

**HOW DID THE KURDS OF TURKEY  
ACTED POLITICALLY AGAINST THE  
POLICIES OF THE GREAT POWERS?  
1850–1950**

This Thesis is submitted to the  
Graduate Institute of Social Sciences  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
In  
International Relations  
By  
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March 2015

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I dedicate this thesis to My Father of blessed memory and my mother...

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The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

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## ABSTRACT

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March 2015

### HOW DID THE KURDS OF TURKEY ACTED POLITICALLY AGAINST THE POLICIES OF THE GREAT POWERS?

1850–1950

This thesis clarifies the roots of the contemporary the Kurdish issue. By asking, how did the Kurds of Turkey acted politically against the policies of the Great Powers (Great Britain, Russia, France and later the USA)? 1850-1950. However, the issue has its historical roots in the near past, but the problem is discussed in a narrow sphere. International dimension of the Kurdish issue are also considered seriously.

The study encompasses, how the Kurdish national movements behaved and evaluated the process with negotiations in their relations with Great Powers. Besides, the Great Powers policies and attitude towards the Kurdish movements and the Turkish national movement policies and relations with Great Powers are clearly revealed in this work. Great Powers post the Ottoman policies are clarified with Sykes–Picot secret agreement and reshaping of the Middle East is defined in Sevres and Lausanne agreement. These all are the main reasons and roots of Kurdish issue.

After providing the dimensions and limitations of the topic, the paper presents the issue with topic quality, time and geography that clarify the issue and focus on the base of the problem. By doing this, the study just opened a new path for Kurdish issue that Great Powers had affected it during 1850-1950 on behalf of their interests.

**KeyWords:** Kurdish issue, Kurdish issue roots, Kurdish issue and Great Powers, Sykes–Picot agreement, Kurdish–Armenian relations, Sevres and Lausanne Treaties effects on Kurds,

## KISA ÖZET

**Nevzat Keskin**

**March 2015**

### **TÜRKİYE KÜRTLERİ SÜPER GÜÇLERİN POLİTİKALARI KARŞISINDA SİYASİ OLARAK NASIL HAREKET ETTİLER? 1850-1950**

Bu tez mevcut Kürt sorunun kökenlerini gün yüzüne çıkartmak için şu soruya cevap vererek açıklık getiriyor. “Türkiye Kürtleri süper güçlerin (İngiltere, Rusya, Fransa ve ABD) politikaları karşısında, siyasi olarak nasıl hareket ettiler? 1850-1950. Bu cevap mevcut sorunun yakın geçmişteki kökenlerini ele alarak, fakat soruna dar bir çerçeveden bakarak uluslararası boyutuna dikkat çekiyor.

Bu çalışma Kürt hareketlerinin Süper Güçlerle nasıl ilişki içinde olduklarını ve görüşmelerini nasıl değerlendirdiklerini kapsıyor. Ayrıca, bu çalışma Süper Güçlerin politikalarını ve Kürt milli hareketlerine karşı nasıl bir tutum sergilediklerini, Türk milli hareketlerinin politikalarını ve Süper Güçlerle olan ikili ilişkilerini gösteriyor. Süper Güçler, Osmanlı sonrası politikalarını gizli Antlaşma Sykes-Picot ile sergileyip ve Ortadoğu'nun yeniden şekillendirilmesi için Sevr ve Lozan antlaşmaları ile bu politikalarını gerçekleştiriyorlar. Bütün bunlar Kürt Sorununun temel kökenleridir.

Bu çalışma, konunun coğrafik boyutlarını ve diğer sınırlandırmaları ile belirlenmiş bir zaman aralığında meselenin ana sebepleri üzerinde yoğunlaşıyor. Bu metotla bu çalışma Süper Güçlerin 1850 -1950 yılları arasında kendi milli çıkarları doğrultusunda Kürt Sorununun oluşmasında etkin rol oynadıklarını göstermiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kürt sorunu, Kürt sorunun kökenleri, Kürt sorunu ve Süper güçler, Sykes-Picot antlaşması, Kürt Ermeni ilişkileri, Sevr ve Lozan antlaşmasının Kürt sorunu üzerindeki etkisi

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

**CUP:** The Committee of Union and Progress

**USSR:** The Union of Soviet Socialist Republic

**SRK:** The Society for the Rise of Kurdistan

**WWI:** The First World War

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1927 Khoybun Movement

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1930 Ağrı Rebellion Put out

1935 Sadabat Treaty

1938 Dersim Rebellion

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

First of all, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Zirve University and all my professors, especially Dr. Gökhan Bacık, Dr. Bezen Coskun and my advisor Dr. Alper Yılmaz Dede- who had trust in me and I am also grateful to them for their invaluable contributions during the write up of this thesis by providing me with relevant articles and guidance.

Secondly, I sincerely thank my supervisor – Dr. Alper Yılmaz Dede – whose lectures and counsel motivated me to choose this topic; and who mentored me throughout this thesis. I am also very grateful for his priceless contributions and attentions. He had been there for me round the clock both at university office and through electronic mails.

Thirdly, I would like to thank Dr. Bezen Coşkun, Dr. Alper Dede, Dr. Gökhan Bacık and İsa Afacan for their fantastic lectures and words of encouragements.

Furthermore, my special thanks to all my colleagues, especially Jalil Abdullah who has read and commented on the first draft of this thesis. My thanks also go to my wife Midea Hussein and my sister in law Ala Mohammed Hussein for correcting and editing the thesis.

Finally, my special gratitude also goes to Remzi Ketenci Director of Dunya TV in. I also would like to thank all Kurdologists and Kurdish institute of Paris and especially Şakir Epözdemir, Mehmet Bayrak, Dr. Naci Kutlay, Kemal Burkay, Kovan Amedi, Omar Sheikmous, and Welat Zeydanlıoğlu, who advised me and supplied documents for my thesis.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Kurdish politics has been affected by the Great Powers as well as by the internal dynamics of the Ottoman Empire. Kurdish issue; generally in the Middle East and especially in Turkey, is not a regional but an international matter that occurred and caused by Great Powers (Great Britain, Russia, France and the US). In other words, the Kurdish politics in the Middle East has emerged by Great Powers of the 19th-20th centuries. Great Britain, Russia and especially France had intended to colonize Ottoman Empire and reshape borders of territories where minorities live and victimised the minorities under Ottoman Empire's authority. By Sykes-Picot secret negotiations which started in 1915 and ended in 1916; the Ottoman Empire was divided into three parts based upon the British, Russian and French colonial interests (Burkay, 2008: 522-523).

Ottoman Empire was considered as the sick man of Europe (Deringil, 1999: 40 cited by Özten, 2009: 5). Ottoman Empire was a multinational state and its borders were too wide, because of this the impact of the French Revolution of 1789 was inevitable. Ottoman Empire was classifying its society as Muslim and non-Muslim (Natali, 2005: 37). National awakening was difficult for different ethnic Muslim groups under its authority. However, the Ottoman Empire had been affected by the French revolution freedom trend. The Muslim and non-Muslim, who were affected by that trend, formed their own national institutions and wanted their self-determination and after some time they got their independence from the Ottoman Empire (Özten, 2009: 1).

In the Middle East Kurds are the fourth largest ethnic group after Arabs, Persians and Turks (Barkey&Fuller, 1998: 5). Ethnically, Kurds are different than the founders of Ottoman State, but Kurds were tied to Ottoman Empire with religious affiliation because both are Sunni Muslims. They were the most loyal ethnic group to Ottomans under its authority. They had been loyal to the state until the collapse of the Empire. Due to being Muslim; Kurds were the last minority components that constructed their own national institutions to achieve their independence. Even though the Empire

was weakening, they were not formulating ethno-nationalist separatist movements for self-determination. Kurds were the last society who awakened by nationalistic trend, affected from the French Revolution under the Ottoman Empire. In terms of ethnic nationalism, the Kurdish national awakening had come after the Turks (Özten, 2009: 1).

Kurds lived under Ottoman Empire for 330 years with their semi-autonomous system between the 16th and the 19th centuries (Epözdemir, 2011: 66). During this period Kurds were protected from Persian attacks. However some westerns travelers such as Dr. Grand and missionaries Knapp and Rynolds claim that Kurds were familiar with Turks, but after the French Revolution of 1789, Kurds also started to construct their national movements. Because of some reasons such as tribalism, Kurds' religious affinity with Turks and the fragmented structure of the Kurdish society, led some local movements that failed to formulate and they were suppressed and leaders were exiled to İstanbul. Botan Badrkhan and Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri were two important figures of these rebellions. After these rebellions the sick man of Europe the Ottoman Empire was more weak power than before. Comparing to its religious (Ummah) term, the Ottoman Empire was now weak in its pan-Turkistic state government than before and tried to reconstruct the Kurdish society according to its centralization policies. However, most of the conflicts started after these centralization attempts. The Ottoman Empire fought with its rivals and being in need of money and soldiers led the Empire to practise new reforms of centralization. Kurds had faced with new challenges of the Empire such as high taxation and request of military service (conscription) that had not been seen before.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

Western Great Powers had always been interested in Kurds for instance; they explored the Kurdistan region with their travellers and misionaries to convert Kurds into Christianity; with help of Nestorians, Armenians and Caldenians. Consequently, Christian origins; Nestorians, Armenians and Caldenians, who integrated with the Great Powers and accepted Western culture had became rich in a short time. The events that occured between Kurds and Nestorinas in 1847 and Kurds-Armenians in

1865 led anti-sentiment against Kurds in Western world (Noel, 1999: 158-160). Kurds had no chance to express themselves to Westerns. Consequently, in reshaping of the the Middle East, Western Great Powers were biased and on behalf of their colonial interests, they did not give any national right and place to Kurds in the new shape of the Middle East.

As Mehrdad R.Izady claims “The Kurds and their political fate in our century should be understood within Great Powers’ politics” (Izady, 1992: 201). Consequently, when we make a flashback to recent history during 1850 and 1950 we can observe that Kurdish issue and the Kurdish national movements were affected by international events that took place during this period in the Middle East.

*From this point of view my research question is how the Kurds of Turkey reacted to political climate. Where and in what extent Kurds stand in relation to the Middle East policy, conducted by Great Britain, Russia, France and the US in relation to the Ottoman Empire and then Turkey. In other words, the Kurdish movements can not be explained without the impact of the Great Powers’ politics.*

My hypotheses are as follows: The first hypothesis is that weakening of the Ottoman Empire and its centralization policies provoked the Kurdish rebellions and the Kurdish nationalist movement. However, international dimension of the Kurdish national movements are important circumstances for understanding the movements in the term under study. The second hypothesis is that the Great Powers interference into the Ottoman Empire’s internal affairs and the Kurdish movement’s relations with the Great Powers directly influenced the Kurdish separatist movements under the Ottoman Empire. However, tribal nationalism and loyalty to the Ottoman Empire were obstacles for the Kurdish separatist movements. The Kurdish national fragmentation and division between tribes could not bring success to the Kurdish movements. Additionally, the Great Powers’ attitude of having good relations with Mustafa Kemal’s *Misak-ı Milli* (National Contract) movement and signing the two important agreements Sévres and Lausanne made Kurds stateless.

The Kurdish issue is one of the most complex problems in the Middle East. However much it is an internal problem, but its roots are external as well. In order to

understand and analyze the issue, the focus should be on prolonged continuum between 1850 and 1950. In this period, the events determined the fate of Kurds. Besides, Kurds had veered between national awakening, tribalism, The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP)'s Turkification policies and Great powers' policies. Before the First World War, the Kurdish movements' aim was to gain their autonomy under the Ottoman authority. Weakening of the Ottoman Empire and the new government of the CUP and its Turkification policies contributed national awakening of Kurds. However, Great Powers had already decided on new borders which were just compatible with their interests. As a result of prolonged continuum (term under study) (1850-1950), internal conflicts and external decisions, Kurds remained stateless.

This study will first provide an assessment of Great Powers' policies on the Middle East, but especially with their reflection on Kurds and especially on Kurds in Turkey. Thus, the main topic of this study is "how the Kurds of Turkey acted politically in regards to the policies of the Great Powers between 1850 and 1950".

## **THEORY AND METHODOLOGY**

Most of the states in the world today are originally diversified; in ethnic variation in any given country have appealed much attention from students of ethnicity and ethnic struggles. However intergroup differences do not have enough reasons for the advance of an ethno-nationalist movement, they represent a central condition to the rise of such a movement. One important question in this context is that of relations between the ethnic group and the central state. The subject has been studied by scholars who have employed the concept of centre-periphery "domination" relations. Although these explanatory theories are devoted to the analysis of political and ethnic conflicts, they may be applied to the study of ethno-nationalist movements as a whole.

In addition to ethnic differences and penetration by the centre into the periphery, the activation of a movement requires political mobilisation embodied in the form of ethno-nationalist organisations. The establishment of such a body was in fact central

to the achievements of the Kurdish movement in the period under study, as will be discussed later.

The discipline of international relations has long been plagued by a confusion regarding terminology. For instance, the term nationalism may at times deal with states and at other times with nations, nationalities and ethnic groups. The international dimension of ethno-nationalist movements has been largely neglected in research. Such a theme could be studied by placing a given ethno-national group within the framework of the interaction between domestic and foreign policies. By organising itself and by rising against the central power of the state, an ethnic group may affect political development in the country as well as influence its foreign relations, i.e. by gaining the support of or triggering the direct involvement of external actors, particularly states. Both the weakness of the central government and the international dimension of the Kurdish nationalist movement are important conditions for understanding the history of the movement during the period under study. This is, however, quite distinct from the history of the official diplomatic relations between the governments, to be discussed below.

International relations have generally been described as the process of state interaction at the governmental level. However, one premise in this study is that international relations are not limited to the study of official inter state diplomacy. Non-state relationships and actors must be taken into account in the study of international affairs. Domestic political issues and cross-cultural and social relationships, for instance, are important elements in this context. Non-state actors are entities other than states that interact on the international political arena.

The state-centric model ignores the existence and significance of regional and transnational organisations, despite the fact that most causes of international conflict since 1850 have involved non-state actors. One example of such actors are “stateless” groups, such as the Basques or the Kurds. The Kurds have long been to critical political factors in the region. That is they are found by residing in a number of neighbouring countries. By being consistently involved in political upheavals against the central powers in those countries; through contacts of Kurds and especially the

Kurdish political movements with one another across official state boundaries; and by being involved in and affected by Great Power policies in the area.

In our study, the Kurdish political organisations, tribal chiefs and prominent leaders operate in the name of the Kurds. Yet it will be presented that although the Kurdish population was an important element as a non-state actor, the state remained the dominant and decisive actor. Deprived the both statehood adequate diplomatic channels and international platforms, the possibility for the Kurdish population to become an actor equal to a state was severely limited.

Thus, the notion of Great Power “Kurdish policy” does not fit into the realm of official diplomacy, and instead designates the policy of certain states towards an ethno-national group and its nationalist movement. As has previously been mentioned, the Kurds do not possess a state of their own and have therefore been deprived of official political relations with states. In addition, attempts made by any state to support the Kurds by whatever means or to support their claim to national rights, have often been regarded as interference in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire where the Kurds exist. This was precisely the case during the period under study. When supporting the Kurds and other groups in Turkey, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and France was repeatedly accused by the Turkish new government of interference into the Turkish internal affairs.

The connection between nationalism and tribalism is significant to the question of loyalty, since loyalty might be either of a tribal or of a nationalistic nature. A certain loyalty exists within the tribe and remains confined to the borders of the tribe as a local community. This community may be defined either territorially or exclusively on the basis of relatives, with the latter being the principal factor in terms of solidarity within the tribe. The loyalty of the tribesman is to his tribe rather than to a certain nationality. However, the pioneer Kurdish nationalists emerged precisely among the tribal chieftains, and particularly among the Sheikhs. In certain cases, the interests of the tribal leaders and the Sheikhs collided with those of the nationalist movement. In the 1850-1950s, the tribal way of life was still prevalent in the Kurdish society. Therefore, in a study of the Kurdish nationalist movement, of its relation to

the Ottoman central government in particular and to Great Power politics, the role played by the tribes must be appreciated. Tribal leaders were the key element in contacts between the Kurds and the Great Powers in the Ottoman Empire and the new Turkish State.

The idea of state-building is likewise important in this context. In the countries among which Kurdistan is partitioned, official authorities have attempted to erect strong central governments and integrated states, and have sought to help grow a sense of belonging to the state rather than to a local community. Such efforts have been healedbasically by two forces from the Kurdish side, which may be characterised as the nationalistic and the tribal respectively. The two have often had differing intentions in provoking the hostility of the central government and its attempts to build a strong centralised state. While the aims and strategies of the former have been developed in terms of national rights or national self-determination, the tribal forces have been driven by the desire to live in a traditional manner free of state control. The most favourable situation for both categories has been that of a central government too weak to control all parts of the country. Nevertheless, both nationalistic and tribal forces have opposed the attempts of the central government to promote loyalty to the central power and its bureaucratic apparatus, as well as its effort at creating a state- nation. A symbiosis emerged between the élites of these two social forces, and this fusion has symbolised both the development of the Kurdish nationalism on the one hand, and its weakness on the other. In other words, the two forces have periodically co-operated in order to strengthen the movement, yet have been at odds concerning main goals, thus creating a disagreement within the movement itself.

In their attempts to gather power, the tribal chieftains are not only dependent on the actual potential of the tribe itself, but must also attempt to strengthen their position via alliances with other tribes and by espousing nationalistic ideas. This form of tribal conduct reflects traditional tribal efforts to merge with ideological and national feelings in order to increase their own causes. The force of the tribal chieftains may also be promoted by co-operation with “external” powers, namely the central power of the state or of foreign powers, such as the Great Powers.

The tribal leaders have thus consistently sought new contexts and new ideas in order to expand the opportunity to increase their power. A tribe might find itself nationalistic or conversely, in co-operation with the central government against the nationalist movement, thus in the first case strengthening the symbiosis and in the second case weakening the symbiosis and even in some cases leading to its collapse. In fact, there is an ambivalent relationship between the Kurdish nationalism and the tribal and religious loyalties. On one hand, Sheikhs and Aghas were the pioneer nationalist leaders. It was because of the primordial loyalties to these authorities and to the values they embodied that the Kurdish nationalist movement gained its mass character. On the other hand, conflicts among these traditional leaders have served to prevent the Kurds from acting in unison.

Methodologically, it can be said that the Kurdish issue is not revealed with all its details, because, we need relevant details for this work. This study is limited to three dimensions. The first dimension is limited to geography. The reason for this, is that Kurds started to live into three countries' borders; Turkey, Iraq and Syria. This case was after the demolition of the Ottoman Empire. Kurds had organized many different socio-political movements which had similar characteristics more or less. However, this study is especially concerning to the Kurdish issue in Turkey and its roots are tied with historical events in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century that is from 1850-1950.

The second limitation is concerning to the quality of the topic. That is to its characteristics. In this thesis, the international dimensions of the Kurdish issue are dealt with its domestic dimensions. In this framework the Great Powers' Kurdish policies and the Kurdish movements' relations with Great Powers were studied. Moreover, domestic the Kurdish movements policies were affected by external Great Powers policies and relations with the Kurdish movements were searched.

The third limitation is concerning to time. The second half of 19<sup>th</sup> and the first quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century are chosen as a time for research. The reason for this is that the Ottoman Empire became weak power and Great Powers involved into the Ottoman domestic affairs. However there was a Kurdish issue, but it was not like the

issue in the Republic of Turkey in the way of its characteristics. The effects of Sevrés and Lausanne agreement have a special in contemporary the Kurdish issue. Therefore, before and after the two agreements; the Sevrés and Lausanne agreements process is worth to be searched and it had done with details and discussions were revealed. The reason for this is that the term between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century is process that the Kurdish issue gained its international dimension.

In order to clarify problems of a specific time period, all it need to do, is to begin with explaining the main dynamics of that time by using valid social theories that can enlighten the term. Therefore, if it be done, it would be fruitful to think over the issue of the early awakening of the Kurdish nationalist sentiments via “nationalism” and “center-periphery” theories. Thus, the thesis will deal with the historical survey of nationalism in order to shed light on the specific issue. That is “early awakening of the Kurdish nationalist sentiments which have particularly evolved in CUP period in the Ottoman Empire and led Kurds to look for an independent state and for these reasons had close relations with Great Powers to fulfill their aims. By benefiting from the nationalism theories in general and by analyzing classical nationalism theories, I will decide which of the nationalist perspectives would help to clarify the topic and while doing analysis on the subject matter, it will help the study to explain the problematic better. It is sure that the problem will become clearer on an analytic basis when the origins of the problem are rooted to reasonable facts with a theoretical understanding.

As it can be seen after reading further it became apparent that there is no historical approach sufficiently regarded on the Kurdish problem in Turkey. Currently, the Kurdish problem is analyzed without being linked to previous historical events. Besides, the data that pro-Kurdish and pro-state sources offer is almost distant from them and subjective. It is still asserted by both sides, as if the Kurdish nationalist statements were always presented and they were survived with difficulties from ages. It has the available infrastructure in a Western format to build a unique nationalist movement, or, it is an imperialist game supported by foreigners and the actual problem is an uprising of undeveloped “Kurdish Turks” which is a result of international trends being followed in a Western format. Furthermore, in the light of

documents, the formation of the Kurdish nationalist identity has progressed in a different route in internal and international trends. In other words, the Kurdish people followed a different experimental path than the other nationalist movements in the Ottoman Empire while forming a nationalist paradigm. More profound researches on the birth of the Kurdish nationalist sentiments show that the Kurdish nationalist discourse developed by pioneering of the Kurdish elites as a “reaction” against the government policies rather than being formed gradually after the social processes like in the Western world. Therefore, Kurds lacked internal social dynamic to seek the national aspirations for creating a nation-state among the Kurdish population. Any the Kurdish social form which aimed at founding its “nation state” is out of the question in the late Ottoman times. The Kurdish nationalist ideology, like the Turkish nationalist ideology, is more like a project being forced to be put in practice by the ruling elites or tribe leaders, who were more local than being national and embrace all the Kurdish society.

Thus, with the inferences of the Great Powers interference into the Ottoman Empire and later having relations with the Turkish Republic are sources on the Kurdish nationalist movements’ discourses. The study will focus more on history and Great Powers states politics of the period on the Kurds and their relations with Ottoman and the Turkish Republic. The study will point out how driving factors and motivations leading the Kurdish nationalist sentiments have began to flourish in the Ottoman Empire and how the Kurdish movements acted in the Great Powers’ politics for their surviving and establishing a national state. Particularly the CUP era was somehow brought an identity making process to the Kurds for the first time regarding both domestic and international considerations. Therefore the method adapted to the study is “center periphery and national awakening in a historical perspective that how Turkey Kurds acted in Great Powers politics for one hundred years.

What I wish to do and conclude with this thesis is that my study will be based on material facts, testimonials, historical resources and references. While doing this, the study is considering the near history of Great Powers and searching their relations with the Ottoman and Turkish Republic. The study gets important reason and results from subjects and analyzes Great Powers policies and show their effects on the

Kurdish currently issue. I believe that the issue is solved better, if the questions are treated in a different way than previous studies. This different way includes analyzing the facts and hypothesis in a more historical view, considering the period's historical result with the understanding of that particular period, while making use of native, original and concrete sources. My thesis will be different in this view. Besides, in writing my ideas and making claims on the matter, there is a point which I especially pay attention to that. I try carefully to refrain myself from over-generalizing when deciphering the historical matters which need to be examined within their own historical context.

In this study a glance at the Kurdish history, geography, culture and language that led the Kurds into a situation where they did not have state of their own. The purpose of this study is to present a panorama of the period between 1850 and 1950 with documents, memoirs and comments. Documents mostly written in Kurdish, pro-Kurdish approach and the Turkish documents with pro-Turkish approach will be used in this study selectively. In addition, documents that written by Russian and European researchers will be used. These sources have approached the issue differently than the Kurdish and Turkish sources and they reflect their interests of Russians and European on the issue. Besides, the approach of this study, historical events should be evaluated within their historical context.

This study is composed of eight chapters. The second chapter will be on the Kurdish history, geography, culture and language that define their origin. In order to arrange the theoretical infrastructure on the period of 1850-1950 that sticks to 19th and early of 20th centuries a short history, geography, culture and language are required. Historical background and Kurds' relation with Turks from general to specific will led to see connections and results between events. Due to that reason, this study will analyze the survey of historical events of the chosen period from 1850 to 1950 which have chosen to be focused.

Additionally, chapter three will focus on the political events in the 1840s that took place among the Great Powers, the Ottoman Empire and the Kurds. The relation of

these powers with each other and their conflicts were determinative of the region's fate including that of the Kurds. Ottoman Empire as the sick man of Europe, Great Britain as the expanding power, Russian struggle with Ottomans and moreover France's and the US's relations with each other had affected fate of Kurds. Besides, the colonial period and its plans indicate the aim of colonization policies that have been planned on reshaping the Middle East region.

Furthermore, in chapter three, the Kurdish national awakening and Kurds' conflicts with the Ottoman Empire are analyzed. In this chapter the first two the Kurdish rebellions that are accepted as the starting point of broken Kurdish-Turkish relations will be studied. However, the role of the British in Badrkhan rebellion and the Russian effect on Shaikh Ubeydullah Nehri revolt against the Ottomans and Iranians and the role of the British on the end of the rebellion are going to be examined. Putting down of the rebellions and exiling families of Badrkhan and Nehri's life in İstanbul and their effects on the future of the Kurdish national movements will be included. Later the role of two families in national awakening of Kurds and also their political negotiations with western powers especially with the British and the French representatives in İstanbul will be studied.

Accordingly, chapter four analyzes the Kurdish issue and how it became an international issue and the Kurds' relations with the Great Powers. Additionally, the Ottoman-Russian wars and the Kurds' role in in these wars are detailed. Armenian-Kurdish conflict is another topic of this chapter. Kurds' activities in the CUP and their effect on the Kurdish issue to become an international issue will be considered. Finally the First World War; the Kurdish-Russian and the Kurdish-British relations and their impact on the Kurdish national awakening will closely be studied.

Chapter five and six analyzes the treaties which decided on the Middle East nations' fate and reshaped the Middle East. The Sévres Treaty and hope of Kurds for an independent state will closely be examined. Just after the Sévres Treaty the serial conferences in Paris, London and San Remo that made ground work of Lausanne The treaty that disappointed Kurds and Kurds new struggles; negotiations and reactions to the Lausanne Agreement. Additionally, the Sykes-Picot secret

agreement, which is known as the agreement of division of the Ottoman Empire by three Great Powers, Great Britain, Russia and France.

Chapter seven and eight will be conclusionary chapters. They will cover the Great Powers' leaving alone of Kurds and promises that had not been fulfilled. Besides, this study focus on the new Kurdish rebellion and "iron hand" policies of new government of republic, its force exile, exiling and Turkification policies, which started to assimilate Kurds and Kurds' reaction these policies. Additionally, this study will focus on how these policies demolished the demography of Kurds as a nation and putting down of their national awakening and causing them to end up with no state of their own.

## **AS A NATION; KURDS**

Since the research question is on Kurds of Turkey in Great Powers policies during 1850-1950. The study has to focus on subject and object of the topic, Kurds. In other words, it should clarify who the Kurds are, what their language is, where they come from and where they live now. Additionally, Kurds' first meeting with Turks and their relations with the Turks in the history are basic topics for this research.

The Kurds have existed and been accepted as an ethnic group for several thousands years and their land has been defined as *Kurdistan*<sup>1</sup>for centuries. However, the Kurds are accepted as Dagh Turks in Turkey, as Persians in Iran, as nomad Arabs in Iraq and Syria. Therefore, it is better to search from Western sources. Because, the Western sources are independent and they could be more impartial and reliable than the one that had been written by a nationalistic approachment (Beşikçi, 1990: 12). The Greek historian Xenophon in his book named Anabasis mentions Kurds as Kardochoi and their relations with Persians (Kutlay, 2002: 31; Abdulla, 2009: 45). Strabo, the famous Greek Geographer of the last century of B.C. indicates the Kurdish area as this. The territory of about 500,000 square kilometres of an area between the pontique chain, the Caucasus (Zagros and Taurus Mountain and Iranian ranges), the Persian Gulf and steppes of Mesopotamia on one side and Anti - Taurus

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<sup>1</sup>Kurdistan is firstly called by Seljuki Sultan Sencer in 1157

plateau. That is the area which consists of eastern and southeastern part of Turkey, western part of Iran, northern part of Iraq and Syria (Kutlay, 2002: 32).

The Kurdish people are ethnically Iranian people. Historians generally agree to consider them as belonging to the Iranian branch and the large family of Indo-European language family. In prehistoric times, kingdoms called Mitanni, Kassites and Hourites reined these mountainous areas situated between the Iranian plateau and the Euphrates. In 711 BC the Medes founded an empire and in 612 BC conquered the powerful Assyria and spreaded its domination through the whole Iran as well as central Anatolia. The Medes was to end in 6 BC. Until conversion of Islam, the Kurdish history was that of the Aryan Empires of the East (Zeki Beg, 1931: 58-86).

Historians Polybius and Herodot also mention Kurds and calls them as Kurti and their Medes Empire (Kutlay, 2002: 32). Minorsky defines Kurds as grandson of Medes (Minorsky, 2005). Western historians and travellers mostly accept Nestorian and Armenian documents, as sources to differentiate Kurds from Turks, Persians and Arabs. Besides, V.F. Minorsky and Sidney Smith by giving many references have clarified Kurds' origin and the place that they have lived until so far for thousands of years (Zeki Beg, 1931: 44-51).

There are many references that try to explain the Kurdish history that will take too much time to discuss details of Pre-Islamic the Kurdish history. Consequently, the Kurdish – Turkish relations the study will focus on post-Islamic the Kurdish history of which concerns relations with Turks of starting with the converting of Kurds into Islam in 7<sup>th</sup> century and encountering Turks in 11th century (Burkay, 2008: 8).

Arab-Islamic expansion in the 7<sup>th</sup> century was towards Mesopotamia and most Kurds accepted Islam as their religion in this century (Burkay, 2008: 8). The majority of the Kurds are Sunni Muslims, but there is fairly large Shi'ite minority as well as Yezidi and Christian populations. In the second half of the 10th century Kurdistan is shared amongst four principalities, in the north the Shaddadids (951-1015), in the east the Hasanwayhids (959-1015) and the Banu Annaz (990-1116) and in the west the Marwanids (990-1096) of Amed. After Turks conquered Iran and invaded Baghdad, the Seljuk Turks annexed the Kurdish principalities one by one. Besides, the last and

the most important dynasty is the Eyyubids; however it was not a Kurdish state, but it was governed by a Kurdish family (Lazarev&Mihoyan, 2010: 56-67; Zeki Beg, 2002; Nezan, 1989: 31, Burkay, 2008: 134-150).

In the 11th century for the first time the Marwanid principality, which were founded in 990 and were demolished in 1096 by Seljuki Turks, had relations with Turks officially. According to the Kurdish historian Idris-i Bidlisi, Marwanids helped Seljuki Turks with ten thousands soldiers to defeat Romanos Diogenes' troops in Manzikert Battle 1071. But just after 25 years after the war Seljuki Turks demolished the Marwanids (Xerzan, 2012)<sup>2</sup>. In the 14th and 15 centuries Ottomans conquered Kurdistan and had complex relations for decades with Kurds. Since the Kurdistan was a land between two empires, Ottomans and Persian, it became a land of battle for years (Lazarev&Mihoyan, 2010: 69). However, Kurds and Turks had good relations with Amasya Agreement in 1514 that about 20 the Kurdish principalities had been annexed to the Ottoman Empire via of İdris-i Bidlisi. Since then, Kurds and Turks have been living together and for 330 years had lived in fairness until the middle of 19th century of the Kurdish rebellions period (Epözdemir, 2011: 61).

From the time that Kurds are known until now Kurds' geographical homeland is also contested topic until now. The conflict on the Kurdish geography is that Kurds have a tendency to exaggerate their land and other surrounded nations want to minimize the Kurdish geography (Izady, 2011, 26). Iranian claims that Kurds' original homeland is only the place known Zagros Mountains and they come to Iran as refugees. Arabs also denies that Mosul was invaded by Kurds in the same way.

