levies were killed and wounded. Bombed by the RAF and pursued by British troops, Sayyid Muhammad, chieftain of the Jabbārī, and Karim Fattah Agha, along with three hundred of their followers escaped to Rawāndūz.<sup>52</sup> This fresh addition to OzDemir's forces encouraged him to take an offensive posture by inaugurating new attacks on British troops settled in Rāniya and in Ḥarīr and Batas, east of Arbīl. Both places were overrun by OzDemir's forces. The British forces made a counterattack to recapture Rāniya but they were routed. These new military successes had greatly enhanced the prestige of OzDemir among the Kurds, and his offensive capability increased to an alarming degree.<sup>54</sup>

With the loss of Rāniya the British administration in Kurdistan began to crumble. The High Commissioner was advised that the fall of Rāniya and the whole of the Pizhder region had rendered the British force in Sulaymāniya defenseless. Hence, the immediate evacuation of the town was carried out. Pro-OzDemir Kurdish forces marched further south and occupied the towns of Koī and Taqtaq. In September 1922, OzDemir's forces were only forty miles away from Kirkuk.<sup>54</sup> After the fall of Koī and Rāniya, the pro-Turkish Kurds in

Sulaymāniya made several appeals to OzDemir to occupy their town. ‘Abbas-i Mahmud Agha led a force to march on Sulaymāniya. However, Shaikh Qadir and the Sulaymāniā notables prevailed upon ‘Abbas-i Mahmud Agha to halt his march pending the arrival of Shaikh Mahmud. The British government had already arranged to bring back the Shaikh from Kuwait to stop the Turkish advance.<sup>55</sup>

To the west of Rawāndūz similar circumstances were prevailing. The wavering Kurdish chieftains on the frontier with Turkey, began to throw in their lot with OzDemir. Both Faris Agha and Shaikh Ahmad offered their allegiance to OzDemir and sent contingents of armed followers to join OzDemir’s army.<sup>56</sup> Except for the towns of Arbīl and Kirkuk, where a shaky British administration was still in existence, the whole of southern Kurdistan came under OzDemir’s influence. Hence, in September 1922, most of southern Kurdistan was "seething with unrest" and the British administration in the area "was sitting on a volcano".<sup>57</sup>

In addition to being a good propagandist and a skillful manipulator of the tribal chieftains, OzDemir seems to have had deep political insight. In September he wrote to the Turkish Command of the East and Jazīra saying:

"According to my information the British had evacuated Sulaimaniya, and they are going to evacuate Kirkuk and Arbil in order to allow the formation of a Kurdish state...Moreover, I have already received letters from Kurds of ‘Aqra, Chamchamal and Kirkuk asking for Turkish occupation of their towns...I am very concerned that Kurds, being aware

of our weakness, might try to revive the idea of an independent Kurdistan through traitors."<sup>58</sup>

The British High Commissioner, Sir Percy Cox comments on the notable achievements of OzDemir and his associates. He writes that a couple of Turkish officers had succeeded in exerting sufficient influence over the frontier tribes to cause an uprising in Kurdistan which necessitated a total review of British policy.<sup>59</sup> In his appreciation of OzDemir's career W. Jwaideh writes:

"No doubt many factors weighed heavily in favour of the Turks...the fact that a small force with very limited resources succeeded in rousing a large part of the Kurdish countryside and was able to defeat a British-led force in British controlled territory is a tribute to the skill, courage and organizing ability of a handful of Turkish officers."<sup>60</sup>

Ahmad Taqi, a Kurdish officer who worked closely with OzDemir, also credits the latter with many unique leadership qualities. In contrast to some British administrators in Kurdistan, OzDemir was very skillful in tribal politics and cautious in his dealing with the proud chieftains. He adds that probably OzDemir was one of "the very few conquerors" of Kurdistan who managed to turn most of the Kurds with the "slightest use of force into his obedient tools".<sup>61</sup>

Nevertheless, the British administrators, in general, tend to attribute the success of OzDemir more to favourable circumstances than to the skill of their Turkish opponent. In his analysis of the fall of the British administration in the area during the period leading to September 1922, Edmonds contends that the British administration as a whole lacked the needed resolve. He adds, "strength is what the Kurd understands and he must be controlled by force tempered with kindness, but still ultimately by force...", "rapidity of action is therefore the necessary condition of success."<sup>62</sup> According to Edmonds, the rapid loss of Rāniya which was a turning point in the struggle with OzDemir was not a witness to OzDemir's skill. It was rather a witness to the poor and indecisive leadership on the part of British officials. In this Miss Bell concurs. She writes:

"The Turks...are preparing another attack. This time on Aqra, north of Arbil. They've no force, but they shake their fists at the tribes, and since up to now we've carefully kept our fist in our pockets the tribes think that the Turks are the only people who have an army. That's why we lost Sulaimani. We took action, but we took it at least 48 hours late."<sup>63</sup>

Others attribute the success of the Turks in creating unrest in Kurdistan to the uncertainty in British policy. Kenneth William, a British writer, argues that since the outbreak of World War I the British Middle East policy had been in disarray, for there was no body of experts to supervise and coordinate British policy at

centres such as Cairo, Constantinople and Baghdad. Therefore, the British policy in 'Iraq had been "contradictory, halting and Micawberish".<sup>64</sup> On February 16, 1922 Miss Bell writes that the greatest drawback of British policy was the lack of a policy. Thus actions had to be taken quickly. Because of the non-existence of a definite policy, many of the initiatives which were taken in response to the unpredictable events were like "terrific leaps in the dark."<sup>65</sup> The uncertainty regarding British policy was further encouraged by the British troops' withdrawal from Kurdistan, which left the Kurds with the impression that the British had no intention of staying. Therefore the tribesmen were not willing to cooperate with the British authorities out of fear of punishment should the Turks return to the area.<sup>66</sup> In his critical review of British policy in Kurdistan up to 1922, Hawrami, a Kurdish scholar, writes:

"The British policy in Kurdistan consisted of a strong mixture of contradictory notes. They wanted, in spite of their declarations to the contrary, to rule Kurdistan but disliked being depicted as a military occupying force; even more distasteful was the idea of having to spend on their venture. They wanted to win the friendship and confidence of the Kurdish population, but they remained aloof from the desires and aspirations of the majority. They nurtured what 'they' thought was best for the Kurds at a time when they were not sure of themselves and of their own intentions."<sup>67</sup>

In weighing the relative impact of the various factors which led to the general unrest in Kurdistan during the period May-September 1922, credit has to be given to OzDemir and his associates. The uncertainty in British policy in Kurdistan was a significant factor in this regard, for it had created a fertile ground for sowing the seeds of dissension and defiance. In the struggle over Kurdistan, the British authorities in 'Iraq were at a disadvantage, whereas OzDemir had a strong united and determined national leadership behind him and a considerable amount of sympathy among the population of the disputed area. The British officials in 'Iraq were fettered by the reluctance of their government at home to take any bold initiative which might entail new commitments. In addition, the British officials had to respond to the challenge presented by OzDemir in a difficult mountainous terrain where superior British technology did not make a great impact, and where the population, by and large, had been alienated and were hostile.

The Cairo policy on Kurds proved to be to some extent a failure. The uncertainty which characterized the British policy during the period 1918-1920 was not resolved. From May 1921 to May 1922, there was hardly an indication that Cox's autonomy plan was carried out. British officers remained in direct control of most of southern Kurdistan. Moreover, the British policy makers appear to have grossly underestimated the strength of Turkish ambitions in the Wilāyah of Mosul and Mustafa Kamal's potential to create instability in Kurdistan. Besides, the British government's decision to bring Shaikh Mahmud back to Sulaymānīya to rule is a further indication of the confused nature of Britain's Kurdish policy.

### Shaikh Mahmud's Second Governorship

The collapse of British policy in Kurdistan made Churchill "deeply perturbed". He began to regard the Kamalist regime as the "most dangerous" enemy of Britain and decided that immediate action had to be taken to stop further Kamalist inroads in Kurdistan.<sup>68</sup> The British administration in 'Iraq had similar concerns. The administrative report for 1922 states that the situation by the end of September called for immediate action as the whole of southern Kurdistan was about to pass out of British influence and to lapse into disorder, which might spread rapidly to Kirkuk and Arbīl.<sup>69</sup>

As the Turkish government was appealing to the religious sentiments of the Kurds the British officials in 'Iraq realized that encouraging Kurdish nationalism was the only effective counter-device left at their disposal. Busch observes:

"The only alternative, it appears was one Cox had suggested and partially implemented: continue to foster Kurdish nationalism and thereby develop Kurdish national sentiment in such a way as to push Kamal to accept the acceptable agreement."<sup>70</sup>

In July 21, 1922, while Shaikh Mahmud was still in exile, the pro-British Mustafa Yamulki was authorized to form the Jam'iyat-ī Kurdistān (Kurdistan Society) whose members were mainly ex-civil servants and army officers of the Ottoman Empire. Rafiq Hilni, who was an active member and on the editorial

board of Bağ-ı Kurdistan, the official organ of the Society, writes that the main goal of the organization was the dissemination of Kurdish nationalist ideals and resisting Turkish attempts to win the Kurds to their side. Moreover, in July 1922, Tawfiq Wahbi, another pro-British Kurdish officer visited Sulaymāniya and tried to convince them to refuse the Turks entry into the city and also encouraged them to look for a leader other than Shaikh Mahmud.<sup>71</sup>

The British government continued the search for a leader to lead the Kurdish nationalist movement. Goldsmith, then P.O. in Sulaymāniya was in favour of Shaikh Mahmud's reinstatement. Edmonds, who considered Shaikh Mahmud to be "incorrigible", strongly opposed his return and proposed that a further approach be made to Sa'id Taha. Noel also expressed "grave doubt" about the Shaikh who had proved in the past to be "so intractable". However, Edmonds writes, "in the end our hands were forced by the speed of events."<sup>72</sup>

Therefore, it appears that the British government was forced to accept the fact that Shaikh Mahmud was the only personality in Kurdistan who could rally the Kurds under the banner of Kurdish nationalism. Miss Bell wrote to Cox advising him to accept the return of Shaikh Mahmud because:

"... a general cry arose from Sulaimaniyeh that the only way to compose the situation was to allow back Shaikh Mahmud . . . As we are not disposed to reoccupy the district for the present nothing was to be lost by giving Shaikh Mahmud another trial."<sup>73</sup>

Lees expresses a similar view. He maintains that Shaikh Mahmud was brought back at a time when the British government was "shaking off" her responsibility in the area, and wanted Mahmud to be a "suitable thorn in the side of Turkey, more or less, a counter irritant to them."<sup>74</sup>

It seems that there was a popular demand for Shaikh Mahmud's return. The Kurdish nationalists of both Rawanduz and Sulaymāniya had agreed to his return. The National Elective Council in Sulaymāniya had collected many Madbatas demanding the Shaikh's return. These Madbatas bore the authorization of the prominent chieftains of Kurdistan. The Young Kurds of Jam'iyyat-i Kurdistan were also pressing for his return.<sup>75</sup> Apparently, Cox was reluctant to approve Shaikh Mahmud's return. However, he was forced to heed the consensus among the British officials and Kurds.<sup>76</sup> But both King Faisal and 'Abd-al-Muhsin al-Sa'dun opposed the Shaikh's return and they asked that the 'Iraqi government should be allowed to establish its rule in Kurdistan and stand against the Turks. The British government thought the 'Iraqi request was impractical.<sup>77</sup> But in the end, as Edmonds puts it, the British government:

"...had despaired of keeping out the Turks with our own resources and had brought back Mahmud to consolidate Kurdish national feeling as the sole means of doing so...and conceded all his demands, supported as they were by Kurds."<sup>78</sup>

W. Jwaideh writes that whether the British government had bowed before popular demand for the Shaikh's return or whether they were unable to control Kurdistan without him, his reinstatement demonstrates clearly that the British had recognized him as "the most important personality" among the Kurds.<sup>79</sup>

For these reasons, on September 12, 1922 Shaikh Mahmud was brought back from internment in Kuwait to Baghdad where he had a few days of negotiations with Cox and Faisal. On September 30th, the Shaikh arrived in Sulaymānīya to an enthusiastic reception to rule as hukumdar of Kurdistan. Kurdish chieftains from all parts of Kurdistan came to Sulaymānīya to pay homage.<sup>80</sup> In October, he announced himself as King and formed a cabinet with nine ministers. The Cabinet included tribal chieftains and some capable administrators such as General Mustafa Pasha Yamulki, Minister of Education, and General Siddiq al-Qadri, the General Inspector of the Administration. During the first month of his rule, Shaikh Mahmud issued a series of executive orders to administer the functions of justice, administration and education. Rozh-ī Kurdistān was published in Kurdish as the official organ of the government.<sup>81</sup>

It seems that the British government had agreed initially to allow Shaikh Mahmud full power in Sulaymānīya with a minimum of British intervention. Cox was advised that:

"If he [Mahmud] asks for aegis let him have a single officer British P.O. with him, to act as liaison officer with Baghdad, but not to try to

administer at all. If we keep on good terms with him and uphold as far as we can the independence of that Kurdistan which is under him, it will make a Kurdish wad between Iraq and Turkey."<sup>82</sup>

The only political officer sent with Shaikh Mahmud was Noel. His status was officially Mustashar-ī Siyasi (Political Advisor), but in Sulaymaniya he was given the title of a "consul".<sup>83</sup>

The second governorship of Shaikh Mahmud lasted from September 1922 to July 1924. The nature of his relationship with the British authorities in 'Iraq during this period was similar to that of 1918-1920; suspicion, confrontation and hostility were its main characteristics. This was due partly to the uncertainty of the policy pursued by Britain in Kurdistan, and partly to Shaikh Mahmud's ties with the Turks.

The uncertainty of British policy and the haste with which Shaikh Mahmud was reinstated did not assist the Shaikh in understanding his new role in Sulaymānīya. The British officials in 'Iraq maintained that upon his return from Kuwait Mahmud had made solemn promises that he would obey the British government and King Faisal and that he would not interfere in Kurdish affairs beyond Sulaymānīya Liwa.<sup>84</sup> However, in November 1922, Mahmud was declared in Sulaymānīya as King of all Kurdistan with Noel attending the ceremony as "consul". Rozh-ī Kurdistān invited all Kurds of southern Kurdistan to join the new Kingdom under "Malik Mahmud I." During the first week of November chieftains

from Kirkuk, Kifri, Arbīl, Rāniya, and Rawāndūz had visited Sulaymānīya to give allegiance to Shaikh Mahmud.<sup>85</sup>

Edmond's explanation for the alleged sudden reversal in Shaikh Mahmud's attitude is as follows:

"Shaikh Mahmud may have been perfectly sincere when, before leaving Baghdad, he gave assurances that he would confine his activities to the Liwa of Sulaimani; but the tumultuous welcome in the stationyard at Kingarband [near Kirkuk] and the intoxicating air of Kurdistan...had quickly wiped out any memory of the limits placed upon him."<sup>86</sup>

Others argue that Shaikh Mahmud was a strong Kurdish nationalist and very ambitious. Finding himself in the midst of chaos created by the Turks in Kurdistan, he could not resist availing himself of the opportunity and to make a risky attempt to grab more power than he had been allowed to have.<sup>87</sup>

As has been demonstrated during the discussion of the events of the years 1918-1919, the Shaikh had a strong belief in the ideals of Kurdish nationalism. This conviction does not appear to have waned. In fact, to the contrary he remained "fanatical" in this conviction, even to the exclusion of his personal greed and ambition. Noel narrates this discussion between himself and Shaikh Mahmud in Sulaymānīya:

"Yesterday I tried hard to lure him away by the picture of the subdivision [Sulaymania] as a little Kingdom of his own, in which he would rule unfettered by any form of tutelage or control...I held out to him the prospect of Rs 30000 a month. He didn't even nibble at the bait."<sup>88</sup>

There are some indications that by 1922 the ideals of Kurdish nationalism had gained some strength among the Kurdish graduates of the Tanzimat schools in Kirkuk, Arbīl and Sulaymānīya, army officers and individuals who had worked in the Ottoman civil service. By 1922 Kurdish nationalism in 'Iraq was being actively championed by the Jam'īyyat-ī Kurdistān, which as mentioned above was in existence before the Shaikh's return to Sulaymānīya. In an effort to distance Shaikh Mahmud from the pro-Caliphate (pro-Turkish) elements in Kurdistan and also to enlist the support of the religious notables and Kurdish chieftains, the elitist Jam'īyyat-ī Kurdistān convinced Shaikh Mahmud to be its president. From then on Jam'īyyat-ī Kurdistān had two components in its makeup: the traditional elements, represented by Shaikh Mahmud and Shaikh 'Abd al-Karim of Qadir Karam, a village to the east of Kirkuk, and the intelligensia, referred to locally as the Munāwars. General Mustafa Pasha Yarmulki and Rafiq Hilmi were the two most prominent members of this group. From November 1922, Rozh-ī Kurdistān replaced Bang-ī Kurdistān in being the mouthpiece of Jam'īyyat-ī Kurdistān, and the journal continued to be dominated by the Munāwars. The Jam'īyyat was advocating the concept of a united independent Kurdistan under British auspices

and refused any association with 'Iraq's government.<sup>89</sup>

Attributing the allegedly sudden change of stand by Shaikh Mahmud towards Britain to emotionalism and the "intoxicating air of Kurdistan", hardly serves to provide a proper understanding of the character of a man whose personality had been formed by his princely upbringing and hardened by the difficult circumstances which he had had to go through since his childhood. However, personal ambition and Kurdish nationalism dominated Shaikh Mahmud's personality, and these might have played a part in the Shaikh's alleged breach of word towards Britain. Since no written evidence so far has been produced about the promises which Shaikh Mahmud had supposedly given in Baghdad, the issue remains subject to speculation. There might have been some vague verbal pledges from both sides at Baghdad. The persistent claim of Shaikh Mahmud before September 1922 to be the legitimate King of all Kurdistan, and the tenacity with which he pursued this goal during the 1920s, as will be explained below, hardly leaves any room to believe that he had given any definite promise to confine his ambitions to Sulaymānīya. Moreover, due to the difficult circumstances which had been created by OzDemir's intervention in Kurdistan, neither King Faisal nor Cox were in a position to press Shaikh Mahmud to give up his claim to all Kurdistan.

#### The Election for the Constituent Assembly and the Kurds

Determining the status of the Kurdish areas beyond Sulaymānīya Liwa' was a thorny issue for both Shaikh Mahmud on one hand and the British and 'Iraqi

governments on the other. The controversy here was the result of ambiguity in the British policy toward the Kurds and the new status of Shaikh Mahmud in Kurdistan. The conflict for control over Kurdish areas outside Sulaymānīyā Liwā' became manifest when the 'Iraqi government decided to hold elections for the Constituent Assembly in July 1923.<sup>90</sup>

It was the official view of the British government that Shaikh Mahmud did not have the support of the Kurds beyond Sulaymānīyā Liwā', and that the Kurds in Kirkuk and Arbīl did not want to join his kingdom. British officials, therefore, maintained that Shaikh Mahmud's intervention in Kirkuk Liwā' for instance, was a major factor in the rupture of the relationship between the Shaikh and the British government.<sup>91</sup>

On July 23, 1923, the 'Iraqi government decided to hold elections throughout 'Iraq to elect deputies to the Constituent Assembly. Initially, the Kurds were reluctant to elect their representatives to the Constituent Assembly, for they had some apprehensions that would imply Arab rule in Kurdistan, and would also amount to the denial of their rights to join an independent Kurdish state in the south-eastern provinces of Turkey as provided for in Article Sixty-four of the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920.<sup>92</sup> The preliminary results of the registration for the election in Kirkuk, Arbīl, Sulaymānīyā, and the Kurdish qadās of Mosul convinced the British government that Kurds were unanimous in their refusal to participate in the election. The leading notables of Kirkuk and Arbīl were, by and large, in favour of union with Shaikh Mahmud's government.<sup>93</sup> According to the 'Iraqi

government the nonparticipation of Kurds in the election was not the result of sympathy for Shaikh Mahmud, but was due primarily to their fear that the registrations would lead to conscription and taxation. The aloofness on the part of the Kurds toward the election forced the 'Iraqi government to delay the election to November 1923.<sup>94</sup>

The issue of the Kurds' participation in the election generated an intense debate among the British officials and between King Faisal and the British authorities in 'Iraq. In October 1922, Cox directed Edmonds to work hard to win over the inhabitants of Kirkuk, Kurds and Turkomans, to the idea of participation in the election. Moreover, the British officials in southern Kurdistan were told to inform the Kurds that they could participate in the election if they chose, and their participation in the election and sending deputies to Baghdad would not "prejudice their right to whatever status" might be assigned to them in the eventual peace treaty with Turkey.<sup>95</sup> In giving the Kurds a choice to elect their deputies to the Constituent Assembly Cox was guided by two considerations. On July 11, 1922, the Secretary of State for Colonies announced in the House of Commons that Kurds would not be forced to accept Arab rule in 'Iraq.<sup>96</sup> Also by July 1922, the High Commissioner was aware that the Kurds had lost hope of joining an independent Kurdistan in the south-eastern provinces of Turkey. Therefore, Cox was of the view that the Kurds would eventually elect their deputies to the Constituent Assembly. This would create a vested interest for the Kurdish nationalists in the national government in Baghdad. The Kurds' participation in

the election would provide an institutional and gradual means for their complete adhesion to 'Iraq. This was in full harmony with the policy pursued by Cox.<sup>97</sup>

King Faisal, on the other hand, was reluctant to allow the Kurds to have a choice in the election of the Constituent Assembly. He maintained that the British government was not sufficiently decisive in pursuing the election process in Kurdistan and in dealing with Shaikh Mahmud. Besides, the Kurds had already been given such a choice in the 1921 referendum, and, they for the most part had voted positively, Faisal maintained.<sup>98</sup> Cox disagreed vehemently. "Nothing that I can say will convince him [Faisal] of the falseness of this impression", Cox told Churchill.<sup>99</sup> For if the British government was to take the results of the 1921 referendum as a measure to determine who was 'Iraqi or not, then the Kurds in Sulaymānīya, who refrained from voting at all, and the Kirkuk Kurds who voted for the most part negatively, would not be considered "'Iraqis now".<sup>100</sup> As for the acceptance of King Faisal by the Arbil Kurds, this was another "illusion", because the positive vote there was "worked out" by Captain Lyon.<sup>101</sup>

In the end King Faisal was led to believe that the status of southern Kurdistan within 'Iraq had not been definitely decided. The British government seems to have understood the reasons for the King's insistence on holding elections in Kurdistan. Cox writes:

"The inclusion of Kurdistan had a further aspect for him, which we probably had not fully considered. It is the question of the preponderance

of Sunnis or Shi'is in the Constituent Assembly, which was going to be an important policy-making body in 'Iraq. If the Kurdish representatives, who were for the most part Sunnis, were left out, a strong Shi'ite majority would make Faisal's task of governing 'Iraq difficult. Since the Shi'is at that time were under the influence of their anti-British religious leadership, the Constituent Assembly would have refused to ratify the Anglo-'Iraq Treaty of 1922.<sup>102</sup>

But British officials were doubtful about the existence of any will on the part of the Kurds to participate in the election and some even doubted the soundness of the idea. Noel persistently claimed that more than seventy-five percent of the population of Kirkuk were Kurds who were, by and large, pro-Shaikh Mahmud and did not want to participate in the election. The Kifrī Kurds, further south, had also unanimously asked to join the Sulaymāniya Kingdom.<sup>103</sup> Captain Lyon in Arbīl, said that the Kurds in his district were not enthusiastic about the election, and should they be given a chance they would ask to join Shaikh Mahmud.<sup>104</sup> 'Iraq's administrative report for the year 1922-23 also confirms this general unwillingness on the part of the Kurds to participate in the election. However, the report attributes this to their desire to evade paying taxes.<sup>105</sup>

Some British officials maintained that holding an election in such a hostile environment would further alienate the Kurds and create a tense situation which would require very little to turn the suspicions of the Kurds into acts of

desperation.<sup>106</sup> Noel writes:

"I am against the universal suspicion, in some cases almost amounting to certainty, that we are determined to get the Kurds into Iraq by hook or by crook and that the election business is all eyewash...Finally I would like to point out to the Kurds' mind the Secretary of State's assurance that no Kurd would be forced into inclusion in Iraq cannot be squared with the principle of Kirkuk Liwa as an electoral college."<sup>107</sup>

It was the view of Noel that the British government's attempts to hold elections in Kirkuk would further alienate Shaikh Mahmud and his influential Sayyid family. Noel warned Cox that the British could not rule Kurdistan without their backing and he also warned the British government that the leading Turkoman notables in Kirkuk were trying to spoil the relationship between Shaikh Mahmud and the British authorities by their double dealing. On one hand, the Turkoman notables were telling the British that the Shaikhly family was incapable of governing and the present support for Shaikh Mahmud in Kirkuk was "a flash in the pan" and was due to his bribery of Kurdish chieftains and intimidation of his opponents. On the other hand, the Turkomans told Shaikh Mahmud that they would support him in his refusal to allow King Faisal to establish control in Kirkuk.<sup>108</sup>

The British government was forced to carry out the election for several

reasons, the foremost of which was the conviction of King Faisal and many British statesmen, that the non-participation of the Kurds in the election would greatly enhance the Turkish claim to Mosul Province at the then on-going Lausanne Peace Conference between Turkey and the Allied Powers.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, if the Kurds did not participate in the election the position of Faisal in the eyes of 'Iraqi nationalists who were suspicious of British policy objectives in Kurdistan, would be threatened. The nationalists feared that the British were contemplating the creation of a "Kurdish belt" under their control in the north so that Britain could perpetually dominate the Arab government at Baghdad.<sup>110</sup>

In order to convince the Kurds to participate in the election, Henry Dobbs, the British High Commissioner, requested the 'Iraqi government to issue a decree which would allay the Kurdish nationalists' apprehensions. King Faisal said that he was ready to grant Kurds autonomy if they decided to send deputies to the Constituent Assembly. Moreover, on September 23, 1923, the 'Iraqi government had already issued a decree which promised: 1) that no Arab officials would be appointed in the Kurdish districts; 2) Arabic would not be imposed on Kurds in education; 3) and the legal and civil rights of the inhabitants of the Kurdish areas would be protected.<sup>111</sup>

Furthermore, in order to ensure the participation of Kirkuk in the election, Edmonds was authorized to strike a deal with the Turkomans. This Turkic minority, though small in number, had a strong influence in the affairs of Kirkuk Liwā'. Being mainly Efendis, they had contempt for the Kurdish tribesmen. They

regarded Shaikh Mahmud's claim to Kirkuk as ridiculous. Although Kirkuk's efendi elite were generally pro-Turk, in their political orientation they were guided mainly by their interests as a social and ethnic group. By the end of 1923, the Turkomans were coming slowly to the realization that the Turks' return to the Wilāyah of Mosul was not probable, so they were more inclined to make a deal with King Faisal. In 1923, the 'Iraqi government agreed to allow the Turkomans to maintain their old privileges in the administration of Kirkuk and the Turkish language to remain, as in Ottoman times, the official language of the city.<sup>112</sup>

With Kirkuk Liwā' won to the government side and Shaikh Mahmud's influence curtailed and confined to Sulaymaniya alone, in March 1924, the election for the Constituent Assembly was held in Kurdistan. Even in Sulaymānīya city Kurds went to a near-by village to elect their deputies to the Constituent Assembly.<sup>113</sup>

The controversy over the election for the Constituent Assembly in Kurdistan during the years 1922-1924 demonstrates that Shaikh Mahmud's claim to have the support of the Kurds outside Sulaymānīya Liwā' was not totally unfounded, but the British concern over King Faisal's position within 'Iraq had to prevail over other considerations. Shaikh Mahmud's plan for a Kurdish state was in conflict with the British government's policy of gradual absorption of the Kurdish area into 'Iraq. Therefore, the collision between Shaikh Mahmud and the British government was inevitable.

### Shaikh Mahmud and OzDemir

Shaikh Mahmud's relationship with OzDemir reveals, among other things, his distrust of the British government. A careful examination of the OzDemir-Shaikh Mahmud correspondence also reveals a desire on the part of both Turkey and Britain to manipulate the Kurds in their struggle for the Wilayah of Mosul.

Soon after his return to Sulaymānīya in September 1922, Shaikh Mahmud's relationship with the British became strained over control of Koī and Rāniya, two small towns to the west of Sulaymānīya. Upon the June 1922 British troop withdrawal from these towns, OzDemir's forces had occupied them. Shaikh Mahmud agreed with the British government that he would use his influence with the notables of the two towns to force OzDemir's troops out of the area on condition that the two towns would be part of the Shaikh's Kurdish administration of Sulaymānīya. The Turks were forced out of the area when an understanding was reached between Shaikh Mahmud and the notables of Koī and Rāniya; then the British forces occupied Koī and as a result of intrigue between the British and some local Kurds in Rāniya, Shaikh Mahmud's nominee sent to administer the town was expelled and a pro-British Kurd was appointed as the Qā'immaqām.<sup>114</sup> The Shaikh received this news with great chagrin. Reflecting on these events, Noel writes that it was obvious that the events in Koī and Rāniya only served to increase the Shaikh's belief that "we are using him to pull our chestnuts out of the fire."<sup>115</sup>

Shaikh Mahmud's frustration with and distrust of the British could be further

ascertained from two letters he wrote in November 1922. Simko wrote to the Shaikh counselling patience in the latter's dealing with the British. Shaikh Mahmud wrote in reply that the British government "once again did not live up to their promises to him."<sup>116</sup> And in a letter to OzDemir, Shaikh Mahmud writes, "I will not forget the British humiliation of me...I know they are not sincere with regard to Kurdish independence. They want to use us against the Turks."<sup>117</sup>

Shaikh Mahmud did not trust the Turks either. However, it seems that he was not in a position to antagonize them. He realized that the policies which had been pursued by the British political officers in southern Kurdistan before September 1922 had alienated most of the influential Kurdish chieftains who were already firmly committed to OzDemir. Besides, upon his return to Sulaymānīya, the Shaikh received a letter from OzDemir reminding him that the Wilāyah of Mosul was still considered to be a part of Turkey and that there would be an imminent advance by the Turkish army into the region. Shaikh Mahmud could not afford to disregard OzDemir's warning.<sup>118</sup> The British had sent Shaikh Mahmud to Sulaymānīya to force OzDemir's forces out of the region. However, the Shaikh was not given sufficient money, ammunition and weapons to accomplish the task, which the British administrators with all the resources at their disposal had failed to achieve. Encircled by pro-Turkish Kurdish chieftains in Sulaymānīya and throughout Kurdistan, uncertain about the strength of the British resolve to remain in Kurdistan and British intentions towards him, and being almost empty handed, Shaikh Mahmud thought that the task of expelling the Turks from Kurdistan for

the time being was neither attainable nor desirable. Hilmi sums up this view of the Shaikh by observing that "Mahmud came too late and was forced to ride the tide."<sup>119</sup>

For these reasons, Shaikh Mahmud tried to maintain his ties with both the Turks and the British, and he hoped to use his unique position to play the Turks off against the British in order to enhance his position in Sulaymānīya and establish the Kurdish government in the Wilāyah of Mosul.<sup>120</sup> In October 1922, for instance, he wrote to Fawzi Beg, a Turkish officer working with OzDemir:

"If you have sufficient force to occupy Kirkuk to Jebel Hamrin come immediately. I will be a faithful soldier of the Khilafa and surrender Sulaymania to you. If you are not ready to come, in order to show goodwill I am ready to leave Sulaymania to any location you determine. Should you not wish that, please send me ammunition, weapons and money to expel the British. Failing either, please withdraw and re-enter Kurdistan with a better army. Meanwhile, I will avail myself of the time and take British money and weapons until you come."<sup>121</sup>

With this skilfull diplomatic overture the Shaikh had managed to deter OzDemir's forces from entering Sulaymānīya and caused the Turks to withdraw from Koī and Rāniya.

In March 1923, the capture of OzDemir's correspondence with the Turkish

Command of the East by the British authorities at Zākho, revealed that OzDemir was equally manipulative of Shaikh Mahmud. OzDemir, while addressing Shaikh Mahmud in flattering terms, evaded every request to make a pronouncement on behalf of the Turkish government in favour of Kurdish independence. He wrote to the pro-Turk Kirkuk Mudafa'a Jam'iyati (The Society for Defense of Kirkuk's Rights), that the government had no intention of supporting Shaikh Mahmud's demands in the Wilayah of Mosul, and Kurdistan would be administered according to the line of administration already in existence in Turkey.<sup>122</sup> According to Hilmi, while he avoided making any statement on the Kurds' national rights, OzDemir did promise Shaikh Mahmud a governorship of Kurdistan similar to the Khedive's governorship in Egypt.<sup>123</sup>

OzDemir was also aware that Shaikh Mahmud was not sincere in his dealings with Turkey. He was quoted as describing Shaikh Mahmud as "first a tool of the British, then a volunteer to death for the Turkish army...We do not want this Shaikh, he is a cunning man."<sup>124</sup> Therefore, OzDemir wanted, in his turn, to use Shaikh Mahmud "as a pawn in the game, the object of which was to recapture Mosul Wilayah."<sup>125</sup>

Concurrently with his negotiations with the Turks, throughout 1923, Shaikh Mahmud was writing to Edmonds and Sir Henry Dobbs professing his unabated loyalty to the British government and his undying hatred of the Turks.<sup>126</sup> But he appears to have given more weight to his ties with the Turks, for the uncertainty of British policy in Kurdistan led him to think that it was the British who would

eventually leave Kurdistan. Therefore, he was of the view that he would rule an autonomous Kurdistan under Turkish rule.<sup>127</sup> Shaikh Mahmud was politically astute in his "flirting" with OzDemir and the British in the hope of using the former as a lever against the latter, but he seems to have placed too much trust in the Kamalist Turks. The latter were already pursuing the Turkification of their own Kurds in Turkey and, Mustafa Kamal was an advocate of a strong, centralized state without any form of autonomy.<sup>128</sup>

The distrust between Shaikh Mahmud and the British, ambiguity in Britain's policy in Kurdistan, the unsettled differences with Turkey over the Wilāyah of Mosul, and the desire to integrate the Kurdish areas into 'Iraq, contributed to the deterioration of the relationship between Shaikh Mahmud and the British during the period 1918-1920. These factors continued to strain the Anglo-Kurdish relationship during the years 1921-23.

#### Sayyid Taha, Simko and Shaikh Mahmud

The arrival of Sayyid Taha of Nehri and Simko, Agha of the Shakak in southern Kurdistan at the end of October 1922 had helped to further strain the already difficult relationship between Shaikh Mahmud and the British authorities in 'Iraq.<sup>129</sup>

Since Simko was more influential than Sayyid Taha among the Kurds, Edmonds approached the Foreign Office with a suggestion to make use of Simko's presence in southern Kurdistan in the confrontation with Shaikh Mahmud and the

Turks in Rawāndūz. Initially the Foreign Office told Cox that he could make use of Simko in pursuing a forward policy to evict the Turks from Rawanduz region.<sup>130</sup> But the continued presence of Simko on the 'Iraq-Iran frontier and the British dealings with Simko had brought about strong protests from the Iranian authorities. In December 1922 the Iranian government told the Foreign Office that Simko was still involved in hostile activities aimed at destabilising Iranian Kurdistan. Therefore, on December 11, 1922, the High Commissioner in Baghdad was told not to have any dealings with Simko.<sup>131</sup>

Sayyid Taha, who was a Turkish subject, appeared to be the most suitable tool in the fight against the Turkish intrigues in Rawāndūz. Being the grandson of Shaikh 'Ubaidullah al-Nehri, he had some influence in Bahdīnān, and large estates in Rawāndūz.<sup>132</sup> The sudden appearance of Sayyid Taha in southern Kurdistan seems to have provided a temporary outlet for the crisis which was developing between Shaikh Mahmud and the British. In early November 1922, the negotiations between the Shaikh and the British authorities had reached a deadlock. The Kurdish delegation asked the British government to recognize Shaikh Mahmud's claim to be the king of independent Kurdistan in its entirety. The Sulaymānīya delegation negotiating with Edmonds refused to have any dealings with the 'Iraqi government. The British authorities viewed Sulaymānīya demands as "excessive". The uncompromising stand of Shaikh Mahmud was attributed to the latter's desire to use OzDemir's presence in Rawāndūz as a lever against Britain in his design to establish an independent Kurdistan.<sup>133</sup> To deprive

Shaikh Mahmud of this lever the British government thought of using Sayyid Taha in a plan to force the Turks out of Rawāndūz. In mid-November, Cox sanctioned a plan suggested by Edmonds for the formation of a tribal lashkar (a tribal force) under the command of Sayyid Taha to attack OzDemir's forces in the Rawāndūz region. The success of this plan would have put a real check on Shaikh Mahmud's power by cutting his line of communication with the Turks. Moreover, the pro-British Kurdish intelligensia in Sulaymāniya, who viewed Shaikh Mahmud's ties with the Turks as harmful to Kurdish interests, looked to Sayyid Taha to provide a more enlightened leadership for the cause of Kurdish nationalism and to take a balanced stand vis-à-vis Britain. Though the scheme was sound in conception, it failed to develop owing to a series of unanticipated factors. Sayyid Taha had overestimated his influence among the Kurdish tribesmen on the frontier, and the British government was unable to provide him with the promised financial and military aid. Moreover, Sayyid Taha did not prove to be a man who understood strategy; he sent the RAF to bomb the villages of the tribes who did not send men to join his tribal lashkar. Finally, the heavy November rains in Kurdistan rendered large and effective military operations in the area extremely difficult. For these reasons, by mid-December 1922, the British government realized that Sayyid Taha's venture had failed.<sup>134</sup>

The British dealings with Sayyid Taha, whom Shaikh Mahmud viewed as a rival, had displeased the latter. He asked OzDemir to send financial and military help to foil Sayyid Taha's plan. Although the scheme of Sayyid Taha had failed

before Shaikh Mahmud had taken any measures against it, the episode helped to further estrange Shaikh Mahmud from the British. It also weakened the position of the pro-British elements in Sulaymānīya and strengthened that of the pro-Turkish elements.<sup>135</sup>

Also, during the month of November 1922, Edmonds tried to weaken Shaikh Mahmud's resolve by putting economic pressure on Sulaymānīya. Tobacco was the sole important revenue producing staple of the Liwā'. Edmonds gave instructions to the effect that receipts issued at Sulaymānīya for excise on tobacco were not to be recognized by the 'Iraqi government. This had only a temporary effect on Shaikh Mahmud's administration, because the tobacco merchants agreed to pay double excise in Sulaymānīya and Baghdad. Moreover, by collecting duty on tobacco in addition to the tithe on other produce, Shaikh Mahmud managed to finance his government and to collect an extra 300,000 rupees.<sup>136</sup> This punitive and hostile act on the part of Edmonds not only failed to create the desired effect, but also it helped to further alienate the Sulaymānīya government from the British and strengthened the pro-Turkish elements there.<sup>137</sup>

For these reasons, by the end of December 1922 the situation in Kurdistan was very tense, and Shaikh Mahmud's prestige was high among the Kurds. Having failed with Sayyid Taha, Edmonds tried to encourage the moderate Kurdish nationalists among the Shaikhly Sayyids. In order to strengthen the position of the pro-British Kurds in Sulaymānīya and around Shaikh Mahmud, at the instigation of Edmonds, the pro-British and the influential Ṭalabānī chieftains of Kirkuk went

to Sulaymāniya and gave homage to Shaikh Mahmud. The Ṭalabānī chieftains and Shaikh ‘Abd al-Karim of Qadir Karam, who were the two most important leaders of the pro-British Kurdish nationalist elements told Edmonds that unless some steps were taken by the British government to satisfy Kurdish national aspirations, the pro-Turkish elements in Sulaymāniya might convince Shaikh Mahmud to join OzDemir in initiating hostile actions against the British in Kurdistan.<sup>138</sup> On his return to Sulaymāniya on December 20, Chapman, the Political Officer there, found that the pro-British Shaikh Qadir and the Begzāda Jāfs were bitter about the failure of the government to convince the ‘Iraqi government to initiate a policy which might allay the apprehensions of the Kurds and strengthen the position of the pro-British Kurds.<sup>139</sup>

Therefore, on December 24, 1922 the British authorities in ‘Iraq managed to convince the British and ‘Iraqi governments to make a joint statement on their Kurdish policy with the purpose of encouraging the pro-British Kurdish nationalists and curtailing the power of Shaikh Mahmud’s appeal to the Kurds. The statement said:

"His Britannic Majesty’s Government and the Government of ‘Iraq recognize the right of the Kurds living within the boundaries of ‘Iraq to set up a Kurdish Government within those boundaries, and hope that the different Kurdish elements will, as soon as possible, arrive at an agreement between themselves as to the form which they wish that Government

should take and the boundaries within which they wish to extend and will send a responsible delegation to Baghdad to discuss their economic and political relations with His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of 'Iraq."<sup>140</sup>

A close examination of the discussion which preceded the December 24, 1922 Announcement among the British officials in 'Iraq indicates that the Turkish threat to Kurdistan was the primary reason for the British government's approval of the Declaration.

On December 11th, Noel wrote to the British High Commissioner saying that the situation was seriously deteriorating in Kurdistan and that the British government had either to act swiftly against Shaikh Mahmud or to give concessions to the Turks.<sup>141</sup> On December 20th, Chapman wrote that any delay in making a pronouncement which would promise the Kurds the readiness of the British government to recognize their national rights, would only help bring about the Turks' arrival to Sulaymāniya.<sup>142</sup> On December 18, Edmonds told his government that "there is not an hour to lose and recommend that we make the announcement today...the menace to Kirkuk and Arbil liwa's is very real and I beg you to wait no longer on the objection of the new 'Iraq cabinet to the announcement."<sup>143</sup>

Initially Noel had some reservations about the December 24 Announcement. He doubted that it would have the intended effect in curbing Shaikh Mahmud's

power among the Kurds. He wrote:

"I assure you from personal knowledge of Mahmud and the so-called the moderate party, that they will be content with nothing less than Jabal Hamrin frontier...Nor would they agree to any form of 'Iraqi suzerainty. Moreover, even if this frontier was conceded, it is doubtful whether Mahmud could be dropped by the moderates..."<sup>144</sup>

Noel suggested an alternative plan which was the reactivation of the Sayyid Taha-Simko scheme with more vigour. He argued southern Kurdistan had to be treated as a whole, not as separate parts. Therefore, the Announcement should be addressed to a representative body of Kurds, rather than to Shaikh Mahmud alone. His reasoning was that the Turkish menace had been used by Shaikh Mahmud as a way to obtain his demands, and therefore it was essential that the British government should not let the Kurds be under the impression that it was this that had produced the December 22 Announcement.<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, Noel believed that Sulaymānīya's demand for independence was dictated by OzDemir. He cautioned the British government that the Announcement would be interpreted in Kurdistan as a preliminary step towards a complete evacuation in favour of the Turks. Noel added that Turkish aggression rather than the placation of the Sulaimānīys, "I consider the main problem, and in the solution the value of Mahmud is much less than that of Simko."<sup>146</sup>

Cox disagreed with Noel's views and agreed with Edmonds that in order to check Turkish influence in Kurdistan it was necessary to consolidate the pro-British Kurdish nationalist centres at Qādir Karām, Kifrī and Sulaymānīya.<sup>147</sup> Moreover, Shaikh Mahmud's demand for independence was not dictated by OzDemir. The demand had taken its insistent form after the evacuation of Sulaymānīya in June 1922. It was hoped that the Announcement would reassure the moderate Kurdish nationalists that 'Iraq's government was not inimical to their national aspirations.<sup>148</sup> Edmond's rationale for the Announcement was put in these words:

"We must harness Kurdish national sentiment in the only place where it is organized and guide it within certain limits, i.e. on the condition that we meet Kurdish national aspirations and do not bang the door upon them."<sup>149</sup>

The 'Iraqi government stipulated that the Announcement was not to imply political or economic separation of the Kurdish liwā's from 'Iraq.<sup>150</sup> The British government hoped that the Announcement would have the effect of creating an autonomous Kurdistan with some loose connection with 'Iraq. In other words, the British were endeavouring to reproduce the relations existing before the June 1922 evacuation of Sulaymānīya with the substitution of Kurdish for British administrators. Besides, the Announcement was the last resort because neither the 'Iraqi government nor the British could control the area.<sup>151</sup>

However, the Administrative Report on 'Iraq for the period April 1922-March 1923 states that nothing tangible came out of the December 24, 1922 Announcement, because it came too late. Shaikh Mahmud's position among the Kurds, as Noel had predicted, was too strong to be shaken by a moderate party. Furthermore, by the time the Announcement was made Turkish influence was too entrenched among the Kurds to introduce any basic changes of attitude.<sup>152</sup>

The December 22 Announcement is another instance of British policy in Kurdistan being decided on an ad hoc basis. Just like the May 1921 autonomous plan of Cox, and the British government's decision of September 1922 to bring Shaikh Mahmud back to Sulaymānīya, the December 24 Announcement was a political move on the part of the British to rally the Kurds under the banner of Kurdish nationalism to contain the Turkish threat to northern 'Iraq.

