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**THE DILEMMA OF KURDISH NATIONALISM AS A RESULT OF
INTERNATIONAL TREATIES AND FOREIGN OCCUPATIONS BETWEEN
THE YEARS 1850 TO 1930**

By

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Supervisor:

Dr Michael Rapport

**A thesis submitted to the University of Glasgow in fulfillment of the
requirement of the Degree of Master of Philosophy, April 2019.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
THESIS ABSTRACT	v
ABBREVIATIONS	vii
INTRODUCTION	
1. General Background.....	1
2. Thesis Main Question	4
3. Justification	5
4. Thesis objectives	6
5. Thesis Methodology.....	7
6. Thesis Structure.....	15
CHAPTER ONE	
EXISTING LITERATURE ON NATION AND NATIONALISM	16
1.1 Introduction.....	16
1.2 The concepts of ‘Nation’ and Nationalism	17
1.3 Arab and non-Arab Forms of Nationalism.....	22
1.4 Territorial and Pan-Nationalism.....	29
1.5 Conclusion	29
CHAPTER TWO	
INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS IN RELATIONS TO KURDISTAN	31
2. Introduction.....	31
2.1 The Emergence of Otto-Persian Treaties	32
2.1.1 Treaty of Erzurum I of 1823.....	32
2.1.2 Treaty of Erzurum II of 1847	34
2.2 The Treaty of Sevres of 1920.....	38
2.3 Treaty of Lausanne of 1923	48
2.4 The Kurds: A critical appraisal	51
2.5 Conclusion	52
CHAPTER THREE	
HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF KURDISH NATIONAL IDENTITY	54
3.1 Introduction.....	54

3.2 Kurdish Identity and Kurdistan	54
3.2.1 Kurdish Language	55
3.2.2 Kurdish Culture	60
3.2.3 Sufism and Kurdish national identity	66
3.3 Conclusion	69
CHAPTER FOUR	
THE EMERGENCE OF KURDISH ISSUES AND NATIONALISM.....	71
4.1 Introduction	71
4.2 Kurdish Issues	71
4.3 Kurdish Nationalism	79
4.4 Emergence of Kurdish National Awareness	83
4.5. Kurdish Organizations before 1930	94
4.6 Kurdish Newspapers and Magazines before 1930	98
4.7 Kurdish Nationalist Poetry and Revolutions before 1930	103
4.7.1 Kurdish Nationalist Poetry	103
4.7.2 Kurdish Revolutions between 1850-1930	106
4.8 Why Kurdish Nationalism Failed in the early Twentieth Century?.....	107
4.7.1 The development of Kurdish nationalism in northern Kurdistan	108
4.9 Conclusion	116
CONCLUSION	118
BIBLIOGRAPHY	124

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Chnor Jaafar Ahmad

The researcher
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01 April 2019

THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis is discussing the failing Kurdish nationalism between the year 1850 and 1930. The researcher discusses various difficulties faced by the Kurdish nationalism, particularly due to the fact that Kurdistan was occupied by the Ottoman and Persian empires, followed by the arrivals of the British Empire, France and Russians (major allied powers) in the Middle East generally, and Kurdistan particularly. These powers took a great part of Kurdistan and attached them to Turkey, Iraq and Iran. These steps were made by the treaty of Lausanne of 1923, although in the Treaty of Sevres of 1920, the right to establish an independent Kurdish state was recognized for the first time. However, due to the scattered nature of Kurdish nationalism in one hand, and the influence of the major allied powers in the region, the Kurds could not establish an independent nation-state for themselves. Interestingly, the Kurds proved their origin in the region with their distinctive culture, language and geography, but in terms of their nationalist identity, it is imperative to ask whether Kurdish nationalism was able to become a cohesive definition to introduce the Kurds within the frame of an independent state. If not, what went wrong to Kurdish nationalism?

The main objective of the thesis is to show the reader that political goal of Kurdish nationalism is lost, and could not unite all the Kurds, but always depended on the foreign powers to make it live and stand, while these powers let them down. Thus, the Kurds need to rely on itself.

The researcher argues that Kurdish nationalism could not become a united political philosophy that could attract the major allied powers towards the Kurds, and to make them honor their promises to the Kurdish independent state. In spite of the fact the Kurds had a deep-rooted culture in the region different from the Turks, Persians and Arabs, but in terms of awareness and education, the Kurds were to certain degree were illiterate in general. In other words, only few numbers of individuals were educated who could not have a broad influence on the Kurds.

There are four chapters in this thesis, in which the t Chapter One is dedicated for the literature review defining the terms ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism’ in order to serve identifying the Kurds as a nation. Chapter Two, discusses about the relevant international treaties to the Kurds and Kurdistan. Chapter Three addresses Kurdish

nation as a nation and how the elements of nationhood apply to the Kurds. Chapter Four is another important chapter of the thesis, which addresses Kurdish cause. It categorizes Kurdish nationalism into three stages, they are: firstly, Kurdish nationalism during the era of Kurdish dynasties. Secondly, during the era of Kurdish revolutions starting from the revolution of Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri in 1880 until 1908. The third one starts from 1908 until 1930s. The last chapter will be the concluding chapter.

ABBREVIATIONS

CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
KDPI	Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran
WW1	World War One
WW2	World War Two

INTRODUCTION

1. General Background

This thesis begins with one part of a Kurdish poem by Ibrahim Ahmad, a famous Kurdish nationalist poet during the end of twentieth century, which says:

“Before fire worshiping, before being Muslim,
While captive and free,
We were Kurds, and will remain Kurds
I am neither Arab, nor Iranian, nor a mountainous Turk
Not only me alone, but even the history confirms: [that]
I am a Kurd and from Kurdistan,
It is not shame nor pride
Nations’ differences,
It is a decision that the history had made
We are Kurds, and will remain Kurds”¹

Kurdistan is a large geographical region in the Middle East and consists of mountains and high plains. Many primitive terms from ancient history have been used to name it, such as ‘*Mabaina Nahrain*’ i.e. Country between the Two Rivers”. The population of this region considers themselves native Kurds and most of the historic sources are of the view that Kurds and Kurdistan are two complementary terms in the region. The great Greek historian Herodotus referred to the Kurds as the descendants of the Medes, which has nowadays become the national march for the Kurds, as it was written by the Kurdish prominent poet Dildar who said: “We are the generations of Medes and Kay Khusraw, our religion and beliefs are homeland.”²

Today the Kurds are considered the fourth largest nation in the Middle East in terms of numbers, with nearly fifty million people, and are members of multiple branches of Islam, including Sunni Muslims, Shiite Muslims including Alawites, Kakay, Yazidis, Shabak people. They still do not have an independent state for many reasons. Whatever the reasons may be, they can be categorized under two main categories of factors: internal and external facts.

Kurds have a long history consisting of revolutions, political uprisings and armed conflicts against the regional and international forces. Besides that, they have their own famous political figures, and have sacrificed a large number of their people for the sake of freedom and independence for Kurdistan, though never achieved. Two centuries ago,

¹ Umar Maaruf Barzinji., Ibrahim Ahmad: Koi Barhama Shirakani, (Kurdish), (Tra: Ibrahim Ahmad, All his Poems), 1st Edi, Sulaimani, 2007, 68.

² Dildar, Zhianu Barhami (Kurdish), (Tra: His Life and Workings), Sulaimani Publishing, 1969, p. 57.

in other words, which was considered as the golden ages of the Kurdish dynasties, Kurdistan was divided between the Ottoman and the Persian empires. These two empires acted like two major polar influencing dynasties and Kurds lived under their control and were persuaded to join the conflicts against the opposing empire. This situation weakened the Kurdish dynasties and caused disunity, which finally led to their disappearance. The last dynasties to collapse were Baban in 1851 and Botan in 1855. These two dynasties had strong and influential positions economically, culturally and politically in the region.³

This thesis will mainly focus on a specific period related to Kurdish nationalism which starts from the early years of post Baban and Botan eras during the 1850s until 1930. In fact, Kurdish nationalism went through four significant stages during this period. This will be chronologically discussed as follows:

The first stage can be named as “dark years”. This stage started immediately after the collapse of the two last dynasties. In this period, Kurdish society was left with no national ruler. In other words, there were no Kurdish authorities to control the society’s economic, military and political powers. The main governing powers were stemmed from the Ottoman and Persian empires, because the remnants of these dynasties were occupied and became no longer independent. This stage continued for two and half decades for the Kurds to re-gather their powers and reconnect different parts of Kurdistan in the early years of 1880s.

The second stage can be named as “the birth of Kurdish armed revolution” which started in 1880. This revolution was led by Sheikh Ubeydullah of Nehri who was subsequently given the title of “Father of Kurdish Nationalism”. He established the Kurdish Union Organization which successfully gathered all the Kurdish tribes in the region. The main purpose was to establish a strong and widescale union among the Kurds in order to fight against the two empires’ existence in Kurdistan. This revolution continued for over another two and half decades until the establishment of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in 1908, which was the triggering point of the third stage, as follows;

The third stage can be named as the “emergence of Kurdish civil organizations”. In this stage numerous Kurdish civil organizations published journals and newspapers in all

³ Zaki Beg, Muhammad Amin., *Tarikh Addua Al-Imarat Al Kurdiyah fi Ahdil Islami*, (Arabic), (Tra: A History of states and Kurdish emirates in the Islamic Era), Al-Saadat Publishers, Egypt, 1945, pp. 22-25.

Kurdish, Arabic and Turkish languages. The aims of these publications were to enhance Kurdish public awareness about the geography Kurdistan and spread the philosophy of Kurdish nationalism, Kurdish identity, culture, history and Kurdish language to every individual as much as possible. This stage opened the door for Kurdish intellectuals and writers to continue in publications which never stopped until nowadays although it went through different circumstances throughout the twentieth century.⁴

In around the same time, due to the interference of the Russian, British and French forces in the Ottoman Empire's internal affairs which was named at that time as 'the sick man of Europe', the internal control of the empire was shrinking day after another. Besides that, the ethnic minorities lived under the control of the empire were gradually more aware of their status, history, nationalism and identity. This was another factor that led to the end of the Ottoman Empire in 1920s.