The Kurdish area is approximately 500.000 km<sup>2</sup>. However, since there is no independent Kurdish state, the Kurdish reality is accepted only as based on majority ethnic land. The Kurdish land historically changed. Related to demographics, economy, and historical events, the land has widened and became narrow. For instance, hitorically Armenian land around Van Lake now is residence of Kurds, but

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<sup>2</sup>(<http://www.mezopotamya.gen.tr/ayse-hur-hanimefendiye-cevaben-makale,304.html>)

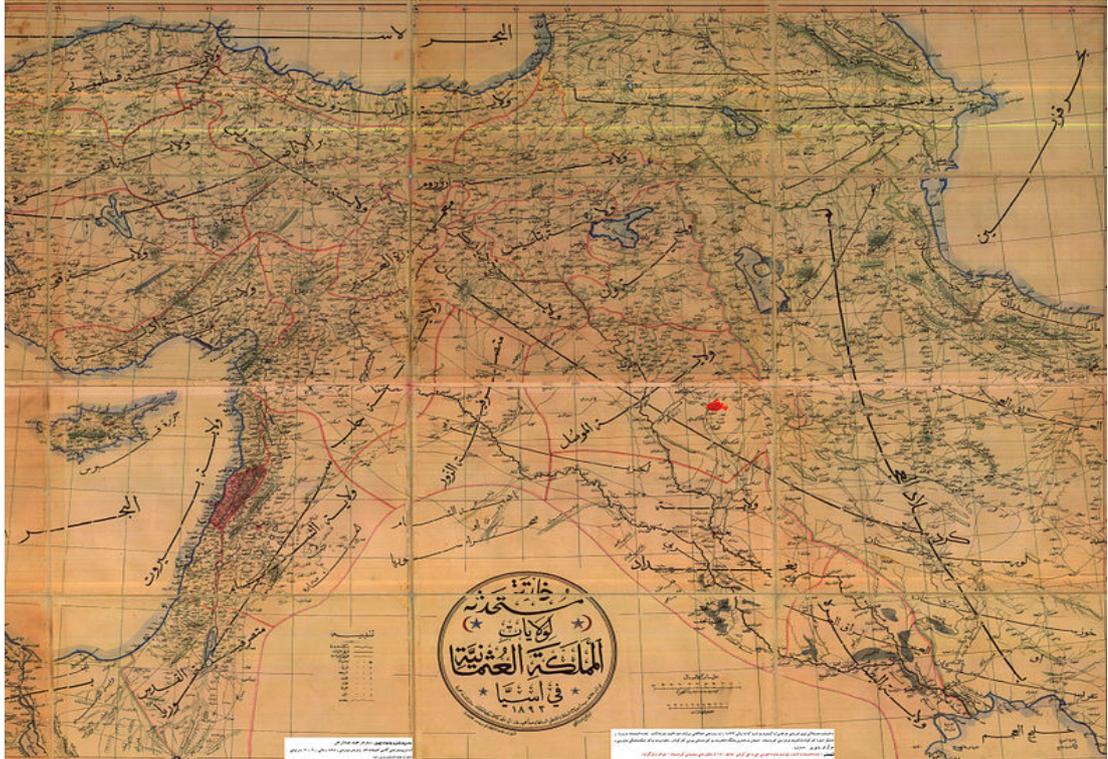
previous places where Kurds resided such as Capadocia and Pontus is no more the Kurdish land (Izady, 2011: 21).

The mountainous geography of the Kurdish land affected the Kurds' fate. However the natural structure of the land had been like a castle to protect Kurds from invasions, however, prevented unity among the Kurdish tribes. The mountains also prevented Kurds to develop socially, culturally and economically. However Kurds accepted the mountains as their best friend, and as this famous the Kurdish proverb explains "no friends for Kurds, except mountains". The states under which the Kurds live denied existence of Kurds as a nation and it is difficult to give exact information about the Kurdish demography (Abdulla, 2009: 41-42). It was not the mountains but the plain land became a battlefield for natural resources later, especially for petroleum and water in the last two centuries.

Kurdish language, which belongs to the northwestern group of Irano-Aryan languages, has never had the opportunity to become a unified language and its dialects are generally separated into three groups with distinct similarities between them. Kurdish, with Persian, Afghan and Belucian languages are from the same origins. However it has no similarity with the Arabic and the Turkish. The biggest group, in regards to the number of people who speak it, is the northern Kurdish commonly called "Kurmanji" spoken by the Kurds living in Turkey, Syria, Russia, and Armenia and by some of the Kurds living in Iraq and Iran. The central group includes the Kurdish spoken in the northeast of Iraq and Irani Kurds, which it is called "Sorani". This group also gave birth to a literary language. The third dialect is Zazaki/Dimili includes the Kurdish spoken in the east and southeast Kurds in Turkey. The Kurdish population who speak this dialect is about three million (Burkay, 2008: 199-200).

The Kurdish culture is made of its history, geography and languages that complement each other. However, after the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Islam also has affected the Kurdish culture. Since that time, there were no legal organizations for Kurds, and tribalism became the social structure in the Kurdish lands. Because of bans on the Kurdish language, the oral literature is more developed than the written literature.

Besides, customs and traditions are more specific that may differentiate Kurds from other neighboring nations.



[http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dosya:Osmanli\\_Ortadogu.jpg](http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dosya:Osmanli_Ortadogu.jpg)

Map: 1.1 the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East

## **THE KURDISH-TURKISH RELATIONS**

### **SELJUKI-KURDISH RELATIONS**

The Seljuki state was established in 1038 by Tuğrul Bey. The nomadic Oğuz Seljuki Turks started military expeditions to West in the 1040's and had relations with the Kurds. Two commanders of Seljuki named Buga and Nasıgılı sieged Diyarbakır in 1043 and later sieged Farqin (Silvan) for days, however because of conflicts between commanders they had to lift the siege. The mid-11th century is starting point of the Turkish-Kurdish relations (Lazarev&Mihoyan 2010: 46-47; Epözdemir, 2011: 126; Burkay, 2008: 147). Under Sa'ad Ibn Abu Al-Shawq presidency some the Kurdish

tribes annexed to Seljuks at that time (Lazarev&Mihoyan, 2010: 49). Before meeting with Seljuks the Kurds had several states and tribal principalities of their own (Epözdemir, 2011: 124).

When Tuğrul Bey died in 1063, Alparslan took his place and started to new military expeditions to west; that is the Anatolian peninsula. When he turned his face to Anatolia, Alparslan needed the Kurdish troops for fighting against Byzantium Empire. According to (Burkay, 2008) one in four and to Epözdemir, half of Alparslan's troops were Kurds from Marwanids. Before the Manzikert Battle, Diogenes was attacking the Kurds because they were helping the Seljuks. Because of these reasons, in 1063 Byzantine Empire sieged Diyarbakır, but they could not capture the city. Besides, Byzantine Empire was an old Kurdish enemy that was accepted as "Black Roman" by the Kurds. Byzantium Empire and the Kurds had a long background of conflicts. Consequently, by winning the Manzikert War, not only Seljuks, but also Kurds had benefitted from the battle, since they had got rid of Byzantine Empire's attacks. Additionally, the Seljuks' respect increased in Islamic World after Manzikert Battle (Epözdemir, 2011:127; Burkay, 2008: 148)

Kurds got rid of Byzantium, but now they were faced with Seljuks. Just after the battle of Manzikert, Alparslan appointed a governor of Ahlat and Manzikert which meant that they were no more Marwanid lands. Starting from Shadadids in 1075, Marwanids in 1083 and Hasanwayhids in 1095, he eliminated these Kurdish states and put them under his authority (McDowall, 2004: 22-23; Burkay, 2008: 148-149; Epözdemir, 2011: 126-127; Zeki Beg, 1931: 105).

12<sup>th</sup> century Sultan Sanjar's term was time of conflicts between Seljuks and Kurds. Starting from 1103 to 1110 Kurds attacked Seljuki troops in Mardin and Duçayl. In these conflicts thousands of soldiers had been killed on both sides (Lazarev&Mihoyan 2010: 47). Sultan Sanjar attacked to Hakkari, Zavzan and Bashnavi tribes in 1122 and later could controlled Hemedan, Kirmanşah, Senendij and made a province in the east of Zagros mountains and named it as "Kurdistan" in 1157 (Lazarev&Mihoyan, 2010: 47; Burkay, 2008: 7)

The Turkish-Kurdish relations were based on family ties, ethnic, cultural, tradition and Islam. Seljuks marked the end of the Kurdish dynasties and authorities, then Sultan Sanjar preferred Turkoman officers to the Kurdish provinces (McDowall, 2004: 23). Besides, Seljuks benefited from the Kurdish mollahs, intellectuals, and madrasas, that is, Seljuks had profited from the Kurdish wisers and intellectuals and used these as basic for education and constructed many mosques, madrasas and other public institutions in Kurdistan (Celil, 1998: 18). Mostly, Seljuks and Kurds had good relations; however Kurdistan became a battlefield between Byzantium Empire, Seljuks and Kurds for years.

### **OTTOMAN-KURDISH RELATIONS**

Despite some conflicts, the Kurdish-Turkish relations in the Seljuki period were mostly in good terms. Comparing to Seljuks, Kurds had much more conflicts with the Iranian authorities in the same period. The major reason of conflicts between them was that Iranians were Shi'a and Kurds were Sunni (Epözdemir, 2011: 57). After the Seljuki Harzem and Mongol armies invaded Kurdistan. However, Eyyubids, Seljuki and Mamluk were trying to protect Kurdistan from Mongols' and Ilhans' invasions and massacres. After the Seljuki, Anatolia was divided into principalities. Ottomans were just one of these principalities that settled around Bursa.

The Ottomans had already seen the emergence towards the end of two rival Turkoman dynasties. Shi'i Qara Quyunlu (Black Sheep) and Sunni Aq Quyunlu (White Sheep) that they were ruling Kurdistan by utilizing the Kurdish Shi'is in Dersim against Botan Sunni tribes to weaken their principalities and defeat them (Burkay, 2008: 171). The first meeting of Kurds and Ottomans was in 1473 in Erzincan that Ottoman army under of Fatih Sultan Mehmet attacked Aq Quyunlu army which was the enemy of Kurds. When Fatih Sultan Mehmet defeated Uzun Hasan's (Aq Quyunlu Leader) army in Yassı Çimen Battle this led to an approachment between Ottomans and Kurds (Epözdemir, 2011: 63).

Kurdistan was between two big Empires: Sunni Ottoman and Shi'i Safavid. Except Dersim districts' tribes that were Qizilbash (Red Head-An Alawi Sect), other the Kurdish principalities were Sunni Shafi'i. On one hand, Shah İsmail had a very radical Shi'i understanding that aimed to move into Anatolia through Dersims' Kurdish Qizilbash. On the other hand, Yavuz Sultan Selim had a very radical Sunni understanding. They fought on the Kurdish land Chaldiran and thousands of Qizilbash and Sunni Kurds had been killed on both sides. Furthermore, Kurds were living in principalities and living peacefully with each other. However, to protect themselves from Safavid danger they had to prefer Sunni Ottomans to Shi'i Safavids. Another reason of the Kurds' preference of Ottomans was that Shah İsmail was appointing Qizilbash to over Sunni Kurdish principalities that caused conflicts between Kurds. Hence, sixteen Kurdish tribes under İdris-i Bidlisi, the governor of Bitlis principality and a famous Kurdish historian and scholar, made an agreement with Ottomans. They officially agreed that Kurds would be free in their principalities that is in a state of autonomy and would give their taxes. Besides, they would send soldiers in case of war (Kutlay, 2011: 39-40).

Kurds were between two strong powers: Ottoman and Safavid, that is Kurdistan was a buffer zone and battlefield, mostly they were bulwarking with Kurds (Lazarev & Mihoyan, 2010: 81-84). Before Chaldiran war, Yavuz Sultan Selim made a treaty for reducing Safavid and its power of rising Shi'ism sect into Anatolia. The reason for this was to protect the Kurdish principalities from Safavid military expeditions and Shi'ism, with participation of sixteen principalities letters and with İdris-i Bidlis's petition in 1514 agreed on some articles in Amasya. By the Kurdish alliance Sultan Selim gained victory at Chaldiran and eliminated the influence of Shi'ism, securing Kurdistan for 330 years from Safavid and other external dangers (Epözdemir, 2011: 61-69; Paris, 1948: 7). This agreement had been in effect for 330 years until the Botan Badrkhan rebellion in 1846. Except small conflicts, Kurds and Ottomans lived peacefully for centuries. Both sides were benefitting from this situation. On one hand Kurds were in welfare and on the other hand, the eastern border of Ottomans was secure. In other words the Ottomans turned their face to the west and went on for military expeditions.

As Mela Mahmut Beyazidy, a Kurdish scholar explains Kurds were a live wall that secured the Ottomans' eastern border from Georgia to Baghdad for 330 years from Safavid Iranian Shi'ism and military expeditions. As Ahmede Khani, the famous reports, Kanuni Sultan Süleyman had said to his mother that he had placed the Kurds there in order to protect the eastern borders from Iran (Lazarev&Mihoyan, 2010: 93-94). However, Yavuz Sultan Selim killed 40.000 Qizilbash from Dersim that had relations with Safavids Shi'is of Iran (Burkay, 2008: 173). Thus, Kurdistan was once again a battle field between Ottomans and Safavids (Celil, 1998: 18). Kurdistan, for the first time in 1639 was divided between the Ottomans and Safavids by Qasri Shirin Agreement (Qasimlo, 1991: 44).

### **THE GREAT POWERS OF 1850-1950 AND THEIR POLICIES**

The term under study 1850-1950 is chosen for its importance. This term is the era of colonization. Great Powers started to reshape the world according to their interests. To reach these aims, the states had inter-relations and made new politics on behalf of their national policies. This study is going to reveal these policies of Great Powers with the Ottoman Empire and their reflection on the Kurdish national movements and their fates. These Great Powers policies, activities and politics that affected Kurds are being analyzed. In order to take the picture and fit it to the frame, the "1850- 1950" era, the Great Powers' situation and condition are revealed with details.

Great Powers; Britain, Russia, France and later the U.S had close relations with the Ottomans, but these closeness were based on political approachment they were subjective and based on their national interests. The cross relations were flexible and the Great Powers were mostly utilizing some ethnic and religion minorities in the Ottoman Empire for fulfilling their aims. This work will reveal how Kurds were being utilized against each other and its effect on the future of the Kurdish movements. Therefore, each of these states' situation and relations with the the Ottoman Empire are worth to be searched and analyzed as they relate to the Kurdish movements.

Great Britain, France and the American missionary activities are important elements of Great Powers to interfere into the Middle East politics. Here, this study will focus on Great Powers' missionary activities that affected Kurds and other minorities; Nestorians, Kaldanies, and Ashuries who were neighbours with Kurds. These missionary activities caused conflicts between Kurds and the ethnic and religion minorities by provoking the Kurdish reaction against them. These conflicts caused a bias against Kurds in the West and some demonstrations took place in Europe. Kurds were revealed as wild people and this prejudice influence was seen in the Sévres and Lausanne treaties.

### **OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN THE 19TH CENTURY**

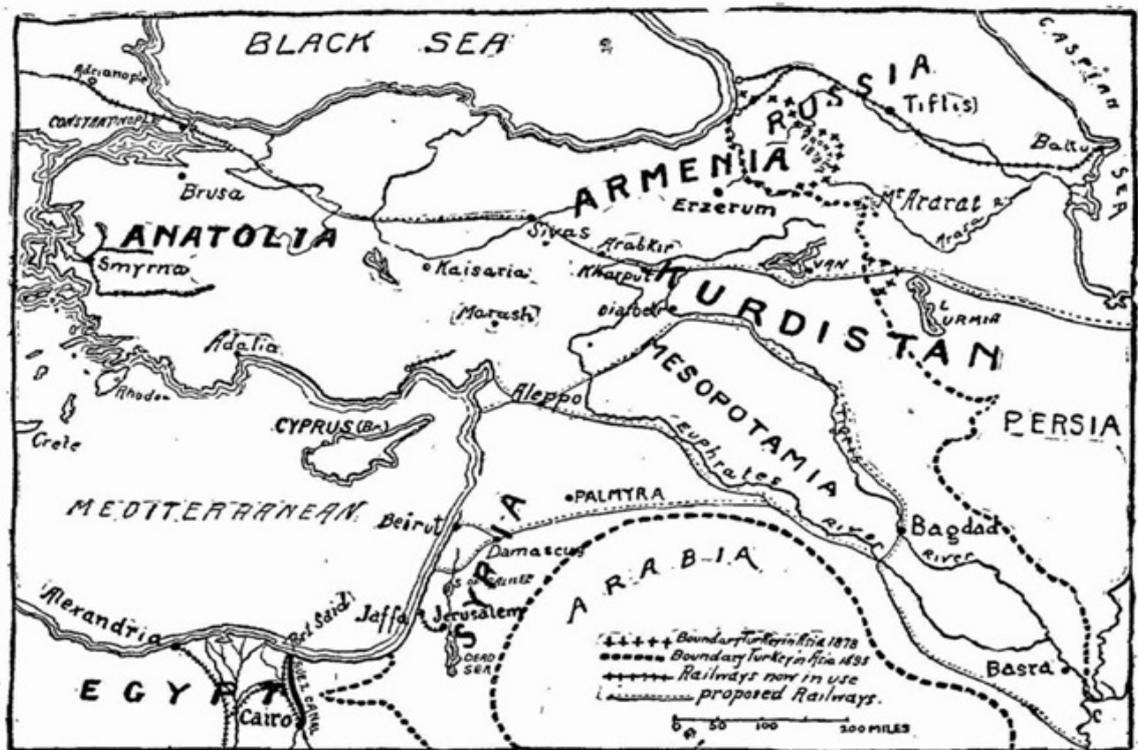
Ottoman Empire was made of many ethnic groups that were clasified as non-Muslim "millet" and Muslim "teb'a". However, the social structure of the Empire was more different than other states. Soon after the French Revolution of 1789; firstly, the influence of nationalistic trend had been seen among non-Muslims of the Ottoman Empire. Yet, Muslim Ottoman citizens had been influenced from the Revolution as well. They started to consctruct their own national institutions and sought self-determination (Özten, 2009: 1).

According to the western great powers from the begining of 19th century on, Ottoman Empire was sick man of Europe (Burkay, 2008) The Empire was in administrative, economic and military difficulties. In 1807 Selim III was brought down from administration by the Ottoman military and Nizam-ı Cedid army (New Army) was dispelled. Military was in state of decision and appointing new governors or pashas. In 1808 Mahmut II was appointed by the military and Ayans branch of the army was interfering in collection of taxes and the taxation system. Janissary (Yeniçeri) was more effective in the government and its rebellions were weakening the state (Kalman, 1994: 86). This case indicated that Ottoman Empire was a weak power in the Europe and could not compete with Great Powers anymore.

Great Britain, Russia and France benefitted from internal conflicts in the Ottoman Empire and trying to divide the Empire. In order to get the biggest portion of land from the Empire, Britain and France were helping Ottoman Empire against Russia.

However, one reason of this attitude was to prevent Russia to come down to the Mediterranean Sea. Therefore, the new strategies of the weak Empire were in accordance of the Great powers' interests. Because, Ottoman Empire was unable to put new policies into practice and be effective in the region. Thus, its new policies were mostly directed by Great Powers and of course these plans were generally according to Great Powers national interests (Kalman, 1994: 87).

The aim of France and Russia was to control the Silk Road. However, the British were not welcoming this (Kalman, 1994: 88). The internal conflicts of the Ottoman Empire had led the Great Powers to interfere into its internal politics. For these reasons, during the term of Abdulhamid II, the Ottoman Empire was approaching Germany to diminish the influence of Britain, France and Russia. However, the Ottoman Empire was defeated and signed the Ayestafanos Treaty with Russia, and Great Britain settled in Cyprus and in 1882 invaded Egypt (Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı tarihi*, 1983: 166-169, cited by Karadeniz & Kara, 2010: 166-167). Besides, Germany was also attempting to compete with Great Britain over the Ottoman land in the Middle East (Fahir Armaoğlu, *Siyasi Tarih (1789-1960)*, 1975: 229 cited by Karadeniz&Kara, 2010: 167).



1896

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN ASIA.

<http://www.shalomjerusalem.com/kurdistan/>

Map: 1.2 the Ottoman Empire in Asia

### GREAT BRITAIN IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Before petroleum was not well known, the British aim was to secure its trade route that went throughout the Kurdish region. In the 19th century in order to reach its goal, Britain was applying new policies in the Middle East. For instance, Great Britain sometimes was fighting against Russia with Ottoman as in the Crimean War. However, sometimes the British were against the Ottoman Empire. Besides, the British were interfering into the Kurdish rebellions and sometimes they were supporting rebellions and other times they were fighting against the Kurdish rebellions together with Iran. The only aim of the British was to secure its national interests, to colonize the region and its all policies in the the Middle East were

aiming at the reformation the region according to its benefit (Burkay, 2008: 298-299).

In the beginning of the 19th century the Middle East had started to change. Because it became an arena of interests that Great Powers; Britain, Russia and France had struggled on (Lazarev&Mihoyan, 2010: 106). Great Britain's biggest rival was Russia. However, Great Britain was trying to protect its new colony India's borders and prevent other Great Powers such as Russia, France and Germany to interfere into the Middle East. Putting away the other powers from the region was a major policy of the Great Britain. Besides, the British were interfering into national and Muslim movements of the region to close to the biggest powers of the Middle East, Ottoman Empire and Iran. The British travellers prepared many reports that described the region in detail. In these reports, characteristics of societies and demography of the region were clearly classified. The Great Britain was also mediating between Ottomans and Iranians to know and be effective in the region. In addition to these, the British were supporting Ottomans against Russia to break its power to enter into the Middle East (Abdulla, 2009: 219).

However the British were seen as one reason of the Kurdish rebellions by Ottomans. From the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until 1950, the British transferred its regional policy to the U.S. Great Britain played an important role in unsolving of the Kurdish issue and provided great help to the Ottoman Empire (Burkay, 2008: 328). In this period, not the regional powers, Ottomans and Iranians, but the imperialists and colonisers were dominant in the politics of the region. The fate of nations, borders and regional policies were mostly determined by Great Powers.

## **RUSSIA IN THE 19TH CENTURY**

Russia with its pan-Slavist attitude and its rivalry against the Great Powers of the 19th century had the intention to interfere in the Ottoman Empire and go down to the Mediterranean. Strengthening of Russia and weakening of the Ottomans had increased the influence of Russia interfering in the Ottoman Empire's domestic

affairs. The Great Britain was an active actor to balance the power between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. However, this was based on the British national interests to colonize the Middle East. Russia's policy was to keep the British away from Iran, Kurdistan and the Balkans. However, Russia was aware of the British assistance to the Ottoman Empire during the wars like the Crimean Wars. Hamidia Cavalries, composed of the Kurdish fighters were being utilized against Russia by the Ottoman Empire.

Russia had a big role in decreasing the Ottoman power by defeating it in the wars such as 1877-1878 wars in the 19th century (Lazarev&Mihoyan, 2010: 106-108). Russian attacks against the Ottomans weakened the Empire and the Ottomans could not fulfill new reforms. The Russian wars with the Ottomans were weakening Ottomans in two ways. Firstly, the Ottomans were losing lands to Russians. Secondly, with pretext of helping the Ottomans, the British were also invading Ottoman territories. For instance, after the British helped the Ottomans in the Crimean War against Russia, they invaded Cyprus. Additionally, European Great Powers were politically and economically interfering in the domestic affairs of the Ottoman Empire, i.e., the imperialist powers were utilizing national movements who were fighting for their independency (Celil, 1998: 31-32). After defeating the two powers, the Ottomans and the Iranians that had divided and ruled the Kurdish area for centuries, Russia became a neighbor to Kurds. Consequently, Russia also led to the Kurdish national awakening (Lazarev&Mihoyan, 2010: 107). New Kurdish rebellions like the Rawandouz, Botan Badrkhan and Bitlis rebellions came just after the Russian wars with the Ottomans and the Iranians. However, the Ottomans tried to make a protective structure of units of the Kurdish tribal troops with the Hamidian Cavalries before Russian military expeditions to stop its assaults in eastern Anatolia.

## **FRANCE IN THE 19TH CENTURY**

The second half of the 19th century is the period of industrialization of Western Europe. The industrial empires, Britain and France, had agreed to not fight between each other. Then they divided the world between themselves for colonization and lived in their short golden age. However, Germany was still interfering in the

European affairs and fighting with its neighbours. This kept Germany out of the colonial competition. This situation led to an imbalance in world politics (Ortaylı, 1981: 1).

Great Britain and France were neighbours, but in the 19th century they were competitors in colonizing and occupying new countries. Ottoman Empire was the sick man of Europe and its wars with Russia weakened the empire against the Great Powers. The Ottoman Empire was approaching to Germany during the wars. Britain was politically helping Ottomans, however in reality; it was pursuing its interests. However, the Ottomans were aware of the British intentions, but since Russia was intervening in its internal affairs, it had to rely on the British.

The French Revolution of 1789 had already influenced most of the countries with its nationalist trend. The impact of the trend led nations to construct their national movements and to struggle for their independency. The last ethnic group that were influenced were Muslim and non-Muslim societies of the Ottoman Empire (Özten, 2009: 1). Besides, Kurds and their Christian neighbours in the Kurdistan were aware of the growing influence of the European Great Powers; over Ottoman Empire. Therefore these societies expected to be assisted by these powers (Bruinessen, 1992: 228). In addition to these, France with Britain and Russia had interfered in the Ottoman internal affairs and utilized these nations against the Empire. In this way they had prevented reforms to be put into practice (Bilal Şimşir, *Kürtçülük (1787-1923)*, 2007: 21 cited by Özten, 2009: 50). France and Britain provoked to drag the Ottomans into the Crimean War with Russia that led the Ottomans down to a weak position. When the Empire failed, Britain settled in Cyprus and invaded Egypt in 1882. As a result France widened its colonies. Russia also approached the Kurds and provoked the Kurds against the Ottoman Empire (Kahraman, 2004: 41, Enver Ziya Karal; *Osmanlı Tarihi VIII*, 1983, 166, 169, cited by Karadeniz&Kara, 2010: 166)

## **GREAT POWERS MISSIONS AND MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN KURDISTAN**

In the 19th century the U.S. and Germany were not as powerful as Britain, Russia and France in the Middle East. The U.S. was in the colonial competition in the

beginning of 20 century, Germany also joined the colonial competition as delayed in the end of the 19th century. That lately joining in colonialism could not have influenced the Middle East balance of power. However, Germany and France were not as powerful as Britain; this also had a negative attitude on the Kurds. The reason for these was that Kurds had one choice whether to be with Britain or not. German officers were advisors of the Ottoman army and took place in suppressing the Kurdish rebellions (Burkay, 2008: 336-337). Germany with that policy was intending to get Ottoman confidence to enter in the Middle East politics. Moreover, Germany took place in the Ottoman Empire army renewal project. Finally, Ottoman Empire because of Russian assaults and the British imperialism had to appeal to Germany during the period of Abdulhamid II.

However the U.S. was not powerful in the Middle East, yet it had founded organizations to be effective in the future (Burkay, 2008: 337). In 1890 in the Ottoman Empire and especially in the Kurdish area the U.S. had 118 churches. In these churches there were 891 missionaries. These missionaries were fulfilling 11.899 activities relevant to Christianity. Additionally, the U.S. had founded 508 schools (Burkay, 2008: 338) in the Ottoman Empire. American schools were serving their national interests. That is to say, the aim of schools was not to help or improve nations' culture. Yet the goal was to serve on behalf of their country's interests (Halfin, 19 Yüzyılda Kürdistan Üzerine Mücadeleler: 2008, 125 cited Burkay, 2008: 338).

Great colonialists and imperialist powers had founded a large mission network in the Kurdistan. In 1880 Britain had consuls in Erzurum, Diyarbakır, Van and Mosul. The Consul in Erzurum was consul general and called Kurdistan Consul as well. France also had consuls in Diyarbakır, Erzurum and one agent in Mosul. The largest mission network was founded by Russia. Russia had consuls in three parts of Kurdistan, Van, Bitlis, Beyazid (Turkey); Mosul (Iraq); Kirmanşah, Mahabad, Urmiye (Iran) (Lazarev, 1988: 55).

The Christian missionaries and explorers in Kurdistan that started in the 19th century, served for their countries' interests politically and commercially, besides

their educational concerns. However, the Christian missionaries' attitude and their closeness to Christian minorities scared the Kurds and the fear directed Kurds against Christians. Thus, the European imperialist influence had increased in the region (Bruinessen, 1992: 228). Kurds' anxieties had been utilized in the Sévres and Laussane treaties in the 20th century by Kemalist elites. During the treaties new nationalists in Anatolia, the Kemalists', were spreading the fear that an Armenian Empire was going to be found on the Kurdish territories. By this way, Kurds were being provoked against Armenians and were pushed to the New Turkish Republic. This topic will be detailed later.

In order to observe the region and be more influential Britain had many other activities; for example, the tea clippers, bankers, merchants and shippers were also working beside the missionaries (Hubbard, 1916: 156). When Britain's missionaries arrived the region, they served on behalf of their countries and performed many activities; such as building schools and opening churches. They were very loyal to their states and praised their countries' policies. The Christian minorities believed that, the countries who sent missionaries would protect them from their neighbours' oppression. Finally, they saw that they had been utilized against each other and left them to their "enemies' mercy" (Hamilton, 1947: 245).

The British, French and American missionaries had common values with Christian minorities. Consequently, affecting the Ashuris, Armenians and Suryani was too easy compared to the Kurdish society. They were trying to affect the Kurds with different ways. Generally, the Kurds did not welcome missionaries. Sometimes they had good relations, but in general they had conflicts. For instance, when an American missionary Dr. Grand cured Nurullah Beg head of Botan Emirate, he gave a village to missionaries, in spite of Muslims' criticism (Kalman, 1994: 117). However, when two of American missionaries Knapp and Reynolds had been killed by Chief Musa Beg of Aliğa, district of Van and Beyazid. Especially Musa Beg, but in general Kurds, were announced as uncivilized people in Europe and America (Gürbüz, 2008: 74).

Missionaries were like region experts. Since they were among the society, they had witnessed every negative and positive aspects of that society. Therefore, in Paris they were called to work with experts and historians on maps to reshape the world (Macmillan, 1919: 88). In the next chapters we will see that the reports and information that missionaries and observers had delivered to commissions of agreements had determined the fate of the Kurds. Moreover, missionaries' maps about minorities' issues, and their effects in Botan Emirate and Shaikh Ubeydullah Nehri Rebellions affected their countries attitude, which were reshaping the region according to the missionaries' reports. Additionally, their convictions and their reports' effects on the Sévres and Laussane treaties are going to be discussed.

The arrival of missionaries to the region and their influence on Christian minorities caused a conflict between the Kurds and Christian minorities. And so, this led Badrkhan Beg to attack to Nestorians and Britain send Ottoman Empire over the Kurdish principality. As a result of this, Badrkhan principality was put out by the Ottoman Empire army. With these mission networks, the Great Powers could affect Ottoman Empire and interfere in internal affairs of the Empire. These consuls were observing everything in the Kurdistan, about the society and its conflicts that could be utilized against the Ottomans. By this way they could interfere in Ottoman domestic affairs very easily.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **KURDISH NATIONAL AWAKENING AND CONFLICTS WITH THE OTTOMANS**

Weakening of the Ottoman Empire and its oppression for centralization policies urged Kurds for self-determination and incited to separate from the Ottoman Empire. The two important Kurdish national movements Badrkhan Beg (Botan Emirate Leader) and Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri rebellions are caused by centralization policies

of the Ottoman Empire. Additionally, Great Powers; Britain and Russia had affects on these two rebellions.

Badrkhan Beg's relations with the British and Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri's relations with Russia and the British are important. Because the Badrkhan Beg conflict with the Christian minorities of the Ottoman Empire was provoked by Britain and this attitude brought the end of Botan Emirate and put out the Nehri's rebellion. However, duality of the British and Russian's and their flexible policies on behalf of their national interest led these rebellions to be unsuccessful. Apparently, Great Britain was forthe Ottoman Empire, but in reality the Ottoman Empire was like a buffer zonein front of Russia to come down to the Middle East and the Mediterranean Sea. Russia was against the Kurdish national movement and they wanted Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri to have good relations with the Ottoman Empire or at least do not breakits relations the Empire.

Britain persuaded Nestorians, Caldenians and Ashuries to not give their taxes to Badrkhan Beg's Botan Emirate and not unite with the Kurdish national movements. This started many conflicts between Botan Emirate and small Christian minorities. Moreover, Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri relations and attempts of having relations did not welcomed by Britain. Because of relations with Russia was strengthening Russia and weakening the Ottomans. Therefore, Britain's reactions to Nehri, attempting to haverelations with Russia was not for the sake the Ottoman Empire, on the contrary it was on behalf of its national interests that could be put under danger by Russia. It was securing of the Silk Road and keeping away Russia from the Middle East and the Mediterranean.

Russia refused the Kurdish appealing of assistance and preferred Armenians to Kurds for aid. On the other side, Great Britain had preferred Nestorians, Kaldanies and Ashuries to Kurds. This was caused by the negative Kurdish image in the mind of the westerns. That was caused by the conflicts with Chiristian minorities and Botan Emirate attacks on Christians and their harsh attitude towards them.

## **THE KURDISH NATIONALISM**

European style of national awakening was started by the French Revolution in 1789. Nationalism affected east of Europe in the early 19th century as ethnic sentiments turned into self determination movements. But the Kurdish nationalism claims were tribal, more than ethnical and territorial in forming (Ökem, 2006: 155-156).

The Kurds were organized largely into a hierarchy of territorial tribes and tribal confederations that were quasi-autonomous thanks to the warfare between the Ottoman and Persian Empires. The enmity of Persian and Ottoman Empires led the Kurds and Turks to have agreement with the Ottomans. In 1514 the Ottoman Empire and the Kurdish chiefs who supported the Ottomans over the Persian Empire, signed Amasya Agreement.

In the early 19th century, administrative and territorial reforms of the Ottoman Empire favoured centralized administration and that policy threatened the Kurdish chiefs' authority. Thus, the Kurdish chiefs in order not to lose their control over their territory revolted against the Empire. The first big uprising was done by Cezira-Botan Emirate's Badrkhan Beg. The Kurdish rebellion paved the way for the Kurdish nationalism. However, the aims of these rebellions were mostly about local affairs and administrative reforms, taxation, and conscription.

Early the Kurdish national identity awakening can not be accepted as nationalist, since they remained limited to the Kurdish urban areas and did not contain pure nationalistic ideology. Before the First World War the Kurdish awakening process was local. That is, they were aware of their Kurdishness, but it was based on tribal and religious identities. Not like other Ottoman communities, the Kurds did not want external intervention (Özten, 2009: 34).