During the period of January to March 1923, relations between Shaikh Mahmud and the British rapidly deteriorated and the parties slid towards a military confrontation. Since his arrival in 'Iraq in October 1922, Simko had resided first with the Pizhder, and then in Arbil for a while. On January 8, 1923 he went to Sulaymānīya. His arrival there turned a bad situation into a worse one in terms of Shaikh Mahmud's relations with the British. Due to the refusal of Britain to support him in his struggle against Persia and having some disagreement Sayyid Taha, at the end of November 1922, Simko wrote to the Turkish Commander of the East offering his services to aid OzDemir's anti-British efforts to recapture the Wilāyah of Mosul for Turkey.<sup>153</sup> The Turkish frontier officials ordered Simko to

encourage Shaikh Mahmud to take an anti-British stand. Upon his arrival in Sulaymānīya, Simko was received by Shaikh Mahmud and the Kurds as a national hero, and his presence in the city raised the morale of the Kurdish nationalists and gave Shaikh Mahmud a "swelled head".<sup>154</sup> Edmonds maintains that Simko's arrival in Sulaymānīya considerably strengthened the pro-Turkish elements' hold on Shaikh Mahmud and added "fuel to the fire of nationalistic exaltation." Edmonds had earlier cautioned the British officials that Simko's presence in Sulaymānīya would have a disturbing effect in the area.<sup>155</sup>

Shaikh Mahmud, in his turn, made use of Simko's reputation among the Kurds. On January 20-21, 1923, he summoned Kurdish chieftains throughout Kurdistan to attend a grand Kurdish conference which sanctioned the Shaikh's claim to be the King of all Kurdistan.<sup>156</sup> Moreover, in January Rozh-ī Kurdistān began to publish articles inviting the Kurds to stand up for their rights and oppose British policy in Kurdistan. In an apparent reference to 'Iraq the journal called the "neighbours" of Kurdistan to cede their Kurdish lands to the Sulaymānīya Kingdom.<sup>157</sup>

In addition, on January 23 a Kurdish delegation was in Kirkuk to hold negotiations with Edmonds. The Sulaymaniya delegation displayed an unbending attitude and demanded that the British government should immediately recognize Shaikh Mahmud as the King of a united independent Kurdistan. Edmonds told the Kurdish delegation that: 1) it would be impossible for the British government to do anything with the Sulaymānīya government until they had abandoned their

original policy of ignoring the 'Iraqi government; 2) the Kurds had to state openly that they would accept a British mandate; 3) the Sulaymānīya government had to sign political and economic agreements with 'Iraq; 4) and any further inclusion of Kurdish territories in the Sulaymānīya Kingdom must come as a result of negotiation with the 'Iraqi government and the inhabitants of the area.<sup>158</sup>

The representative of the 'Iraqi government in the negotiations was equally uncompromising. The Baghdad government was trying to water down the content of the December 24 Announcement which they had agreed to under pressure from the British. The 'Iraqi nationalists could not tolerate Kurdish nationalism, and they refused to allow King Faisal to grant Kurds autonomy. Therefore the 'Iraqi government viewed autonomy as "a parochial affair".<sup>159</sup>

Edmonds was frustrated with the uncompromising stand displayed by both parties. He makes this revealing observation:

"I am not an enthusiast Kurdish nationalist...they are hateful people and if Iraq's government was likely to be strong enough I should say to hell with their Kurdish nationalism. As it is, and in view of the desirability of trying to keep the Turks out as long as possible I regard Sulaimani as a slippery fish that must be patiently played till we land him in the 'Iraqi basket."<sup>160</sup>

The failure of the January negotiations was followed by a series of events which further strained Shaikh Mahmud's relations with the British. At the end of

January, Sulaymānīya was visited by a group of Turkish officers and a plan was drawn up for a combined Kurdish and Turkish attack on Kirkuk and Arbīl.<sup>161</sup> Meanwhile, Shaikh Mahmud had established contacts with Najaf and Karbala, two anti-British Shi'i centres in southern 'Iraq, in the hope of getting their assistance in his anti-British activities.<sup>162</sup> Besides, during the months of January and February in 1923, the pro-Turkish elements around Shaikh Mahmud were on the ascendant, and encouraged him to imprison, exile and alienate the pro-British Shaikhs and the intelligentsia in Sulaymānīya. Thus, the Kurdish officers who had been earlier given Shaikh Mahmud's administration in Sulaymānīya the nucleus of an enlightened and modern leadership were forced to flee the town. Mustafaa Yamulki, who was the spokesperson for these officers, was very bitter in criticizing Shaikh Mahmud's pro-Turkish policy, which he thought had caused the "Kurds to lose the goodwill of Great Britain."<sup>163</sup>

For these reasons, on February 16, 1923, a conference on the Kurdish question was held at Baghdad. Shaikh Mahmud refused to attend the conference because he was afraid for his life. The British government decided that Shaikh Mahmud's planned attack with OzDemir on Kirkuk and Arbil had to be averted soon. Therefore, the conference drew up a military plan to force Shaikh Mahmud out of Sulaymānīya. On March 3, 1923, Sulaymānīya was bombed by the RAF and Shaikh Mahmud was forced to leave the town the next day.<sup>164</sup>

However, the occupation of Shaikh Mahmud's stronghold and that of OzDemir needed a large-scale operation. This had to wait until the ongoing negotiations at

Lausanne between Turkey and the Allied Powers had been concluded.

For these reasons, Britain's Kurdish policy during 1921-1923 was determined partly by her desire to neutralize the Turkish threat to northern 'Iraq and partly by the need to strengthen King Faisal's regime in Baghdad. The British government during this period continued the policy of encouraging Kurdish nationalism which she had begun during the 1918-1920 period, chiefly as a counter ideology to Turkey's pan-Islamism in Kurdistan. Although Sir Percy Cox, like his predecessor Sir Arnold Wilson in the Baghdad residency pursued a policy which aimed at the gradual but full integration of the Kurdish districts into 'Iraq's administration, from 1921 to 1923 the British government remained officially committed to the policy of granting the Kurds autonomy. Moreover, the British government remained during this period without a definite policy in Kurdistan. The autonomous plan of May 1921, the decision to bring back Shaikh Mahmud to Sulaymānīya in September 1922, the December 24, 1922 Announcement, and the November 1923 guarantees of Kurdish rights issued on the eve of the election of the Constituent Assembly, were policies drawn up on an ad hoc basis in response to circumstances created by Turkey's desire to regain the Wilāyah of Mosul. To sum up, Britain's policy in Kurdistan during this period remained a "hand-to-mouth" one.

## Notes for Chapter 5

1. Harold Nicolson, Curzon: The Last Phase, pp. 260-2.
2. Ireland, pp. 311-3.
3. Bullard, Camel, p. 117; H. Young, Independent Arab, pp. 324-5; Ireland, pp. 311-14; FO. 371/6344, The Middle East Committee, "Minutes of a Meeting held at Colonial Office on Monday 2nd 1921"; Stivers, p. 77; A.S. Klieman, The Foundation of British Policy in the Arab World: The Cairo Conference of 1921 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), p. 111.
4. Niama, pp. 59-60; FO. 371/23724, May 31, 1921. Teleg. un. numb. from Churchill to Curzon.
5. Stivers, p. 76.
6. British High Commissioner file (From now on BHCF), 13-14, Events in Kurdistan, "Kurdistan Policy", Vol. 1, Teleg. No. 196, June 24, 1921, Churchill to Cox. The independent Kurdistan which Churchill had in mind was a British protectorate administered directly by the British High Commissioner through a local council of chieftains managing their internal affairs and receiving a subsidy from the British government. (See: FO. 371/6346 Teleg. Churchill to Cox, June 13, 1921.)
7. Spencer Noel, p. 123; Klieman, p. 110.
8. Cab. 24/121 C.P. 2743, Feb. 26, 1921, memo "South Kurdistan".
9. Graves, pp. 278-79; FO. 371/6346 Teleg. No. 201, Jan. 9, 1921, Cox to Churchill.
10. Lady Bell: Personal Papers, 2, p. 362.
11. BHCF. 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 1, Teleg. No. 201, 21 June 1921, Cox to Churchill.
12. BHCF, 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 1, Teleg. No. 257, July 1, 1921, HC to Churchill.
13. Graves, p. 284.
14. 'Iraq: 1900-1950, p. 131.

15. Lady Bell: Personal Papers, 2, p. 314.
16. Cab. 24/121. C.P. 2866, Report for the Period March 24th to 30th, 1921.
17. F0. 371/6346 Teleg. No. 196, June 21, 1921, Churchill to Cox.
18. F0. 371/6346 Teleg. No. 201, June 9, 1921, Cox to Churchill; Administrative Report on Iraq 1921, p. 7.
19. F0. 371/6346 Teleg. No. 196, June 21, 1921, Churchill to Cox; F0. 371/6397, Teleg. No. 503, Sept. 23, 1923, Cox to Churchill.
20. Busch, p. 373.
21. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 2. Teleg. No. 1072, May 14, 1921, Office Political Officer, Sulaimani, to HC. Baghdad; Busch, p. 373; Teleg. No. 616, Oct. 25, 1921, Cox to Churchill, cited in 'Aziz al-Haj, p. 188.
22. F0. 371/6397 Teleg. No. 616, From HC to S.S. Col. Oct. 26, 1921; BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. I, "Major Young's appreciation of position as regards Kurdistan", Oct. 24, 1921.
23. BHCF, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 2, U/D.
24. BHCF, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. I. Teleg. No. 2109, August 25, 1921, Churchill to Cox; F0. 371/6397 C.P. 3460, "Cabinet Meeting: The Military Situation in Iraq". Dispatch No. 622, Dobbs to Churchill.
25. Special Report on Progress of 'Iraq, pp. 253-4.
26. Peshkawtin, May 12, 1821; F0. 371/6387, memo. p. 1954, PO Sulaimani to Cox, August 21, 1921.)
27. F0. 371/6397, Meeting of the Eastern Committee With Regard to Policy in Kurdistan, Nov. 2, 1921, memo. by E.G. Adam.
28. F0. 371/6397 Teleg. memo 622, Oct. 22, 1921, Churchill to Cox.
29. The French were strongly opposed to Faisal becoming ruler of 'Iraq, and tried repeatedly in 1921 to destabilize his regime. France and Britain were pursuing two different policies vis-à-vis Turkey during the immediate post-war era. Britain seems to have wished for a while to reduce Turkey to complete impotence as a force in international affairs by dividing her into many smaller units. Britain, therefore, actively supported the Greek attack on Turkey in the 1920-22 war

between the two countries. The French, on the other hand, wanted to assist Kamalist Turkey, and signed the October 20th, 1921 Franklin-Bouillon Agreement with Turkey, which secured the province of Sicilia for Turkey, and a safe frontier in Asia Minor with French-held Syria. The British government resented the Franco-Kamalist agreement because it strengthened Turkey and also because France did not consult Britain in spite of her being a member of the Entente which had fought against Turkey during the War. (See: Lady Bell: Personal Papers, 2, p. 217.) The French officials tried first to arouse British suspicions about Faisal by portraying him as being "weak." Then they argued that Faisal had "considerable prestige but (was) dangerous." In order to dispel French apprehensions, Lloyd George tried to exaggerate British difficulties in 'Iraq. He told

his French counterpart that the British government had two alternatives in 'Iraq: either to have an Arab ruler or to maintain a large number of troops there. Britain simply could not opt for the latter alternative. (See: 371/6350, Teleg. March 14, 1921, Churchill to Lloyd George.) Moreover, the British government promised the French authorities that Faisal no longer had any ambitions in Syria and that his actions in 'Iraq would be closely watched. (See: Niama, p. 73; Noel Spencer, pp. 45-7.)

30. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 2, Despatch No. 1072/1/E, PO, Sulaimani, May 14, 1921.; Administrative Report 'Iraq October 1921 to March 1922, p. 7.; FO. 371/6345, Intelligence Report Iraq No. 20, Feb. 20, 1921.; The Daily Telegraph, June 13, 1921.

31. Administrative Report 'Iraq October 1920 to March 1922, p. 7

32. BHCF 13/14, Vol. I., Teleg. No. 201, June 6, 1921, Cox to Churchill; BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. I, Desp. 1072, May 14, 1921, Office. Politica, Sulaiman, to HC. Bagh.

33. On July 28 and 29, the British Government in 'Iraq held a referendum on Faisal's ascension to the throne of 'Iraq. This referendum was preceded by local meetings at which 'Iraqi governors and their British supervisors made it known that they desired a positive vote. Official madbatas (petitions) by pro-British or pro-mandate writers were permitted, while those which opposed Faisal and the mandate were prohibited, and their authors punished. (See: Administrative Report 'Iraq October 1920 to March 1922, p. 14; Spencer Noel, pp. 55-7; Sluglett, pp. 70-1; Ireland, pp. 332-5.

34. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Teleg. August 20, 1922.

35. FO. 371/6397, Intelligence Report, Iraq No. 19, Nov. 1921; 'Iraq Administrative Report October 1920 to March 1922, p. 7; Longrigg, 'Iraq 1900-

1950, p. 133; Graves, p. 301; Lord Birdwood, Nuri Sa'id - A Study in Arab Leadership (London: Cassell and Co., 1959, p. 134; Ireland, p. 333.

36. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 118: 'Iraq Administrative Report October 1920 to March 1922, p. 15.

37. Lady Bell: Personal Papers, 2, p. 217.

38. FO. 371/7781, Cab. Paper No. 3847, March 20, 1922; FO. 371/6397, Cab. Paper. 3494, "Possibility of a Turkish Offensive in Northern Iraq," memo. by S. S. War. Nov. 21, 1921.

39. Howell, pp. 314-15; Turkey's border dispute in Kars and Caucasia with Russia was settled in March 1921, with the signing of a Treaty of Friendship between the two countries. (See: FO. 371/63971, Cab. Pap. No. 3494, Nov. 21, 1921.)

40. FO. 371/6397 Cab. Paper No. 3494, "Possibility of Turkish Offensive in Northern Iraq," memo. by S S . War. Nov. 21, 1921.

41. FO. 371/6391 Teleg. No. 821, Dec. 28, 1921, HC to S. S. Col.; 6397, Teleg. No. 727. Nov. 12. 1921. H. Rumbold to F.O.

42. FO. 371/6397, Cab. Paper. No. 3494 "Possibility of a Turkish Offensive in Northern Iraq", memo. Nov. 21. 1921.

43. FO. 371/6391. Teleg. No. 821. Dec. 28. 1921. Baghdad. H.C. to S. S. Col.

44. F.O. 371/7781, Teleg. No. 479, July 5, 1922; Hilmi, VI, p. 22.

45. Taqi, pp. 42-3; 53; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 230.

46. FO. 371/6333, Intelligence Rep. No. 19, Iraq, Aug. 15, 1921; Teleg. No. 29, April 19, 1921, Cox to Churchill, cited in al-Haj, pp. 40-1; 371/10098, Intelligence Rep. Sept. 18, 1924, Iraq.

47. 'Iraq Administrative Report Oct. 1920 to March 1922, p. 78. In June 1921, a Kurdish administration patterned on the Turkish administration in Turkey was established in Rawāndūz which had the following: 1) Raqib Agha of Surchī, President of the Rawāndūz Majlis, 2) Abmad Taqi, vice-president, 3) Bawil Agha, a member of the Majlis, 4) Ahmad Beg, qā'immaqām of Rawāndūz, 5) Nuri Bawil Agha, Chief of Police, 6) Shawkat Efendi, ra'is baladiya (mayor). (See: Hilmi, VI, p. 92.

48. Peshkawtin, 12 January, 1922; 'Iraq Administrative Report Oct. 1920 to March

1922, p. 45.

49. FO. 371/6346, Teleg. No. 29, 19 April, 1921, Cox to Churchill; 10098, Intelligence Rep. Iraq, Sept. 18, 1924; Teleg. 1710, July 3, 1922, General Head Quarters, Iraq to War Office, 'Iraq Administrative Report October 1920 to March 1922, p. 78.

50. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 246. OzDemir was aware that the British army in 'Iraq had a substantial number of Muslims from India. Therefore, he did not fail to address them too. He appealed to their religious sentiments in pamphlets written in Urdu. (See: FO. 371/6353, Intelligence Report, No. 19, August 15, 1921.)

51. FO. 371/7781, Desp. No. 61, Consulate Aleppo, May 17, 1922; Lady Bell: Personal Papers, 2, pp. 232-33; FO. 371/6397, Teleg. No. 700, Nov. 21, Cox to Churchill; 'Iraq Administrative Report October 1920 to March 1922, p. 76. Jaimi, a chieftain of the Shammar Arab tribe in Mosul Liwa, who was pro-Turkish, disseminated anti-Faisal and pro-al-Sanusi propaganda among the Arab tribes of the wilayah of Mosul. (See: FO. 371/6397, Teleg. No. 29, April 19, 1921; Cab. Paper. 3494, "Possibility of Turkish Offensive in Northern Iraq," a memo. by S. S. War., Nov. 21, 1921.

52. 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1922 to March 1923 (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1924), p. 34; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 245. The two British officers who were killed were Captain Bond, APO in Chamchamal, and Captain Makant, who was in charge of the local levy in the same area. On June 18, Karim Fattah Beg, the Hamawand chieftain invited them to his village. Then he plotted their murder on their way to him. The British Government seems to have been reluctant to tell the parliament the whole story. On June 27, Churchill was asked by opposition members about the incident. The Secretary for Colonies replied: "It was an act of individual treachery on the part of a local frontier chief... no political significance need be attached to the incident." H.C. Parl. Deb., Vol. 155, p. 1827.

53. FO. 371/7781, Teleg. No. 479, July 5, 1922, Cox to Churchill; Hilmi, Vol. 6, p. 23; Taqī, p. 61.

54. 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1922 to March 1923, p. 649; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 296; Longrigg, 'Iraq 1900-1950, pp. 44-50.

55. Taqī, p. 66.

56. Taqī, p. 58; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 230.

57. Edmonds, pp. 229-30.
58. Yadāsht, VI, p. 68.
59. FO. 371/7781, Teleg. No. 479, July 5, 1922, Cox to Churchill.
60. Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, p. 553.
61. Khabatī Gal-ī Kurd, p. 62.
62. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 336.
63. Lady Bell: Personal Papers, 2, p. 298.
64. "The Significance of Mosul," pp. 350-51.
65. Lady Bell: Personal Papers, 2, p. 282.
66. FO. 371/6346 Teleg. No. 29, April 19, 1921; 'Iraq Administrative Report October 1920 to March 1922, p. 45; E.B. Soane, "Evacuation of Kurdistan", Journal Royal Central Asian Studies, Vol. 10, pt. 1, 1923, p. 73.
67. Hawramī, pt. 2, p. 102.
68. Lady Bell: Personal Papers, 2, p. 296.
69. 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1922 to March 1923, p. 64.
70. From Mudros to Lausanne, p. 374.
71. Yadāsht, V, pp. 69-70, 74-5; Bang-ī Kurdistān (1922), Vol. 1, No. 2, August 2. After the departure of the British, Sulaymāniya was in turmoil. The Hamāwand chieftain, Fattah Beg entered the town and pro-British elements were imprisoned, or fled. However, Jam'iyatī Kurdistān, through its organ, kept reminding Kurds of the horror of Turkey's return. Bang-ī Kurdistān, No. 6, Sept. 1922, No. 8, Sep. 29, No. 9, Oct. 1922.
72. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 124. When Simko was in control of most of Iranian Kurdistan, the British government wanted to maintain a close relationship with him so that they could use him against Turkey. Miss Bell thought the appointment of Sayyid Taha, who was closely associated with him in Iran as hukumdar, was a means to have Simko as an ally against Turkey. In July 1922, Simko was defeated by a combined Turkish and Persian force, and consequently Sayyid Taha was dropped as a candidate for the post of hukumdar

in southern Kurdistan. BHCF 13/14, Tgm. 58, No. 581/s, 17 Aug. 1922, Political, Rowanduz to HC; Lady Bell: Personal Papers, II, p. 297.

73. Lady Bell, Letters, 2, p. 534.

74. "Two Years in Southern Kurdistan," p. 277.

75. FO. 371/7781, Teleg. No. 646, Cox to Churchill, Sept. 10, 1922; Air 23/339, Teleg. from GHQ, Baghdad, June 19, 1922; Special Report on Progress of 'Iraq, p. 255; Air 23/339, memo. No. 901, July 3, 1922, from PO Sulaimani: Hawrami, pt. 2, p. 105; Lady Bell: Personal Papers, 2, p. 299.

76. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, "A Note on the Situation in Kurdistan," July 14, 1922. Air 23/339, Teleg. No. PO/50/1162, u/d, Cox to PO. Sulaimani. Cox's acquiescence to the return of Shaikh Mahmud to Sulaymaniya has been considered as "one of his rare mistakes." (See: Graves, p. 320.)

77. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 2, Teleg. No. 339/5, July 18, 1922; HC, Par. Deb., Vol. 191, p. 2250; al-Malaffat al-Bilat. Malaff Idarat Kurdistan, memo by 'Abd al-Muhsin al-Sa'dun, No. 4/47, June 16, 1922, cited in Lutfi, p. 105; Niama, p. 118. Miss Bell seems to have favoured allowing Faisal "to try his hand since it is clear we have no more arrows in our quiver." Lady Bell: Personal Papers, 2, p. 295.

78. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 303-4.

79. Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, p. 562.

80. Special Report on Progress of 'Iraq, p. 255; 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1922 to March 1923, p. 36; Longrigg, 'Iraq 1900-1950, p. 144.

81. Hilmi, VI, pp. 9-10; Bang-i Kurdistān, Vol. 1, No. 12, Oct. 27, 1922. British reports on 'Iraq for the period April 1922 to March 1923 claim that there was no orderly administration under Shaikh Mahmud, who apparently had not issued any executive orders. (See p. 37.) This claim, however, does not take into account a series of legislative and executive orders which were issued by Shaikh Mahmud and published in Bang-i Kurdistān. (See for instance Vol. 1, No. 12, Oct. 27, 1922.)

82. Lady Bell: Personal Papers, 2, p. 286.

83. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 301.

84. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 300-1; Special Report on Progress of

'Iraq, p. 255.

85. Lees, p. 271; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 301; Rozh-ī Kurdistān, No. 2, Vol. 1, Nov. 22, 1922. On November 27, Shaikh Mahmud's rule in Sulaymaniya was hailed as being the fulfillment of centuries-old Kurdish national aspirations and "Malik Mahmud I's" rule as an extension of the Kurdish kingdoms of Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, and Karim Khan Zand. (See: Rozh-ī Kurdistān, Vol. 2, No. 2, No. 122-1922.)

86. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 301.

87. W. Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2. pp. 561, 564.

88. BIICF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Sulaimani, Oct. 12, 1922, Noel to Cox.

89. Rozh-ī Kurdistān, Vol. 1, No. 1, Nov. 15, 1922; No. 5, Dec. 20, 1922; No. 8, Jan. 10, 1923. On November 6 and December 27 of 1922, the journal Rozh-ī Kurdistān published two articles in reply to al-Bilād, an 'Iraqi newspaper. The Kurdish journal vehemently protested the 'Iraqi paper's reference to Sulaymānīyā as a liwā' of 'Iraq. Rozh-ī Kurdistān writes:

"It talks of Kurdistan as if it were part of 'Iraq and calls it the Liwa of Sulaimani, because it has close commercial and economic relations with Baghdad. It calls the Cabinet of Kurdistan by the name of Provincial Administrative Council. These remarks are most deplorable... We never expected our great and friendly neighbour ['Iraq] to trample underfoot all our thousand-year old rights and good relations of these two governments and people... to violate our frontier." (See: Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 301.)

90. The Constituent Assembly was to act as the Parliament of 'Iraq. From October 1922, the British were trying to ensure its election. However, Iraqi nationalists and Shi'i 'ulama opposed people's participation in the election on the grounds that the British government was trying to use the Constituent Assembly to give formal sanction to the 1922 Anglo-'Iraq Treaty which was considered by the 'Iraqi opposition as a British device to perpetuate the Mandate in 'Iraq. (See: Ireland, pp. 391-5.)

91. Special Report on Progress of 'Iraq, p. 257.

92. 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1922 to March 1923, p. 14.

93. Office of the Ministry of the Interior, "Malaffat Majlis al-T'asisi," File No. N/10/B.2, cited in Adhami, pp. 301-2.

94. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 303-4; Adhami, p. 178.
95. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3. Teleg. Cox to Churchill, Oct. 8, 1922.
96. Spence Walter, p. 124; BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, memo. no. PO/49, Secretariat of HC, Bagh. to Council of Ministers, 'Iraq, Oct. 3, 1922.
97. Graves, p. 322.
98. Malaffat al-Bilat al-Malaki (Files of the Court), Doc. No. 976, Dec. 4, 1922, cited in al-Adhami, p. 290; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 318.
99. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, memo. by Cox to Churchill, Sept. 1, 1922.
100. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Teleg. No. 15, PO, Sulaimani, 20th August, 1922; al-Adhami, pp. 295-6.
101. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Teleg. 11/12, PO. Sulaimani, August 20, 1922.
102. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Teleg. No. 11/12 503, Sept. 22, 1922, Cox to Churchill.
103. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, "A Note on the Kurdish Situation," Noel to Cox, Oct. 22, 1922; Memo. by Cox to Churchill, Sept. 7, 1922; Teleg. No. 15, Oct. 11, 1922, Noel to Cox.
104. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Teleg. 15, Oct. 11, 1922; FO. 371/9004, Teleg. E1019, memo. by Edward, Jan. 26, 1923.
105. 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1922 to March 1923, pp. 36-7.
106. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Teleg. No. 15, PO. Sulaimani, Oct. 11, 1922.
107. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, "The Situation in Kurdistan," Oct. 10, 1922, Noel to Cox.
108. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, PO. Sulaiman, letter, from Noel to Cox, Oct. 12, 1922.
109. Adhami, pp. 297-8; Longrigg, 'Iraq 1900-1950, p. 100; Niama, pp. 79-80.

110. 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1922 to March 1923, pp. 6-7.
111. Special Report on Progress of 'Iraq, p. 257; Spencer
112. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, "Kurdistan Policy," H. Dobbs, March 28, 1923. Nazim Beg Nafichizada, a leading Turkoman notable of Kirkuk, told Edmonds:
- "I am an old friend of Shaikh Mahmud and I like him personally, but this does not mean that I should like him as Governor. Kirkuk has her price; she must now see precisely what her rival suitors have to offer; she will give herself to the one that makes the most attractive bid. If Shaikh Mahmud wants Kirkuk to join him, he must get in touch with our leading men. For instance, I personally should want an assurance that we would not have, say, a brainless Jaf set over us as a Mutasarrif. I think he has forgotten us; he has made no attempt to court us for a couple of years." (See: BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Desp. No. K813. Pol. Kirk. Division. Oct. 16, 1922.
113. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5, Teleg. No. 275, May 11, 1924; 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1923 to December 1924 (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1925), p. 32. Sulaymaniya sent five deputies to Baghdad. One of them was Shaikh Qadir, brother of Shaikh Mahmud. (See: Adhami, p. 472.) Kurds claim that the Kurdish deputies in the Constituent Assembly were in general insignificant people with no influence in Kurdistan and that they were acting as a "rubber stamp" of the British government. (See Hawar, al-Thaqafa al-Kurdiyya, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 91-2.) Shaikh Mahmud was apparently resentful of the Kurdish participation and he tried to bribe Shaikh Qadir not to take part in the election. (See: FO. 371/10098, Intellig. Report. 'Iraq, 30th April, 1924.)
114. Taqī, p. 68; Hilmī, VI, pp. 31-2.
115. BHCF, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, letter. Sulaimani, Noel to the Advisor of the Ministry of Interior, Oct. 12, 1922.
116. Rozh-i Kurdistan, No. 7, Vol. 1, Nov. 30, 1922.
117. Hilmī, VI, pp. 71-3.
118. Hilmī, VI, pp. 13, 35-6, 3-6.
119. For a detailed account of the situation and the strength of OzDemir among the Kurds. (See: Hilmī, VI, pp. 13-24.)
120. FO. 371/18824, Desp. No. 179, Council of Ministers, Baghdad, Jan. 17, J/1/3,

19223; FO. 371/9004, E1619. memo. E.J. Edmonds, Jan. 26, 1923; BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3; HC to Air HQ BF. Bagh. Feb. 15, 1923; Shaikh Mahmud was following a two-track policy. While he was exchanging letters with OzDemir through a certain Tahir Efendi, he also tried to make the British believe that he was not anti-British. He made good use of the services of Shaikh Qadir, his brother, in this regard. (See: Hilmi, VI, p. 39.)

121. Hilmi, VI, pp. 72-4.

122. 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1922 to March 1923, p. 36; FO. 371/18824, Desp. No. 226, Jan. 29, 1923, Secretariat of HC, Bagh. to Major Young, "Answer to Question VII".

123. Hilmi, VI, p. 74.

124. FO. 371/9004, memo. C.J. Edmonds, No. E3620, April 1, 1923.

125. FO. 371/18824, Baghdad, HC to Major Young, Advisor to the Minister of Interior, "Answer to Question VII," Jan. 29, 1925; 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1922 to March 1923, p. 36.

126. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Teleg. No. 1410, Feb. 24, 1923, Al. Kik. Div. to HC. FO. 371/18824, Baghdad, HC to Major Young, Advisor to Minister of Interior, "Answer to Question VII," Jan. 29, 1925; Hamilton, p. 208; Hilmi, VI, p. 74; F.O. 371/90101 Intelligence Report, 'Iraq, No. 19, Oct. 1923.

127. To demonstrate his loyalty to OzDemir when the Jam'iyat-i Kurdistan approached him to be their president, Shaikh Mahmud consulted OzDemir about it, for he was aware that OzDemir was unhappy with the Jami'yyat-i Kurdistan's anti-Turkish policies. (See: Hilmi, VI, p. 86.)

128. Hawrami, pt. 2, p. 110.

129. In 1922, Simko and Sayyid Taha, his brother-in-law, were leading a Kurdish uprising on the Turco-Persian frontier from Dilman to Bāna against Persia, with the hope of establishing a Kurdish state. The revolt was suppressed by a converging movement of the Kamalist forces from the west and the Iranian forces from the east. Simko was forced to leave in the field not only a large quantity of arms and ammunition, but also his six-year-old son Khosraw (See: Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 305.)

130. F.O. 371/7782, despatch, Nov. 17, 1922.

131. F.O. 371/7782, Teleg. No. 438, Persia Political, Sir Percy Loraine, Nov. 27,

1922; Teleg. No. 3933, Decoll, 1922.

132. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 306-7.

133. BHCF, 13/14 Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, "A Note on the Kurdish Situation," Jan. 14, 1922.

134. F.O. 371/7782, Teleg. No. 878, Cox to Churchill, Dec. 16, 1922; BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, C.J. Edmonds, "Kurdish Frontier Policy," Dec. 21, 1922; 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1922 to March 1923, pp. 36-7; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 305, 6, 7, 8.

135. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Teleg. No. 69, Administrative Inspector (AI) Arbil to HC, Baghdad, Dec. 21, 1922; Teleg. No. 332, Dec. 19, from Cox to FO. Shaikh Mahmud informed OzDemir that Sayyid Taha had been given one hundred thousand rupees to form a Kurdish irregular force to throw the Turks out of Rawāndūz. (See: Hilmi, VI, p. 89.)

136. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, "General Appreciation of Sulaimani Situation," Secretariat of HC to Air HQ BF, Iraq, Feb. 15, 1923; Desp. No. PA.776, AI, Kik. to Cox, Dec. 26, 1922; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 304-5; Cf: Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, p. 575.

137. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, "General Appreciation of Sulaimani Situation," HC, Secretariat of HC to Air HQ BF, Iraq, Feb. 15, 1923.

138. BHCF, 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, "Note on the Kurdish Situation," Jan. 1, 1923 by C.J. Edmonds, No. 4/1; AI. Kirk. Division, Teleg. No. K/91, Jan. 8, 1923.

139. BHCF, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Sulaim. PO. Desp. ST/ 92, Dec. 20, 1922; AI. Kik. Div. Teleg. P.A. 773, Dec. 18, 1922.

140. Special Report on Progress of 'Iraq, p. 256.

141. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Teleg. No. 67, December, 19, 1922.

142. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, AP Sulaimani, Desp. No. ST/92, Dec. 12, 1922.

143. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, AI. Kik. Teleg. PA 773, Dec. 18, 1922.

144. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Teleg. No. 69, Dec. 21, 1922,

Arbil, Noel to Cox.

145. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Teleg. No. 269, Dec. 21, 1922, Arbil, Noel to Cox.

146. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Teleg. No. 264, Dec. 20, Arbil, Noel to Cox.

147. Special Report on Progress of 'Iraq, p. 256; 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1922 to March 1923, p. 37.

148. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Teleg. No. F C. 3111 from Cox to Advisor for Minister of Interior, Dec. 20, 1922.

149. FO. 371/9004, memo C.J. Edmonds, E1019, Jan. 26, 1923.

150. Lady Bell: Personal Papers, 2, p. 306.

151. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan , Vol. 3, "A Note on the Kurdish Situation," by C.J. Edmonds, No. K/9, Al. Kik. Div., Jan. 1, 1923.

152. 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1922 to March 1923, pp. 38-9; Special Report on Progress of 'Iraq, p. 250.

153. Simko wanted to cooperate with the Turks because he wanted to gain the release of his child and his two thousand gold pieces, which were in the custody of the Kamalist forces in the south-eastern province of Van. (See: Taqī, p. 70.)

154. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, "General Appreciation of Sulaimani Situation," Secretariat of HC to Air. HQ BF Iraq, Feb. 15, 1923; Memo Al. Kik. Div. Jan 13, 1922; Teleg. No. ST/101 Pol. Sulaimani. Jan. 10, 1923; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 313. Realizing the significance of Simko as the national hero of the hour, Shaikh Mahmud ordered public and official ceremonies to be held in his honour in Sulaymaniya. (See: Rozh-i Kurdistan, Vol. 1, No. 8, Jan. 10, 1923.) Miss Bell had some doubt about Simko's ties with the Shaikh. She writes: "I don't fancy that Simko will regard Shaikh Mahmud's pretensions with favour and if we let things take their course a sharpened knife or two might take... his direction." (See: Lady Bell: Personal Papers, 6, p. 303.)

155. BHCF, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Al. Kik. Div. to Adv. Ministry of Interior, Jan. 14, 1923.

156. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, "Demands of the Council of Kurdistan," Chapman to Al. Kik. Div. Desp. No. ST/103.

157. Rozh-ī Kurdistan, Vol. 1, No. 8, Jan. 10, 1923.
158. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Desp. K78 Al. Kik. Div. Jan. 30, 1923; Teleg. No. 13, Al. Kik. Div. Jan. 12, 1923; 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1922 to March 1923.
159. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Desp. No. K58 Al. Kik. Div. to HC Jan 23, 1923; Desp. Jan. 6, 1923, Arbil, Noel.
160. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Desp. No. D.O. K78, Edmonds to Bourdillon, Acting High Commissioner, Jan. 30, 1923.
161. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 314; Special Report on Progress of 'Iraq, p. 250.
162. Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, p. 576.
163. Taqi, p. 76; Rozh-ī Kurdistan, Vol. 1, No. 8, Jan. 10; BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, vol. 3, Teleg. Al. Kik. Div. Jan. 21, 1923; Air 520/1, Desp. HQBF. 'Iraq to Air Ministry, March 13, 1923; Hilmi, Vol. 6, pp. 94-95. In January 1923, Mustafa Kamal sent Fattah Beg, a Turkish army officer originally from Sulaymāniya, to Sulaymāniya to complete the encirclement of Shaikh Mahmud by the pro-Turkish forces. As he was a brother-in-law and a confidant of the Shaikh, he had a considerable impact on his anti-British policy. (See: FO. 371/18824, Dobbs to Amery, Jan. 22, 1925; Hilmi, VI, p. 57; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 314; FO. 371/18824, Desp. No. 179/J1113, Jan. 17, 1923, Secretariat of Ministers, Iraq.
164. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 314-5; BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, "General Appreciation of Sulaimani Situation," Secretariat of HC to Air HQBF, 'Iraq, Feb. 15, 1923. The military plan which was adopted at the conference included: 1) On February 21, 1923, the High Commissioner would send a telegram to Shaikh Mahmud, instructing him to come to Baghdad; 2) If he did not comply, a squadron of the RAF would demonstrate over Sulaymāniya and drop notices announcing his dismissal as hukumdar and allowing him five more days to report to Baghdad; 3) two companies of British troops would move to Kirkuk to deter him from any attack on that city; 4) The barracks and Shaikh Mahmud's headquarters would be bombed if he refused to leave Sulaymaniya. (See: Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 315.)

## Chapter 6

## THE EMERGENCE OF A POLICY, 1922-1927

The major factors which shaped Britain's Kurdish policy during the period November 1922-June 1927 remained the desire to satisfy British domestic pressure for disengagement from 'Iraq, the need to safeguard 'Iraq's northern frontier against the Turkish threat, and the necessity of strengthening King Faisal's government. Russian designs on the region were also of great concern to Britain.

The Lausanne Negotiations

All eyes were now on Lausanne, where the Peace Conference had begun on November 20, 1922 with Lord Curzon and Ismat Pasha Onunu representing Britain and Turkey respectively. The Kamalist regime did not see itself bound by the provisions of the Treaty of Sèvres and it was claiming the whole of the Wilāyah of Mosul down to Jabal Ḥamrīn while Britain was asking for a frontier to correspond with the northern boundary of the Mosul province.<sup>1</sup> Turkey based its claim to the Wilāyah of Mosul on several grounds: 1) race; arguing that the Arabs were only a small minority and Turks and Kurds were not racially separable; 2) economy; Turkey claimed most of the disputed territory's trade was with Anatolia; 3) illegal occupation of the Wilāyah by the British after the Mudros truce; 4) and self-determination, since the inhabitants wanted to join Turkey.<sup>2</sup>

On December 14, 1922, Curzon had contested each one of the grounds on

which Turkey based her claim: 1) racially the majority were Kurds who were of Indo-European origin, fundamentally different from the Ural-Altai Turks; 2) most of the trade of the Wilāyah of Mosul was with 'Iraq, not Anatolia as Turkey claimed; 3) legally, the British government had been entrusted with the mandate over 'Iraq by the League of Nations; 4) and the frequent Kurdish revolts during the nineteenth century, the period prior to World War I, and the immediate post-War period demonstrated the unwillingness on the part of the Kurds to be part of Turkey.<sup>3</sup>

During the negotiations both Onunu and Curzon proved to be equally obdurate. The former argued that the Turkish government could not "for a moment" consider abandoning her sovereign right over the disputed territory.<sup>4</sup> Curzon, on his part noted that his government could not "contemplate" the surrender of the Wilāyah of Mosul to Turkey.<sup>5</sup> There was a deadlock in the negotiations and this continued to hinder the peace talks on other issues. Therefore, on February 4, 1923, Turkey and the Allied Powers agreed to temporarily exclude the Mosul Question from the conference agenda.<sup>6</sup>

The British stand in Lausanne was influenced to a certain extent by political considerations at home. The Kamalist victory over the Greeks in 1922 was an important factor in the fall of the coalition government of Lloyd George on October 1922. On November 15, 1922, the Conservative Prime Minister Bonar Law won an election which was fought on a Tory platform of domestic laissez-faire, with minimum commitment abroad.<sup>7</sup> Bonar Law seems to have been

determined to evacuate Mosul province. On January 8, 1923, he wrote to Curzon:

"There are two things which to me seem vital; the first is that we should not go to war for the sake of Mosul; and second that if the French, as we know to be the case, will not join us, we shall not by ourselves fight the Turks to enforce what is left of the Treaty of Sèvres..."<sup>8</sup>

This attitude of keen desire for immediate disengagement from 'Iraq in general and Mosul province in particular was a popular demand in Britain reflected both in the press<sup>9</sup> and the House of Commons. On February 20, 1923, Mr. Asquith, ex-Prime Minister and an Opposition member of Parliament, declared that the British Government should no longer stay in 'Iraq, because there were no vital interests worthy of the sacrifices which were to be made for holding it. He urged Bonar Law to immediately withdraw and cut off Britain "completely" from any obligation in 'Iraq.<sup>10</sup> On March 1, 1923, when the Supply Estimate for the Middle East expenses was presented to the House of Commons for debate, there was a general cry to stop putting further burdens on British taxpayers. Mr. E. Harinsworth, another Opposition member had this to say: "I think the general feeling in the House is that the Government intends to evacuate 'Iraq." Mr. Ormsby-Gore, the then Under-Secretary for Colonies, replied that while immediate withdrawal was out of the question, his Government was firmly committed to reducing British commitments in 'Iraq.<sup>11</sup>

Being under these pressures, in March 1923, Law ordered the formation of a Cabinet Committee to evaluate British policy in 'Iraq. In its report, the Committee stated that there was a powerful body of opinion both in Parliament and the country which favoured, mainly for financial considerations, early withdrawal from 'Iraq. However, in case of withdrawal the Arab kingdom in Baghdad would fall and the whole of Mesopotamia would be absorbed by Turkey. This would constitute a great danger to the British presence in the Persian Gulf. The re-emergence of a strong Turkey would also inflame the Muslim subjects of the British Empire, leading to anti-British uprisings.<sup>12</sup> The findings of the Committee appears to have confirmed the view of Churchill, the Secretary for Colonies, who had earlier in January told Parliament that an early withdrawal from 'Iraq would violate the very definite pledge Britain had made first to the Arabs, whom the British government had promised not to abandon to Turkish rule; secondly to King Faisal, who was elected by the whole country, including Mosul province and with whom Britain had signed the 1922 Treaty which obliged the British Government to maintain the territorial integrity of 'Iraq; and thirdly, to the League of Nations without whose consent Britain could not abandon her mandate over a large mandated territory.<sup>13</sup>

But maintaining the British hold on 'Iraq and the Wilāyah of Mosul had to be subjugated to the wider British imperial interests in the Middle East and Anglo-Russian rivalry. The Lausanne Conference provided an opportunity for Britain to improve her ties with Turkey. The pro-Greek policy of Lloyd George's

Government during the years 1921-1922 had created distrust between Mustafa Kamal and Britain. This had to be rectified before Bolshevik Russia made any effective use of it to extend her influence in Turkey. The Mosul Question was a barrier in the way of establishing peace with Turkey. Nevertheless, Churchill maintained that peace with Turkey was of "utmost importance" both for the introduction of the intended reduction in the cost of British administration in 'Iraq and the British effort to contain Russia's southward advance towards the Persian Gulf.<sup>14</sup>

The appeasement of Turkey therefore was essential for the preservation of British imperial interests in the Middle East, and the Kurdistan question, which was of great concern for Mustafa Kamal, provided a means to do so. In December, 1922, Curzon was already convinced that the Kurdish state which was envisaged in the Treaty of Sèvres was no longer realizable. In an attempt to allay Turkish apprehensions with regards to the Kurds, he suggested to the British government the idea of offering to divide the Wilāyah of Mosul in such a way that Turkey would get the Kurdish mountainous region, including the towns of Koī, Rawāndūz and Sulaymānīya, while 'Iraq would retain 'Amādiya, Arbīl, Kirkuk, Mosul, and the whole plain country inhabited by Arabs and Turkomans. The Foreign Secretary argued that this offer had a further advantage of freeing the British and 'Iraqi governments of "an intractable people, living in a most difficult area, whom we have been unable to the present to reduce to anything approaching order and good government."<sup>15</sup> However, the British government refused Curzon's

suggestion for many reasons, the foremost of which was the concern that the surrender of the Kurdish mountainous region would have left 'Iraq undefendable against Turkish aggression in the future. Secondly, without the Kurdish mountains the important route which carried British trade between 'Iraq and Persia via Khānaqīn would have become difficult to protect. Thirdly, Turkey was not in a position to be able to establish an effective administration in the detached mountainous region. Thus the area would remain in chaos and the resulting instability would threaten 'Iraq's northern frontier.<sup>16</sup>

But Curzon was authorized at Lausanne to tell the Turks that the British government was ready to drop articles Sixty-two to Sixty-five of the Treaty of Sèvres which called for the establishment of an independent Kurdistan. Therefore, Curzon did not press for Kurdish independence. It was hoped that this would eliminate a conviction held by Mustafa Kamal that Britain was bent on dismembering Turkey by establishing a Kurdish state in Anatolia and northern 'Iraq. In return for this concession Turkey was asked to join the League of Nations in order to complete the isolation of Bolshevik Russia. For these reasons the fate of Kurds was subordinated at Lausanne to the Anglo-Russian struggle for influence in the Middle East.<sup>17</sup>

The Lausanne negotiations had a direct bearing on events in southern Kurdistan. Both Turkey and Britain were trying to manipulate the Kurds in order to strengthen their bargaining position at the Conference. On December 22, 1922, the Secretary for Colonies wrote to Cox saying that the negotiations in Lausanne

were going to be the determining factor in deciding the course of action Britain would take in Kurdistan. He added that should the negotiations with the Turks over Mosul province come to a conclusion in favour of 'Iraq, there would be no need to eject Shaikh Mahmud from Sulaymānīya and OzDemir from Rawāndūz. On the other hand, if the negotiations reached an inconclusive end, then action would be necessary.<sup>18</sup> Early in January 1923, while the Lausanne negotiations were still in progress, it became evident that the Turks were concentrating troops at Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar, a few miles from Zākho. The population of the Wilāyah of Mosul "got wind of these threatening movements" and was led to believe that the Lausanne Conference had failed and that the Turks were about to make an imminent advance on Kurdistan. There was a complete deadlock in the negotiations until on the 4th of February, Turkey and the Allies agreed to temporarily exclude the Mosul question from the agenda of the Conference for a period of one year.<sup>19</sup>

The troop concentrations on the frontier, anti-British propaganda and rumours which were spread by the pro-Turkish secret committees in Kirkuk and Arbīl had a tremendous impact on the population. Consequently, Edmonds writes, the local officials and the pro-British notables in Kurdistan went about "pallied with terror".<sup>20</sup> Besides, in March Shaikh Mahmud intensified his efforts to mobilize the Kurds for a general uprising against Britain. It is recalled that on March 3, 1923 the bombing of Sulaymānīya had forced the Shaikh to escape to the near-by mountains. The town remained under the control of his followers, and he remained

in virtual control of the Sulaymānīya Liwā'. It appears that Shaikh Mahmud's correspondence with OzDemir continued from his new headquarters in the mountains and they accelerated their efforts to instigate a general tribal uprising to coincide with a combined attack by OzDemir and Shaikh Mahmud's followers on Kirkuk and Arbīl.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, Rozh-ī Kurdistan published a series of articles questioning 'Iraq's right to the Wilāyah of Mosul. The journal also protested the lack of a Kurdish representative at the Conference in Lausanne.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, Shaikh Mahmud agreed to a Turkish demand to send three Kurdish deputies from the Wilāyah of Mosul to sit in Angora in the Turkish General Assembly. This was intended to bolster Turkish claims to Mosul province at the Conference in Lausanne.<sup>23</sup>

For these reasons, in March 1923, the British authorities in 'Iraq felt the need to inaugurate a forward policy in Kurdistan. They argued that drastic action by the RAF, British troops and the Levy, was essential to the "nipping in the bud" of an anti-British rising which was in the making in the Sulaymānīya Liwā'.<sup>24</sup> A similar action in Rawāndūz which had become the "cancer of Kurdistan", was equally important, to deny the Turks an important avenue for aggression and intrigue when the second Lausanne Conference was to be held. Besides, by eliminating OzDemir's and Shaikh Mahmud's intrigues in Kurdistan, the British government could afford to prolong the negotiations in Lausanne.<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, a vigorous air offensive was unleashed against the tribes which supported Shaikh Mahmud in Sulaymānīya, and simultaneous air raids were made

on OzDemir's followers in the Rawāndūz and Arbil regions. These had a demoralizing impact on the tribes. On April 18, 1923, two columns of ground forces supported by the RAF made a surprise attack on Rawāndūz. OzDemir could not raise a force large enough to resist it. Therefore, he and his Turkish irregulars crossed the frontier into Persia and Rawāndūz was occupied. Shaikh Mahmud, on his part, tried to raise a tribal lashkar of Pizhder to prepare for the defense of Sulaymānīya. Having pacified Rawāndūz region, the British forces made a speedy march on Sulaymānīya both from the south and north-western directions. On May 8, proclamations were dropped from the air on Sulaymānīya informing the people of the advancing British forces' intention to peacefully occupy the town. On the next day the town was occupied.<sup>26</sup> Shaikh Mahmud's failure to raise a tribal force to prevent British troops from occupying Sulaymānīya has been attributed to the sudden collapse of OzDemir, the speed and decisiveness which characterized the latest British move, and the effective use of the RAF.<sup>27</sup>