When the World War One (hereinafter "WW1") outbreak in 1914, the Russian, British Empire and French forces (hereinafter 'the major allied forces') arrived in the region. During the war, both British and French powers had secretly agreed on dividing the Ottoman's lost-territories in which Kurdistan was immensely part of the agreement. The agreement called Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916.⁵

Soon after the agreement, the Kurds realized that they have the opportunity to establish their own independent nation-state like the other Arab states in the region. On that ground, they asked for their rights of independent Kurdish state to be recognized as any other nation-state in the early twentieth century. However, this right was not achieved due to the implementation of the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 and subsequent treaties of Sevres of 1920⁶ and Lausanne 1923 by the allied forces.⁷ This situation led Kurdish nationalism to enter into the fourth stage.

As to the fourth stage, Kurdish nationalism emerged in the form of civil and armed revolutions and against two frontiers. These frontiers were regional which consisted of the Turks, Arabs and Persians, and international, which consisted of Russian,

⁴ Abubaker, A. Othman, *Kurdu Kurdistan la komala Wtareki Mezhuida* [Tra; Kurds and Kurdistan in a number of historical speeches], 1st Edi, Ministry of Education Press, 2005, pp. 13-18

⁵ Chomsky, N. 'Sykes-Picot Is Failing', Interview, July, 2013, No. 2029, Al-Akhbar English at <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/16132>, re-visited on 03 April 2014.

⁶ 'Tucker, Spencer and Roberts, Priscilla Mary., Vol. 4 WW1', *Encyclopedia, World War One*. ABC-CLIO, 2005, pp. 1079-1080.

⁷ Page, Mevin E., *Colonialism, An international Social, Cultural, and Political Encyclopedia*, ABC-CLIO, 2003, p. 527.

British and French forces. The main aims of these revolutions were to establish an independent Kurdish nation in the region. The most popular revolutions were, firstly, the revolution led by Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji in Southern Kurdistan in 1921. Secondly, the revolution led by Sheikh Said Piran in Northern Kurdistan in early 1920s which finally ended upon executing him in 1925. Thirdly, the revolution led by Simko Shikak in Eastern Kurdistan throughout 1920s which ended in 1930.⁸

This thesis explores the abovementioned four stages in details. In other words, it will examine the Kurdish political cause and Kurdish nationalism that went through these four stages from the second half of the nineteenth century until 1930s in terms of both revolutionary and cultural perspectives.

2. Thesis Main Question

As previously mentioned, the current state of the Kurdish people has become one of the major ethnic issues known worldwide. This issue originally stems from the lack of owning any independent and sovereign state that defines its national, ethnic and geographical identity within a proper described boundary on the map. Although the right to establish an independent sovereign state was granted to the Kurds according to the Treaty of Sevres 1920, this status was subsequently withdrawn in the Treaty of Lausanne 1923.

Hence, the thesis' main question is as follows:

Why were the rights of an independent Kurdish state provided under Treaty of Sevres 1920 were removed in its subsequent Treaty of Lausanne 1923, which became an official instrument that led to partitioning Kurdistan until now? What went wrong that hindered the establishment of Kurdistan?

To answer the above question, it is imperative to address whether the flaws of Kurdish nationalism were factors for not achieving Kurdish independence. This can be done through examining Kurdish history from 1850 to 1930, in which several Kurdish revolutions took place. In addition, other internal and external factors are important to consider. Once all these factors have been examined, then we can understand the nature of Kurdish nationalism.

⁸ Khwaja, Ahmad., Chim Di (Kurdi), (Tra: What I saw!), 1st Edi, Shafiq Publishing, Baghdad, 1968, p.130.

In line with Kurdish nationalism, the thesis will examine further whether there was a lack of a prominent and internationally known charismatic Kurdish political figure, the lack of an internationally supported Kurdish lobby, and whether the internal disunity and political discrepancies inside Kurdistan were in fact strenuous conditions that hampered the Kurds in imposing their rights to an independent state. The researcher will also examine whether regional political conditions were impeding factors for the Kurds, while at the same time being supportive factors for the Balfour Declaration 1917.

3. Justification

There are three justifications for the current thesis topic, as follows:

Firstly, looking for sources and information available in British libraries, and those written by non-Kurdish writers on this current thesis topic was challenging, and Kurdish readers are not aware of such sources until recent years. Kurdish writers have covered various topics on Kurdish issues, but when they reached the issues covered in this thesis, they addressed them in a skeptical way with little reference to the non-Kurdish writers' views and texts. In other words, they bypassed the issue without going into too much detail due to their lack of access to the materials here in the UK as the main references for writing. In addition to this, one of the barriers was the language barrier, therefore, they avoided dealing with this thesis question in order not to quote statements incorrectly. In fact, the language barrier caused problems and happened on a number of occasions. The researcher identified mistakes in texts translated from English into Kurdish. For example, occasionally, the years and the names were quoted incorrectly. Thus, in order to move past this skepticism, the researcher is confident that addressing the current thesis question is timely, valid and necessary, and directly addresses the controversial issue of Kurdish nationalism, and will further enrich Kurdish resources in the United Kingdom. It is nonetheless important to state that these foreign sources had impartial perspectives on the Kurdish nation; they did not favor one group over another, and they translated what they saw into the writings. Their writings, thus, get to the heart of Kurdish issues and in an objective way. Their impartialities can become a great source for academic writings.

Secondly, neither the details nor any similarities to this thesis topic have been addressed previously by Kurdish historians and writers at the academic and higher education levels in any universities inside Kurdistan, despite covering the same period in history that the

current thesis (i.e. between 1850-1930). They have discussed the same treaties that this thesis examines, but they referred to them only if they were relevant to their research question. This means that they did not extend their analysis on these treaties, particularly when examining how these treaties were created by the major allied powers that were not in favor of an independent Kurdish nation.

It is worth mentioning that some Kurdish writers took a narrative approach in explaining the incidents relevant to the current thesis topic. This is not the case for the researcher. The originality of the topic can be clearly seen from the nature of the thesis question itself which required the researcher to conduct a thorough, impartial and systematic analysis of all the factors relevant to the thesis question. This approach will produce a conclusion that contributes to the literature of Kurdish nationalism.

4. Thesis objectives

Upon addressing the thesis main question, the researcher aims to reveal significant historical issues related to the Kurds from two perspectives, they are namely, external and internal factors. The former one is related to the control of the external powers by the allied countries in general, and regional powers that surrounded the great Kurdistan area. These regional powers approached the major allied powers to protect their interests. The internal factors, on the other hand, are related to the Kurdish internal matters attached to Kurdish nationalism. The Kurds generally had gone through long-lasting internal divergence that weakened them to the degree of being unable to stand in front of both the major allied powers and regional powers. Such divergence could be as a result of geographical, cultural and religious factors that stopped the rise of a charismatic national symbol capable of uniting the Kurdish people.

In the context of Kurdish nationalism, as a political principle, it is important to recognise the character of Kurdish nationalism against the background of its political role in response to all the international conflicts that took place in Kurdistan. Therefore, the researcher aims to find out whether the lack of awareness of a vivid Kurdish nationalism, which also comprises Kurdish identity, compelling external factors or all these circumstances together contributed to the weaknesses of Kurdish nationalism in nature. As previously mentioned, there are factors indicating that the Kurds live on a land that has considerably significant geopolitical and socioeconomic element, yet the researcher

examines whether or not these were exploited as reliable factors to achieve independence.

5. Thesis Methodology

In the current thesis, the researcher investigates what occurred in Kurdistan between the years 1850s and 1930 in order to find a convincing academic answer for why Kurdistan was not formed. In other words, this thesis focuses on the key historical facts and incidents that took place at that time. In this context, Burns suggested that “History is a manifold record, evaluation, systematic analysis and synthesis of evidence concerning human achievement. It is not a list of chronological events; it is rather an integrated account of the relationships between persons, events, times and places”.⁹ To apply Burns’s statement into the thesis, the researcher argues that modern Kurdish history does not entail a mere list of chronological events to mention, otherwise it would become a story text. It is far greater than this stage, as analysis is needed for each stage, time, period and persons, and why these persons acted in particular way. Once all these factors are understood, then the puzzle of Kurdish nationalism in the early twentieth century will be solved.

Thus, for this type of research the researcher needs to employ a ‘qualitative approach’ within a ‘case study’ technique. Before explaining how the current thesis applies the qualitative approach, it will be more realistic to understand qualitative research through the following questions: What is qualitative research? What is the aim? What does the researcher need to do? And how does it serve the researcher to find answers for the current thesis? All are discussed below:

As to the first question, Key in his book had defined qualitative research “...as a generic term for investigative methodologies which can bring emphasis on the enquiry at variables in the natural setting in which they are found”.¹⁰ Additionally, Sherman

⁹ Historical research enables the researchers to understand the past and the present in the light of the past. It is an act of reconstruction, undertaken in a spirit of critical inquiry and prevents us from reinventing the wheel. Thus, those involved in historical education research cannot create new data and must work with what already exists although some of it may be unknown at the start of the research and only comes to light through the investigation. Much historical research is conducted in detective-like fashion, wearable information is attracted to a source, those knowledgeable about the event or situation contracted and used as informants and documents located. In general, quality historical research depends on sufficient primary data rather than secondary data. Burns, Robert B., Introduction to research methods, Sage, London, 1990, pp. 481-486.

¹⁰ Key, James P., Research Design in Occupational Education, Oklahoma State University, 1997, at <http://www.okstate.edu/ag/agedcm4h/academic/aged5980a/5980/newpage21.htm>, re-visited on 16 May

quoted Edson's argument that "... 'qualitative research' is an enquiry in a form of 'moral discourse' which means an attempt to understand ourselves in relation to the larger world relevant to a particular matter".¹¹

Mason provided a much simpler explanation by saying that:

"...qualitative research is grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly 'interpretivist' in the sense that it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced based on two methods: the first one is methods of data generation which are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced. The second one is methods of analysis and explanation building which involve understandings of complexity, detail and context."¹²

Since the current thesis takes a qualitative approach, the researcher aims to seek answers to the question, what went wrong in Kurdish nationalism in the early decades of twentieth century? The researcher depends on collecting primary sources in order to produce findings that were not determined in advance by anyone else, sources which are related to the nature of Kurdish nationalism in the early twentieth century.