There is a disagreement among Kurdologists for the first Kurdish nationalist movement. However, in the Kurdish studies there is a claim that the Badrkhan uprising in 1846 is the first national movement that was suppressed by the iron hand of the Ottoman Empire. The motion led to new uprising against the Ottomans since it awakened nationalistic sentiments, whose goal was to establish a new Kurdish ethnic identity across the Kurdish land (Yassin, 1995: 40).

The centralization policies, taxation and military conscription significantly contributed to the Kurdish uprisings. These rebellions also paved the way for the Kurdish nationalism. The Kurdish nationalism was tribal and decorated with religious sentiments that differ from other separatist nationalist movements such as; Armenian and Greeks. However, these uprising were utilized by Great Powers and turned those developments into their imperial and colonial interests. Great Britain tried to change these Kurds' acquired rights into its accounts. Therefore, with the missions and missionary activities and by provoking Christian minorities such as the Nestorians against Botan Emirate interfered into the Kurdish national movements. Futhermore, it was against the Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri-Russia relations as well. The reason for this is that G. Britain had some interests in the Ottoman Empire's power to utilize it against Russia.

#### **BADRKHAN BOTAN EMIRATE AND ITS DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE IN 1846**

The autonomy of the Kurdish principalities was guaranteed by the Amasya Agreement in 1514. Since that date the Kurdish principalities were under the Ottoman control. The Ottoman-Kurdish relations were good and for 330 years there was no conflict between them. However, Kurdistan was firstly divided in 1639 by the Qasr-i Shirin Agreement between the Ottomans and Persians. Therefore east of Kurdistan remained in the hands of the Persian Empire. The rest of Kurdistan was under the Ottoman control and it was divided by the Kurdish dynasties and each of those dynasties was made of different tribes. Tribes' confederations were principalities and they were quasi-autonomous under the Ottoman Empire. Baban, Bahdinan, Botan and Hakkari were the most important principalities of Kurdistan (Celil, et al, 1998: 9).

For many Kurds, the Badrkhan remained as the most famous dynasty in the Kurdish history. Badrkhan Beg was a warrior, attractive, devout and aspiring, but at the same time he was impetuous. As Sharaf -al Din Bitlisi explained in his Sharaf Nameh, he was originally from Azizan, the well-known family of Cezire Botan, whose roots go back to the 13th century (Mcdowall, 2004: 45). In the beginning of the 19th century

the Kurdish leader was Badrkhan Beg. He minted coins on his own name which read "Emire Botan Badrkhan (Botan Emirate Leader Badrkhan)" on one side and on the other side it read 1842 (Kutlay, 2011: 53). One reason that Badrkhan is accepted as the father of the Kurdish nationalism is that. He stated that "Not the Ottoman Sultan, but I am the leader of this country (Cizira Botan Emirate), if he is so powerful, but I am nobler than him" (1675 te relation de Dous Effendi, 1810; 95 cited by Kutschera, 2013: 23). This attitude reflects a noble man's inner feelings and passion, who is the leader of a tribe. He is different from the other Kurdish feudal tribal leaders by his nationalistic feelings and his contribution to the Kurdish nationalism that is why he is accepted as the father of the Kurdish nationalism. By this attitude Badrkhan is not like the other Kurdish leaders, and established the Emirate (Kutschera, 2013: 23-24).

In 1821 Badrkhan refused to give troops to the Ottoman Empire and called Nurullah Beg of Hakkari and Mahmud Han Beg of Van and with the other Kurdish tribal leaders intended to found a national Kurdish state. During 1836-1838 Badrkhan was attacked by the Ottoman Sultan. However, they agreed in 1839 and the same year fought in Nizip against Muhammed Ali Paşa, who was the head of Egypt province. It can be seen from the European explorers' *diaries* that Badrkhan Kurdish state was based on justice. There was no banditry in his state and they said that there was a social order and regular system (Kutschera, 2013: 25-26).

In 1844-1848 Badrkhan was at the top of his career. He minted money and had a *khutba* (sermon) read on his name. Badrkhan Emirate's eastern border reached to Iran, and the western borders to the middle of Mesopotamia from Diyarbakır to Mosul. Additionally, his state was very rich (Kutschera, 2013: 25). In 1845 one of the French explorer explained Badrkhan Emirate as a kingdom. He differentiated Badrkhan because it was more developed than other Ottoman provinces. He explained that agriculture was more developed and villages were tidier and there was evidence of prosperity in the state. However, he was paying 250 thousand liras as tax to the Ottoman Empire. His state was being governed well. He was rash but a just man; besides, there was an uncomparable welfare difference with other Eastern Ottoman provinces (Kutschera, 2013: 26).

Badrkhan Beg in the 1830s kept away from warfare with the Ottomans. The reason for that was to retain his resources until he became strong. When the Ottoman army was defeated by Muhammed Ali Paşa of Egypt, Badrkhan extended his land and combined new principalities to his Emirate. Mukus's leader Abdal Han and later Iran Kurdish principality Ardalan joined the Botan Emirate of Badrkhan (Celil, et al, 1998: 17). Badrkhan established a weapon and gunpowder factory with weapon experts. This success increased his recognition in the other Kurdish principalities; then he sent students to Europe to be experts in the military field (A. Alpoçyan, Ermenistanın Tarihi Sınırları, Kahire; 1950: 42 cited by Celil, et al, 1998: 17). Badrkhan Beg had good relations with the Armenians and Ashurians. He even intended to appoint a minister of economy from Armenians and he had a consular from Armenians as well. European explorer Dittel explained in his diaries that Badrkhan protected his cities from the dangers that might come from outside. He took shelter for refugees and helped them in accommodation, but it is interesting that refugees were given a weapon, horse, sword and gun, so that the Emirate's army became stronger. Besides, explorers had explained that his Emirate was safe and prosperous that they had not seen these in other Asian countries. He had established a foundation for humanitarian aid (A.Safrastian, Kurds and Kurdistan, 1948: 54-55 cited by Celil, et al, 1998: 17). When he put the military, public policy and economy in order, he became an autonomous leader. After he declared his independency, he declared Cizre as the capital. The Kurdish flag was hanged and the Kurdish tribal leaders declared their submission to Badrkhan's Botan Emirate. (A. Sucadi, Kürt Devrimleri, Kürt ve Irak Cumhuriyeti. 1959: 45 cited by Celil, et al, 1998: 17; Kahraman, 2004: 40).

Bazil Nikitin explained that the Nestorian massacre diminished reputation of Badrkhan and his role in history. As it is known Nestorians, who were living in the Hakkari District's Geliyê Tiyaşê valley refused to give tax to Badrkhan Emirate. Additionally, they punished the tax collectors of Badrkhan. Therefore, Badrkhan Beg attacked on Nestorians and massacred thousands of them. However, his kingdom did not have a long life. After attacking Nestorians, since the Nestorians were Christian origins and they hanged a British flag over their Castle Britain made Ottoman

Empire to beat Badrkhan. After a long fought between Ottoman Empire and Badrkhan armies, Badrkhan was defeated and he was capture by the Ottoman in 1847. He was exiled to İstanbul.

### **THE BRITISH-AMERICAN MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN KURDISTAN AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE KURDISH-NESTORIANS CONFLICTS**

Involving missionaries led Nestorians society to have internal conflicts. Additionally, they caused Nestorians to have problems with their Muslim neighbours. One of the missionaries sent a letter to the leader of Nestorians Mar Shimun in 1836 that expressed his feeling as "your Nestorians national issues are because of Muslims' oppression, and that is why the American missionaries feel compassion for you" (S.M.Amin, *Kurd u Ajam, Mejui siyasi Kordakani Eran*. 265 cited by Abdulla, 2009: 395).

This approachment led to enmity between Kurds and Nestorians. However the British policy was to help Ottoman to maintain its position. The British could keep its geo-political strategies, but a war between the Kurdish principalities and Nestorians was serving for the British policy in two ways. Firstly, the Kurdish principalities which were a treat for the Ottoman Empire would be suppressed by the Ottomans. Secondly, the British had a chance to connect with the Nestorians with its policy about the Ottomans. The British were against Nestorians (Assyrians) to unite with Kurds in rebellion. Missionar Badger led Mar Shimun to refuse meeting with Nurullah Beg of Hakkari, the British also tried to suppress the Kurdish rebellion with its officers (Lazarev&Mihoyan, 2010: 131) .

In 1846 Badrkhan wanted a high amount of money from Mar Shimun. However, when Mar Shimun did not fulfill Badrkhan's order, Badrkhan's commander Zeynel Beg invaded Tiyari valley. With Badrkhan's permission Zeynel Beg massacred Caldenians and Yacobies. Besides, thousands of Christians were killed and Mar Shimun handed over himself to the missionary Badger in Mosul (Lazarev&Mihoyan, 2010: 131).

The British consuls in Van and Mosul persuaded Ashurians not to give taxes to Badrkhan. This led many new conflicts between the Nestorians and Kurds. As a result, the Nestorians lost their life and properties. Mosul's British consul to protect Nestorians wanted Ottomans to attack Badrkhan Emirate (Abdulla, 2009: 395-396). On one side Mosuls' pasha was inciting Kurds to attack Ashurians. Yet, on the other hand Mosuls' pasha and the British were inciting Ottomans to attack Badrkhan. Finally this incitement gave a result and the Ottoman Empire attacked on Badrkhan (Celil, et al, 1998: 18).

In 1846 a declared military campaign against Badrkhan in March, after two months Ottoman army was ready to suppress Badrkhan Emirate. In June of 1846 the Ottoman army approached to the north of Cizre to break Badrkhan alliances. With 25.000 troops Ottoman tried to suppress Abdal, who had 15.000 or 17.000 thousands soldiers (Lazarev&Mihoyan, 2010: 132). From the north and south, Osman Paşa of the Ottomans attacked Nurullah Beg, Badrkhan Beg and Khan Mahmud. However Badrkhan Beg was about to stop Osman Paşa's assault. Yet his nephew Yezdanşer was deceived by Osman Paşa's promises. After that, Yezdanşer stopped fighting and led Ottomans to turn around and surround Badrkhan Beg army. Later, Badrkhan was surrounded by Osman Paşa's troops in Eruh castle until July 1847. However, Badrkhan surrendered to Osman Paşa and he was exiled to İstanbul. From İstanbul he was taken to Crete. After the surrender of Badrkhan, Nurullah Beg and Khan Mahmud resisted against the Ottomans. Especially Nurullah Beg resisted until 1849. However, the exile had started from Kurdistan. Because Badrkhan, was handcuffed when surrendered himself (Lazarev&Mihoyan, 2010:132).

Western missionaries portrayed the Nestorian conflict as a reaction against Christians and wanted to display Kurds as cruel to Europe. By this way they punished Kurds with Ottomans whereas they were the inciters of this case. After some time Mar Shimun confessed that western missionaries had provoked them against Kurds and blamed them for their intentions. This historical event between two neighbours led negative consequences for the Kurdish movements (Burkay, 2008: 363).

## **BADRKHAN BOTAN EMIRATE MASSACRE AGAINST NESTORIANS**

Botan Emirate leader Badrkhan relations with Ottomans had been spoiled because of some local issues. However, Badrkhan attacked the Nestorians in 1843 and later; the second attack came in 1846 to Nestorians. Those broken relations with the Nestorians and the attack angered the Great Powers. Demonstrations were organized in London and Paris against attacks on the Nestorians. The European reactions led the Ottomans to attack Badrkhan Botan Emirate. The Nestorian massacre brought the end of Botan Emirate. One major feature of Badrkhan is that, he got much reaction from Europeans (Kutschera, 2013: 26-27).

The Ashuri who spoke Aramaic dialects and belong to Nestorian church had lived in central Kurdistan; Bahdinan and Hakkari were under Botan Emirate's authority. The Ashurians had annexed to Botans' Badrkhan before its declaration of independence. However, the Ottoman strategist, the American missionaries and the British diplomats provoked Ashurians against Badrkhan Beg. The Ottomans did not oppose such provocation (Celil, et al, 1998: 18).

Until 1840 the Ashurians around Hakkari had good relations with Hakkari governor Nurullah Beg. Even there were Nestorians' representatives in Botan Emirates assembly. They had to help Hakkari principality in any war. However, the Ashurians leader Mar Shimun's view was respected in council. Starting from the 18th century British and American missionaries had started relations with the Ashurians of Hakkari. The Ottoman state was becoming weak from day to day. Yet, Badrkhan Beg was developing his power and increasing his impact on the region. However this situation was not welcomed by the Great Powers, and America. Therefore, the British diplomats and American missionaries persuaded Ashurians to have good relations with Ottomans and disobey their local the Kurdish leaders. By the way their missionary activities were increasing and this alarmed Kurds. In 1842 in Esita village a castle was founded under the name of a school by western missionaries. As Mar Shimun relied on the British and American power, he hoped to establish an independent state. The Ottomans were unhappy because of western influence in their eastern provinces on one side, but on the other side it would upset relations between Kurds and Nestorians of the region. At that time Ottoman policy was on one hand

convincing Mar Shimun for fighting against Kurds, and on the other hand persuading Kurds against Nestorians (Burkay, 2008: 360-361).

After the Kurdish principalities union, Badrkhan Beg sent his agent to the Assyrian leader Mar Shimun. However, Mar Shimun relied on British Badger and did not want to meet Badrkhan's representative. Badger convinced Mar Shimun that he did not have to meet with Badrkhan, and he could rely on the British. After that, Mar Shimun hanged up the British flag on his castle and by that way; he assumed that Badrkhan would not attack him. However, Nurullah Beg of Hakkari and Botan Emirate combined their powers to attack on the Assyrians. They defended themselves in the castle (Burkay, 2008: 361).

Assyrian Christian tribes were located in Greater Zab valley of Tiyyari district. Mar Shimun was deputy of Nurullah Beg of Hakkari. One of the reasons that Nurullah Beg of Hakkari united with Badrkhan to attack Mar Shimun was that he had relations and cooperation with Süleyman Beg, who was a rival of Nurullah Beg. The Assyrians tribes were divided by missionaries and one tribe of Assyrians, Tkuma, promised to assist Mir Nurullah Beg and Badrkhan against Mar Shimun. The reason of conflicts among the Assyrians was American protestant missionaries. Among the missionaries there was polarization; for instance the Anglican missionaries supported Mar Shimun. Yet, American competitors supported Mar Shimun's rivals (Mcdowall, 2005: 45-46).

The rising of Christian missionary activities also provoked the Kurdish people in the region. Kurds were accusing Assyrian Christians that they were the main reason of missionaries' involvement in the Kurdish area. One of the Kurdish Begs remarked to W.F. Ainsworth that "The Assyrians are guide and forerunner of those who came to spread Christianity" (Mcdowall, 2005: 46)

European demand from the Ottoman was to punish the Kurdish Emirate. The Ottoman Empire was seeking a pretext to suppress the Botan Emirate. The Assyrians' formidable persecution was an enough pretext to overcome the Kurdish Emirate (Mcdowall, 2005: 46). The first Badrkhan attack was in 1843 with 70,000 men which moved through the Nestorians' region Tiyyare valley and massacred the

inhabitants. Survived Nestorians were sold as slaves. The second invasion happened in 1846 and Badrkhan had fought against his previously allied Assyrians and destroyed them (Mcdowall, 2005: 47).

Badrkhan's attempt against the Assyrians which turned into a massacre was protested in Paris and London (Kutschera, 2013: 27). All Europe was informed about the Nestorians' massacre and this would become a gray period in the Kurdish history that would affect Europeans' decision about the Kurdish fate in the 20th century agreements, especially at the Sévres and Lausanne treaties. From then on Kurds were known as wild and barbarian people in the Europeans' minds.

### **SHEIKH UBEYDULLAH NEHRI REBELLION AGAINST THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN 1881**

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the biggest and most successful Kurdish rebellion was the rebellion of Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri of the Naqshabandy order. Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri intended to establish a Kurdish state. The rebellion was against Iran and the Ottomans, the Great Powers interfered in this rebellion and they suppressed the rebellion in cooperation with one another. The reason for this was that this rebellion was against the Great Powers interests. The father of Sheikh Ubeydullah, Sheikh Taha was a more influential man when compared to Badrkhan. However, after the defeat of Badrkhan he moved to the Shemdinan (Şemdinli) zone. The Nehri family was not only well known as religious, but also they were socially active in the society. Therefore, Sheikh Ubeydullah was influential on the Kurdish tribes in both sides; Iran and Turkey (Burkay, 2008: 379-380).

Sheikh Ubeydullah declared jihad against Russia. He joined the Russian-Ottoman Wars of 1877-1878 with a military union on the Ottoman side. However, he was defeated by Russians. Khalfin reports the number of army as 70.000. Yet Garo Sasuni expresses the number as 50.000. However, it is said that Dersim districts and Kars Kurdish tribes refused to fight against Russia (Burkay, 2008: 380). After the war with Russia Sheikh Ubeydullah's had expressed his national feeling as "The

Europeans should make an investigation to see that Kurds are a nation in Iran and Turkey, we want to govern ourselves.” With this manifesto Sheikh Ubeydullah takes his place among fathers of the Kurdish nationalism (Kutschera, 2013: 29; Beşikçi, 2013: 80). Sheikh Ubeydullah had attempted twice for rebellion in 1874 and 1880. However, Sheikh was defeated in Miyandewab (Iran) and his massacre against the people (Kutschera, 2013: 29).

As a result of Nehri rebellion, with pretext to help the Ottoman Empire, the British and the French interfered in the Ottomans’ internal affairs more than before. Besides, the U.S. recognised Iran and established a consulate for diplomatic relations. However, as a result of Sheikh Ubeydullah’s prestige, his son Seyit Abdulkadir and his nephew Seyit Taha would play an important role in the Kurdish issue with the European consuls in İstanbul and established the Kurdish councils to negotiate with the western powers (Kutschera, 2013: 29).

### **SHEIKH UBEYDULLAH NEHRI’S RELATIONS WITH THE BRITISH**

The British had good relations with the Ottomans between 1877-1878. The reason was that the British aimed to stop Russia coming down to the Mediterranean Sea and occupy the Silk Road. The British-Kurdish relations were connected to these interests. Kurds' good relations with Russia were not approved by the British. Additionally, the Kurdish uprising for self-determination also was not welcomed by the British. The reason was that the Ottoman was becoming a weak power against Russia. The tribal Kurdish principalities’ relations with the British were related to the British policy with the Ottomans and Russians.

The Ottoman had suppressed Badrkhan and pointed new pashas over the Kurdish principalities. To prevent the Kurdish movements, the British helped the Ottomans to establish its authority on the Kurdish area. The British general consulate wanted the Ottomans to exile influential the Kurdish tribe leaders to Western Anatolia and insisted on this policy. However, at the same time the British were bribing the Kurdish tribal leaders to pull them to their side. In order to diminish the Russian

influence over the Kurdish and Armenian societies, the British were using high efforts to convince the Kurdish tribe leaders. The British had seen the Kurdish national Nehri movement as a chance for Russia to occupy the Euphrates valley and prevent the British to reach India. However, Ottoman authorities were unwilling to exile the Kurdish tribal leaders (Celil, et al, 1998: 29).

As Khalfin reports Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri applied to Erzurum and Van Russian consuls to get aid from them. When Nehri applied Russia to get their assistance he said “if you do not help us, we will apply the British for their assistance’ but Russia responded that if they help, they would help the Armenians but not the Kurds. Therefore, Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri appealed to the British Van consul Clayton for assistance. As a result, the British assisted Sheikh Ubeydullah in providing weapons. However, an Armenian merchant M. Bagdasaryan denied that the British had not assisted the Sheikh and on the contrary the British got agitated by hearing news of Sheikh Ubeydullahs’ rebellion. Hence, Clayton visited Sheikh Ubeydullah in Shemdinan and said “we want the Ottoman as it is and do not want it to be divided”. Besides, Clayton asked Sheikh Ubeydullah to write a report to the Great Powers’ consuls to indicate his desire. As Clayton stated his aim frankly and Sheikh understood the British attitude over the Ottoman Sheikh also said that if he had any matter with the Sultan, they would solve it between themselves. “This is not a matter of the British” (Burkay, 2008: 382).

Sheikh Ubeydullah is known for reacting to the British-Armenian relations, which were going to result in an Armenian independent state on the Kurdish land. It is reported from the American missionary Cochran that Sheikh Ubeydullah had said “what is this I hear, that the Armenians are going to have an independent state in Van and the Nestorians are going to hoist the British flag and declare themselves as the British subjects. I will never permit it, even if I have to arm the women” (Vice consul Clayton’s report dated 11 July 1880 (Turkey. no. 5 1881), quoted in Robert Olson) cited Gurbuzel, 2008: 87). However, in another report from Dr. Cochran, it was said that Sheikh demanded from missionaries to put him in such a way of getting help from the British government (Gürbüz, 2008: 8).

Sheikh Ubeydullah informed the British about his son's military expeditions that his son's journey is justifiable to protect the Kurdish rights. Besides, Sheikh requested from Dr. Cochran to deliver his letter to the British authorities (correspondence respecting the Kurdish invasion of Persia (Turkey, no, 5 (1881. p. 47-48 cited by Celil, 1998). During Sheikh Ubeydullah's activities, the British were able to benefit from Ubeydullah's activities. However, some Sheikh Ubeydullah punishment approach suspected the British. Therefore, the British requested from Sultan Abdulhamid II to suppress the Sheikh Ubeydullah movement (Erturk, 2007: 47). Sheikh Ubeydullah had controversial relations which were mostly directed by the British. The British mostly were for to stop the Sheikh's rebellion against the Ottoman Empire not to make the empire weak against any Russian attacks. The British attitude was to stop Ubeydullah and interfere in the Ottomans' internal affairs.

Sheikh Ubeydullah aimed to establish a Kurdish state between Iran and Ottoman borders. Therefore, it is self evident that it is a national Kurdish movement. However, as in Badrkhan rebellion, one major Great Power; the British had followed an oppositional policy against Sheikh Ubeydullah's rebellion to be suppressed. However, what happened after Sheikh Ubeydullah rebellion was meaningful and it indicated that there was an agreement between the Ottomans and the Great Powers, just after suppressing Sheikh Ubeydullah rebellion, the British invaded Egypt. However, Russia and France also alleged that they had claims on Egypt. France also invaded Tunisia and what is the most surprising that the Ottomans condoned this great power's attitude (Basil Nikitin, 19. Yüzyıldaki Kürt isyanları, 1978: 30-36 cited by Beşikçi, 2013: 80-81).

### **SHEIKH UBEYDULLAH NEHRI'S RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA**

Ottoman-Russian conflicts were over, now they were fighting against the Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri rebellion. The Kurds were reactive to the Ottoman Empire's centralization policies which oppressed the Kurdish society. This policy required high taxes, conscription and "iron hand" operations against the Kurdish uprisings. Therefore, Kurds who were subject of the Ottoman State now were looking for new

ways of assistance from Russia and Britain for rebellion. However, these Great Powers were approaching to these demands, which coincided with their own imperial and colonial interests. Russia was in war with the Ottomans, however, the evaluation of Sheikh Ubeydullah relations with Russia would be in this framework.

Russia was aware of the Kurdish attitude towards the Ottomans. Botan-Hakkari tribes' leaders and Sheikh Ubeydullah's family disliked the Ottoman authority. They were waiting for appropriate time to revolt and gain their previous status under the Ottoman Empire (Averiyanov P. I. Rusya'nın XIX. Yüzyılda Acemistan ve Türkiye'de yürüttüğü savaşlarda Kürtler Tarihi, 1900, 158 cited by Celil, et al, 1998: 28).

The Ottomans' demands especially conscription and taxes led the Kurds to search new ways. Because of the centralization policies many Kurds immigrated to Russia. However, big tribes could not immigrate. Therefore, they had appealed Russia for assistance. The Kurdish hope of help from Russia was related to the rate of warfare between the Russians and Ottomans. Russia was attempting to assist the Kurds, not for the Kurdish national interests, but for passification of them and put them in conflicts with the Ottomans. Russia believed that if they do not have agreements with the Kurds, the British and Ottomans would deploy them against Russia (Celil, et al, 1998: 28-29). This case was not approved and welcomed by both the British and Ottomans. The British by its spies was striving to bring Kurds face to face with Russia. Therefore, the British had seen the Kurdish and Armenian issue as a tool to use against the Ottomans, Russia and Iran (Celil, et al, 1998: 53).

In 1877 Sheikh Ubeydullah accepted to fight on the the Ottoman side against Russia means that most of Kurds would join to the battle against Russia. However, Erzurum consul of Russia Ivanov in his notes on Botan Kurds expresses that Sheikh Huseyin and his grand father Sheikh Taha were never against Russia. On the contrary the Sheikh family was against the Ottomans. Therefore, when the Ottomans declared ``jihad`` against Russia that Sheikh Ubeydullah had to join war with the Ottomans against Russia, he had a plan. Since he didnot agree with the Ottoman centralization policies, taxes and conscription policies, he moved to north of military front that is

the weak front of the Ottoman to benefit from the case for rebellion. Additionally, famine and harsh war conditions led many Kurds to escape from the war (Celil, 1998: 41-42). Because many Kurds left the war and some of them switched sides during the war of 1877-1878, the Ottomans were defeated (Norman, Armenian and campaign of 1877-1878: 292 cited by Celil, 1998: 43)

During the Sheikh Ubeydullah rebellion he demanded assistance from Russia. Because he was seen closer to Russia than Britain the Sheikh demanded help from Erzurum's Russian consul Kamsakaran. Sheikh was praising Russia that "it is better to be on lion's side than the fox's". According to Sheikh Ubeydullah, Russia was the lion, and Britain was the fox (AVPR, F. Posolistov & Konstantionople, 1879 cited by Celil, 1998: 66)

The relations between Russia and Sheikh Ubeydullah is expressed as neighbourhood closeness "to the Kurds, the Russia is more sympathetic than the British" (Celil, 1998: 66). Vice of Sheikh Ubeydullah, Muhammed Said met with Kamsakaran and told him the importance of the Kurdish issue. Muhammed Said discussed that Van and Diyarbakır mountain passes that were controlled by the Kurdish troops would affect the result of the Russian war with the British and Ottomans (Celil, 1998: 67). Kamsakaran informed Russia of Sheikh Ubeydullah's demands of assistance. However, the Russian Foreign Minister preferred Armenians to the Kurds in assistance (N. A. Khalfin, Boribaza 22 Kurdistan, 118 cited by Celil, 1998: 67). In conclusion, the British were for the Ottomans and did not want the Kurdish tribes to revolt. Besides, they helped the Ottomans in suppressing the Sheikh Ubeydullah rebellion. Both Russia and the British did not want the Christian minorities of the Ottomans to join the Kurdish rebellions as well.



Kurdish Independent Kingdoms and Autonomous Principalities circa 1835:

**BABAN** - Independent kingdom or principality and its approximate domain

**ARDALAN** - Autonomous vassal principalities and khanates

Rewanduz - Capital

Arbil - A major populous city

— - International boundaries

— - Boundaries of autonomous principality

<http://lepzerin.wordpress.com/2012/04/05/anatolian-kurdish-emirates/>

Map: 2.1 Kurdish independent Kingdoms and Autonomous Principalities in 1835

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE KURDISH ISSUE BECAME AN INTERNETIONAL ISSUE**

The interference of the Great Powers brought the end of two major Kurdish national movements Badrkhan Beg and Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri rebellion. The secret negotiations of the Great Powers and their policies on partition of the Ottoman Empire took the Kurdish issue into the world agenda. The reason for this is that partition of the Ottoman Empire meant reshaping of the Kurdish land. The Kurds were utilized in this policies and this affected their fates.

The Kurds and Armenians were living within each other and they were neighbors for thousands of years. However, the Great Powers used these both nations against each other and used them for their interests. Russia was using the Armenians and the Ottomans were using the Kurds. The Armenians and Kurds were proxies for Russia and the Ottomans. By this way the both nations were fighting with each other on behalf of other powers interests. Then, Armenian and the Kurdish conflicts were used against those two groups in the Sévres and Lausanne treaties. Hamidia cavalries were another utilization of Kurds against Russia by using the Cavalries against the Armenians. By these cavalries the Kurds were made enemies with their neighbors and they became unsuccessful in uniting the Kurdish nation.

Starting from the 16<sup>th</sup> century until the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Kurds became an important tool between the Ottoman-Iranian conflicts. Both sides competed to establish a stable authority over the Kurdish society. In the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British, Russians, Americans, French and later Germans joined this competition.

### **AT THE END OF 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY THE KURDISH RELATIONS WITH THE WESTERN POWERS**

The conflict in east of the Kurdish region increased tension between Russia and the Ottomans. This led the imperial Great Powers to be active to invade the region. Therefore, the Great Powers wanted to utilize the Armenians and the Kurdish national movements for their interests. The two big Kurdish uprisings of Botan Emirate and Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri rebellions had suppressed with help of

international interfering of the Great Powers and their assistance. As a result of both uprisings we can say that the first negative impact of international interference had been seen very evidently. That was, the Kurdish issue became an international issue (Celil, et al, 1998: 50). Young Turks revolted Sultan Abdulhamid in 23 July 1908. This event led changes in the Kurdish policy of international aspect (Celil, et al, 1998: 65).

When we look at the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we can see that Great Britain, France and Russia's relations with the Ottomans had determined the attitude of Western Great Powers policies towards the Kurds and other minorities in the Kurdish area.

Therefore, when we categorize these attitudes we would see how the secret agreements on sharing the Ottoman Empire were done and how they could influence the Kurds fate. This also leads us to recognize the content of the agreements. (Beşikçi, 2013: 56).

### **THE ARMENIAN-KURDISH CONFLICTS AS A POLITICAL ISSUE BETWEEN THE RUSSIANS AND OTTOMANS**

The Armenian-Kurdish conflict after the establishment of the Hamidia cavalries became an international issue. The imperialist Great Powers utilized minorities and religious for their interests. To reach their aim, they led clashes between minorities and religious groups, such as the Armenian-Kurdish and Kurdish-Nestorian conflicts (Celil, et al, 1998: 39-40).

The Armenian-Kurdish relations in regards to the activities of the Hamidia cavalries had become worsened gradually. Especially, after the Berlin Agreement, Britain, France and Russia were carrying on a balance of powers policy, and their interference was just oral. However, Germany was encouraging the Ottomans on its policy towards the Armenians and Kurds (Celil, et al, 1998: 43).

The conflict between the Kurds of Turkey and the Armenians developed and later turned into fighting. Especially, the Armenians who had been dependent on the Kurdish tribes had more conflicts than any other Armenians. I. A. Zinoviev, Russia's

İstanbul ambassador, explains that "when the Kurdish tribe leaders had received high rank from the Sultan, they supposed that they were owners of Anatolia. First, they killed Christians (Armenians and Nestorians), and later they became a problem for their own nation as well" (Celil, et al, 1998: 45). However, during 1903 and 1904 there was solidarity between the Kurds and Armenians of Sason in Batman (Celil, et al, 1998: 46).

The Armenian-Kurdish solidarity is against the Sultan's attitude. Many times the Kurds protected the Armenians from the Sultan's oppressive policies. Especially the Kurdish tribal leaders informed the Armenian of the Sultan's plans of enmity against them. In Dersim district 20.000 of Armenians were hidden from the Turkish soldiers. But it did not save them from persecution. After this type of harsh policy against the Armenians, thousands of Kurds were also expelled from their places to the Middle of Anatolia (Lazarev&Mihoyan, 2010: 188). Since 1890 Armenian rebellions had been suppressed by the Kurdish troops (Hamidia cavalries). This way, the Armenian-Kurdish conflicts turned into hard bloody clashes such as the Sason event of 1894 and 1904. In Van, in 1896, the Hamidia cavalries fulfilled their duty of foundation. Additionally, these crashes made a big gap between Kurds sunni-shi'i as well (Beşikçi, 2013: 91). The reason for this is that Sunni Kurds were pro-Ottomanist and Shi'i Kurds were pro-Iranist. Consequently, Sunni Kurds accepted to be Hamidia cavalries and Shi'i Kurds refused to be Hamidia cavalries. Finally, this was an enough reason for a conflict between Sunni-Shi'i Kurds.

"Kurdistan will be Armenia" propaganda also provoked the Kurds and this led religious Kurds to react and take side with the Ottomans. This propaganda impacted the Kurdish negotiations in Paris Conference. The Armenians had delivered a map and a report to the Paris Conference Council that was full of claims that the Kurds with the Ottomans had massacred the Armenians and claimed that the Kurdish land was theirs. The report and the map were seen as an exaggeration by British Noel who was an observer in Kurdistan (Beşikçi 2013: 184-185). The Armenian report was an over exaggeration but the propaganda that "Kurdistan will be Armenia" was done by the CUP to start a new conflict between the Armenian and Kurdish societies (Beşikçi, 2013: 187).

After the propaganda, some Kurds attacked the Armenians. However, the founder of that propaganda, Kazım Karabekir, had said (to the Kurds) "if you do not help us, you would be slaves of the Armenians and your land will be occupied as well". Kazım Karabekir in his memories says that "I know that the Kurdish national awakening and the movements will not end. For this reason I spreaded the propaganda that Kurdistan will be Armenia, but we will not let our Kurdish brothers alone". That propaganda was well done and it fulfilled its aim (Beşikçi, 2013: 193).