### Cordon Sanitaire in Kurdistan

The British now sought to establish a scheme which they called the cordon sanitaire, whereby Shaikh Mahmud would be barred from interfering in the affairs of neighbouring areas. After the expulsion of OzDemir from Rawāndūz and the occupation of Sulaymānīya, the British High Commissioner in Baghdad disagreed with King Faisal on how to administer Kurdistan. The 'Iraqi government wanted a form of administration which would closely link the northern provinces to the

rest of 'Iraq by appointing administrators directly responsible to Baghdad. The British government on the other hand, though convinced that the prospect of an independent or even autonomous Kurdistan was no longer a viable proposition, wanted the Kurdish districts to be placed in varying degrees of loose subordination to 'Iraq's government. This had to be carried out in a way which would respect Kurdish national sensibilities.<sup>28</sup> In addition, while the Lausanne Conference was still going on, the British government was unable to leave the Kurdish nationalists with the impression that their national aspirations, which had been recognized in the December 24, 1922 Announcement were being ignored.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, the 'Iraqi government was not strong enough to establish its authority in Kurdistan, nor was the British government in a position to establish her direct rule or to commit further troops to assist the 'Iraqis in the region, for the British government was already under a lot of criticism from the opposition in the House of Commons for sanctioning military operations in Kurdistan, which was interpreted as taking on new obligations in 'Iraq.<sup>30</sup>

For these reasons, in June 1923, while Shaikh Mahmud was still in the mountains northeast of Sulaymānīya, the British government asked the pro-British moderate members of Sulaymānīya Council to rule the town as a Liwā' of 'Iraq under the direct supervision of the High Commissioner. The pro-British Kurds were ready to cooperate on the condition that the occupying British troops remained in the town. Since this meant additional obligations in the area, which the British government was not ready to assume, the British forces were

withdrawn from the town. On June 14, 1923, the Sulaymānīya Council had resigned and Shaikh Mahmud had sent his followers to administer the city. On July 11, Shaikh Mahmud had returned to the town and resumed his rule.<sup>31</sup>

Sir Henry Dobbs held the view that unless Mahmud was killed or captured, the British authorities in 'Iraq had no choice but to strike a temporary deal with him. In this Edmonds concurred. The latter knew that the Shaikh would return soon to Sulaymānīya, thus Edmonds devised a measure which aimed at reducing Shaikh Mahmud's potential to threaten Kirkuk and Arbīl. This measure consisted of detaching several subdistricts from Sulaymānīya and leaving Shaikh Mahmud's power confined to the city. In August, 1923, Edmonds wrote to Shaikh Mahmud:

"H.E. the High Commissioner has learned that you have returned to Sulaimani and has ordered me to inform you that he had made arrangements for the administration of Qazas of Ranya, Qala Diza, Chamchemal, Halabja...and for the nahiya of Mawat that you must not interfere in any way with the above mentioned districts...If (which God forbid) you act against these instructions,...the most drastic action will be taken against you. For the present provided that you do not interfere in the said districts and provided that you do not commit hostile acts, His Excellency does not intend to take action against you."<sup>32</sup>

In Rawāndūz, a similar form of loose administration was established. On April

23, Rawanduz was officially declared a qadā of Arbīl and Sayyid Taha was appointed as Qā'immaqām (governor of subdistrict) with a measure of autonomy. A column of Assyrian Levies was sent to assist him in establishing law and order in the region. Due to the policy of cuts in British troops and expenses in 'Iraq, Sayyid Taha was warned by the British government that he should not expect more British aid or troops to administer the frontier town.<sup>33</sup> The appointment of Sayyid Taha in Rawāndūz was of some significance due to the town being at the cross-roads of the eastern and northern roads. It was hoped that this measure would not only consolidate the authority of 'Iraq's government in this strategic town, but that also it would serve to impose an effective check on Turkish propaganda and the reentry of Turkish irregulars into the region.<sup>34</sup>

The temporary arrangement with Shaikh Mahmud, which Edmonds calls the cordon sanitaire, lasted until mid-July 1924. Shaikh Mahmud seems to have remained as ambitious as ever in his desire to rule all of Kurdistan. It was reported that on August 16, 1923, he had sent a tribal force to reoccupy Ḥalabja, where 'Adila Khanim had been installed earlier in the year to rule. Similar expeditions were sent by the Shaikh to re-establish his authority in Chamchamāl. Moreover, Shaikh Mahmud had sent emissaries to the Kurdish chieftains asking them to give him homage.<sup>35</sup> However, intensive RAF bombing had deterred the waverers from joining the Sulaymānīya government, and emboldened Shaikh Mahmud's rivals to resist him.<sup>36</sup>

In November 1923, Shaikh Mahmud intensified his hostile acts against British

authorities in Kurdistan. This was due partly to a lakh of rupees which he had managed to raise from tobacco excise and the kodah tax paid by the tribes in Sulaymānīya Liwā', and partly due to the encouragement he had received from Turkish officials on the frontier.<sup>37</sup> Many tribes in Sulaymānīya Liwā' began to defy the government by refusing to pay taxes to government officials. The British authorities responded by frequent bombing of the defiant tribes, and Sulaymānīya town was raided on several occasions. This had forced a great proportion of the town's inhabitants to move out to the nearby regions.<sup>38</sup>

In May 1924, an accidental violent clash between the Assyrian Levies and Kirkuk's inhabitants had further strengthened Shaikh Mahmud's power in Kurdistan. He sent emissaries to the Kurdish chieftains throughout Kurdistan calling upon them to join his efforts to assist the people of Kirkuk against the British-backed Assyrians whom he charged of committing atrocities against the Muslims in the city. Consequently many Kurdish tribes in Kirkuk and Arbīl Liwā's began to look to Sulaymānīya for leadership.<sup>39</sup> The month of June had also witnessed a lot of agitation and turmoil in Baghdad caused by the 'Iraqi nationalists who opposed the 'Iraqi Constituent Assembly's ratification of the Anglo-'Iraq Treaty of 1922. Shaikh Mahmud apparently had a distorted perception of the strength of the Baghdadi nationalists and the weakness of the British.<sup>40</sup> In fact, Shaikh Mahmud thought that the British were so deeply involved in the confrontation with the 'Iraqi nationalists that they would not be able to confront his forces in Kurdistan. Therefore, once again he began to entertain the idea of

occupying Kirkuk. For this reason, he called upon Kurdish tribes in Persia to assist him in forcing the pro-British administration out of Ḥalabja, and to form a Kurdish army to march on Kirkuk.<sup>41</sup>

Although the British authorities in 'Iraq were alarmed by Shaikh Mahmud's hostile activities, they were reluctant to take military action to force him out of Sulaymānīya for two reasons. Firstly, the British wanted to use Shaikh Mahmud's presence in Sulaymānīya and the possible secession of Kurdistan from 'Iraq as a lever to force the 'Iraqi nationalists to soften their stand against the Anglo-'Iraq Treaty. The British officials made it clear to the 'Iraqis that Shaikh Mahmud's action was directed mainly against 'Iraq's government, and that the Kurd's resentment of the British was due to the latter's attempts to place them forcibly under the 'Iraqi government's authority.<sup>42</sup> Hawrami makes this revealing observation:

"The hostile attitude of the Kurds towards the new 'Iraqi Government was not in fact, altogether unwelcome; it was a constant reminder to Faisal and his friends that...Britain might express her consent to Kurdish independence, in case the situation in 'Iraq took a course of development that would not be consulted and agreed to by His Majesty's Government."<sup>43</sup>

Secondly, while the Second Lausanne Conference was still going on any

military action by the British government in Kurdistan would have been portrayed by the Turks as a violation of the status quo in the Wilāyah of Mosul which the British government had officially committed herself to preserve until the final settlement of the question in Lausanne. Moreover, anti-Shaikh Mahmud action would have only helped to enhance Turkey's position in Kurdistan during a delicate period when both sides to the Mosul dispute were endeavouring to win over the sympathy of the Kurds.<sup>44</sup>

The coinciding of the deliberations of the 'Iraqi Constituent Assembly over the ratification of the Anglo-'Iraqi Treaty with the Lausanne Conference enabled the British government to use the threat of the loss of the province of Mosul to coerce the 'Iraqi nationalists to accept the Treaty. In June 1923, Dobbs sought the authorization of J.H. Thomas, the Secretary for Colonies, to threaten King Faisal and the 'Iraqi nationalists that unless they agreed to ratify the Treaty the Wilāyah of Mosul would be lost. To this Thomas consented. King Faisal was informed that a non-ratification vote in the Constituent Assembly would force Britain to ask the Council of the League of Nations to include the Wilāyah of Mosul in its next agenda which was due on June 10th.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the Baghdad Times, the official organ of the Residency in Baghdad wrote that unless the Treaty was ratified by June 10th, "Mosul will be lost."<sup>46</sup>

In their confrontations with the 'Iraqi nationalists, the British officials manipulated the Kurdish deputies in the Constituent Assembly. Both the High Commissioner and Miss Bell were frustrated by the nationalists in the Assembly.

On June 7th, Dobbs told Thomas that the chance of the ratification of the Treaty by the Assembly was very dim and the "best course of action" was to get King Faisal to dissolve the Assembly. In this the Secretary for Colonies concurred.<sup>47</sup> Thus Dobbs asked Miss Bell to use her influence with the Kurdish deputies in the Assembly to support a British-sponsored proposal which asked for a delay in the ratification of the Treaty to the period after the settlement of the Mosul Dispute in Lausanne. Dobbs thought that if the ratification was delayed then he would have a good excuse to ask his government to coerce King Faisal to dissolve the Assembly. Thus the Kurdish deputies voted for the proposal which sought to delay the ratification of the Treaty.<sup>48</sup>

However, on June 10th, as a result of a deal struck between Yasin al-Hashimi, the leader of the nationalists and the British government, which secured for the former the post of Prime Ministership, the Assembly was called to hold a quick session to ratify the Treaty. A considerable number of the deputies had either boycotted, abstained or were opposed to the ratification. Nevertheless, the Treaty was ratified. The eighteen Kurdish deputies voted en bloc in support of the ratification.<sup>49</sup>

In mid-July 1924, the Anglo-'Iraqi Treaty had been ratified and the Lausanne negotiations were almost concluded. The British government felt no need to allow Shaikh Mahmud to continue to threaten the British administration in Kurdistan. Therefore, the High Commissioner saw no alternative to the immediate reoccupation of Sulaymaniya. On July 21st, a force consisting of an 'Iraqi army

column, a police regiment, a detachment of Assyrian Levies, and the RAF made a smooth advance into the town which had earlier been bombed. Shaikh Mahmud fled into the mountains again. J. Chapman was appointed as assistant Mutaşarrif to administer the liwā' and he was responsible directly to the High Commissioner.<sup>50</sup>

From his fortified headquarters at Sharbazher and Penjwīn, southeast and north of Sulaymānīya, Shaikh Mahmud organized forays against the British administration in the outlying districts of Kirkuk and Sulaymānīya. Taking advantage of the internal fighting among the Jāf princes in Ḥalabja, in August Shaikh Mahmud had managed to establish his authority in Ḥalabja and its surroundings.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, by November 1924, Shaikh Mahmud had managed to establish a parallel Kurdish government in Sulaymānīya Liwā'. He received or imposed taxes on most of the tribes in the Liwā'.<sup>52</sup>

In August, Yasin al-Hashimi, the new 'Iraqi Prime Minister, sought and received the authorization of the British government to suppress Shaikh Mahmud's revolt. From August to December 1924, several campaigns were launched to drive Shaikh Mahmud and his followers out of their stronghold in the mountains. In spite of the extensive damage inflicted on the region by the RAF which included the burning of scores of villages, Shaikh Mahmud's ability to carry out "brigandage" was not curtailed. Shaikh Mahmud's force was very mobile and familiar with the mountainous terrain. The 'Iraqi army, which played a significant role in these campaigns, was not sufficiently informed about the geography of the region. In

December, al-Hashimi was forced to resign for his inability to crush Shaikh Mahmud's revolt and his "severity in campaigns against the Kurds."<sup>53</sup>

Nevertheless, in mid-December of 1924, the British government was forced to mobilize more troops and to make effective use of RAF raids in order to pacify Sulaymāniya Liwa' before the arrival of the Commission of Enquiry of the League of Nations to Kurdistan. Consequently, Shaikh Mahmud's ability to cause instability in the region was drastically reduced and he and his followers became hunted fugitives on the Persian frontiers.<sup>54</sup>

For these reasons, Britain's Kurdish policy in 'Iraq for the period November 1922 to December 1923, was, to a large extent, influenced by the negotiations in Lausanne with Turkey over the province of Mosul. Moreover, during this period, Britain withdrew her support for an independent Kurdistan which she had espoused in the August 1920 Treaty of Sèvres. Britain's new official stand on Kurdish independence was dictated primarily by her desire to appease Turkey, whose co-operation was needed in Britain's grand strategy to isolate Bolshevik Russia. Furthermore, during this period, like the period 1921-1922, the Kurds were used as pawns by both sides in the Anglo-Turkish struggle for the Wilāyah of Mosul. In addition, the policy of cordon sanitaire in Sulaymāniya was an ad hoc policy forced on the British authorities by the circumstances in 'Iraq due to the lack of a peace settlement with Turkey and the reluctance of the British government at home to take on additional obligations in 'Iraq. Like the appointment of Shaikh Mahmud to his first Governorship in 1919 and his second

tenure in September 1922, the cordón sanitaire was short-lived, and demonstrated the entrenched position of Shaikh Mahmud in Kurdistan. Finally, the use of the threat of Kurdish independence to coerce the 'Iraqis to ratify the Anglo-'Iraq Treaty of 1922 was the reaffirmation of a century-old British policy of manipulating the Kurds to enhance her hold over 'Iraq. This policy remained the most salient feature of British dealings with the Kurds during the next period, 1925-1927, as will be seen.

#### The Mosul Question Before the League of Nations

It will be recalled that on February 4, 1923 Turkey and Britain agreed to temporarily exclude the Mosul dispute from the Lausanne negotiations. During the second round of talks, which started on April 23, both sides agreed to allow nine months for direct settlement of the dispute over the status of the Wilāyah of Mosul. Accordingly, this was incorporated into Article 3 of the Treaty of Lausanne which was signed on July 24, 1923.<sup>55</sup> Having failed to settle the dispute within the prescribed period, on August 30, 1924, the British government asked the League to put the Mosul Question on the agenda of its next session which was going to be held in September in Brussels. In September, the frontier line of status quo, later known as the "Brussels Line" was established by the League as a provisional line which was to be preserved till the final settlement of the dispute. At its 30th session held in Geneva, the Council of the League decided to set up a Commission of Enquiry "with a view of collecting facts and data" which were

required to make a decision by the Council according to Article 2, Paragraph 2 of the Treaty of Lausanne.<sup>56</sup>

From 1925 to 1926, the British stand on the Mosul Question, which was to a large extent a Kurdish question, as will be explained, was governed by the strategic colonial interests of Britain in the Middle East and especially the Persian Gulf. Kenneth Williams has most eloquently expressed the strategic significance of the Wilāyah of Mosul. He writes:

"For Mosul represents in the first and last resort an attempt to rehabilitate that system of buffer state between the Mediterranean and India which was before the war an abiding axiom in the Eastern policy, and which in the years following the War completely collapsed, owing on the one hand to the assertion of the nationalist spirit in the Middle East, and on the other hand to the successful propaganda by the Soviet authorities in Russia. In other words Mosul is not a departure from the accepted policy...; it is a phase in the reconstruction of buffer states on the way to India."<sup>57</sup>

During the post-War I period, the British strategy for securing the routes to India consisted of cementing alliances with the Persian Gulf Arab rulers, maintaining commercial and political influence in 'Iraq, southern Persia, Kurdistan, and to reach a rapprochement with Turkey. By 1925, this policy was already implemented on the ground. But the possibility of a Kamalist-Bolshevik

political and military alliance was viewed as a threat to British interests in 'Iraq. Thus, the Anglo-'Iraqi control of northern 'Iraq was of some importance.<sup>58</sup>

The policy of the years 1922 to 1924 of placating Turkey was maintained and accelerated by the British government during this period. Bolshevik Russia was still bent on destabilizing the region in order to facilitate her policy of gradual absorption of Iran and Turkey. Therefore, she was encouraging Mustafa Kamal to take a military approach to the conflict over the Wilāyah of Mosul.<sup>59</sup>

However, the Turco-Russian alliance during this period was beginning to crack due to the Bolshevik regime's double dealing with Turkey and with Mustafa Kamal's outlook. While the Russians had been assisting the Turks in smuggling arms to the pro-Turkish elements in southern Kurdistan, they were secretly and simultaneously involved in a plan to foment an uprising of the Kurdish tribes in southeastern Anatolia with the ultimate object of absorbing this region, as well as the northwestern Kurdish regions of Persia, into the Soviet Union. This scheme was co-ordinated and carried out from Van, Diyar Bakr, Erzurum and Tabriz. Communist agents infiltrated the Kurdish regions of northern 'Iraq as well, disguised as Islamic activists.<sup>60</sup>

Mustafa Kamal was told of Russia's secret plans for Anatolia. He expressed bitterness, but he needed the temporary alliance with Russia. Turkey was in need of money and arms. Moreover, being still uncertain of Britain's intentions, he wanted to use Russia's might as a counter to that of Britain in the dispute over the Wilāyah of Mosul. Ideologically, however, Mustafa Kamal and his colleagues

considered the West, not Russia, as their ideal.<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, in the dispute over the Wilāyah, Britain's colonial interests coincided with those of France, and the national interests of 'Iraq. On October 24, 1925, reflecting on a conversation she had had with the Secretary of French administration in Syria about the significance of Mosul, Miss Bell wrote that "it was as important to the French as to us, if we lost Mosul they could not hold Aleppo...no shadow of rift should appear between the two European authorities."<sup>62</sup> This was further reiterated by M. Berthelot, the French Foreign Minister, on December 7, 1925. The latter told the British government that both on account of France's interest in the area and the general world interests, his government would stand firmly by Britain in the struggle over Mosul.<sup>63</sup>

For 'Iraq, the retention of its northern districts was of vital importance for the very survival of the country. This was illustrated by King Faisal in his speech in March 1925 before the League's Commission of Enquiry:

"The bringing into existence and consolidation of a permanent Government of 'Iraq is dependent on the preservation of the status quo, as I consider that it is improbable, both strategically and economically, for a Government in Baghdad to live if Mosul is detached...My experience of the mentality and spiritual state of the Turkish people, their historic ambition for extension and invasion...makes me declare that...Mosul is to 'Iraq as a head is to the rest of a body."<sup>64</sup>

This concern of the King, which was shared almost by all segments of 'Iraq's government and by the nationalists, was reflected in the 'Iraqi media during the crisis.<sup>65</sup> Mustafa Kamal's distrust of Russia and the commonality of interest between Britain, France and 'Iraq were external factors which assisted Britain in standing firm in her dispute with Turkey over the Wilāyah of Mosul.

Nevertheless, these favourable external factors had to be weighed against a popular demand, which was as strong as it had been during the years 1922 to 1924, for outright disengagement from 'Iraq in general and Mosul province in particular. Opposition to Stanley Baldwin's Conservative government's 'Iraq policy centred on three lines. One was oil; Opposition deputies in the House of Commons questioned the existence of a commercially benefitable amount of oil in the Wilāyah of Mosul. Secondly, the Opposition did not see it as necessary for the British to stay in 'Iraq, or even to have a treaty of alliance between Britain and 'Iraq, for this had entailed a costly and dangerous commitment on the part of the British government. Besides, the Mosul affair provided the Conservative government with an "anchor" in her grandiose scheme for expansion and the creation of a vast empire from the Mediterranean to India. And thirdly, the Opposition questioned the propriety of pursuing an uncompromising policy in the dispute over Mosul province, which it feared would only serve to drive Turkey into a close alliance with Russia.<sup>66</sup> Instead of taking a confrontational stand towards Turkey, the opposition at home asked the British government to secure British interests in 'Iraq by meeting Turkey's demands in the Wilāyah of Mosul

and to procure the British withdrawal from 'Iraq. The latter was considered to be a heavy burden on British tax-payers.<sup>67</sup>

The government on her part denied that her Mosul policy was dictated by oil interests. The Prime Minister said that his government was most anxious to terminate British responsibilities in 'Iraq as soon as 'Iraq was able to qualify to enter the League of Nations.<sup>68</sup> On November 10, 1925, the Colonial Secretary wrote a memo explaining the dangers of any premature withdrawal from 'Iraq. He argued any hasty withdrawal would entail a breach of faith towards 'Iraq's government, which the British government was committed to by the Treaty of 1922 to secure her territories, inflict irreparable damage to the British honour and prestige throughout the Middle East and leave the Anglo-Persian oil fields unprotected.<sup>69</sup>

#### The Kurdish Factor in the Mosul Dispute

The Kurds and the question of Kurdish nationalism were the most vital ingredients of the Mosul question. Anon wrote that the Kurdish question was "the crux of the Mosul Problem". With this Minorsky concurs. He writes that the trouble in the Mosul dispute "lies in the great Kurdish problem". R. Lindsey, the Ambassador in Angora during the crisis was of the view that the Mosul question for all intents and purposes, was a Kurdish question. Several contemporary and modern writers on the Mosul Question have expressed similar views.<sup>70</sup>

To Turkey in particular, the presence of the Kurds in the Wilāyah of Mosul appears to be the prime, if not the sole, factor for her persistent and unrelenting desire to acquire the region. The Turkification of the Kurds in the southeastern provinces of Turkey necessitated Turkish control over southern Kurdistan. Since 1908, successive Turkish regimes had been pursuing the Turkification of the non-Turkish elements. After Mustafa Kamal's War of Independence, Kurds were the only sizeable non-Turkic race left within Turkey. Therefore the Kamalist regime, which viewed the existence of distinct Kurdish existence as a threat to the cohesiveness and territorial integrity of the country, pursued the process of Turkifying its own Kurds with great zeal. Turks were afraid that the forced assimilation of their own Kurds could not proceed successfully with the Kurds of the Wilāyah of Mosul just across the frontier, left free to develop their nationalism under the liberal regime of King Faisal, and British patronage of Kurdish irredentism.<sup>71</sup> Besides, the 'Iraqi Kurdish national movement could be developed to the point of becoming an example for the Kurds in Turkey. This would enable the British government to establish her influence among the Kurds in the southeastern provinces of Turkey.<sup>72</sup> Therefore Turkey would have a problem in northern Kurdistan similar to the difficulties faced by the Ottoman Empire during the last century in the Balkans and Macedonia.<sup>73</sup>

By 1925, Turkey had already created its own Kurdish problem. After War I, at the time of Turkey's defeat and weakness, the Turks, fearful of losing the eastern provinces to the Armenians, had done much to foster Kurdish nationalist

aspirations and to encourage the Kurds to demand the creation of an independent Kurdistan. But when the Turks under Mustafa Kamal were able to establish their control in the east, Kurdish nationalism was first discouraged and later prosecuted.<sup>74</sup> In January, 1923, when the Lausanne Conference was going on, Turkey promised autonomy to her own Kurds. But this promise was never implemented and the Kurdish nationalists were accused of being British agents.<sup>75</sup> During the months of March and April 1925 Turkish Kurdistan was embroiled in a Kurdish uprising which forced Mustafa Kamal to declare martial law throughout Turkey. The uprising was led by Shaikh Sa'id of Pīrān, a leader of the Naqshbandi order of Dervishes. When the rebellion broke out the Mosul question had reached a very critical stage. For this reason, Mustafa Kamal perceived the Kurdish revolt as a British plan to distance the Kurds from Turkey while the Mosul Dispute was still unsettled.<sup>76</sup> In addition, Turkey argued that the partition of Kurdistan between Turkey and 'Iraq would make the difficult mountainous frontier region, inhabited by the unruly Kurdish tribes a safe sanctuary for Kurdish fugitives from both countries. Thus any punitive expedition by Turkey or 'Iraq might flare up into hostilities between the two nations. As a result, the Kurdish nationalists and the unruly tribesmen would make the frontier region perpetually unstable.<sup>77</sup> On June 28, 1926, the Turkish Prime Minister told Lindsay that they anticipated no serious problems with the Kurds of Persia, but the Kurds in southern Kurdistan, who were the kinsmen of the Kurds of Turkey, would remain desirous of joining the Kurds in Turkey, and this would complicate the frontier problem between the two

countries.<sup>78</sup> Turkey was also "nervous" about the separatist Kurdish propaganda, which was directed by exiled Turkish Kurds based in Mosul towards Kurds in the southeastern provinces.<sup>79</sup>

### The Commission of Enquiry in Kurdistan

Before the arrival of the League of Nations, the Commission of Enquiry to the Wilāyah of Mosul, both Turkey and the 'Iraqi government, the latter backed by Britain, had undertaken several measures aimed at strengthening their respective influence with the Kurds. The 'Iraqi Minister of the Interior toured the Kurdish region and promised that the Kurds' national rights would be respected if the Kurds decided to stay within 'Iraq. Besides, the 'Iraqi government, supported by 'Iraqi nationalists and local media called upon the British government to take effective measures against Shaikh Mahmud who was still roaming the frontier, to curb his influence on Kurdish public opinion.<sup>80</sup>

The British authorities, on their part, held a Conference in Arbil to discuss some procedures which intended to improve their image with the Kurds and precautionary measures to cope with any Turkish attempts at destabilizing Kurdistan while the Commission of Enquiry was carrying out its task. The Conference decided: 1) to pay generous compensation to the Kurdish tribes on the frontier who had been affected by military operations carried out in the region by British and 'Iraqi troops, especially those villages whose houses had been burned by the Assyrian Levies; 2) King Faisal was to tour Kurdistan and give

reassurances to the Kurds; 3) Mutaşarrifs in the Wilāyah of Mosul had to be delegated more powers; 4) the 'Iraqi government was told to increase spending on development projects, especially in agriculture and irrigation in Kurdistan; 5) immediate plans had to be set up to extend the railway line deep into Kurdistan in order to impress the inhabitants that the British government had no intention to leave; 6) preparation of ad hoc measures to head off any Turkish effort to create instability in Kurdistan while the Enquiry of Commission was still there; 7) and the immediate dispatch of detachments of Levies and troops to expel Turkish troops who had crossed the 'Iraqi frontier near Zākho.<sup>81</sup>

In addition, the British government was closely observing the events across the frontiers inside Turkey and cementing ties with the Kurdish nationalists. In November 1924, there was general resentment among the Kurds in Turkey towards Mustafa Kamal who had abolished the Caliphate and the Shari'ah. Kurds felt that their allegiance to the Sultan-Caliph was the only bond between them and the Turks. Some Kurdish chieftains and Kurdish nationalists sought British help to start a revolt in Turkey. The British government did not lend active support to the Turkish Kurds to assist them in their planned revolt. However, Britain tried to keep the Kurds under the illusion that the British government would support any successful Kurdish revolt.<sup>82</sup> Besides, British intelligence was able, through its contacts with members of the Kurdistan Society, a club formed in 1925 by exiled Turkish Kurds, to engineer a mutiny in the 18th Infantry Regiment settled on the frontier. This led to the desertion of five hundred officers and soldiers who took

refuge in 'Iraq. The mutiny was a serious blow to the Turkish plan to take a forward action in the Wilāyah of Mosul before the arrival of the Commission of Enquiry.<sup>83</sup>

Furthermore, during late 1924, Simko was once again intriguing with Turkey against the British authorities in 'Iraq. Turkey provided him with L1000 from his own confiscated gold to raise a tribal lashkar of one thousand soldiers to assist Turkey in fighting the pro-British Assyrians on the frontier who had been used by Britain as a pretext to extend the British military occupation further north of the Brussels (status quo) Line. It was also hoped that this force would assist Shaikh Mahmud to start a new revolt which would have embarrassed the British authorities before the Commission of Enquiry. But in December 1924, for some obscure reason, Mustafa Kamal asked the frontier officials to put a halt to Simko's activities.<sup>84</sup>

During the period February to May 1925, while the Commission of Enquiry was holding its investigations, Turkey and Britain were trying to manipulate the Kurds to their own advantage. At the early stage of the enquiry, Turkey was in favour of a plebescite in the area as a means to settle the dispute. Britain opposed this on the grounds that most of the inhabitants of the Wilāyah of Mosul were illiterate Kurds; there was a lack of proper machinery; a plebescite might inflame the tribes and create unrest; and the issue at stake was merely a delimitation of a frontier which did not warrant a plebescite. At any rate, the British government claimed that the population in the area had already voted twice--in 1919 and

1921--in favour of inclusion in 'Iraq. Turkey, supported by the Commission of Enquiry, on the other hand, argued that the issue was not only the delimitation of a frontier--it was deciding the status of the Province of Mosul.<sup>85</sup> In the end, the Commission of Enquiry decided to hold selective enquiries instead of a plebescite, for a plebescite would have met insoluble technical difficulties.<sup>86</sup>

The British opposition to the plebescite stemmed from a conviction which some British officials had that a plebescite would have shown that the "majority" of the Kurds wanted a reunion with Turkey.<sup>87</sup> These officials reasoned that Kurds would only respect power and prestige. An ordinary Kurd knew that if he voted against Britain the probability of reprisal was hardly there, but if he voted against the Turks, the latter would definitely penalize him. "So he would vote for the Turks and trust our good nature" as Lord Thomson, Secretary for Colonies was quoted as saying.<sup>88</sup> Edmonds, for instance, was confident that a plebescite would not serve British interests. He maintained that the Kurds respect prestige and the prestige of Turkey as the power that had ruled the area for centuries was still, to some extent, intact. This, accompanied by intensive propaganda which appealed to the religious sentiments of the Kurds, foretelling the return of the Turks, and threatening retribution against those who collaborated with the British, had deterred many from displaying a pro-British stand.<sup>89</sup>

R. Clark Johnson, in his M.A. thesis on the Kurds, cites a different reason for British reluctance to the holding of a plebescite:

"Britain's view was quite antithetical. Curzon, although he studiously refrained from mentioning it, must have realized that a plebiscite would be disastrous to British policy. The Kurdish majority of the Wilayat wanted independence, or, at least a guaranteed autonomy; under no circumstance would they submit willingly to rule by Arabs."<sup>90</sup>

This view is corroborated by a letter written by R. Jardine, the British assessor attached to the Commission of Enquiry. He writes that if the wish of the Kurds was to be taken into account, "a large number" had expressed a desire for an autonomous Kurdish state under the protection of Britain or the League of Nations.<sup>91</sup> The Commission of Enquiry's July 1925 report on its findings in the area reaffirms this viewpoint. The report notes that if racial considerations were to be the sole factor in deciding the future of the disputed territory, the formation of an independent Kurdish state would be legitimate.<sup>92</sup>

The various explanations mentioned for British opposition to a plebiscite have some degree of validity. The majority of the inhabitants in the Wilāyah were illiterate. They would not have been able to participate in a plebiscite, nor was there any of the needed machinery in place to hold a plebiscite which would be an authentic reflection of the desire of the people. Therefore the British stand could not be totally disregarded. However, this stand did not compare well with the 1921 British-sponsored referendum to elect Faisal as King. Thus Turkey also had a good case; deciding the status of a region with over a million souls did

warrant a referendum. It is also true that the British government feared the result of a plebescite might be a call for an autonomous Kurdistan. Such a popularly sanctioned demand on the part of the Kurds would have left the British authorities in 'Iraq, who had already opted during the post-Lausanne period for the complete inclusion of Kurdish districts into 'Iraq, in a precarious condition. One should note, however, that a Kurdish vote for an independent or an autonomous state, except in Sulaymāniya Liwā', was not a foregone conclusion throughout southern Kurdistan.<sup>93</sup>

With the arrival of the Commission of Enquiry the pro-Turkish activities in the Wilāyah of Mosul and from across the frontier increased. The pro-Turkey secret committees in the Wilāyah, especially those led by the Turkoman notables in Kirkuk and Arbil, went into action. The so-called Turkish experts, such as Jawad Pasha, the former commander of Gallipoli, Fattah Beg, and Nazim Naftchizada, two members from the region who represented the Wilāyah in 1924 in Angora at the General National Assembly, used their influence in the Wilāyah of Mosul to encourage the pro-Turkish Kurds to display their sympathies. Besides, since September 1924, Turks had been concentrating troops on the frontier with 'Iraq which had bolstered the morale of the pro-Turkey elements, and emboldened the Kurdish tribesmen in several districts, who refused to pay taxes to the government officials.<sup>94</sup>

The defiance on the part of the Kurds was due to a certain extent to the apprehension on their part that Turkey might return and take vengeance on them.

For instance, a leaflet distributed in Arbīl noted:

"Muslim Kurds, they have believed that you do not know the sacredness of Mohammedanism...to create enmity and fight between the communities [Kurds and Turks], they established an autonomy for their own advantages, disregarding the fact that the Kurds and Turks were brothers in religion and nation. When the British understood this fact, they abolished autonomy and bombed by aeroplane the heart of Sulaimani town, killed your children and destroyed your property...Turks are returning to rescue you from the infidels...tell the Committee [Commission of Enquiry] we are Muslims and we live together with the Muslim Turks, the servants of Muslim religion. We do not want to live with the Arabs and infidels...If you support the 'Iraqi Government you will become an ally with the Arabs and the unbelievers...Regret will be no use."<sup>95</sup>

This sort of propaganda, which combined the appeal to the religious sentiments and warning against the dire consequences of assisting the British authorities, was accompanied by the spreading of rumours. Kurds were told, for instance, that Shaikh Mahmud had reoccupied Sulaymānīya, and a large Turkish force crossed the frontier in Zākho.<sup>96</sup> These seem to have a substantial impact on the inhabitants. On March 1925, Miss Bell wrote that Turkish threats and propaganda had a certain effect on the Kurds and was eagerly taken by the "bad hats".<sup>97</sup> The Turkish

intrigue and propaganda bore fruit in Bahdīnān, in particular. The northern frontier chieftains and the religious dignitaries met and agreed on a policy of general civil disobedience by refusing to pay the taxes to the government of 'Iraq. Moreover, several influential chieftains in the region contacted the Turkish commander on the frontier showing their readiness to fight on the side of the Turks, should the latter decide to cross the frontier.<sup>98</sup> Besides, the pro-Turkish Committees in Kirkuk and Arbīl had a considerable impact on the townspeople. It suffices to mention that the celebrated Sayyid Ahmad Khanaqa, a pronounced pro-Turk, managed to recruit the support of a great proportion of Turkomen and the Kurdish tribes of Kirkuk Liwā' for Turkey.<sup>99</sup>

Meanwhile Mustafa Kamal used the anti-Kamalist Shaikh Sa'id revolt in northern Kurdistan as an excuse to concentrate about fifty thousand troops and irregulars on the frontier.<sup>100</sup> By this he was apparently trying to pursue the usual pattern of Turkish defense policy--concentrating huge numbers of regular troops to put pressure on the enemy, and sending bands of irregulars across the frontier for a war of attrition. This was the tactic used by Turkey to force France out of Ghazi 'Ayntap in eastern Anatolia and Greece out of the Thrace. Turkey thought the constant sending of chattas (irregulars), across the northern frontier to harrass British authorities, accompanied by Shaikh Mahmud's hit-and-run operations from the northeastern side of the frontier, would force the British out of the Wilāyah of Mosul.<sup>101</sup> The troop concentrations were also intended to demonstrate Turkey's resolve with regard to its claim to Mosul, and Mustafa Kamal wanted this to have

its "moral impact" on the deliberations of the Commission of Enquiry.<sup>102</sup>

The British government, on her part also resorted to the manipulation of the Kurds. Just before the arrival of the Commission of Enquiry, the British had agreed to a certain arrangement with the Kurdish chieftains granting the latter a certain degree of autonomy in administering their tribes. The chieftains were led to believe that this liberal policy would continue. In addition, numerous tribal chieftains on the frontier were put on a regular monthly salary for their supposed role in keeping order on the nearby roads. Furthermore, in 1925, the 'Iraqi government decided to allocate ninety-one thousand rupees to cover the deficit in the Sulaymāniya budget.<sup>103</sup>

In Sulaymāniya, the moderate Kurds were encouraged to form the Jam'iyat-i Mudafa'ay Watan-i Sulaymāni (The National Society of Defense in Sulaymāniya). The journal Zhiyānawa printed their views. In a manner very similar to the role played by Tegayesh-tin-i Rasti, in 1918, the former published several editorials and articles reminding the Kurds of their sufferings under the Turkish regime and the Kurdish journal emphasized the need for friendship between Britain and the Kurds.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, when the Commission of Enquiry was in Sulaymāniya it expressed readiness to meet Shaikh Mahmud, the British authorities argued that such a meeting would give Mahmud's armed revolt legitimacy in the eyes of the Kurds and worked against the needs of a smooth enquiry in the region.<sup>105</sup>

In Kirkuk Sayyid Ahmad Khanaqa was detained. The Ṭalabāni Kurdish chieftains and several prominent religious personalities were brought by the British

authorities to tell the Commission of Enquiry their dismay with Turkey on account of the abolition of the Caliphate. In Arbīl, similar measures were taken. Captain Lyon was given a wide authority to arrest and banish the pro-Turkey elements.<sup>106</sup> In Mosul Liwa' the Arabs, Christians and the Yezīdi Kurds were for the most part solidly for maintaining union with 'Iraq. A considerable proportion of the Kurds of the Mosul districts had already been alienated from Mustafa Kamal because of the abolition of the Caliphate.<sup>107</sup> The pro-Turk chieftains who displayed loyalty to Turkey and refused to pay taxes were imprisoned, banished and their villages were bombed or burned by the Assyrian Levies. The retribution campaign was so widespread that on May 10, 1925, Shaikh Ahmad of Bārzān wrote to the government of 'Iraq saying that if the bombing campaign did not stop, his and several other tribes in the area would be forced to make a collective migration to Turkey.<sup>108</sup> In addition, the arrest and the banishment of pro-Turkish individuals were so wide in the Wilāyah of Mosul that the Commission of Enquiry had to launch an official complaint against both the British and 'Iraqi governments.<sup>109</sup>

In comparison to Turkey, the British government was at an advantage in her relations with the Kurds during the Mosul Dispute. In 1925, the Kurds had already established a stake in the 'Iraqi government. Their representatives were elected to the Constituent Assembly. Moreover, King Faisal promised to maintain Kurdish cultural rights if they decided to remain within 'Iraq. The British and 'Iraqi media warned the Kurds that if they joined Turkey, they would lose the national rights which had been granted to them in 'Iraq.<sup>110</sup> Finally, in an attempt to assure the

town notables and the chieftains, who had illegally acquired land, and win them over to the British cause, the British government asked the 'Iraqi government not to open any land registry records while the Commission of Enquiry was still there."<sup>111</sup>

But the event which had the most effective impact on the Kurdish attitude during the Mosul Dispute, was the 1925 revolt in northern Kurdistan. Since the Lausanne Conference, the Turks had been vigorously asserting that they and the Kurds were united in race and religion and Turco-Kurdish relations were described by them to have been always excellent. The March-April revolt of 1925 led by Shaikh Sa'id and the brutality with which it was suppressed had destroyed the very basis of Turkish claim on the Wilāyah of Mosul. The revolt came at a particularly inopportune moment for the Turks and strengthened the British claim that Kurds did not want Turkish rule.<sup>112</sup>

While the Commission of Enquiry was touring the frontier region, hundreds of Kurdish refugees were crossing the frontier from Turkey into 'Iraq, carrying with them stories of Turkish atrocities against the Kurds. This was a blow to Turkish prestige among the Kurdish tribes on the frontier, many of whom were pro-Turkey.<sup>113</sup> Zhiyanawa also carried news of large-scale massacres being committed against the Kurds in Turkey and of Shaikh Sa'id's trial and execution along with several other Shaikhs in northern Kurdistan. This turned the religious shaikhs, who had earlier championed the Turkish cause in the Wilāyah of Mosul against Turkey.<sup>114</sup> In fact, by his abolition of the Caliphate and the suppression of

Shaikh Sa'id's uprising, Mustafa Kamal had cut the very root of his claim to the Wilāyah of Mosul. Jwaideh notes that for these reasons, Shaikh Sa'id's revolt and the atrocities which followed, "were certainly instrumental in deciding the Mosul dispute in favour of Britain."<sup>115</sup>

Finally the British government used the Mosul Dispute and the threat of losing Kurdistan to Turkey to enhance her hold on 'Iraq and benefit British commercial interests, in the country. On July 11, 1924, the British government had authorized the British High Commissioner in Baghdad to use the Mosul Dispute as a lever in the negotiations which were going between the 'Iraqi government and the British controlled Turkish Petroleum Company over an oil concession in 'Iraq. The government was under pressure from 'Iraqi nationalists not to accept the Company's terms which were seen as being excessively in favour of the latter.<sup>116</sup>

Desirous to avail himself of the presence of the Commission of Enquiry, Dobbs told the 'Iraqi government that the settlement of the oil concession would greatly "simplify" the settlement of Mosul Dispute in 'Iraq's favour. Dobbs had also reminded the 'Iraqis that Turkey had already made generous offers to the American and British oil companies to exploit the oil in the Wilāyah of Mosul.<sup>117</sup> On March 5, 1925 the pro-British al-'Ālam al-'Arabī, an 'Iraqi daily wrote that the TPC was owned by Britain (25%), France (25%), the United States (25%) and several other European states who were members of the Council of the League of Nations which was going to settle the Mosul Dispute in June. Therefore, if the 'Iraqi government failed to grant the oil concession to the Company before June,

it might lose the Wilāyah of Mosul to Turkey.<sup>118</sup> In addition, in February 1925, Mr. Paulis, the Belgian member of the Commission of Enquiry, told 'Iraq's Foreign Minister, "whichever of the two parties to the frontier dispute first gave a reasonable oil concession" to the Company, would get the Wilāyah of Mosui." On February 24, the Secretary of State for Colonies authorized Dobbs to give an ultimatum to the 'Iraqi government to the effect that if she failed to settle the terms of the oil concession with the Company before March 21st, it would risk the loss of its northern Liwā's.<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, in March, Count Teleki, the Hungarian member of the Commission of Enquiry, was approached by Dobbs to convince the 'Iraqi government that unless Western oil interests were satisfied by the terms of the oil concession which was under negotiation, the Commission of Enquiry would decide to grant the Wilāyah of Mosul to Turkey.<sup>120</sup> Under the pressure of the British ultimatum, and the "advices" offered by the members of the Commission of Enquiry, Yasin al-Hashimi decided to accept the TPC terms for an oil concession.<sup>121</sup>

From June to December 1925, while the Council of the League of Nations was debating the Mosul Dispute in Geneva, Turkey continued to concentrate troops and foment agitation on the frontier in order to influence the Council's decision in her favour. In October, the rumours of Turkish attacks on Zākho, 'Amādīya, and Rawāndūz caused panic throughout southern Kurdistan. Shaikh Ahmad of Bārzān, who had put himself on the side of Turkey, was the instrument for this new wave of Turkish propaganda and agitation. With the instigation of Turkey,

he attacked the Assyrian settlements on the frontier in order to draw the attention of the Kurds to an alleged British plan to establish an Assyrian state on Kurdish land.<sup>122</sup>

In Sulaymānīya Liwā' Turkey had managed to reestablish ties with Shaikh Mahmud, who inaugurated a new wave of hit-and-run operations in Sulaymānīya Liwā'. In May 1923 Yasin al-Hashmi came to Kurdistan to supervise the suppression of Shaikh Mahmud's new challenge. He replaced the Kurdish levy, whose sincerity he doubted, with a new force composed mainly of Assyrian and Arab levies to accomplish the task of checking Shaikh Mahmud's movements and defending the Wilāyah of Mosul against Turkish incursions. Moreover, the 'Iraqi government put a price of twenty thousand rupees on Shaikh Mahmud's head. In June, new regiments of British troops were brought to Kurdistan to join the 'Iraqi troops and Assyrian levies in their fight against Shaikh Mahmud. As a result of the intensive combined air and ground attack, Shaikh Mahmud and his followers were forced to cross the border into Persia. However, in September, Shaikh Mahmud, accompanied by several hundred armed followers mainly from Persia, resumed attacks on the government administration in Ḥalabja and Penjwīn. But the swift retaliatory actions by the RAF and 'Iraqi troops forced him once again to recross the frontier.<sup>123</sup>

To sum up, Britain's policy towards the Kurds in 'Iraq during the period July 1924 to December 1925, was, to a large extent, devised to secure the Wilāyah of Mosul for 'Iraq. It is equally true to argue that the Mosul Question was another

manifestation of the Kurdish problem. The controversy over whether to hold a plebescite or a selective enquiry by the Commission of Enquiry demonstrates that the Kurdish factor was so significant that it governed even the technical aspect of the League's approach to the Mosul Question. During this period, both Turkey and Britain continued their methods of using the Kurds as pawns in their struggle for control over the Wilāyah of Mosul. Although the style of Turkish propaganda, intrigue and agitation during this period was very similar to that of the OzDemir period, Turkey failed to destabilize Kurdistan while the Commission of Enquiry was in the area. This was partly due to the precautionary effective military measures which were taken against Shaikh Mahmud, and the latter's expulsion from Sulaymānīya and was partly due to Mustafa Kamal's abolition of the Caliphate and the Kurdish revolt in southeastern Anatolia. In a manner very similar to her use of the negotiations over the Wilāyah of Mosul in Lausanne, to ratify the Anglo-'Iraq Treaty of 1922, Britain manipulated the struggle over control of the Wilāyah of Mosul, which was before the League to consolidate her imperial interests in 'Iraq by forcing the 'Iraqi government to grant the oil concession to the TPC.

#### The Kurds and the Mosul Award

On December 16, 1925, in Geneva, the Council of the League of Nations adopted a resolution, based mainly on the recommendations of the Commission of Enquiry which awarded the Wilāyah of Mosul to 'Iraq. The Award had the

following conditions, which had an impact on Britain's future policy toward the Kurds:

- 1) The Brussels Line was delimited as the frontier between Turkey and 'Iraq;
- 2) Britain was invited to prepare and submit to the Council a new treaty with 'Iraq extending the mandatory regime for an additional twenty-five years unless 'Iraq, in conformity with Article I of the Covenant, were admitted as a member of the League before the expiration of that period; and
- 3) The British Government was invited to lay before the Council the "administrative measures" which would be taken with a view to securing for the Kurdish inhabitants the rights and "guarantees regarding local administration".<sup>124</sup>

A close examination of the conditions of the Mosul Award bears out the impact of the Kurdish question on the Mosul Dispute. The call for a new treaty to govern Anglo-'Iraqi relations for twenty-five years to come, as stipulated in condition number two of the Award, was to a certain extent a device by which the League wanted to ensure that the 'Iraqi government would implement the articles related to Kurdish rights. This stipulation echoed the recommendation of the Commission of Enquiry that if the Mandate came to an end in 1928, as provided for in the 1924 Protocol to the 1922 Anglo-'Iraq Treaty, without guarantees of the Kurdish rights, "the majority of the population" would have preferred Turkish to Arab rule.<sup>125</sup> On January 13, 1926 the new treaty was signed between 'Iraq and the United Kingdom, amidst popular opposition and riots in 'Iraq. According to Erskine, the author of King Faisal's biography, the King was forced to accept the

new treaty which prolonged the British stay in 'Iraq. Apparently the King was told that he had either to sign the treaty or lose Kurdistan.<sup>126</sup> This is another instance of Kurdish nationalism, which was nurtured by the British, being used as a pretext to prolong the British stay in 'Iraq.