As to the third question; what does the researcher need to do? The researcher implements Mason's approach of qualitative research. According to Mason, the following steps must be taken by the researcher in order to effectively contribute to the relevant literature of a particular topic:

Firstly, conduct systematic and rigorous research. This means that the researcher has to use key principles of research design such as linking the research questions to the methodological approaches, considering issues of analysis and data collection as integrated and being clear about the purposes of the research.

Secondly, the research should produce social explanations to intellectual puzzles, like the puzzle of Kurdish issues that have lasted for a century. Moreover, the researcher

2016. This approach is frequently criticized for not allowing generalizations to be made, and this argument has some validity. However, other observers argue that 'generalisability' need not be a problem in qualitative research'. Still, if we contrast case study research with larger quantitative comparative studies there is an apparent trade-off between their respective advantages. See also "*Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide*", Module 1, Qualitative Research Methods Overview, Family Health International, p. 1, at <http://www.ccs.neu.edu/course/is4800sp12/resources/qualmethods.pdf>, re-visited on 20 May 2016.

¹¹ Sherman, Robert R. & Webb, Rodman B., *Qualitative Research In Education*, USA, Routledge, University of Florida, 1988, at p. 2. See also Trochim, William M.K., *Research Methods Knowledge Base*, 2006, Web Center for Social Research Methods. Available at <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/order.php>, re-visited on 15 May 2016.

¹² Mason, J., *Qualitative Researching*, London, Sage, 1996. p.4.

is explicit about the rationales that have produced these explanations through a selection of events for analysis, and what the main role of the researcher is in the findings.¹³

Based on the above explanations, the researcher set the thesis' methodology through employing the data classification discusses in the following section.

The researcher can only depend on one type of sources; that is documents,¹⁴ which can be primary or secondary sources. For example, for a document to be a primary source, it should be either a copy of a legal document, or any work, letter or diary written by a witness to the events, but the secondary sources are second-hand versions and therefore less immediate. Nevertheless, secondary sources can be used as back-up data and when primary data is not available. Detailed below is how the researcher categorised the useful and dependable data.

i. Primary sources

Primary sources comprise the most important component of the thesis. Generally, as Burns suggested that "...for primary sources documents are the most common, which range from newspapers and committee reports to songs, tales and ballads, and to more personal diaries, letters and memories. Burns further suggested that some documents are intentional, produced for public consumption, while others are unpremeditated, written for personal use, the intended different purpose of the various types of document affect the validity of the information they contain."¹⁵

In line with the above, the researcher mainly referred to the documents discussing Kurdish nationalism, the political circumstances of the region including Arabs and Turkish nationalism, and the stands of the wining major allied powers of WW1 and

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Normally, there are four types of data sources to be used in historical research; documents, oral records, artefacts and quantitative records. The researcher states that firstly, the current thesis' question seeking answers to issues related to Kurdish nationalism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there is no oral record narrating the political environment in the region at that time. Secondly, any artefact existing in Kurdish museums can serve the aims of this thesis on a limited basis apart from indicating Kurdish identity. Although Kurdish identity comprises a great characteristic of Kurdish political issues, the available items at the museums are not displayed in such a way as to connect them to the Kurdish political issues, i.e. they are focused on archaeological perspectives and are related to ancient Kurdish societies. Thus, the researcher finally decided not to rely on these artefacts for the thesis. Finally, Kurdish issues particularly at that time were not an issue to be addressed by a survey distributed to the public, at least among those who were educated in the society. Based on this presumption, no quantitative records on Kurdish issues can contribute to the thesis question.

¹⁵ Burns, *supra*, note 9, p. 485.

the regional political circumstances in the Middle East. Following this, all the international instruments of Sykes-Picot Agreement 1916, Balfour Declaration 1917, treaty of Sevres 1920, and Treaty of Lausanne 1923 are the primary sources directly related to this thesis. The researcher found relevant documents, statements, newspapers among other documents written at that time in the following locations:

Firstly, Record Centres in the UK

These centres are ‘British National Archives’ at Kew, and British Library in London. As to the former one, obtaining original historical documents from this archive was crucial for the thesis’ main question. The researcher found that writing on Kurdish issues in the early twentieth century will require significant reference to this archive, otherwise it will lead to a less significant contribution to the literature. The reason is that British Empire was one of the major and powerful states that controlled a vast area of Mesopotamia generally, and Kurdistan particularly. The researcher visited the archive three times and found the most relevant and contributory sources for the research. For example, the documents obtained included primary sources from the British foreign policy documents, maps and writings of the commissioners and other local rulers to the British commissioners, as will be elaborated in the thesis’s main body.

The British Library in London is another significant centre that the researcher visited to consult its materials. Although it was indeed worth visiting this great library, the researcher found that most of the sources relevant to the thesis’s question were also available at the British National Archives. Nevertheless, there were important textbooks written at that time that had contributory inputs to the thesis literature. For example, the books written by James Baillie Fraser on his famous book titled “Travels in Koordistan [Kurdistan], Mesopotamia, Etc. Including an Account of Parts of Those Countries Hitherto Unvisited by Europeans: With Sketches of the Character and Manners of the Koordish [Kurdish] and Arab Tribes”, written in 1840. Similarly, Claudius James Rich’s book titled “Narrative of a residence in Koordistan, and on the site of ancient Nineveh; with journal of a voyage down the Tigris to Bagdad, and an account of a visit to Shiraz and Persepolis, by C.J. Rich, ed. by his widow”. Both writers focused on Kurdish culture and lifestyles before the year 1850. These can be relied on when discussing Kurdish identity in the subsequent chapters. As to the writes after that date, Basil Nikitin was a Russian connoisseur who lived during the late

Ottoman Empire, and witnessed the events after WW1. The Royal British Diplomat Cecil John Edmonds (1889-1979) was another benchmark in this context, and will be referred to in the thesis's main text.

In this context, Major Soane (1881-1923) was a prominent expert of the Kurds, a Kurdologist and wrote an interesting and controversial book about the Kurds, their language and culture. He worked at one time for the Imperial Bank of Iran and is probably best known for his book "To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise". In this book he recounts a journey he made from Constantinople to Baghdad disguised as a Persian traveler. He spoke Persian, Arabic and was an acknowledged expert on the Kurdish language. There are some other writers who visited Kurdistan during the period of which the current thesis focuses on their writings are considered as a primary source for Kurdish nationalism during the early twentieth century, and will be mentioned in the main body of the thesis.

The reason for depending on their writings is that they referred to and evaluated the political, social, language status, even psychological aspects, identity and nationalist senses of the Kurds during the period of which the thesis covers. In other words, they recorded all the facts about the Kurds for a future audience. Besides that, there were Kurdish writers who were contemporaneous to those foreign writers, yet the Kurdish writers' thoughts were based on Kurdish backgrounds from inside, while the foreign writers had an outside perspective. Thus, no historical analysis to the Kurdish issues can be made in a proper way without significantly relying on these foreign writers.

Secondly, Kurdish Library resources

These include the research institutes that the researcher consulted in order to obtain original Kurdish texts on the subject. Although these centres are in early stages of development, there are plausible efforts to collect the manuscripts and all other documents on Kurdish history in South Kurdistan.

- a. The main Library of Sulaimani University.
- b. Zhin Centre – which is one of the centres that focuses on collecting the historical documents of Kurdistan at different periods in history.
- c. Institute of Strategic research studies – although this centre is sponsored by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) Party it gives particular attention to the history of the Kurds.

The researcher obtained the following the documents, which are considered primary sources:

a. Books

There are two books on the Kurds that are considered primary sources; Sharaf al-Din Bitlisi, a medieval Kurdish historian and poet (1543-1599), wrote *Sharafnama* in 1597 in the Persian language. This is regarded as the main source on medieval Kurdish history. He advised the Kurds to be united and stay together against foreign powers and wrote of the weaknesses of the Kurdish elites when they met non-Kurdish powers. As for more recent history, Amin Zaki (1880–1948),¹⁶ was a Kurdish writer, historian, Iraqi statesman and politician who witnessed and reported many important events during those days, in his book on Kurds and Kurdistan, he discussed the issues surrounding Kurdish nationalism in the twentieth century on Kurds and Kurdistan in which he also discussed Kurdish nationalism issues in those days. He explained how Kurdistan was partitioned and the role that should be taken by the Kurdish revolutionists and nationalists.

b. Diaries

As to the diaries, Rafiq Hilmi (1898–1960) was a Kurdish historian, writer and politician and was the founder of the Kurdish party *Hîwa* in 1938 and the author of many books on the history of Kurdistan and the Kurdish language. He wrote his famous *Yadasht* (Diary) on the Kurdish revolutions and Malik Mahmood during the early 1920s. Therefore, his diary was published and is now considered a primary source.

c. Newspapers

The researcher found many interesting newspapers from the early twentieth century which dealt with Kurdish issues during those days, such as *Zhin* which was followed by *Zhyanawa* , and others that encouraged the Kurds to stand against the major allied powers, and Turkish and Persian plans in the region. These will be referred to throughout the thesis.

¹⁶ Zaki Beg, *supra*, note 3.

d. Ballads

There were also several Kurdish poets who wrote about Kurdish nationalism, like Ahmadi Khani (1650-1707). In the early twentieth century, others wrote poems on Kurdish culture, issues and nationalism, like the prominent Kurdish poet, novelist and journalist Tawfeq Mahmoud Hamza known as Piramerd (1867-1950) and Haji Qadir Koyee (1817-1897) who carried on a nationalistic message from Ahmadi Khani. There are other poets whose writings are greatly relevant to the thesis's main question. For example, when the thesis focuses on Kurdish identity, these poets tell us how important it was to speak in the Kurdish language in order to show that the Kurds were different from the Turks, Arabs and Persian. These poets also encouraged the Kurds to be proud of being 'Kurd' like any other nations in the region. They indeed had roles in reviving Kurdish nationalism in their times, as will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

ii. Secondary sources

There are several text books about the Kurds and Kurdish issues, which are written by scholars on the topic, like David McDowall, who wrote his book on Modern History of the Kurds, which will be referred to as a secondary, but still significant' source.