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Christian minorities Nestorians and Armenians issues appeared and these issues affected the Kurdish national movements negatively. Imperialist Great Powers attitude towards the Kurds was with the pretext of securing these minorities from the Kurds. During the Badrkhan rebellion the pretext was the Nestorians and in the Sheikh Ubeydullah uprising the pretext was the Nestorians and Armenians. However it is normal for Christian Western Powers to have an interest in the Christian minorities of the Ottomans, yet the main aim of these Great Powers was not completely innocent as it is seen. Their goal was their national interest, not the interests of the minorities (Burkay, 2008: 339).

### **THE KURDS' ROLE IN THE OTTOMAN-RUSSIAN WARS**

Part of the Russian-Ottoman wars took place in the Kurdish territories. Besides, the Armenians were second proxy between the Russian and Ottoman warfare. The enmity between both Empires led the Kurds and Armenians to be utilized in the conflict by both sides. Consequently, the Ottomans established an army from the Kurdish tribes, called the Hamidia cavalries, which were used against the Russians and Russian allied Armenians.

The Hamidia cavalries were mainly from the feudal Kurdish tribes. This system was established by Sultan Abdulhamit II. However, when he was removed from power in July 23, 1908 by the Young Turks, the Hamidia cavalries became disloyal and caused new conflicts between the Kurds and Armenians (Celil, et al, 1998: 65) .

## **THE HAMIDIA CAVALRIES**

The Russians had established their cavalries from the Cossacks (Kazakh). The Ottomans took this system as an example. The reason was to benefit from the Kurdish tribes' power and to stop Russian troops at the Caucasians. By the way, the Sultan aimed to tie the Kurdish tribes to his authority and complete his centralization policies. These troops not only were used against the Russians but were also used against Iran in 1905 and later in the Balkan War and against Russia in the First World War. Besides, they were used against the Armenians from 1894 to 1915. These Cavalries prevented Kurds to be united against the Ottomans, because they were also used to suppress the Kurdish rebellions (Burkay, 2008: 399).

Even though, the Hamidia cavalries were established against the Russians, this led to a conflict within the Kurds themselves. Therefore, some Kurdish tribal leaders turned to Russia. For example, son of Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri, Abdulkadir and Abdulrezzak Badrkhan appealed to the Russian viceroy Kont. I. I. Vorontsov Dashkov that the Kurdish tribes were ready to revolt against the Ottomans and they demanded Russian aid. If Russia would not help Kurds, they would migrate to Russia (Celil, et al, 1998: 73-74). However, Russia evaluated that aiding Kurds would lead to problems with its neighbors, the Ottomans and Iranians. Russia did not help Abdulrezzak Badrkhan, but just led him to stay in Hoy, a Kurdish city in Iran under Russian control. Moreover, Russia did not permit him to be active in politics. He with Simko (a Kurdish tribe leader settled on borders between Turkey and Iran) founded a secular school "Gihandin" in Hoy (Celil, 2007: 100-101).

The Hamidia Cavalries increased the Armanian-Kurdish conflict. The two groups had come face to face in many areas. Additionally, on one hand, Sultan Abdulhamid II expelled some Kurdish tribes to Anatolia; on the other hand he was awarding the other Kurdish tribes to pull them to his side. This way, he was preventing the unity of Kurds through the Hamidi acavalries (Kutlay, 2011: 70-71; Celil, et, all, 1998: 41).

British Noel also explains the aim of Hamidia as prevention of unity of Kurds that K. P. Ivanov, Russian Gulf Consul, confirms Noel and says that Sultan Abdulhamit II was awarding one Kurdish tribe leader while punishing another through him.

Therefore, Hamidia was a reason of fighting in between the Kurdish tribes and led a fratricidal war between the feudal Kurdish tribes (Burkay, 2008: 402).

The Hamidia cavalries was founded by the Sultan's administrators. The goals of the Cavalries were firstly; to use Kurds as a fox hole before Russia and to use them as a tool against Iran. Secondly; the aim was to unite the Kurdish tribes of the Ottomans to prevent them to be a united nation. The Sultan expressed: "first of all we should assimilate the Kurdish region" (Celil, et, all, 1998: 42). Additionally, France's ambassador to İstanbul explained the aim of the Hamidia cavalries as "powers to foray Christian Armenians" Russia's Erzurum Consul V. Maksimov said that the Hamidia cavalries had plundered the people's properties and crops (Celil, et, al, 1998: 44-45). Hasip Koylan also explains the goal of establishing the Hamidia cavalries: "Hamidia cavalries were established to break Kurds by Kurds". This is an Ottoman policy of Kurds that Hamidia Cavalries divided Kurds into Hamidian Kurds and non-Hamidian Kurds. The conflicts between the three groups (Armenians, Hamidian Kurds and non-Hamidian Kurds) led to new problems that created a gap between the Kurdish groups and Armenians (Burkay, 2008: 401).

## **THE KURDS CONTACTS WITH THE WESTERN POWERS**

Leaders of the Kurdish national movements (Badrkhan Beg and Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri) surrendered to the Ottoman Empire and they were in exile in İstanbul. These leaders' sons and grandchildren had been influenced from their ancestors and maintained their Kurdish identity in İstanbul. Therefore, when the Ottoman Empire was weaker and losing its power, the well-known Kurdish families' members established the Kurdish institutions and worked for Kurds' self-determination. Additionally, they met with western Great Powers' consuls in İstanbul to fulfill their aims.

The Kurdish intellectualism had grown under the CUP umbrella in Europe. This was a new of way relations with Great Powers consuls. İstanbul and other Europe metropolises were good ground for this activity. The Kurdish individuals and institutions that had been founded for this mission improved their relations and described the Kurds aim of self-determination to the Great Powers. Their struggle

attracted European attention to Kurds and by this way they wanted European involvement for solving the Kurdish issue. However, loyalty to the Ottoman Empire and tribal nationalism were obstacles before Kurds to be a united nation and for self-determination.

### **THE KURDISH ACTIVITIES IN THE CUP AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE KURDISH ISSUE WHICH BECAME AN INTERNATIONAL POINT UNDER CONSIDERATION**

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century many Ottoman intellectuals were politically against the Sultan. Among those intellectuals there were many the Kurdish intellectuals whose opposition identity was pan-Ottoman or Ottomanism rather than the Kurdish identity. Therefore, they took place in the Turkish movements. Until 1908 Kurds took place in the CUP and yet, later they made national demands. However, these desires mostly were not about a separate state or independence. Two Kurdish intellectuals Dr. Ishak Sukuti and Dr. Abdullah Cevdet were among the founders of the CUP, which was found in 1889. Beside them, there were some other Kurds in the CUP who raised their voice and demands to the world. Kurds in the CUP had relations with the Armenians and had columns in their newspapers and magazines. "Troshak" and "Pro Armenia" were just two of these newspaper and magazines (Kutlay, 1991: 38).

In 1898 the first Kurdish newspaper "Kurdistan" was founded by Miktad Badrkhan in Cairo. Kurdistan was in Kurmanji and later published articles in Turkish as well. The newspaper was published in Geneva, London and Folkestone by Abdurrahman Badrkhan. Kurdistan was a paper against the Sultan and supporter of the CUP. However, it was forbidden in Turkey. It entered Turkey via Syria. Later it was published in İstanbul by Süreyya Badrkhan (Uçarlar, 2009: 104; Malmisanij&Lewendi, 1992: 43). One member of the CUP Abdurrahman Badrkhan was in Geneva and focused on freedom under Ottomanism, which was the CUP's view as well. Abdurrahman Badrkhan had good relations with Europeans and had informed them about the Kurds and the Kurdish issue.

The CUP's publication "Osmanlı" and "*Kurdistan*" had solidarity. However, by the increase of Turkification, they had separated their way gradually (Kutlay, 1991: 20-

21). The Armenian-Kurdish conflicts had increased in the 1890's. Kurds who had migrated to Europe and were also close to the Young Turks tried to prevent the Armenian-Kurdish conflicts. However, Kurds who were in the region kept quiet against these conflicts (Kutlay, 1991: 16-17). The Young Turks organized their first congress in 1902 January in Paris, Abdurrahman Badrkhan and Hikmet Baban also joined the congress, but their attitude was not clear about their national sentiments (Kutlay, 1991: 83-84).

In the end of 1907 the Young Turks organized their second congress in Paris. In this congress the Kurds were represented by Abdurrahman Badrkhan and his friends, who were publishing "Kurdistan" newspaper. However, they did not represent Kurds awhole, since Kurds were not a united nation (Kutlay, 1991: 87).

Şerif Paşa, the Ottoman Stockholm consul and Sait Paşa were from a well-known Kurdish family from Süleymaniye was also members of the CUP. He helped the leader of CUP Ahmet Rıza monthly by donating some amount of money. However, later some events led them to become opponents (Kutlay, 1991: 37). Another famous Kurdish intellectual was Mevlanazade Rifat founded "Osmanlı İslahat Esasiye Fırkası" with Şerif Paşa. In 1909 Şerif Paşa left the country and settled in Paris. As he declared and defined himself as a supporter of Kurds and other minorities, he attracted attention of Europeans (Kutlay, 1991: 99). Şerif Paşa came back to Turkey 1912, but he had to leave the country because of the CUP revolution and its new government. He was wanted and prosecuted with capital punishment. Şerif Paşa was following a pro-British and the French diplomacy. Later, Şerif Paşa became a Kurdish representative in Paris Conference (Bir muhalifin Hatıraları, İttihat ve Terakkiye Muhalefet, 1992; 12 cited by Celil, et al, 1998: 48).

Broken relations between the Young Turks and the Kurds increased gradually with coup d'etat of April 13, 1909 which consolidated the CUP's authority. Therefore, the Kurdish leaders improved their relations with the Armenian movements. The Young Turks were anxious because of good relations between the Kurds and Armenians. The Young Turks sent their spies to break the Armenian-Kurdish relations. However, the Kurdish feudal conflicts helped the Young Turks to overcome Kurds. Botan

Emirate family Badrkhan and Shemdinan Nehri family turned against each other. Emin Badrkhan claimed that Nehri's family can only be religious leaders and yet, Seyit Abdulkadir claimed that Badrkhan's family can only be military commander, but not a nation leader.

By the time the CUP closed down the Kurdish clubs and schools in İstanbul. Most of the Kurdish leaders were wanted and many of them left the country. The Kurds who remained became the Kurdish leaders and they continued their activity secretly (Celil, et al, 1998: 67).

### **THE KURDS' CONTACTS WITH THE WESTERN POWERS CONSULS**

By declaration of the Second Constitutionalism in 1908 (*II.Meşrutiyet*) many new political and cultural institutions were established. There were several Kurdish institutions that aimed to serve the Kurds. With these reforms the Kurdish activities were more organized and political activities have increased. "Kürt Teavun ve Terakki" (The Kurdish Mutual Aid and Progress Community) was established in 1908. In this community Baban Shemdinan and Badrkhan were equally presented and they were dominant in the community. This community had a newspaper and tried to improve relations with Armenia. Later, "Kürt Hevi Talebe Cemiyeti" (the Kurdish Students Hope Society) was established and its branches spreaded in Europe by Kadri Cemil Paşa and Ekrem Şemseddin. Babanzade Recai Nüzhet and Selim Sabit opened a branch in Lausanne and later new branches were opened in Geneva and Munich as well (Cemilpaşa, 1991: 23).

By the Second Constitutional Government of 1908 the Kurdish intellectuals' activities and diplomacy were important stepsto improve the Kurdish relations with the western powers. Badrkhan's relations with Russia improved and later Abdurrazak Badrkhan visited Russia and required Russian assistance for self-independency (Jwaideh, 1961: 350). Abdurrezak Badrkhan had good relations with Russia. He is Necip Badrkhan's son and like many Kurds he opposed the CUP policies. He worked as the Ottoman Consul of St. Petersburg and Tahrán. When he was accused by the Sultan, he fled Russia. He settled in Sivastopol, St. Petersburg and Erivan. Abdurrezak had worked with Simko whose father was a good friend of Abdurrezak.

Both worked in Khoy city of Iran but under Russian authority. They found "Gihandin" community; the Russians also had assisted this community. They worked on the Kurdish language and culture for a temporary time. However, they had disagreements on something that they left each other (Kutlay, 1991: 47; Ahmed, 1992: 30).

Before starting of the First World War, Kurds had some contacts with Germans. However these contacts were made by Germans who had intended to increase their influence over the Ottoman Empire. Germans made the propaganda that Kurds and Germans were from the same origin and should be have close relations (Kutlay, 1991: 47).

### **THE KURDS AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR**

In the end of the First World War four Empires, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Russia and the Ottomans were divided. By division of the Ottoman Empire there were four formations: Firsts are the states in the Balkans such as Albania and Greece, second, is the states in the Arab world by the British and the French invasion, third, is Armenia and fourth, is Kurdistan. Kurdistan was divided into three parts. Since Iraq and Syria were mandates of Britain and France, Kurdistan was divided into three parts between Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Thus, Kurdistan can be called as "Mandate of Mandate" (Beşikçi, 2013; 53).

Comparing to the Arabs and other nations, division of Kurds is completely different. The Arab world also had been divided by the Great Powers. However, as a result of this division several mandates and independent states had been established whereas, the Kurds and Kurdistan were divided and shared. Therefore, İsmail Beşikçi asks why the Great Powers did not accept a mandate or independent state for Kurdistan. What was the meaning of division and sharing of Kurdistan? Although the major nations of Asia and the Middle East after the war had their states, why were the Kurds divided and shared? For analyzing the process after the First World War, these questions will enlighten the Kurdish issue and aim of the Great Powers on the Kurds (Beşikçi, 2013: 54).

## **THE KURDISH-RUSSIAN RELATIONS DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR**

Before the the First World War the influence of the western Great Powers had increased in the region. Since the conditions were available Molla Selim; a famous Naqshabandy Sheikh from Bitlis, applied the British for assistance. However, the British were not sure that the Kurds would be successful. Therefore the British refused MollaSelim's request. Molla Selim turned to Russia for assistance. The Russians knew that they could control the region by assisting the Kurds and they accepted assisting. However, since other tribes in the region did not help Molla Selim he was defeated and he took refuge in Bitlis's Russian Consulate. However, in the First World War, the Ottomans attacked the consulate, arrested Molla Selim and hanged him in Bitlis (Jwaideh, 1961: 329).

Russia called Kurds to its side by Yusuf Kamil Badrkhan and Kör Hüseyin Paşa. However, with pan-Islamic propaganda and with the help of German spies, the Kurds sided with the Turks (Jwaideh, 1961; 338). Yet, it is said that Seyit Abdulkadir son of Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri agreed with Russia on the condition of autonomy for Kurdistan and non-fighting with Russia (Kutlay, 1991; 116). During the WWI, Dersim district's Kurds and their leader Ali Şer acted with Rusia and the Armenians. In the name of Koçgiri tribe Ali Şer agreed on establishing an independent Kurdistan with Russia. However, because of the October revolution of Russia, Russia withdraws and after that the agreement between the Kurds and Armenians had dissolved (Jwaideh, 1961: 338). A member of Badrkhan's family who was exiled to İstanbul after Botan Emirate revolution and suppressing the uprising Yusuf Kamil Badrkhan in Tibilis had some connections with Russia and had tried to accept the Kurdish national demands. Yusuf Kamil had sought refuge in Russia. During the WWI he became the governor of Erzurum and Bitlis during the Russian invasion of the Ottoman Empire. It had been reported that Yusuf Kamil Badrkhan had applied the British for establishing an independent Kurdistan (Kutlay, 1991: 61).

During the the First World War Nehri's family had relations also with Russia. Seyit Taha Nehri had contacts with Russia. He visited Russia several times and stayed in

Novorossisk temporarily. He returned as a supporter of Russia and stayed in Rojan city close to the Turkish-Iranian border. He was ready to establish a Kurdistan under Russia's mandate. However, because Seyit Taha had relations with the Germans, Russia suspected from his loyalty and destroyed his house (Hay, 1921; 353). Nikitin mentions a letter from Seyit Taha on name of Free Kurdistan Community (Istihlasi Kurdistan Cemiyeti), He demanded help from Russian commander against the Ottoman state (Nikitin, 1991: 344). Although Kurd Sheikh and tribal leaders struggled for assistance from Russia and Britain, both of Russia and Britain did not help Kurds since these demands were not in line with these powers interests (Nikitin, 1991; 344).

Britain, Russia and France intended on sharing the Ottoman land and this had been revealed in the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Besides, the Kurdish land also was on the table of the Great Powers. These plans were revealed by a letter from the Russian Foreigner Minister Sazan of Petrograd to the French Ambassador B. Paleologue that Russia wants Van, Bitlis, Siirt, Amediye, Cizre and Mergaver region to be given it to Russia. However, France did not accept Russian demands (Osman Olcay, Sevr Antlaşması Doğru, 1981. S. I. VII cited by Kurubaş, 2004: 24).

### **THE KURDISH-BRTISH RELATIONS DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR**

During the First World War the Kurds had relations with the British. In the first month of the World War Sheikh Mahmud Berzenji and the Kurdish tribes in Persia agreed to establish the south Kurdistan confederacy under the British protection. Sheikh Mahmud also claimed a Mosul Vilayet under the British protection. Şerif Paşa had offered help to the British observer Sir Percy Cox to serve for the British to guarantee "the future of Kurdistan". However, the British refused this assistance for several reasons. The main reason of refusing was that the Kurds' desires were not in line with the British interests because constructing a balance in the north of Kurdistan between the Kurds and Armenians under the shadow of Turks needed a big effort (Wilson, 1938; 130).

There was a disagreement among the British politicians in their views regarding how to treat the Kurdish independency. Some of the British were for an independent

Kurdistan, while the other the British opposed against this idea. After the armistice of 1918, the British were for a disintegrated Ottoman Empire. They were trying to maintain vital interests and at the same time to fulfill the Allied promises of self-determination for all nations living under Ottoman control and however, this was a dilemma within the British as well (Yassin, 1995: 43).

In the First World War Great Britain had invaded Iraq and its aim was to reach Mosul, a petroleum rich territory. However, to reach its aim Britain had to have relations with the Kurdish tribes in mountains of North Kurdish area. Therefore, the British government observer Percy Cox would meet with Şerif Paşa for an autonomous Kurdish region in June 1918. Besides, the British were trying to pull SeyitTaha and Mahmud Berzenji to its side (Celil, et al, 1998: 101). Despite the Turks and Germans' anti-propaganda, the British got the Mesopotamian Kurdish tribes loyal support. This support led the British to invade all parts of Iraq in 1918's. However, the Kurdish tribes' supports did not last long, they broke up their relations with the British and later they fought against the British troops (Celil, et al, 1998: 102)

Finally, the friendship and close relations between Kemal Atatürk and the Soviet Russia worried Britain and therefore Britain abandoned the idea of supporting a Kurdish state. The British also looked new ways to have good relations with Kemal Atatürk (Yasin, 1995: 45).

### **THE FIRST WORLD WAR'S EFFECTS ON THE KURDS**

The First World War not only affected the Ottoman Empire, but also the Kurdish regions were negatively affected. It demolished the region. After the war the Kurdish region economically drowned and the population was displaced and the region was dramatically shared between the Western Great Powers. The idea of the Kurdish union not only practically, but also ideally was false now. Kurds were now far away from each other and without a plan and program the Kurdish tribal leaders' ties were cut down with each other. Without any programs for their national independency their minds were confused. Yet, the war had some positive effects as well. The most important positive effect of the WWI was that the Kurdish leaders awakened

nationally and they became aware of their identity. After that war the Kurdish leaders organized national movements and struggled for their national rights. The result of these, the rate of people who wanted the Kurdish independence increased. The actors of this process were the Kurdish leaders such as Kamuran, Emin Ali Bey from Badrkhan family, Ekrem, Kadri and Omer from Cemil Paşa family. Beside these, there were Seyit Abdulkadir and Seyit Taha from Nehri family, and Süleyman Paşa and Mahmud Berzenji from Süleymaniye.

The propaganda that the Armenian state would be established in the east of Anatolia provoked and angered Kurds, and also some the Kurdish leaders tried to emulate Armenians to have a Kurdish state whether independent or a mandate state. By this way Kurds once again became an object of international affairs and policies. However, not only the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, but also the 1917 revolution of Russia influenced the Kurdish leaders deeply (Lazarev, 1989: 61). Wilson principles gave a hope to the Kurds. Because they declared that "the Ottoman Empire would establish an authority over Turks, but also other nations who were under the Ottoman Empire authority will guarantee their autonomous states". With this principle Wilson implies that "nations should decide about their fate" "This implication was legitimizing the Kurdish intellectuals' desires" (Cemil Paşa, 1991; 53).

The 12<sup>th</sup> Article of the Wilsonian Principles was not only for Kurds. But the Kurdish intellectuals founded "Kurdistan Teali Cemiyeti" The Society for the Rise of Kurdistan (SRK) in 1918 just after the First World War with the aim of creating an independent Kurdish state in east and southeast of Turkey. The first leader of the society was Seyit Abdulhadiir Nehri. However, the SRK founders were from Kurdish feudals, but the community itself was not tribal community. It was a community over tribalism. "The Society for the Rise of Kurdistan" was not like other the Kurdish communities that previously had been established. It was claimed that the SRK was embracing 15 the Kurdish intellectuals. Additionally, most of these Kurds were intellectuals and tribes' leaders (Bruinessen, 1992: 346).

The SRK (The Society for the Rise of Kurdistan) was founded as a result of the Wilsonian Principles and it affected the Kurdish intellectuals. The society aimed to

put the Kurdish issue into the world agenda and especially into the Allied Powers' agenda. The major aim of the society was a free Kurdistan and its aim was revealed on its seal that was used by the society in official correspondence. On its seal it was written "Autonomous Kurdistan". The society's political line was to reach a free autonomous Kurdistan. However, the plans for an autonomous Kurdistan were not clear and the shape of a free Kurdistan was not very clear as well. The society tried diplomatic paths and struggled diplomatically. Except the SRK many other Kurdish communities were founded. For instance, the Kurdish Society for Mutual Aid and Progress was one of them. However, none of these communities were as affective as the SRK. Therefore some of these groups worked as branches of the SRK. As Lazarev reports from an Iranian Kurd Abdulkasım Lahutin that Kurds were separated into four groups. The reason of their separation was because of their connection with external powers which they expected to be assisted by them and according to their choice of demanding rights for Kurds, they are classified as following. The first group was for an independent state, Badrkhans were in this group. The second group was Pro-Turkish. They wanted an autonomous state under the new Turkish state that was going to be established. The third group was Pro-Iranian, that they wanted an autonomous state under Iran. The fourth group was Pro-British, that they wanted a free Kurdistan under the British control. In this group there were members of the famous Kurdish families such as Seyit Abdulkadir Nehri, and Kurd Mustafa Paşa (Lazarev, 1989: 99).

However, generally there were two main tendencies that first inclination was under Seyit Abdulkadir whose aim was for a state under the Ottomans or a state under Britain, but in both cases Seyit Abdulkadir Nehri was for an independent state. The second group whose head was Badrkhans' was for a free Kurdistan. As a result of these two tendencies, Kurds failed to get aid from outside. The conflicts and different attitudes of the Kurdish leaders and intellectuals led the Kurds to be stateless. Since that each family was trying to strengthen its own position. During armistice the Kurdish leaders had floundered between autonomy and independency. Since they could not succeed to direct the movement, they could not influence the public. This was the biggest factor that led the Kurdish movement to fail.

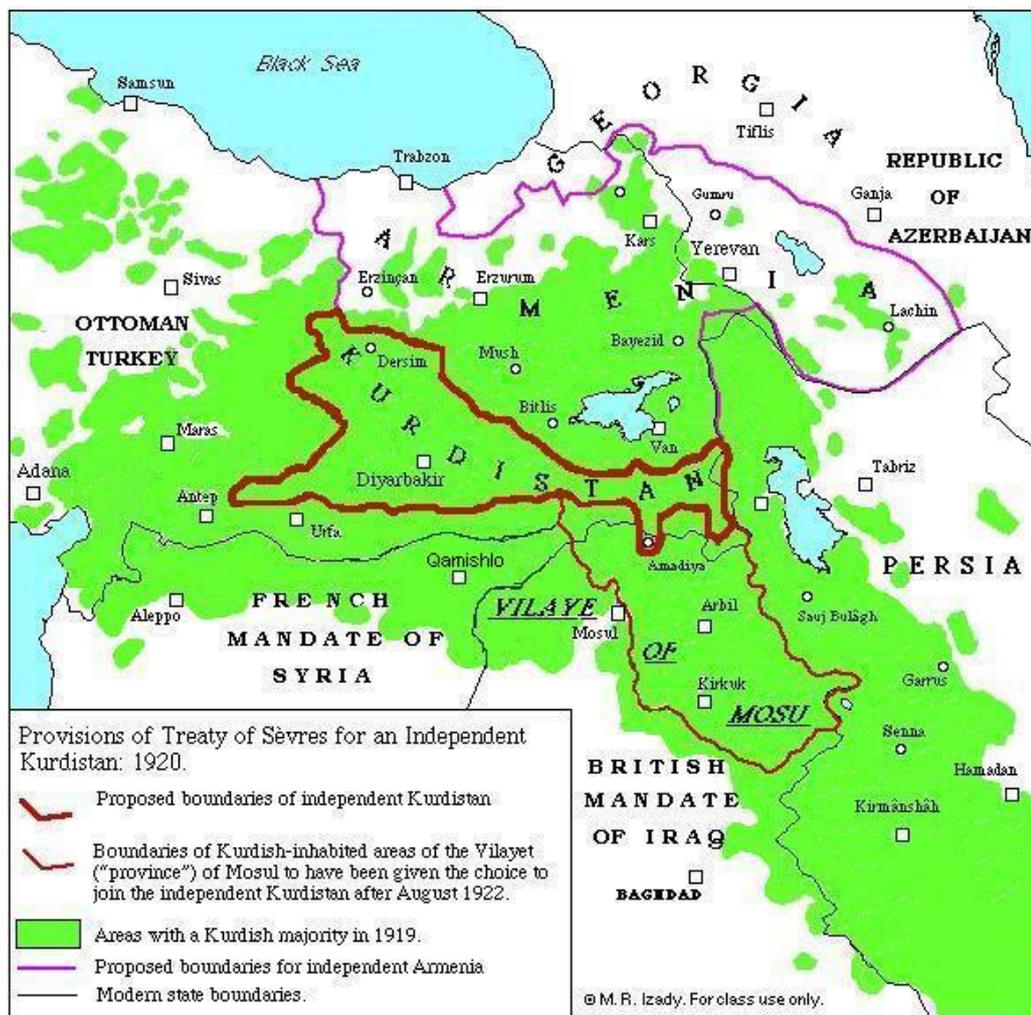
During the First World War the Kurdish independence movement failed. The reasons of this failure were underdevelopment of the Kurdish society politically, socially, economically and division of the Kurdish society. Additionally, the utilization of Kurds by the Turks and the Great Powers' imperialism also led the Kurdish independency movement to fail. However, the First World War experience gave the Kurds an experience of struggle against foreigners. Moreover, feudal structure was weakened after the war and the Kurdish national awakening spreaded among Kurds (Celil, et al, 1998: 104).

#### **CHAPTER 4**

#### **THE SÉVRES TREATY (1918-1920) THE KURDISH ISSUE IS IN FRONT OF THE WESTERN POWERS**

After the First World War, it was time of negotiations, but for the Ottoman Empire it was time of fragmentation. Now, the Great Powers were negotiating with nations under the Ottoman Empire. However, these nations had their own conflicts and the Kurdish-Armenian conflicts were brought back by the Great Powers. The Society for the Rise of Kurdistan (Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti) and the other national Kurdish institutions were crashing, but the Turkish National Contract (*Misak-i Milli*) movement was on its power and effective. Although, the Kurds were unexperienced but now they are in the international agenda and arena.

Being stateless and having no representative was politically disadvantaged position for the Kurds to negotiate with the Great Powers. With all these disadvantages, the Kurds joined to conferences that took place in Europe. Comparing to secular Mustafa Kemal, the Kurds were religious. Mostly, The Kurdish groups were also more pro-Ottoman, these were some of the reasons for the Great Powers to take Mustafa Kemal's representatives into consideration. Additionally, at this time the Great Powers plans that had been taken in secret Sykes-Picot agreement were revealed by the Russian Bolsheviks.



<http://www.sipankurdistan.tripod.com/>

Map: 4. 1 Provisions of the Sèvres treaty for an independent Kurdistan in 1920

## THE KURDISH POLICY OF THE BRITISH

These were plans for sharing the Ottoman Empire, and Kurdistan also would be divided and face with a question that would go on for decades. However, the big actor Great Britain's Kurdish policy and its utilization of the Kurds for its national interests and its Kurdish policy's flexibility was clear and they resulted in the current the Kurdish issue. Furthermore, the Armenian claims and their anti-propaganda

against the Kurds in Europe before the peace conferences put the Kurds in difficult situation. Noel Reports and Noel's closeness with the Kurds could not bring any positive political result for the Kurds. Great Britain's target was Mosul, oil-rich province and its security. The Kurdish policy of the British was mostly focused on Mosul, that is south of Kurdistan. Generally its Kurdish policy for north of Kurdistan was not clear and complicated.

### **THE BRITISH INTEREST IN THE KURDISH POLICY**

Since middle of the 19th century the British had relations with the Kurds. These relations were a part of the British Middle East policies. The British-Kurdish relations have developed after the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916. After the First World War when the British dominated the Mesopotamia and they were faced with the Kurdish issue. The aim of the British was to enlarge its territory and add north of the Kurdish region's petroleum district to their colony, that is south of Kurdistan. Therefore, the British had to have relations with the Kurds.

Strategically, the Kurdish region was important for the British. Utilization of the Kurds against the Turks, Arabs and Russians led the British to strengthen its domination over Mosul province and over the Kurds (Afşin, 1964: 73). The Kurdish-Armenian relations also directed the Kurdish policy of the British. Armenians' claims on the Kurdish land and the Kurdish reactions to these desires, led the British to have different policies for each part of Kurdistan; south and north of Kurdistan. That is to say, the British policy of south Kurdistan and Mosul oil rich district was different than, the north region of the Kurdish land which was claimed to be Armenian land. This attitude was a dilemma in the Kurdish policy of the British. Therefore, the British intention was to detain the north Kurds with indefinite promises and divide the south Kurds into several autonomous states. The feudal division of the Kurdish society and geographical structure of the land was helping the British to practise its policy easily (Kurubaş, 2004: 32).

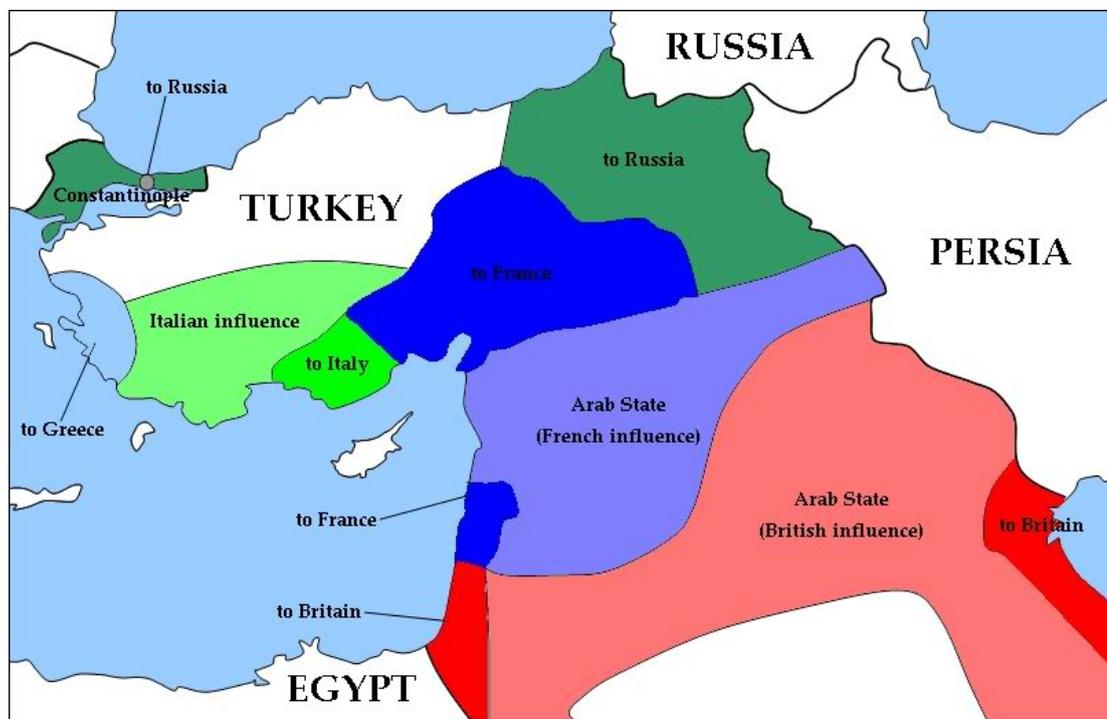
The protection of Mosul district was a major aim of the British policy. The British changeable policy of on both part; north and south Kurdistan aimed to create a buffer zone between Turkey and Mosul the British colony (Lazarev, 1989: 131). Moreover, Atatürk's successful policy with Russia and the British had a negative impact on the Kurdish fate. The 1917 October revolution of Russia gave a new chance to Kemalists to be successful. Mustafa Kemal movement was threatening the British that "if you do not fulfill these wishes and insist on doing these activities they would become communist". In the same way the movement was threatening Russia that "if you do not fulfill our desires and insist these policies, they would get closer to the British". That is to say, Atatürk's dual policies and balance of power policy had led the Great Powers' decision on the Kurdish issue negatively (Beşikçi, 2013: 58-59). As the British guaranteed minorities rights with other Allied powers with the 44<sup>th</sup> article of the Lausanne treaty both Britain and the United States followed the same policy with Christian minorities. However, the British policy on the Kurds was complex (Kurubaş, 2004: 34-35).