Moreover, the use of the phrase "local administration" instead of "autonomy" in condition number three of the Award, is an indicator of Britain's new Kurdish policy. After the Lausanne Conference, the British government had dropped the idea of autonomy in Kurdistan, as explained above. The pre-Lausanne policy called for a limited autonomy. However, Shaikh Mahmud's first and second governorship in Kurdistan demonstrated the impracticality of the policy. Besides, the 'Iraqi government was strongly opposed to autonomy and favoured a policy which granted Kurds some cultural rights. In addition, by 1924, Britain came to the realization that an autonomous Kurdistan in 'Iraq would be unacceptable to Turkey and Persia, and would complicate the British and 'Iraqi governments' earnest desire to establish friendly relations with these two important neighbours of 'Iraq. Therefore, after the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne, Britain began to pursue a policy of administrative autonomy in northern 'Iraq as opposed to regional autonomy, appointing Kurdish officials in the Kurdish districts, but ruling the area as part of 'Iraq.<sup>127</sup>

Furthermore, the Commission of Enquiry indicates that the Kurds were generally in favour of autonomy under British rule. Nevertheless, it seems that the British had used their influence with the Commission, and later on in the Council,

to disregard this demand of the Kurds. After Lausanne, Britain wanted to bring the demands of the Kurdish nationalists, into what British officials considered to be "practical terms" which would also fit their policy objectives in Iran and Turkey.<sup>128</sup> The following observation by Dobbs in February 1926, serves to shed more light on the post-Lausanne policy:

"...It is a fact that during the War, and while the ratification of the Treaty of Sèvres appeared possible, His Majesty's Government did a great deal to encourage Kurdish nationalism, with results that have since proved decidedly embarrassing. The present policy...is however to discourage any attempt...at a separatist policy on the part of the Kurds of Iraq. His Majesty's Government is bound to see that their reasonable demands in regard to the use of their own tongue and appointment of Kurdish officials...are met by Iraq's Government."<sup>129</sup>

According to condition number three of the Award, the British Government, as a Mandatory power was called upon to provide "guarantees" and "administrative measures" to secure Kurdish rights in 'Iraq. The signing of the 1926 Anglo-'Iraq Treaty only three weeks after the Mosul settlement, which ensured that the British observe the government's compliance with Kurdish rights, was the first step taken signalling the readiness of the 'Iraqi and British governments to honour their obligations.<sup>130</sup> It is noteworthy that this Treaty had

met with strong opposition in the House of Commons. Both Liberal and Labour deputies accused the Conservative government in power of a breach of pledge made in 1923 by the government to terminate Britain's commitment in 'Iraq as soon as possible. Mr. Amery responded that Britain needed not to stay in 'Iraq the twenty-five years prescribed in the Treaty. He added that his government intended to stay there until such time as 'Iraq had "acquired the stability" which justified her admission to the League.<sup>131</sup>

At the banquet which was held at the British Residency on the occasion of the signing of the new Treaty, B. Bourdillon, the Acting High Commissioner made a speech, which had been earlier endorsed by Amery, reminding the 'Iraqi government of her obligations under the stipulations of the Mosul Award. He observed:

"The aim of the Irak Government should be made and is, to make all its component elements good citizens of Irak state, and will do this best by encouraging rather than discouraging their pride in their linguistic or ethnic individuality. The Kurd is not an Arab, any more than a Scotsman is an Englishman; you will make him into a good Iraki citizen not by forcing him to adopt Arab speech and habits...but by giving him every opportunity and encouragement to become a good Kurd."<sup>132</sup>

In his reply to this speech, King Faisal reiterated his government's readiness to

carry out all her obligations under the Award. King Faisal added, "Among the first duties of every real Iraki will be to encourage his brother, the Iraki Kurd, to cling to his nationality...they will be by their union and co-operation active members in the prosperity of a common home."<sup>133</sup>

Furthermore, on January 21, 1926, 'Abd al-Muhsin al-Sa'dun, the 'Iraqi Prime Minister, made a speech to the Constituent Assembly which echoed the Acting High Commissioner and Faisal in their above mentioned speeches:

"We are all aware that... 'Iraqi Government defined the policy towards the Kurds...It is our duty to give northern people, especially the Kurds, their national rights and they shall have a satisfactory administration agreeing with the interests of their country...Gentlemen, this nation cannot live unless it gives all Iraqi elements their right. We all know that the Turkish Government has suffered dissension and disruption only in consequence of her having usurped the rights of the existing elements...The fate of Turkey shall be a lesson."<sup>134</sup>

These speeches were followed by government orders to all ministries to implement the Kurdish policy of the government. The common emphasis of the three speeches was that the 'Iraqi government should 'Iraqify but not Arabize the Kurds. Were these speeches made merely to satisfy the League or, were they sincere insights of far-sighted statesmen? Notwithstanding the motives of their

authors, these speeches had an impact on the course of events in Kurdistan during the years 1927-1931.

In February 1926, it was the view of the British government that the 'Iraqi government was already pursuing a policy of granting the Kurds cultural rights and had "little to do" to honour the stipulation contained in the Mosul Award. To substantiate this view, on February 24, 1926 the British government submitted to the League a memorandum which contained detailed administrative measures taken by the 'Iraqi government to satisfy the national aspirations of the moderate Kurds. The memorandum indicates, among other things, that most of the officials in the Kurdish districts were Kurds and the government was trying not to appoint Arab officials except where no competent Kurds could be found.<sup>135</sup>

For these reasons, the Mosul Award had the effect of providing international legal protection of Kurdish rights in 'Iraq. However, it spelled the formal end of any Kurdish nationalist hopes of uniting the Kurds in Turkey and 'Iraq. Moreover, the Award and the attached stipulations formalized Britain's post-Lausanne policy in Kurdistan. The regional aspect of the Mosul Award was that with the inclusion of the Wilāyah of Mosul under British control in 'Iraq, Britain had completed the encirclement of Persia by zones of British influence: Baluchistan to Basra by the Persian Gulf and then by land from Basra to the district of Mergever in Persian Azerbaijan.<sup>136</sup>

### The Anglo-'Iraq Treaty with Turkey of 1926

Britain was convinced that the stability in southern Kurdistan could not be attained without reaching an understanding with Turkey. In January 1926, Turkey told Britain that the Council of the League's decision on the Mosul Dispute was not acceptable to her, and started to mobilize troops. Moreover, the Turkish media spread rumours of an imminent war with Britain.<sup>137</sup> However, the British government knew that Mustafa Kamal was involved in a great "bluff", for he was not in a position militarily and politically to enter a war with Britain which had also the support of the League. Besides, with a hostile Kurdish population of southeastern provinces in its rear, and the lack of effective support among the inhabitants of the Wilāyah of Mosul, Turkey could not afford to enter into a difficult war with Britain.<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, Mustafa Kamal was aware that there was an identity of interest in the Wilāyah of Mosul between France and Britain. Neither was he able to get a firm pledge from Bolshevik Russia that Turkey would be supported by Russia in the event of war with Britain.<sup>139</sup> Finally Turkey was alarmed by the Italian dictator Mussolini's revived colonial ambitions in south-western Anatolia, a part of which had been allocated in the abortive Treaty of Sèvres to Italy. In April, Mussolini visited Tripoli and it was rumoured that if Turkey invaded the Wilāyah of Mosul, he would invade the southwestern provinces of Turkey. This aroused such intense feeling in Turkey that partial mobilization was ordered.<sup>140</sup>

The British government on her part, throughout the crisis had shown readiness

to reach a political settlement with Turkey and avoid war. In September 1925, at the Geneva Conference, Leo Amery, the architect of the Mosul policy, told Towfiq Rushdi, the Turkish Foreign Minister, that Turkey's apprehension about the establishment of an autonomous or quasi-autonomous regime in southern Kurdistan had no real basis, Britain had no such plan and the post-Lausanne policy of the governments of 'Iraq and Britain was to grant Kurds some cultural rights within 'Iraq. Nevertheless, Turkey remained suspicious of British policy in Kurdistan.<sup>141</sup> In October, Turkey suggested the signing of a security pact which would guarantee 'Iraq's frontier. This pact was to involve Persia, France and Britain. But the Kurdish regions of the Wilāyah of Mosul were to be transferred to Turkey. The British government refused this offer.<sup>142</sup>

In December, only a few days before the Council of the League of Nations gave its verdict on Mosul. In order to meet Turkey halfway and reduce political pressure at home for a direct settlement of the Mosul Dispute, Lindsay had suggested to the Foreign Office the surrender of the Kurdish districts east of Sulaymāniya to Iran, the area to the north of Rawāndūz to Turkey, while the towns in the plain would remain within 'Iraq. If Turkey agreed to this offer, 'Iraq's opposition should be disregarded. The Foreign Office rejected the idea on the grounds that the Iranian government was not strong enough to control her own Kurdish districts. It was feared that this would further complicate the Kurdish question in Iran, and could add more problems to the shaky relations between 'Iraq and Iran. Moreover, the partition of the Kurdish territories would have

created a chaotic situation in northern 'Iraq and left the towns of Kirkuk, Arbīl and Mosul without adequate protection. Besides, the cession of Kurdish territories of the Wilāyah of Mosul to Turkey and Iran would entail a drastic reduction of the number of Kurdish deputies in the Constituent Assembly in Baghdad, leaving the Assembly to be controlled by the predominantly Shi'i deputies.<sup>143</sup>

The Mosul Award and the attached stipulations which provided for the guarantees of Kurdish national rights and administrative measures had only increased Turkish fears that Britain, with the blessings of the League, was planning to establish an autonomous Kurdistan, which would eventually destabilize the Kurdish regions of southeastern Turkey by impeding the process of Turkification.<sup>144</sup>

By the end of 1925, Britain faced a dilemma in her relationship with Turkey. On one hand, she felt that Turkey's friendship was a necessity to stabilize northern 'Iraq, and to reduce British expenses in that country. In addition, Turkey's friendship as a strong neutral country was essential in Britain's policy to stop the Russian advance to the Persian Gulf region. On the other hand, Britain had already committed herself to be the protector of Kurdish national rights within 'Iraq. This was scarcely acceptable to Turkey, who viewed any manifestation of Kurdish nationalism as a danger to her security. Therefore, the British government was left with no option but to assure the Turks that the Kurds in 'Iraq would be allowed only limited cultural rights and 'Iraq and the British government were determined to place the Kurdish districts under the firm control of the Baghdad

government.<sup>145</sup> Thus on January 17, 1926 Amery told the House of Commons that Britain would not ignore the Kurdish national rights in 'Iraq. He went on to say:

"...While so doing, we aim at reconciling the Kurds with 'Iraq, as indeed they are reconciled today. If they are so reconciled, the last thing we will wish them to do is to look across the border and chase the dream of an independent Kurdistan carved out of Turkey and Persia. The last thing we want them to bring about is any state of affairs in that part of the world which would breed unrest; what we want is stability."<sup>146</sup>

The Kurdish factor in Britain's relationship with Turkey, as it stood in 1926, had been eloquently detailed in a comprehensive memorandum written on February 8th by Lindsay. The latter writes that Kurds constituted a formidable danger to Turkey for several reasons. Firstly, they inhabit a vast territory which Turkey could not afford to abandon. Secondly, in comparison to the Turks, Kurds were viewed as backward because they were "more deeply devoted" to their religion. This presented a serious obstacle to Turkey's drive for westernization. Nothing but this menace to the whole policy of Mustafa Kamal could account for the persistence with which Turkey had tried to extend her sovereign rights over the Wilāyah of Mosul. It would well suit the objectives of British policy in the Middle East if Turkey was able to achieve the stable equilibrium between north and south to which she aspired. During this period, it was anticipated that Russia's

southward march would be checked by Britain's friendly relations with Turkey. Moreover, a strong Turkey meant stability in the region. "This was precisely what His Majesty's Government most desired," in order to rid herself at "the earliest date" of the dangers involved in the commitment to the 'Iraqi Mandate.<sup>147</sup>

The solution which Lindsay saw to the dilemma in Britain's relationship with Turkey was the idea of Britain offering to guarantee the Turkish frontier against any aggression for a limited period of years. The British government should endeavour to involve with France, Italy and Russia in this as well. If this scheme was implemented, Lindsay anticipated that would have the effect of substituting in Turkey "the feeling of security for the mentality of constant fear."<sup>148</sup> Lindsay's suggested pact with Turkey had amounted to a security pact for the Middle East similar to the Locarno Pact which had regulated the peace and security of France and Germany after World War I.<sup>149</sup>

In June, Lindsay was authorized by Britain to negotiate a treaty with Turkey which would guarantee her frontier against aggression, and he was also authorized to hold out some inducements which might encourage Turkey to sign such a treaty. The inducements consisted of some modifications of the boundary with 'Iraq in favour of Turkey, provisions for a good neighbourly relationship between Turkey and 'Iraq, some share in the oil royalties of the Wilāyah of Mosul and the conclusion of a Turco-'Iraq extradition treaty. This last provision was included to assure Turkey that Britain would assist her in suppressing the Kurdish nationalists who would try to destabilize Turkey by using 'Iraq as a sanctuary. Towfiq Rushdi

received the British readiness to guarantee the Turkish frontier with enthusiasm and worked out with Lindsay a draft Treaty of Friendship between Turkey, 'Iraq and Britain. Surprisingly, during the negotiations Turkey did not ask for the redrawing of the frontier, but insisted on the inclusion of provisions for the extradition of fugitives on the frontier.<sup>150</sup> On June 5, 1926, the Treaty of Friendship was signed which gave Turkey's formal consent to the Mosul Award. Turkey received a "sweetener" in the shape of a ten percent share in the oil royalties which might be found in the Wilāyah of Mosul for twenty-five years to come. This was commuted later to five hundred thousand pound sterling and paid in advance. On October 18, 1926 the Permanent Frontier Commission started its work in Mosul region. It is interesting to observe that Articles 10 to 12, provided for the establishment of a frontier zone which extended to a depth of seven to five kilometres on each side of the frontier between Turkey and 'Iraq. In this frontier zone armed gatherings or hostile propaganda would not be allowed.<sup>151</sup>

Therefore, the 1926 Treaty of Friendship between Britain, 'Iraq and Turkey was an institutionalized British-sponsored regional cooperation which was, to a certain extent, aimed at the Kurds who were looked upon as being a destabilizing factor in the Middle East. This was a further indication that Britain's Kurdish policy was governed by her desire to have stability in the region in order to deny Russia an opportunity to exploit any instability for her own interest. Moreover, the December 1925 proposal by Lindsay for the partition of southern Kurdistan between Turkey and Iran in order to allay Turkish apprehensions is similar to the

November 1922, Curzon proposal in Lausanne to cede Southern Kurdistan to Turkey. In both cases the British government had refused the partition of southern Kurdistan due to her desire not to destabilize King Faisal's government by disrupting the sectarian balance in the demographic make-up of 'Iraq. This is a further indication that Britain's Kurdish policy was drawn with the government's desire to see peace with Turkey and the need to consolidate Faisal's regime.

#### Regional Cooperation: 1926-1927

The signing of the June 1926 Treaty of Friendship, the British government inaugurated a new policy in Kurdistan which on one hand maintaining her support for Kurdish national rights, while on the other hand, supervising and encouraging regional cooperation among the states of 'Iraq, Turkey, and Iran with regard to the Kurds.

Before the signing of the Tripartite Treaty of Friendship, British authorities in 'Iraq would usually give sanctuary to exiled Turkish Kurds, and allow them to carry out political activities on the frontier within 'Iraq. However, in the period following June 1925, British authorities in 'Iraq turned down several requests by exiled Turkish Kurds to stage anti-Kamalist revolts from 'Iraq's frontier. In April 1926, Shaikh Mahdi, a brother of Shaikh Sa'id of Pīrān Palu, asked the High Commissioner in Baghdad to assist him to start a general rising in Kurdistan with the aim of establishing an independent Kurdistan under British mandate. Shaikh Mahdi and his associates were told in explicit terms that it was neither a part of

British policy to encourage armed revolt on Turco-‘Iraq frontier, nor was it Britain’s intention to support the formation of an independent Kurdistan.<sup>152</sup>

In October 1926, Shaikh Mahdi was arrested at Zākho due to his involvement in Hajo’s revolt. Hajo was a tribal chieftain who led a revolt in the Midiat-Mardin region of the frontier against Mustafa Kamal. Shaikh Mahdi was taken to Baghdad where he was released on the condition that he left ‘Iraq for Iran. This was followed by the arrest and expulsion of several Kurdish activists who were members of the anti-Kamalist Kurdistan Society. These included Dr. Muhammad Shukri and Dr. Sabri Ahmad, who earlier in March 1925, were given all facilities to distribute anti-Kamalist propaganda on the frontier and the opportunity to meet the Commission of Enquiry to plead against Turkey.<sup>153</sup> In November, Turkey and ‘Iraq agreed that no fugitive would be allowed to reside on frontier region and Turkey was given the right of hot pursuit of the Turkish Kurdish activists inside ‘Iraq.<sup>154</sup> In December, Dobbs was told by Mustafa Kamal that he had a plan to remove five hundred thousand Kurds from the frontier with ‘Iraq. The High Commissioner advised him against such an action because the number of the Kurds was no less a million and a half, and such large-scale forcible replacements would trigger instability in the area. Dobbs had also conveyed to Amery Mustafa Kamal’s “most friendly” attitude toward ‘Iraq.<sup>155</sup> Mustafa Kamal’s seeking of advice from the British High Commissioner in Baghdad on such a sensitive matter points out that by the end of 1926, Britain and Turkey were closely cooperating on issues related to the Kurds.

Having stabilized the Turco-'Iraq frontier, Britain turned to Shaikh Mahmud, whose forays from Persia into 'Iraq were causing uncertainty in 'Iraq-Iran relations. In September 1925, Shaikh Mahmud was forced to cross the frontier. In June 1926, Shaikh Mahmud along with eight hundred armed followers, mainly Iranian Kurds, had recrossed the frontier, and he established his administration in the frontier districts. In addition, in July, Prince Salar ad-Dawla, the brother of the deposed Shah Muhammad 'Ali Qajar, who was also related to the Iranian Kurdish chieftains by marriage, had risen in revolt in Iranian Kurdistan. Moreover, in August, Simko made another bid to grab power in the triangle region of the frontier of 'Iraq, Turkey and Iran.<sup>156</sup>

Therefore, the 'Iraq-Iran frontier was plagued with unrest, the continuation of which was seen by the British government as a threat to stability in the region. The fact that Salar ad-Dawla had entered Iran secretly from 'Iraq was used by Russian agents in Tehran to convince Reza Shah of Britain's connivance in Salar ad-Dawla's revolt so that the former would be convinced of futility of any attempt to strengthen ties with Britain.<sup>157</sup> In October, the British Foreign Secretary wrote to the Colonial Office that he was most anxious that every effort should be made to dispel the misunderstanding which had arisen between 'Iraq and Persia with regard to the alleged British involvement with Salar ad-Dawla. The British authorities in 'Iraq and Iran were told that they should render any aid they could to Reza Shah to suppress the Qajar prince's revolt, the continuation of which might well confirm the suspicions of the Persian government which were being

fostered by Soviet propaganda that the British government was assisting the revolt.<sup>158</sup>

The Persian government succeeded, not without British support in suppressing both revolts in Iranian Kurdistan. Upon his reentrance into 'Iraq, Salar ad-Dawla was arrested by the 'Iraqi authorities.<sup>159</sup> However, Shaikh Mahmud continued to be a destabilizing factor on the frontier. This was due partly to the inability of the Iranian authorities to establish firm control over the Kurdish tribes of the frontier and partly to the reluctance of the Iranian authorities to cooperate with 'Iraq's government. This reluctance on the part of the Iranian government was due to the Shah's suspicion that the British government had designs on Iranian Kurdistan.<sup>160</sup> Besides, Reza Shah was very bitter about King Faisal's unwillingness to grant Iranian citizens in 'Iraq the status of most favoured nation, which 'Iraq had granted in 1924 to citizens of several countries who were members of the League of Nations.<sup>161</sup>

In October 1925, the Iranian government asked that the Air Officer in 'Iraq fly to Tehran to co-ordinate and supervise Persian government efforts to establish her control on the frontier and have Shaikh Mahmud arrested. Upon his arrival in Tehran, the Air Officer found that the Persian government had not made any preparations and there was no plan to follow for military activities on the frontier. In February 1926, the British Military Attache in Tehran had presented the Iranian government with a strong note of protest for the lack of willingness on their part to prevent Shaikh Mahmud from using Iranian territories for incursions into

'Iraq.<sup>162</sup> In June, the Persian government had agreed only to take an intermediary role in negotiating the release of two British airmen, whose aeroplane had gone down during action against Shaikh Mahmud. The two British officers were held as prisoners of war inside Iranian territory by Shaikh Mahmud's followers. The British government protested and argued that the British airmen were held in Iranian territory and that the Iranian government was bound to take prompt and effective action to secure their release.<sup>163</sup>

In September 1926, Shaikh Mahmud had again crossed the frontier with a force composed mostly of Iranian Kurds without any hindrance from the Persian authorities. It was also reported that during this period the Shaikh had established "the most friendly relations" with the Iranian local officials on the frontier. In the summer of 1926, for instance, Shaikh Mahmud gave important military assistance to the Military Commander of Banah, a border town, when the latter was threatened by a local hostile outbreak.<sup>164</sup>

By November 1926, several developments on the Iranian side of the frontier had assisted the emergence of an effective cooperation between 'Iraq and Iran on frontier affairs. Firstly, the Pizhder revolt in Kurdistan of Iran had resulted in the capture of the border town of Sardasht. This forced Reza Shah to send a large force to restore order in the area. The Iranian force managed to pacify the frontier and disarm several border tribes. Secondly, Edmonds, an assistant advisor to the 'Iraq Minister of the Interior in 1925, was able to develop friendly relations with Hidayatollah Khan, the Iranian Interior Minister. Consequently, both governments

agreed to develop a working relationship to monitor the movements of the tribes on the frontier. Furthermore, the internal fighting between Shaikh Mahmud's Iranian Kurdish followers had considerably reduced his capacity to offer any serious challenge to the British authorities on the frontier.<sup>165</sup> Therefore, in December, it was reported that Shaikh Mahmud was feeling "tired of brigandage", and very isolated from the Kurds on the frontier region.<sup>166</sup> Thirdly, as a result of RAF bombings and British arrangements with the Jaf Chieftains, Shaikh Mahmud was cut off from the Jāf tribesmen whose taxes had been in the past the main source of revenue which enabled him to sustain his hit-and-run operations. Finally, being totally isolated from the Kurdish tribes on the frontiers Shaikh Mahmud had turned once again to the pro-Turkey Turcomans of Kirkuk. However, the latter were already reconciled to the 'Iraqi government and saw no need for Shaikh Mahmud, who in the past had been "their dupe" during the Mosul Dispute.<sup>167</sup>

Isolated and faced with the newly emerging 'Iraq-Iran rapprochement, in 1927 Shaikh Mahmud began to seriously consider the terms of surrender offered to him by the governments of 'Iraq and Britain. The capture of two British airmen in July 1926, had forced the British government to negotiate with Shaikh Mahmud. The latter told Dabbs that he was ready to serve the British government loyally, if he was reappointed as hukumdar of southern Kurdistan. However, the British authorities did not have any confidence in Shaikh Mahmud's new-found loyalty, and they were no longer in need of his services, for Sulaymānīya and the other Kurdish districts were in the process of being fully integrated into the Baghdad

government. The British High Commissioner told him that: 1) he should immediately release the two British airmen; 2) make dakhāla (seek pardon) to King Faisal; 3) reside in Baghdad or any other place outside Kurdistan chosen for him by the 'Iraqi government; 4) and in return he would be given a salary from his confiscated properties. The Skaikh refused these terms.<sup>168</sup>

In October 1926, Shaikh Mahmud told the British government in 'Iraq that he had always had good-will towards Britain and that he was ready to give a solemn promise not to interfere in southern Kurdistan's affairs. In return, he wanted to be appointed as governor of Iranian Kurdistan, which he claimed to be able to rule in the name of the British government in 'Iraq. The Shaikh was told that both the 'Iraqi and British governments were "on friendly terms" with the Persian government and had not the least desire for hostility, nor most assuredly did either government wish to control further Kurdish areas. They were already "quite sufficiently burdened" with the Kurdish districts of 'Iraq.<sup>169</sup> On October 15, 1926, Kanaham Cornwallis, who was adviser to the Minister of the Interior agreed to meet Shaikh Mahmud in Khormal, a village on the frontier on the 'Iraqi side. Shaikh Mahmud demanded that the British government make a statement on its Kurdish policy, and that Kurds be assured that their national rights which had been sanctioned by the League would not be ignored by the 'Iraqi government. Cornwallis told him that he had to stay out of Kurdistan's politics, to reside outside southern Kurdistan at a location away from the frontier in Iran, and appoint a person to administer his estates in Sulaymānīya. Shaikh Mahmud said

that he could not reside in Persia, because Reza Shah's troops had orders to kill him.<sup>170</sup> Shaikh Mahmud remained in hiding in the frontier region, and hoped that the prolonging of the negotiations might force the British government to reconsider their Kurdistan policy. However, Cornwallis told his government that Shaikh Mahmud and his followers were isolated and "weary" of living as outlaws, and that they would eventually accept the government terms of surrender. On July 1, 1927, the Shaikh did sign, through an intermediary, the terms of his surrender, in which he agreed to live outside southern Kurdistan in a location some thirteen miles away from the 'Iraqi frontier.'<sup>171</sup>

For these reasons the British-sponsored regional co-operation among 'Iraq, Iran and Turkey helped to temporarily suppress the Kurdish nationalists' activities in those countries. It appears that the British statesmen in 1926-1927 came to the firm conclusion that with the settlement of the Mosul Dispute they did not have any more need to appease the Kurdish nationalists, whose objectives ran counter to those of Britain in the Middle East.

Britain's policy in Kurdistan was to a considerable extent affected by the Lausanne negotiations (November 1922-July 1924). At Lausanne, the British government wanted reconciliation with Turkey in order to distance her from Bolshevik Russia, which had entertained the idea of extending her control to the Persian Gulf and threatening British interests in India. Therefore, at Lausanne the British withdrew their earlier support for a Kurdish state as stipulated in the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920. Moreover, the Lausanne negotiations and the possible

loss of southern Kurdistan was used as a lever by Britain to force the 'Iraqis to ratify the Anglo-'Iraq Treaty of Alliance of 1922, which most 'Iraqis perceived as a legal tool to perpetuate British colonialism in 'Iraq, while the latter had to pay a heavy financial obligation for being colonized.

With the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne with Turkey, Shaikh Mahmud, driven out of Sulaymānīya, and OzDemir expelled from Rawanduz, the British government was able to formulate a definite policy in Kurdistan; giving 'Iraqi Kurds cultural rights and discouraging separatism among them. Therefore, the uncertainty which characterized pre-Lausanne British policy in Kurdistan was, to a certain extent, resolved. When the Mosul Dispute was brought before the League, it became evident that the Kurdish question was the most vital element of its components. While the Commission of Enquiry was touring the Wilāyah of Mosul and the Geneva Conference was discussing the Dispute, both Turkey and Britain used the Kurds as pawns in their struggle over that province. Britain used the opportunity to force the 'Iraqi government to grant an oil concession to the TPC which many 'Iraqis opposed as being excessively in favour of the Company in its terms. It is equally significant to point out that in order to counter Turkey's pan-Islamic appeal during the Mosul Dispute, Britain was forced to encourage Kurdish nationalism. Thus the Jam'īyyat-ī Mudafa'ī Watanī Sulaimānī and their Kurdish journal Zhiyānawa were further British contributions to the course of Kurdish nationalism. In addition, the clauses which were incorporated in the Mosul Award, subsequent pledges by British and 'Iraqi officials, and the

administrative measures which were followed had far-reaching consequences in enhancing Kurdish nationalism, as will be explained below. Nevertheless, by 1926, the British had realized that the cause of Kurdish nationalism which she had helped to nurture among the Kurds was a double-edged sword; it could be manipulated by her to bring the defiant 'Iraqi and Turkish governments into line and it could have an adverse effect on regional stability, which was an important policy objective of Britain in the Middle East. For this reason, during the years 1926-1927 Britain began to supervise and assist the nation-states of 'Iraq, Turkey and Iran against the Kurdish nationalists in the same manner that she had supported the Ottoman and the Persian Empires during the nineteenth century against the leaders of the Kurdish Emirates whose efforts for independence were viewed by Britain as a disruption of the balance of power in the Near and Middle East.

Footnotes for Chapter 6

1. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 312F. (For a detailed account see: Spencer William, "The Mosul Question in International Relations," un.pub. Ph.D. Dissertation, The American Univ., 1965; Great Britain, Foreign Office, Lausanne Conference on Near Eastern Affairs 1922-23: Records of Proceedings and Draft Terms of Peace (CMD.1814) London: HMSO, 1923; Fadil Hussein, "The Mosul Problem"; Busch, Mudros to Lausanne.)
2. Lausanne Conference on Near Eastern Affairs, pp. 262-4.
3. Ibid, pp. 366-7, 369-70.
4. Ibid., pp. 363, 372.
5. Ibid., p. 363.
6. Spencer Noel, p. 131.
7. Stivers, p. 102; Davies, p. 199.
8. Nicolson, Curzon: The Last Phase, p. 331; Blaeke, Unknown Prime Minister, p. 488.
9. Spencer Noel, p. 128.
10. H.C., Parliamentary Debate, 160: p. 901.
11. Ibid., pp. 2323-25.
12. F0. 371/10097, Intelligence Report No. 3, Feb. 7, 1923; Graves, p. 324.
13. H.C., Parliamentary Debate, 159: p. 2134.
14. F0. 371/10870, "Turkey," annual report, No. 424, Jan. 1, 1925.
15. F0. 371/6967, Teleg. No. 80, Dec. 6, 1922, Curzon to Sir E. Crowe; DBFP, 1st. Ser. 18, Doc. No. 257, p. 271; Ja'far Pasha was favourable to the offer made by Curzon. Spencer Noel maintains that Ja'far Pasha's willingness to give the Kurdish mountainous region to Turkey indicates that both he and Curzon were "poor geographers and strategists, for.... some 200 miles of [Iraq's territory] would be flanked by turbulent hill country..." (See: "The History of 'Iraq, 1920-1932," p. 127.)

16. FO. 371/7667, Cabinet Committee on 'Iraq, Teleg. No. 60, Dec. 8, 1922; Cab. 23/32, Cab. Paper No. 62, "The Conclusion of a Meeting of the Cabinet," Dec. 7, 1922; BDFP, 1st. Ser., 18: Doc. No. 265, pp. 380-1.
17. Howell, p. 328; Nicolson, Curzon: The Last Phase, p. 315.
18. FO. 371/7782, Teleg. No. 725, Dec. 22, 1922, Churchill to Cox.
19. Lady Bell: Personal Papers, II, pp. 308-10; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 312-3; Spencer Noel, p. 131; Compare: Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, p. 594.
20. Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 313; FO. 371/7782, Teleg. No. 883, Dec. 16, 1922.
21. BHCF 13/14 Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5, memo. 2, March 19, 1923, Air HQ, BF, 'Iraq, to Chief of Staff; Memo No. 535/2 From Air Marshall Sir John M. Salmond to Sec. of Air Ministry, June 26, 1923, "Air Operations in Kurdistan"; FO. 371/10098, Intelligence Report, 'Iraq, May 14, 1924.
22. See No. 6, November 27, 1922; No. 5, December, 1922.
23. Taqi, p. 74.
24. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Memo. No. 521/1, "Situation in Sulaimani," March 14, 1922.
25. BHCF, 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Teleg. No. 5495, March 20, 1922, BFHQ, 'Iraq, to Air Ministry; FO. 371/9004, memo. no. E3117, Curzon, March 23, 1922.
26. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5, memo. Air 535/2, Air Marshall Sir John Salmond to Sec. of Air Ministry, June 26, 1923. "Air Operations in Kurdistan."; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 325f.
27. For a detailed account of these operations see: Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, pp. 585-87; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 328.
28. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5, Teleg. No. 275, May 11, 1923, HC to S.S. Col; Teleg. No. 184, March, 1923, Dobbs to Noel; Niama, p. 118.
29. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5, Teleg. No. 184, March 1923, Dobbs to Noel.
30. H.C., Parliamentary Debate 163: p. 1365; Special Report on Progress of 'Iraq,

pp. 255-56; BHCF 13/14 Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5, letter HC to CO, April 12, 1924.

31. Special Report on Progress of 'Iraq, p. 257; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, pp. 588-9.

32. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 346.

33. BHCF, 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5, Teleg. no. 275, May 11, 1923, HC to S.S. Col. Longrigg, 'Iraq 1900-1950, p. 147. The appointment of Sayyid Taha as Qa'immaqam, which was pressed for by Dobbs, met strong resistance from Faisal, who wanted to appoint a less powerful individual to the post. The High Commissioner insisted on the appointment of Sayyid Taha as a "bullet-proof" Qa'immaqam. The term "bullet-proof" was used by the British officials for those persons who, due to their tribal connections were almost immune from assassination. The reason for Dobbs' insistence was due to his conviction that Sayyid Taha might be the only person who could cope with the Turkish intrigues in the region. (Cf: Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, p. 574, n. 2; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 326.)

34. Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report by His Majesty's Government on the Administration of 'Iraq for the Period April, 1923-December, 1924 (Colonial. No. 13), (London: HMSO, 1925), p. 29.

35. FO. 371/10098, Intelligence Report, 'Iraq, 30th April, 1924, Lees, p. 272.

36. 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1923-December 1924, p. 32-33.

37. FO. 371/10098, Intelligence Report, 'Iraq May 14, 1924. Special Report on the Progress of 'Iraq, p. 258; 'Iraq: British Administrative Report April 1923 to December 1924, p. 31.

38. In mid-July of 1924 when Sulaymānīya was reoccupied, its inhabitants had dwindled from twenty thousand to only seven hundred souls. Two months after the British reoccupation the population rose again to twelve thousand. (See: 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1923-December 1924, p. 31; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 371-2; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, p. 590.

39. FO. 371/10114, "Air Staff Note on the Occupation of Sulaimani," No. 44459/24, Sept. 27, 1924; 10100. Teleg. No. 66304, May 30, 1924, Air Office Command, 'Iraq to Air Ministry; In May 1924, a massacre took place in Kirkuk as a result of an argument between a few Assyrian levies and Kirkuk shop-keepers. The Assyrians, who had been assaulted, went to their regiments and brought their comrades. The latter came to the bazaar and began to shoot at

random into a group of people sitting in a coffee-house. This incident occurred in Ramadan, the Muslim fasting month, and it turned into a Muslim-Christian conflict. Consequently, thirty Muslims died and sixty were wounded. The Assyrian losses were six killed and five wounded. The High Commissioner ordered an immediate investigation into the matter, but nobody was convicted. This outraged the Kurds, and hundreds of men from the tribes around Kirkuk marched on the city to avenge the dead. However, they were dispersed by the Talabani chieftains. (See: FO. 371/10098, Intelligence Report, 'Iraq, May 28, 1924; Intelligence Report, June 12, 1924.)

40. 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1923-December 1924, p. 32. On March 27, 1924, the Constituent Assembly (the 'Iraq House of Chamber and Deputies) was officially opened by a speech from King Faisal, in which he outlined the task of the Assembly in the following words: 1) to pass the 'Iraqi constitution for the safeguarding of the rights of individuals and the stabilization of internal politics; 2) to legislate an Electoral Law for the Assembly and provide for the supervision of the policy of the government and its acts; 3) to ratify the Anglo-'Iraq Treaty of 1922 which would regulate the 'Iraqi government's relations with the British government. The 'Iraqi nationalists opposed the ratification on the grounds that the Treaty strengthened the British hold on 'Iraq, restricting 'Iraq's sovereign rights and placed heavy financial obligations on the state of 'Iraq. The Opposition in the Assembly formed a Committee to report on the terms of the Treaty. On April 2, the Committee, under the presidency of Yasin al-Hashimi presented a critical report and demanded several amendments. The British were not ready to meet these demands. There were large popular demonstrations, organized by the 'Iraqi nationalists, and on May 29, 1924 the army was called in by the government to disperse the thousands of people. This turned into a bloody confrontation. (See: 'Iraq, Administrative Report. April 1923-December 1924, pp. 20-1; Niama, pp. 133-6; Stiver, pp. 79-82; Graves, pp. 305-6.

41. FO 371/10098, Intelligence Report, 'Iraq, Oct. 28, 1924. The Persian authorities ordered government officials on the frontier to warn Kurdish chieftains of Persia not to join Shaikh Mahmud's anti-British activities. (See: 371/10098, Intelligence Report, Baghdad, Oct. 28, 1924.)

42. Lady Bell, Letters, II, p. 549; al-Qaysi, pp. 245-6.

43. Hawramī, pt. 2, p. 10.

44. FO. 371/9010, Intelligence Report, 'Iraq, No. 23, Dec. 1, 1923.

45. 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1923-December 1924, p. 22; FO. 371/13034, Desp. May 9, 1924, Dobbs to Amery; 11259, 'Teleg. No. 12, June 16, 1924, Dobbs to Amery; Manchester Guardian, June 13, 1924. In the confrontation with the

'Iraqi nationalists, Britain had threatened to withdraw from 'Iraq and leave them at the mercy of Mustafa Kamal. This was a bluff to intimidate King Faisal and the nationalists, because Britain had done a lot to establish her influence in 'Iraq, which had a rich oil potential. (See: al-Ḥasanī, Tārīkh al-'Irāq, II, p. 92.

46. Baghdad Times, June 10, 1924.

47. CO. 730/60/2655, Teleg. No. 282, June 2, 1924, Dobbs to Thomas; "Minute," June 4, 1924, Thomas to Dobbs, cited in Niama, p. 162.

48. Lady Bell: Personal Papers, II, p. 344; Adhami, p. 542; Raja' Husaini, p. 150; Khattab, p. 151; Kurdish deputies in the Assembly were usually carefully selected by the British authorities in 'Iraq. Most of them served as a rubber-stamp for British policies. (See: Hawār, al-Thāqafa al-Kurdiyya, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 93-4.

49. 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1923 to December 1924, p. 25; CO. 730/6132/85. A. Chamberlain to Lindsay, June 6, 1924; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, pp. 383, 384; Niama, p. 165.

50. FO. 371/10114, "Air Staff Note on the Occupation of Sulaimani," Desp. 44459/24, Sept. 27, 1924; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 387.

51. BHCF. 13/14, "Events in Kurdistan," Vol. 5, Shaikh Mahmud: Aide Memoir," by B.H. Bourdillon, Nov. 3, 1926; Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report by His Majesty's Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of 'Iraq for the Year 1925 (Colonial No. 21), (London: HGSO, 1926), p. 32.

52. 'Iraq Administrative Report April 1923-December 1924, pp. 31-2.

53. Special Report on Progress of 'Iraq, p. 258; al-Qaysi, p. 279.

54. Lady Bell: Personal Papers, II, pp. 369-70.

55. For the text of the Treaty, see: Great Britain, Parliament, Foreign Office, Treaty of Peace with Turkey and Other Instruments Signed at Lausanne on July 24, 1923, Together with Agreements between Greece and Turkey Signed on Jan. 30, 1923; and Subsidiary Documents Forming Part of Turkish Peace Settlement (Cmd. 1929) (London: HMSO, 1923). Article 3 of the Treaty notes: "The frontier between Turkey and 'Iraq shall be laid down in friendly arrangement to be concluded between Turkey and Great Britain within nine months."  
"In the event of no agreement being reached between the two Governments within the time mentioned, the dispute shall be referred to the Council of the League of Nations."

"The Turkish and British Governments reciprocally undertake that pending a decision to be reached on the subject of frontier, no military or other movement shall take place which might modify in any way the present state of the territories of which the final fate will depend upon that decision."

56. League of Nations, Question of Frontier Between Turkey and 'Iraq Report, p. 12; League, Official Journal, 5th year, Oct., 1924, No. 11, "Minutes of the 30th Session," p. 1465. The Commission of Enquiry was composed of Count Teleki, former Hungarian Prime Minister, Mr. Wirsén, the Swedish Minister in Bucharest, and Mr. Paulis, a colonel in the reserve of the Belgian army. The Commission was also accompanied by British and Turkish assessors.

57. "The Significance of Mosul," The Nineteenth Century and After, 99 (1926), March, p. 349.

58. D. Bourke Borrowes, "Britain Interest in Persia," Empire Review, 55 (1932), p. 239; Marian Kent, pp. 189-90.

59. FO. 371/1086, Letter. March 6, 1925, Lindsay to Chamberlain; Howell, pp. 329-30.

60. FO. 371/11458, memo. no. E51/G "Russia's Communist Activities on 'Iraq Frontier," Jan. 4, 1925, British Embassy, Constantinople.

61. Arnold Toynbee, "Angora and the British Empire in the East," The Contemporary Review, June, 1923, p. 688.

62. Lady Bell: Personal Papers, II, p. 374.

63. BDFP. Ser. La. Teleg. no. 544, Dec. 4, 1925, Chamberlain to Lindsay.

64. League of Nations, Questions of Frontier between 'Iraq and Turkey, p. 7.

65. FO. 371/9010, Intelligence Report, No. 21, Nov. 1, 1923; al-Istiqlal, no. 262, Oct. 1924; al-Amal, no. 33, Nov. 8, 1923; Times (London), August 8, 1925.

66. H.C., Parliamentary Debate 189: p. 2080; FO. 371/10826 "Mosul" memo. no. 840, Nov. 16, 1925; Dudley Heathcote, "Mosul and the Turks," Fortnight Review 124 (1925), p. 611; "Mosul the Desired," Literary Digest, 17 February, 1923, p. 12; Spencer William, pp. 66-67. Opposition to the government's Mosul policy was widespread throughout the country. Many leading British journals and newspapers presented Amery, the architect of British policy on the issue, as "the spendthrift, the wrecker, the warmonger." (See: Leo Amery, My Political Life, II, p. 328.)

67. H.C., Parliamentary Debate 187: p. 9.

68. Cab. 24/175, Cab. Paper No. 472, "'Iraq and the Mosul Question," Nov. 10, 1925. The world press presented the Mosul dispute as a battle between Turkey and Britain over the control of the oil potential of the Wilayah of Mosul, but British officials persistently denied the charge. Spencer William writes that the higher and middle ranking non-policy-making civil servants of the British Government who recorded their memoirs and impressions at the time of the crisis or later "are near unanimous in their assertion that oil was of little or no importance." (See: "The Mosul Question in International Relations," p. 205.) Noel Spencer, in his more recent doctoral dissertation on 'Iraq deals with the controversy over the role of oil in the Mosul dispute and concluded that oil had some role in determining the stands of both parties; however, oil was not the prime factor. Concern for the security of the British Empire appears to have been the dominant factor in the minds of British officials. (See: "The Diplomatic History of 'Iraq, 1920 -1932," pp. 204-6.) As far as Turkey was concerned, oil was scarcely a consideration. It suffices to mention that at a Constantinople conference in 1925, which was held by Turkey and Britain to settle the Mosul Dispute, Turkey agreed to divide the Wilayah of Mosul in a way that would have left all the suspected oil fields in 'Iraqi territory. (See: Toynbee, The Survey of International Affairs for the Year 1928 (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), pp. 184-6. Nevertheless, there is a consensus that both Turkey and Britain used oil as a tactical weapon during the crisis. (For a detailed account of the role of oil in the Mosul Dispute see: Mejcher, The Imperial Quest for 'Iraq, 1910-1926; Davies, "The British Oil Policy in the Middle East, 1912-1932"; Stivers, Supremacy and Oil: 'Iraq, Turkey and the Anglo-American World Order 1918-1930; Geoffrey Gareth Jones, "The Oil Companies and the British Government 1900-1925," unpub. Ph. D. Dissertation, Corpus Christi College, 1977.

69. Cab. 24/175, Cab. Paper. no. 472, "'Iraq and the Mosul Question," memo. Nov. 10, 1925.

70. Anon, "Reflection on Mosul Problem," Journal of Royal Central Asian Society, 13 (1926), p. 4; Toynbee, "Angora and the British Empire in the East," p. 680; Minorski, "The Kurdish Question," p. 31; G. Cathrone Hardy, A Short History of International Affairs, p. 121-2; Economist, Feb. 19, 1926; Times, Jan. 25, 1925; BDFP Ser. 1a. 1:p. 246, Teleg. No. 130, Nov. 21, 1925, Lindsay to Chamberlain; Fasil Hussein, p. 246; H.C. Parliamentary Debate 189: p. 2100. The Turkish Foreign Minister told Lindsay that the Kurdish question was the "key" to the Mosul question. (See: Times (London), "'Iraq and the Kurds," Feb. 12, 1926.)

71. FO. 371/10826, "Memorandum Respecting the 'Iraq Frontier Dispute" E.6635/212/65, Oct. 23, 1925; Cab. 24/175, "'Iraq and the Mosul Question," Cab. Paper. No. 472, Nov. 10, 1925; BDFP , Ser . 1 a. 1: Dec . No. 570. Memo. by

Lindsay , Feb. 8, 1926, p. 818; al-Hasani, Tarikh al-'Iraq, II, p. 119; Longrigg, 'Iraq 1900-1950, p. 145. Ismet Onunu Pasha was quoted as saying, "The Turks are frankly nationalist, and nationalism is our only factor of cohesion. At any price we must Turkify the inhabitants of our own land, and we annihilate those who oppose the Turks." (See: Basra Times, June 21, 1925, cited in Spencer William, p. 112.)