For example, when McDowall talks about Kurdish society during the early twentieth century, he claimed that almost every tribe and tribal section also possesses a strong sense territorial identity alongside ideas of ancestor.¹⁷ This could be partially true and on line with the researcher's hypothesis, i.e. 'disunity among the Kurds', but he did not distinguish the fact that the sense of nationalism was already existed in the minds of Kurdish individuals. That is why they could not accept the controls of Persians and Ottomans for centuries before. Besides that, Kurdish leaders were aware of that sense of nationalism, and all they needed to do was to bring them under one umbrella. Thus, talking about Kurdish revolutions in the period in issue will needs more explorations which the task of the current thesis is. Yet, his book is significant when it examines various Kurdish issues like society, politics, nationalism, religion and geography.

There are other important Kurdish historians who covered significant parts of Kurdish nationalism. For example, Kamal Mazhar whose books are prominent ones and the

¹⁷ McDowall, David, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, [3rd Edi Rev], I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, (1996), pp. 13-17.

most relied ones in Kurdish library. The researcher argues that without reference to his books, the thesis will not meet the main thesis question. Yet, it is important to mention that his books are following narrative approach when he examined different facts and incidents took place during the early twentieth century. One can understand that he tries to convince the reader that religion had influence on the failure of most of Kurdish revolutions. For instance, when he talked about the battle of Shaibah near Basra of 1914 between the English troops and the Ottomans, he argued that religion was the main factor for Sheikh Mahmood as a Kurdish leader to join the Arabs and the Ottomans in the battle.¹⁸ However, the researcher does not necessarily agree with the author, as Sheikh Mahmood later on negotiated with the British Empire in order to be recognised as the king of Kurdistan notwithstanding that he was a religious man. He was trying to establish an independent Kurdish nation-state. He refused the Ottoman's control in Kurdistan. If that was for religion, he would not stand against the Ottomans and subsequently negotiate with the British Empire during the early years of 1920s. So, his sense of nationalism and popularity in the region pushed him to fight against the English troops in Shaibah battle, and not religion.

Next, Jamal Nabaz's books and writings are important as well. He is one of the prominent Kurdish historians in the twentieth century whose works were on Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish revolutions. His thoughts are secular in general within the context Kurdish nationalism. In his writings, he mainly gives particular importance to Kurdish language, geography and culture. For him, as long as these elements exist, the Kurds will remain, principally language. He argued that a standard unified language will be certainly the main door for independence. Conversely, the researcher argues that standard unified language will not be the main factor for Kurdish unity. Kurdish language is rich in vocabulary and diversified across Kurdistan in which standardizing and unifying it will be an impossible task to do. So, Kurdish nationalism can succeed to achieve in establishing an independent Kurdish nation-state through national unity of the Kurds throughout Kurdistan similar to Jewish nationalism.

As to Arab writers, Satih Al-Husri's publications was an important source and contributory to the thesis. His book *Ma Hiya Al Qaumiyah?* Which means: What is Nationalism? indeed

¹⁸ Ahmad, Kamal Mazhar., Chand Laparayak La Mezhuji Gali Kurd (Kurdish), (Tra: Some Pages in the History of Kurdish Nation), (2nd Edi), Ministry of Education Publishing, Erbil, (2001), pp. 13-23.

helped the researcher to compare Kurdish nationalism with Arab nationalism. However, when dealing with Kurdish nationalism issues the researcher discusses the opinions of some Arab nationalists like Abdulrahman Kawakibi whose works, and speeches were quoted in Al-Husri's book. Both Kawakibi and Al-Husri were recognised as the founders of Arab nationalism. That is why is it necessary to refer to their works as secondary sources.

6. Thesis Structure

This thesis is comprised of four main chapters apart from the introductory and conclusion chapters. The current chapter focused on the general background on the thesis topic, main research question, methodology, objectives and challenges. Chapter One focuses on the existing literature on nation and nationalism, which covers the topics of concepts of 'nation' and nationalism Arab and non-Arab forms of nationalism, followed by territorial and pan-nationalism. Chapter Two will be mainly on the international and regional treaties and agreements in relations to Kurdistan, in which it will be examining the emergence of Otto-Persian treaties, treaties of Erzurum I of 1823, and II of 1847. Then it will be examining the treaties of Sevres of 1920, and Lausanne of 1923. Then the Chapter will turn to the topic on the Kurds: a critical appraisal. Chapter Three will be on the historical analysis of Kurdish national identity, which will examine Kurdish identity and Kurdistan, Kurdish language and culture, Sufism and Kurdish national identity. Chapter Four will be mainly on the emergence of Kurdish issues and nationalism by starting with Kurdish issues, Kurdish nationalism, and emergence of Kurdish national awareness. Under the later topic, the chapter will examine Kurdish organizations before 1930, Kurdish newspapers and magazines before 1930, Kurdish nationalist poetry and revolutions before 1930, Kurdish nationalist poetry and Kurdish revolutions between 1850-1930. Finally, the chapter will turn into examining the last question: why Kurdish nationalism failed in the early twentieth century? After all these various interrelated topics being examined, the thesis will turn into the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER ONE

EXISTING LITERATURE ON NATION AND NATIONALISM

1.1 Introduction

Like any other nation, Kurds have their own sense of nationalism which is rooted within the Kurdish communities both inside or outside of Kurdistan notwithstanding that its strength was varied from a time to another.

Before starting the chapter, it is important to recall that the thesis will explore two important issues in detail; firstly, an examination of the internal factors among the Kurds. These factors were directly related to the existent movement known as 'Kurdish nationalism'. Secondly, the external factors that led to the weakening of the Kurds in the region in many aspects, which is why they were left helpless and left Kurdistan partitioned.

Furthermore, the academic contribution of the thesis is to demonstrate whether Kurdish nationalism lacked an independent political philosophy, or whether it was heavily influenced by the imported nationalism of the Turks, Persians and Arabs. To do that, the thesis will first examine the relationships between civil and armed revolutions that served Kurdish nationalism. The civil revolution took place in the form of Kurdish journalism as a medium of communication, writers and poets which was backing and representing Kurdish armed revolutions at internal and external levels. In the meantime, they gave particular attentions to Kurdish culture, language and educate Kurdish individuals on that rhythm in order to break the influence of Arab, Turkish and Persian cultures on Kurdish society. So, it will examine whether they were only successful to protect Kurdish identity, culture and language or not? Also, it will examine whether the armed revolutions were able to become an umbrella to control and achieve the goal of independent Kurdistan or not? This contribution will be achieved through critical review of the incidents took place from 1880s to 1930 in Kurdistan that will require significant references to the archives and primary sources, otherwise it will lead to a less significant contribution to the literature.

Next, the contribution of this chapter derives from the fact that it will be unrealistic to deal with the above matters without having a clear understanding of the concepts of 'Nation' and Nationalism. Once, the two terms are clearly defined and explained, then it will be important to consider Arab and non-Arab Forms of Nationalism like Turkish

nationalism as the Arabs and Turks were the neighboring and closest nations to the Kurds. Later on, Territorial and Pan-Nationalism will be discussed.

1.2 The concepts of ‘Nation’ and Nationalism

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term ‘nation’ refers to ‘a large body of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular state or territory’.¹⁹ The concept of ‘nation’ has connections to what is known as ‘ethnic community’, and is also sometimes referred to as a ‘civic identity’. Peter Alter suggested that the term ‘nation’ shares a common myth from the descendants transferred from one generation to another. There should be a common history, a distinctive culture, a common territorial association, and by a group of people who have a sense of solidarity.²⁰

It is important to mention here that there is no clear definition of ‘nation’, and explaining it remains long-standing dispute, which makes it difficult to analyze, as perceived by Anderson.²¹ However, in this chapter, the researcher attempts to examine the term ‘nation’ to head for understanding the term nationalism subsequently.

The term ‘nation’ is originally rooted from the natural identity of the individuals to see themselves as being different to others. However, the idea of being a nation or being part of a nation is sourced from the individuals’ minds and opinions which makes them exhibit some of their important characteristics as a nation. The first step to finding the identity leads the individuals to search for their identities through their feelings created collectively with the other individuals of the same nation. In this context, Bagehot said:

“The problem of ‘nation-making’—that is, the explanation of the origin of nations such as we now see them, and such as in historical times they have always been — cannot, as it seems to me, be solved without separating it into two: one, the making of broadly-marked races, such as the negro, or the red man, or the European; and the second, that of making the minor distinctions, such as the distinction between Spartan and Athenian, or between Scotchman and Englishman. Nations, as we see them, are (if my arguments prove true) the produce of two great forces: one the race-making force which, whatever it was, acted in antiquity, and has now wholly, or almost, given over acting; and the other the nation-making force, properly so called,

¹⁹ ‘Oxford Dictionaries’, (n.d.), at <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/nation>, re-visited on 07 May 2014.

²⁰ Alter, P. Nationalism, London, Edward Arnold, 1989, p. 7.

²¹ Anderson, Benedict, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Verso, 2006, p.3.

which is acting now as much as it ever acted, and creating as much as it ever created".²²

To relate this statement to the Kurds as a nation, as a 'broadly-marked race', the Kurds are the descendants of the Aryan race from the Indo-European family and have been living in the Middle East from the time of antiquity, on a specified territory distinguished from the other races in the Middle East by virtue of their distinctive culture, language and common history. Thus, like Scotsmen who are not Englishmen, the Kurds are not Arabs, Turks nor Persians, although the latter two nations are also Indo-Europeans.

In fact, this definition is broad and has a multi-dimensional aspect, however, apart from this opinion, there was a need for people to depend on the nation itself for their identity. For example, Renan suggested that nations are comprised of a general and continuous referendum.²³ This statement establishes a sort of psychological self-confidence that became the gateway for another component of nation and nationhood, that is, the awareness of the nation that creates an association between the individuals of a common background. Hence, the question of national identity and independence is likely to emerge among the people. Renan was a French philosopher, historian and writer who dedicated his life and works to his native province of Brittany. He is best known for his influential historical works and political theories, especially concerning nationalism and national identity. One can argue that his sense of nationalism and focus on national identity was the compelling factor that made him believe that the existence of any nation should rely on a continuous referendum to be updated and continue to exist.