Lazarev indicates the complexity of the British policy that representatives in Baghdad were thinking differently than the government in London. This led three major approaches for the Kurdish policy of the British. The first plan was to dominate all Kurdistan economically, politically and militarily by the British. That is, its aim was to dominate Near East by utilization of the Kurdish issue. The second tendency was separating the Kurdish issue from Turkey and Mesopotamia. This was a general inclination both in Baghdad and London. According to this bent Kurdistan would be divided into three parts and later four parts. The third tendency was a complexity of Mosul situation both in Baghdad and London. The only common opinion here was to expel Turks from Mosul (Lazarev, 1989: 174).

Great Britain's Baghdad officer Arnold Wilson classified the Kurdistan issue and divided it into three parts according to its importance. The first is Iraqi Kurdistan's fate. The second is the fate of Turkey Kurdistan and the last is the fate of Iranian Kurdish tribes' freedom movements (Lazarev, 1989: 38). The head of the Society for the Rise of Kurdistan Seyit Abdulkadir visited the British political high commissioner A. Ryan in April 1919 and informed him that he was searching a plan

for an autonomous Kurdistan under the British mandate. High commissioner Admiral Calthorpe asked the Kurdish issue to Britain foreigner affairs minister about their attitude. The British minister proposed that the Kurds should remain calm and pay attention to provocations until peace conference was resulted (Sonyel. I.s. 28-29 FO 371 / 4191, 82999, no: 811 / M / 1743 cited by Kurubaş, 2004: 35).

The only British anxiety was from İstanbul. The Kurdish movements' enmity of Christians and specially the British hostility of Sureyya Badrkhan who was stayed in these groups was a reason of the British anxiety. Therefore, the British were for to expel heads of the Kurdish communities from İstanbul; such as Abdullah Cevdet and Seyit Abdulkadir. Otherwise unwanted events could occur. Consequently, Seyit Abdulkadir visited the British political commissioner A. Ryan in İstanbul and explained that they werenot against the British, but they were not ready to accept Armenian domination over the Kurds. Besides, Abdulkadir was threatening that if they do not give guaranty for that, Kurds would have cooperation with Turks (Noel, 2010: 47-48).



<http://forum.paradoxplaza.com/forum/showthread.php?147311-1914-1924-British-interests-British-honour-British-obligations/page60>

Map: 4. 2. The British interests in the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1924

### **NOEL REPORTS, ARMENIAN CLAIMS AND ANTI-PROPAGANDA AGAINST THE KURDS**

Great powers of western and Eastern missionaries spies, consulates and explorers had worked in Kurdistan and the reports that they had prepared about the Kurdish culture, history, demography, customs, traditions, tendencies and especially political attitudes helped the powers to determine their the Kurdish policy. Starting from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the British, Russian and later step by step Germans, French, Americans and later other western powers became interested in the Kurds and this interest changed into interfering into Ottoman Empire's internal affairs of the Kurdistan region.

One of the major political actors of the Middle East of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was Great Britain that had used a hard effort to investigate and follow changes in the Kurdistan and to change these improvements into its account. To do this Britain sent its spies under several positions such as missionaries, engineers and explores such as C. J. Edmonds, Colonel Bell. Major Soane, Bolton, Colonel Elpinson, Captain Hay, Lees, Jardine, Clarke, G. R. Driver, Greenhouse Engineer A. M. Hamitton (New Zealand), Captain Woolley. However, for "the North Kurdistan" the part that now is in Turkey Major Noel was charged with a duty and his reports had a big role in its fate. Mim Kemal Öke with his work named "The British policy of South-East Anatolia and Major Noel" (İngiltere'nin Güneydoğu Anadolu Siyaseti ve Binbaşı, E. W. C. Noel) is well explaining the British policy. Major Noel's reports about the Kurds, directed Sévres treaty and also it affected Sévres decisions as well.

Since there was a British opposition and enmity in the region, Britain sent Major Noel who was from India's political branch and he had worked in Iran earlier (Ahmed, 1992: 100).

In April of 1919 Major Noel came to Nusaybin and started his duty. First of all he was learning the people's attitude and trying to have close relations with them.

(Bilgin, 1992: 24, Sarımay, 1998).The British cautioned Major Noel to not give the Kurds any hope. Noel was reporting his impression and informing İstanbul high the British commissioner. According to his reports the Kurds' enmity to the British was as much as Şerif Paşa who was in Paris and was negotiating in name of the Kurds. Besides that, he advised for some steps to be taken for the process. On his advices Calthorpe wanted Noel to calm down the Kurdish society with the help of some of the Kurdish tribal leaders (Öke, 1990: 43)

The British consulate of İstanbul authorized Colonel Wilson with some the Kurdish leaders to calm the reactions against Great Britain that the British were founding an Armenian state in the Kurdish land. Therefore, Noel aimed to soothe reaction of Pan-Islamists and the Kurdish nationalists (Noel, 2010: 7). Admiral Calthorpe wrote a letter to Lord Curzon. In his later, he expressed the importance of the Kurdish region and stated that a mandate for the Kurds under the British rule is unappropriate. Calthorpe added that something should be done after the decision of the conference. According to these British spies, the Kurds had to wait for the results of the peace conference (Kurubaş, 2004: 38).

The British İstanbul high consulate Hohler had suspicions about Noel. In 21 July of 1919 Hohler wrote a letter to Sir Tilley and complained that the Kurds were a problem and by coming of Noel the problem had gotten bigger. According to Hohler, Noel was a talented and a good man; however, he was a fanatic. Noel was a Kurdish apostle or even he could be "Lawrence of Kurdistan". In his letter Hohler adds that until London government determine a Kurdish policy. It should be careful and move slowly till peace conference was resulted. Kurdistan and Mesopotamia's present situation should be maintained and he should follow in the letter that he could do that with assistance of Seyit Abdulkadir and the other Kurdish leaders in İstanbul and in the region.

Moreover, Hohler claims that he could maintain the present situation by giving some simple promises to the Kurdish leaders. Finally, he concludes that for weakening Turks the best way and good idea is to, remove the Kurds from them, but Baghdad office was unable to do this (DBFP, Vol. IV; P. 693-694). According to Hohler

letter's content, until that time the British had no a clear Kurdish policy. Although the British high consulate was aware of Noels' activities, Major Noel was moving on his own mind. According to Martin van Bruinessen, Noel's aim was to establish a Kurdish state and he was looking for the popular governor of that the Kurdish state that would be under the British mandate. However, Noel also would see that how the Kurds had been divided (Bruinessen, 1992: 144). Noel returned to north of Kurdistan in October of 1919, since Noel had good relations with the Badrkhan family. Celadat Ali and Kamuran joined Noel via of Aleppo. Besides, Ekrem Paşa from Cemil Paşa family joined them at the "Noel trip". By that way the British-Kurdish cooperation had come into existence. Nuri Dersimi explained the aim of Major Noel as to determine the population of the Kurdish, Armenian and Jewish people so that they would prepare a report for drawing new borders before the peace conference (Dersimi, 1992: 24). However, provocation of Ali Galip, Elazig governor, prevented Major Noel's success. Therefore, Noel's friends Celadat Ali, Kamuran and Ekrem Cemil Paşa withdrew to Aleppo.

### **ARMENIAN CLAIMS REGARDING THE KURDS**

Armenian claims put the Kurds in a difficult situation in peace conferences and the Sévres treaty. However, the Kurds were not directly responsible for Armenian massacres and conflicts with the Turks, but they were not completely innocent as well. Hamidian cavalries and their utilization against the Armenians strengthen the claims of the Kurdish involvement in crimes against Armenians. The Ottoman aim was to suppress the Kurdish and Armenian rebellions with the help of Hamidian cavalries. Thirty six Hamidian cavalries were mostly formed in areas that the Kurds and Armenians were living together, in such cities like Van, Ağrı, Bingöl, Erzurum, Patnos, Muş, Urfa and several other cities within these districts. Since the head of cavalries were the Kurds and they were appointed by the Ottoman state; the Kurds were accepted as responsible from crimes against the Armenians. Since 1890, the Ottomans used the Kurdish Hamidian cavalries against the Armenians. In 1894 and 1904 in Sason and in 1896 in Van district the Kurdish formed Hamidian cavalries had committed bloody attacks on Armenians (Beşikçi, 2013: 89-91).

As Noel expressed; the Kurds took a role in the Armenian massacres but they were fulfilling the orders of the Turkish authorities and it does not mean that they were directly responsible of crimes (Noel, 2010: 55). As a nation; the Kurds' demands were against both the Turkish and Armenian interests. The Armenians were expecting aid from Europeans and Turks were expecting aid from Muslims. Therefore, both Turks and Armenians saw the Kurds as pawns. Turks approached to the Kurds over the Islamic caliphate that they were one community of Islam. The Armenians also claimed that the Kurds and Armenians were from the same origin and their old religion Zoroastrianism was very close to Christianity. Both nations were trying to pull the Kurds to their side to live with them. However, when the Kurds declared their national demands, both Turks and Armenians shouted together that the Kurds were the only responsible for the Armenian massacres. Even the Turkish delegates wanted Pierre Loti to publish a book in Paris; that try to convince Europeans not humble Turks "but barbaric" Kurds were responsible from Armenian massacres (Noel, 2010: 55-56). However, the Kurds were known as barbaric thanks to the Armenian propaganda. Yet, when European explorers visited Kurdistan; they had realized that the Kurds did not commit massacres. Besides, Armenian communities and churches in Britain had a big role in the Kurdish anti-propaganda in Europe (Noel, 2010: 159).

Abdulhamid and the CUP put a conflict between the Kurdish-Armenian societies to prevent help of Europeans to the Kurds in the future. Before 1860 relation between Armenian and the Kurds were based on respect, friendship, love and tolerance. Christian leaders in Diyarbakır explained that "if there were not Turks we had no any problem with the Kurds". The forced exile of 1865 and 1915 were done by Ottoman government's imperial edict. There are some evident examples that the Kurds did not practice the order of the CUP governments deliberately. Noel explains that when he visited Rewanduz, he met with Nestorians who were protected by the Kurdish people for two years. Besides many the Kurds took Armenian family and hid them from Turks forced exile to the Russian border (Noel, 2010: 160-161).

The Kurds relations with Nestorians, Armenians and Suryans were good. However, the First World War changed this balance. Armenians also committed a big genocide

against Muslim Kurds in East of Anatolia and that was well known by Europeans. An American missionary Dr. Usher says that when Turks left Van city and while Russia was controlling the city a young Armenian with ax in hand, killed and torn off many the Kurds in the hospital. Dr. Usher said that if Armenians were not prevented, they could do the same to the Kurds that what the Kurds did to them under the Ottoman state authority (Noel, 2010: 161-162).

Armenians were represented by different delegations in peace conferences in Europe such as London, Paris and San Remo. The first was Armenian Republic's delegation. Second was Boghas Nubar delegation which was European national Armenian delegation and the third group was a religious functionary group under Monsenyor Terzian Armenian Patriarch. Therefore, the Armenian delegations' reports had affected the Kurdish demands negatively. The Armenians claims that the area which had claimed that is the Kurdish land was also shown in Armenian reports that this land is belongs to Armenians as well. That is the alleged land is Armenian land and the Kurds had killed thousands of Armenians with Ottomans or under Ottomans' authority. The claims were too exaggerated that they were including minorities into Armenian population, but at the same time, Armenian delegation in order to show that how the CUP had killed thousands of Armenian they were indicating less population. That is, there was a contrast in the reports. These paradoxes were weakening Armenians anti-propaganda, against the Kurds in the peace conferences (Beşikçi, 2013: 184-185).

### **THE SYKES-PICOT AGREEMENT AND DIVISION OF KURDISTAN**

During the First World War Britain, France and Russia held several meetings and discussions about the future of the Ottoman Empire. In 1916 G. Britain and the French representatives Sir Mark Sykes and George Picot agreed that they would divide up the Arab speaking area of the Ottoman Empire. Additionally, in the Turkish speaking area France would have the zone from Syria to Cilicia. Russia would have İstanbul, Straits and the Turkish provinces close to the Russian border in east of Turkey. However, in 1917 October by Bolshevik revolution Russia withdrew from that plan and revealed the Sykes-Picot plan to the World agenda. Now Britain

and France were the only two players of this game and powers after the First World War (MacMillan, 1919: 475; Mihoyi, 2006: 14). These revealed imperial plans were for the Middle East and Near East. Great Powers were shocked by this confession. Arnold Wilson, Iraq's British high commissioner claimed that the U.S. president Woodrow Wilson's principles and especially article 14<sup>th</sup> aimed to diminish the reactions of Easterns to this Great Powers' plan (Mihoyi, 2006: 14).

The Sykes-Picot agreement was concluded in 1922. Yet, since Britain acquired former Ottoman territories the secret agreement was altered in 1920 San Remo (Italy) conference. More of the land that was promised to France now had been given to Britain. It granted Atatürk more non-Arab land and including the Kurdish plebiscite land in the Sévres treaty. The Kurdish area in Persia remained unaltered. However, a small part was divided into Armenia (Culcasi, 2006: 685).

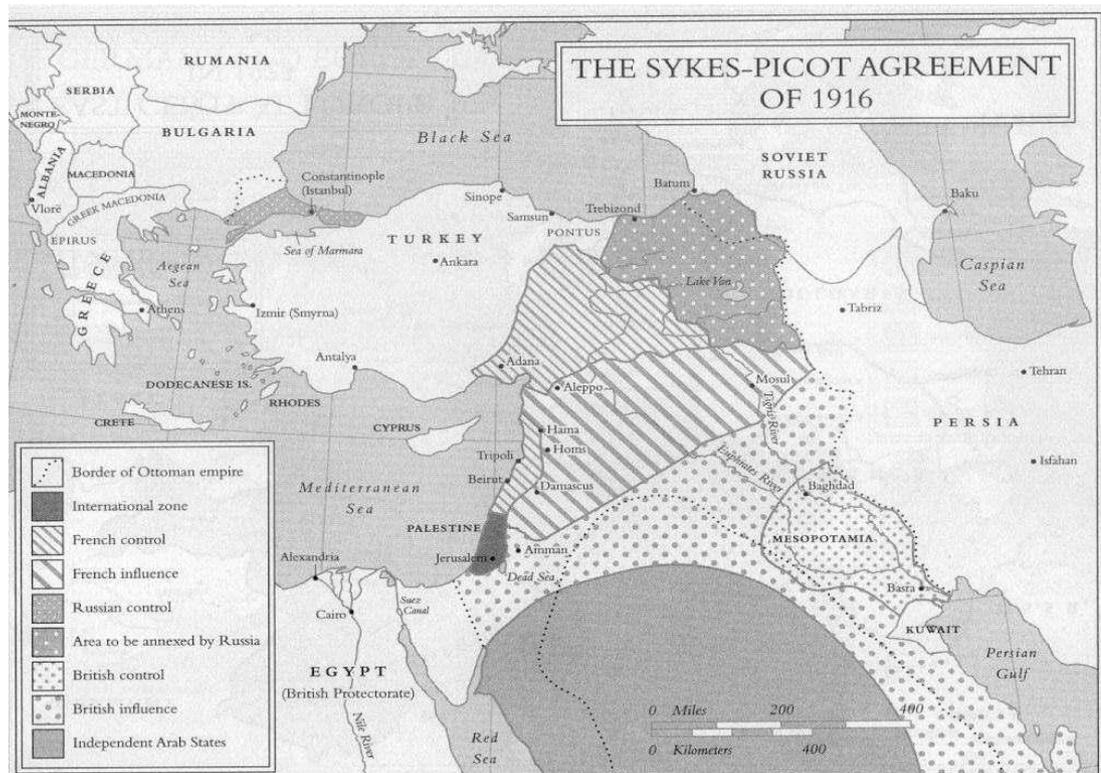
The Kurdish society approached the First World War dividedly. Furthermore, Kurds were caught without a collective plan for their future. The Sykes-Picot agreement divided their countries. The Kurds were in conflicts over their country. On one side, Pan-Islamist Sultan (Caliphate) demanded to have autonomy of cultural and administrative within the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand the Kurdish nationalists who had been influenced from the French revolution and Wilson principles fought for the independence of Kurdistan (Nezan, 1989: 36).

The Sykes-Picot agreement between the British, French and Russians was colonial division of the Ottoman Empire. "Divide&Rule" policy of Great Powers affected Kurdistan deeply. The Great Powers wish was a divided "Ottoman Empire". Because of this, a wreck and a secular state; the Turkish State was for, (Britain and France) Imperialism and (Russia) Socialism interests and this policy made the Turkish state as inescapable of the Middle East. Therefore, "divide&rule" policy was application to the Kurdish nation (Beşikçi, 1988: 3).

It is very interesting that both Britain and France agreed and worked together. The plan that both the British and French representatives had prepared, was approved by their government in May of 1916. It was an imperialist plan that Syrian Coast and

Lebanon was left to France. Central Mesopotamia, Arab lands, Baghdad and Palestine were left to Britain (Macmillan, 1919: 487).

That is before The Lausanne and Sévres treaties had failed and the Ottoman Empire had already been divided and partitioned by Britain, France and Russia. Kurdistan was also divided and the fate of the Kurds had drawn by the Great Powers. This fate was drawn as a partitioned nation. The Sykes-Picot led the Kurdish issue to be an unsolvable issue. By that secret agreement Kurdistan and the Kurdish nation became a tool in the history, but not a subject. Because, the Kurdish national demands were not taken into consideration and more than this the Kurds were divided, partitioned and shared. The Kurds were placed under other different authorities. Consequently, Sykes-Picot agreement is an important milestone of the Kurds and Kurdistan history.



<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/iraq/sykes.htm>

Map: 4. 3. The Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916

## MOSUL ISSUE AND THE BRITISH ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE KURDS' IDEA OF INDEPENDENCE

As it can be seen from Major Noel reports, the British had no plan for North Kurdistan, but he was just calming the Kurds down and distracting them with promises. Yet, for the South Kurdistan and especially for Mosul, the British had an organized plan. In order to obtain Mesopotamia oil, the British, had a special interest in South Kurdistan.

In March 1919 Wilson arranged a conference in Baghdad to discuss situation of Mosul. Major Noel, Soane and Gordan Walker who were expert of the Middle East joined the conference. In the conference the situation of Mosul had been discussed and reducing of Sheikh Mahmud Berzenji's power became a common decision (Jwaideh, 1961: 511).

One of the major British scenarios of independent Kurdistan was proposed by Noel that Mosul would be capital of state which would include cities of Nehri, Rewanduz, Akra, Erbil, Kerkuk, Kifri, Hanekin, Sulemaniye and the state would be a mix of Muslim and Christian populations (Lazarev, 1989: 78).

Disagreement between Turkey and Britain on status of Mosul was referred to The League of Nations. Since Turkey was relying on its agents in the region who were doing pro-Turkish and anti-British propaganda, the British rejected the referendum, which was proposed by Turkey. Both the British and the Turkish sides wanted to buy the Kurdish support with uncertain promises of autonomy. Finally an investigation commission visited Mosul and probed the local people's demands. The commission found out that the majority of Mosul is Kurdish and their wish is an independent Kurdish state. However, oil weighted more than public demands. Britain and Turkey signed an agreement in 1926, after Sheikh Said revolution which was suspected to be provoked by the British. The agreement required all rights of Turkey surrendered in exchange of ten per cent of oil produced in the area, by the condition that the British would not support the Kurdish and Armenian agitation in the future (Bruinessen, 1992: 274-276).

According to the content of this agreement in 1926 Sheikh Said revolution was under suspicious of to be provoked by the British. The revolution was claimed to be supported by Great Britain to force Turkey to surrender its rights in Mosul. The

agreement which was signed in 5 June 1926 between Britain and Turkey prevented national the Kurdish movements to take progress by its 12<sup>th</sup> article. As to twelfth article *“Turkey and Iraq officers would never meet with other countries’ tribes, Sheiks and tribal members in their country. Besides, they would never let any movement to take progress in its country against other state and commitpropaganda in one country against the other”*.

Turkey gave up its ten percent oil rights with 500.000 sterlin cash money. The same decision wastaken in an agreement between Iran and Turkey in Tahrán in 22 October 1926 that neither Iran nor Turkey would let any Kurdish movements in its country against each other to treat its borders (Celil, et al, 1998: 165-168; Qasimlo, 1991: 78-79).

The British were not interested in all the Kurdish regions, but only places where rich in oil and their security was easy. Great Britain demand meant division of Kurdistan. One important event of 1919 was the disagreement between experts and Britain government on Mosul. Therefore, Lloyd George and Lord Curzon insisted on international conference to decide on Mosul status. Until a conference the Kurds should be calmed down (Lazarev, 1989: 163). Jwaideh also explained that the Kurdish policy of the British and Mosul issue were not clear and were based on experimental policies and the Kurdish policies of the British were temporary (Jwaideh, 1961: 508).

However one year passed after Montreal armistice the British could not bring any new plan to the Middle East and Mesopotamia. That is, 1919 was a term of indefiniteness for the British.

### **THE KURDISH ISSUE IN INTERNATIONAL WORLD AGENDA**

The Kurdish issue is now in internatioanal agenda and Great Powers’representatives were discussing new borders of the the Middle East and sharing the Ottoman Empire. Discussions were long that three peace conferences had been taken in Europe; Paris, London and San Remo. However, the Kurds were unlucky and unexperienced.

Besides that the Kurds did not have experienced representatives and a concrete plan for their future. Separately, the Kurds were not a united nation.

### **THE KURDISH ISSUE IN PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE**

Just after the First World War in 18 January of 1919 Paris Peace Conference took place. 32 countries joined the Paris Conference. However, when the peace conference was organized big powers such as Britain, France and Italy did not discuss with defeated countries, instead, they presented them the result of their own decision that had been discussed between the Great powers. Besides, member of ethnic groups also took place in Paris Peace Conference. Stockholm Ambassador of the Ottoman Empire Şerif Paşa as a representative of the Kurds was Paris, which was the first international forum that the Kurdish issue had been discussed and internationalized. Turks also were doing propaganda in Paris, where the peace conference was taking place. Piere Loti, Claude Farrere and Madame Gaulis who were fans of Turkey were doing propaganda for Turkey. These famous names had stayed in İstanbul for years and they liked Turkey. Therefore, these famous people could affect European society (Yahya Akyüz, Türk kurtuluş savaşı ve Fransız Kamuoyu (1919-1922), 1975: 20-31 cited by Beşikçi, 2013: 185). The Kurds also were doing propaganda but that was very weak, since they did not have experienced diplomats to affect newspapers, journals and magazines. Even they did not have enough money to arrange dining room for meetings with the Kurdish supporters. For these reasons the Kurds could not express to explain the Kurdish issue to the conference committee and include the Kurdish issue in the conference agenda. The Kurds could not clearly explain their demands in the conference. However, Şerif Paşa had relations with the Armenians, who had showed the Kurdish areas as their land in their reports which they had been delivered to the conference committee. Şerif Paşa convinced the Armenians, who were accepting Kurdistan as a fake area and doing it in their propaganda in Europe as well. Şerif Paşa signed a document with the Armenians, that the Armenians were for freedom of Kurdistan and Şerif Paşa also would accept their independence (Beşikçi, 2013: 185-186). However, this signature became a reason of an anti-propaganda that “Kurdistan will become Armenia” which affected conservative Kurds to stand back from the Kurdish national

movements. The Armenian propaganda in Paris was going on. Şerif Paşa's agreement with the Armenians in Paris led some pro-Ottoman Kurds to found the six city community "Vilayeti sitte". The aim of this community was refute Şerif Paşa and Armenian claims on the cities of Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Van, Bitlis, Erzurum and Sivas, that they will not let an Armenian or pro-Armenian Kurdish state to come into existence. On the contrary they will go on with the Ottomans and support their national rights. The community was made of parliamentarians and governors in the Ottoman Empire (Beşikçi, 2013: 188).

At the end of January of 1919 the Kurdish issue came into the conference agenda. The British delegation's general Y. H. Simet had prepared a report and insisted that states as Saudi Arabia, Syria, Palestine, Armenia and Mesopotamia should be separated from the Ottoman Empire and its mandate. Firstly, there was not a word of "Kurdistan". However, after a discussion Kurdistan took place in the report. Mostly, the British and French took place in the discussion of the Kurdish issue, since it was in sphere of their interests (Lazarev, 1989: 129).

In these discussions the British aim was to acquire the South of Kurdistan that is Mosul and keep away France and Turkey from the region. The British policy and its interest were to create a free region under Kurdistan and Armenia to make a buffer zone between Turkey-Mosul and Turkey-Baku. For these reasons the British struggle was turning around these demands (Kurubaş, 2004: 48). The Kurdish issue took place in the third meeting between the British and French delegations in 23 December at 1919. Barthelot proposed that a part of Mesopotamia can be under control of Turkey. Moreover, Barthelot offered a Kurdish tribal confederation under the French and the British as well. However, Lord Curzon of the British Foreign Affairs Minister refused Barthelot's proposal of the Turkish interference (DBFP, Vol. P. 966-967). Several decisions were taken after The Paris Peace Conference. The first; neither the British nor the French and the British-French cooperation mandate are reluctant for a mandate of north Kurdistan. Yet, South Kurdistan was an exception of the decision. Second, they would not let the Turkish domination over the region. Third, the Kurds would live with Ashurians and Armenians, yet Kurdistan would not be an exception of the Armenian independent state that was signed by

Britain and France. Four, Lord Curzon wanted the Kurds decide for their future whether they would be independent states or not. However they would be secured from Turks attacks. These decisions were proposed by Lord Curzon and were accepted by Barthelot. Since, they did not want to face with new problems in the Middle East (DBFP, Vol. I. V. 967).

### **THE KURDISH ISSUE IN THE LONDON CONFERENCE**

In 1921 February a peace conference took place in London. Atatürk as representative of Ankara government and a representative of İstanbul's Ottoman government was also invited to the conference. Tevfik Paşa was representative of İstanbul government and Bekir Sami Bey represented Ankara government. When Tevfik Paşa explained his ideas said that Ankara government's representative Bekir Sami bey's views should be taken into consideration. That is, Ottoman Empire was officially declaring its end in an international peace conference and pushing Ankara government into negotiation. Bekir Sami Bey clarified his views and mentioned all questions that interested new Turkey. Besides, he explained their wishes that should be taken into consideration (Kutlay, 2011: 169). In London conference once again the British and French delegations took place in discussions about the Kurdish issue and Kurdistan. Britain and France accepted that Kurdistan will be an independent or federation of autonomus states. The proposal had been offered by Britain. The British officer also had offered that France should be convinced about this decision (FO 371 / 193, 175160, 31.1.1920). Vice minister of Britain, Hirtzel, confessed the impossibility of an independent state of Kurdistan. However, an independent Kurdish state could be possible in Mosul under the British authority. Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, B. Barthelot, was not for Kurdistan to be solved according to the Sykes-Picot treaty. Because Blue region of France was narrowed towards Mosul and the British Red region was widening towards to Mosul. Besides, Kurdistan's future was not determined in the Sykes-Picot Treaty. Moreover, Barthelots' opposition and reaction was for natural resources in the British side that they were more than the amount in France region. Lord Curzon, the British minister refuted Barthelot's suspicions and expressed that the British had no plan for Kurdistan (DPFP. C. IIV. 257-258). By that way both Great powers France and Britian could not solve Kurdistan issue and the Kurdish

issue was left to another conference. The manner of taking the Kurdish issue into consideration led the British military officer to be anxious. Because, any unacceptable decision would let reaction of the Turkish or the Kurdish sides, which would cause new military movements that would put the British into difficulty. Therefore, the British general staff did not want a risky case (Lazarev, 1989: 169). Lord Curzon sent a letter to İstanbul British high commissioner to Admiral Sirj De Robeck who was determining the target of London Conference. According to the target, Kurdistan would not be left to the British-French common cooperation or to any of them. Moreover it would not be an independent state underan European state. In addition, it would not be an autonomous Kurdistan under the Turkish authority as well (DBFP, part II, series B. vol. I.P. 283). This was an unsolvable case to be left to the next conference.

### **SAN REMO CONFERENCE AND THE KURDISH ISSUE**

In April of 1920 in San Remo a new conference took place to bring to a conclusion to some issues before agreements. The Kurdish issue was a major issue of the conference. In the first session of the conference Lloyd George proposed the situation of Kurdistan to be considered. Lord Curzon expressed the difficulty of the issue, since the region was near Armenia and Kaldani-Ashury cooperation. South Kurdistan was under domination of Britain. Consequently, Britain and France could dominate other part of the Kurdish area as well. However, both Great Powers refused this proposal and they were for to separate Kurdistan from Turkey and give autonomy for Kurdistan. Yet, Curzon was suspicious whether the Kurds could govern themselves. Curzon had reached the idea that as much as he got information from İstanbul, Baghdad and from the British region experts, the Kurds had no ability to govern all the Kurds except their own tribes. Şerif Paşa was blamed by Curzon as such: “However he describes himself as representative of the Kurds, but none of the Kurds know him”. The fragmentation was an obstacle before the Kurds to govern themselves as a nation. Curson expressed that “in case of refusing the British and the French domination, the Kurds will prefer the Turkish domination since the Kurds are accustomed to the Turkish domination. Therefore, he was aware that it was difficult to separate the Kurds from the Turks (DBFP, Vol, VIII, 43-44).

By San Remo conference of 25 April in 1920 Iraq became a British colony that Mosul had played an important role in that decision (Qasimlo, 1991: 73). Therefore, San Remo conference was called as “oil agreement” as well. Besides, Palestine became a mandate of the British and Syria a mandate of France (Wilson, 1936: 126). Curzon had accepted the proposal of De Robeck İstanbul’s British High Commissioner and sent a letter to De Robeck not to tell Damat Ferit Paşa and Seyit Abdulkadir about the decision of the peace conference until it was officially declared. Lazarev explains that the British were not interfering into Armenia, Turkey and Kurdistan before San Remo peace conference. However, De Robeck was not refusing Ottoman and the Kurdish leaders that were looking for aid of Britain. He was following a balance policy before San Remo. He could calm down Seyit Abdulkadir to wait for the result of San Remo conference and direct Damat Ferit Paşa to utilize the Kurds against nationalism, but at the same time to support the Kurds without a risky way. De Robeck was managing Damat Ferit and Abdulkadir, and at the same time he persuaded Abdulkadir that the fragmentation in the Kurdish policy would solve the Kurdish issue negatively (Lazarev, 1989: 172). In San Remo Conference several decisions were taken for Kurdistan:

- 1- Six months, after this agreement would go into effect, a commission would gather in İstanbul. According to conference’s articles, in the east of the Euphrates in the South of Armenia and in North of Syria and also Mesopotamia in the places that most of inhabitants are the Kurds local autonomy plan would be prepared. This plan would protect other ethnic groups that live in the region. The commission would be composed of the British, France, Italy, Iran, the Kurds and the commission will visit the region and research the situation in details.
- 2- The Turkish government will fulfill the decision of conference and accept the decision of commission that of the government will perform decision in three months.
- 3- By declaration of these articles of the conference, if the people of the concerned region apply to League of Nations, that they want to be separated from Turkey and if the commission be convinced about that these people are

able to live on their own. That is independently from Turkey. At that time Turkey should guarantee that case and leave all its rights immediately. However, leaving of these rights are another subjects of conference between Turkey and the Great Powers. Moreover, Mosul Kurds also could join the independent Kurdistan by their free will (DBFP, vol. VIII, 44-45). Later this rough draft was accepted as 62, 63 and 64 articles of the Sévres Treaty, which gave the Kurds independence.

In 23 April of 1920 in San Remo a meeting named “Trio Agreement” took place. In this agreement the British insisted on having Mosul. However, the British had no intention on other parts of Kurdistan. As Vansittart express “Trio Agreement” intended an autonomous status for Kurdistan in the future. Therefore, Trio Agreement became an agreement that the Great Powers expressed their best wishes for the Kurds (DBFP, First series, vol, VIII, 133).

Autonomy plan for Kurdistan was later discussed in the Sévres Treaty and the articles of 62, 63 and 64 were guaranteed. A commission in İstanbul would prepare for the autonomy for Kurdistan. Yet, Nestorians, Kaldani and other ethnicities and religious minorities would be protected. The decision about Kurdistan that was taken in the Sévres Treaty was discussed in San Remo. However, decision was conditional and diplomatic that the Kurds had no chance to determine their fate. Besides, these decisions broke the hope of the Kurds in themselves. For these reasons Şerif Paşa resigned from his post as a representative. Because, the Great Powers were leaving East and South of Kurdistan out of autonomous region that Şerif Paşa was insisting on. Besides, there were indefinites from autonomy to independency. Finally, the common decision of Great Britain, France and Italy was to determine the division of region economically and politically (Lazarev, 1989: 158).