72. FO. 371/11458, Desp. No. 940/43400/8/1925, Jan. 4, 1926, Lindsay to Chamberlain.

73. BHCf 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 3, Teleg. No. 543, Oct. 1, 1923, HC, Baghdad, to CO; FO. 371/10826, memo. "Mosul " no. 840, Nov. 16, 1925; Cab. 24/175, Cab. Paper. No. 472, Nov. 12, 1925, A Note by Secretary of State for Colonies; FO. 371/10867, Enclosure No. 3 in No. 1, March 3 1925, R. Horace to Lindsay. The American consul in Baghdad considered Turkey's fear of the creation of another Macedonia in Kurdistan as legitimate. He shared Turkey's concern that the division of the Kurds would not be "conducive" to a lasting peace. (See: Confidential: The US Diplomatic Records, The Middle East, 'Iraq, Desp. No. 469, Nov. 10, 1926.)

74. See: Chapter 4, p. 181.

75. Izmit Kasri (Turkish Daily), No. 1339, 16- 17 Jan. 1923. Cited in 2000 Dogru, Aug. 30, 1987.

76. FO. 371/10075, Teleg. No. 167, March 3, 1924, Lindsay to MacDonald; 10867, Despatch. No. 289, April 8, 1925, "Ismet Pasha's Statement Before the Grand National Assembly of Turkey," "The Insurrection in the Eastern Vilayets, Press Survey," 15th to 21st April, 1925, Enclosure No. 1; Teleg. No. 468, June 15, 1925, Lindsay to Chamberlain; Manchester Guardian, March 6, 1925. The Turkish Court of Independence which tried Shaikh Sa'id and his associates stated in its verdict that "some of you worked to advance your personal interest, while others were guided by propaganda and political ambition. You all worked... for independent Kurdistan." (See: FO. 371/100867, Teleg. No. 522, July 7, 1925, Horace to Chamberlain; Armstrong, Grey Wolf, p. 225.) For a comprehensive study on this revolt see: Olson, The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism.

77. Spencer William, p. 22; Toynbee, "Angora and the British Empire in the East," p. 686.

78. RDPF, Ser. Ia. 1: No. 1 gm. No. 8, Jan. 29, 1926, Lindsay to Chamberlain.

79. Dudley Heathcote, "Mosul and the Turks," 124 (1925), pp. 609-10.

80. BHCf 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5, "Minister of Interior's Tour of Kurdistan," Nov. 2, 1924; FO 371/10068, Intelligence Report, No. 22, 'Iraq, Nov. 1, 1924; 'Iraq Administrative Report, p. 16.
81. FO. 371/10068, Intelligence Report, No. 22, 'Iraq, Nov. 1, 1924; BHCf 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5, Desp. No. 4455, Oct. 18, 1924.
82. Air. 23/411, Air Staff, Intelligence, to AHQ, Bagh. Despatch. No. Nov. 11, 1924.
83. Air 23/411, Despatch. No. 1/1929 AHQ, B.F. 'Iraq, Baghdad, Nov. 5, 1924, to Advisor to Minister of Interior; Despatch. No. D16, Nov. 8, 1924, 550, Baghdad to AHQ; FO. 371/10068, Intelligence Report, No. 22, Oct. 21, 1924.
84. FO. 371/1050, "A Further Note as a Result of a Tour of Khoi-Maku," Enclosure. No. 2. In No. 1; 10115, Teleg. No. 65, Oct. 18, 1924; Taqi, pp. 85-7.
85. League of Nations, Question of Frontier Between 'Iraq and Turkey, pp. 17-18; Foreign Policy Association, Editorial Information Service, Foreign Policy Reports, Vols. 1-2, 1925-1926 (New York: 1966), p. 9; Spencer William, pp. 61-2. In 1925, the literacy rate in Mosul city was only 3%, and in the Kurdish districts it was only 1%. The majority of people had no real wish in a political sense at all. (See: F.W. Chardin, "The Mosul Question: What the Inhabitants Really Want," p. 62.) The Commission of Enquiry consisted of Mr. Paulis, a Belgian, Count Teleki, the Hungarian ex-Prime Minister, R. Jardine, the British PO in Mosul acting as assessor, Subhi Beg Nashat, ex-Minister of Commerce and Work, acting as the 'Iraqi assessor, and Jawad Pasha, Fattah Beg, and Nazim Beg Naftchizada, as Turkish assessors. (See: Great Britain, Col. Off., Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of 'Iraq for the Year 1925 (HMGSO, 1926), pp. 8-9.
86. League of Nations, Question of Frontier Between 'Iraq and Turkey, pp. 18-19; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 399.
87. Foreign Policy Association, p. 9.
88. Journal of Central Asian Society 12 (1925), pt. 3, p. 213.
89. Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 402.
90. "The Kurdish Question: A Study in Nationalism," Georgetown Univ. unpub. M.A. Thesis, 154, p. 809, quoted in Hawrami, p. 103.
91. FO/108235, Despatch. No. E2731/62/65, May 9, 1925, Dobbs to Amery, Enclosure No. 1, "The Final Diary of the British Assessor to the Commission of

the League of Nations."

92. League of Nations, Question of Frontier Between 'Iraq and Turkey, p. 78.

93. Ibid., p. 78; BHCF. 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. V, "Conference on the Kurdish Question," Feb. 10, 1925, Baghdad.

94. Air. 23/163, Despatch. No. 1726, May 6, 1925.

95. Air. 23/308, trans. of undated letter, distributed by a certain Hashim Nahid Arbili.

96. Air 23/163, Arbil Report, No. 31, May 11, 1925; FO. 371/ 10837, Confid. Teleg. No. 305, (Constantinople), April 15, 1925, Lindsay to Chamberlain; al-Qassab, Min Dhikrayati, p. 253.

97. Lady Bell: Personal Papers, II, p. 369.

98. Air 23/162, Report. No. 28, May, 1925, S.S.O. Arbil; Memo, No. 4728, A.I., Mosul Liwa, April 25, 1925, To Advisor of Minister of Interior; 163, Despatch No. G/1138, May 24, 1925, A.I., Mosul Liwa, to Ad. Minister of Interior; Report No. 28, May 13, 1925, S.S.O. Arbil; Teleg. No. Y3475, AP Arbil to AHQ, Baghdad, April 24, 1925; 308, "An Appreciation of the Rayat Situation," May 4, 1925; Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 416.

99. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 313.

100. For a detailed account of this revolt (see: Olson, The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism; R. Olson and W. Tucker, "The Shaikh Sa'id Rebellion in Turkey (1925): A Study in the Consolidation of a Developed Uninstitutionalized Nationalism and the Rise of Incipient (Kurdish) Nationalism", Die Welt des Islam 18/3-3 (1978), pp. 195-211.

101. FO. 371/10837, Teleg. No. 511, Confid. June 30, 1925, Horace to Chamberlain, Therapia; 10826, "Appreciation of the Situation on 'Iraq Frontier," Oct. 15, 1925; 10835, Despatch, General HQ, Palestine, British Liason Officer, Beirut, Oct. 28, 1925; 10868, Teleg. No. 962. Confid. March 18, 1925; 10867, "The Insurrection in the Eastern Vilayets: Press Summary," April 15 to 21st, 1925.; 1068 Despatch. No. 219, "Turkey," March, 1925, Lindsay to Chamberlin.

102. FO. 371/10867, "The Insurrection in the Eastern Vilayets: Press Summary," April 15 to 21st, 1925.

103. al-Qaysī, pp. 281-2.

104. See: No. 17, Feb. 23, 1925; Fadil Hussein, p. 230.
105. FO. 371/1882, "Notes of an Interview Between His Excellency the High Commissioner and Frontier Commission," Jan. 17, 1925.
106. DO. 371/10825, "Extracts from the Diary of Liason Officer to the Frontier Commission Period 17th to 21st Feb., 1925." Residency (Baghdad), March 15, 1925 to S.S. Col.
107. FO. 371/10098, Intelligence Rep. 'Iraq, No. 23, Nov. 13, 1925; Intelligence Report. No. 25, Dec. 11, 1925.
108. FO. 371/10837, Teleg. No. 305, April 15, 1923, Lindsay to Chamberlain; 10825, Enclosure No. 1 in No. 1, May 9, 1925, Dobbs to Amery; Air. 23/163, Despatch No. G/1138, May 24, 1925, A.I. Mosul Liwa to Minister of Interior; trans. letter dated May 10, 1925, Shaikh Ahmad to Qa'im-maqam of Zibar; Air. 23/162, Teleg. N. 1693, April 6, 1925, S.S.O. Mosul; "Turkish Facts and Fantasies," Foreign Affairs, 4 (1924-26), p. 688.
109. League of Nations, Question of Frontier, pp.7-9
110. 'Iraq Administrative Report for the Year 1925, pp. 22-3; Edmonds, who was a member of the Anglo-'Iraq delegation throughout the tour of the Commission of Enquiry through the Wilayah of Mosul, writes: "...scales of tactical advantage were to all outward appearance heavily weighted in our favour. We were in control of the administration, including police, and were thus presumably in a position to bring pressure to bear on any and every element of population (See: Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 401.)
111. 'Iraq Administrative Report for the Year 1925, p. 97.
112. FO. 371/10867, Despatch. March 6, 1925; 18824, "Reply to Question XXIII of the Question Sent to the High Commissioner By His Excellency, President of the Council of the League of Nations Under the Cover of His Letter dated 21st January 1925"; Nikitine, al-Akrād, p. 186; Spencer Noel, p. 106.
113. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, p. 426-7.
114. See: No. 19, Vol. 1, March 2, 1925; No. 35, Vol. 1, August 13, 1925; No. 39, Vol. 2, Sept. 10, 1925. The pro-British Turkish Kurds were brought before the Commission of Enquiry to tell about atrocities committed by the Kamalist forces across the frontier. They appealed to the Commission not to put the southern Kurds under Turkish rule, so that they would not suffer the same fate as the Turkish Kurds. (See: BHCF. 13/14, "Events in Kurdistan," Vol. 5, Jan. 13, 1925,

S.S.O. Mosul to HC.

115. Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, p. 61~.

116. FO. 371/10086, Despatch. No. 1064, Nov. 13, 1924, C.O. to H.C. Baghdad. The terms of the oil concession gave TPC an exclusive right for seventy-five years to exploit oil in the Wilayahs of Baghdad and Mosul. 'Iraqi persons were to be given preference in the allotment of possible future stake offers for sale in the company. The 'Iraqi government wanted to limit the duration of the concession, and to have some influence in the administration of the company. Moreover, al-Hashmi, the Prime Minister, insisted that a stipulation be attached to the concession which would have made the agreement null and void should the British government fail to secure Mosul for 'Iraq. (See Fadil Hussein, pp. 314-15; 'Alwajī, p. 37; al-Istiqlāl, No. 54, Jan. 24, 1925; al-Mufīd, Jan. 25, 1925.)

117. Davies, pp. 35-36, 226, 289. For a detailed account of the American efforts to use the Anglo-Turkish conflict over Mosul to gain an oil concession, see: Spencer Noel, pp. 198-203; Benjamin Gerig, The Open Door and the Mandate System: A Study of Economic Equality Before and Since the Establishment of the Mandate System (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1930.)

118. Quoted in 'Alwaj', pp. 55-6.

119. FO. 371/10827, Memo. No. E1112/43/65, Feb. 24, 1925.

120. FO. 371/10827, Teleg. No. 120 from HC to S.S. Col., March 2, 1925.

121. Cab. 24/175, Cab. Paper. No. 450, "Iraq: Petroleum Company," Oct. 25, 1925; H.C. Parliamentary Debate 189: p. 427; al-Qaysi, p. 251.

122. 'Iraq Administrative Report for the Year 1925, p. 2; BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5, "Shaikh Mahmud: Aide Memoir," B.H. Bourdillon, Nov. 3, 1926; Air. 23/309, Report No. 37, Oct. 11, 125, S.S.O. Arbil; Lady Bell: Personal Papers, II, p. 357; al-Qaysi, p. 285. During the Constantinople Conference for the settlement of the Anglo-Turkish dispute over the Wilayah of Mosul, the British, represented by Sir Percy Cox argued that the status quo frontier line of the northern frontier with Turkey should be extended further north to incorporate all Hakkari province in south-eastern Anatolia. The British Government felt this would provide a guarantee for the establishment of the Assyrians as "a single community." Turkey rejected this additional British demand, and the negotiations reached a deadlock. In September 1924, a serious clash took place between Turkish troops and the Assyrian militia. This resulted in "unspeakable atrocities" being committed by the Turkish troops. In 1925, while the Council of the League was holding its deliberations on the Mosul dispute, both Turkey and Britain were

using the Assyrians and Kurds as pawns in their attempts to establish influence in the disputed territory. In September 1925, the League sent the Laidoner Commission to the area to investigate the alleged frontier violations. (See: League of Nations, Official Journal, Minutes of the thirty-Seven Session of the Council, Dec. 7-16, 1925.

123. 'Iraq Administrative Report for the Year 1925, p. 21; al-Qaysi, pp. 285-6; Air. 23/309, Report No. Y4009, Sept. 23, 1925; Teleg. Sept. 3, 1925, Air Staff Intelligence to AHQ, 'Iraq; U.S. Diplomatic Records, 'Iraq, "'Iraq's Cabinet Members of the New Ministry," Rep. No. 98, Aug. 1, 1925, Consulate, Baghdad. Marshall Salmond, the Commander of the 'Iraq Air Force, was honoured with the "Medal of Kurdistan" due to his role in leading RAF operations in Kurdistan. (See: Zhiyānawa, Oct. 4, 1925.)

124. League of Nations, Decision Relating to the Turco-Iraq Frontier Adopted by the Council of the League of Nations, Geneva, December 16, 1925, Miscellaneous No. 17, 1925 (Cnd. 2562) (London: HMSO, 1925.)

125. League of Nations, Question of Frontier Between 'Iraq and Turkey, p. 89.

126. King Faisal, p. 215; Great Britain, Parliament, Colonial Office, Treaty Between the United Kingdom and 'Iraq Regarding the Duration of the Treaty Between the United Kingdom and 'Iraq of October 10, 1922, Signed at Baghdad Jan. 13, 1926 (London: HMSO, 1926).

127. BHCF, 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5, Teleg. No. 543, Oct. 1, 1923; "Post Frontier Settlement," Apr. 12, 1925, H.C. Baghdad; FO. 371/11460, letter. Residency, Baghdad, Feb. 10, 1926, B.H. Bourdillon to Amery. The report of the Commission of Enquiry indicates that seven-tenths of the inhabitants of the disputed territories were Kurds whose demands ranged from complete independence to autonomy under British rule. (See: League of Nations, Question of Frontier Between 'Iraq and Turkey, pp. 57-8, 76.

128. FO. 371/10826, "Mosul," Despatch No. 840, Eastern Dept. Nov. 16, 1925; 10825, E2731/32/65, No. 1, May 9, 1925, Enclosure No. 1, S.H. Dobbs to Amery. British officials viewed the Kurdish tribes' expressed desire for independence as a reflection of the latter's world-view. They wished to live in "a utopian state free of all limits on their freedom." (See: Air. 23/411, "The Tribes of Southern Kurdistan," S.S.O. Kirkuk, Feb. 18, 1926.)

129. Air. 23/411, Memo. No. G.0.118. Secretariat of High Commissioner for 'Iraq, Baghdad, Feb. 26, 1926 to Air H.Q.

130. al-Ḥasanī, Tārikh al-'Irāq, II, p. 133.

131. H.C. Parliamentary Debate: 189, p. 1925.
132. FO. 371/11460, Enclosure No. 3, Letter. Feb. 10, 1926, H.B. Bourdillon to Amery, Residency Baghdad.
133. FO. 371/11460, Enclosure No. 5, Letter. Feb. 10, 1926; Baghdad Times, Jan. 22, 1926.
134. FO. 371/11460, Enclosure No. 3, "Extract from the Proceedings of the 13th Meeting of 'Iraq Chambers of Deputies. Held on Thursday, 21st January, 1926." 11460, Memo. No. 201, Enclosure No. 4, Jan. 24, 1926, from the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers to All Ministries.
135. Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report by His Britannic Majesty's Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of 'Iraq for the Year 1926 (Colonial No. 29) (London: HMSO, 1927), pp. 1415; FO. 371/11460, "Memorandum on the Administration of the Kurdish Districts in 'Iraq," Feb. 10, 1926, by B.H. Bourdillon, the Acting H.C. Baghdad. The memorandum provided the following details: 1) Out of the total of fifty-seven administrative officials of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of the Interior in Kurdistan, forty-three were Kurds; 2) The Ministry of Justice employed thirteen judges and top administrative officials, ten of whom were Kurds, and cases were held in Kurdish. The 'Iraqi Government employed fifty-four officials in other departments such as waqf, immigration, and customs, thirty-eight of whom were Kurds. (See: Special Report on Progress of 'Iraq, pp. 261-2.)
136. Minorski, "The Mosul Question", pp. 40-1.
137. See: Aksam, editorials for 17-18 December, 1925, cited in William Spencer, pp. 173-75.
138. Confidential: US Diplomatic Post Records, American Embassy (Constantinople), Despatch No. 1823, March 12, 1926, to Secretary of State; CO. 577/1111, Teleg. Nov. 23, 1925, Lindsay to Amery; FO. 371/10837, Despatch No. 1044, "Diwan of the Council of Ministers," Baghdad, April 16, 1925 to HC, Baghdad; 10826 Despatch No. 840, "Mosul," Lindsay to Chamberlain, Nov. 16, 1925; ed. John Barnes and David Nicholson, The Leo Amery Diaries, 2 Vols., (London: Hutchinson Publishing, 180), 1, p. 457.
139. BDFP Vol. 1:79, Sir W. Tyrrel to R. Lindsay Const. No. 151, Dec. 27, 1926; Letter S.W. Tyrrel to Lindsay, Dec. 30, 1925, p. 497.
140. BDFP, Ser. 1A, 1:442.43, "Translation of M. Mussolini's Record of his Conversation with Sir A. Chamberlain at Leghorn on Sep. 30, [126], cited in

Noel Spencer, p. 193.

141. BDFP. Ser. 1A, 1:762, Teleg. No. 531, Oct. 16, 1925, Lindsay to Chamberlain.

142. Cab. 24/175, Cab. Paper. No. 472, letter, Oct. 23, 1925, Lindsay to Chamberlain; Foreign Policy Association, p. 12; BDFP. Ser. 1A. vol. 1:807, Teleg. No. 561 Jan. 29, 1926, Lindsay to Chamberlain; letter. Jan. 12, 1926, Lindsay to S.W. Tyrrel, London; Hugo F. Spender, "The Mosul Question at Geneva," Fortnightly Review, Nov. 1925, p. 609.

143. CO. 370/86/38, Teleg. No. 133. Dec. 5, 1925, Lindsay to Chamberlain; FO. 371/11458, Despatch. No. 940/4340/8/1925, British Embassy, Angora to F.O. Jan. 4, 1926.

144. DBFP, Ser. 1A. 1:798, Teleg. No. 554, Sir R.W. Tyrrel to Lindsay, Dec. 30, 1925; 1/762. Teleg. No. 531. Oct. 16, 1925, Lindsay to Chamberlain.

145. Economist, Feb. 20, 1926, "The 'Iraq Treaty Debate; BDFP. Ser. 1A. Vol. 1:797. letter. Sir. W. Tyrell, to Lindsay, Dec. 30, 1925. During the 1920's, the Kurds presented a similar dilemma to the U.S.S.R. Most Kurdish intellectuals and tribal chieftains were unhappy with the regimes in Turkey, Iran and 'Iraq, and would have been glad to receive Soviet aid for the formation of a Soviet-oriented Kurdish government. Thus, the Kurdish question provided a "ready-made" device for the Soviet regime to destabilize the Middle East. Although the temptation for the Soviets to form a pro-Moscow Kurdish regime was very strong, it was always counterbalanced by the Soviet realization that such a policy would seriously harm their relations with the Arabs, Turks and Persians (See: Howell, p. 319.)

146. Economist, Feb. 20, 1926, "The 'Iraq Treaty Debate."

147. BDFP, Ser. 1A. 1:819-20, Feb. 8, 1926, Despatch. No. 570. memo. by Sir R.L. Lindsay.

148. Ibid., p. 820.

149. H.C. Parliamentary Debate 191: p. 2180.

150. BDFP, Ser. 1A. Vol. 1:810-12, Cab. Paper. No. 89, March 3, 1926.

151. The Leo Amery Diaries, I, p. 403; Foreign Office, Turkey No. 1 (1926) Treaty Between the United Kingdom, and 'Iraq, and Turkey, Regarding the Settlement of Frontier Between Turkey and 'Iraq Together with the Notes Exchanged. Angora: Jan. 5, 1926 (Cmd. 2679) (London: HMSO, 1926.)

152. BHCF, 13/14 Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5, Despatch No. 1/ 407 March 19, 1926, Dobbs to Amery, 'Iraq Administrative Report for the Year 1926, p. 23; Air. 23/411, Baghdad, Residency, No. B.C. 1618, July 22, 1926; FO. 371/1035 Despatch No. 523, Enclosure No. 1 by Gallian-Smith to Percy Loraine, Tabriz. Aug. 23, 1925.

153. Air. 23/411, Despatch No. 3.0.254, Residency, Baghdad, Oct. 21, 1926. In August 1926, Dr. Ahmad Sabri asked for 1,000,000 pound sterling from the British government to enable the Kurds to establish an independent Kurdistan under British mandate. The British government refused this request, and warned the exiled Turkish Kurds not to approach the frontier region. When they failed to heed this warning, they were arrested and expelled to Syria. (See: FO. 371/11480. Despatch N.S. B/724 Criminal Investigation Dept. Baghdad. Aug. 21, 1926; Al, Mosul Liwa. Despatch No. 5/3424, July 28, 1926.

154. FO. 371/11468, Intelligence Report. No. 25, Dec. 7th, 1926.

155. FO. 371/12255, Despatch. Dec. 1, 1926, from HC to S.S. Col.

156. FO. 371/11494, Teleg. No. 209, Sept. 7, 1926; Arfa, pp. 65-7; Spencer Noel, pp. 290-3.

157. FO. 371/11494, Teleg. No. 596, Aug. 23, 1926, British Nission, Moscow to F.O.

158. FO. 371/11491. Teleg. Oct. 20, 1926.

159. FO. 371/11468, Intelligence Report No. 19, Sept. 14, 1926; 11491, Despatch. No. 5.0. 12663, Nov. 3, 1926, Residency, Baghdad.

160. League of Nations, Permanent Mandate Commission, 10th Session, Sept. 1926, p. 63; BHCF. 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5, "Shaikh Mahmud: Aide Memoir"; FO. 371/11491, Teleg. No. 416, Aug. 30, 1926, HC to S.S. Col; Teleg. No. 106, July 10, 1926, HMG Charge d'Affaires, Tehran to HC. Baghdad.

161. The Anglo-'Iraqi Judicial Agreement of March 25, 1924 provided privileges in lieu of the Ottoman capitulations, which were suspended for the duration of the Agreement. The consent of the fourteen member-states of the League who had previously enjoyed the rights granted to them by the Capitulations in 'Iraq, was also obtained in return for similar rights guaranteed by the Judicial Agreement. (See: Noel Spencer, pp. 267-8.)

162. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5, "Shaikh Mahmud: Aide Memoir."

163. FO. 371/11491. Despatch No. C. 1265/26, July 1, 1926.
164. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5, "Shaikh Mahmud: Aide Memoir."
165. FO. 371/11491, Despatch No. S.B. 829/6/4, 'Iraq, Police Criminal Investigation Dept. to Minister of Interior, Baghdad; Despatch No. 329, July 13, 1926, Enclosure No. 1 in No. 1, memo. "Incidents on 'Iraq-Persia Boundary," July 1925-June 1926; 11468, Intelligence Report. No. 25, Dec. 7, 1926.
166. FO. 371/11468, Intelligence Report, No. 25, Dec. 7, 1926.
167. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5, "Monthly Report for Kirkuk," Dec. 1926.
168. Confidential US Diplomatic Post Records, Despatch 469. Nov. 10, 1926. Consul, Baghdad to Secretary of State; FO. 371/11491, Letter from Shaikh Mahmud to HC. Baghdad. Jan. 27, 1927; Teleg. No. 304. S.S.Col. to HC Baghdad, July 16, 1926; Teleg. No. 352, HC to S.S.Col.; Teleg. No. 449, Sept. 15, 1926, H.C. to S.S.Col.
169. FO. 371/11491, memo. by Cornwallis, No. 42926/27/SL, Oct. 9, 1926, Ministry of Interior, Baghdad.
170. FO. 371/12288, Persia. No. 31, Feb. 1, 1927. "Memorandum on 'Iraq Government Negotiation with Shaikh Mahmud of Sulaimani," by Mr. Clive.
171. 'Iraq Administrative Report for the Year 1926, p. 15; Zhiyanawa, No. 80, June 2, 1927; BHCF. 13/14, vol. 5, Events in Kurdistan, Despatch No. C/252 A1, Sulaimani, June 1, 1927, Letter from Cornwallis to Shaikh Mahmud, June 5, 1926; FO. 371/1149, memo. by Cornwallis, 42726/27/SL, Oct. 9, 1926; FO. 371/12288, Enclosure I trans. of a Private Note from the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs to His Majesty's Minister, Tehran, Jan. 17, 1927; 11491, Teleg. No. 496, Oct. 15, 1926; Kamāl Nūrī Ma'rūf, "Chand Rastyak Darbaryī Murkirdinī Raykawtnam-ī Sālī 1927 La Niwan Shaikh Maḥmūdū Karbadastanda," Karwān, No. 134 (1989), pp. 50-2.

## Chapter 7

## THE FULFILLMENT OF A POLICY

During the period 1927-1931, British policy in Kurdistan was drawn up with the intention of completing the gradual integration of the Kurdish regions into the 'Iraqi state, and preventing the nationalist Kurds from disrupting regional security. Meanwhile, throughout the period, the British authorities exerted continuous pressure on the 'Iraqi government to carry out its past promises to the Kurds with regard to the attainment of administrative autonomy in the Kurdish liwā's.

#### The Causes of the September 1930 Rising

Although the period after the Mosul Settlement until 1930 was described as "years of comparative quiescence"<sup>1</sup> the Kurdish struggle for autonomy and an independent state continued unabated. In fact, the second half of the 1920's witnessed noticeable growth of Kurdish nationalism in 'Iraq and Turkey. In 'Iraq this was evident from the many instances in which the Kurdish deputies in the Majlis (Parliament) acted as one bloc in pursuing Kurdish nationalist rights, and the formation of numerous Kurdish nationalist organizations. In April 1926 the Zanistiy Literary Club was formed by Kurdish Efendis in Sulaymānīya. Its aim was the dissemination of secular values among the Kurds, but it soon became a vehicle for the propagation of nationalist ideas through its night classes and through its organ, Zhiyān. The club established branches in Mosul, Arbīl and Kirkuk. In 1927,

the government realized that the club had become a semi-political Kurdish nationalist platform, so it was closed down.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, on February 2, 1926, six Kurdish members of parliament, as well as some Kurdish notables from Sulaymānīya and Kirkuk held a secret meeting and formulated an appeal to 'Abd al-Muhsin Beg al-Sa'dun, then Prime Minister, urging him to implement the Mosul Award safeguards with regard to Kurdish rights. Their appeal called for: 1) Kurdish to be the official language of all 'Iraq's parliamentary procedures; 2) all officials in the Kurdish liwā's to be Kurds; 3) and one-third of the 'Iraqi cabinet and the officials of the central government to be Kurds. The Kurdish members of parliament agreed that should the government fail to meet their demands, they would leave the ruling party Hizb al-Taqaaddum (Party of Progress) headed by 'Abd al-Muhsin en bloc. The 'Iraqi Premier met the petitioners and assured them that their demands would be given serious consideration.<sup>3</sup>

During this period, Kurdish nationalism was not confined only to the intelligensia. In a report on the Kurdish movement prepared by the British Air Ministry in 1927, the tribal chieftains of the powerful tribes such as Pizhder, Dizā'ī, Jāf, Hawrāman and Khoshnaw were "fiercely nationalists". The report adds that "...Any Kurd at heart is a firm believer in the idea of Kurdistan independence, and would be prepared to fight for it."<sup>4</sup> Another report written by British intelligence states:

"that an independent Kurdistan is bound to come, probably at some very remote period, is as sure as is the fact that Kurds can never mix amicably with either Turks, Arabs or Persians, as sure as was the rise of Poland and Tzecho-Slovakia; the evolution of Kurdistan is but the last stage in the inevitable disintegration of the Ottoman Empire."<sup>5</sup>

This movement was not confined to the 'Iraqi Kurds alone. In 1926, a number of exiled Kurdish emigres from Turkey, Iran and 'Iraq formed the Khoybun, (Independence) a Pan-Kurdish nationalist party. In October 1927 at a meeting in Beirut, Lebanon, the formation of the Khoybun was officially announced. The Amir Jaladet Badr Khan was elected the first president of the society. The members of Khoybun worked closely with the Armenian Dashnak Nationalist Party. The Armenian nationalists appeared to have been instrumental in the formation of the Khoybun, which in 1928 had started a revolt against Turkey in the Ararat mountain region on the 'Iraqi, Iranian and Turkish frontiers. The Kurdish nationalists through their Armenian connections received financial aid from the Greek and Italian governments who hoped to use the Kurds in order to weaken Mustafa Kamal. Khoybun members were active in northern Kurdistan, Iran, Rawanduz, and among the Kurdish emigres in Constantinople, Aleppo, Tabriz, Baghdad, Cairo and Paris.<sup>6</sup> Although Khoybun did not have a large membership in 'Iraqi Kurdistan, Sayyid Taha of Nehri and several important Kurdish notables on the frontier were in contact with the Ararat rebels and two

Kurdish officers of the 'Iraqi army joined the revolt.<sup>7</sup>

The Khoybun's activities presented a serious challenge to the British authorities in 'Iraq and the whole British policy of preserving the stability of the region during the second half of the 1920's. This was still a strategic goal of Britain in her attempt to contain the ever-increasing threat of Bolshevism. Kurdish nationalism, the British thought, would provide the machinery, though still in embryonic form, for organized revolt. The British officials were afraid that skilled manipulators provided with gold or the hot-headed Kurdish nationalists, who entertained utopian ideas of an independent Kurdistan, would be able to throw northern 'Iraq, northwestern Iran and southeastern Turkey into a state of anarchy which would have very serious consequences for the area. Although Bolshevik Russia was still not interested in destabilizing 'Iraq and its neighbours, should they be willing to destroy the equilibrium created by Britain in the region, the Kurdish movement would be an effective tool to do this.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, in 1928 some Khoybun activists were using 'Iraq's frontier with Turkey to aid the Ararat revolt. Such activities constituted a threat to the Anglo-'Iraq efforts to establish friendly ties between Turkey and 'Iraq.<sup>9</sup>

Besides, the Kurdish nationalist activities of the Khoybun offered hope for those Kurds who had "strong deep-rooted" antipathy towards the Arabs. According to British officials, the 'Iraqi administration which was established in Kurdistan after the failure of Shaikh Mahmud's second administration, "was not, in general, popular with the Kurds." Except for those who held high government posts or had

beneficial trade ties with Arab 'Iraq, few Kurds were content with the then existing 'Iraqi administration in the Kurdish liwa's. Therefore, the strength of the government in the Kurdish regions rested "almost solely" on the Kurds' knowledge of the ever ready British support for 'Iraq and the ability of the RAF aeroplanes to suppress any Kurdish defiance by wrecking havoc in their country.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the creation of Khoybun in Turkey had revived among the 'Iraqi Kurds the "dream of union" with the Kurds in Turkey, thus renewing the threat to the internal unity of 'Iraq which the British and 'Iraqi authorities had done a great deal to eliminate.<sup>11</sup> For these reasons, in 1928, the British government persuaded the French authorities in Syria, where some Khoybun activists resided, to assist the Turkish government in cutting the Ararat rebels' supply line from Syria's frontier with Turkey.<sup>12</sup> The British Residency in Baghdad, with the aid of the Colonial and Foreign Offices, prepared and distributed a list of persons to whom it was deemed undesirable, on account of their connection with the Khoybun, to issue visas to 'Iraq. The British officials in Iran were told to watch for anti-Turkey Kurdish activities as well.<sup>13</sup>

The threat of Kurdish nationalism abroad to peace in the northern liwa's was further complicated by the growing awareness among the Kurds that the Baghdad government was reluctant to carry out their previous promises to them, especially the December 16, 1925 stipulations of Mosul Award which provided for administrative autonomy in Kurdistan. In November 1926, Sir Henry Dobbs noticed that the 'Iraqi government was not properly heeding their commitment to

the League with regard to the appointment of Kurdish officials in the predominantly Kurdish liwā's. He was forced to remind the 'Iraqi government of their pledges to the Kurds.<sup>14</sup> Eleven Kurdish deputies submitted a memorandum to the parliament and to the Residency indicating their concern about the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the government to carry out promises given to the Kurds. The petitioners suggested: firstly, the creation of a "Kurdish Bureau", either in Kirkuk or Arbīl to be solely responsible for the administration of all southern Kurdistan, and secondly, that Kurdish liwā's be loosely connected to the central authorities through the High Commissioner. The Kurdish deputies' demand was virtually a call for the re-establishment of the old Turkish Wilāyah system.<sup>15</sup>

During the years 1928-1929, Kurdish complaints against the government were more vocal. The Zanistiy club and Peshkawtin (progress), a secret society which was formed in 1927, were involved in anti-government activities. These involved instigating the Kurds to voice their protests against the "arabization" of Kurdistan.<sup>16</sup> In June, Kurdish deputies led by Muḥammad Amīn Zakī, the deputy from Sulaymānīya, a veteran politician and an ex-Ottoman official, submitted two reports to the parliament and to the Minister of Education which pointed out the Kurds' dismay with the government's failure so far to carry out their obligations towards the Kurds, especially with regard to Kurdish education. The report indicated that Kurdish education had not been given proper attention and recommended the creation of a "Permanent Committee" in the Ministry of Education to oversee the writing and translation of Kurdish textbooks. The report

also suggested the formation of a Kurdish Education Area to administer the affairs of education in the Kurdish liwā's.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, some discontented Kurdish nationalists sent a delegation to Pirān village in Iran, where Shaikh Mahmud was residing, to inform the latter about the growing discontent among the Kurds. The Shaikh had apparently expressed readiness to return to lead them against the government at an opportune time.<sup>18</sup>

In 1929, Sir Gilbert Clayton, the new High Commissioner told the 'Iraqi government that he was constantly receiving petitions and Madbatas (an official report or protocol) from Kurdish notables and chieftains complaining about the government replacing the local Kurdish administrators with non-Kurds.<sup>19</sup> In April, six Kurdish deputies representing the Sulaymānīya, Arbīl, Kirkuk and Kurdish qadās in Mosul, presented to the High Commissioner and the 'Iraqi Government a detailed memorandum claiming that past pledges to the Kurds had been "to a large extent", ignored by the government. The memorandum recommended: 1) that since the liwā' of Mosul was an exceptionally large province with twenty-four qadās, of which nine were predominantly Kurdish, and that was difficult to administer, the Kurdish qadās, should form a new liwā' (of Dihok); 2) that the administration of Kirkuk, Sulaymānīya, Arbīl and the suggested liwā' of Dihok, be unified and presided over by a competent Kurdish Administrative Inspector; 3) that since the Minister of Education had failed to give effect to the League's safeguards with regard to Kurdish education, a Kurdish Education Area be formed and entrusted with educational affairs in the predominantly Kurdish liwā's; 4) that

the provisions of the Land Code be implemented and the tāpū fees be waived for two years in order to encourage people to come forward for registration of their land; 5) and that of methods of fair distribution of resources throughout 'Iraq based on the needs of each region be adopted.<sup>20</sup>

The Prime Minister in Baghdad consulted the High Commissioner on the reply which was to be presented to the Kurdish deputies. They both agreed that the creation of a unified Kurdish administrative unit within 'Iraq would be inadmissible for it would help to keep alive separatist tendencies in the region. They also rejected the call for the formation of a Kurdish Liwā' in Dihok. As for the rest of the recommendations in the memorandum, the 'Iraqi and British governments agreed to address them in future.<sup>21</sup> Earlier in 1926, Mr. J. Hall, a senior official of the Colonial Office, observed that any "Kurdish enclave" was bound to endanger 'Iraq's territorial unity.<sup>22</sup>

The events of the years 1926-1929 indicate that the 'Iraqi government's Kurdish policy was drawn up in close consultation with the British authorities. The emergence of new Kurdish nationalist organizations and the numerous petitions by Kurds demanding Kurdish rights are indications of the growth of Kurdish nationalism, and increased feelings of resentment among the Kurds. The resentment reached a climax with the signing of the 1930 Treaty of Alliance between 'Iraq and the United Kingdom which was free of safeguards for Kurdish rights.

### The Treaty of 1930 and the Kurds

Although the Treaty of 1926 provided that the duration of the Mandate in Iraq be extended for twenty-five more years, on December 4, 1927, the 'Iraqi and British governments signed an abortive new treaty which obliged Britain to recommend 'Iraq's admission to the League of Nations in 1932. Disagreement between 'Iraq and the United Kingdom led to the non-ratification of the Treaty owing to the following factions: The provision of the two subsidiary bills on conscription, the signing of a new financial arrangement between the two parties, and the refusal of the 'Iraqi government that its admission to League membership in 1932 be conditional on the recommendation of the British government as to whether "all went well" in internal affairs and the country was able to maintain a certain degree of progress. However, the arrival in March 1929 of the new High Commissioner, Sir Gilbert Clayton, who was more sympathetic to 'Iraq's wish to be rid of the mandate than Sir Henry Dobbs, and the coming to power of a Labour government in London, which was more desirous of military disengagement from 'Iraq, brought about the November 1929 announcement by the British government that they were ready to unconditionally recommend 'Iraq's admission to the League in 1932.<sup>23</sup> In March, Nuri Pasha al-Sa'id formed a new cabinet in Baghdad whose main mandate was the signing of a new treaty to regulate the relationship between Britain and 'Iraq during the post-mandate period. The new cabinet included Ja'far Pasha al-'Askari, as acting Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, and Jamil al-Madf'i, in the Ministry of Interior portfolio. In June, King

Faisal dissolved the parliament and secured the election of pro-Treaty deputies. On July 1st, the Treaty was signed between the two countries in the midst of popular opposition to it throughout 'Iraq.<sup>24</sup>

The July 1930 Treaty brought the Kurdish question to the forefront of 'Iraqi politics. While the Treaty was still being negotiated, during the months of February to July, the situation was very tense in the north. There was anxiety among the Kurds and the question which was constantly asked was what would become of them when British control was terminated.<sup>25</sup> This anxiety had manifested itself in several small demonstrations organized by the Kurdish nationalists in the Kurdish towns and the emergence of a number of secret societies, some old and others new. The new societies, such as Sarkawtin (victory), Yekeytī Galī Kurdān (The Union of Kurds), and Nadi al-Irtiqa' al-Kurdi (The Society for the Advancement of Kurds), were involved in anti-'Iraqi and anti-British activities. They encouraged people to write petitions to the League of Nations and distributed pamphlets which spoke of British betrayal.<sup>26</sup> In February 1930, Ma'ruf Jiyawuk, the Kurdish deputy from Arbil asked Nuri Pasha in the parliament whether the new Treaty would contain safeguards for Kurdish rights.<sup>27</sup> During the months leading up to the signing of the Treaty the Residency in Baghdad was "bombarded" with questions, Madbatas and petitions sent by the Kurdish notables and the powerful chieftains requesting the British government not to ignore Kurdish rights in their negotiations with the 'Iraqi government. On April 8th, for instance, the High Commissioner met some of these petitioners and

told them that they could count on his influence with the 'Iraqi government to secure their rights.<sup>28</sup> In an attempt to defuse a critical situation, Nuri Pasha was prevailed upon by Major Young, the then acting High Commissioner, to make a policy statement on 'Iraq's Kurdish policy. The prime minister promptly reiterated his government's commitments and willingness to carry out all pledges made to the Kurds. He also promised that he would order a review of the policy in the north with the view of addressing Kurdish grievances, especially the issue of the replacement of Kurdish officials in the north by non-Kurds.<sup>29</sup>

On July 1st the Treaty was published but contained no provisions on Kurdish rights. Both Britain and 'Iraq claimed that the Treaty intended solely to regulate the relationship between two independent sovereign states after the termination of the mandate.<sup>30</sup> The Kurdish nationalists did not accept this argument, for they maintained that the stipulations of the December 1925 Resolution of the League provided for "guarantees" which the Mandatory Power (Britain) was supposed to provide in order to make sure that the 'Iraqi Government would carry out their obligations toward the Kurds.<sup>31</sup>

Consequently, the Kurdish nationalists started a new campaign of appeals and petitions. On July 16th, the Municipal Council of Sulaymānīya decided to boycott the election of deputies for the parliament. The Kurds in Arbīl liwā' followed suit.<sup>32</sup> On July 22nd, the Kurdish nationalists organized a petition to the League protesting the Treaty's silence on Kurdish rights. This petition had the support of the most influential Kurdish chieftains and religious personalities in the Kurdish

liwā's. They also claimed that according to the League's Resolution of December 16, 1925 they were entitled to autonomy.<sup>33</sup> The Sulaymānīya notables sent a special appeal to the League which reiterated the Kurdish grievances with regard to the new Treaty. The petitioners also pointed out that the administrative officials, mostly non-Kurds, had been intimidating the Kurds to disclaim their national rights. The appeal goes on to say:

"Gathering from the behaviour of the Arab officials at a time when the Mandate still exists, we should assume the present administration will be worse than of the Turks, if the Mandate is ended."

The Sulaymānīya notables also contended that the League's 1925 Resolution on Mosul Affairs granted them the right to establish a Kurdish government.<sup>34</sup>

The Kurds' petitions appear to have emanated, to a certain extent, from their own erroneous interpretations of the stipulations of the 1925 Resolution on Mosul Settlement. There was a notion widely held among the Kurds to the effect that the League's resolution had entitled them to an independent Kurdish government in the north. This conviction was deliberately spread among the Kurds by the Kurdish nationalists, who led their people to believe that upon the termination of the mandate, the British government was determined to establish a Kurdish government in the north or maintain their present mandate in Kurdistan.<sup>35</sup> 'Iraqi and British officials maintained that this mistaken interpretation was to a large

extent the cause of the Kurdish agitation and petition writing. Moreover, the belief that Britain was about to establish a Kurdish government was straining Britain's relationship with the neighbouring countries of Turkey and Iran, who seem to have also viewed it with great concern due to their own Kurdish problems. Therefore, the British felt that such an erroneous notion among the Kurds "should be authoritatively contradicted" at the earliest possible time.<sup>36</sup>

With this end in mind, after considerable discussion between the Residency and the 'Iraqi Government, Major Young, and Ja'far Pasha agreed to make a joint tour of the Kurdish liwā's. Major Young managed to convince the 'Iraqi cabinet to use the opportunity to announce a liberal policy to the Kurds. This policy consisted of the government's intention to decree a bill which was to give effect to the stipulations of the 1925 League's Resolution with regard to the Kurds; making Kurdish the official language of administration, justice and education in the predominantly Kurdish liwā's. This was called the Kurdish Language Law.<sup>37</sup> On August 10th to 13th, while Major Young was accompanying Ja'far Pasha in the tour of the northern liwā's, he repeated the following announcement to the Kurdish leaders in Kirkuk, Sulaymāniya, and Arbīl:

"I have seen it suggested in certain irresponsible quarters that it is the deliberate policy of His Britannic Majesty's Government to encourage Kurdish nationalism to the embarrassment not only of the 'Iraq Government, but also the friendly Turkish and Persian Governments.

Nothing could be further from the truth, anyone who imagines that by coming to me, he would get any encouragement in such a policy is making a great mistake."<sup>38</sup>

Ja'far Pasha, said his government's position with regard to the Kurdish rights would not change with the signing of the new Treaty. He went on to say:

"Iraq Government is firmly resolved to take into due consideration the promises which have already been given by them with the object of satisfying the aspirations of our brothers...I announce our readiness to draft a Kurdish Language Law and put it into application...you should feel certain that we are in full agreement over the policy which I have just announced to you."<sup>39</sup>

The joint tour did not ease the situation, and it also added more fuel to an already explosive situation. The reception of the Acting Prime Minister and the Acting High Commissioner was far from cordial. The behaviour of the government officials in Sulaymānīya was "provocative". Just before the arrival of Ja'far Pasha and Major Young to the town, there was an unusual concentration of troops in and around Sulaymānīya and most parts of the town were picketed by troops with machine guns. Major Young asked Ja'far Pasha to order the withdrawal of the troops. This had a "most unfortunate effect" upon the general

atmosphere and the reception for the guests was far from cordial.<sup>40</sup> The situation was further aggravated when Ja'far Pasha threatened the Kurdish nationalists that, unless they stopped their activities, a massacre would take place similar to that which had occurred earlier between the anti-Treaty elements and the government troops in Karbala. This threat outraged the nationalists. Ramzi Beg, their spokesman replied that had it not been for British support no 'Iraqi troops could have reached Sulaymānīya and went on to say that unless Kurdish rights were granted, civil disobedience in the form of refusal to pay taxes would take place.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, throughout the tour protests against government policy toward Kurdistan was apparent. In Sulaimānīya there were demonstrations by the students, while in other Kurdish Liwa's the Kurds displayed an unprecedented unanimity in asking Major Young for the establishment of an independent Kurdish government under the mandate of the League, to which Major Young's answer was his government would only support those who were committed to the unity of 'Iraq.<sup>42</sup>

Upon his return to Baghdad, Jamil al-Madfa'i the Minister of Interior, who had accompanied Ja'far Pasha during the late tour of Kurdish regions, ordered the dismissal of Towfiq Wahbi, the Mutasarrif of Sulaymānīya on the grounds of "incompetence". This was apparently the "last straw" between the moderate Kurdish nationalists and the government, for Towfiq Wahbi was popular in Sulaymānīya and seems to have been regarded as a champion of the moderate party who had earlier stood up to Shaikh Mahmud's pro-Turkey policies.<sup>43</sup> The

'Iraqi government charged the ex-Mutaşarrif of complicity in demonstrations which took place during the joint tour and he was also accused of being the driving force behind the election boycott and the petitions written to the League. The Kurdish nationalists in their turn considered the dismissal of the Mutaşarrif as a blow to their national aspirations and a further indication of the government's unwillingness to carry out the liberal policy which had been announced to the Kurds during the tour.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, the nationalists managed to gain the support of the Sulaymānīya notables and most of the tribal chieftains in the liwā' for a petition which was sent to the Residency requesting the re-installment of Wahbi.<sup>45</sup>

It is clear that the joint tour of August 10-13 failed to diffuse the tension or help to remove any of the grievances; instead it added more to the old ones. The timing of the tour was "too late" and must be considered as another instance of British policy being drawn up on a hand-to-mouth basis.<sup>46</sup>

Was the government actually failing to implement its past commitments to the Kurds up to September 1930, as numerous Kurdish petitions claimed? What were the motives and concerns which shaped the 'Iraqi Government's stand in the Kurdish liwā's during the years 1927-1930? What did the British government do as a Mandatory Power to see that the 'Iraqi government fulfilled its promises to the Kurds?