In the Middle East, the concept of nationalism has a more formal shape, the new modern Turkish state was established upon the philosophy of 'Turkism' that considered the Kurds to be the mountainous Turks which further deprived them of their basic national rights. The Iraqi Baathist party re-established Iraq upon the philosophy of nationalist Baathist in the late 1960s. It initially recognized Kurdish identity, as mentioned by Aflaq in 1969, the founder of the Baath Party in Iraq, and it was only after a long-lasting Kurdish revolution, that the Baath party agreed to sign the Declaration of 11 March 1970, which recognized the Iraqi Kurds' rights to their languages, culture and history. However, this right was limited to the boundary of one unitary state, Iraq. Thus, as an

²² Bagehot, Walter, Physics and Politics or Thoughts on the Application of the Principles of Natural Selection and Inheritance to Political Society, Batoche Books Kitchener, 2001, p.52.

²³ Renan, Ernest., What is a nation? Vol. 2, Tapir Press, 1996, pp. 23-25.

Arab nationalist movement, the Baath party recognized Kurdish identity, but did not allow Kurdish to spread beyond to political or national issues.²⁴ That is why the Declaration of 1970 was not successful. For Kurds, so as to preserve their identity in accordance with Renan's opinion, they must update their identity continuously in order to survive the influences of other nations like the Turks, Arabs and Persians.

Although national identity evidently predates the struggle for national recognition and dignity, one can argue that when a nation without a state is unrecognized by another nation, the unrecognized state struggles to establish a state, which further leads them to revolt until they are recognized as a nation with all its particulars and characteristics and is protected. For example, the Kurdish nation has fought for nearly a century and a half against the process of Turkification, and the subsequent Arabization and influence of Persian politics.

In the late nineteenth century, the world seen three important phenomena: British industry, the American economy and the German capitalism, which inter-influenced each other in terms of nation and nationhood. Hobsbawm, quoted that "...we are forced to look after the world's economy, and respect the general interests of all the states, although that does not mean we should not prioritize the economic status of our country."²⁵

As for the term 'nationalism, the Oxford English Dictionary defines it as "an extreme form of patriotism marked by a feeling of superiority over other countries" and "Advocacy of political independence for a country", such as Scottish nationalism.²⁶ 'Kurdish nationalism' conforms to this definition. Many writers define the term 'nationalism' from their own perspectives. For example, Rothi defines nationalism as a belief or political ideology that involves an individual identifying with or becoming attached to his or her nation, which further establishes a feeling of national identity. At this juncture, unlike the Oxford English Dictionary definition, Rothi differentiated between the sense of nationalism and what comprises patriotism. For Rothi, 'patriotism' entails the social continuity and personal behaviors that support their states' decisions

²⁴ Zaki Beg, Muhammad Amin., Tarîxî Kurd û Kurdistan, (Kurdish), (Tra: A Short History of the Kurds and Kurdistan), Dar al-Islami Publishers, Baghdad, 1931. See also Bengio, Ofra., Saddam's Word: The Political Discourse in Iraq, Oxford University Press, 2002, at pp.5-7.

²⁵ Hobsbawm, Eric., Age of Revolution: 1789-1848, Hachette UK, 2010, Chapter 7.

²⁶ Oxford Dictionaries, *supra* note 19.

and actions,²⁷ while the Oxford English Dictionary made a strong connection between both terms. According to Rothi's definition, however, one can see that both nationalism and patriotism complement each other in such a way that one cannot be useful without the other. Thus, it is the sense of 'nationalism' that gives birth to patriotism, while 'patriotism' provides technical support and maintenance to 'nationalism' through the individual's positive behavior. Through patriotism, the individuals love their country, and prove this love through supporting their country's institutions and, sometimes, their government. However, nationalism seems a more clearly-defined programme, which aims at national independence, territory, and the assertion of national rights.

Next, Motyl has looked upon nationalism from a sociological perspective, and gives particular importance to the sequence or the lifetime of nationalism, in which the beginning of the nationalism process has influences on its later stages, even on contemporary nationalism. For Motyl, there are pre-modernist and modernist perspectives of nationalism. As to the former, nationalism comes from the reflection of an ancient time in a particular society, which took on an evolutionary pattern that humans needed in order to organize themselves into different groupings based on a close relationship by virtue of their color, race, language, or their affinity of birth. Motyl has described modern nationalism, on the other hand nationalism as a recent phenomenon that necessitates structured circumstances of modern society in order to exist.²⁸ Furthermore, Paul James argues that in order to achieve subjective modern nationalism, a reference to primordial statements is necessary.²⁹ Thus, for the purposes of this chapter, and in line with James statement, understanding Kurdish primordial claims is essential to developing an understanding of modern Kurdish nationalism before 1916, which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

In Germany, the concept of nationalism did not alter from the traditional, essentially political, conception of nationhood to an ethno-cultural concept. For example, the question of Alsace-Lorraine led to the ideological emphasis of the French political, against the German ethno-cultural, understanding of nationhood. The German historian Mommsen said '...it is possible that Alsace is German by race and by language, but it is

²⁷ Rothi, D., 'National attachment and patriotism in a European nation: A British study', *Political Psychology*, (2005), no. 26, 135-155.

²⁸ Motyl, A., *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, San Diego Academic Press, 2001, p.251.

²⁹ James, P., *Globalism, Nationalism, Tribalism: Bringing Theory Back In*, Sage Publications, London, 2006, pp.290-296.

French by nationality and by its sense of fatherland.” This sense was similarly developed by Renan, as suggested by Brubaker.³⁰ Therefore, one can see that the Germans thought that the state would not construct the ‘nation’ rather, on the contrary, the nation would construct the state, which means that people have no legal rights to their fatherland, but that it is the common basis of ethnicity, language and culture that construct a state.

Hence, Giddens chose to be silent about the special will of the nationalists in establishing their own nation-state, while Kohn focused on the psychological component of nationalism as a high egoistic feeling by the citizens to establish a nation-state. He quoted that “every nation contemplates itself through the medium of self-conceit, and draws conclusions to its own advantage, which individuals then adopt to themselves with complacency, because they confound and interweave their private and their national character.”³¹ Kohn’s view seems to be narrowing the meaning of nationalism because he linked ‘nationalism with nation-state’. For him, there is no nationalism without a nation-state. If we analyze Kohn’s view, it can be argued that he automatically separated stateless nations from the definition of nationalism, (like the Kurdish nation) while he considers himself as one of the strongest figures on the theory of nationalism.

Thus, the term ‘nationalism’ can generally be defined as a natural phenomenon because from humanity’s earliest stage, humans have wanted to establish contact with those who understand their language. Nationalism itself is a neutral concept; as Gellner suggested, nationalism does not have a specific political color, it will get its color from its surroundings. The history, geography, politics and culture of a state contribute to a specific form of nationalism.³² The nationalists might change their own nature in different historic ages; therefore, researching nationalism in any country needs to take into consideration the particular circumstances and goals of nationalism in that country. The concept of nationalism should not be considered separately. It is not a distinct part of theoretical history; rather, it should be discussed in relation to a specific experience in a particular time and place. It appears with its own specification and cannot be repeated in other places.

³⁰ Brubaker, Rogers, Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany, Harvard University Press, 2009, p.12.

³¹ Kohn, Hans., The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins And Background, Transaction Publishers, 1961, p. 371.

³² Gellner, Ernest, Nation and Nationalism, Cornell University Press, New York, 1983, pp. 1-5.

Next, nationalism appears with two different goals: firstly, nationalism can stand for freedom, equality and justice, therefore it can be viewed as a struggle for freedom against oppression and invasion. Secondly, nationalism means chauvinism and racism. When the major allied powers came to the Middle East after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, they opened the door for nationalism emerging in a more significant way. However, the newly established states exploited this concept of nationalism and mixed it with an ideology against the rights and existence of other nations. For example, forces used against the Kurdish nation throughout history include the Turkish Kamalist, the Baath regime and Persians, and in particular the Anfal-genocide campaign and the restraining of the Kurdish revolution and uprising of the main actors.

Ernest Gellner and John Breuilly in their book titled: *Nations and Nationalism* stated that a sense of nationalism can define then create nations, not vice-versa. According to them, one must acknowledge that the culture historically inherited by these nations will be subject to change because of nationalism. Subsequently, nationalism revives dead languages and norms, but this does not indicate that nationalism is invented by newly created, manmade ideology,³³ that it can be argued that nationalism is first instilled by intellectuals or elites. In this context, nationalism would not have arisen in Kurdistan if European intellectuals had not initiated the debate about nationalism at the heart of active political groups³⁴ Lastly, Smith states that nationalism appears through politicizing ethics. Nationalists are not able to take ownership of national legends or give meaning to any traditions. Nationalism centers on political independence and territorial unity.³⁵

1.3 Arab and non-Arab Forms of Nationalism

In the Arab world, Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi is regarded as the father of Arab nationalism. Nineteenth century writers in Sham also played a role in initiating Arabic cultural nationalism, like Haider Asshababi, followed by Ibrahim al-Yaziji, Butrus al-Bustani, and Adib Ishaq whom, like al-Kawakibi, emphasized the unity of Arabs on the basis of land, i.e. that of the ethnic nation and not on the basis of religion. They also considered political suppression as equal to religious suppression. Kawakibi's finger was pointed to those nations of the western Saharan people because they were not considered

³³ Gellner, Ernest & Breuilly, John, *Nations and Nationalism*, Cornell University Press, 2008, pp.53-54

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Smith, Anthony D., *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History: Key Concepts*, John Wiley & Sons, 2013, Chapter Four.

as part of the Arabic world throughout the nineteenth, and many years of the twentieth, centuries. Kawakibi's belief could not reach beyond the theory of Khalafat. Khalafat is thought to be political right i.e. to be elected by the people, but for Kawakibi, Khalafat must be established on the basis of ethnicity. In this context, writes like Satih Al-Husri, depended on the constitutional principle that states: people are the source of power, and the Khalifa is elected by the people." Additionally, for Kawakibi Khalafat is a spiritual post to be determined on the basis of time. In other words, Khalifah's role is a religious role and not a political one. This separation was gradually becoming the back bone of modern Arab nationalism.³⁶

After WW1, the question of the ethnicity and religion of eastern Arab societies took on a new dimension acknowledged by Satih Al-Husri. He was initially attached to the Ottomans on the basis of religious unity, but later he diverted his thoughts towards Arabism as he was influenced by the classical thoughts of German and French nationalism, particularly Fichte's writings.