### **THE SÉVRES TREATY AND ITS KURDISTAN PLAN**

The Sévres Treaty was planning an independent Kurdistan. There were reactions against the treaty despite the Kurds’ welcoming of the treaty. The articles of the Sévres Treaty were based on conditions and it was difficult to be fulfilled. The Ottoman and the Turkish Independence Movement (Misak-ı Milli) reactions were

against the conditions that had been put by Great Powers and these reactions were under discussion by Great Powers. Great Britain's expectation from the Sévres Treaty was not approved by France and Italy. That is, there was a disagreement between the Great Powers who had decided on the Sévres Treaty's articles. After that process Italy and France agreed with Mustafa Kemal and this attitude brought the end of Sévres Treaty for the Kurds. Consequently, the Kurds' dream "independency" was buried in the depth of history.

### **THE SÉVRES TREATY AND ITS DECISIONS OF AN INDEPEDENT KURDISTAN**

Sévres Treaty is the first agreement that the Kurds as an ethnicity became an object of international policy and the decisions were official. The third chapter was about Kurdistan that the 62<sup>nd</sup>, 63<sup>rd</sup> and 64<sup>th</sup> articles had clarified the solution and condition of its national problem and the Kurds' decision about their independence (Lazarev, 1989: 207).

The Sévres Treaty was a result of the Paris and San Remo Conferences. Woodrow Wilsons' fourteenth points were called "The Wilsonian Principles", attracted the Kurdish nationalist's attentions. Especially the twelfth point in the speech was directly relevant to the Kurdish people in the Ottoman Empire.

The Kurdish demands that had been submitted to the Paris Conference by Şerif Paşa were accepted by the Allied powers. Article 62 of the resultant of Sévres, stated that, in six months of the signing of the treaty, autonomy would be given to the Kurds on the area between the Euphrates, Armenia, Syria and Mesopotamia. Article 64 stated that in one year granting of autonomy will be considered by League of Nations. That would be based on the desire of the Kurdish majority, whether or not to grant full recognition of autonomous the Kurdish region. In article 63 Ottoman had to accept in three months (McDowall, 1991: 14).

Baskın Oran criticizes articles 64 and 62 that the Kurds had many obstacles to have their own independency. According to the 62<sup>nd</sup> article, in one year, they would demand separation from Turkey. However, the measure of how it would be was

indefinite. Although to this indefinite article, if the Kurds carry out these conditions, they would apply to League of Nation and they would evaluate the conditions of the Kurds and decide for their independence. Turkey would accept and leave the Kurds rights (Baskın Oran "Sevr'in yeni Adı" ikibine Doğru, 1988: 17 cited by Kurubaş, 2004: 100).

However it was difficult for the Kurds to carry out the Sévres treaty conditions. The Great Britain aimed to fulfill its several interests by the treaty. The British target was in founding a small Kurdistan and it would let Britain to reach its goal by that way;

1. The British would found Armenia independent state without the Kurds' reactions.
2. South Kurdistan's (Mosul Province) security would be supplied by a small Kurdistan. North Kurdistan would become a buffer zone between South Kurdistan and communist Russia.
3. Britain's major goal was to pressure Turkey and Iran with Kurdistan. Britain was afraid of a powerful Turkey. Therefore, it wanted to guarantee the domination of the British in the Middle East and weaken Turkey as well. A buffer zone from Turkey under Kurdistan was the policy to stop Russia to come down to the Middle East (Lazarev&Mihoyan, 2010: 413-414).

Olson defines the Sévres Treaty plan for Kurdistan as a contradiction that it was submitted as a divided land; since a large part was under Iraq and Iran. However, another contradiction was that the Kurds, who were in a struggle for independent Kurdistan, were looking for Britain's assistance (Olson, 1992: 49).

Lazarev also focused on contradictions of the Sévres Treaty, that the agreement was registration of division of the Kurdish land into three parts. Additionally, Iranian and Iraqi the Kurds were out of the Sévres plan. Furthermore, when historians mention these articles, they suspiciously approach and claim that these are not coincidence; on the contrary, they have insisted that these are not very serious to be practiced (Lazarev, 1989: 185).

What was interest of Britain from a Kurdish state in North of Kurdistan? Was there an ideological approach to these articles, that the performing of them was too difficult even impossible (Olson, 1992, vol.13, issue, 3). The geopolitical of Kurdistan in the North was determined by a telegraph from London that clarified the aim of the British. According to telegraph the goal of the plan for independent Kurdistan was to make a buffer zone between Turkey, Armenia and Mesopotamia. That is to protect the British interests in Mesopotamia and weaken Turkey as well (Evans, 1972: 276). That is, if Turkey and Britain agree on Mesopotamia, an independent Kurdistan was needless. One year condition was to check the Turkish public opinion and later decide on the issue. That is why the Allied Powers left the Sévres Treaty conditionally (Yıldız, 1991: 82). Additionally, Garo Sasuni also called attentions to the British policy to widen its borders until Diyarbakır and Malatya. That is an independent Kurdistan would let the British to have an effect on the region in general (Sasuni, 1992: 180).

Lazarev cross-examines the Sévres peace treaty articles and defines them as weak and useless for the Kurds. First of all these articles define the Great Britain policy and tendency. However, the treaty's conditions about Turks, the Kurds and Armenians were not well designed. Besides, their effects have continued until today. The Sévres was an important element of the British-Turkish relations in the sense that it is a milestone for the new Turkish State (Lazarev, 1989: 187).

### **OFFICIAL OTTOMAN REACTIONS TO THE SÉVRES TREATY**

The Sévres was a failed document. Among the signatories only Italy had approved it. Other participants, who had signed the document, did not approve the document. Even the sick man Ottoman Empire did not approve the document, which it had signed (Lazarev, 1989: 189).

The Sévres Treaty in 16 July of 1920 was delivered to the Ottoman delegation. The delegation on behalf of Babiali reacted to the treaty and showed their disapproval. According to the delegation, the Kurds had never demanded independence or separation. Moreover, the Kurds would never demand independence as well. Additionally, if the Kurdish people demand independence, they were ready to accept

the Kurdish majority population regional autonomy. The Ottoman delegation also reacted to 62<sup>nd</sup> article of the Sévres treaty had drawn fake borders, which were not drawing the real Kurdish territory. Besides, the delegation had claimed that some regions that had not been the Kurdish land had been shown as the Kurdish land. In reality these regions were the Turkish and in case of disagreement an international commission should have an investigation over these regions (Bayrak, 1993: 103).

In July of 1920, the Allied powers replied and warned the Ottoman government in a hard way. In that reply there was a focus on the separation of the regions that were not Turkish or majority were not Turks. After that, warning Sultan Vahdettin, with authority of Ottoman government, approved and signed the treaty in the 22 July of 1920.

### **THE KURDISH MOVEMENTS WELCOME THE SÉVRES' DECISIONS**

The Sévres Treaty was an important element of the Kurds to hope for their independency. In the Paris and San Remo conferences the Kurdish delegations used an effort to bring the Kurdish issue into the conference agenda. By this exertion the Kurdish issue was brought to the international platform. Before that, the Kurdish issue was a domestic issue of the Ottomans that was not well known by the European public. Therefore, the Sévres Treaty became a good reference for the national Kurdish movements to carry out the issue in the world agenda. To some extent they accepted the Sévres Treaty articles as reference of accepting the Kurdish national demands by the international public. However, the Sévres Treaty was not carried out, but for the Kurds, it had a meaning. Kamuran Badrkhan insisted on the importance of the Sévres Treaty, even though it could not be put into practice. Yet, the treaty gave the Kurdish independence and unity that were results of long struggles for these statuses. This treaty gave the Kurdish national movements a positive energy to look forward (Lazarev, 1989: 188).

The evaluation of the Sévres Treaty was typical and therefore some of the Kurdish leaders disappointed by the treaty decisions. Şerif Paşa was the first one who saw intentions of the Allied powers. Therefore some of the Kurdish leaders reacted to the treaty decisions. Seyit Abdulkadir the founder of the Society for the Rise of

Kurdistan (Kurdistan Teali Cemiyeti). Cibranlı Halit Beg one of the major Hamidian Cavalries leader and Kurdish nationalist leader. İhsan Nuri Paşa was a commander of the Ottoman, who later became an important leader of Ağrı rebellion and Bitlis parliamentarian Yusuf Ziya Beg reacted to Sévres Treaty, who had not given hope to the Kurds (Yıldız, 1991: 157).

The Treaty of Sévres provided for the liberation of the dependent people. However, it was not expected that the Kurds could possibly have been content to enjoy autonomy with framework of Turkey. But, the treaty could not be carried out into execution.

### **ATATÜRK'S REACTION TO THE SÉVRES TREATY AND HIS POLICY ON THE TREATY**

One reason of failure of the Sévres Treaty was that; the treaty was signed with the Ottoman Empire, which had lost its authority over the Empire's land. Mustafa Kemal was successful to convince the Kurdish tribal leaders around him with the slogan of "we are brothers" and rebelled against the Allied powers. Mustafa Kemal promised the Kurds that Turkey was a common homeland of the Kurds and Turks. However, the weakness of the Kurdish movements led Mustafa Kemal to overcome the issue (A. Safrastian, the Kurds and Kurdistan, Harvill press yayınları, Londra, 1948, 81 cited by Abdulla, 2009: 416).

After founding a "de facto" authority, Kemalist movement defeated Greece and won the Sakarya battle. After that Mustafa Kemal retook back İzmir from the Greeks in 1922. After that time Italy, which believed it was deceived by France and Great Britain, had relations with the Kemalist movement and signed a treaty with Kemalists in 13 March of 1921. They had agreed on withdrawing of Italian troops from south of Turkey. This was the turning point of the Sévres Treaty that is, it was the beginning of the end of the Sévres Treaty. France also chose the powerful side as needed to its political interest and preferred Kemalist movement to the Kurds. France had agreed with Mustafa Kemal and according to the Franklin-Bouillon-Ankara Treaty France troops withdrew from south of Anatolia. In reply to this withdrawing Ankara agreed that Cezire region (Kamishly, north of Hasaka), the Kurdish mountain (Cebeli Akrad) and Ceylanpınar would be given to France.

France and Britain did not agree on "the Kurdish Emirate" and declared their disapproval. Therefore, Şerif Paşa closed to Britain, to fulfill his projects. However, by agreement of Atatürk and France, France withdrew from the Sévres treaty. After that Mustafa Kemal said "we have agreed with powerful countries, who signed the Sévres Treaty, these indicated that the Sévres Treaty is needless". After that Mustafa Kemal, who expelled the Greeks and Armenians from Anatolia agreed with France and Italy. By that way he became powerful. Later on, he fought against the British. Atatürk's diplomacy with the Allied Powers changed the balance of power of ethnicities (Abdulla, 2009: 417).

Beşikçi claims that Mustafa Kemal followed a balance policy that had treated both the British and Soviet Union. Mustafa Kemal was saying to Soviet Russia "if you do not fulfill our requests and insist on us to do these things, we will start relations with the British" and with the same method he was calling Britain also that "if you do not fulfill our desires and oblige us to do things, we will have relations with Soviet Russia and become communist". By these balance policies Mustafa Kemal could be successful in his military and political requests (Beşikçi, 2013: 59).

The Turkish National Power Movement (Türk Kuvvayı Milliye Hareketi) had become a power and gradually it strengthened its position. The British saw its interest to support and strengthen the Turkish National Movement and leave Kurdistan plan of the Sévres Treaty. The British helped Mustafa Kemal to be successful against Greeks. However the Greek were allies of the British, but they helped Mustafa Kemal and sent him two ships of weapons. After that Mustafa Kemal fought and won the battle against the Greeks (Silopi, 1969: 61).

Mustafa Kemal defeated the Kurdish movement, however it did not mean that Atatürk removed the Kurdish movements from the region. The Kurdish movements grew up by revealing of the Kemalist movements' nationalistic aim and tendency. The Kurdish movement was known in international agenda at that time. That was by the Sévres Treaty, their rights were declared to the world. However the Sévres Treaty was not put into practice, but articles that were clarified the Kurdish issue and

borders, redefined to the Western Great Powers about the Kurdish issue. That attitude determined the Kurdish movement and its level (Celil, et al, 1998: 112).

Armenian claims also gave a strong tool to Mustafa Kemal to stand and be successful against the Sévres Treaty. Mustafa Kemal's experience of working in Diyarbakır and his promises perceived by chieftains that the Allies were not favoring the Kurds, but the Armenians. Therefore, Mustafa Kemal won the Kurdish confidence that he would protect the Kurdish land from the Armenians and by his struggle the Kurdish chieftains were protesting that they did not want to get separated from the Turks (Bruinessen, 1992: 279).

### **THE KURDISH MOVEMENT'S RELATIONS WITH THE WESTERN POWERS AND DIPLOMATIC STRUGGLE IN EUROPE**

Fragmentation in the Kurdish society was seen in its institutions. However the Society for the Rise of Kurdistan (SRK) had the problem of fragmentation, but it was an actor of negotiations in İstanbul and its representative Şerif Paşa was in Europe. Mustafa Kemal's political maneuvers were effective in the Great Powers decisions on the Kurds. Under this section the following issues will be discussed; The Society for the Rise of Kurdistan in İstanbul and its political negotiations in Europe. Şerif Paşas' political negotiations and struggle in Paris. Turks' reactions to the Kurdish societies, the Kurdish political negotiations with Western powers and abolitions of the society for the Rise of Kurdistan and ending its relations with the Allied powers are major subjects.

The British duality in its polies with the Kurds and fragmentation in the Kurdish institutions were preventing the Kurds to be effective in peace conferences in Europe. Once again the Kurdish-Armenian conflicts were an obstacle before the Kurds to express themselves to Great Powers. A negative view of the British about the Kurdish representative Şerif Paşa became a part of the Kurdish policy of the British. The Kurdish-Armenian conflicts and Şerif Paşa's struggle to solve them was a sign to the Great Powers that the Kurds and Armenians could live together and accept each other. However, this attempt was misunderstood by the Kurds and Mustafa Kemal used this as anti-propaganda against community and influenced

religious Kurds. After that process the anti-propaganda that “The Kurdistan will be Armenia” was reacted by many the Kurds and they declared annexation to the Turkish National movement (Misak-i Milli) and the SRK had to declare its abolishment in 1921.

### **THE SOCIETY FOR THE RISE OF KURDISTAN IN İSTANBUL AND ITS POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE BRITISH**

During the armistice the Kurdish leaders were in several centers not only far away from their people, but also from each other. The Society for the Rise of Kurdistan (Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti) was in İstanbul and from Nehri family Seyit Abdulkadir and Badrkhans family members were struggling in this community. Şerif Paşa was in Paris, Sureyya Badrkhan was in Cairo, Sheikh Mahmud Berzenji in Sulemia (Süleymaniye), Seyit Taha in Bahgdad and Simko (İsmail Ağa) in Iran. Each of these leaders accepted themselves as leaders of the Kurds and Kurdistan. That case led to fragmentation in the Kurdish policy. They were competing with each other instead of being united. Each of these leaders wanted the Great Powers help him so that he could convince all other the Kurds afterwards. However, the Allied Powers were aware of these leaders’ powers. Even the British were indifferent against the Kurds’ demands because of the fragmentation in the Kurdish policy (Kurubaş, 2004: 58-59).

The Society for the Rise of Kurdistan started to move to benefit from the war. The SRK’s relations with the Allied Powers and conveying their national right to Great Powers was an attempt to have the Kurdish rights via of Western Powers. However, Bruinessen’s approach to this topic is different that since the Kurdish nationalists had no effect on the Kurdish society, they applied in diplomatic ways to have these rights (Bruinessen, 1992: 145). The SRK mostly had demands from Great Britain. However, these attempts were given by it were mostly empty promises. The SRK had chosen two centers for diplomatic struggles; İstanbul with Seyit Abdulkadir and Badrkhans, and Paris with Şerif Paşa. Mustafa Kemal had declared these activities of the Kurdish movement and their attempts as anti-Islamic and started anti-propaganda against them in the region. Şerif Paşa’s agreement with Boghos Nubar; Armenian national movement leader led a huge anti-propaganda against the SRK (Beşikçi,

2013: 275-277). Cibranli Halit Beg the head of Azadi movement with his friend Yusuf Ziya agreed with Seyit Abdulkadir in İstanbul to apply the League of Nations to struggle for the independence of Kurdistan (Celil, et al, 1998: 114).

During the armistice the Kurdish leaders around the SRK had applied to the British under Seyit Abdulkadir presidency to benefit from the Wilson principles. The major aim of these meetings with the British and other Allied powers' representatives was the status of Kurdistan and the Kurdish national rights. The Kurds were afraid of an independent Armenian state that would be established on the Kurdish land. Moreover, they wanted the British assistance against the Turkish authority (Kurubaş, 2004: 62).

For the first time the Kurdish leaders in January of 1919 met with the British directly under presidency of Seyit Abdulkadir in İstanbul. The Kurds expressed that they want the British to be just for the Kurdish rights. Moreover, they wanted Andrew Ryan to help them to send a representative to the peace conference.

According to the British high commissioner Calthorpe; the Kurdish delegation gave a memorandum to him. The delegation was formed from Bediuzzaman Mollo Said Kurdi, Emin Ali Badrkhan and Seyit Abdulkadir who signed a document that clarified their demands. The document comprised the Kurdish history and the Kurdish leaders of self-determination. The demands were as following:

1. An independent the Kurdish state.
2. Equality of the Kurds with other nations and ethnicities in the Middle East.
3. An autonomous Kurdish region under mandate of the British (Sonyel, 1991: 26).

It is said that Şerif Paşa was appointed after this meeting as the Kurdish delegation with help of Andrew Ryan, the British commissioner. After that Şerif Paşa had declared himself as representative after the meeting.

The SRK met the American delegation in İstanbul. American commissioner told the SRK members that Armenia was going to be independent on most of the Kurdish area. However, Bediuzzaman had reacted to the commissioner and said "if Kurdistan

was near the sea, you could practice that plan. However, you are not able to climb your ships over Kurdistan Mountains”. The commissioner also reacted to the Kurdish delegation that they were for themselves and said “be with yourself, that God be with you”. Consequently, the delegation understood that the U.S. would not help them and never met them (Silopi, 1969: 54).

Seyit Abdulkadir was not relying on the British, since he had heard that the British were discussing on division of Kurdistan as South (Mosul Center) and North. However, since there was no other choice, the Kurds had to continue meeting them. The SRK’s last meeting with the British commissioner was in 8 December of 1919. Seyit Abdulkadir met Hohler. De Robeck informed Lord Curzon, that the Kurds were in difficulty and Damat Ferit wanted to use them against Mustafa Kemal without any rational promise. Therefore, the Kurds are for a Kurdistan under the British mandate and the British policy is better for the Kurds than any other plan (Lazarev, 1989: 167).

The head of the SRK Seyit Abdulkadir met France commissioner. Seyit Abdulkadir had clarified that there were some mistakes in map of Kurdistan that had been delivered to peace conference in 22 March of 1919 by Şerif Paşa. Besides, he demanded for an independent Kurdistan with a sea border that was inevitable to be economically free as well (Yıldız, 1991: 47).

The Allied powers were happy by the agreement between Boghos Nubar and Şerif Paşa. That case was welcomed by the SRK that when they visited commissioner of the British in 3 March of 1920. They declared that Şerif Paşa was their representative to have good relations with the British.

### **ŞERİF PAŞAS’ POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS AND STRUGGLE IN PARIS**

When peace conference started in Paris; the Armenians, Nestorians and Kurds attempted to tell the world community about their rights. In order to do this, they were struggling and by diplomatic ways they were trying to raise their voices to the global community. The British welcomed these nations’ diplomatic struggle and sending their representatives. However, because of political fragmentation in the

Kurds, the British believed that none of the Kurds could represent the Kurds in Paris. Because of that the British did not care much about the Kurdish struggles and did not see them as serious. Especially, they were very reluctant of Şerif Paşa's attempts in diplomacy. Şerif Paşa was accused that he was ineffective among all the Kurds, but only influent in Mosul district. Şerif Paşa was away from his country and had stayed in Europe for a long time. He was blamed that he did not know much about Kurdistan. Therefore, he was called as "ignorant fellow" (Lazarev, 1989: 184). However, Şerif Paşa was a volunteer and said that "I saw that many people do not know about Kurdistan as a result of the Armenian anti-propaganda and claims that the Kurds were primitive and Kurdistan was an invented geography. Therefore, this led me to show our rivals that there was a Kurdistan and we signed an agreement with the Armenians and also I accepted their independence which was their national right". (Yahya Akyüz, *Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı ve Fransız Kamuoyu (1919-1922)*. TTK, Ankara, 1975: 90-91 cited by Beşikçi, 2013: 186). Kutlay blames Şerif Paşa as an incoherent person because he had supported the idea of expelling the Armenians from Anatolia and said that "the Armenians left Kurdistan on their own will; therefore, they do not have any right over this land" (Kutlay, 2011: 132-133). Therefore, suspicions about Şerif Paşa were preventing him to be effective in diplomatic struggle in Paris.

Şerif Paşa was a Turkish delegate in the Versailles Congress, but now he was the Kurdish delegate in Paris and was appointed by the SRK. He delivered a Kurdish region map that showed the Kurdish land and residence. On behalf of the Kurds, he met the Armenians' delegation in Paris and delivered a petition to the Paris Conference that had clarified the Armenian-Kurdish demands from Western Powers (Celil, et al, 1998: 109).

Ekrem Cemil Paşa in his memories had said that they appointed Fahri Beg from Diyarbakır as representative in Paris. However, they had struggled to convince Şerif Paşa as a Kurdish representative of the Kurds in Paris and had good relations with Armenia and cooperate with Armenia (Cemilpaşa, 1991: 53). Besides, many other Kurds like Arif Paşa from Egypt, Zeki Reşit and Sait Ahmed Efendi from Mahmud Berzenji family attempted to join Şerif Paşa in Paris. However, these attempts were

unsuccessful. Therefore, Şerif Paşa can be called a general representative of the Kurds in Paris. However, Şerif Paşa was not completely accepted by all the Kurds. Lord Curzon was looking for an acceptable and admirable representative of the Kurds, but he expressed that he could not find anyone (Kurubaş, 2004: 72-74).

Lazarev mentioned Şerif Paşa and the British relations during the First World War that he had applied for the British-Kurdish cooperation in 1914. However, that was unsuccessful. He met the British Sir Percy Cox in 1918 July in Geneva. However Şerif Paşa proposed some visionary ideas to the British to practice them. Yet, since he was not in the country for a long time, his ideas were very fanciful to the British (Lazarev, 1989: 24). Yet, the British showed a positive attitude to the Kurdish demands that Şerif Paşa offered. Şerif Paşa proposed an autonomous region under the British mandate as well as Arab states. To practice these, he wanted the British to take some steps before peace conferences. However the British welcomed them, but saw that these demands were more than Great Britain's expectations. As a diplomat in Europe not only with the British, he met the French as well. Şerif Paşa had denounced the Ottomans that attacked the Kurds over the Armenians and clarified the Ottomans as a bad reason for relations between the Armenian-Kurdish societies.

Şerif Paşa had proposed autonomy under the French mandate as well. Therefore, in Paris Peace Conference there was a diplomat that had controversial demands from the Allied Powers. Therefore the Kurdish demands were not taken into consideration seriously (Akyüz, 1988: 137-138). Additionally, Şerif Paşa's dual relations with the French were disliked by the British delegations.

Boghos Nubar, the Armenian National Movement leader delivered a written message to the conference in 12 January of 1919. In that petition Nubar was claiming that Van, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Sivas, Erzurum, Trabzon, Maraş, Kozan and Adana were originally Armenian lands. Therefore, Boghos Nubar wanted from the conference to give them an independent Armenian state. Moreover, Kaldani-Ashury delegation also claimed that Mosul, Urmiye, Diyarbakır and Urfa were their original land and wanted the conference help them in an independent state of Kaldani-Ashury (Bayrak, 1994: 20).

The Kurdish delegation reacted to these declarations that had presented to the conference by the Armenian, Kaldanian and Ashurian delegations. Therefore, Şerif Paşa just ten days after these declarations had presented a memorandum to the conference that alleged lands by the Armenian delegations belonged to the Kurds. Besides, he gave detailed information about these lands and explained that how the Armenians had left or were expelled from these lands (Bayrak, 1994: 20; Lazarev, 1989: 134-135).

Şerif Paşa declared that the reason of the Armenian, Kaldanian and Ashurian claims were due to missionary activities in the region. In reality, the Armenians who left their residence by their own will and they were not happy under the Ottoman authority. Moreover, those who left the region sold their lands to the Kurds or it became land of the Ottomans. Therefore, according to the Wilson principles, Şerif Paşa requested an independent the Kurdish state. The memorandum was delivered to conference committee, but was politically disliked by Europeans (Göldaş, 1991: 168). Şerif Paşa was not welcomed by the British. Because, he had accused missionary activities, which were supported by the Allied powers that brought the region to that situation.

After he delivered the memorandum to conference committee Şerif Paşa in April 15, 1919 wanted to meet Wilson Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Italian prime minister Orlando to explain them the Kurdish demands and situation of the Kurds. He also wanted to clarify the main reason of conflicts between the Armenians and the Kurds. Yet, he offered a temporary peace for supplying security. However, he was not successful to reach them and explain his requests (Göldaş, 1991: 170).

According to the British foreign Office documents, Şerif Paşa had written a letter to the France foreign minister and criticized the French on their Kurdish policy and complained about his status in Paris. Additionally, he accused France that it did not let him to return to İstanbul after the peace conference and he blamed them for ending his political life (FO, 371 / 4192/ 26007, 6. 71919 cited by Mesut, 1992: 86).

Şerif Paşa met the British once again in October in 1919 to reveal that the source of the Armenian-Kurdish conflicts was the Turks. According to Şerif Paşa to solve the

conflicts between both nations had to accept each other's national rights. Therefore, he wanted the British to gather both nations' national leaders in London and make a committee from both nations to solve problems and look forward (Jwaideh, 1961: 376). Since Şerif Paşa knew the plans of Europeans and their attitudes, he wanted to get himself accepted by the Allied powers and increase his reliability in their views.

In Paris a rapprochement had already started between Boghos Nubar and Şerif Paşa. Two leaders, who had presented different memorandums to the conference committee that were full of accusations and claims about each other. However, now they were looking for a solution to their conflicts. Şerif Paşa wanted to remove Armenians' claims that the Kurds had involved with the Armenian massacres. The Armenians aimed to speed up the Allied plans for them. They showed that the Armenians and the Kurds could live together in welfare without the Ottomans interfering into their societies' affairs. For these reasons, Şerif Paşa, Boghos Nubar and H. Ohancanyan signed an agreement and declared in December 10, 1919 and later they presented it to the conference committee (Lazarev, 1989: 168).

Şerif Paşa's agreement with the Armenian National Movement in Paris and reaction to this agreement among the Kurds, led the British to revise its the Kurdish policy and the British reliance in Şerif Paşa decreased once again. That is to say, Şerif Paşa was losing his confidence in the British side.

Reactions to Şerif Paşa were mostly from religious Kurds. The famous Kurdish Islamic scholars like Said-i Kurdi, Muhammed Sadık and Ahmed Arif were some of those who reacted to the Kurdish-Armenians cooperation. They declared that they would never agree with non-Muslims against the Ottomans (Nursi, 1990: 302). However, some of the Kurdish tribes' reactions to the Armenian-Kurdish agreement were utilized by the Kemalists to provoke the Kurds against the Allied Powers' decisions on the Kurds (Yıldız, 1991: 82). After the resignation of Babanzade and Arif Mardini from the SRK and other reactions to Şerif Paşa's relations, Şerif Paşa sent a telegraph to İstanbul that he had resigned from his duty from the SRK as following "as I was deeply tied to the Caliphate's holy state. I do not want to break this tie with the Caliphate state, since I am taking place in separation struggle in

Paris. Therefore, I have resigned from my Kurdish representation of Paris delegation responsibility. All my struggles were to protect the Caliphate rights and I will protect the Caliphate from now then, Şerif” (Bayrak, 1993: 98).

## **TURKS’ REACTIONS TO THE KURDISH POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE WESTERN POWERS**

The establishment of the SRK worried Turks. Neither CUP nor Kemalists and national powers liked the idea of an independent the Kurdish state. Kurdistan rested on the lands that they had struggled to free and secure from the Allied powers. They wanted the Kurds under their authority. Therefore, the Kurdish-Armenian relations and diplomatic struggles caused their anxiety (Beşikçi, 2013: 187).

The Kurdish diplomacy and relations with Armenia led to the establishment of “Vilayeti sitte” community to break its affection on the Kurds. That is, it was called community of Eastern provinces and founded in 4 December 1918 in İstanbul. The founders were the Kurds, but they were pro-Ottoman. The provinces were composed of six cities which were Sivas, Van, Diyarbakır, Bitlis, Elazığ and Erzurum. The founders of “Vilayeti Sitte” community were Bitlis deputy; Harputlu Nedim; Süleyman Nazif; ex-governor and İsmail Hakkı, Diyarbakır deputies Zülfi and Fevzi, Sivas deputy Rasim and Erzurum deputy Hoca Rahip gathered under “Vilayeti Sitte” community. They declared that they would be with the Ottomans and support rights of regions’ people (Mahmut Goloğlu, Erzurum Kongresi, 1968: 13 cited by Beşikçi, 2013: 188).

The Vilayeti Sitte’s propaganda was that “Kurdistan will be Armenia”. This was not only against the Kurdish diplomacy, but also against Armenia. Once again it was aimed to attack the Kurds against Armenians by Mustafa Kemal Movement. The executor of this policy was Eastern General Commander Kazım Karabekir. The Vilayeti Sitte was mostly part of North Kurdistan provinces where the Kurds and Armenians were living together. In order to be effective to the Kurds, founders were of the Kurdish origin. Later, the community wanted to join the Society for the Rise of Kurdistan (SRK). However, this application was refused by the Kurds (Beşikçi, 2013: 190).

When the SRK was founded, Tevfik Paşa government was on duty. Kurd İzzet Beg was the Minister of the Interior and he was a well known (pro-British) the British man. Kurd Izzet Beg was uncle of Şerif Paşa (Akşin, volume I, 1992: 79). According to Calthope, Izzet Beg was for the British policy of the Armenian-Kurdish relations and supporting Kurdish leaders' attempts of having an agreement and good relations with Armenia (Akşin, I, 1992: 149).

Izzet Beg was not against the SRK meeting, but his being pro-British and admiring the Kurdish-Armenian relations means that he was not against the SRK diplomacy as well. Since the SRK was founded by Tevfik Paşa government to make a balance policy with the Kurds against the Armenian and Arabs, so that they had to have good relations with the Kurds (Tunaya, II, 1986: 189). Moreover, the Ottomans did not prevent Şerif Paşa diplomatic struggles in Paris. Mustafa Kemal was against the Kurdish national movements from the beginning that sent a telegraph to Diyarbakır government to close down all communities that struggle to separate the country. He had approved the governor's attempts to close the branch of the SRK in Diyarbakır (M.Kemal Atatürk, Nutuk, cilt II, III, İstanbul, 1962 cited by Celil, et al, 1998: 109).

Besides, Mustafa Kemal promised to the Kurds that they would give the Kurds national rights. Thus, the Kemalists utilized the Kurds against the Allied Powers. Some of the Kurdish tribal leaders believed in these promises. In 1919 June a Kurdish congress took place in Erzurum. A decision of the Kurdish support for the Turkish Liberation war was taken in the congress by the condition of an autonomous region to the Kurds. After the war, this congress was against the Kurdish revolution and Sultan government as well. The Kurdish leaders, who took place in Erzurum the Kurdish National Congress, were not against the Turkish State. Therefore, they joined the Erzurum congress that took place in 10-23 July of 1919 (Celil, et al, 1998: 109).

The British denounced the Kurdish communities to the Damat Ferit government that some provocation occurred by these communities and the SRK was also blamed as well. Therefore, in 10 July 1919 the Babiali called the SRK to know that what they had talked with the British representatives in İstanbul. The Babiali was looking for a

way to agree with Şerif Paşa. For these reasons the SRK leaders were called to meeting. The SRK was under Seyit Abdulkadir's chairmanship including Mevlanazade Rıfat, Emin Ali Badrkhan and they met Abuk Paşa, Avni Paşa and Ibrahim Efendi from the government (Jwaideh, 1961: 377).

The Babiali was blaming the SRK for separation of Kurdistan and the SRK was blaming the Babiali that Damat Ferit Paşa had given East of Anatolia to the Armenians. That is, both sides accused each other and later agreed that they had to wait for the Paris Peace Conference decisions (Akşin, I, 1992: 538). At this meeting the Kurdish leaders insisted that they saw an independent Kurdistan in the British policy which was under Great Britain's mandate. However, the Babiali insisted that they were still powerful and it was needless to look for the Kurdish autonomous state (DBFP, Vol, IV, p: 696). At the end the Babiali accepted autonomy for Kurdistan. By this way the Kurdish leaders also accepted to be a part of the caliphate and expressed their devotion to the Ottoman Empire (Jwaideh, 1961: 378). Both sides agreed and the attitude of the Ottoman Empire of the Kurdish demands and their acceptance of the Kurds indicated that the Ottomans had become very weak.

#### **ABOLITION OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE RISE OF KURDISTAN AND ENDING OF RELATIONS WITH THE ALLIED POWERS**

The SRK had diplomatic relations with the Allied powers and it was only the Kurdish representative in İstanbul to discuss the Kurds' fate with the British, French and Americans. However, there was a pressure over the SRK from the Kurds and Turks as well. The Kurds were accusing the SRK for having relations with enemy and Turks (The Babiali and Kemalists) were accusing the SRK that they had intentions to separate Kurdistan.