In discussing the first issue, it is useful to recall the pledges which were made to the Kurds prior to 1930 by both the British and 'Iraqi governments: 1) Sir Percy Cox's May 1921 Plan which promised the Kurds autonomy and the creation

of Dihok liwā' out of the Kurdish qadās of Mosul; 2) the December 24, 1922 Joint Declaration by the British and 'Iraqi governments that they would establish a Kurdish government in southern Kurdistan; 3) the July 11, 1923 Resolution of the Council of Ministers during the election of the Constituent Assembly which indicated that the 'Iraqi government did not intend to appoint Arab officials in the predominantly Kurdish liwā's; 4) the January 21, 1926 speech by 'Abd al-Muhsin al-Sa'dun, in which he promised to grant the Kurds administrative autonomy; 5) and the December 16, 1925 Mosul Award by the League which had stipulations providing for "guarantees" and "administrative measures" to ensure the Kurds' rights within 'Iraq.

It seems that during the years 1927-1930 the British authorities presented two entirely different pictures of the 'Iraqi government's policy in the north. On the one hand they were telling the League of Nations that the 'Iraqi government was honouring their undertakings to the Kurds. On the other hand, in their correspondence with London and the 'Iraqi government, the British officials argued persistently that the government was not honouring their promises to the Kurds.

It has already been noted that in 1926 the British government reported to the League that the 'Iraqi government's Kurdish policy was "in full accord" with the League of Nations' stipulations with regard to the Kurds' rights. In their annual report on 'Iraq to the League, for the year 1927, the British government wrote that the policy of 'Iraq with regard to the special treatment of the predominantly

Kurdish areas, which was outlined in the last report "has remained unchanged".<sup>47</sup> The 1928 administrative report on 'Iraq said that Sulaymānīya liwā' was one of the "best administered and least troublesome" regions of 'Iraq. Although the report mentions some dissatisfaction with the government's Kurdish education policy, it tends to agree with the government's view that Kurds' demands were unrealisable because the country was not in a position financially to be able to establish separate training colleges and high schools for the Kurds. The report also mentions that the government was doing its best to translate and print Kurdish textbooks.<sup>48</sup> The administrative report of the year 1930 states that the government was involved in the implementation of a "constructive programme" to satisfy the aspirations of the Kurds.<sup>49</sup> The Special Report on Progress in Iraq for the Years 1921-1931 (327 pp.) which was prepared by the British government for the League of Nations, maintains that "In general, little fault could be found with the attitude of the 'Iraqi Government" with regard to their implementation of the League's stipulations on Kurdish rights.<sup>50</sup>

In addition, in October 1930, in their observation on the Kurdish petitions which were addressed to the League, the British officials argued that the Kurds' claim that most of the officials in the predominantly Kurdish liwā's were non-Kurds was "without foundation", that Nuri Pasha's cabinet was very sympathetic to the Kurds and that most officials in the north were either Kurds or Kurdish-speaking. The British memorandum on the Kurdish petitions goes on to support the 'Iraqi government's stand that the difficulty in the application of the

League's stipulations on Kurds was "due mainly" to the Kurds' "backwardness" and lack of a standard Kurdish language. As for the increase in the number of the non-Kurdish administrators in the Kurdish liwā's, which was mentioned by the petitioners, the memorandum contends that was to some extent unavoidable due to the expansion of services to the north and the lack of technically qualified Kurds to administer these.<sup>51</sup> Relying on the information provided mainly by Britain, the Permanent Mandate Commission (PMC), in its Nineteenth Session of November 1930, decided to express satisfaction that the government of 'Iraq was genuinely carrying out a generous and well-considered policy towards its Kurdish subjects.<sup>52</sup>

Nevertheless, in their private and secret correspondence, British officials were bitter and frustrated about the 'Iraqi government's failure to live up to their past promises and the stipulations of the League on Kurdish rights. In April 1930, numerous Kurdish complaints to the Residency forced Kanahan Cornwallis, the Advisor to the Minister of the Interior to write a report on the 'Iraqi government's performance in the north. This report, which was the result of several field trips and enquiries held by British officials on the spot, provides the following chart on the ratio of Kurdish and non-Kurdish officials in the predominantly Kurdish liwā's:

GAZETTED OFFICIALS                  NON-GAZETTED  
(1930)    OFFICIALS

K      T      A      C/J      K      T      A      C/J

Kirkuk	16	11	18	2	29	107	40	12
Arbil	18	5	4	1	95	23	34	--
Sulaymaniya	9	8	1	2	90	14	12	12
Kurdish Qadas in Mosul	11	3	14	4	46	8	43	35

NOTE: K = Kurd; T = Turk; A = Arab; C/J = Christian/Jew

As the chart demonstrates, the employment of so many non-Kurds was a "definite breach of pledges". In Sulaymāniya, where ninety-nine percent of the people were Kurds, no less than thirty percent of the officials were non-Kurds. All together there were 324 Kurdish officials, 165 Arabs, 180 Turcomans and Christians and Jews in the Kurdish liwa's. Thus the number of non-Kurds exceeds that of Kurds by ninety-three. Besides, all proceedings and correspondence in the Justice Departments in the area were in Arabic and no translation of the Penal Code existed. The report concluded its findings by stating that "no Kurdish child can be properly educated in Kurdish."<sup>53</sup> Edmonds, who was assistant to Cornwallis

in the Ministry of the Interior was similarly unsatisfied with the Government's implementation of their obligations to the Kurds. He writes that from 1926 to 1929 several Ministers of Education had tried to violate the stipulations of the League on Kurdish education. For instance, in 1929 the Minister of Education tried to persuade Sulaymānīya and Arbīl to use Arabic as a means of instruction. Having failed to convince the Kurds to do so, he caused inordinate delays in approving Kurdish language books and refused to appoint full-time translators in the Ministry. Edmonds adds, "Almost every other department of the administration would supply similar examples."<sup>54</sup> And in December 1930, Sir Francis Humphrys, the High Commissioner, wrote a report for the Secretary of State for Colonies in which he indicates that in spite of many assurances from Nuri Pasha to him, the government was not implementing their declared liberal Kurdish policy. He writes, for instance, that there were one hundred non-Kurdish officials in the Kurdish liwā's in violation of the stipulations of the League, according to which they had either to be transferred or be trained in Kurdish.<sup>55</sup>

It was these hidden facts which gave rise to a debate within the British government and between the British and 'Iraqi officials.

The officials in the Foreign and Colonial offices were reluctant to press the 'Iraqi government hard on Kurdish rights out of fear that Nuri Pasha's pro-British cabinet might fall due to the rising influence of the Arab Nationalist politicians in Baghdad, who regarded British concern for Kurdish rights with suspicion.<sup>56</sup> The British administration in 'Iraq was in favour of putting constant pressure on the

government officials to see that Kurdish rights were secured. The following observation of Sir Humphrys spells out the situation:

"Whatever comments His Britannic Majesty's Government may have thought fit to include in, or exclude from, their annual reports to the League, successive High Commissioners have never disguised in their conversation with the King and Prime Ministers their opinion that the stipulations of the League were not in fact, being satisfactorily fulfilled."<sup>57</sup>

In October 1930, Hall in the Colonial Office, wrote to the Residency in Baghdad expressing his sympathy with the British administration in 'Iraq and their anxiety over the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the 'Iraqi government to implement its Kurdish commitments. Hall adds that the 'Iraqi government's failure to honour their pledges to the Kurds "cannot be indefinitely concealed." Insufficient attention to the legitimate aspirations of the Kurds could not fail to reach the attention of the League in due time. Besides, Hall confessed that the shortcomings of the government "had not been frankly faced" when the British government sent their observations on the Kurdish petitions to the League.<sup>58</sup>

The debate between the 'Iraqi government and the British authorities was also tense. This was due partly to mutual distrust and partly due to disagreements concerning the policy to be pursued in the north. There was a widely held view among the 'Iraqi politicians to the effect that all difficulties were due to the

instigations of British officers of the RAF. A suspicion developed among the Baghdadi politicians, including King Faisal and Nuri Pasha, that Britain wished to jeopardize 'Iraq's entry into the League of Nations by inciting the Kurds against the government. The 'Iraqi government complained on several occasions that it suspected British intelligence officers of encouraging the Kurds to make exorbitant demands from the 'Iraqi government.<sup>59</sup>

The 'Iraqis' suspicions were not without some foundation for various reasons. In the past, as shown above, Britain had frequently used the threat of the Kurdish nationalist movement to 'Iraq's internal unity to coerce previous regimes to sign treaties and commercial concessions favourable to Britain. Besides, during the year 1928-1929, while Shaikh Mahmud was still in Persia, the British authorities had maintained secret contacts with him. According to a British intelligence report, in 1928, Shaikh Mahmud toured the frontier and had several meetings with the Kurdish chieftains, and British administrative officers. Moreover, in the spring of 1929, the office of the British Intelligence Service in Sulaymaniya sent Shaikh Mahmud one hundred shotgun cartridges as a present. In November Captain Gowan, the Administrative Officer of Sulaymānīya liwā' met him again, and Shaikh Mahmud had apparently requested a large subsidy.<sup>60</sup> Concerning the impact of these meetings on Anglo-'Iraqi relationships, Peter Sluglett, writes the following:

"It is not clear how far the Arab officials in Baghdad were aware of those

cordial relations, but there is obviously some foundation for Arab suspicions that the British were pursuing a clandestine policy. If not an alliance, at least of generous accommodation with Shaikh Mahmud. Such suspicions may help to explain the evident hostility on the part of Baghdadi politicians, and civil servants towards any...concession to Kurdistan."<sup>61</sup>

It is probable that the British authorities in 'Iraq had tried to maintain friendly contacts with Shaikh Mahmud across the frontier partly to discourage him from taking a hostile stand towards 'Iraq, which would have resulted in destabilizing the frontier with Persia. The British authorities had already done a great deal during the years 1926-1927 to accomplish stability in the area, as has been demonstrated above. Also, the British officials realized that as long as Shaikh Mahmud remained near the frontier and had contacts with the 'Iraqi Kurds, the Kurdish nationalist movement would remain alive. Consequently, the 'Iraqi government would always feel the threat of Kurdish separatism to the territorial unity of the country. As a result, King Faisal and Nuri Pasha would realize the significance of British aid to them and would not give in to the anti-British Arab nationalists. It is evident that Shaikh Mahmud was not unaware of this. In fact, he tried to manipulate it for his own cause. In May 1929, Gilbert Clayton sent Shaikh Mahmud some money and a letter asking him to remain out of politics and obey the government. The Shaikh replied:

"Don't think that my obedience to the British Government is for the sake of my properties...our obedience is to the British Government...and not to 'Iraq. Please think of this point for a moment. If we were entirely obedient to 'Iraq, would that suit you?"<sup>62</sup>

The British government was equally distrustful of the 'Iraqi government's intentions towards the Kurds. In September 1930, the Secretary of State for Colonies wrote to the Acting High Commissioner in Baghdad saying, "I doubt whether the Iraqi Government were fully implementing their pledges."<sup>63</sup> In numerous notes the officials in the Colonial Office express explicit feelings that the 'Iraqi Government was "dishonest" in their policy in Kurdistan.<sup>64</sup> The British officials in 'Iraq frequently complained that King Faisal, Nuri Pasha and most ministers were deliberately delaying the implementation of the stipulations of the League on Kurdish rights.<sup>65</sup>

The British and the 'Iraqis had a different understanding of the Kurdish question and consequently had different approaches to it. The Kurdish policy of the government was influenced by concern for national unity in 'Iraq, the Arab nationalists' hostility towards Kurdish nationalism, and 'Iraq's relationship with neighbouring Turkey and Persia. The Kurdish and Arab nationalists could not reconcile their aims. It has already been explained above how the Sulaymānīya nationalists refused to identify themselves as 'Iraqis and protested a Baghdad newspaper's mention of Sulaymānīya as a liwā of 'Iraq. In 1926, Sir Henry

Dobbs noted that 'Iraqi Arab politicians, though very enthusiastic about their own national rights, failed to appreciate the force of such sentiments among the Kurds.<sup>66</sup> In addition, the Pan-Arab 'Iraqis were against any concession to the Kurds whom they viewed as a threat to 'Iraq's Arab identity. Their attitude towards the Kurds ranged from willingness to let them separate from 'Iraq and "stew in their own juice" to a desire to see them "hanged for treason".<sup>67</sup> Jamil al-Madfa'i and 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qassab, two Ministers of the Interior, during the period 1927-1930, were fiercely anti-Kurd. The former was under the influence of Yasin al-Hashimi, a prominent Arab nationalist, who, as shown above, was always in favour of a military approach to the Kurdish question. Al-Madfa'i tried consistently to resist the implementation of a liberal policy in the north.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, the officials in charge of Mosul Area Education, who were also in charge of the administration of Education in Arbīl and the Kurdish qadās of Mosul, were unsympathetic to the Kurds.<sup>69</sup> King Faisal was not anti-Kurd. However, he held the view there was no benefit of trying to placate the Kurdish nationalists, who would eventually, if the opportunity came, join their compatriots across the frontier in Iran and Turkey. Moreover, both Faisal and Nuri Pasha shared the view that any concession to the Kurds would only encourage them to ask for more.<sup>70</sup> The Baghdadi politicians and the senior civil servants generally viewed the Kurds either as "brothers of the Arabs" among whom the detested enemy--the British--had sown dissension to weaken 'Iraq, or as "a parcel of frontier savages". The most moderate 'Iraqis regarded the Kurds as junior partners

to be tolerated, if they "behave and are grateful" for the privileges they were already enjoying, the British officials contended.<sup>71</sup>

The government feared that the implementation of their pledges to the Kurds, most of which had been forced upon them, would harm 'Iraq's national unity. The appointment of Kurds only in the Kurdish liwā's was bound to keep alive the separatist tendencies in the north.<sup>72</sup>

'Iraq was also anxious that their policy in Kurdistan not have an adverse effect on the country's relationships with Turkey and Iran. In December 1929, the Persian government offered their formal recognition of the 'Iraqi government. This was followed by the appointment of permanent representatives in both countries, and the formation of the Permanent Frontier Commission which was formed after the Turco-'Iraq frontier Commission. The presence of Simko on the 'Iraq-Iran frontier was a thorny issue in the bilateral relations of the two countries. In 1930, this troublesome Kurdish chieftain was eliminated.<sup>73</sup> But the Persian government remained, for the most part suspicious of the British government's policy in 'Iraqi Kurdistan. Persian government officials made several presentations to the 'Iraqis in which they displayed their dismay with 'Iraq's tolerance of Kurdish nationalism which they viewed as a threat to their own national security.<sup>74</sup>

Turco-'Iraqi relationships witnessed similar developments during the years 1928-1930. In June 1928, Turkey raised the status of their mission in Baghdad from a Consul-General to a Legation. In September, 'Iraq appointed Mr. Sabih Nash'at, an ex-Minister, in Angora as Minister Plenipot.<sup>75</sup> Since then, bilateral

relationships between the two countries had made progress. The 'Iraqi government was determined not to allow these important and delicate ties to be troubled by the Kurds. "...Iraq and Turkish interests were in perfect harmony as regards the Kurds", the 'Iraqi Charge d'Affaires in Ankara stated.<sup>76</sup> In 1930, the 'Iraqi government's intention to pursue a liberal policy in the north had alarmed the Turks who "violently" condemned it as a policy dictated by the British to destabilize Turkey. It is noteworthy that Turkey considered any concessions to the Kurds as an "unfriendly act".<sup>77</sup> The 'Iraqi government was bound to take Turkey's protest seriously, because the latter was involved in the suppression of a Kurdish revolt in the mountainous Ararat region. In September 1930, while Nuri Pasha was in Angora, he was approached by the Turkish Prime Minister to give his consent to the entry of Turkish troops into 'Iraqi territory on the frontier in an attempt to surround the rebels in Ararat. Nuri Pasha agreed in principle to Turkey's request, but he asked that the request be made in writing. Nuri consulted with the British officials in Baghdad, who told him that Turkey was involved in a policy of extermination of the Kurds and that 'Iraq's permission for Turkish troops to use 'Iraqi territory in this campaign would have an adverse impact on 'Iraq's image, which would affect her application for membership in the League. Therefore, Nuri Pasha rejected Turkey's request.<sup>78</sup> It is noteworthy that in 1930, Turkey and Iran were already coordinating their efforts in the suppression of the Ararat rebels. Turkey was allowed to send more troops into Iranian territory to encircle the rebels and Iranian troops were brought to the frontier to assist the Turkish forces.<sup>79</sup>

The British government had formulated an entirely different outlook toward the events in the Kurdish liwā's during the years 1927-1930. The 'Iraqis believed that the majority of Kurds except for a few hot-heads, were content with government policy. Thus the Ministers in direct charge of Kurdish policy held the view that any unrest in the Kurdish liwā's was being fostered by British officers eager to weaken 'Iraq. The British authorities, on the other hand, felt that the Kurdish regions were bound to 'Iraq by the "slenderest ties of loyalty", and that there was a grave danger of these ties being broken unless the government adopted a sympathetic and generous policy in Kurdistan.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, Arab politicians argued that they could hold the Kurdish liwā's merely by brute force and they opposed any conciliatory policy. Jamil al-Madfa'i for instance, was quoted as saying "all will be well if you leave it to the cabinet to settle with the Kurds." The British, on the other hand, maintained that if sufficiently provoked, the Kurdish nationalists would be able to create widespread unrest in the north. In addition, it was the view of the British government that the Kurdish movement contained two camps: the extremists loyal to Shaikh Mahmud, who still hoped to establish an independent Kurdistan, and the moderates, who had come to the realization that they could enjoy their Kurdish rights within the framework of 'Iraq. It was the latter camp which the British government was trying to win over.<sup>81</sup> Finally, the 'Iraqi government, for reasons already mentioned, disliked any "special regime", or "autonomy" for the Kurds and was bent on establishing direct control of the Kurdish liwā's. However, the British government, was opposed to

the policy of absorption and favoured instead the amalgamation of Kurdistan with 'Iraq, in a manner very similar to the policy which had been pursued by Britain towards the Scots in the United Kingdom. This would, it was hoped, maintain some Kurdish identity in the north, while eventually strengthening 'Iraq's unity. However, the 'Iraqi government thought that the two situations could not be compared.<sup>82</sup>

These fundamental differences between the two governments with regard to their respective Kurdish policies led to constant friction in their relationship. The British government adopted a policy of exerting continuous pressure on the 'Iraqi officials to pursue moderate policies, while the latter took refuge in procrastination. In the spring of 1928, the then Acting High Commissioner complained to the 'Iraqi government that there was not any indication on their part of willingness to implement the Kurdish policies requested by the League. For instance, he argued, the translation bureau had not yet been set up, and no serious efforts were being made to prepare textbooks in Kurdish. The government argued that the main obstacle in the way of Kurdish education was the non-existence of a standard Kurdish, as Kurdish writers until the nineteenth century wrote in Arabic, Turkish and Persian. They argued that the modern tendency among the Kurds to write in Kurdish was due mainly to the efforts of the British colonial officers in 'Iraq.<sup>83</sup> British officers, however, questioned the sincerity of the government's stand on Kurdish education. Edmonds writes: "Nobody denies that the practical application to the Kurdish problem bristles with difficulties but all

efforts are concentrated on not overcoming them." Similarly when the 'Iraqi authorities claimed that there were no qualified Kurdish teachers, the British replied that the government had not trained any.<sup>84</sup>

Furthermore, it was the view of the British that the 'Iraqi government's attempts to Arabize the administration would strengthen the separatist camp. Edmonds was quoted in 1930 as saying that "two years ago there was no real Kurdish question; now throughout Kurdistan there is a powerful nationalist and separatist movement". Unless this was wisely dealt with, he said, it could produce an armed uprising similar to the one which was going on in Ararat.<sup>85</sup>

In April 1930, a more detailed memorandum on the British view of the Kurdish question, prepared by Cornwallis, was submitted to the 'Iraqi government. Cornwallis, like Edmonds, warned of impending danger in the Kurdish liwa's. He pointed out the government policy of employing unsympathetic Turcomans to administer the Kurdish regions was resented by the Kurds. He called, for instance, for the immediate removal of 'Abd al-Majid Beg, the anti-Kurd Turcoman Mutaşarrif of Arbīl liwā'. Moreover, the Advisor to the Minister of the Interior complained that Kurds were not sufficiently represented in the high posts of government in Baghdad and he made the following recommendations to the government in order to remedy the situation: 1) since the educational affairs of Kurdistan were administered by incompetent and unsympathetic administrators in Baghdad and Mosul, it was desirable to establish Kurdish Area Education provided with qualified Kurdish administrators and allocated certain revenue; 2)

the publication of a Kurdish Language Law which had been promised to the Kurds during the August tour of Ja'far Pasha; 3) the appointment of a Kurdish Assistant Director-General in the Ministry of the Interior; 4) and the opening of two full secondary schools in Arbīl and Sulaymānīya. Cornwallis concludes his report by saying "...I have heard it said there is no Kurdish question. I think this is far from actuality...and if this is allowed to continue unchecked...I am certain there will be trouble."<sup>86</sup>

These recommendations were rejected by the government on several grounds. Firstly, the numbers of Kurdish schools in the Kurdish liwā's did not warrant the formation of an Education Area, they contended. Secondly, 'Iraq's treasury was in financial crisis. Thirdly, if Kurds were offered such generous terms, the government's policy would be misconstrued in Turkey and Iran. And fourthly, the King was afraid that if the government was to accept Cornwallis' recommendation the Arab nationalist ministers would resign and he would have difficulty in forming a new pro-Treaty cabinet.<sup>87</sup> The Acting High Commissioner did not accept the government's reasons for not adopting Cornwallis' recommendations. Major Young wrote that Nuri Pasha was "not honest" in citing the financial reason as a pretext for not opening a Kurdish Education Area, for the government had already agreed to appoint a Kurdish inspector for education and the difference in the expenses would not exceed one hundred and twenty rupees. However, the task of the "Kurdish inspector" would be very limited and only within one district, while the Kurdish Area Education would have a budget of its own and its task was to

administer education in several districts.<sup>88</sup>

During the months of July to August the situation in Kurdistan deteriorated rapidly due to the Kurds' uneasiness about the 1930 Treaty, which has been discussed above. Again the government had a different explanation for the unrest than that of the British government. The 'Iraqi government felt that the agitation and petition-writing were the result of "pandering" to the Kurds. The British, on the other hand, maintained that the unrest was inevitable due to the government's refusal to implement a liberal policy towards the Kurds inspite of repeated British warnings.

Subsequently in August 1930, the two governments had a significant disagreement about how to deal with the explosive situation. Jamil al-Madfa'i wanted to pursue a forward policy in Kurdistan which consisted of: 1) the immediate removal of Towfiq Wahbi as Mutaṣarrif--this he did as explained above; 2) the arrest and trial of all those who organized the demonstrations during the joint tour of August 10-13th in the Kurdish liwā's by Ja'far Pasha and Major Young, and the detention of all those who had written petitions to the League and the Residency; 3) the immediate removal of the Kurdish Commandant of Police in Sulaymāniya and his replacement by a non-Kurd; 4) the subsequent removal of all Kurdish Mudīrs and Qā'immaqāms whose political views did not conform with those of the Government; 5) and the inauguration of a vigorous policy in dealing with all Kurdish chieftains, religious notables and civil servants who had entertained separatist ideas.<sup>89</sup> Cornwallis and Major Young, who had been Acting

High Commissioner since the sudden death of Clayton, disagreed strongly with Madfa'i's above-mentioned policy, arguing that it would have exactly the opposite effect among the Kurds; instead of calming the situation such a policy would lead to an explosion. The government must decide, Cornwallis notes, whether it intended to try to rule the Kurds by force and against their will, or to win their goodwill. If the former was advocated, 'Iraq had to decide whether it had sufficient force to do so, the Advisor to the Minister of the Interior contended. The British officials thought that the government wanted to approach the Kurdish question in the same manner which the young Turks had unsuccessfully tried to do--taking a regiment of troops with guns to defiant villages and dealing summarily with the rebels.<sup>90</sup>

Finally, the British government was concerned that any outbreak of hostilities in 'Iraqi Kurdistan would embarrass the British government in the League of Nations. It is noteworthy, that in November 1930, the Permanent Mandate Commission was to address the Kurdish petitions. Britain feared that the unrest in the Kurdish liwā's and the punitive measures which the government might be forced to take would make the Kurds appear in Geneva as the "grieved party". The PMC's goodwill was essential for the easing of 'Iraq's admission to the League which was going to be discussed in the June 1931 session of the Organization.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, the British government decided to link their support for 'Iraq's application for membership in the League to the latter's following a liberal policy toward the Kurds. Thus on August 18, Major Young warned Ja'far Pasha,

Nuri Pasha and the King that unless the recommendations of Cornwallis with regard to the policy in the north were adopted by the government and concrete evidence of this was given by the 'Iraqis in the form of the publication of the Language Law, the removal of non-Kurdish officials from the Kurdish liwā's and the elimination of anti-Kurdish ministers such as al-Madfa'i from the cabinet, the British government would disassociate themselves in Geneva from 'Iraq's policy in Kurdistan.<sup>92</sup>

Being under such continuous pressure from Britain, the government began a conciliatory policy in the Kurdish regions. The ingredients of this policy were: 1) to accept Cornwallis' advice not to implement Jamil al-Madfa'i's suggested punitive measures against the Kurdish nationalists; 2) the appointment of Salih Zaki, a Kurd, as Assistant Director-General in the Ministry of the Interior to be in charge of Kurdish affairs with two full-time translators attached; 3) and Sayyid Nuri Barzinji was to fill the promised post of Kurdish Inspector in the Ministry of Education.<sup>93</sup>

By pressing the 'Iraqis to conciliate the Kurds, the British did not intend to encourage Kurdish separatism, as some 'Iraqi politicians thought. In fact, the British aimed at achieving exactly the opposite; in pursuing a liberal policy in Kurdistan, the British authorities wished "to take the wind out of the sails" of the extremists.<sup>94</sup> It appears that the idea of an independent Kurdistan in 1930 was still viewed by the British government as undesirable and an "impractical dream". In October, Major Young wrote to the Colonial Office arguing that if Kurdish

autonomy was to be given, Kurdistan would turn into a "home for brigands" who would live by pillaging the near-by towns in Arab 'Iraq and the result would be very similar to the situation which had prevailed in the North West territories in India before the occupation of Waziristan.<sup>95</sup> Sir Nigel Davidson, the Legal Advisor of King Faisal expressed a similar view, indicating that the idea of a Kurdish Government, or autonomy, or even semi-autonomy was not held by British officials. "It has been the logic of hard facts and not any partiality to Arab aspirations...which proved such a solution to be impractical", Davidson argued.<sup>96</sup> It is interesting to observe that it was the same concern--impracticality of Kurdish independence--and even the same analogy--of Waziristan--which was used by consecutive British High Commissioners to argue against independence or autonomy for the Kurds. This demonstrates a continuity in the policy of the British government and the extent to which the British administration in 'Iraq was influenced by the India experience.

Having persuaded the 'Iraqis to follow a liberal policy in Kurdistan, the British government decided to give their full support to 'Iraq during the deliberations of the Nineteenth Session of the PMC in Geneva in November 1930. The British and 'Iraqi officials agreed in advance to formulate a joint stand on the Kurdish petitions. Major Young eloquently argued 'Iraq's case before the Organization, and he urged that the petitioners' demand for a Kurdish state should be rejected, for Kurds had had no experience of self-rule and their petitions were inspired by a mistaken notion that the League was about to establish a Kurdish government.<sup>97</sup>

The British officials emphasized that unless the latter notion was emphatically refuted by the League, unrest would continue in the north.<sup>98</sup>

Therefore, the PMC adopted a British-sponsored resolution with regard to the Kurdish petitions:

"Whereas no decision of the League of Nations can be cited in justification of the petitioners' demand for the establishment of a Kurdish Government under the supervision of the League of Nations;

"And whereas those decisions provided for special treatment for the Kurds, which treatment, according to the latest information in the possession of the Mandatory Power, is not fully secured, and for certain guarantees of local administration which do not seem yet to have been furnished:

The Permanent Mandate Commission decides to recommend to the Council:

"1) To reject the petitions of the Kurdish notables so far as it aims at the formation of a Kurdish Government under the supervision of the League of Nations;

"2) To request the Mandatory Power to see that the Legislative and

administrative measures to secure for the Kurds the position to which they are entitled are promptly put into effect and properly enforced;

"3) To consider the advisability of providing for measures to guarantee to the Kurds the maintenance of such a position; should 'Iraq be finally emancipated from the trusteeship of Great Britain."<sup>99</sup>

For these reasons, during the years 1927-1930 the road to the September 1930 uprising in Sulaymānīya was prepared by a growing national consciousness among the Kurds. The latter were discontented due to the government's inability to honour their pledges. The government's failure to fully implement their promises to the Kurds was due partly to the influence of some 'Iraqi Ministers and partly to the constraints placed upon them by the need not to strain the country's friendly relationships with Turkey and Iran. The mutual distrust between the 'Iraqi and British officials accounted, to some extent, to the failure of the two governments to work out a policy which would defuse the explosive situation. The joint tour by Ja'far Pasha and Major Young on August 10-13th not only failed to calm the situation but it complicated it further. By September the tense situation in the Kurdish liwā's needed only a spark to explode. The government's decision to hold elections in the north for deputies provided that spark.

### The September 1930 Confrontation in Sulaymānīya

Although the elected Sulaymānīya Council, dominated by the nationalist members of the Kurdish National Committee, had decided to boycott the general election of deputies in 'Iraq, G. Alban, the Administrative Inspector in Sulaymānīya and the 'Iraqi government decided to hold the election regardless. On September 6th, thirty Sulaymānīya notables were invited to the local Government House (Seray) for the election of an Inspection Committee under the electoral law. While the Committee election was proceeding, a crowd of initially two hundred (which later developed into a demonstration of several hundred) marched through the streets of the town shouting anti-election slogans. Approaching the Seray the demonstrators began to throw stones on the police force which was guarding the building. The British officials called 'Iraqi troops to the scene. One policeman was wounded and troops and demonstrators clashed. Consequently several demonstrators and soldiers were killed and wounded.<sup>100</sup> Alban ordered the arrest of four hundred men for their role in the demonstration. All except for eleven were immediately acquitted. The eleven who were members of the Kurdish National Committee, were taken immediately to Kirkuk, tried and released.<sup>101</sup> As there was no evidence against Shaikh Qadir, an active member of the Committee and a brother of Shaikh Mahmud, it was decided not to try him but to exile him to southern 'Iraq temporarily. Ten days later the election was held in Sulaymānīya without any disturbances. Earlier, elections were carried out peacefully in other Kurdish liwā's.<sup>102</sup>

The British and 'Iraqi governments present a different account than that of the Kurds on the unfolding of events during the uprising. According to Alban, who since the dismissal of Towfiq Wahbi in August, was acting as Wakīl or deputy Mutaşarrif, he tried to convince Shaikh Qadir and the members of the Kurdish National Committee to participate in the election, but in vain. The Kurdish leaders were warned of serious consequences if any attempt was made to obstruct the election, and apparently they had agreed to keep out of the election affairs. Having failed to persuade the inhabitants not to participate, the Kurdish leader decided to "wreck" the election, Alban claims. According to the Administrative Inspector, the shopkeepers who refused to join the demonstration were "rough-housed".<sup>103</sup> There were also contributory factors. Kurdish nationalist separatist ideas were disseminated by a small and elite group of ex-civil servants and army officers who had managed to recruit the students to their cause. In the past the students had been used by them to stage demonstrations, such as the one held on July 16 during the visit of the Prime Minister to the town, and the students had been the backbone of the demonstration which was held in August on the occasion of the joint tour by Major Young and Ja'far Pasha. The Sulaymānīya nationalists were already emboldened by their past experience and were determined to use the same tactics to obstruct the election, British officials contended.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, the Ararat rising in Turkish Kurdistan had had an impact on the morale of the 'Iraqi Kurds. The news of the revolt was circulated by the Kurdish nationalists.<sup>105</sup>

The use of troops and the subsequent arrest of the Kurdish leaders of the

National Committee were justified, according to the British authorities, for several reasons, the foremost of which was that if the demonstrators were not dealt with decisively the unrest would have rapidly spread to the rest of Kurdistan and other parts of 'Iraq where similar anti-election and anti-Treaty sentiments were prevailing. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to take preventive measures such as air reconnaissance in order to prevent the unrest from spreading to other Kurdish regions.<sup>106</sup> In addition, it was feared that the spread of unrest to other Kurdish liwā's, would complicate British efforts to assist Turkey in pacifying their Kurds who were involved in the Ararat uprising.<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, the unrest in Sulaymānīya provided a test for British intentions in the Kurdish liwā's. The decisive way which the British authorities dealt with Kurdish leaders during the September uprising was a clear signal to the Kurds that the British were determined to consolidate government control in the region. It also disproved the suspicion which some 'Iraqi politicians had about the sincerity of British intentions in Kurdistan.<sup>108</sup> Finally, the British High Commissioner argued that the decisive measures taken by the Administrative Inspector was a defensive one because the demonstrators were armed with revolvers and daggers and there was no evidence that the "Iraqi army used more force than was essential to restore order."<sup>109</sup>

The Kurdish nationalists, on the other hand, maintained that the whole incident on September 6th was due to the government's wish to force elections on Sulaymānīya and that provocative measures which were taken to ensure this.

According to them a large number of soldiers and police were spread throughout the town. Moreover, Sulaymānīya's elected Municipal Council and the important notables were ignored, while some "individuals of no importance" were asked to supervise and rig the election.<sup>110</sup> To substantiate this view, nationalists pointed to the fact that none of the deputies who had written petitions to the League of Nations were re-elected.<sup>111</sup> They also disagreed with the British allegation that the demonstration was violent. The first 'Iraqi policeman was wounded accidentally by a bullet shot by a colleague. The demonstration was peaceful and the demonstrators were not armed, and the high casualties among the demonstrators testify to this claim, Kurds contended.<sup>112</sup>

The fact that there were some casualties among the 'Iraqi police and troops is an indication that the demonstration was not as peaceful as the Kurds claimed. It is equally difficult to accept the British stand that they were not involved in imposing an election on the Kurds in Sulaymānīya who on several occasions before September had expressed their dissatisfaction with the government policy. Nevertheless, the reasons for the rising in Sulaymānīya should be sought in its indirect causes--the high expectations within the Kurdish nationalist movement which was the result of a conviction shared by many, due partly to an erroneous interpretation of the stipulation of the League on Kurdish rights and partly to the Kurdish nationalists' attempt to mislead their people, about the alleged British plan to form a Kurdish government. The apparent mistrust between the Kurds and the government which manifested itself in the petitions, the increasing number of

grievances held by the Kurds due to the government's failure to fully carry out their promises, the uncertainty and anxiety among the Kurds after the signing of the 1930 Treaty between the government and the British, and the inability of the British authorities to defuse the tension in Kurdistan, were factors which made the confrontation on September 6th inevitable. The British government's firm approach to the uprising is an indication that Britain was still committed to its post-Mosul Settlement policy in Kurdistan, while pressuring the government to carry out policies which were conciliatory to the moderate Kurdish nationalists, the British were determined to suppress Kurdish separatism which threatened their interests in 'Iraq, Turkey and Iran. One of the most immediate consequences of the September uprising was the return of Shaikh Mahmud to lead his third and final, revolt against the government.

#### Shaikh Mahmud's Third Revolt

On September 17, 1930, Shaikh Mahmud, along with a hundred of his followers, recrossed the frontier into 'Iraq. From September 1930 to May 1931, Sulaymāniya and Kirkuk liwā's were engulfed in a guerrilla war waged by Shaikh Mahmud's followers. This revolt went through two stages. During the first stage, September 1930 to February 1931, the unrest remains confined primarily to the northern and eastern portions of Sulaymāniya liwā'. The second stage began in March and ended in May 1931 with the surrender of Shaikh Mahmud.

During the first stage the Shaikh combined his guerrilla warfare with an

intensive political campaign which aimed at recruiting the Kurds to his cause, winning the sympathy of the League of Nations and attempting to keep British authorities neutral in his conflict with the government. As noted above, since 1929, Shaikkh Mahmud had been in contact with the Kurdish nationalists in Sulaymānīya in an attempt to win their support for a new Kurdish revolt against the government. The dismissal of Towfiq Wahbi, the moderate Mutaṣarrif, on August 18 by Jamil al-Madfa‘i, who had the support of the moderate leaders like Shaikh Qadir, caused the Sulaymānīya nationalists to turn again to Shaikh Mahmud for leadership.<sup>113</sup> Having gained political support in Sulaymānīya, upon his return to ‘Iraqi territory, Shaikh Mahmud toured Pizhder country and managed to gain the political support of most of the chieftains of this powerful tribe. From October, the Shaikh’s followers commenced a campaign of hit-and-run attacks against government forces on the frontier.<sup>114</sup>

Meanwhile, the ‘Iraqi government moved swiftly to meet the new threat posed by Shaikh Mahmud. From October 22 to 27, three battalions of troops were dispatched to Sulaymānīya. This force was later strengthened by the addition of five more battalions and six hundred-strong mobile police force which was lightly equipped counter-insurgency force. Kurdish rebels managed to temporarily occupy small border towns such as Khurmāl and Penjwīn and were later forced to relinquish their control of these towns due to intensive bombing by RAF units. Moreover, from October 1930 to March 1931, Government forces made several attempts to encircle Shaikh Mahmud, but in vain.<sup>115</sup>

During the months of October to December the unrest gained momentum and reached an alarming level, for the greater part of the country in which the military operation took place, was exceedingly difficult terrain consisting of precipitous mountains and narrow scrub valleys. It was extremely difficult to move troops in such a difficult environment. Besides, Shaikh Mahmud and his followers knew "each inch of the country" and managed frequently to elude advancing troops.<sup>116</sup> In addition, most of the inhabitants and even some of the local officials, sympathized with the rebels. This enabled them to obtain quick and accurate intelligence of all projected hostile movements, while at the same time concealing their own.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, it appears that the British were initially unwilling to take active steps against the rebel force. Brooke-Popham, the Acting High Commissioner attributes this stand to the following considerations. After the signing of the 1930 Treaty, it was the policy of the British authorities to leave the responsibility of maintaining internal order, especially in Kurdistan, primarily with the government of 'Iraq. British troops would come to the aid of the government forces only if the situation was likely to get completely out of control. This was part of Britain's policy of preparing 'Iraq for self-rule. It was difficult for British officials in 'Iraq to see what steps could have been taken initially against Shaikh Mahmud because the latter had deliberately kept his movements close to the Persian frontier so that he could recross into Persia should that be necessary. Also, the rugged mountainous frontier made the employment of the RAF useless during the time Shaikh Mahmud toured the frontier regions.<sup>118</sup>

Politically, Shaikh Mahmud spared no effort to enlist the support of the Kurds throughout southern Kurdistan, and he appears to have gained not insignificant support. The intelligensia (Efendis) in the towns who were disgruntled by the bloody confrontation in September, and suddenly espoused Shaikh Mahmud's cause. Hafsa Khan, the wife of Shaikh Qadir, was the most active member and to a certain extent the brain of the Kurdish nationalist movement in Sulaymāniya. She visited Kurdish tribes and towns and spoke of "atrocities" committed by government troops in September. Her efforts seem to have assisted Shaikh Mahmud in his new revolt by preparing Kurdish public opinion.<sup>119</sup> Besides, as soon as Shaikh Mahmud had returned, three Kurdish officers of the 'Iraqi army joined his movement.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, the government's attempt to bypass the Kurdish chieftains and establish direct rule through salaried officials--in some cases by non-Kurds--had alienated the chiefs who adopted the "cloak of nationalism" espoused by Shaikh Mahmud.<sup>121</sup> The latter's call was not confined to the chieftains and Efendis. Proclamations signed by a Committee for the Defense of Kurdish People, were widely distributed. This called upon all Kurds to support Shaikh Mahmud's movement which aimed at achieving the right of self-determination for the Kurds similar to that of other nations. Thus Shaikh Mahmud wanted to impress upon the Kurds that his movement had national legitimacy.<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, in his private interviews and correspondence with the Kurdish chieftains and notables, the Shaikh left the impression that Britain was assisting his efforts to establish an independent Kurdistan. For instance, in December Shaikh Ahmad of

Barzan asked the British Administrative Assistant whether Shaikh Mahmud's claim to have secret British support had any basis.<sup>123</sup>

For these reasons, during the months of October to March of 1931, Kurdish chieftains and notables throughout the Kurdish liwā's wrote letters to the High Commissioner and the League of Nations expressing their support for Shaikh Mahmud. This political support went as far as the Kurds of Mosul liwā'. For instance, on November 17, the Administrative Assistant in Mosul informed the Residency that most of the aghas in his liwā' had given their support to Shaikh Mahmud's cause.<sup>124</sup>

This support could be seen also from several petitions sent by Kurds to the League. On October 10th, a petition which was signed by powerful chieftains from Sulaymāniya, Kirkuk and Arbīl complained of the government's lack of enthusiasm in implementing its promises to them. The petitioners wrote that when the Kurds in Sulaymāniya asked the government in August for the suspension of the policy of appointing non-Kurds in their liwā' the 'Iraqi authorities had responded by dismissing their Mutaşarrif. In September, when the people demonstrated peacefully, "the Arabs responded to our demands by wholesale massacre of innocent people", the petition claimed. Therefore, the petitioners requested that pending the League of Nations' respond to their demands for the establishment of a Kurdish Government, the Kurdish liwā's were to be placed under a separate mandate regime.<sup>125</sup> In March 1931, several petitions were sent to the League by Kurdish chieftains and religious dignitaries throughout the Kurdish

liwā's, and including some Kurdish chieftains from Iran which asked for the formation of a Kurdish state under the presidency of Shaikh Mahmud.<sup>126</sup>

In a manner similar to his behaviour during the previous revolts, Shaikh Mahmud tried to maintain his apparent loyalty to the government, especially the British authorities. Upon his entrance into 'Iraqi territories, the Shaikh sent a letter to the Acting High Commissioner indicating that he would remain loyal to him, at the same time, he condemned the "massacre" in Sulaymānīya. He argued that the incident in September vindicated his view that it was impossible for Arabs and Kurds to live peacefully together under the government of 'Iraq. The Shaikh also told the British authorities that he was proceeding to Pizhder country to offer condolences to the Pizhder Chieftain on the death of a member of his family.<sup>127</sup>

Although in September the British authorities asked Shaikh Mahmud to immediately quit 'Iraqi territory, the latter ignored this order and continued his contacts with the chieftains. Nevertheless, the Shaikh continued to send the Residency letters displaying his readiness to act upon British advice inside Kurdistan of 'Iraq. For instance, in January 1931, he asked the Acting High Commissioner to send a representative to meet him. However, the latter preferred to ignore the Shaikh's pleas to avoid giving legitimacy to his revolt in the eyes of the Kurds or to give credence to the Shaikh's claims that the British were supporting him.<sup>128</sup>

In January 1931, a conference was held in the Residency in Baghdad to review the affairs of southern Kurdistan. The British officials were unanimous that unless

effective measures were taken to check the spread of the revolt, the unrest would spread to all the Kurdish liwa's, which would be a great embarrassment to 'Iraq in the League of Nations. The revolt in Sulaymāniya had already emboldened Shaikh Ahmad of Bārzān to take a more intransigent stand toward the government in Mosul liwa'. Therefore, a forward policy was agreed upon. However, the British officials maintained that until Shaikh Mahmud was suppressed no military action should be taken against Shaikh Ahmad, but due to the climatic conditions, the Conference recommended that no military action should start before the spring.<sup>129</sup>

In March, the revolt in Kurdistan reached a critical stage for a multitude of reasons. Firstly, the Shaikh was trying to extend the revolt to other Kurdish liwa's. Kurdish chieftains were invited by the Shaikh to join a national uprising. Secondly, in early March Shaikh Mahmud made a southward move towards Qara Dāgh, in the southeastern part of Sulaymāniya. By mid-March, the Shaikh's followers had reached Kifri on the Diyāla River and began to threaten Khānaqīn. In his southward move the Shaikh intended to recruit the powerful nomadic Jāf tribe.<sup>130</sup> This tribe, which had 2500 riflemen, was resentful of recent government attempts to administer them directly by government officials instead of their hereditary chieftains who used to rule the tribe and pay a Maqtū', a certain fixed amount of money paid annually to the government. In mid-March, the mutasarrif of Kirkuk and the British Administrative Inspector of the liwa', who were touring the Kifri Qadā were approached by the Jāf tribesmen demanding the postponement

of the count of their flock for the purpose of taxation. The government considered this request to be instigated by Shaikh Mahmud. Therefore, troops were used for the forcible collection of koda tax in the region. This created strong resentment among the Jāf. Moreover, the Jāf tribesmen wanted to maintain a certain Mahmud Beg as their Ra'īs (chieftain) instead of a government nominee. For these reasons, Shaikh Mahmud's followers were welcomed in Jāf country and there was a possibility that the uprising might spread to the eastern bank of the Diyāla River, not very far from Baghdad.<sup>131</sup> Thirdly, the Kurdish rebels had established an elaborate system of administration in the rebel-held territories which extended from the Persian frontier as far as the north and southeastern approaches of Kirkuk city. The rebels sent orders to the Arbīl liwā' asking that no Kurd pay taxes to the government, and indicating that collaboration with the government was a treasonable act.<sup>132</sup>

For these reasons, on March 22, a conference was held in Baghdad and a plan was drawn up to end the revolt in the northern liwā's. This forward policy included a systematic effort by the government to publicly refute Shaikh Mahmud's allegations that the British were assisting the rebels. Therefore, letters were sent to the Kurdish chieftains saying that Shaikh Mahmud and his followers were outlaws, and that all had to strictly obey the government which had the "full support" of Britain.<sup>133</sup> In order to dispel any doubt in the mind of the tribesmen of British intentions toward Shaikh Mahmud, it was agreed to warn the villagers, by proclamations dropped by RAF aeroplanes, that if they assisted the rebels, their

villages would be bombed.<sup>134</sup>

In deciding on the military plan the British Government was determined that the operations against the rebels should be decisive and swift, and that minimum force should be used in order not to "popularize" the revolt, for in June 1931, the League of Nations was to consider the numerous Kurdish petitions and 'Iraq's application for the membership in the Organization. The British government maintained that the rebels should be denied any success, and no mistakes should be made which might assist them in creating widespread unrest. A popular revolt would necessitate a largescale military undertaking and wider British involvement. The British authorities were concerned that such a military undertaking would create an impression in the League that 'Iraq was not yet a stable country and British military involvement would have given credit to the petitioners' claims that British troops were there by government order to enforce unpopular policies in the north.<sup>135</sup> This concern was conveyed in a letter from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office which stated: "We should try to avoid being portrayed in Geneva as having tried to force a policy on Kurds with bayonets and bombs."<sup>136</sup>

The intensified bombing by RAF squadrons kept Shaikh Mahmud on the move and forced him to give battle, on April 5th, near the village of Awi-Barika, twenty miles northeast of Tūzkhurmatu in Kirkuk liwā'. In this battle a mobile column of four hundred troops with close and effective assistance of RAF units, surprised Shaikh Mahmud in the village. Although the Shaikh and most of his followers managed to escape the village after a battle which continued throughout the day,

the rebels suffered sixteen dead and dozens wounded. Meanwhile, the government troops and RAF squadrons continued their pursuit of the rebels, whose morale was "severely shaken", and most of the Shaikh's followers began to desert him. Being under sustained and vigorous bombardment of RAF aeroplanes and the pressure of advancing government troops, Shaikh Mahmud was forced to move to the north and northwest. Unable to convince the Pizhder to open a new front against the government, on April 21 the Shaikh was forced to recross the frontier into Persia and live in Pirān village, his old refuge.<sup>137</sup>

Having signed the Treaty of Alliance with 'Iraq, the British authorities were determined to close Shaikh Mahmud's file for good. It was the view of the British government that as long as Shaikh Mahmud remained in southern Kurdistan or in his sanctuary just across the frontier in Iran, there would be no peace in Kurdistan, for he would pose a danger to the stability of the 'Iraq-Iran frontier. For example, Mr. Flood, a top official in the Colonial Office wrote that the Shaikh's presence on the frontier would keep the separatist movement alive in 'Iraq. Therefore, he suggested the removal of Shaikh Mahmud from Kurdistan and if possible from 'Iraq.<sup>138</sup>

Therefore, as soon as Shaikh Mahmud arrived in Iran, the 'Iraqi authorities approached the Iranian government through diplomatic channels to have him arrested. Unlike the years 1926 to 1928, when the Iranian government was neither able nor willing to grant 'Iraq's request, this time they were quite capable of coordinating efforts to end Shaikh Mahmud's influence. By April the Iran-'Iraq

relationship had become very cordial.<sup>139</sup> Shaikh Mahmud was viewed by Persia as a threat to the internal security of the country and a destabilizing factor in the newly built friendship with 'Iraq. Some frontier Iranian Kurdish chieftains, encouraged by Shaikh Mahmud, had risen in revolt, and this had alarmed Reza Shah and his government. In April 1931, when King Faisal and Sir Humphrys were in Tehran, the Iranians complained to the British and 'Iraqi officials that 'Iraq's territories were being used by Persian Kurds against government forces. Therefore, it was agreed that operations against the defiant Kurdish chieftains on both sides of the frontier commence immediately.<sup>140</sup>

On April 25th the government of 'Iraq proposed to the Persian authorities that General Khalid Zaki, the Commander of the Eastern District, should meet the Persian Commander on the frontier. Consequently, both Commanders met with the British General Inspector of 'Iraq's army and drew up a military plan against the rebels. Operations were to begin on May 16th. On May 13th, Persian troops were gathering in Mariwān to make an attack on Pirān, just eight miles to the west. "This was the last straw that broke the camels back", wrote the Assisting Air Force Command in 'Iraq.<sup>141</sup> Shaikh Mahmud had already received a joint ultimatum on May 2 sent by Humphrys and the King which asked him to surrender in return for his life. Being "sore pressed" as he was on May 14th, the Shaikh surrendered to Captain Holt, the Oriental Secretary to the High Commissioner, who was anticipating him in Penjwīn<sup>142</sup>

There were several factors which accounted for the defeat of the rebels. C.