For Al-Husri, 'nation is a separate issue from land, since nationalism is a natural element of humans. Common language and shared history is the forceful power of nationalism.' He rejected the religious, economic and cultural relationships, and presented himself as a domestic nationalist who stood strongly against religious and cultural nationalism of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Al-Husri was a secular Arab nationalist who believed that pan-Islamism was no longer effective and would soon diminish.³⁷

In fact, the emergence of Arab nationalism, if compared with Kurdish nationalism, Zain Nooradin Zain stated in his research on the rise of Arab nationalism stated that 'during the nineteenth century, Islam was a deeply rooted religion in the East Arab regions, in such a way the new thought of western nationalism could not only break thought it, but even Islam (as the religion of the majority of the region) was able to stand against all the efforts of the sense of nationalism including secularism in the region.' Similarly, it is not possible to consider that this political nationalism was just born out of internal conflicts

³⁶ Al-Husri, Satih., Ma Hiya Al Qaumiyah? (Arabic) (Tra: What is Nationalism? Arab United Studies Centre, Beirut, 1985, p.108.

³⁷ Al-Husri's approach to Arab nationalism was influenced by nineteenth-century European thinkers, especially German romantic nationalists. He was described as having a "cultural-sentimental" approach to nationalism. For him, the term 'nation' is a living entity, and he insisted that a nation can only be on its long-standing historic existence, even if its members were unconscious of that or refused to be considered of that nation. Charif, Maher, Rihanat al-nahda fi'l-fikr al-'arabi, Damascus, Dar al-Mada, 2000, pp.204-205.

and spiritual instabilities that the Arabs finally came to realise from their own civilization alone.³⁸ However, Said, who was a contemporary of Zain, argued the opposite, that...when the WW1 out broke, the Ottoman empire collapsed, then national states appeared before the concept of nationalism. At that point, the Arab nation's league emerged, which first called for re-establishing the nation-states which existed geopolitically in the region.³⁹

The concept of Arab nationalism seems to have some harsh elements against non-Arab nations. For example, in a multi-racial society where the majority of the population is Arabic, like Iraq, where the Kurds are a moderately crowded population in their own geographical area, one can see that the Arab nationalists who considered themselves as the representatives of the majority of people in Iraq, did not allow other minorities to speak out about their own nationalism. That is how they became a source of suppression to the Kurds in Iraq throughout the twentieth century. When the first generation of Arab nationalists were beginning to work on the administrative tasks in their newly formed countries, their personal interests were parallel to the western nations' interests in the region, on account of their people's welfare and regional well-being. That is why the British Empire and the French provided support for Arab nationalism at this stage, especially during the first decade of the twentieth century.

In fact, Arab nationalism was suggested to be weak during the early twentieth century until after WW1. The reasons were that, as Nazimi argued, Arab nationalism was too weak or too fragmented to understand the happenings in the region, which is why they had to choose to either support the Ottomans or the British Empire, which supported the Husseins project for the region. In Iraq, nationalist activities increased between the years 1914 to 1918.⁴⁰ That means, Arab nationalism was baseless and was literally created by outside support served to strengthen Arab nationalism against the Ottoman empire. This support did not last long as they also stood against the Arab nationalists in the following decades. In this context, Kawtharani stated that: "...through using oppressive forces

³⁸ Zain Nooraddin Zain, Nushu' al-Qaumiyah Al-Arabiah (Arabic), (Tra: The emergence of Arab nationalism), Dar Al-Nahar, Bairut, 3rd Edi, 1979, p.144.

³⁹ Al-Said, Razwan, Asir Al-Nahdat Al-Arabyat: Asilat Al-Kabira, Wal Ijabat Al-Haira, (Arabic), (Tra: The Age of Arabic Renaissance: Big Questions and Confused Answers), Arab Thought Journal, No: 15, Beirut, 1985, p. 8.

⁴⁰ Nazimi, Wameedh J. O., Al-Jthur Assyasiyah Wal-Fikrya Wal- Ijtimaeyah lil Harakat Al-Qawmiyah Al-Arabiya Al-Istiqlaliyah (Arabic), (Tra: The Political, Thought and Social Roots of Independent Arab Nationalist Movement), Edi 1, Centre of United Arab Studies, Beirut, 1984, p. 108.

against the civic action by those communities who were directly living under the control of the major allied powers, they [the major allied powers] also worked to miscarry the projects of establishing new national states with all their structures and shapes set by these people.”⁴¹ However, the Arab nation-states continued to be established until 1950. That means if the Arab nationalism was not baseless, then the major allied power could not interfere in the Arab world and its nationalism.

To illustrate Kawtharani’s view, we can look at the history of the British Army’s repression of the Iraqi Arab revolutions that took place between 1914 and 1918, and the revolution of 1920 on one hand, and repressing the Kurdish Malik Mahmood revolution that took place between 1919 and 1922 on the other hand. Ubeydullah Arwi stated that “...the State [Iraq] remained as a foreign State, and its people became destitute” nevertheless, he mentioned the Iraqi nationalist movement as separate from its culture and religion, since the movement was different from the culture and norms of the people at that time.⁴² This shows the weaknesses of both Arabic and Kurdish nationalism during WW1, because they easily became emotionally supportive means for the Ottomans or the Britons. In fact, the Iraqi Arabs supported Sahrif Pasha’s project which was in line with British interests. This indicates that Arab nationalism was not independent and had weaknesses. Which time, here was no specific ‘Iraqi nationalism’ since it was only established in 1921. Therefore, one can argue that before that date, the people of the region were influenced by Arab nationalism which was supported by the Britons who worked towards establishing Iraq.

Some Arab nationalists, such as Sati’ al-Husri and Michel Aflaq, tried to adapt a framework for nationalism and religion to set up a do you mean ‘idealism’ instead of ‘idealistic’. They wanted to formulate the principles of Arab nationalism and the circumstances of uniting Arab ideas by returning to Islam emotionally, such as the spirit of Arab history, and using some of Fichte and Hegel’s study that considers language a method of spirituality and the basis of a nation. This takes into account the basis that everyone who speaks Arabic is Arab, and confusing sentence so consider reworking this and other places which the Arabic language is spoken. In this context,

⁴¹ Kawtharani, Wajih., *Mashru’ Addaulata fi Matali’ Al qarn Al-Eshrin*, (Arabic), (Tra: State Project in Early Twentieth Century), Arab Thought Journal, No: 22, Beirut, 1981, p.39.

⁴² Arwi, Ubeydullah., *Mafhum Addaula*, (Arabic), (Tra: The Concept of State), The Arab Cultural Centre, Dar Al Baidha’, Morroco, 1st Edi, 1981, p. 139.

Michel Aflaq said: “There is a nationalistic part in Islam that has an awesome position of building Arab history and Arab nationalism. The Baath party was the first movement which illustrated this relationship and gave a new form. This task answered this historic crisis”.⁴³

Said contributed to the term ‘nationalism’ in the Arab world by arguing that nationalism in the beginning of the twentieth century in the Arab states was synonymous to patriotism”. He mentioned further that even the Egyptian Al-Ahram newspaper at that time was referring to patriotic and national assumptions. However, he soon decided to assert that the term nationalism itself emerged among the Arabs in 1916, when Hussein Sharif called for revolution against the Ottomans. However, this term was not initially understood as separate from patriotism until the 1930s when it became more obvious in the writings of Satih Al-Husri.⁴⁴

Therefore, mixing western cultural ideas with the religion of Islam as a basis for spiritual unity, Arab history, common Arab feelings and a common land and history was not enough to confirm the principles of democracy and nationalism in Arab countries or parts of Arab countries. Hence, the nature of Turkish, Persian and Arab nationalisms are linked with political, cultural and social history of those nations on one hand, but, on the other hand, their versions of nationalism were the result of the reactions and fear of capitalizing on nationalism in neighboring countries. Although each of these nations were able to establish their own independent states in co-operation with the allied countries of WW1, it was mainly through this cooperation that confirmed and enforced the boundaries of their countries.

If we study the emergence of Kurdish nationalism in Kurdistan with its specifications, which will be further discussed in Chapter Five, as a political reaction against the threats and attacks of Arab, Persian and Turkish nationalism. In other words, although Kurdish nationalism involves the struggle of freedom fighters in an invaded nation, Kurds do not have basic rights in any part of the land known as Kurdistan, the prominent German theoretician named Johann Gottlieb Fichte thought that the natural state border should be established on the basis of language. However, it is also fair to state that

⁴³ Aflaq, Michel, *Al-Baath Wal-Turath* (Arabic Language) (Translated: Baath and Heritage), Dar Al-Hurriyah, Baghdad, 1976, p.100.

⁴⁴ Saed, Razwan, ‘Al-Mustalah Assyasi Al-Arabi Al-Hadith (Arabic), (Tra: The Contemporary Arab Political Terminology)’, *Minbar Al-Hiwar Journal*, No; 10, 1985, p.15.

sometimes a border can become the foundation for identifying a language; for example, the Kurdish language was born solely within the border of Kurdistan, and exists nowhere else. With the utilization of the famous Kant theory concerning humans' decision, that man should depend on them, He brought the matter of human decision into existence. From Fichte's survey, individual poverty is not stated but individuals will disappear from the nation. Fichte transmitted Herder's theory concerning nationalism into two goals; firstly, he has given the content of idealism in German because he considered it more significant than the other languages. Secondly, for Herder, the institutions and the authority of the State were an important necessity for protecting German cultural areas (or German language areas). Thus, German nationalism has evolved to mean a nation of high standing and a political entity.⁴⁵

Before the end of the nineteenth century, the idea of cultural revolutions, using the example of the French Revolution had been spread by intellectuals in the Ottoman and Iranian Empires. And the economic, cultural and political authorities of these empires had strong links to European capitalism. Each state was also linked to the global capitalism. First, the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and European countries had developed. Intellectual Turks and other people from the Ottoman Empire stood against the Ottoman authority and for the sake of new constitutional life had been started. Some of the Turkish intellectuals had escaped from Ottoman authority to European countries. The cultural ideas of these countries had an influence on the Turkish intellectuals. Following this, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) 1908, of which the Turkish and Kurdish intellectuals had been members, changed their reformist project to Pan-Turanism (Pan-Turkism) for the purpose of uniting the Turkish nations in one state with the Turks from Bulgaria, the Caucasus, central Asia and China. This can be regarded as Turkish nationalism reacting against the dangers of the Pan-Slavism movement which the Russians claimed during the second half of the nineteenth century.