With the pretext of cooperation with the Armenians and declaration of Şerif Paşa with the Armenian national leader Boghos Nubar; Şerif Paşa and the SRK faced with very harsh reactions. Thus, Şerif Paşa could not endure against that and resigned in 24 April 1920 from his duty. Generally, the Kurds and especially the SRK had no representative in Paris. Thus, Seyit Abdulkadir sent a letter to the conference committee in 5 May 1920 and explained that since there was no the Kurdish

representative in the conference, decisions taken about the Kurds and Kurdistan would be null and void (Yıldız, 1991: 86). By the way the SRK was becoming weak over the time.

The Young Turks and the Kurdish nationalists in 1909 had the first cold relations that by 1909 April this reached to a climax. By the revolution of 1909 April, the CUP deeply settled in the government that the Kurds looked for new ways. After that the Kurdish-Armenian relations started and from then on, these relations disturbed the CUP and the CUP had struggled to spoil them and did several provocations by its agents in the region (Celil, et al, 1998: 67).

The SRK was composed of the Kurdish feudal leaders and families. The two major of these families were Nehri and Badrkhans. The competition between two families weakened the SRK's power and effectiveness. Badrkhan were accusing Nehries that they could only be religious leader, yet Nehri also were claiming that Badrkhan could only be commander, but not leader (Celil, et al, 1998: 67). Additionally, they were blaming each other for betraying, Badrkhan had relations with Russia and Seyit Abdulkadir had relations with Britain (Çamsoy, 2007: 18).

The SRK had domestic problems in 1920. There were two tendencies in foundation of the SRK and they can be classified as pro-autonomist and pro-liberalists. Therefore, the Kurds struggled to find new communities. Badrkhans separated from the SRK and founded the Kurdish Social Community (Nikitin, 1991: 196). Additionally, the SRK revised its presidency and Seyit Abdulkadir once again was elected as the head of the SRK. Seyit Abdulkadir got closer to the Turks. Zinar Silopi expressed that Seyit Abdulkadir said "When Turks fight with the Greeks and if I hit the Turks from back in this case my ancestors will damn me" (Silopi, 1969: 97). At this time the division appeared on the ground that the SRK had domestic conflicts.

The founder of Kurdistan Social Community Emin Ali Badrkhan also declared his intention of founding the community. He said that "I believed in Britain and the Allied powers feeling of rights, justice and the Kurdish national will that the Kurds were accepted as a nation and in order to establish a social organization I founded

this community" (Bayrak, 1193: 103-104). Since the SRK had lost its effectiveness, according to Jwaideh the SRK abolished itself in June 1921 (Jwaideh, 1961: 397).

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **THE LAUSANNE TREATY AND DIVISION OF KURDISTAN (1921-1923)**

The Lausanne Treaty was full of incoherency. Relations and negotiations of the new Turkish state with the Great Powers revealed that the British had more interests in a united new Turkish state than a fragmental the movement. Apparently, the Great Powers delivered Kurds to the new Turkish state by approval of the Kurdish deputies in the Turkish Parliament. Thus, the idea and dream of independent Kurdistan was officially ended. Furthermore, the Lausanne is an agreement that shared Kurdistan between three states: Turkey, Iraq and Syria. That is, it was partitioned between the two the Great Powers, the G. Britain (Iraq), France (Syria) and Turkey. In other words, except Kurdistan part that remained Turkey, the remaining parts in Iraq and Syria became "mandate of mandate". Finally, Kurdistan became victim of "divide&share" and "divide&rule" imperialistic policies of the Great Powers. By international approval, the Lausanne meant different for Kurds and Turks; for Kurds it meant division and for Turks it meant independency.

Under this section the idea of abandonment of independent Kurdistan, The Kurdish policy of the British and its flexibility after the Sévres Treaty, the Kurdish rebellions to practice the Sévres Treaty decisions are discussed. The Kurdish policy of the British was to prefer the new Turkish state to fragmental the Kurdish Movements. However Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish politicians claimed that the British supported the Kurdish movements. In reality, the British were supporting Mustafa Kemal against Enver Paşa who was close to the Bolsheviks and fighting against Sheikh Mahmud Berzenji in South of Kurdistan.

The Kurdish policy of the British Close relations between Kemalists' and the Bolshevik Soviet union worried the British deeply. Therefore, the G.Britain changed its the Kurdish policy and abandoned the idea of supporting of a Kurdish state. The

British preferred its own good relations with the new Kemalist regime. That is, the Kemalist regime's successfulness in internal diplomacy between and with both the G. Britain and Soviet Union and threatening one power against another led British to change its the Kurdish policy.



[http://www.warchat.org/pictures/second\\_greco-turkish\\_war\\_partitioning\\_of\\_anatolia\\_treaty\\_of\\_lausanne.jpg](http://www.warchat.org/pictures/second_greco-turkish_war_partitioning_of_anatolia_treaty_of_lausanne.jpg)

Map: 5. 1. The Lausanne Treaty

### **THE IDEA OF INDEPENDENT KURDISTAN WAS ABANDONED**

In the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the G. Britain, France and Russia had played an important role in division, partition and sharing of Kurdistan. They are responsible from Kurds to be stateless. The most powerful of those, the G. Britain, was playing leading role of reshaping the Middle East on behalf of its national interests. The British had not well prepared a plan and policy on Kurds. The British policy was interested in Mosul and south of Kurdistan, to protect the Mosul province. The two main points were important for the British to secure Mesopotamia and to end the Turkish domination over where Turks were minority. That is, Kurds were not the subject of the British policy; on the contrary they were a tool in the British policy. The Sévres plan of independent Kurdistan had put out. Imperialist powers struggled

to partition the Ottoman Empire before and after the First World War to partition the Ottoman Empire and several conferences and secret agreements were signed between the Great Powers. Within this division Kurdistan got its share and these was the Allied power's choice. These policies took place in 1915-1923 and conflicts were solved between 1923-1925. Since that Kurdistan or the Kurdish region was divided in 1639 with the Qasri Sherin agreement between Ottomans-Iranians, the Ottoman Kurdistan was partitioned between the G. Britain, France and Turkey. It was divided, partitioned and shared in the Lausanne Treaty in 1923 (Beşikçi, 2013: 51-52).

The Sévres and Lausanne are imperialistic agreements that colonized Kurdistan without borders. The Lausanne treaty divided Kurds and Kurdistan and later put these partitions and share under international guarantee. However, what was benefit of the British and French imperialism in division of Kurdistan and in what extend partition of Kurdistan was in their interest. How could the British and the French imperialism perform their interest and with which government they had cooperation to acquire their benefits (Beşikçi, 2013: 65-66). There are some contradictions why the Bolsheviks did not react to partition and division of Kurdistan and why the Bolsheviks did not help the Kurdish national movement as well. Besides, what was relation of the new Turkish state with the British and the French imperialists and what were their ideological ties with communist Soviet Russia. A letter from Enver Paşa to Cemal Paşa has revealed cooperation between Turkey and the G. Britain that Enver Paşa says "Mahmud who led a meeting with the British in İstanbul informed that the British wanted to meet with him. I was angry but he said the British are unhappy with stopping of negotiations between the British-Turkish". Additionally, he added that "now the British and ministers are not with the French and secondly the British left their old ideas and now they are for to work with the Turkish nationalists, as result of these, they left İstanbul to us. They will leave straits and they withdraw their soldiers as well. Besides, except Syria and Iraq they will accept our government. As a decision of Iraq, it was definite they (British) wants us Enver Paşa, Cemal Paşa and Talat Paşa. That is, the CUP's members had to stop making anti-propaganda against. The British wanted us to do this..." (Şevket Sureyya Aydemir,

Enver Paşa, cilt, 3, p.531 cited by Beşikçi, 2013: 248-249). That is, the British authority preferred Mustafa Kemal to the CUP members.

This letter shows that before the Lausanne agreement the borders had already been drawn between the British and the new Turkish state government. This indicates that Kemalists had secret relations with the British (Beşikçi, 2013: 249). In the Lausanne conference, when the ethnic minority groups' issues were discussing, the field of studying and defining minorities were got as the main topic of discussion. That is, scientific discussion was an important topic of the conference. Specially, Kurds separation from Turkey according to the Sévres agreement and their insisting on separation was questioned. However, the British demanded from the Turkish delegation to have the Kurdish deputies in the Turkish Parliament to decide on the decision of separation or continue with Turkey. In 1922 with a telegraph question separation was asked to the Kurdish deputies and wanted them to view their decisions. Erzurum deputy Hüseyin Avni Bey said "This country is belongs to both the Kurdish-Turkish people, only two nation, Kurds and Turks have the right to speak from this seat". After this public speech Dersim deputies; Hasan Hayri and Ramiz, Urfa deputies; Bozan and ŞahinBey; after that Palu, Van, Bitlis, Diyarbakır and Malatya deputies; almost all of them the Kurdish deputies in the Turkish Parliament approved Hüseyin Avni Bey decision (Celil, et al, 1998: 123).

With unanimously decision of the Kurdish deputies had a positive effect to prevent the Great Powers to interfere into Turkey domestic affairs. After that İsmet Paşa who was head of the Turkish delegation, expressed his happiness with a telegraph from the Lausanne that "this country; Turkey is belongs to both nation Turks and Kurds. Both nations will be equal before government and will have equal national rights". When the Kurdish deputies declared their approval of living with Turks, Turkey promised to give their national rights. The Lausanne conference committee not only left idea of independent Kurdistan, but also approved not to commemorate the Kurds in official documents. In 23 July 1923 in the Lausanne agreement the conference committee obliged Kemalist to sign these articles. Article, 38; without any discrimination of nation, language and religion; the Turkish government undertake all its citizens' life security, freedom and protection. Article, 39: Turkey government

undertake to protect and be equal using their any languages in personal restriction before languages or trade and will not put any restriction before any languages in using social life (Celil, et al, 1998: 123-124). By the Lausanne agreement the Great Powers left the Kurdish independency idea in historical documents. After that date any of the Kurdish movement would be illegal. “Divide&rule” is imperialist powers’ policy that to have their interests easily. In the beginning of 1923 with the Lausanne agreement Kurdistan had been divided, portioned and shared. Therefore, the Lausanne treaty is agreement of division of the Kurdish nation and imperialistic policy. The Lausanne had two different meanings for Kurds and Turks. For Turks the Lausanne meant an independent national state and approval of this states by international powers. Yet, The Lausanne meant for Kurds approval of captivity and being colony of international system (Beşikçi, 1990: 21).

Cairo conference in 12 March 1921 after a long discussion between the British Commissioners, who were experts in the Middle East, had decided to change several articles concerning an independent Kurdistan. After a brainstorm it can be seen the discussions and negotiations, but without a concrete decision about Kurdistan (Abdulla, 2009: 430).

### **THE KURDISH POLICY OF THE BRITISH HAD BEEN CHANGED AFTER THE SÉVRES TREATY**

The conflict between Mustafa Kemal and Enver Paşa; furthermore, Enver Paşa relations with the Bolshevik Soviet union and Mustafa Kemal closeness to the G. Britain had changed the Kurdish policy of the British. The Bolshevik kept Enver Paşa in Batum until 1921, since was an alternative to Mustafa Kemal. The British’s choice was Mustafa Kemal against Enver Paşa and Russia. Since, Mustafa Kemal was more close to western powers than Enver Paşa. Mustafa Kemal had expressed that he is for an establishing a state model of European for several times. Therefore, the British preferred powerful Mustafa Kemal and nationalist leaders to fragmentary the Kurdish movements (Beşikçi, 2013: 63-64).

However, Kemalist said that the British supported a Kurdish state, but in reality British had fought against Sheikh Mahmud Berzenji and never became for an independent Kurdish state. Additionally, the British were using Kurds as a tool to put out the Middle East revolutions. Yet, the British-Kemalism cooperation performed “divide&share” policy to divide Kurdistan. To do this Kemalists were for conflicts between the Armenian-Kurdish societies. At the same time with propaganda that, “Kurdistan will be Armenia” was pulling the Kurdish tribal leaders to his side (Beşikçi, 2013: 198).

Mosul is the turning point of the Kurdish issue between the British-Turkish. After Turks defeated Greek in 1922, the Turkish troops turned their way to Mosul under Özdemiş Paşa commander ship and wanted the Kurdish tribes to join them to free Mosul.

Atatürk was successful to convince Mahmud Berzenji and signed agreement with Berzenji against the British. This led the British to change their Kurdish policy. According to agreement Mustafa Kemal and Sheikh Mahmud Berzenji:

- 1- Turkey would give independency to south of Kurdistan, and would not interfere in its domestic affairs.
- 2- Sheikh Mahmud was accepted as the king of Sulemania and a parliament would be open.
- 3- In case of a war Turkey would use the Kurdish military force as a power.

Sheikh Mahmud was demanding the Turkish assistance against the British. This case angered the British and after that Sheikh Mahmud and Atatürk had relations and agreement. The British changed its the Kurdish policy and the British-Turkish delegation had agreed before the Lausanne that they would conciliate each other by making a concession on minority rights. Especially because of this attempt the British decide to leave decision of Kurdistan to be the Kurdish deputies in the Turkish Parliament (Celil, et al, 1998: 123). Nejat Abdulla explains that; the British policy 1915-1923 was an opportunist policy. The G. Britain utilized the Kurdish issue and

when it got its interests it forgot all promises that they had given to Kurds (Abdulla, 2009: 431-434).

However the Sévres Treaty had decisions for establishment of an autonomy or an independent Kurdistan was concerned, but it did not materialize in London conference in 1921. The Allied powers forgot their promises that had given to Kurds. There were several reasons that the Allied shift their ways. Firstly, the advance of the Turkish nationalist movement, which led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in absorbing the Kurdish area of Anatolia into what became known as the Republic of Turkey. The absorbed area was part of what had been considered for the proposed the Kurdish autonomy or independency and agreed on at the Sévres. Secondly: According to the research department of the Foreign office, there was resistance of Turks under Atatürk who prevented ratification of the treaty of the Sévres. They also refused to allow any mention of Kurds or Armenians in the treaty of the Lausanne which replaced in 1923. Thirdly: Another factor was that the conflicting claims to the Mosul province, which comprised almost all of Iraq, Kurdistan and the British interests of petroleum in Mosul. Thus, the British had chosen to protect its own interests and the Kurds were losers (Yassin, 1995: 44-45).

### **THE KURDISH POLICY OF THE BRITISH AND KURDISH REBELLION TO PRACTISE THE SEVRÉS TREATY DECISIONS**

Kemalist regime dual relation with Soviet Union and the G. Britain dashed the Kurdish hopes. The new attitude of the British became its policy that an independent the Kurdish state was not beneficial to the British interests. Therefore, Kurds rebellions stated after that the Great powers shifted their ways. Rebellions were a kind of self-solving problems.

However utilizing the Kurdish nationalist and Kemalist against each other, the British preferred this way to secure Mesopotamia. The conflict was beneficial for stability of the British interest in Mosul. In 20 October 1921 an agreement signed between France and Turkey. This agreement led the British to close to Kurds (Olson, 1992: 98). Thus, Turkey had strengthened its South borders. The British tried to

change this balance and made Abdurrahman Ağa to revolt against, but did not help him to success (Bayrak, 1993: 118-119).

This was not for the Kurdish beneficial, but on the contrary, the aim was to use Kurds against the Turkish freedom war. East Military front commander Kazım Karabekir used Hamidia cavalries against the Kurdish rebellions, however he could not success. Hamidian cavalries realized that they have been betraying. Therefore, some of them refused and rebelled against new government. The famous person of these cavalries was Cibranli Halit Beg, who later became founder of Azadi movement and rebelled under this movement. Halit Beg and his friends in 1920 made the propaganda of independent Kurdistan that was concerned in the Sévres Treaty. He refused NationalContract (Misak-i Milli) and decision of Sivas and Erzurum conferences that accepted North Kurdistan in the Turkish republic of Turkey and called them as National oath or pact. Therefore, to struggle for this goal he started to organize in Varto, Karlioiva, Manzikert, Bulanık and Hınıs. Additionally, he met with Sheikhs and tribe leaders. They thought that Kurds could reach their national right via of weapon. Cibranli Halit Beg reached to the Society for the Rise of Kurdistan (SRK) members Seyit Abdulkadir, Sheikh Abdurahman of Hakkâri and the Kurdish parliamentarian Yusuf Ziya. They agreed to apply to League of Nation for an independent Kurdistan. However, the Kurdish opposition under Halit Beg was preparing itself around Dersim-Koçgiri region for rebellion (Celil, et al, 1998: 113-114). The Turkish government put out rebellion, but could not control all Dersim tribes. The Kurdish leader in İstanbul had no result in their relation with Mustafa Kemal. Mustafa Kemal was militarily weak in 1920 he continued his relation with Kurds and promised them that he would give them their rights concerned in the Sévres treaty. He said that he would practice the Sévres Treaty, but first they have to expel Greek and sign peace agreement. However, in 1921 when he was more powerful than in 1920, he forgot his promises. Since Mustafa Kemal obliged Kurds to join military force, give extra taxand give animals new rebellions occurred in Kurdistan (Kutschera, 2013: 55-56).

The Kurdish club in İstanbul had moved to Baghdad to meet with the British high commissioner Sir Percy Cox, under presidency of Halil Badrkhan. Halil Badrkhan “we are preparing ourselves for a revolution and we are ready, it is for two years that we do not give tax to Turks in Dersim, Diyarbakır, Van and Bitlis. The regions are ready for uprising; Badrkhan said these people as grandchild of Badrkhan dynasty preferred me as the head of movement. Halil Badrkhan expressed his deeply being fan of the British. “We want the British mandate, if the G. Britain helps us, we will become a tampon between Iraq and its enemies Russia and Turkey”. Additionally we will have good relations with Armenians and Christian minorities”. Halil Badrkhan demanded the British assistance of war materials as debt that they would give after independency of Kurdistan. Even if you do not help me, I would continue my struggle and if I could not fight regularly, I would practice guerilla tactics. However, the Kurdish revolution was put out in 1922 of January and Halil Badrkhan lived in Baghdad in siege until the end of 1922 (Kutschera, 2013: 56-58).

Since 1922, the British interests in Kurds diminished and just they interested in Mosul. Increasing of the Turkish Liberation movements’ powers reduced the British interests in Kurds and its movements. The Kurdish policy of the British in the Sévres treaty which was for independent of Kurdistan, now had changed into that how much of Kurdistan will be annexed to Turkey and how much of it will be annexed to Iraq.

### **KURDS AND TURKS REPRESENTATIVES AT THE LAUSANNE TREATY**

The Ottoman Empire no longer existed; the Grand National Assembly of Turkey was the only representative of Turks. The Kurdish nationalists and movements were weak thus making the unable to send their representatives to the Lausanne Treaty. Allied Powers already prefers the Turkish National Movement (Misak-i Milli) to the weak and fragmented the Kurdish movements. Therefore, İsmet Paşa was representing both nations; Turks and Kurds. Subsequently, the agreement was signed. Thus, Kurds were excluded from international policies formulation. Furthermore, Kurds were not only stateless, but now Kurds were not accepted as ethnic minority. These all were signed by the Great Powers and accepted officially. The only way for Kurds was to rebel against these.

## **THE NEW TURKISH STATE AND ITS POLICY**

The new state policy was to convince Kurds to support the new government that Mustafa Kemal and his friend founded. This policy was based on promises of “Kurdish-Turkish brotherhood” and the propaganda was “Kurdistan is becoming Armenia”, with these promises, Mustafa Kemal was successful in some extent to persuade some the Kurdish tribe leaders to move and to act with Kemalists. Mustafa Kemal was charging the Kurdish Nationalist as the British agents. Especially the Rise of Solidarity for Kurdistan was in the target of Mustafa Kemal. He called them “a few vagrants” and Mustafa Kemal charged the Kurdish struggle as the British trick, and made people believe in it as that. He was trying to pull Kurds to his side. Therefore, he was presenting the Kurdish-Turkish nations that are undividable (Beşikçi, 2013; 241-246).

The British had to start renegotiations with Ankara government after it accomplished a battle against Greek. After Mudanya agreement 27 October in 1922 Ankara government was called to the Lausanne and the Turkish parliament announced that İstanbul government is not representing Turks any more. The Turkish parliament (TM) of İstanbul government abolished on 1 November 1922, thus the Turkish parliament, that is the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) as new Turkey representative joined to the Lausanne conference. The head of delegation was İsmet Paşa, the best friend of Atatürk. The Lausanne conference took place on 20 November 1922. Because of some conflicts it stopped in 4 January 1923, but 23 April was the date when the Lausanne restarted and in 24 July of 1923 it was ended with signature. The Lausanne was the clarification of the end of the Kurdish policy of the British and success of the new Turkish government diplomacy that maintained in Europe. The Sévres treaty had ended and for the British there was no the Kurdish issue any more. However, they did not announce the declaration that the Kurdish issue is ended for the G. Britain for their security (Öke, 1992: 121).

The Kurdish national communities had lost their influence and were even could not send representative to the Lausanne conference. Allied Powers had addressed their collocutor and it was Ankara government and the head of the Turkish Lausanne

delegation was İsmet Paşa on behalf of both nations. İsmet Paşa announced that “we are representative of Turks as much as Kurds. Because the Kurdish representatives are also in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and they contribute into governing the country as Turks”. For these reasons, İsmet Paşa took two of the Kurdish deputies with him to the Lausanne conference. For the first time he took Pirinçzade Fevzi Bey and he also took Zülfi Zade Zülfi Bey with him as the Kurdish representatives. Both Fevzi and Zülfi Bey said “we are brother with Turks and do not want separation, because there is no differences between us” (Silopi, 1969: 61).

The Kurdish deputies also declared their views unders spokesman Hasan Hayri that they do not want to be segregated from Turkey. Additionally, they informed the Lausanne conference committee with telegraphs, which was done from the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) (Dersimi, 1992: 189). Thus, Kurds had lost their confidence in the Allied Powers, because of some reasons. Firstly, Allied Powers solely negotiated with Turks; secondly, Mustafa Kemal promised that had given Kurds for their rights and autonomy. These promises gave hope to Kurds.

### **THE LAUSANNE TREATY DECISIONS FOR KURDS AND MINORITIES**

Allied Powers attitudes towards Kurds let North Kurdistan under Turkey authority without Mosul. They preferred the new Turkish government state to the fragmented Kurdish society and its national movements. Because, by signing this agreement the Kurdish issue lost its international prominence. Kurds were no more appealing to the international political society.

Minorities issue was interrelated with the Kurdish issue. The British wanted Turkey to accept minorities based on ethnics origin, but Turkey refused this proposal that there is no difference between ethnics from the same religion. That is, Turkey did not want Kurds to be accepted as ethnic and preferred that minorities should be accepted on religion basic, such as Christian and Jewish etc. That is, Kurds now lack of ethnical rights along with its national rights. Because, according to new World order after the First World War, minorities issues required several main rights for solution; the criteria of minority was accepted as “origin, language and religion.” However, for Kurds the situation was different. They were not minorities according to the

Lausanne head of the Turkish delegation İsmet Paşa. Minorities issue, its definition, and limit for right was a major topic of the Lausanne conference. This case worried İsmet Paşa that it may become peace conference. However, one of the British diplomat convinced İsmat Paşa that until now many promises had given to the minorities and this is demonstration, quarrel and protests are normal (Yıldız, 1991: 29).

In the Lausanne agreement not only Kurds were left behind minority rights, but also signed the division of Kurdistan which was firstly divided into two parts in 1639 by Qasri-Sherin agreement with Iran and now in the Lausanne it was partitioned as north and south. Moreover, this division was officially accepted by Great Powers.

After the Lausanne the Kurdish nationalist who were scattered and disappointed by the Allied Powers and loser of diplomacy, organized territorially and rebelled against government. That is, the Kurdish nationalist movements localized and wanted their rights from countries that live in. Shortly, the Lausanne Treaty was victory of the Turkish nationalist movements and defeat of the Kurdish nationalist. The Lausanne symbolized the victory of Turks and defeat of Kurds. As a result of the Lausanne treaty decisions “nations of Turkey” changed into “Turkish nation” (Oran, 1993: 300-301).

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **REAWAKENING OF KURDS AND NATIONAL MOVEMENTS (1924-1940)**

In this chapter the following issues will be explained. Azadi movement, the Kurdish-Nestorian cooperation; Beytüşşebap rebellion, Sheikh Said rebellion, Khoybun movement, Ağrı and Dersim rebellions are clarified. In these movements and rebellions the Great Powers interference and assistance will be discussed and proved that in as to what extend these claims are true. That is to say, these movements and their relations with Great Powers and their attitudes towards each other are detailed. Not historical narration of these, but their international dimensions are going to be revealed. Generally, these movements were accused of being under the influence of

outside interference. However, with different aspects and from different resources these issues are searched and stated accordingly. It is clear that the Kurdish movements had sought assistance from Great Powers prior 1940's. In reality they had not succeeded to convince these powers for aid for national movements.

### **AZADI MOVEMENT AND ITS REALITY**

Azadi movement was a result of end in diplomacy attempts. The Kurdish nationalists had been disappointed in the Lausanne Treaty. Therefore, they decide to oblige to their demands militarily and organized around some movements. One of biggest movement was Azadi movement (Kurdish freedom movement). Azadi movement founded in 1923, but according to the British documents Azadi movement was founded in 1921 in Erzurum by Cibranlı Halit Beg (Halit Begê Cibri). Ekrem Cemil Paşa also says that Azadi was founded after the Lausanne Treaty (Bruinessen, 1992: 189; Olson, 1992: 72; Cemil Paşa, 1991: 59). Azadi movement founders were Cibranlı Halit Beg and Yusuf Ziya Bey, whom were very close to Kemalists. Halit Beg was a commander of Hamidia cavalry and saw the intention of Atatürk, and his policy toward Kurds. Since he joined his congress of Erzurum, Yusuf Ziya Bey also was deputy and knew Atatürk policy of Kurds. Besides, there were experienced soldiers in Azadi. Unlike other the Kurdish movements the founders were soldiers. However, Halit Beg made contacts with the Society for the Rise of Kurdistan. The center was in the north of Kurdistan. Additionally, Azadi movement was unable to make formal contacts with European and western (Bruinessen, 1992: 279-280).

Azadi movement aim was independent Kurdistan. Therefore, it was preparing itself for a general revolution in the Kurdish regions. The first Azadi congress held in 1924. The famous Nakshabandi Sheikh Said also attended in congress and two important decisions were accepted by congress committee.

- 1- A general revolution would start and independence would be declared.
- 2- Azadi movement sought assistance from Great powers; Britain, France and Russia.

Because of anti-communism many participants reacted to assistance of Russia, however, since Sheikh Said was afraid of the fate of Kurds, he preferred to seek assistance from Russia. However, Russia was more close Turkey than Kurds at that time. A delegation was sent to Georgia to demand assistance from Russia. Yet, Russia replied that they support the movement but for the moment they will not be able to help them. Additionally, Azadi through the British commissioners demanded assistance, but the British also gave a negative response to the Azadi movement (Bruinessen, 1992: 280-281).

Azadi movement assisted the Kurdish tribe to apply to League of Nations for assistance. However, an unexpected Nestorian revolution changed the mode of Azadi movement, which occurred in Baytüşşebab.

## **BEYTÜŞŞEBAP REBELLION AND THE KURDISH-NESTORIAN COOPERATION**

Mosul issue was not resolved in the Lausanne Treaty. The issue was postponed to be negotiated between Turkey and Britain within nine months, after the Lausanne Treaty. The first meeting was held in İstanbul. In Haliç conference the Mosul issue was not solved and once more, it was postponed by the League of Nations. However, the British representative Sir Percy Cox wanted Turkey to give Beytüşşebab to Nestorians. Nestorians also had applied to the British with a detailed map that they wanted Van, Urmiye, Hakkari and Mosul to establish a "Nestorian state". The British had already armed Nestorians and led them to rebel in 1924 in September. Nestorian leader Petros Ağa makes propaganda to revolt Kurds. However, the Turkish army in 12 September 1924 attacked and the two rebellions were put out, many Nestorians and Kurds whom took part in the rebellion ran away to Iraq and Iran (Genel Kurmay belgeler, 1992: 37-72).

Azadi movement had no important role in the Beytüşşebab rebellion except İhsan Nuri Paşa who later would be leader of Ağrı Rebellion. Kurds took part in the rebellion by chance. A letter that came from Yusuf Ziya Beg (who could send

telegraf through via of military) Yusuf Ziya was in İstanbul and took place in the Turkish opposition side. Yusuf Ziya Beg telegram contained a report of his finding. His brother Rıza and other the Kurdish officers misunderstood the letter as a sign that the general uprising had already started. They took many weapons and rebelled. They went into mountains. They tried to persuade local the Kurdish tribes to join in the revolt. When they realized that there was no general uprising and their position was precarious they fled to Iraq. This rebellion once again reaffirms the Turkish government that the Kurdish nationalists are threat for them (Bruinessen, 1992: 283-284).

However, this rebellion was organized by Azadi movement. The British had seen failures of Kurds in the revolution. Additionally, this revolution led Azadi to lose its high rank commander. Therefore, Azadi also did lose out on Beytüşşebap (Olson, 1992: 81-82). Azadi movement members, who fled to Iraq, took refuge behind the British. However some of them could not fled such as Halid Beg (Cibranlı) and deputy Yusuf Ziya Bey, who were arrested by Mustafa Kemal and were killed in prison. Azadi movement members who fled to Iraq and took refuge made complaint against the Turkish government and presented a list of their complaints and anxious to the British authority in Iraq. In this list there were violations of minority's rights. Prohibition of the Kurdish language, and even word "Kurdistan" of Kurds in Turkey and many other violations that were towards the Kurdish rights (Bruinessen, 1992: 284-287).

Azadi members, who presented their complaints about the Turkish government oppressions against Kurds, did so in an attempt to get the sentiments of the British. However, since human rights concept was not developed, it was not appropriate for the British to support the Kurdish national rights. At least they attempted to get the British assistance to protect Kurds from the Turkish government oppressions. However, Britain described the Kurdish proposals and plans as dreams. The target was very big and Kurds who were well known by the British were not ready for such revolutions (Olson, 1992: 81-82).

## **SHEIKH SAID REBELLION AND THE BRITISH ATTITUDE**

Azadi movement uprising is known as Sheikh Said rebellion. Before the uprising the movement applied to the British for assistance. However, the British had no confidence in Azadi ability to succeed in the rebellion. Since, the British had experienced Kurds in Beytüşşebap Nestorian rebellion. The British did not attempt to assist Kurds. Not details of the uprising, but foreign rumours assistance is concerned to this study. The role of the British is always questioned. Additionally, the complot of Mr. Templeton that the Society for the Rise of Kurdistan members had faced, had caused suspicious that the British may have aided uprising.

The Turkish government was aware of Azadi movement uprising or provoked it through its policies. Therefore, Mr. Templeton plot was an event that had rumours of the British aid to Sheikh Said rebellion. By the way the founder of the Society for the Rise of Kurdistan former leader Seyit Abdulkadir was arrested through the plot and brought to Diyarbakır and afterwards he was hanged with Sheikh Said. The plot was practised skilfully and the Kurdish nationalist attempt of demand of the British assistance was unsuccessful. However, they still believed in the British assistance.

## **SHEIKH SAID REBELLION WAS SUPPRESSED**

Sheikh Said the rebellion was an early sign uprising of Azadi movement. Since Kemalist movement was recognized in the Lausanne Treaty and it improved its power, It was difficult for a rebellion that lacks foreign assistance to overcome this government.

Kemalist movement policy of Kurds was paradoxical. In one way Mustafa Kemal was spreading the idea of "the Kurdish National Movement as the opposite of Islam". In other way he was telling the Western powers that "if you give Kurds autonomy under the Turkish authority, you will relax and we will overcome them very easily" (Beşikçi, 2013: 275-279). Additionally, Kemalist movement was denouncing Kurds to the Great Powers that Sheikh Said rebellion is a fundamentalist movement and pro-caliphate that Sheikh Said wants to bring caliphate back. Thus, Kemalist movement succeeded in conceptualizing the Sheikh Said movement as

fundamentalist, pro-caliphate and anti-colonialism to the World in order to prevent foreign assistance. Therefore, the movement had to combine forces with the Kurdish tribes and resist against government on its own (Lazarev&Mihoyan, 2010: 232-233).

The movement was not assisted by external powers, but on the contrary the Sheikh Said movement was hit with foreign assistance by the Kemalist movement. Bruinessen clarifies that the British were well informed about the uprising by the Azadi movement representatives. However, the British refused any kind of assistance. The British were publicly accused of helping the Sheikh Said movement. But, Kurds and the British always denied the accusations. Turks never found any evidence, except the fact that Mr. Templeton event that it was a plot and well directed by the Istanbul police headquarters (Bruinessen, 1992: 291-292). France had assisted the Kemalist movement against the Sheikh Said rebellion. The Turkish troops with the permission of France over Syrian land turned around the Sheikh Said rebellion and attacked them from behind and surrounded the Sheikh Said troops from the Mardin and Batman fronts (Celil, et al, 1998: 155).

Yusuf Ziya Bey and Cibranlı Halit Beg decided to apply to the League of Nations to demand for assistance via Mahmud Berzenji and Simko Ağa. However, there is no information whether they had got any help from the League of Nations (Lazarev&Mihoyan, 2010: 231). According to the British Foreign Office of Air Commander Cibranlı Halit Beg met with the Russian consulate in Urmiye. However, Russia also saw the rebellion as feudal and did not attempt to help the Sheikh Said rebellion (Kutschera, 2013: 103).