Robinson, the General Inspector of the 'Iraqi army maintains that the vigilance, courage, perseverance and the disciplined behaviour of the 'Iraqi troops with the non-hostile Kurds, helped efforts to contain the revolt greatly.<sup>143</sup> Sir Humphrys considers the role played by the RAF units to be decisive. He writes that the satisfactory settlement of the unrest in Kurdish liwā's was "largely due to the splendid effort" of the RAF which was ably assisted by the 'Iraqi armed forces.<sup>144</sup> E.R. Ludith-Hewitt, the Assistant Commandant of the Royal Air Force in 'Iraq, gives credit to Major F.C. Robert, a British officer, who was attached to the 'Iraqi troops in Kurdistan.<sup>145</sup> King Faisal said that Shaikh Mahmud's revolt was one of the "most troublesome affairs" of 'Iraq, which came to an end due to the "closest and most friendly" cooperation between the RAF and government troops.<sup>146</sup>

In spite of this close cooperation, the suspicion and disagreement between the British officials and the 'Iraqi government which was manifested during the events leading to the September uprising, appear to have continued during the revolt. These differences were related to each side's peculiar understanding of the revolt and of the best way to pacify the Kurds. British officials believed that the return of Shaikh Mahmud was, to a great extent, due to the 'Iraqi officials who did not act fast enough to address Kurdish grievances, in spite of the constant warnings given to them by the British.<sup>147</sup>

The Baghdadi politicians, including senior government officials, thought that the events in Kurdistan had been manipulated by the British government to facilitate the return of Shaikh Mahmud in order to create unrest in the north,

which would provide an excuse to perpetrate their stay in 'Iraq.<sup>148</sup> The 'Iraqi army officers, the opposition and the media were resentful of the methods which British officials wanted the army to pursue in order to contain the revolt. King Faisal was distrustful of the British military advisors' role in the operations against the rebels and he suspected that the 'Iraqi troops were being obstructed in their work against the rebels.<sup>149</sup> Nuri Pasha and the cabinet were in favour of declaring martial law in the Kurdish liwā's so that the government could deal decisively with the rebels. The Prime Minister went as far as informing King Faisal that the government had only two choices, either to declare martial law and bring the revolt to an abrupt end, or, the government had to quit the Kurdish liwā's which had become ungovernable and a heavy burden on 'Iraq's "empty" treasury.<sup>150</sup> Nuri Pasha was also quoted saying that they "were handicapped in dealing with the rebels by the necessity of observing European methods [trial, witnesses, etc.] instead of being able to inflict summary punishment".<sup>151</sup>

These concerns of King Faisal and Nuri were echoed by opposition members in the parliament and Baghdad media. Several articles in the Baghdad press wrote editorials about the revolt insinuating that British influence was responsible not only for the armed revolt but also for hampering the government's efforts to curb it. Similar views were expressed in a veiled form in the parliament. For instance, Jalil al-Jalili and Salih Jabr, two deputies, made statements to the effect that Shaikh Mahmud's strength lay in the support which was being given to him by "persons other than his tribal followers", and they argued that the Shaikh was a

"tool of a foreign power".<sup>52</sup>

An 'Iraqi newspaper wrote:

"We are much surprised with the Government's prolonged silence concerning the conspiring against 'Iraq by mercenary agents of foreign policy... How are the Persian and Turkish Governments to account for the inactivity of our gallant army...there are in England societies who support the rebels...that certain hands are active behind screens working for the creation of dissention."<sup>53</sup>

The British government, however, insisted that the policy of conciliating the Kurds should continue and every effort should be made to isolate Shaikh Mahmud from the mainstream Kurdish movement and the influential chieftains. British officials pressed the 'Iraqis to follow the liberal policy announced in August 1930. The British argued that if they had agreed to allow the 'Iraqi officers the unlimited freedom of action which the latter had asked for, then the collective punishment of the defiant tribes and arbitrary arrests by the government of suspects would have had the effect of "driving thousands of Kurds" into the rebels ranks.<sup>54</sup> In addition, the British government agreed that Nuri Pasha's suggestion that a Turkish-style tribal lashkar be formed to fight against the rebels was not practical. The formation of such a force would have expanded the revolt and might have added another factor to the tribal rivalry and perpetuation of unrest in the

region.<sup>155</sup>

Shaikh Mahmud's third revolt has many similarities with the previous ones in the way it began and ended. Here, as in the previous ones, he was leading a rising brought about by forces which were beyond his control. Like the previous revolts, this revolt was also confined primarily to Sulaymāniya liwā', and Shaikh Mahmud's effort to nationalize it was in vain due to the lack of a Kurdish political movement with a national appeal. Moreover, during this revolt, like the earlier ones, the RAF was instrumental in bringing about its end. Nevertheless, the 1930-1931 revolt was unique in some ways. Unlike the previous revolts led by Shaikh Mahmud, which were largely due to Turkish pan-Islamic agitation, this revolt was to a large extent, the result of the conflict between the goals of Kurdish nationalism and the Anglo-'Iraqi alliance. Also, during this revolt, the 'Iraqi army played the role which filled in previous revolts by the Assyrian Levies.

During the period 1927-1931, the British were trying to carry out the policy of administrative autonomy in Kurdistan which had been agreed upon during the settlement of the Mosul Question. The implementation of the policy faced several difficulties. The British officials had to walk a tight-rope in their attempt to balance the aspirations of the Kurdish nationalists who had never given up their desire for independence, and the 'Iraqi (Arab) nationalists who viewed the British policy objectives in Kurdistan with suspicion and were obstructing the implementation of the policy. Besides, both Turkey and Iran continued to press the British and 'Iraqi government against giving further concessions to the Kurds.

## Footnotes for Chapter 7

1. Arnold J. Toynbee, Survey of International Affairs, 1934 (London: Oxford University Press), 1935, p. 128.
2. BHCF 13/14 Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 6. Desp. 1/407 March 30, 1927, "The Kurdish Movement," from AHC to S.S. Col.; Khawaja, p. 41.
3. Air 23/411 Desp. No. D/6 Feb. 5, 1926. S.S.O. Baghdad.; F.O. 371/11468, Intelligence Rep. No 4. Feb. 18, 1926.
4. F.O. 371/12255 A.H.Q. British Force, Baghdad. Desp. No. 1/407, "Report on Kurdish Nationalist Movement," March 30, 1927.
5. Air 23/411. Desp. No. D/6. Feb. 5, 1926. S.S.O. Baghdad.
6. F.O. 371/13032, Desp. No. 1532. July 4. 1928, Secretariat of H.C. to Col. O.; Nikitine, al-Akrad, p. 174. The Armenian nationalists were trying to use the Kurds to take revenge on Turkey for the atrocities committed against them during the First World War. Rich Armenians such as Dogas Nubar and Dr. Papazian, ex-deputy of Van, a city in south-eastern Turkey, established close ties with the Kurdish nationalist leaders such as Amir Jaladat Badr Kan and Mamduh Salim. (See: BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 6, "Kurdish Nationalism," June 14, 1928. AHC. Baghdad.). Ihsan Nuri Pasha, a former Ottoman officer of Kurdish descent, was the supreme commander of the Kurdish forces, which consisted of several thousand well-trained fighters. The Kurdish rebels managed to establish a provisional administration which lasted until September 1930 when the revolt was suppressed by the Kamalist forces. (See: R. How, "Kurd's Revolt Against Turkey," Current History, Sept. 1930, pp. 1231-2; Arfa, pp. 39-40; Zhiyan, No. 252. July 21, 1930; Jwaideh, Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, pp. 617f.
7. F.O. 371/13032. Teleg. Secret. No. S.O. 1587, Baghdad, July 10, 1928. Secretariat of H.C. to Col. O.
8. F.O. 371/13032. A.H.Q. British Force 'Iraq, Baghdad. Desp. No. 1/407, "The Report on Kurdish Nationalist Movement," March 30, 1927.
9. F.O. 371/13032. Desp. No. S.O. 1532, 1532, July 4, 1928, Secretariat of H.C.
10. DBFP. Ser. B. Vol. 6:189. memorandum. Secret. A. Dec. 4, 1928. Dobbs to Amery; BHCF, 13/14 Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 6. Desp. 1/407, "Report on the Kurdish Movement," March 30, 1927, A.H.C. to S.S. Col.

11. BHCF, 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 5. memo. Secret. March 19, 1926. A.H.Q., British Force, 'Iraq, Baghdad, to Air Ministry.
12. F.O. 371/13037, memo. No. B/L/10, Sept. 5. 1928. R.A.F. Transjordan.
13. F.O. 371/1359. Desp. No. Secret. A. Sept. 4, 1928, Dobbs to Avery; 13032, Desp. S.O. 1532, July 4, 1928, Secretariat of H.C.
14. Great Britain, Col. Office, 'Iraq Administrative Report for the Year 1926, p. 96.F.O. 371/13759, letter No. N.P.O. 439. Dobbs to Abd al-Muhsin.
15. BHCF. 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 6, Desp. No. 1/407 March 30, 1927, "Report on the Kurdish Movement," A.H.C. to S.S.Col.; Air 23/411, Desp. No D/6. Feb. 3, 1926. "Kurdish Affairs," S.S.O. Baghdad.
16. Khawaja, pp. 30-1.
17. Zhiyān, No. 118. June 21, 1928.
18. Khawaja, p. 26.
19. F.O.371/13759. Desp. No. S.O 8959. April 22, 1929. Residency Baghdad.
20. Zhiyān. No. 165, April 8, 1929; Great Britain Colonial Office, Special Report on Progress in 'Iraq, p. Z62.; F.O. 371/13792. Intelligence Rep. for the Fortnight ended the 12th of April 1929.
21. BHCF. 13/14, Events in Kurdistan. Vol. 6, Teleg. No. DO. 139. April 20, 1929.
22. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Minutes, March 20, 1926, Col. O.
23. Arnold J. Toynbee, Survey of International Affairs for the Year 1930 (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), pp. 317-20.; Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of 'Iraq for the year 1929 (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1930), p. 2.
24. Sluglett, pp. 181-2; The Treaty of Alliance which was signed between the two countries had several provisions which were unacceptable to the 'Iraqi nationalists. It was to come into effect in 1932, and would give the United Kingdom virtual control of 'Iraq's foreign policy for twenty-five years to come. The leasing of 'Iraqi airbases free of charge was seen as incompatible with true independence. (See: Batatus, pp. 201-2.)

25. C.O. 730/157/5. Extract from Intelligence Report No. 8, May 4, 1930.; Great Britain, Colonial Office, Report to the Council of the League of Nations for the Year 1930 (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1931), p. 25; Confidential, U.S. Diplomatic Post Records, The Near and Middle East, Teleg. No. 1113, August 12, 1930; Ma'rūf Jiyāwuk, Ma'sat Bārzan al-Mazlūma (Baghdad: al-'Arabiya Press, 1954), pp. 84-85.
26. Ma'sat Bārzan, p. 65.
27. Great Britain, Special Report, pp. 262-64; C.O. 730/157/5, teleg. from notables of Sulaymania to S.S. Col. July 10, 1930; 144562, Teleg. No. 257, Oct. 18, 1930, Office of the Council of Ministers to H.C. Baghdad; Aḥmad Zakī, Du Tuqalayī Bay-Sud, ed. Sabah Ghalib (London: Halwest Press, 1984), p. 23.
28. C.O. 730/157/8. 144562. Teleg. 2957, Oct. 18, 1930; 144350, "Kurdish Madhbata", Aug. 24, 1930.
29. C.O. 730/157/5, Extract from Intelligence Report, No. 8, May 14, 1930.
30. 'Iraq Administrative Report 1930, p. 25.
31. BHCF. 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 6, "Precis of Kurdish Situation from June 1st to December 4th 1930," A.H.Q. British Force, Baghdad.
32. C.O. 730/1157/5, 144350 Sulaimaniya Petition to the League of Nations. July 26, 1930.
33. Ibid.
34. Khawaja, pp. 55-56.
35. C.O. 730/157/6. 1446350. J. Hall, "Comments of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland upon the petitions dated 26th July. Presented by Azmi Beb Baban and Fellow Associates," Oct. 22, 1930.
36. Ibid.
37. C.O. 730/157/5, 144350. Teleg. No. 280. August 12, 1930, A.H.C. to S.S. Col.; 144350 Letter, August 6, 1930 from Office of the Council of Ministers to A.H.C. Baghdad.; Zhiyān, August 28, 1930; Times (London), Aug. 9, 1930.
38. U.S. State Department, Confidential, U.S. Diplomatic Post Records, the Middle East 1925-1941, Teleg. No. 111, Aug. 12, 1930, American Consulate Baghdad, to

Sec. of State.

39. Ibid.

40. C.O. 730/157/5/144350. Teleg. No. P.O. 165, August 15, 1930. Residency to the Council of Ministers: 144350, Letter. Secret. A. Aug. 12, 1930. S.S.O. Sulaimani. 144350. Letter from Brooke-Popham to S.S. Col. Sept. 10, 1930.

41. C.O. 730/157/5, 144350, Intelligence Report, dated for the period ending August 12, 1930. Desp. No.1/5/1/111; Khawaja, pp. 77; Jiyawuk, pp. 104-5.

42. C.O. 730/157/5, 144350. Desp. Secret. No. D.O.S. 450. Aug. 11. 1930. G. Kitching A.I. Arbil; 144350 Teleg. 373. Aug. 13, 1930. A.H.C. to S.S. Col.; Jiyawuk, p. 107.

43. Zhiyān, No. 159, Sept. 4, 1930; C.O. 730/157/6. 144350. Extract from Gazette No. 891, Aug. 28, 1930 (al- Waqā'i' al 'Irāqīya).

44. Jiyāwuk, p. 210.

45. C.O. 730/157/6, Extract form Intelligence Report, No. 18, August 23, 1930. Zhiyān, August 20, 1930.

46. Confid. U.S. Diplomatic Post Records, Teleg. No. 54, Nov. 14, 1930, Baghdad American Consulate; P.O. 7301157/8144350, Hall to Flood, Oct. 13, 1930.

47. 'Iraq, Administrative Report for the Year 1927, p. 26.

48. 'Iraq, Administrative Report for the Year 1928, p. 18, 132.

49. 'Iraq, Administrative Report for the Year 1930, p.

50. Special Report on Progress in 'Iraq, p. 261.

51. C.O. 730/157/6. 144350, J. Hall, "Comments of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland upon the petition dated 26th July presented by Azmi Beg Baban and Fellow Signatories." Oct. 22, 1930.

52. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 10, "A Note on the Kurdish Situation," by K. Cornwallis, Adv. to Min. of Interior, Feb. 4, 1931.

53. C.O. 730/157/5, 144360, "Note" by Sir K. Cornwallis, Desp. No. 68338/79, April 23, 1930.

54. BHCF. 13/14 Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 6, C.J. Edmonds, "A Note on the Kurdish Situation," May 11, 1929.
55. BHCF. 13/14 Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 10, Residency, Baghdad, Dec. 19, 1930.
56. Confid. U.S. Diplomatic Post Record. Teleg. No. 605, May 1930, U.S. Consulate, Baghdad, 'Iraq Administrative Report 1930, p. 26. Members of Hizb al-Sha'b in the majlis, who opposed the 1930 Treaty of Alliance were trying to topple Nuri's cabinet by spreading rumours to the effect that 'Iraq was about to be dismembered due to an alleged British desire to separate Kurdistan from 'Iraq and to govern it in a manner similar to the British administration in the Sudan, after it was removed from Egyptian rule. (See: Air 23/411, memo. "Kurdish Affairs" No. 016, Feb, 6, 1930.
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58. C.O. 730/157/6. 14435, Desp. No. 783/5/35, Oct. 23, 1930. Hall to A.H.C. 'Iraq.
59. Special Report on Progress in 'Iraq, p. 264; C.O. 730/151/6 Letter No. S.A. 491, July 19, 1930, Ad. Min. of Interior. to S.S. Col.; 157/5, memo. No. D.O.S. 492, Adv. Minister of Interior. July 27, 1930; BDFP. Ser. B. Vol. 6:373. memo. E2553/151/44 April 29, 1930; Jiyawuk, p. 100.; Hasani vol., II, p. 1949.
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61. 'Iraq, p. 185.
62. New Delhi, BHCF 13/22, Shaikh Mahmud, Vol. 2, Shaikh Mahmud to Clayton, May 27, 1929, cited in Sluglett, p. 184.
63. C.O. 730/157/5. Teleg. No. 333, Sept. 3, 1930.
64. C.O. 730/157/6, A "Note" by Hall, No. 75, Aug. 27, 1930.; 157/6, "Note" May 5, 1930, Col. O.
65. BHCF. 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 8, Teleg. No. 38, Aug. 18, 1930. A.H.C. to S.S. Col.; Teleg. No. 93. Feb. 1930, H.C. to S.S. Col.; C.O. 730/157/5, Teleg. No. 340. July 23, 1930.

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67. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, memo. by Cornwallis, Adv. Min. of Interior. No. S.A. 321, May 12, 1929.
68. C.O./730/157/6 Teleg. No. S.A. 492. July 7, 1930 from Adv. Min. of Interior to A.H.C.; Teleg. S.O. 1372, June 25, 1926, Dobbs to Cornwallis.; A. al-Qassab, Min Dhikrayati, p. 281.
69. BHCF, 13/14 Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 6, memo, by C.J. Edmonds, May 11, 1929.
70. BHCF, 13/14 Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 6, Teleg. No. S.A 321, May 12, Adv. to Minister of Interior; CO. 730, 15715, 144350, "Note of Interview of His Excellency King on 20th May 1930," May 5, 1930.
71. C.O. 730/161/1. 144277, Extract from the "Near East", March 5, 1931.
72. C.O. 730/157/5, 144350, memo. No. 2422, Council of Ministers, to AHC, Aug. 17, 1930.
73. F.O. 371/13782, Persia. Confid. [E20118/279/34] Teleg. No. 166, April 22, 1929. Edmonds to A. Chamberlain; Toynbee, Survey of International Affairs for the Year 1938, pp. 293-4.
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## Chapter 8

‘IRAQ’S ADMISSION TO THE LEAGUE:  
THE CASE OF THE KURDS

The Geneva Negotiations: 1931-1932

From June 1931 to October 1932, the case of ‘Iraq’s admission to the League was strongly pursued by the British government. Britain’s policy in Kurdistan during this period was drawn up with this end in view. Since 1929, Britain’s relations with ‘Iraq had been conditioned by the promise that the former would endeavour to secure the termination of the mandatory government and the admission of ‘Iraq to the League of Nations. Britain’s failure to fulfil this promise would have caused the whole basis of the Anglo-‘Iraqi relationship to collapse. A report written by the Colonial Office in January 1932, clearly states why it was essential for Britain to end the mandate in ‘Iraq by 1932:

"It is extremely doubtful whether any ‘Iraqi Government could be found willing to continue to administer the country, while the British personnel in ‘Iraq, which has been reduced to very small proportions and has mainly advisory functions, would be quite insufficient to take over the administration. His Majesty’s Government might thus be faced with the alternatives either of informing the League that they were no longer able to carry out responsibilities in regard to ‘Iraq...or of themselves taking over

direct administration of the country. For the latter purpose new machinery would have to be improvised at great cost and it would almost certainly be impossible to set it in motion without the support of a strong military force..."<sup>1</sup>

At the January 1931 meeting of the Council of the League of Nations, the British Government recommended 'Iraq for membership in the organization in 1932. The Council asked the PMC to submit a report on 'Iraq in order to assist it in reaching a decision. At its Twentieth Session, the PMC examined the conditions which had to exist in any country under mandate before it could become independent. The report indicated that sound finance, an adequate judicial system, relative internal stability, and certain guarantees of human rights were necessary conditions for the ending of the mandate in a mandated country. The report went on to measure 'Iraq's condition according to these criteria. The PMC examined a Special Report on the progress of 'Iraq during the period 1920-31, in great detail, which had been prepared by the British government. It also examined a declaration made by the British accredited representative at the Twentieth Session to the effect that "His Majesty's Government fully realises" its responsibility in recommending that 'Iraq should be admitted to the League. Then the PMC wrote a report favourable to 'Iraq's desire to be a member of the League. In January 1932, the Council of the League adopted the said report and formed a Committee to prepare a draft declaration on various guarantees to be

undertaken by the government with regard to the protection of the rights of ethnic and religious minorities in 'Iraq. The Council's Committee submitted its report in May, which was to assist the Council in its July meeting to make the final decision on 'Iraq's application for membership in the League.<sup>2</sup>

During the deliberations of the Twentieth Session of the PMC in June 1931, the Kurdish petitions, which had been sent to the League since the September 6th uprising, were hampering the British government's efforts to convince the PMC to write a positive report in 'Iraq's favour. From August 1930 to April 1931 eight Kurdish petitions came to the attention of the PMC. The demands of these petitions (which have been cited) ranged from a desire to see that the 'Iraqi government implement past pledges with regard to administrative autonomy, to calling for the formation of a separate Kurdish government.

On April 19, 1931, Towfiq Wahbi submitted a further petition to the League which was an attempt to refute the observations made during the Nineteenth Session of the PMC in November 1930, by Major Young. Wahbi reiterated earlier Kurdish grievances and contended that the British troops were tools of the 'Iraqi government, which was involved in a policy of "systematic oppression" of the Kurds. In addition, Wahbi asked for autonomy for Kurdistan and tried to distance himself from those petitioners who had requested the formation of an independent Kurdish government. Wahbi attributed the Kurds' earlier demands for an independent government to their ignorance. "Kurds can scarcely be expected to understand the technical points of International Law and confused the idea of

national autonomy with independence", he claimed. He disagreed with Major Young's earlier assertion that Kurds were unfit for self-government and argued that Kurds have a rich tradition of autonomous rule during the Ottoman period. Kurds, unlike 'Iraqi Arabs, who are divided by sectarian Shi'i and Sunni differences, are a homogenous people who have a common language and religion, Wahbi contended.<sup>3</sup> The petition was accompanied by a letter signed by the Committee of Kurdistan, Khoybun's Central Command and Kurdish notables from Kirkuk and Sulaymaniya, empowering Towfiq Wahbi to be the accredited Kurdish representative to the League.<sup>4</sup>

Realizing that the recommendations of the PMC would play an important role in the decision of the League of Nations, the British government made a considerable effort to refute the allegations contained in the Kurdish petitions. Britain maintained that some of the petitions were sent due to the instigation of Shaikh Mahmud, some had been faked and the rest had been written by insignificant Kurds. Moreover, Towfiq Wahbi could not be accepted as an accredited representative of the Kurdish people because the chieftains who signed their names to the petitions in favour of Wahbi were entirely from Kirkuk and Sulaymāniya and no chieftains from Arbīl or other Kurdish qadās were mentioned. Also, it was the view of the British government that any measure of special treatment or local self-government for the Kurds greater than that which had been given to them by the 'Iraqi government would have a disquieting impact on regional peace and stability.<sup>5</sup>

In Geneva, Sir Humphrys made a strong representation in favour of 'Iraq's Kurdish policy. He told the PMC that fewer Arab officials were being appointed in Kurdish areas, and most of them were employed in technical departments. Moreover, he said, during the September uprising, contrary to the Kurds' claims, the government troops had behaved in a "civilized way". Sir Humphrys acknowledged that there was some anxiety in the Kurdish liwā's and that the British and 'Iraqi governments were closely working together to alleviate those fears.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, during the months prior to the June session of the PMC, British officials in 'Iraq were told to assist the government effort to suppress the separatist tendencies among the Kurds. On May 5, 1931, Towfiq Wahbi was arrested in Baghdad because of his efforts to unite the Assyrians and the Kurds in order to instigate unrest in the north, and for writing petitions to the League in order to damage 'Iraq's credibility.<sup>7</sup> Humphrys, who realised that the united Kurdish-Assyrian alliance would have serious consequences for the British plan to persuade the PMC of the fairness of government policy toward minorities in 'Iraq, gave his consent to the arrest of Wahbi, ten Chaldeans and several Assyrian leaders.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, during the months April to May of 1931, the High Commissioner paid five visits to the Kurdish liwā's for the purpose of holding personal enquiries into Kurdish grievances, to dispel any doubt Kurds had about British support for the government and to allay Kurdish apprehensions with regard to the government

policy in Kurdistan after the termination of the mandate.<sup>9</sup> The cumulative effect of this special attention to the Kurdish question was the writing of a detailed report on the Kurdish liwā's which was later incorporated into the Special Report on Progress in 'Iraq: 1920-1931 and submitted to the PMC to help it make an evaluation of the general conditions in 'Iraq. Although the report mentions some shortcomings of the government in Kurdistan, it gives Nuri Pasha's cabinet a lot of credit for their liberal policy in the north. Except for few extremists, Kurds were generally content with the government, the report maintains.<sup>10</sup>

In spite of the unflinching public support rendered by the British government to 'Iraq's Kurdish policy, privately both governments continued to have serious disagreements. Some of these disagreements were due to the difficulties which had arisen from the wording of the 1925 resolution and the recommendations of the PMC in November 1930. Expressions such as "guarantees of local administration", "legislative and administrative means", "natural rights", and "the position which they are entitled to", were open to different interpretations. British authorities gave a liberal interpretation to those vague phrases. The 'Iraqi government, out of concern for national unity, was reluctant to give liberal interpretations to such general phrases.<sup>11</sup> For example, the Kurdish Language Law which was promulgated by the government in order to give effect to the League's stipulations of 1925, was a thorny issue between the two governments. The British supported Kurdish nationalist demands to make the Sulaymānīya dialect the standard Kurdish language for all Kurds. However, the government argued that the Kurdish

Language Law was merely an administrative measure to provide services to the Kurds in their own language and since there were many Kurdish dialects, each region should be allowed to use their own dialect. Besides, the British insistence on a unified Kurdish language was not acceptable to the government because it had political implications, the creation of a unified language would add one more component to Kurdish nationalism and thus threaten 'Iraq's national unity.<sup>12</sup>

The procrastination on the part of the 'Iraqi government in implementing their declared liberal policy in Kurdistan was another source of friction between the 'Iraqi and British officials. In February 1931, Cornwallis wrote a memorandum on government policy in Kurdistan which stated that the government was not implementing their announced policy; no Laws had been translated into Kurdish, the Kurdish Assistant Director-General in the Ministry of the Interior was not given any serious work, the Kurdish Administrative Inspector had no say in the administration of Education in Kurdistan and the number of Arabic schools and non-Kurdish officials were increasing. The Advisor to the Ministry of the Interior recommended the following to remedy the situation: 1) that the Kurdish Language Law be immediately published; 2) that the Assistant Kurdish Director-General in the Ministry of the Interior be consulted on the Kurdish policies of the government; 3) that the government appoint a senior Kurdish advisor to the Prime Minister; 4) and that the relatives of those who died during the September uprising be compensated.<sup>13</sup>

Nuri Pasha was infuriated by these recommendations and told Humphrys:

"I should like to express quite frankly the fears which I feel for the future on account of this, and the difficulties which it may create for the 'Iraqi Government with her neighbours, difficulties in which the British Government will necessarily be involved in her position as an ally to this country."<sup>14</sup>

The British authorities assured the government that all British advice was wholly motivated by a desire to assist them in the general conduct of administration and to help the 'Iraqis to attain the position of a fully self-governing state before the League's decision on 'Iraq's application for membership in the Organization. Moreover, the British officials told the government that Britain had no intention to revert to her position at the time of the Treaty of Sèvres and support Kurdish separatism, as the 'Iraqi Ministers suspected.<sup>15</sup>

The British met the government's procrastination over their Kurdish policy by exerting continuous pressure on the 'Iraqis. Sir Humphrys threatened 'Iraqi officials that his government would disassociate themselves in the League from the latter's Kurdish policy. Moreover, the High Commissioner wrote to Nuri Pasha that unless the latter implemented their declared Kurdish policy, His Majesty's Government would not "refrain from expressing the true facts" about the condition in Kurdish liwā's in the ten-year report which the British government was then preparing for the League.<sup>16</sup> Flood of the Colonial Office expresses a similar frustration. He writes that the 'Iraqi government was behaving "stupidly" in the

north by not following a liberal policy, which would assist Britain in persuading the League of 'Iraq's good intentions toward the Kurds.<sup>17</sup> The Secretary of State for Colonies was no less bitter about the government policy in Kurdistan. He asked Humphrys to tell the 'Iraqis that any hesitation on their part to implement their previous undertakings to the Kurds would not only seriously jeopardize 'Iraq's chances of admission to the League, but would certainly cause the League to impose upon the country much more "stringent" minority guarantees.<sup>18</sup> The British were also trying to avoid the acceptance of a resident League observer in 'Iraq, or the sending of a League enquiry commission, as had been suggested by in the League.<sup>19</sup> The presence of a League or an enquiry commission, the British feared, would uncover many "embarrassing facts" which the British government was eager to conceal from the attention of the Council of the League. The sending of an enquiry commission or a League representative to 'Iraq was also unacceptable to the 'Iraqis, who viewed it as a "derogation" of the sovereignty of their country.<sup>20</sup> It was the view of Britain that 'Iraq had little chance to be admitted to the League unless they won over the Kurds. The PMC was "far from satisfied" with the 'Iraqi government's treatment of Kurds. Therefore, he asked the High Commissioner to exert as much pressure as he could on the 'Iraqis to persuade them to follow British advice on the Kurds.<sup>21</sup>

Hard pressed by the British authorities and hoping to win the good will of the Kurds, in April, Nuri Pasha agreed to a new policy giving effect to the one announced last August by the government. The non-Kurdish officials were to be

transferred and the Kurdish Assistant Director-General would be consulted more regularly on policies affecting the Kurds. On May 19th the Kurdish Language Law was passed in the Majlis (parliament). This Law made Kurdish the official language of administration, education and justice in the predominantly Kurdish areas. In May and early June, the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Interior toured the Kurdish liwā's and announced their new policy to the Kurdish leaders,<sup>22</sup> but the British government said they wanted more tangible evidence of government intentions to implement the Language Law. Ja'far Pasha toured the Kurdish liwā's and he ordered the formation of a committee under the Chairmanship of the Mutaşarrif to supervise the application of the new law. Moreover, a circular was sent to all ministries (except Defense and Foreign Affairs) requesting them to replace the non-Kurdish speaking officials in the Kurdish liwā's.<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, in September, the British officials began to express concern that the 'Iraqi government was not implementing its declared policy. They argued that Nuri Pasha was "deliberately" delaying the implementation of the Kurdish Language Law in the hope that the mandate would end in 1932 and Britain would not be there to exert pressure concerning it. They, for instance, wrote that 57% of all top administrative jobs in Kurdistan were held by non-Kurds. In the Sulaymāniya liwā' 99% of the population was Kurd, yet forty senior posts were still held by non-Kurds.<sup>24</sup>

The 'Iraqi government argued that they had no intention to avoid

implementing their declared Kurdish policy, but they faced many obstacles in the implementation of the Language Law due to the lack of a standard Kurdish Language and disagreement among the Kurds as to which dialect was to be adopted in various regions. Moreover, Nuri Pasha maintained that his government was making a considerable effort to replace the non-Kurdish-speaking officials with Kurdish-speaking ones. To substantiate his claim, he pointed out that of eighty-one students enrolled in the military college, thirty-one were Kurds.<sup>25</sup>

However, the recommendations of June 1931 of the PMC, which rejected the Kurds' demand for an independent state, put a definite end to separatist demands among the Kurds and appears effectively calmed the situation in Sulaymānīya liwā'.<sup>26</sup> However, from July 1931 to July 1932 a new round of unrest commenced among the Kurds of Mosul liwā', who were led by Shaikh Ahmad of Bārzan.

### Shaikh Ahmad's Revolt

As early as the Cairo Conference of 1921 the British government had realized that assisting King Faisal to establish a stable and self-sufficient government in 'Iraq would necessitate the suppression of the separatist tendencies in the north and enable 'Iraq to maintain friendly ties with Iran and Turkey. The defeat of Shaikh Mahmud's third revolt was a significant step towards the fulfilment of Britain's policy in Kurdistan. However, the rise of Shaikh Ahmad as a new centre of defiance to the 'Iraqi authorities and his potential to lead the Kurds in a new uprising presented the Anglo-'Iraqi administration with a serious challenge. This

challenge was two-fold. Firstly, the success of the revolt would have seriously jeopardized 'Iraq's chances to be admitted to the League in 1932. Secondly, the new revolt on the Turco-'Iraqi frontier was seriously straining the peaceful, fragile ties between the two countries. Therefore, the British government felt the need to assist the 'Iraqi government in subduing the revolt in Bārzan, a district to the north-east of Mosul, before the issue of 'Iraq's admission was addressed by the Council of the League in September 1932.<sup>27</sup>

The causes of and the events leading to Shaikh Ahmad's rising of 1931 to 1932 have been exhaustively discussed by Wadi Jwaideh's cited study, so it is unnecessary to discuss them in detail here. However, some additional notes on the role played by the British during this revolt are still needed. Jwaideh classifies the authors who wrote about the revolt into two categories. In the first category are British officials who maintain that the unrest in Bārzan was due to strange, complex behaviour and religious excesses of Shaikh Ahmad. In the second are Kurdish writers, who tend to de-emphasize the religious dimensions of the unrest and give more weight to the Anglo-'Iraqi decision to settle the Assyrians in Barādost, south of the Bārzan region. While admitting that the views of the British and Kurdish writers have some relevance to the outbreak of hostilities in Barzan, Jwaideh contends that the Anglo-'Iraqi administration's determination to end Shaikh Ahmad's "Dere Bey" style of semi-autonomous rule was the main cause of the revolt.<sup>28</sup> The archival material which has become available following the completion of Jwaideh's study seems to confirm his view as will be demonstrated

below.

In 1931, the area which was under Shaikh Ahmad's influence consisted of one hundred and fifty miles in length and eighty miles in width. This forms a part of the triangle on the frontier between 'Iraq, Turkey and Iran. It was noted during the geographical description of this region that Barzan then consisted of practically inaccessible rugged mountain terrain. The area was inhabited by Kurds locally referred to as Diwāna (madmen), consisting of Shīrwān, Mazūrī Balā, and Barosh tribesmen. The Bārzan village lies twenty-five miles to the north-east of 'Aqra, the domain of the powerful tribe of Zībārī. In 1918, Shaikh Ahmad had joined Faris Agha of Zībārī in his anti-British activities. In 1928, the situation had deteriorated again as a result of Shaikh Ahmad's refusal to pay shitwi (tax on winter crops) on his Maqtū' (the annual fixed tax on the produce of the territory which had been farmed by him). Besides, both Shaikh Ahmad and Faris Agha had agreed to resist the government's attempt to hold a census in Bārzan.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the Turks were displeased with the 'Iraqi government's appointment of Sayyid Taha, a Turkish fugitive, as Qā'immaqām of Rawāndūz. Therefore, until 1928, Turkey was assisting Shaikh Ahmad, who was a rival to Sayyid Taha, in order to reduce the latter's influence on the frontier. Consequently, in 1928, when the situation was deteriorating toward the point of military confrontation between the government and Shaikh Ahmad, the British High Commissioner realized that Turkey's support was essential for an effective campaign in Bārzan. Therefore, he prevailed upon the 'Iraqis to delay the attack on Bārzan until all Turco-'Iraqi disputes had been

settled. Thus Shaikh Ahmad was told by the British that the government had no hostility toward him as long as he remained peaceful.<sup>30</sup>

As has been noted, in September 1930, while Nuri Pasha was in Ankara, Turkey protested against Shaikh Ahmad's support for the Oramar rebels on the frontier and complained that the Bārzan region was turning into a refuge for Turkish fugitives. The Turkish Premier asked Nuri Pasha at that time to allow Turkish troops to cross the frontier and punish the Bārzanīs and also to suppress the Ararat rebels who were using the frontier against Turkey. Nuri Pasha refused the Turkish request and told them that 'Iraq had already set up a plan to pacify the Bārzan region.<sup>31</sup> It is noteworthy that in February 1931, the British General Inspector of the 'Iraqi Army visited Turkey and presented the government of 'Iraq with a plan for a joint attack on Barzan. Yet, for some obscure reason the 'Iraqi government disagreed with the British plan and the military campaign was delayed.<sup>32</sup>

By the end of 1931, the Anglo-'Iraqi administration felt it necessary to put an end to Shaikh Ahmad's defiance due to various internal and external considerations. The fighting between Shaikh Rashid Lolan of Barādot and Shaikh Ahmad over influence among the frontier tribes had brought about a lot of destruction in the area. Many anti-Bārzanī chieftains in 'Aqra were equally resentful of Shaikh Ahmad and were willing to start an inter-tribal war, which would have increased the unrest in the frontier.<sup>33</sup> Besides, Shaikh Ahmad was instigating the Kurds against the Assyrians, Turkish Nestorian Christians whom

British authorities wished to settle in the Barādost region.<sup>34</sup> Finally, in October 1930, Shaikh Ahmad was asked to pay taxes on the basis of 'Add-al-Koda (a tax based on the number of sheep and goats owned) instead of the previous practice of paying on a Maqtū' basis. Shaikh Ahmad refused to obey this government order and he argued that the Ottomans, during the rule of the Young Turks did not change the Maqtū' system in his tribal domain.<sup>35</sup>

Externally, Shaikh Ahmad's autonomous rule was complicating 'Iraq's relations with Turkey and Iran. The Shaikh's repeated refusal to return the Turkish-Kurdish refugees to Turkey, and his constant intervention in Turkey's internal affairs by supporting Kurdish rebels in Turkey were seriously straining Turco-'Iraqi relations.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, in late 1931, the Kurdish areas of Iran were embroiled in a tribal uprising led by the Jalali frontier Kurdish tribe. The rebels initially had considerable success and managed to hold several towns. It was feared that the 'Iraqi frontier tribes might join or assist the Jalālī revolt. This constituted a serious threat to friendly relations between 'Iraq and Iran.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, at a meeting held on January 12, 1932, the government had decided to establish a regular administration in Barzan. The territory was to form three new nāhiyas of Shīrwān, Barosh and Mazūrī Balā.<sup>38</sup> From October 1931 to March 1932 efforts were made by Anglo-'Iraqi officials to induce Shaikh Ahmad to accept the stationing of 'Iraqi troops, police and Assyrian levies in Bārzan. Although he outwardly displayed loyalty to the government in order "to gain time", he persistently resisted any effort to curtail his autonomous power.<sup>39</sup> (See

Maps 4 and 5)

For these reasons in March 1932, Naji Shawket, the 'Iraqi Minister of the Interior and British military officers, met and drew up a military plan to attack Barzan in three stages. In the implementation of the plan, the British authorities were determined that the role of British troops would be an ancillary one and similar to the role they had played during the previous year's operation against Shaikh Mahmud. The same rationale was offered; the policy of the British was to leave the government as free a hand as possible in the administration of the country and in dealing with internal tribal revolts. This role, as mentioned, implied that British intervention was to be restricted to critical situations when they would offer at least advisory assistance. This was also intended to train the 'Iraqi Army in mountain warfare and to "blood their noses" before the end of the mandate. Finally, the presence of the RAF squadrons boosted the morale of the government troops, establishing "its prestige among the Kurds while we are still at hand to help them out of difficulties", as a British official observed.<sup>40</sup>

After several encounters between the government forces and followers of Shaikh Ahmad, it was decided that the RAF units had to take a more effective role in order to avoid a prolonged war of attrition. This necessitated the repetition of the military tactic used in March of 1931 against Shaikh Mahmud; the constant bombing of villages suspected of giving aid to the rebel forces in order to disrupt normal life in the rebel-held territories. This tactic also helped to "convince many doubters" among the tribesmen that Britain was fully supporting the government.

Thus many wavering tribal chieftains deserted to the government side.<sup>41</sup>

The British authorities also persuaded the Iranian and Turkish governments to assist the 'Iraqis in suppressing Shaikh Ahmad. Consequently, Turkish and Iranian troops were concentrated on the frontier triangle region opposite Barzan. Realizing that the Anglo-'Iraqi forces had wrecked havoc in Barzan, that many tribal chieftains had gone over to the government side, and that they were trapped between three armies and the RAF, Shaikh Ahmad and his followers decided to surrender to the Turkish forces.<sup>42</sup>

It appears that the British assistance to the 'Iraqi army during the earlier military operation against Shaikh Mahmud had not removed the suspicions which many 'Iraqis harboured about British intentions in the north. During Shaikh Ahmad's revolt there were many who still did not trust the British. One reason for these doubts was the duration of the action taken against the Barzanis--approximately six months. Many 'Iraqi officers were resentful, as they had been during the operation against Shaikh Mahmud, of British officials' attempts to restrict their punitive measures against the defiant tribes. These officers argued that if it was not for British Istishāra (advice), they could have ended the revolt in a few weeks instead of several months.<sup>43</sup> The British government contended that the 'Iraqi officers' "tactless" manner in dealing with the populace was threatening to alienate several peaceful tribes. Therefore, the Residency gave Captain Lyon, then the PO of Kirkuk and Arbīl, the political executive power to deal with the rebels.<sup>44</sup>

As the military operations dragged on, the level of discontent was growing among the politicians, the media, and members of parliament in Baghdad. Many 'Iraqi politicians believed that while the British were eager to end their mandate in 'Iraq, they had the intention to hold on to Kurdistan due to the rich petroleum resources which had recently been discovered. Therefore, the 'Iraqis thought the British were obstructing an effective military campaign against the rebels in order to convince the government that Kurdistan was "too powerful to be handled by the 'Iraqi army."<sup>45</sup> In fact, there were widespread rumours among the Baghdadi political circles that British aeroplanes were dropping food and ammunition to the rebels.<sup>46</sup> Some members of parliament went as far as attributing the unrest in Barzan entirely to British plans to forcibly displace the Muslim Kurds in order to establish a pro-British Assyrian entity in the north.<sup>47</sup>

However, the British officials contended that the success of the military action in Barzan was primarily due to the active role played by the RAF units. In April 1932, Sir John Salmand, the Air Chief Marshall of the British Forces in 'Iraq wrote that the remarkable success against the rebel forces was the result of the concerted and effective efforts made by the RAF. He adds, "There is no doubt that the Iraq Army would have fared very badly...without their gallant assistance."<sup>48</sup> Besides, the morale of the 'Iraqi troops, British officials argued, was "very low". This was due to their inexperience and the lack of motivation of the officers. The latter were mostly ex-Ottoman senior officers and they were aware of government plans to replace them gradually with younger British-trained officers.<sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless, some British officials give some credit to the 'Iraqi army, which they considered as still young and inexperienced in mountain warfare. Therefore, they say a few reverses in such difficult terrain as Barzan were unavoidable. In the end, the role of the 'Iraqi army could not be de-emphasized. They were fighting against a rebel force which had "fluidity" and considerable familiarity with the region. They had succeeded eventually, though not without RAF support, in defeating Shaikh Mahmud and Shaikh Ahmad who had been "the stormy petrels" of 'Iraqi Kurdistan for years.<sup>50</sup>

With the defeat of Shaikh Ahmad government control over the north was consolidated. Thus the prospect of a stable government in 'Iraq and friendly relationships with neighbouring Turkey and Iran became real. Therefore, in October 1932 'Iraq was admitted to the League of Nations and the British Mandate in the country came to an end.