This step by Turkish nationalism became one substantial factor for a wake-up call to the nations under the Ottoman Empire, among them the Kurdish and Arab intellectuals, until they demanded constitutional change, political reforms and other local administrative rights. Therefore, Kurdish and Arab nationalism were considered a

⁴⁵ James, David., Fichte's Republic: Idealism, History and Nationalism, Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 143-145.

reaction to the local authorities of neighboring countries. However, aside from similar factors that led to its emergence, Persian nationalism had two distinct features worthy of mention. The first resulted from their irritation against the Russian and British authorities that existed in Iran. While the second was their feeling of self-underestimation in comparison with Turkish Nationalism, which later led to the establishment of the State of Shi'ites sect in Iran which had caused trouble for the Ottoman Empire since the early sixteenth century.

When Raza Khan established the state of Iranian nationalism with the cooperation of the Englishmen, he wanted to imitate the form and model of the state of Turkish nationalism and Kemal Atatürk in various ways. For example, they attempted to establish a military state and modernize the state and its institutions and impose the Persian language as the only official language. They attacked the cultures and languages of other nations in Iran. On the other hand, Iranian nationalism in this context was obliged to deal with religious cultures and religious authority that was a direct result of politics, culture and religion in Iran. This was an opposite step to Turkish nationalism which was fundamentally established on secularism from the time of Ataturk and afterwards, while before this, Turkish nationalism during the Ottoman Empire, and particularly before WW1, showed empathy towards the Islamic religion, mainly Sunni doctrine.

Aside from this, the behavior of leadership groups or elites that involves efforts to advance their own interests when they are involved in the organization of an ethnicity, such as the Kurds, is crucial in the development of the culture of that ethnicity. So, it is fair to argue that the role of Kurdish leaders, like Sheikh Said Piran and Sheikh Ubeydullah of Nehri among others, and Kurdish intellectuals, like Rafiq Hilmi, Piramerd and other poets (as will be mentioned in the subsequent chapters), during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was a significant factor in the struggle for Kurdish independence and, consequently, the state of Kurdistan today.

Finally, there is a strong relationship between the terms 'nation' and 'nationalism'. It is suggested that these terms are a modern phenomenon. Gellner stressed that "...nations can be identified through the stages of nationalism". He simplified the relationship by drawing on the fact that nationalism benefits from the development of the culture or cultures that became rich as a result the passing of time in which one can say that history inherited developments while nationalism deals with cultures by election i.e. it will initially change the elements of cultures. Thus, Gellner's view tells us that nationalism

can be regarded as a modernizing phenomenon which is directly linked to the industrialization of a society.⁴⁶ Anderson added that ‘nation or nationhood and nationalism’ are terms based on the history of the eighteenth century.”⁴⁷

1.4 Territorial and Pan-Nationalism

Territorial nationalism adopts the idea that all inhabitants of a particular nation like Kurds, Jews, and Arabs among others owe loyalty and commitment to their country of birth or adoption.⁴⁸ In the present day, citizenship is an ideal symbol of territorial nationalism, as evoked by nationalists.⁴⁹ However, in the past, citizenship was not an important factor for the less developed societies like that of Kurdistan, so what was the alternative means of signifying nationalism for the Kurds? Anna Grigorieva suggested that the main principle of territorial nationalism is the establishment of mass, common values that create public culture, and traditional and cultural codes of the population in place. Language can be another important factor.⁵⁰

Pan-nationalism, on the other hand, refers to a large geographical area. This type of nationalism focuses more on the cultures of clusters of ethnic groups and shares the general nationalist ideology that a particular nation, like the Kurds and Jews, are fundamentally part of human society. This is similar to Arab nationalism. Although this definition can be applied perfectly to the Kurds of greater Kurdistan today, it does not apply to the Jews, since they were in diaspora and were dispersed around the world without having a central homeland to consider until the establishment of Zionism in the late nineteenth century, which was not the case for the Kurds.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter explored the terms ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism’ with references to scholars’ and philosophers’ definitions and opinions who lived during the time when Kurdish nationalism was a critical question. Although there is no clear definition of the term ‘nation’, yet ‘nationalism’ can be derived from the belief or political ideology that

⁴⁶ Gellner, *supra*, note 33, pp. 56-58.

⁴⁷ Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, 2006, p.3.

⁴⁸ Leoussi, A. S., *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, New Brunswick, N.J: Transaction Publishers, 2001, p. 62.

⁴⁹ Connor, W. *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*, Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 29.

⁵⁰ Grigorieva, A. A. ‘Pan-Slavism in central and southeast Europe’, *Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences*, 2009, 1(3): 13-21: p.14.

involves an individual who consider themselves to be attached to his or her nation, which further establishes a feeling of national identity.

It further concludes that in Turkey, Turkish nationalism was based on Turkism, in which the modern state of Turkey was successfully established as a strong nation-state in the region. In comparison, it can be argued that Arab nationalism was more rhetoric from its face, but was rather weak and baseless, because it could not lead to independence. Instead, Arab states were established by international treaties that gave them a strategic geopolitical location in the modern Middle East.

When the matter comes to Kurdish nation unlike Turks and Arabs, the Kurds were fighting for their independent state against the Turks, Arabs and Persians at the regional level, and against the strategy of the major allied powers at the international level. That is why it would be sound to argue that Kurdish nationalism existed in various forms from armed revolutions to journalism and poetry. Thus, it is imperative to examine 'Kurdish nationalism' from all these various aspects in order to identify the relationships between civil and armed revolutions and how these two forms supported each other. It will be also important to examine whether Kurdish nationalism lacked an independent political philosophy, or whether it was heavily influenced by the imported nationalism of the Turks, Persians and Arabs. In addition to this, the researcher will examine whether Kurdish nationalism and partitioning Kurdistan are two indistinguishable factors related to each other or not. However, it is important to address the external impacts on Kurdish nationalism, which are; the international and regional treaties and agreements in relations to Kurdistan on.

CHAPTER TWO

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS IN RELATIONS TO KURDISTAN

2. Introduction

In modern times, when we talk about regional and international agreements, the first thing that comes to mind is the role of international law. The term ‘international law’ has been defined as “the body of rules, which are legally binding on subjects of international law in their intercourse with each other.”⁵¹ If we look back to the early twentieth century, when the international community was preparing for the outbreak of WW1 in 1914, writers like Nagel argued that ‘international law’ is mainly guided by the principal nation-state entering the standard of conduct. Accordingly, every sovereign nation was willing at all times and under all circumstances to do what was best for them, which might today be called an anarchic international system. That is what Nagel believed to be the universal hypothesis of modern diplomatic discussion of that time; no nation would permit its own conformity to be questioned.⁵² This was the case when the legal features of international law were not well-established to be distinguished from political interests. Nagel explained this as one of the most serious hindrances to the development of a clear and authoritative international law which has intermingled with political and legal considerations. Sometimes there has been merely a lack of close reasoning, but frequently statesmen have attempted to strengthen a national policy by claiming it as having ‘the character of international law.’⁵³

Before the WW1, the world was basically divided into two types or categories of nations; strong and weak nations. The strong nations aimed to occupy new territories and the weak nations, which either surrendered to occupation, or struggled for independence. The powerful states and their political leaders used the positions of the weak nations like Kurds and Jews to serve their national interests. That is why the rights of a particular weak nation were recognized in a treaty signed by the strong nations; these rights were repealed in subsequent treaties as long as the national interests of the strong nations were met, as will be clarified later on. Thus, it can be argued that changes in circumstances

⁵¹ Hiller, Tim., *Sourcebook on Public International Law*, London, Cavendish Publishing Ltd, 1998, p.5.

⁵² Nagel, Charles and Reinsch, Paul S., “The Codification of International Law, Proceedings of the American Society of International Law at Its Annual Meeting (1907-1917)”, *American Society of International Law*, Vol. 4. (April 28-30, 1910): pp. 27-43.

⁵³ Ibid.

had a direct influence on creating, amending, and abolishing treaties in the early twentieth century, even if a treaty had been enforced for less than a decade. As, Since the central problem of the thesis advocates why the Kurds did not emerge with a state of their own, this chapter will be dedicated to examining ‘the actions of the regional powers and the major allied powers as they were relevant to Kurdistan. This chapter will be dedicated to analyzing the Otto-Persian Treaties, the Treaty of Sevres of 1920, the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923, and an examination of how they were negotiated and concluded. In other words, it will address how the map of the Middle East changed in less than a decade, from 1916 to 1926.

2.1 The Emergence of Otto-Persian Treaties

This section will examine the factors and conclusion of three major treaties that were created before the twentieth century and will further examine how they related to the Kurds in the region. These include: Treaty of Zuhab 1639, the Treaty of Erzurum I of 1823, and the Treaty of Erzurum II of 1847.

However, at the outset, it is worth mentioning that the first partition of Kurdistan goes back as far as the Chaldiran War of 1514 between the Ottoman empire and the Safavid empire. In this war, the Ottomans secured a larger proportion of Kurdistan.