The Sheikh Said rebellion's struggle to get external assistance was unsuccessful. The rebellion started in the Genç city of Bingöl. The event erupted on the non-delivering of 10 Kurds to Hasan Hüsnü Efendi commander. The rebellion started early before its time and spreading in all North of Kurdistan and faced with the iron hand of the Turkish army. Finally, the rebellion was suppressed and Sheikh Said with 47 friends in 1925 on 29 June were hanged in Diyarbakır. However, many of the Kurds, who were seen as potential danger, also were arrested and hanged, even though they had not taken part in the rebellion. Therefore, Kurds who could escape fled from the country and went

to Syria. Who later founded Khoybun movement in Syria for an independent Kurdistan (Celil, et al, 1998: 149-163).

## **FOUNDING OF KHOYBUN MOVEMENT**

Not only for domestic, but also for Turkey foreign policy affairs Sheikh Said was the biggest nationalist of the Kurdish uprising. With Taktiri-Sukun law the opposition was oppressed and new regulations over the Kurdish region led many the Kurdish intellectuals and member of Azadi movement to leave the country. Most of these intellectuals went to Syria and Lebanon and continued their activities under the French authority. The French was dominant power on of both Syria and Lebanon. After Sheikh Said rebellion Iskender Bey, Dr. Sükrü Mehmet, İhsan Nuri, Mulazım Vanlı Rasim, Ertuğlu Hurşit and many other the Kurdish leaders and intellectuals had left the country. They reorganized politically with other the Kurdish intellectuals and leaders in Syria. It was called Khoybun movement in 1927. Bazil Nikitin expressed the founding of Khoybun as a new stage of the Kurdish movement and clasified the others as the Kurdish feudals, such as Badrkhan and Sheikh Ubeydullah rebellions as first. The second stage of the Kurdish movements is that they moved on with “Young Turks” for some national Kurdish rights. The first stage of Kurdish movement is which revolted during the First World War and brought the Kurdish issue into the World agenda (Nikitin, 1991: 337).

Khoybun roots goes back to 1927 during the era of Memduh Selim Beg who left İstanbul and settled in Syria, he lead the foundation of Khoybun. He struggled to bring together Kurds from Turkey, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Europe and America to establish and develop Khoybun. They met in Bhemdun, Lebanon a summer city, negotiated and called the movement Khoybun. They decided on several articles and declared on common decisions.

1. Khoybun would struggle for an independent Kurdistan
2. Khoybun had targetted to free Turkey Kurdistan and would not interfere in any other country, especially Syria and would not put Lebanon into difficulty.

3. Khoybun would help İhsan Nuri Paşa who had struggled in Ağrı Mountain and who was fighting with the Turkish troops.
4. Khoybun declares that they will have good relation with Armenians, who are neighbours with Kurds for thousands of years.
5. Khoybun would propagandize freedom of Kurds and Kurdistan and further the agenda on international assistance from the world powers (Cemilpaşa, 1991: 67-72).

Aleppo was center of Khoybun. France whom was dominated of Syria did not interfered in Khoybun. However it was founded under its authority, they promised to condone Khoybun movement and its activities. Yet, France agreed with Turkey and turned their face on Kurds that Kurds could not help General İhsan Paşa who was commander of Ağrı mountain rebellion. Additionally, Shah Rıza who was in conflict with Turkey and had led Kurds to enter into Ağrı Mountain from his land, now he also solved his conflict with Turkey. Then he led Turks to turn around Ağrı mountain rebellion, by this way the Turkish troops could defeat the rebellions' troops (Zaza, 1994: 79-80).

Yaşar Kalafat alleges that Khoybuns' first meeting took place in Rewanduz in Seyit Taha's house in 1927. He also adds that this was held with assistance of the British Iraq commissioner Edmonds and Captain Motfoltre in that meeting. Besides, there were many the Kurdish tribe leaders, who took part in the meeting. According to the decisions of Khoybun, the British would help Kurds with money and weapons (Kalafat, 1992: 134-136). Khoybuns' means "ego" and its relation with western Great Powers are worth to be considered.

Khoybun was aristocratic and paternalistic movement that could have relations with Armenians and enjoyed Britain and France good will as well (Bruinessen, 1993: 280).

## **KHOYBUN DIPLOMACY WITH GREAT POWERS**

Khoybun, the Kurdish movement invited Great Britain, The U.S. France and Italy to deliberate on the Kurdish national rights. The struggle was to found a commission to investigate Kemalist assaults on Kurds since 1925. The commission would find solution for Kemalists; the new the Turkish states of Ankara unlimited attacks on the Kurdish rights as well (Bedirhan, 1994: 54).

Khoybun not only in Kurdistan, but also in the U.S. and other foreign countries was effective (Chirguh, 2009: 74). However, Turkey new state government had good relations with Great Britain, France and Iran was putting Kurds into a difficulty and with assistance of these powers 60.000 of the Turkish troops attacked 15.000 the Kurdish troops of Ağrı rebellion (Chirguh, 2009: 81). Khoybun aimed to introduce the Kurdish issue to external powers. For these reason, it founded several branches in Syria, Lebanon, the U.S. and many other European countries (Celil, et al, 1998: 174).

The Turkish government and press was making propaganda and accused the Kurdish movement of being imperialist powers tool for utilizing Kurds against the Turkish government. Turkish Ankara government added Khoybun to the black list of imperialist agent against Turkey. Khoybun replied to these accusations that "Khoybun is not a political tool in hands of foreign states. The only aim of Khoybun is to free the Kurdish nation from the Turkish domination. Khoybun movement struggle is for this aim and its powers is its own" (Sasuni, 1992: 278).

Khoybun looked for external support since its foundation from 1927 and gave special importance to international propaganda to support Ağrı rebellion. All its propaganda was against the Turkish government. This maybe was because of the Khoybun movement founders, who had faced with Kemalist "iron hand" policies during Sheikh Said rebellion. This was the Turkish natinalist attitude against the Kurdish issue. Therefore, the movement opened its branches in Cairo, Beirut, Paris, Detroit and Philadelphia to propagandize the Kurdish issue in World agenda. The effective people in this movement were Badrkhans and Dr. Sükrü Mehmet. The Ağrı rebellion had already started, while Khoybun was carrying out its diplomacy (Sasuni, 1992: 202-203). İhsan Nuri was appointed by Khoybun movement as the general

commander of Ağrı rebellion. Khoybun declared that they would support revolution with weapons and also sent a press for publications. Two newspapers were publishing, which were propagandizing the rebellion (Ağrı and Gaziya Welat). Additionally, a journal named "Ağrı Spread Fire" also aimed to propagandize the rebellion. These newspapers and journal were also sending abroad for some centers to inform them about the Kurdish rebellion (Bayrak, 1994: 89).

Khoybun propaganda was increasing day by day. The Turkish government stopped deportation, which started after Sheikh Said rebellion and declared general amnesty for those who had left the country and founded Khoybun movement or joined it later in Syria and Lebanon. Besides, the government offered a rank to İhsan Nuri in Europe and general amnesty for his militants. İhsan Nuri refused this offers and declared his devotion to the Khoybun movement. In addition to this Khoybun utilized the Turkish government proposals as propaganda, which were offered to İhsan Nuri Paşa. For these reasons the movement published many journals and newspapers and spreaded them around the World (Bayrak, 1994: 89). Thus, Khoybun used all opportunities to propagandize and inform the Kurdish issue to the international agenda and insisted on the Kurdish rights.

Khoybun was replying to the Turkish Ankara government claims that Khoybun was imperialist movement. Therefore, in 9 April of 1928 declared a written statement, composed of 12 articles and massacre of Kurds in Turkey, was published as report to inform the the World international agenda about Kurds. In addition to these, a report published by Süreyya Badrkhan with nick name of Dr. Bletch Shirguh in Philadelphia. Named "The Case of Kurdistan against Turkey" it is a modern the Kurdish movement history (Sasuni, 1992: 174-241).

Khoybun invited World Great Powers with intent to inform them about the Kurdish national rights and the Turkish government attitude and the Kurdish rebellion against the Turkish authority. In addition to that they expressed the Turkish propaganda and their misinformation about Kurds in Europe and the U.S. They demanded the World Great Powers to come and see the Kurdish nation and witness the conditions.

Especially, they wanted delegations to come from the U.S. and Europe that League of Nations should not be quite against Kurds situation (Bayrak, 1994: 40-55).

Kurds were well aware of international powers influence and therefore they insisted on publication to inform the World in several languages and tell them directly. Consequently, Khoybun published a journal in three languages; English, French and Arabic, in the 1930s that it had clarified the Kurdish rebellion with name of "the Kurdish issue". They had intended to make a public mind and inform the World (Silopi, 1969: 116-120).

The Turkish government always accused the Kurdish of movement Khoybun as an imperialistic movement and aimed to weak Ağrı rebellion and in that propaganda to break the rebellion powers and its resistance. Besides, it alleged that Soviet Union assisted anti-government powers including Khoybun movement. Burkay also claims that France was a supporter of Khoybun, since it had been founded under its control. It was logical to say that France was supporting Khoybun; Since France was threatening Turkey with Khoybun to solve its conflict with the Turkish government on Hatay district (Burkay, 1978: 106).

Sasuni declined all these claims of assistance and says that the Kurdish movement did not get any aid from foreign states. On the contrary he claims that the Turkish-Soviet Union and the Turkish-Iranian cooperation led Kurds to be defeated against government. The British in Iraq and France in Syria were opposing to this movement and they prevented any help to come from south to Khoybun. The Great Powers attitude to towards the Kurdish movement Khoybun led them to accuse each others for assistance. However, both sides the Soviet Union and the British had no documents to prove that they had assisted the Kurdish movement (Sasuni, 1992: 225-226). The Khoybun propaganda yielded good results in Europe and second international community, which met in Zurich and as a result of Khoybun activities, they declared that Kurds are suppressed by Turks and protested Turkey and accused of with killing of Kurds. The executive council called on the World to be aware of the Turkish government attitude for what it did to Kurds (Jwaideh, 1961:624).

Khoybun efforts of demanding assistance from Great Powers continued during 1927-1934 and they struggled to get assistance in several ways. Yet, they dedicated special effort towards publications aimed at inform Great Powers publics and convince governments. For these reasons Khoybun made seventy publications (Nikitin, 1991: 358).

The Kurdish rebellion Ađrı was a Khoybun institution. However, not Khoybun, but weakening of Ađrı rebellion, affected Khoybun. International Great Powers had good relations with Turkey and later they preferred Turkey to the Kurdish movement. Therefore, this attitude put out hopes of the Kurdish movements' external aid and it became powerless against Turkey.

### **THE KHOYBUN RELATIONS WITH ARMENIANS**

The Armenian-Kurdish relations changed from accusations to cooperations. Armenians claimed and propagandized that Kurds had exiled Armenians with Turks by force and this attitude of Armenians made Kurds seem cruel in the Europe; where peace conferences were taking place. However, Şerif Paşa the Kurdish representative in Paris had attempted to establish relations with Armenian during Paris peace conference and agreed on some basic rights of both nations that they accepted each others' rights. Yet, the maps that Armenian delegations presented to the Paris peace conference committee angered Kurds. Kemalists also propagandized that "Kurdistan is becoming Armenia" and with that anti-propaganda they wanted to pull Kurds to his side.

After Sheikh Said rebellion Dr. Sükrü Mehmet and other the Kurdish nationalists met with İskender Bey-leader of the Kurdish national party (Kurd Millet Fırkası) and agreed on a conference. İskender Bey's close relations with Armenia were a result of his closeness to Şerif Paşa and Boghos Nubar Paşa, who had agreed in Paris. This closeness facilitated conditions for İskender Bey to have dialogue with them and reach an agreement, Armenian would stop anti-propaganda against Kurds in Europe that Kurds had killed Armenians with Turks. In addition to this, Armenian publication would propagandize the Kurdish issue in the U.S. and Europe. Moreover, they would help Kurds to be gathered for a community and they would leave their

claims on the Kurdish area that they had claimed that it was Armenian land (Silopi, 1969: 107-110).

Armenian Dashnak had an important role in the Armenian-Kurdish relations. In 1924 Armenian Dashnak and the Kurdish National Committee agreed on borders that had been determined in the Sévres Treaty (Sasuni, 1992: 184). İskender Bey, the Kurdish national Committee also led Armenian to stop the anti-Kurdish propaganda in Europe and the U.S. as well. On the contrary, Armenian press would propagandize the Kurdish issue in the World agenda.

As Qasimlo mentions one of Armenian leaders F. Papazyan also took part in Khoybun foundation negotiations. However, he was not able to help Kurds. In addition to this Dr. Qasimlo criticizes Khoybun that it was Dashnak party, which was Armenian nationalists and his policy was against Soviet Union. Therefore, it was controlling Khoybun with the British-French cooperation (Qasimlo, 1991: 62). In the negotiations foundation discussions had continued over Khoybun leadership, between Celadet Ali Badrkhan, Şahinzade Mustafa, Abdulkерim and Memduh Selim Bey. Majority of the Kurdish members rejected for Papazyan leadership and therefore some Armenians and Kurds as well wanted to expell Ali Riza (Sheikh Said Son) from Khoybun. After this attitude Ali Riza and his supportes resigned from Khoybun.

Dashnak Armenian nationalist attitude of being against Soviet Union and being pro-Westerns and its close relations with Khoybun, which managed the Ağrı rebellion, put Kurds into difficulty. The reason for this was, Soviet Union claimed that Ağrı rebellion is pro-imperialist uprising and prevented Armenian in Soviet Union Russia to help Ağrı rebellion movement. Kurds in Russia also were prevented from helping Ağrı rebellion. In 1932-1939 the Armenian-Kurdish relations were not as before. This meant that the Kurdish-Russian improved and this completely led to dissolution of ties between the Armenian-Kurdish. Soviet Russia did not want to see Dashnak behind Kurds and Kurds also reliazed that, they had to break their ties with Dashnaks. Finally, the Armenian-Kurdish relations, which continued for 25 years

had completely broken in 1946 by establishment of Mahabat the Kurdish republic (Alakom, 1998: 91-92).

Khoybun relations with Dashnak, which was opposite to Soviet Union, prevented Soviet Union from helping the Kurdish movement. In addition to this, the British and the French relations with new the Turkish government also prevented Allies powers from helping Kurds as well. Therefore, the Great Powers left the Kurds alone, with their fates.

### **THE TURKISH-IRANIAN AGREEMENT OVER AĞRI REBELLION AND ZILAN MASSACRE**

Ağrı rebellion started in the 1927 and ended in 1930. The rebellion was under the control of military forces of the Khoybun movement in 1927. İhsan Nuri was an ex-commander of the Ottoman state army and held many positions in the army during his term. The Great Power interference in the rebellion is related to Khoybun movement, which was effective in diplomacy and finally joined to the Mahabat Kurdish republic in Iran (Cemilpaşa, 1991: 74-80).

Ağrı rebellion was the second activity of Khoybun beside its international diplomacy. Khoybun struggled to bring tribes together to join to the rebellion. Khoybun appointed İhsan Nuri as commander of the national movement and military delegation and it would help Ağrı revolt as much as it can (Bayrak, 1994: 89).

Khoybun sent weapons and also print machine to propagandize the rebellion activities. "Ağrı" and "Gaziya Welat" were two newspapers that published by Ağrı rebellion. In addition to this "Ağrı ateş yağıdırıyor" was also a journal that was published (Nuri Paşa, 1992: 29).

Ağrı rebellion was organized by national the Kurdish movement, Khoybun. The movement took an oath against only Turks and had good relations with neighbours; Iran, Iraq and Syria. Under presidency of İbrahim Heskê Tellî a civilian administration branch was established, The Kurdish flag was hoisted and for the first time Kurds reached the highest rank of union and organization. The Turkish government offered an agreement to İhsan Nuri and proposed a high rank government

office. However, he refused and stood against the government. On the contrary İhsan Nuri sent a letter to League of Nations and called them to assist the Kurdish nation's independency. The Turkish government difficult situation against Ağrı rebellion and new uprising in Van province, led the Turkish government to exile Kurds by force and more than 3000 Kurds were killed in Zilan valley and hundreds of villages were evacuated by force (Celil, et al, 1998: 172-176).

The Turkish government offered two choices to Iran, that it should attack rebellions or led Turkey to turn behind them and defuse them by force. Iran government in 1930 led the Turkish troops to surpress the Kurdish rebellion. In donig so, the Turkish troops could cut the rebellion networks and in 1930 the Ağrı rebellion was put out with "iron hand" of the Turkish government (Celil, et al, 1998: 177).

### **DERSIM REBELLION AND MASSACRE**

After Ağrı (Ağrı) revolution a new rebellion surfaced in Dersim district. However, the government was in struggle to prevent the rebellion. Several prevention methods were established; new gendarme stations, roads and brigdes to attack the district. Yet, the most important prevention step was the Sadabat Treaty. The treaty was signed between Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan in Geneva, in 1935 and later Iraq also joined this treaty. This treaty led the Sadabat Treaty, which was signed between four countries Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan in 8 July of 1937.

An anti-communist and anti-Kurdish treaty "Sadabat" was agreement for cooperation between states that are ruling over the Kurdish land. The seventh article of treaty was preventing rebellious to attack from one state to another. In addition to this, no political movement could organize in one of these states against any others (Bilgin, 1992: 50-51). Now, that communism was threatening Europe and the U. S. as well. Therefore, the Sadabat treaty was seen as anti-Kurdish, but in reality it was an anti-communist strategy, to make a bulwark before Union of Soviet Socialist Russia (USSR) to come down to westerns colonies in the Middle East and Near East countries. Therefore, Kurds had lost their chance to organize in any neighbours countries as a result of this treaty. The Kurdish national movements now had been surrounded in the region.

Dersim rebellion was far away from any external assistance. However, the Turkish government claimed that France had assisted Dersim rebellion since they owed a favour to the Kurds (O' Ballence, 1973: 239). Another claim about France helping Dersim rebellion is that, a group of the Kurdish, who had took place in Sheikh Said rebellion and fled to Syria had returned to North of Kurdistan. However, the group was ambushed in Silvan and including Sheikh Said big brother and Cemilê Seyda were tripped in wheat field was burned under heap of wheat. Since that group had came from Syria, where was under France authority, France was blamed with helping of Dersim rebellion. Besides, France press was following this rebellion very closely. Therefore, this attitude led the claims that France had helped Seyit Rıza, Dersim movement (Arfa, 1966: 43). However, Seyit Rıza was demanding help from the G. Britain not from France. The G. Britain and the U.S. also claimed that Soviet Union supported Dersim rebellion. El İhbar news paper in 1938 published in London alleged that Soviet Union supported Dersim rebellion with weapons and money (Akgül, 1992: 106-113). However, Seyit Rıza sent a letter to the British foreign minister for assistance. In this letter Seyit Rıza was grousing the Turkish government to the British that the Turkish government assimilates Kurds, forbid their language and expel them to west of Anatolia. He concluded that because of these reason, they had revolt against the government and demanded their help for resistance (Kahraman, 2004: 325-326).

The world agenda was Hitler policy. Therefore, Seyit Rıza demand of help from Britain, France and the U.S. with a letter was censored by the Turkish government and the World had no information from Dersim rebellion. Because comparing to Hitler of Germany; the Kurdish issue was not interested by Western Powers. The British had delivered the letter of Seyit Rıza to the Turkish government via of their İstanbul consulate (Kahraman, 2004: 325). After delivering the letters Seyit Rıza was arrested and the rebellion was put out. After suppressing the rebellion, Nuri Dersimi had a special effort to inform Kurds in Dersim and the Turkish government massacres against them. For these reasons he sent letters to Britain, France, the U.S. and League of Nations that to protest Turkey for its oppression against Kurds (Dersimi, 1992:

296-299). However, he could not make campaign against Turkey. He personally used an effort and his effectiveness was as much as any other the Kurdish nationalist leaders.

### **THE KURDISH MOVEMENT LOST ITS EFFECTIVITY**

After Dersim rebellion suppression, the Kurdish national movements lost their powers to struggle against the Turkish government. The "iron hand" of Kemalist regime and Turkification policies prevent new the Kurdish movements to wake up. There were many reasons for these; the Second World War was one these reasons. Since that Europeans were struggling with each other and had not concerned about Dersim rebellion and massacre. That is why they did not interfered into Turkey domestic issue the Kurdish problem and Dersim issue. Hitler and Mussolini that is two new fascist threats in Europe did not let Great Powers to have information about Kurds. During this term the Turkish government exiled thousands of Kurds in Dersim by force, displaced thousands of Kurds and settled them in western of Anatolia. Therefore, it was difficult for Kurds to reorganize for an uprising.

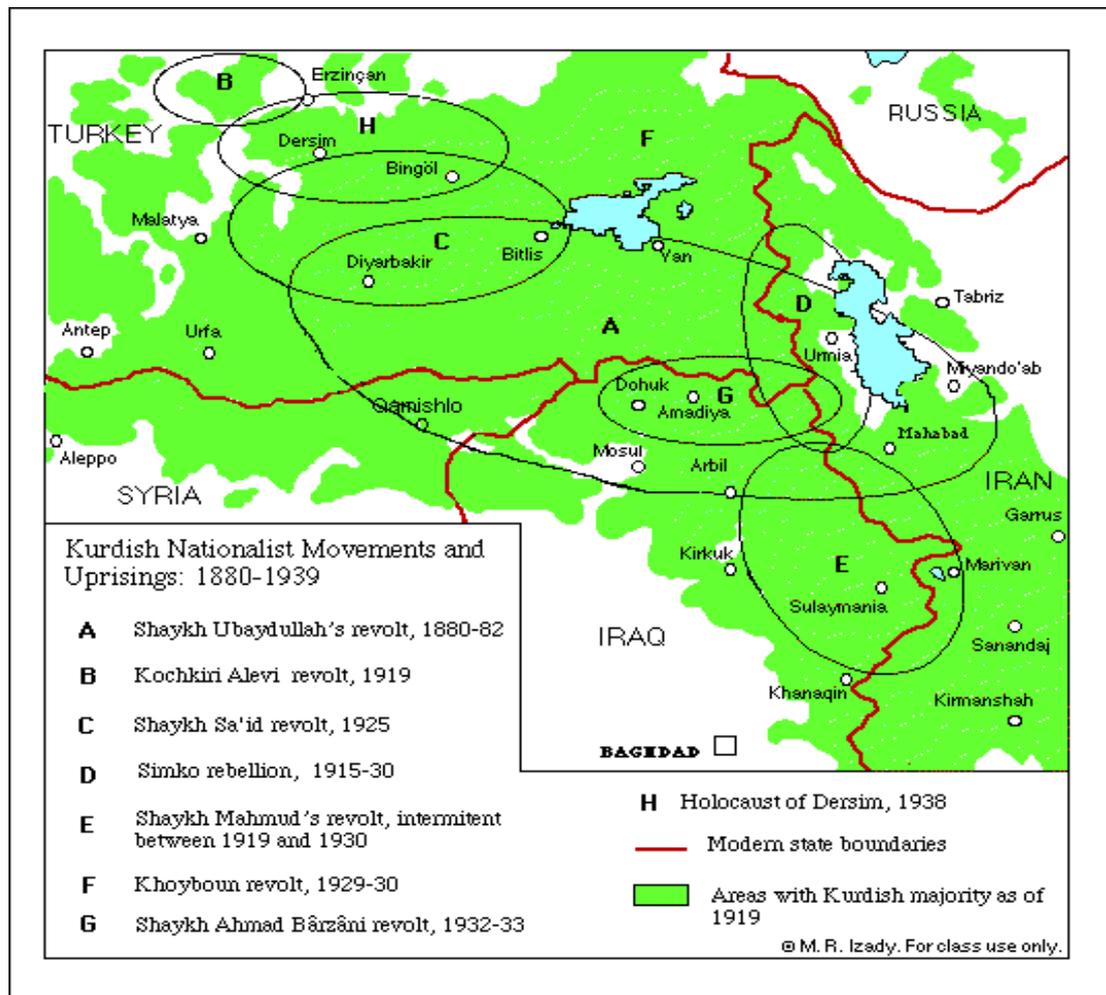
The Kurds who could escape from Sheikh Said and Dersim rebellion fled Syria and who could escape from Ağrı rebellion fled to Iraq and Iran. They took part in Komel movement in Iran. Cemilpaşa family, Kadı Molla, Vahap who were from Turkey Kurds and other Kurds signed an agreement in the point of three borders (Iran, Iraq and Turkey), Three Borders Agreement (Peymana Sêsînor) in 1944 in Dilanbar mountain (Eagleton, 1990: 92). This was a basic for Mahabat the Kurdish republic that had founded in 1946 and demolished after 11 months.

Komel movement changed its name as Kurdistan Democratic Party in 1945 with help of Soviet Union and declared Mahabat the Kurdish Republic. Khoybun annexed to Mahabat republic and Kurds had liked Soviet Union. This attitude discomforted Western Allies powers. Dashnak leaders Ropen Paşa and Harac Papazyan visited Khoybun and told the movement presidency that their closeness with Soviet Union had discomforted the Great Britain and the U.S. and offered them to have relations with the U.S. In addition to this they they had threatened Kurds with fate of Armenians that Turks had done against them. However, Khoybun presidency refused these

proposals and explained that Soviet Union had assisted the Kurdish Mahabat republic to declare its independency. They said that imperialist had not helped them and Soviet Union had assisted them to establish Mahabat the Kurdish Republic. Therefore, Kurds had preferred Soviet Union to imperialist powers; the Great Britain and the U.S (Silopi, 1969: 179-181).

The Kurdish nationalists struggled to bring the Kurdish issue into the World agenda and for many reasons used their efforts to remind the Kurdish issue to the Western Great Powers. Badrkhan family, who had settled in Syria and Lebanon, wrote a memorandum in 30 August, 1943 that clarified the Kurdish rights and emphasized for an independency of the Kurdish states (Jwaideh, 1961: 792-803). Moreover, in 30 March of 1945 Dr. Ahmet Nafiz wrote a memorandum on behalf of the Kurdish League and sent it to San Francisco conference via of Syria-Lebanon the American consulate George Wadsworth. In his memorandum he focused on the Kurdish rights and autonomy. In addition to this he proposed an international commission to search the Kurdish issue (Bayrak, 1993: 581-598).

In 1945 İhsan Nuri Paşa the commander of Ağrı rebellion sent a letter to Great Powers. The aim was to give the Kurdish representatives rights to speak in San Francisco conference and in the same time year the Kurdish national movement sent a letter to United Nation and explained that the peace in the Middle East is connecting to solving the Kurdish issue. However, the UN and Westerns Great Powers did not consider on the Kurdish demands.



<http://www.sipankurdistan.tripod.com/>

Map: 6. 1. The Kurdish Nationalist Movements and Uprisings: 1880-1939

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

My hypotheses were that weakening of the Ottoman Empire and its centralization policies provoked the Kurdish rebellions and the Kurdish nationalist movements. However, international dimension of the Kurdish national movements are important circumstances for understanding the movements in the term under study. Additionally, Great Powers interference into the Ottoman Empire's internal affairs and the Kurdish movement's relations with the Great Powers directly influenced the

Kurdish nationalist movements under the Ottoman Empire. However, tribal nationalism and loyalty to the Ottoman Empire were obstacles for the Kurdish nationalist movements. The Kurdish national movement fragmentation and division between tribes could not bring success to the Kurdish movements. Additionally, Great Powers' attitude of having good relations with Mustafa Kemal's *Misak-ı Milli* (National Contract) movement and signing the two important agreements the Sévres and Lausanne made Kurds stateless.

During this study three major components had played important roles for the Kurdish issue to become and gain an international dimension of the Kurdish issue. The first one is the Kurdish movements itself; the second one is the Turkish national movement and the New Turkish State, republic policies. The most important and the third component is the Great Powers and especially the major actors Great Britain, France and Russia. Generally, the effects of the French revolution were seen on all around the World and on the Kurdish society as well. As a prevention of this influence the Ottoman centralization policies broke the relations between Ottoman Empire and Kurds. The Kurdish Issue came into existence by Great Powers interference of Ottoman Empire internal affairs. Since these powers had not seen their interests in Kurds, they did not solve the Kurdish issue and left the Kurds of Turkey to the New Turkish state. The feudal Kurdish tribes and regional movements such as Badrkhan and Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri rebellions weakened the Kurdish society against Ottoman Empire. Yet, these movements led the Kurdish national awakening, which had played important roles in the first and second quarters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Kurdish national movements.

Before and after the First World War, however the struggles were seen as for founding new states based on ethnic origin and nationalities, but in reality western Great powers, who were determining the conjuncture of the World aimed their interest as the first target. The Kurdish movements tried to benefit from the cases, but they were utilized by both side Western Great Powers and the Turkish National Movement as well. Therefore, the Kurdish issue in Turkey and its international dimension is between three major components crosswise and dual relations that can be classified as following; the Turkish nationalism, that is Kemalists relations with

Great Powers and Kurds. Besides, the Kurdish movements relations with Great Powers and the Turkish nationalists, finally, the powerful actor of the term Great Britain relations with both Kurds and Turks' nationalist, which were based on dual interests and international conjuncture. However, the results of these relations effects were not equal and similar. For instance, sometimes one or two of these components were effective than others.

Kurds rebelled against the Ottomans and Republic of Turkey for several times and with expectation of getting external assistance. However, the Great Powers had known Kurds well that they are not ready for independency. Utilized, fragmented and unsystematic the Kurdish movements without external aid had no chance to stand before systematic armies. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the Kurdish movements' common feature was that they were tribal more than national. The leaders of these uprisings were the Kurdish feudals Sheikhs and Aghas. Besides, sometimes those who rebelled were officers and governors in the Ottoman Empire.

Imperialist Great Powers tried to utilize the Kurdish movements rebellions, which started by the Kurdish feudal leaders. By this way Great Powers created their influence by using these powers. Since these movements were not systematic in the way of structure and plans, they had a negative effect on the Kurdish national movements such as the SRK, Azadi and Khoybun movements. However these movements were under presidency of famous leaders; yet, they were not ready in the way of organization and politics. Therefore, these movements were representing the Kurdish feudalism and bourgeois. Mostly, these leaders were not aware of national sensitivity and far away from the Kurdish public.

During the 1918-1920, the British-Kurdish relations played an important role for the Kurdish issue, but during 1921-1923 the British-Turkish Kemalist government relations improved and except Mosul issue they solved their other problems and conflicts. Britain was just observing the Kurdish nationalists and the Turkish nationalists' relations and utilizing both sides on behalf of its interests. After the Lausanne Treaty, the Kurdish-Turkish' nationalist relations gained regional results than international.

For decades Kurds fought against Turks for their national rights. The aim was to gain their cultural, political and economical rights. However, while struggling for these rights Kurds passed through many stages. Kurds were socially and politically fragmented society. Therefore, Kurds were utilized as tools against Turkey and cheated with empty promises of Mustafa Kemal.

Three components dimensional relations and results were also changable according to their effects of being passive and active. In case of the Kurdish national movements' relations with Britain, the Kurdish nationalists were passive, since the British were activating them according to its political interests. As a result this, the Kurdish issue in the international agenda was shaped according to the British will. The British and Turkish nationalists were struggling to be active in the Kurdish issue and utilize it for their politics.

In this study the relation between the Turkish nationalist and the British are clear and these relations led the Kurdish issue to become an international issue. Russians' October revolution of 1917 weakened Soviet Union to be effective during the term after the First World War in the Sévres and Lausanne treaties. The Kurdish policy of the British, which was based on its interest, indicates that the British interest is in the Kurdish issue as much as it affects its interest. Of course this was not a case only for Britain, but for other Great powers as well. When Great powers saw that Kemalists are more profitable for them than Kurds, they did not hesitate to prefer Kemalists to Kurds. This case also shows that Western Great Powers had lost their confidence in Kurds to be successful against Kemalist systematic power.

The British did not stand behind the Kurdish nationalists for several reasons. Firstly, Kurds had no one leader and united powerful force to affect all Kurds, whereas the Turkish nationalist had a powerful leader. Secondly, Kurds were living as tribe and nomads that it was not appropriate for the British to protect its interests. Thirdly, Kurds had no experience of having an independent state for a long time, while Turks had this experience and were luckier than Kurds. Fourthly, the Kurdish nationalist movements were struggling to affect public. Yet, the Turkish nationalist and

especially Mustafa Kemal was not only trying to affect the Turkish public but also he was using high effort to get Kurds assistance. In some extend with empty promises, he was successful. Mustafa Kemal was fighting with the Kurdish nationalist at the same time. The best of this struggle was in international arena.

The Kurdish issues' international dimension was negative, since Armenian had spreaded anti-propaganda and and claims on Kurds. Therefore, the Turkish nationalist were having difficulty to remove the Kurdish issue from international agenda. That is, the aim of the Turkish nationalist was to convince Great powers for the Kurdish issue, which it is an internal issue more than an international. The fragmentation of the Kurdish movements weakened them against Kemalists as it weakened them against the Ottoman Empire before decades. As a result of this, they lost their credibility in the Europe and being lack of representatives was a sign of this situation. Yet, Mustafa Kemal was increasing his stage and his representatives were stronger than before. By declaration of republic and new problem in Europe such as fascist regimes in Germany and Italy did not let Allied Powers to be aware of Kemalists oppression over Kurds and their attitude in general, which was based on assimilation, expelling and massacres after the Kurdish uprisings. However, the Kurdish movements were unsuccessful against the Turkish nationalist movement, but with uprising declaration of republic; Kurds showed that if the international conjuncture is appropriate they can rebel again.

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