## Footnotes to Chapter 8

1. F.O. 371/16030. Confid. [Des. No. E369/9/93] Jan. 21, 1932. "Iraq: Proposed Release From Mandatory Regime," p. 3.
2. Ibid., 12-13.
3. C.O. 730/161/2. 144396, Letter from Tofiq Wahbi to H.C. 'Iraq. Badhdad. "Comments Made to Refute the Statement Made by Major Young, the Accredited Representative of the Mandatory Power."
4. C.O. 730/161/2. 144396. Khoyun, Lique National Kurde, Central Committee. Teleg. No. 2835, April 17, 1931; Letter, Tofiq Wahbi to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, April 17, 1931; 161/3 Letter. Assiya Towfiq to the Secretary of the PMC. May 16, 1931.
5. C.O. 730/161/3. 144272, "Observations of Petitions to the League of Nations dated 28th March 1931," June 20, 1931; "Observations of His Majesty's Government on the Petitions dated 19th April 1931 from Towfiq, relating to the condition of Kurds in 'Iraq," June 8, 1931; "Memorandum of Further Comments Upon Certain of the Kurdish Petitions Forwarded to the League of Nations with Foreign Office Letter," No. E855/31/73 Feb. 20, 1931.
6. League of Nations PMC, Minutes of Twentieth Session Held at Geneva. June 9th to June 27th, 1931, C. 422. M. 176. 1931. VI Geneva, August 19, 1931, pp. 121-2; Special Report, p. 261; C.O. 730/161/1. 144272. Desp. 88020. Jan. 22, 1936. Earlier in April 1931, Wahbi went to Syria with Yusuf Malik, a pro-Assyrian activist, to win French support and to meet Cope and Rassam, two British citizens who were advocating the creation of an Assyrian homeland in northern 'Iraq. (See: 'Iraq Administrative Report for the Year 1931, p. 15.
7. League of Nations, PMC, Twentieth Session, p. 122.
8. Special Report, p. 261.
9. C.O. 730/161/1. 144272, Extract from Intelligence Report No. 8. April 5, 1931; Teleg. No. 252. May 30, 1931, Nuri to Young.
10. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. II, Desp. 646. Feb. 16, 1931. Council of Ministers, Baghdad. To Residency.
11. C.O. 720/1S2/2. 144396. Memo. Secret. Feb. 4, 1931. Adv. Minister of Interior to Nuri Pasha.

12. C.O. 730/161/1. 144272. Letter. Secret. No. 646. Feb. 16, 1931. Nuri to Humphrys.
13. C.O. 730/161/1. 144272. Conf. No. P.O. 58. March 7, 1931. Humphrys to Nuri.
14. C.O. 730/161/2. 144396. Residency. Baghdad. Feb. 13. 1931. Humphrys to Passfield.
15. C.O. 730/161/2. 144386, Note. Feb. 13, 1931. Flood. C.O. London.
16. C.O. 730/161/2. 144396. Teleg. No. 80. Feb. 19, 1931. Passfield to Humphrys.
17. F.O. 371/162/8, "Report of a Meeting at Foreign Office to Consider the Permanent Mandate Commission's Report to the Council of the Release of 'Iraq from Mandate Regime," E.8219/93/93, Dec. 14, 1931; British efforts to terminate the mandate over 'Iraq were opposed by the French and Italian governments. The former feared that if 'Iraq became a member of the League of Nations Syria would ask that its French mandate be terminated. The Italian government was concerned lest the Treaty of Alliance of 1930 between 'Iraq and the British government pave the way for French political control over post-mandate Syria. Therefore, Italy was initially reluctant to consent to 'Iraq's independence due to the terms of the Treaty. Also, Italy desired to use this opportunity to gain oil concessions in 'Iraq. Eventually, Britain convinced the 'Iraqis to give the Italian oil companies some concessions in return for Italy's consent to 'Iraq's membership in the League. (See: Niama, pp. 364-5.)
18. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. II, Teleg. No. feb. 20, 1931.
19. C.O. 730/161/1. 144272. Desp. No. 8869/31, March 6, 1931. Passfield to Humphrys.
20. Zhiyān, no. 291, August 25, 1931; BHCF, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. II. Letter. Secret. No. S.A/62, April 26, 1931; 'Iraq, Administrative Report for the Year 1931, p. 16.
21. 'Iraq Administrative Report for the Year 1931, p. 19.
22. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 12. Teleg. No. C/1139, Sept. 26, 1931. Chapman to Passfield; C.O. 730/161/1. 144272, Memo. Sept. 8, 1931 by Holt, Residency Baghdad.; Air 23/311 Dep. Ref 1/A/36 S.S.O., Sept. 3, 1931, Arbil to A.H.Q. 'Iraq.
23. BHCF 13/14, Events in Kurdistan, Vol. 12. Memo. 4094, Nov. 7, 1931,

Council of Minister. Baghdad.

24. 'Iraq Administrative Report for the Year 1931, p. 19. In June the PMC made the following recommendations on the Kurdish petitions: 1) To request the Mandatory Power to impress upon the Government of 'Iraq that it should be guided in its dealings with its Kurdish subjects by the spirit of broad tolerance towards a minority worthy of respect, whose loyalty will grow as it is freed from all fear of danger to its national rights, as explicitly recognized by the Mandatory Power and the League of Nations; 2) To inform the petitioners that the League of Nations would continue to ensure that their rights would be respected with even greater zeal and sympathy if it is convinced that the Kurds are loyally contributing to the security and prosperity of the State of 'Iraq; 3) To give its closest attention to the uneasiness undoubtedly prevalent in the Kurdish population which is caused by the uncertainty as to the fate which awaits them if the moral protection of Great Britain, from which they had benefitted for more than ten years, is to be withdrawn. (See: League of Nations, PMC, Twentieth Session, p. 234.)

25. 'Iraq Administrative Report for the Year 1931, p. 2.; C.O. 730/157/6. 144350, Desp. No. 350, Sept. 4, 1930; 163/5 144637 Humphrys to Passfield, Feb. 6, 1931.; Longrigg, 'Iraq 1900-1950, p. 217.

26. The Kurdish Nationalist Movement, pt. 2, pp. 644-52. In a manner very similar to their portrayal of Shaikh Mahmud, the British officials present Shaikh Ahmad as a cruel madman of unstable temperament. They claim that in 1931 he adopted Christianity and forced his followers to eat pork. However, finding himself isolated from the Muslim Kurds, he re-converted to Islam, Kurdish writers deny this allegation and consider it as British propaganda designed to encourage the Kurds to support Shaikh Rashid Lolan of Baradost, a religious notable, against Shaikh Ahmad. (See: Longrigg, 'Iraq 1900-1950, pp. 217-9; 'Iraq Administrative Report for the Year 1931, pp. 13-14; A. Peresh, 'Iraq Dawlatun bil 'Unf (London: Kurdology Press, 1986), pp. 52-4.

27. Air 23/184, trans. letter. Qa'immaqam of Amadiya No. 632, Feb. 16, 1928, to Mutasarrif of Mosul; 'Iraq Administrative Report for the Year 1928, pp. 52-3.

28. 'Iraq Administrative Report for the Year 1931, p. 52; Air 23/184, Desp. No. 5/1086, July 28, 1928 A.I. Mosul to Adv. Minister of Interior, cited in al-Haj, p. 119; Desp. No. 1.M/7.A March 17, 1928. S.S.O. Mosul; Letter. trans. No. 4834, April 21, 1928. Hobbs to Shaikh Ahmad; Teleg. No. 734, Jan 22, 1928, Vali of Hakkari to W.F. Wilson.

29. C.O. 730/174/11. 144637 Extract from Personal Letters, No. S./10371, dated April 6, 1932; A.O.C. 'Iraq to the Chief of April 6, 1932, A.O.C. 'Iraq to the Chief of Air Staff, E.R. Ludlow-Hewitt; C.O. 730/163/51. 144637 Desp. No.

88069/Secret, Feb. 8, 131. Humphrys to Passfield.

30. C.O. 730/163/5. 144837 Desp. No. 88069/Secret, Feb. 6, 1931. Humphrys to Passfield.

31. Great Britain, Col. Office. Report by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of 'Iraq for the Period of January to October 1932 (London: H.M.G. Stationary Office, 1933), pp. 2-3.

32. Air 23/311 letter. Sept. 28, 1931. Arbil S.S.O. to A.H.Q., 'Iraq Command.

33. Confid. U.S. Diplomatic Post, Record, Diplomativ Ser. No. 62. Sept. 30, 131. 'Iraq, U.S. Legation. Mustafa Hasan, an 'Iraqi general who participated in the operation against Shaikh Ahmad, writes that the latter asked the 'Iraqi authorities why the government was trying to establish direct rule in his domain when the Turks had been content to give Barzan as maqtu' to him. (See: al-Barzaniyun (Beirut: Dar al-Taliba, 1963), 25.)

34. C.O. 730/161/1. 144272, Extract from Intelligence Report, dated 25th Feb. 1931; Conf. No. 212, Council of Ministers, Jan. 18. 1932. On June 21, 130, Shaikh Ahmad sent two hundred men to arrest Sito Agha of Oramar, a tribal chief who led a revolt against Turkey. (See: C.O. 730/157/6. 144637, Extract from Summary of Intelligence Report, No. 7. dated August 18th, 1930."

35. Air 23/311 Ref 1/A/39, Oct. 25, 1931. A.H.Q.: Ref. VA/10 Sept. 2, 130. S.S.O. Arbil to A.H.Q. 'Iraq Command.

36. C.O. 730/174/11. 144637, Extract from Intelligence Report. 6. Dated March 21, 131; Mustafa Hasan, pp. 301-1.

37. Confid. U.S. Dip. Post. Records. Desp. No. 62. Sep. 30, 1931; C.O. 730/174/11. 144637, Extract from Intelligence Report. 6. May 23, 1923; Air 23/311. Ref. 1/n/40 Sept. 7, 1931. S.S.O. Arbil to A.H.Q. 'Iraq command, Mustafa Hasan, pp. 26-7.

38. C.O. 730/174/11. 144637. Desp. No. P.O. 75. April 29, 1931. Humphrys to Ja'far Pasha; "Note" by Hall, April 14, 1932; Confid. U.S. Diplomatic Post Records, "Subject: Campaign Against Shaikh Ahmad of Barzan," No. 147 March 3, 1932; Ser. No. 172, "Campaign Against Shaikh Ahmad of Barzan and Public Opinion." June 2, 1932.

39. C.O. 730/174/11. 144637, letter. April 28, 1932. Humphrys to Sir Philip Gunliff.

40. Confid. U.S. Diplomatic Post Record, Ser. No. 238, Jan. 23, 1932, "Subject: The Surrender of Shaikh Ahmad," U.S. Legation, Baghdad; 'Iraq Administrative Report 1932, p. 4.
41. Confid. U.S. Diplomatic Post Record Ser. No. 97. Dec. 19, 1932, U.S. Legation, Baghdad.
42. C.O. 730/174/11. 144637. Desp. Secret. A. April 28, 1931. Humphrys to Gunliff-Lister.
43. Confid. U.S., Central Files, Desp. No. 605, May 6, 1932. 'Iraq, Baghdad; Confid. U.S. Diplomatic Post Record, Ser. No. 172. June 2, 1932, "Subject: Campaign Against Shaikh Ahmad and Public Opinion," U.S. Legation Baghdad, Iraq; Khawaja, p. 103.
44. Confid. U.S. Diplomatic Post Record, Ser. No. 172, June 2, 1932, "Subject: Campaign Against Shaikh Ahmad and Public Opinion," U.S. Legation, Baghdad, Iraq.
45. C.O. 730/174/11. 144637, "Extract from Intelligence Report No. 7. dated April 4th, 1932."
46. C.O. 730/174/11. 144637. Letter. Personal Residency Baghdad. April 28, 1932, by Sir John Salmond.
47. C.O. 730/174/11. 144637. Letter. Secret. April 27, 1932. Air Ministry to Parkinson (C.O.); Desp. 96393. May 9, 1932, Parkinson to Vice Marshall. A.M.
48. C.O. 730/174/11 Teleg. Secret. Nov. 26. 1932. A.M. to C.O.; Mustafa Hasan, p. 49.
49. C.O. 730/174/11. 144637 Teleg. 96393 May 9, 1932, Parkinson to Vice-Marshal. Baghdad, Iraq Command.
50. C.O. 730/174/11. 144637, Note, April 27, 1932. A.M. London to Parkinson.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

One of the most significant findings of this study is the striking continuity of Britain's policy in Kurdistan. This continued policy, which dates back to the nineteenth century has the following distinct features: 1) persistent support of the regional powers in the Middle East in their efforts to suppress the Kurdish revolts which Britain viewed as a threat to the stability in the area; and 2) the readiness on the part of Britain to manipulate the Kurds in order to secure her imperial interests in the region.

British policy in Kurdistan during the mandate was shaped primarily by a desire to safeguard strategic imperial interests in India by securing control over 'Iraq and the Gulf, as this study has demonstrated. From the nineteenth century until the end of the mandate in 'Iraq, imperial British policy aimed at denying Russia control over the routes to the Gulf. This policy necessitated maintaining of territorial unity first of Iran and the Ottoman Empire, and then 'Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey by preserving regional stability. The Kurds were viewed by the British as a destabilizing element in the region. During the nineteenth century Britain assisted the Ottomans and the Iranians in their suppression of the Kurdish revolts. Britain played a significant role in assisting the Ottomans in suppressing the Kurdish revolts of Mir Kur (1834), Badr Khan (1848), Yezdan Shir (1856) and 'Ubaidullah al-Nehri (1882).

After World War I, the British viewed the maintenance of the territorial unity of 'Iraq, Iran and Turkey as an essential part of its policy to stop Bolshevik

Russia's advances towards the Gulf. Therefore, in the years 1918-1924, Britain regarded the Kurdish separatist movement, led by Shaikh Mahmud, as a threat to regional stability. Britain's intervention on the side of 'Iraq's government stemmed partly from a desire to assist King Faisal's efforts to establish a stable government in 'Iraq, and partly to prevent the spread of Kurdish separatism across the border to the Iranian Kurds, who were equally restive during this period. The British government put pressure on the Iranian government to respond to 'Iraq's call for bilateral cooperation to end the Kurdish revolt on the frontier. In 1926, British-led joint efforts of the two countries resulted in the end of the Kurdish revolt in Iranian Kurdistan and Shaikh Mahmud's second revolt. This greatly stabilized the frontier between 'Iraq and Iran in the north. In 1930-1931 British forces played an equally leading role in putting down the Kurdish revolt, and the British-led regional cooperation between Iran and 'Iraq was an important factor in convincing Shaikh Mahmud to end his third and final revolt. Finally, Shaikh Ahmad's revolt (1931-1932) provided a serious challenge to the stability of the 'Iraq-Turkey frontier. British forces and the RAF offered decisive assistance to the 'Iraqi troops involved in ending the revolt. In addition, Britain made a strong effort to coordinate 'Iraqi and Turkish military moves to force Shaikh Ahmad's followers to surrender.

With the assassination of Simko in 1930 in Iranian Kurdistan and the surrender of Shaikh Mahmud and Shaikh Ahmad, Kurdish separatism subsided considerably during the 1930s. This facilitated the establishment of a friendly relationship

among Turkey, Iran and 'Iraq, paving the way for the 1937 Sa'd Abad Pact of regional cooperation. This was a British-dominated agreement in which Iran, Turkey and 'Iraq all played a significant role. Many Kurdish nationalists consider this pact to be a British device for checking Kurdish separatism.

This study of British policy in Kurdistan provides an interesting case study of a colonial power's manipulation of an ethnic conflict to further its interests in the Middle East. Britain used the Kurds to enhance her political and economic hold over 'Iraq, as has been demonstrated above. British policy in this regard was also a continuation of her traditional approach to the Kurdish issue during the last century. It was explained in Chapter Two that James Claudius Rich, the British Resident in Baghdad, instigated unrest among the Kurds in 1820 in order to strengthen his position vis-à-vis Dawud Pasha, the Governor of Baghdad. This established a precedent which was followed by Mr. Rich's successors in Baghdad; throughout the century and up to 1914 Kurds were used as pawns in the struggle for influence in Baghdad between British and Ottoman officials.

During the period 1918-1932, the British High Commissioners in Baghdad followed the same practice, to force the 'Iraqi government to give in to their colonial policy objectives. In 1922, for instance, the threat of Kurdish secession was effectively used to pressure King Faisal to sign the 1922 Treaty of Alliance between 'Iraq and the United Kingdom. The ratification of the Treaty met with stiff resistance from the 'Iraqi nationalists in parliament, but in April 1924, the British had used the Kurdish separatist threat in the north to force its ratification.

Likewise in 1925, the British found in the Turkish bid for the wilayah of Mosul an opportunity to coerce the 'Iraqis to grant the TPC a generous oil concession. This concession established British commercial dominance in 'Iraq.

It is noteworthy that during the struggle over the wilayah of Mosul, Turkey also tried to manipulate the Kurds. This reveals another aspect of the Kurdish question which is remarkably persistent. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Kurds were used as pawns in the Ottoman-Safavid conflict. This phenomenon, which is due partly to the geo-politics of Kurdistan and partly to the tribal composition of Kurdish society, has continued until the present. For example, Kurds were used by both sides during the 'Iraq-Iran war (1980-1988).

The British deliberately kept the Kurdish question alive throughout their mandate in 'Iraq. This was meant to serve as a reminder to King Faisal of 'Iraq's vulnerability and the need for the presence of British troops in the northern portions of the country. During the years 1919-1922, Major Soane espoused the cause of Kurdish nationalism and continuously prevented the 'Iraqi government's attempt to fully integrate the Kurdish regions within 'Iraq. Sir Percy Cox instructed British officials in Kurdistan during the period 1926-1929 to keep their lines of communication open with Shaikh Mahmud, British intelligence officers were secretly arming him, and allowing the Kurdish nationalists in Sulaymanlya and chieftains on the frontier to be in constant contact with him. Thus in 1930, the British skilfully managed to make use of the new threat posed by the Kurdish nationalists and Shaikh Mahmud to force 'Iraq to sign the 1930 Treaty, which

many 'Iraqis viewed as an infringement on the nation's sovereignty.

The gravity of the developments in Turkey following World War I had a significant bearing on British policy in southern Kurdistan. During the period 1918-1920, the Turkish government encouraged pan-Islamism to counteract Allied plans for the formation of an Armenian state in the eastern Turkish provinces. Therefore, British officials such as Captain Noel and Major Soane were told to disseminate Kurdish nationalist views and put forward schemes for an independent pro-British Kurdish state. Britain's espousal of Kurdish nationalism was aimed at weakening the pro-Turkish pan-Islamic tendency among the Kurds, and encouraging the further disintegration of a still defiant Turkey. In 1922, Turkish agitations destabilized all southern Kurdistan. The British once again resorted to the use of Kurdish nationalism in fighting Turkish influence. In December 1922, a joint British-'Iraqi declaration was issued calling for the establishment of an independent Kurdish government in southern Kurdistan.

In 1923, Britain wanted to distance Turkey from Bolshevik Russia and in order to appease Mustafa Kamal during the Lausanne Negotiations, Britain abandoned the provisions of the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres which called for the formation of a Kurdish state. During the post-Lausanne period (1923-1925), having defeated Shaikh Mahmud's second revolt and signed a Peace treaty with Turkey, the British fundamentally altered their stand on the Kurdish question. They began to pursue the aim of "administrative autonomy" instead of an "autonomy" or "independent Kurdish government" in southern Kurdistan. Administrative autonomy meant a

complete integration of Kurdish provinces with the rest of 'Iraq provided that the officials in southern Kurdistan were Kurdish-speaking, and Kurdish was the language of administration, education and justice. These rights were institutionalized in the stipulations of the Mosul settlement of 1925.

In order to appease Turkey, who vigorously opposed even these Kurdish cultural rights, the British did little about the 'Iraqi government's failure to comply with her obligations towards the Kurds. In fact, the British had deliberately kept the League of Nations in ignorance with regard to the 'Iraqi government's noncompliance.

It should be noted that due to King Faisal's liberal stand on Kurdish rights, and vocal Kurdish nationalist elite in Sulaymaniya which was patronized by the British, the position of 'Iraqi Kurds compared favourably with that of their compatriots in Turkey and Iran where the national policy was one of forcible assimilation and integration. This explains why the Kurds in 'Iraq were able in subsequent decades to achieve more national rights than the Turkish or the Iranian Kurds.

It can be safely concluded from the study that the British colonial experience in India influenced British policy in Kurdistan. The British had experienced great difficulty with the tribes in the North-West Frontier of India before the occupation of Waziristan. These tribes were warlike and resentful of direct control by central authorities. The British, therefore, established an autonomous regime in the area loosely connected with the central government. The establishment of a tribal

mini-state in 'Iraqi Kurdistan in 1918 and 1922 led by Shaikh Mahmud was, to some extent, inspired by the British experience in India. Moreover, the British perception of the North-West Frontier tribes as "savage", "primitive" and unfit for self-rule had a profound impact on the formation of their outlook towards the Kurds who were viewed by British officials in similar terms.

The desire of the British to establish a unified and a viable state in 'Iraq had no less significance in shaping British policy in southern Kurdistan. The British had been entrusted with a mandate over 'Iraq. This formal and moral duty coincided with her strategic imperial interests in the country; safeguarding the route to India through the Gulf and protecting the Persian oil fields. These necessitated the emergence of a strong united 'Iraq. The British government treated the Kurdish issue in 'Iraq in relation to 'Iraq's strategic importance. The desire of some Kurds for the formation of a Kurdish state was not in accord with British interests in 'Iraq. The formation of such a state would have deprived 'Iraq of its northern mountainous region, which was essential for the defense of the frontier with Turkey. Besides, the separation of southern Kurdistan would have created a sectarian imbalance in 'Iraq, leaving King Faisal and his mainly Sunni elite with an ungovernable Shi'i majority. This accounts for Britain's firm suppression of Kurdish attempts at separation and the considerable assistance rendered by the British government to 'Iraq in the League of Nations. Thus Britain's pro-'Iraq policy during the 1920s was not altruistic, nor did it stem from bias in favour of the Arabs. This attitude was due mainly to the coincidental

harmony between 'Iraq's national interests and those of the United Kingdom in the region.

Local factors in Kurdistan were not less significant in shaping British policy there. The mountainous and difficult terrain of the north had its impact on the historical development of the Kurds. During the British mandate, the Kurds were still living in semi-nomadic, or agricultural, and tribal regions isolated from one another by geographical and linguistic barriers. Kurdish political life was complicated by on-going tribal feuds. Their inaccessible mountainous region enabled them first to resist the Ottomans' centralizing efforts and later the Anglo-'Iraqi administration's attempts to establish control of their territory. This tribal society was under the influence of the religious shaikhs and feudal lords, and was therefore unable to develop a coherent, secular nationalist movement before the end of the British rule in 'Iraq. Therefore, nationalist ideas remained largely confined to a small urban elite and to those elements of the traditional class who saw nationalism as a vehicle for the advancement of their personal interests. During the immediate post-World War I period, the British considered establishing a Kurdish state. However, they soon realized that there was neither an articulate Kurdish national feeling nor was there an individual which could command the support of the majority of the Kurds.

It has been demonstrated in Chapter One that southern Kurdistan's economy was strongly linked to that of 'Iraq. The British policy-makers in the field were far more familiar with this than those at home. This accounts partly for the

former's lack of enthusiasm for the formation of an independent Kurdish state and their reluctance to carry out policies which did not take into account the dependent character of Kurdistan's economy. Also, with the discovery of the potential oil resources of the north, the British felt that the expected oil revenue from the region would be essential for the development of 'Iraq as an independent nation.

The war-like spirit of the Kurds, as symbolized in Shaikh Mahmud's and Shaikh Ahmad's revolts, weighed heavily in the minds of British statesmen in charge of Kurdish policy. Between 1918 to 1920 the Kurds launched five revolts. These had an impact on the policy-makers in the field, and caused a great amount of confusion. The rapid, unpredictable unfolding of events in Kurdistan caused the British administration to waver between direct and indirect rule and to devise policies on a hand-to-mouth basis.

There is much evidence in the study which clearly indicates that the policy which was pursued in Kurdistan until the conclusion of the Lausanne Treaty of 1923 was indecisive, inarticulate and to some extent contradictory. This was due largely to the uneven distribution of responsibilities, lack of sufficient information and the non-existence of a central body to collect and analyze the information which the British government was receiving through various channels. Though the various ministries in London, the British residencies in Constantinople, Damascus, Baghdad, and the political officers in Kurdistan were concerned mainly with securing British interests, they had considerable differences over the definition of these and the means to achieve this goal. The Residency in Baghdad, for instance,

had a more up-to-date and realistic appreciation of the situation and was determined to pursue the policies which the High Commissioners felt to be sound even if it meant disregarding their seniors' instructions in London. Captain Noel and later Major Soane, considered the Residency to be biased in favour of 'Iraq and tried to obstruct the implementation of the policy prescribed in Baghdad. The obstruction of the implementation of policies agreed upon in Baghdad caused many 'Iraqi politicians to think that the Residency and the British political officers in the Kurdish liwa's were involved in a conspiracy to detach Kurdistan from 'Iraq.

Although the Colonial Office in general, sympathized with the Residency's conduct of day-to-day administration in Kurdistan, there were instances of sharp disagreement between the two. It suffices to mention here that many complaints were written by senior officials in London about T.A. Wilson's consistent disregard of instructions sent to him and a sharp rebuke was sent by Winston Churchill to Sir Percy Cox over the latter's failure to comply with the orders sent to him with regard to the Kurdish policy after the Cairo conference. The Foreign Office as well had some apprehensions about the policy formulation in the Colonial Office with regard to the Kurds. The former felt that the latter was not giving due regard to the United Kingdom's undertakings with France in regard to the Middle East and the policy in Kurdistan. Therefore, the two offices were at loggerheads on many essential issues. The Foreign Office felt that the Colonial Office was not fully aware of the adverse effects of 'Iraq's failure to comply with

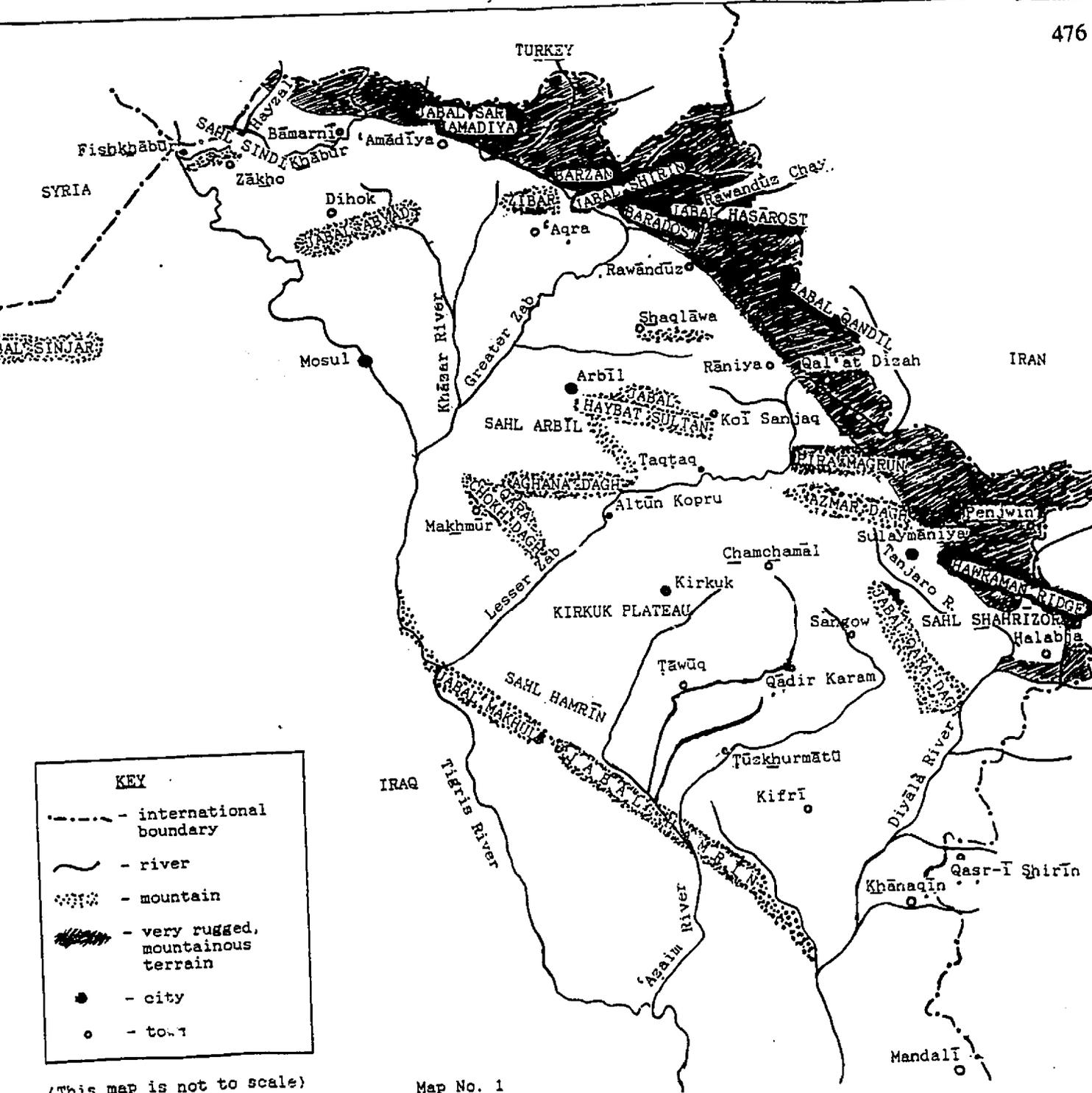
her obligations to the Kurds, and of the possible harm to Britain's prestige in the League of Nations. The Colonial Office, on the other hand, argued that the Foreign Office and the Treasury were giving undue weight to the growing demand at home, motivated by economic reasons, for disengagement from 'Iraq. This led to friction between the two offices and sudden major policy appraisals.

From 1924 onwards, the British policy in Kurdistan began to stabilize. This was facilitated by the suppression of Shaikh Mahmud's second revolt and the signing of a peace treaty with Turkey, which removed much of uncertainty of the British government with regard to the legal status of the Kurdish regions in 'Iraq. The main objective of the British policy following the Lausanne Conference was the gradual amalgamation of the Kurdish regions with the rest of 'Iraq. This policy was intended to satisfy moderate Kurdish national aspirations and assure 'Iraq, Turkey and Iran that the Kurdish movement had been brought under control.

Finally, the frequent wars in Kurdistan in the years 1918-1932 forced the British and the 'Iraqis to be deeply preoccupied with the region. The period was characterized by frequent use of military force, the issuing of threatening proclamations, the burning and destruction of hundreds of villages and anxiety about the spread of the unrest in southern Kurdistan to the neighbouring states of Iran and Turkey. The effect of this state of affairs was that the Kurdish question became a drain on 'Iraq's budget and presented a permanent threat to the stability of the country.

To conclude, it is evident from this study that the leaders of the Kurdish

nationalist movement could not achieve their aims because they did not fully comprehend the policy objectives of Britain and other powers in the region, nor were they united in their pursuit of Kurdish rights. It is also apparent that the Kurdish question became a threat to regional stability because the national aspirations of the Kurds were never seriously addressed.



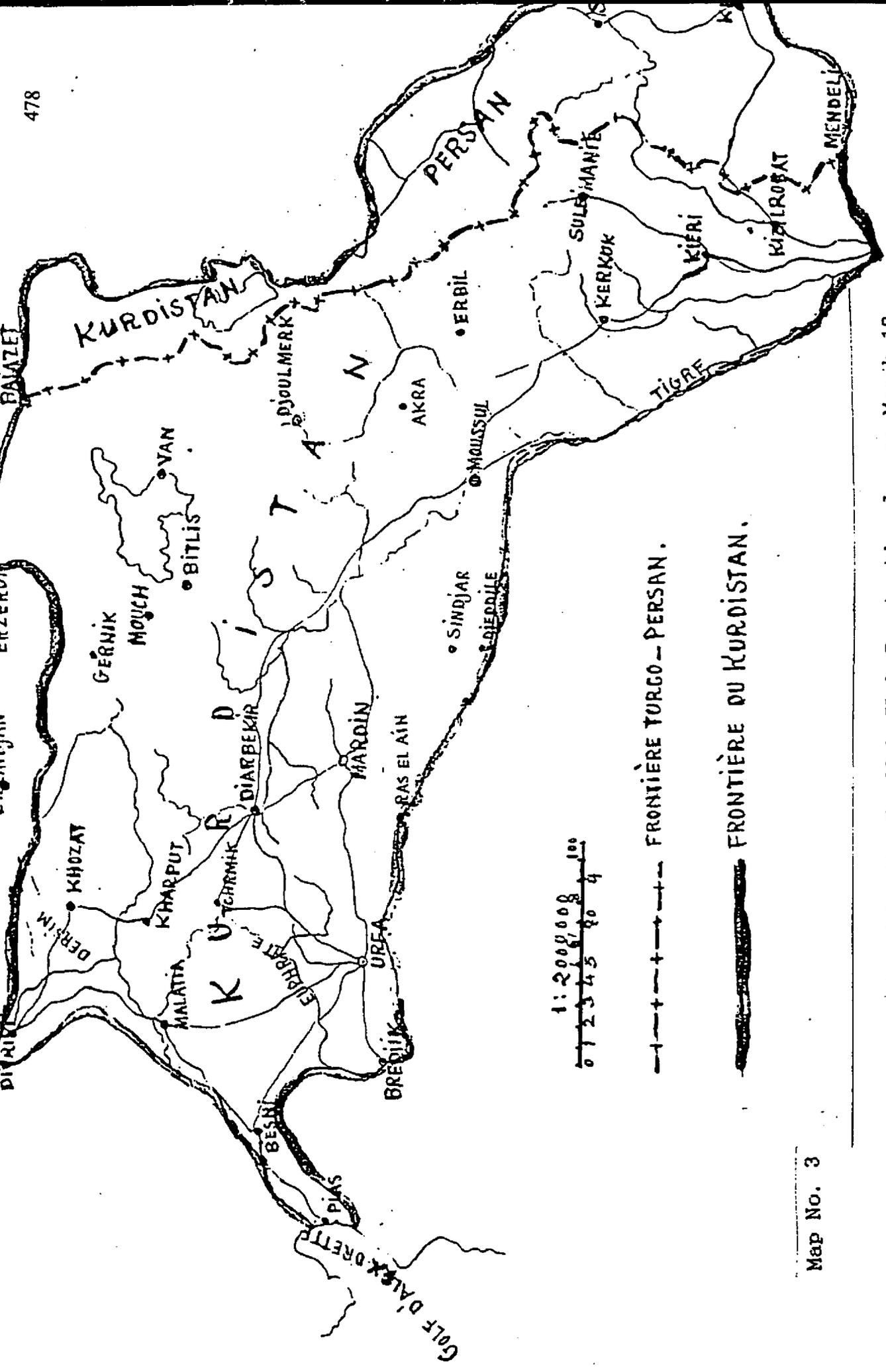
KEY	
- - - - -	international boundary
~~~~~	river
⊘⊘⊘	mountain
⚡	very rugged, mountainous terrain
●	city
○	town

(This map is not to scale)

Map No. 1

SOUTHERN KURDISTAN





FRONTIÈRE TURGO-PERSAN.

FRONTIÈRE DU KURDISTAN.

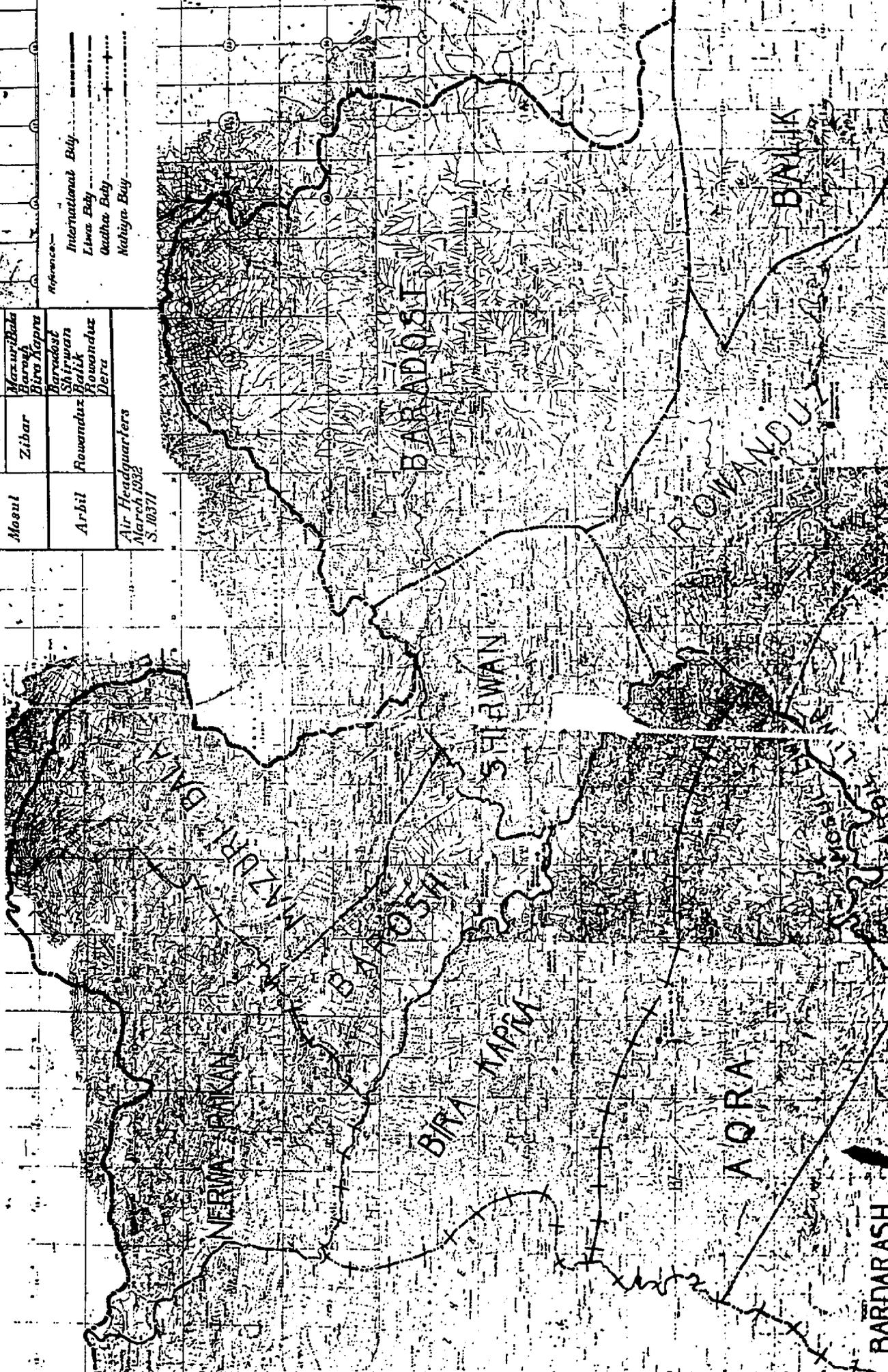
Map No. 3

The map submitted by the Kurdish Club Constantinople, on March 18, 1920 to the Paris Peace Conference. [FO 371 5068]

# PROPOSED ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES BARZAN AND SHIRWAN AREAS

Liwa	Qadha	Nahiya
Mosul	Agra	Agra Bardarash.
	Zibar	Maxwi Bala
		Bira Xapra
Arbil	Rowanduz	Baradost
		Shirwan
		Rowanduz
		Dera
Air Headquarters March 1932 S. 10371		

Reference—  
 International Bdy. ————  
 Liwa Bdy. - - - - -  
 Qadha Bdy. - - - - -  
 Nahiya Bdy. - - - - -



BARDARASH

AGRA

BIRA MAPA

SHIRWAN

BARADOST

ROWANDUZ

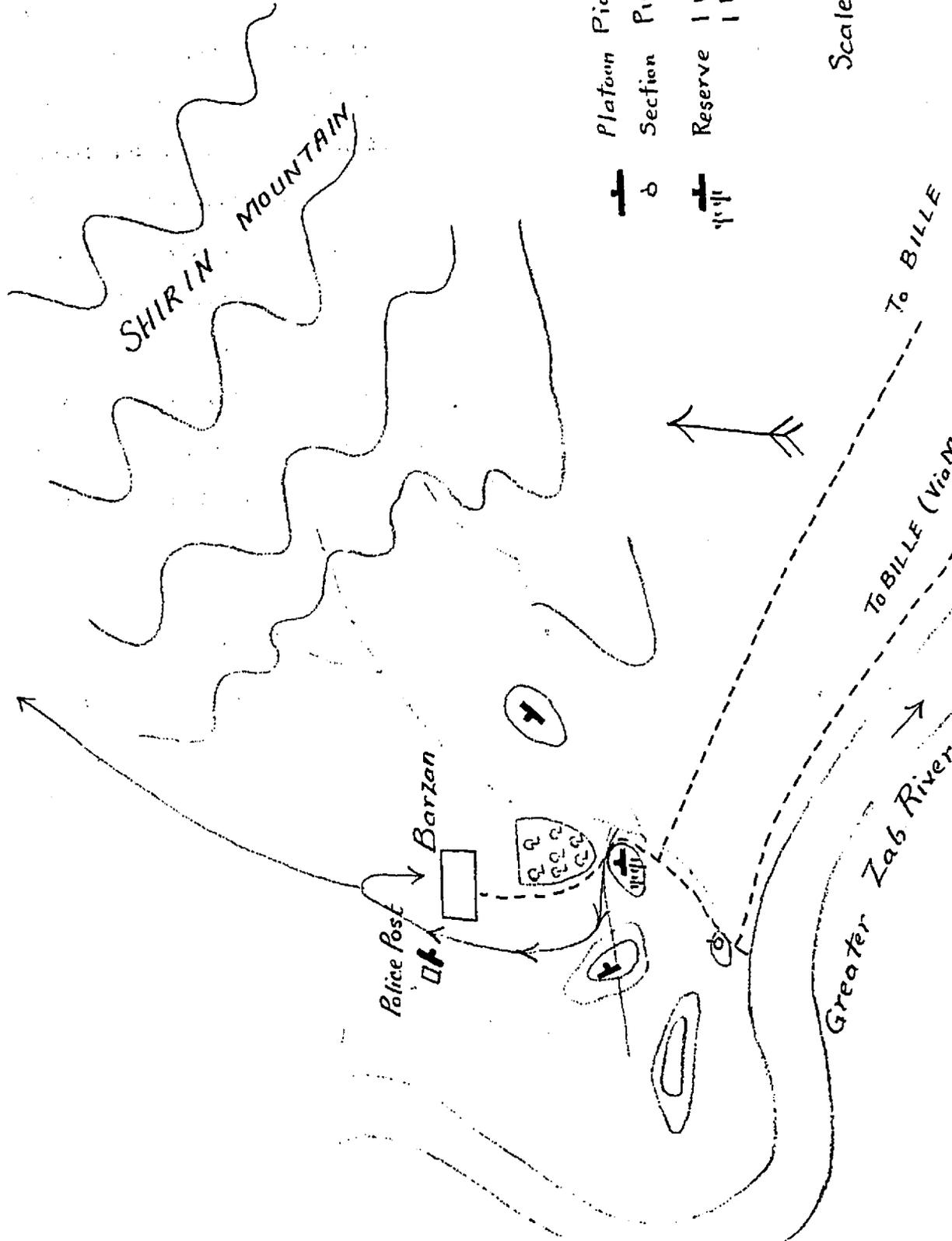
BIALIK

NERWA PIKAN

A Sketch of the Military Operations  
Against Shaikh Ahmad

479-A

*Route of Noz Coy (less detachment)*



- Platoon Piquet
- Section Piquet
- Reserve
- m.g. platoon
- Rifle platoon

Scale 1000 yds

To BILLE (Via Mes)

Greater Zab River

To BILLE

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Agha:** Chief of a tribe or a section of a tribe. In Kurdistan the term is synonymous with Shaikh.

**Adhami:** Taxes collected by the Agha from the villagers in return for his services to them.

**Aradi Amiriya:** Government-owned land.

**'Ashira:** In southern Kurdistan this word has the same meaning as the Arabic term qabila (clan).

**Beg:** Feudal lord, or notable invested with a government position.

**Begzadah:** The ruling clan of a Kurdish tribe.

**Daftardar:** Comptroller of public funds.

**Darvish:** Member of a Muslim mystic order.

**Dere Bey:** (Lit. "Lord of the Valley") The paramount chief of a Kurdish tribal federation or the head of an autonomous tribal government.

**Donum:** An amount of land equal to 0.25 hectares.

**Efendi:** A government official, usually educated at a tanzimat school.

**Fatwa:** A religious decree issued by a mufti (expert on Islamic law) in response to a concrete legal question.

**Hoz:** A smaller tribal nomadic unit whose members share the same lineage.

**Hukumdar:** In southern Kurdistan, the term denotes a governor.

**Iltizam:** A system of tax-farming.

**Khanaqa:** A place where darvishes meet. In Kurdistan khanaqa is synonymous with tekiya.

**Khel:** A term used by nomadic Kurds to denote 20 to 30 tents of the same lineage united by economic and family ties.

Kikha: Chief of a Khel.

Khūyin: Blood-money.

Koda: The tax on livestock.

Liwā': Administrative division.

Māl: An extended family in a Kurdish tribe.

Maqtū': Pre-fixed sum of money paid by a tribal chief to the government in return for autonomy.

Māzin: Elder of a small section of a nomadic tribe.

Mīr: (Arabic Amīr) Ruler of a semi-independent principality.

Mishara: An amount of land equal to 0.92 acres.

Misken: A serf. Miskens are thought to be the aboriginal people of Kurdistan.

Mudīr: Sub-district officer.

Mukhtār: Village headman.

Multazim: Tax-farmer.

Mutaşarrif: Commissioner.

Nāhiya: Sub-district.

Pishtamala: The regular militia of the Shaikh or Agha.

Qaḍā': District.

Qā'immaqām: Deputy Commissioner.

Rā'iyah: (lit. "flock") In southern Kurdistan, the non-tribal tax-paying subjects of the tribes.

Sāpān: Landless labourers.

Sayyid: Descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

Shaikh: Head of a religious order or a tribal chief.

Sipāhī: A member of the feudal cavalry.

Tā'ifa: Section of a tribe composed of several lineages.

Tanzimat: Western-style reforms carried out in the Ottoman Empire during the 19th century.

Tāpū: Land-deed.

Tarīqa: Muslim mystic order.

Tekīya: A place where dervishes meet.

Tīra: Lineage.

'Ushr: Tax on produce of farm-land.

Vergu: Fixed sum of money paid by a village.

Wālī: Governor of a province.

Waqf: Religious endowment.

Wilāyah: Province

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