2.1.1 Treaty of Erzurum I of 1823

Although there were tensions between the Persian and Ottoman empires because the latter provided protection to the rebellious tribesmen fleeing Persian Azerbaijan, Russia instigated the war. Russia hoped to increase difficulties for the Ottoman Empire, which is then waging war with the Greeks, who are supported by Russia. The Russians induce Persian governor of Azerbaijan, Abbas Mirza, son of Fath Ali Shah, to invade Ottoman territory. His troops occupy Kurdistan and the districts adjacent to Azerbaijan. In retaliation, Ottoman forces under the pasha of Baghdad drive into Persia. They are defeated and forced to withdraw back to Baghdad, which comes under a Persian siege for a time. In the Battle of Erzurum in 1821, Abbas Mirza and some 30,000 Persians triumph over an Ottoman force of more than 50,000 men. ⁵⁴ Ates states that the result of frontier raids carried out by Abbas Mirza and Dawlatshah, the war of 1821-22 was

⁵⁴ Tucker, S. C., A Global Chronology of Conflict: From the Ancient World to the Modern Middle East. ABC-CLIO, 2009, p. 1140

inconclusive, despite Iran's many victories. Then, the emergence of cholera, mutual concerns about Russia's advance, the wars in Greece, and pressure from Iranian merchants trading with the Ottoman Empire all helped bring hostilities to an end.⁵⁵ Finally both sides agreed to peace in the Treaty of Erzurum I 1823. The treaty again restored the pre-war status quo while it guaranteed Persian access to the Muslim holy sites in Iraq and Arabia. In return, the Ottomans agreed to work to halt Kurdish raids on Persian territory⁵⁶ in order to protect their own dynastical existences on one hand and also depended on the Ottoman's promised to enhance Kurdish dynasties towards their autonomy. This step taken by the Ottomans left the Kurds in the middle of nowhere, and helpless, because due to this treaty, the Kurds had to seek another way to protect themselves. Fortunately for the Kurds, the Treaty of Erzurum 1823 opened the floor for the Russian and western powers to arrive in Mesopotamia through their delegates, who gradually approached the Kurds that subsequently emerged as a source of hope.

On the contrary, Edmund stated that the Treaty of Erzurum of 1823 was partly the result of the Dawud Pasha's (Ottoman Empire's) attempts to gain control over the Kurdish tribes in Iraq who were supported by Persia. The treaty was finally concluded in 1823 and reaffirmed the boundary arrangement established by the Treaties of Zuhab 1639 and Kerden 1746.⁵⁷ Therefore, the Kurdish tribes were both directly and indirectly involved and the territories became battlefields for those conflicts, which as a result weakened their positions in the region. When the treaty of Erzurum I was finalized, the Kurds again were affected, as their lands and territories fell under the control of the two empires in accordance with the treaties of 1639 and 1746.

Finally, Bahadori argued that although the treaty of Erzurum I did not delineate new borders, it strictly called for the non-intervention of both sides in the others' affairs. As it states in Article I of the treaty:

“From this period, on the side of Baghdad and Koordistan [Kurdistan] no interference is to take place, nor with any Districts of the Divisions of Koordistan within the boundaries, is the Persian government to intermeddle, or authorize any

⁵⁵ Ateş, S., Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands: Making a Boundary, 1843–1914, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 54.

⁵⁶ Tucker, *supra*, note 54.

⁵⁷ Ghareeb, Edmund A. and Dougherty, Beth., Historical Dictionary of Iraq, Historical Dictionaries of Asia, Oceania and the Middle East, Scarecrow Press, 2004, p.68.

acts of molestation, or to assume any authority over the present or former possessors of those countries.”⁵⁸

While the terms of the treaty were clear, both sides continued to intervene in each other’s Kurdish affairs to the extent that this endangered the interests of foreign powers in the region. This intervention reached a level that no empire could tolerate.

Another agreement was reached in 1827 between the Ottomans and Persians, known as the Turkmanchay Treaty, which was the result of the first Erzurum agreement. This came after a four-member committee was formed, including Britain, Russia, the Ottoman Empire and Iran. Their task was to determine the border between the two empires (Ottoman and Iranian), especially in the regions where Kurdish tribes and clans lived. For different reasons, the Kurds were frequently relocated to the border of one of these empires despite living on their own land. After 1835, when tensions over the Kurdish unrest escalated along the Otto-Persian border the two empires nearly entered a new war, but the British intervened as a mediator to avoid war.⁵⁹

2.1.2 Treaty of Erzurum II of 1847

As mentioned earlier, due to the Kurdish unrest in the region, both empires were about to enter into a new war. In 1840, the Ottomans moved against Muhammarra in the south, while the Persians followed suit by attacking Sulaymaniyya, a Kurdish territory, located in the northeast of modern Iraq, near the Iranian border. However, according to Ates, the Babans in Sulaymaniyyah had a level of is more formal autonomous ruling during 1840, and even the Ottomans wanted to eliminate the Babans due to the latter’s influence in the region and growing conflicts with Baghdad. They wanted to make the ruler of Baban a puppet in order to soothe irritations between the Kurds and the foreign forces i.e. the Ottomans. They wanted to make this new puppet model to be imposed against other Kurdish dynasties, such as Rawanduz, Khoshnav, Hakarri and others. in the region.⁶⁰ As a result, the unrest on the Otto-Persian border led to the decline of the Babans’ dominance, while the Ottomans assured Persia, through the British Commissioner in Tehran, that Persia did not pose a threat.⁶¹ The Ottomans indeed wanted to go ahead with

⁵⁸Bahadori, M., ‘The History and Geopolitics of the Iran-Iraq War’, *Berkeley, University of California*, 2005, p. 10, at www.iranian.com/History/2005/May/Bahadori/IranIraqWar.doc, re-visited on 06 December 2014.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰Ateş, *supra*, note 53, pp. 73-74.

⁶¹ Ibid.

the Second Treaty of Erzurum with the help of the with the help of the British and Russians, who took great steps to mediate between the two empires. The treaty was successfully concluded in 1847 by suppressing the Kurds' or 'culminating in the suppression of the Kurds'.⁶²

Cusimano suggested that this treaty established more clearly the northern part of the Ottoman-Persian border. To do this, the treaty provided that a commission be appointed whose task it would be to demarcate the northern border. Once again, however, the two sides were soon in conflict. This time the dispute was not about arms; rather, it focused the interpretation of some of the treaty's key provisions.⁶³

In addition to this, Sabir and Kakeyi argued that in accordance to a British proposal, this second Erzurum Treaty of 1847 emphasized that the Persian government could not interfere in Kurdistan by supporting their struggle against the Ottoman Empire. Both empires had agreed to punish those individuals who engaged in violence and criminal activities along the border, which included Kurdish tribes located in the territory of each empire.⁶⁴ Thus, the treaty not only outlined new terms for the empires, but also brought the first foreign intervention in Persian-Ottoman relations. While small, occasional border disputes did occur, the two empires did not engage in another large-scale war due to the presence of the foreign powers.⁶⁵

Kakeyi remarked that the chaotic relationship between the Persian and the Ottoman empires saw four centuries of interrupted warfare. While the Ottoman period amplified

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ For example, the nomadic tribes which traveled between the two, as well as those tribes that were spread across the border, especially around the Shatt al-Arab, were a constant source of friction between the two States for purposes such as military conscription. Other disputes arose as the demarcation commission found itself in a constant argument over where exactly to mark the frontier. The two sides did manage to agree in 1869 that the status quo should be preserved in defining the boundary, but the vague frontiers established in the previous treaties did not make the commission's task any easier.

⁶⁴ Article 8 of the Erzurum Treaty 1847 states:

“The two High Contracting Mussulman Powers undertake to adopt and enforce the measures necessary to prevent and punish theft and brigandage on the part of the tribes and peoples settled on the frontier, to which end they will quarter troops in suitable localities. They further undertake to do their duty in respect of all forms of aggressive acts, such as pillage, robbery, or murder, which may occur in their respective territories. Contested tribes, the suzerainty over which is not known shall be left free by the two high Contracting Powers to choose once and for all and specify the localities which they will henceforward always inhabit. Tribes, the suzerainty over which is known shall be compelled to come within the territory of the State to which they belong.” *The Treaty of Erzurum, May 31, 1847*. (n.d.), ‘Past Times, Greater Iran and beyond’, at http://www.parstimes.com/history/erzurum_treaty.html, re-visited on 23 May 2014.

⁶⁵ Sabir, S., *International Relations and Iran-Iraq Border Treaties*, Baghdad: Al-Basri Publishing, 1966, p. 157. See also Kakeyi, S. *The Kurds in the Bilateral and the Multilateral Treaties.*, ‘Kurdishaspect.com’, 2010, at <http://www.kurdishaspect.com/doc061110SK.html>, re-visited on 28 March 2019.

the ongoing Kurdish conflict on one hand, the Persian and Ottoman governments further integrated the Kurds into a territorial struggle on the other hand. Due to the pre-existing hostilities, the conflict became an ongoing clash between two empires which equally benefited the British and Russian governments. It was suggested that it was an intentional joint policy of Britain and Russia to sustain the animosities between the Ottoman and Persian Empires. Kakeyi quoted the statement by Sir Palmerston, the British Ambassador in Petersburg, Russia, at the time, who said: “If Great Britain and Tsarist Russia are not desirably willing to end the Persian-Ottoman conflict, then it will never come to an end.”⁶⁶

Finally, one could argue that Great Britain had a strategic interest in Ottoman territories in Mesopotamia and did not want these territories to remain unsecure due to Otto-Persian wars; they wanted to see the Ottomans stronger than the Persians in the region. This was in order to expand their influences in Caucasia and central Asia, to hinder Russian expansion through Persian lands and to control these regions, particularly the strategic area surrounding the Black Sea. Hence, the Russian and British empires came into conflict, but this time proceeded with their conflicts by proxy, i.e. they exploited the Otto-Persian conflicts. The Britons backed the Ottomans, while the Russians backed the Persians. The central location of the conflict was on Mesopotamian land, specifically in Kurdistan. Nevertheless, in order to show their good intentions to the Ottomans, the British established a boundary commission composed of Iranian, Turkish, British and Russian diplomats to mediate the conflict. This was the beginning of the second treaty of Erzurum which was concluded in 1847.

In short, the Erzurum Treaty II was signed in May 1847;⁶⁷ which was an extension of the previous treaty. Kurdistan was officially divided between the Ottomans and Persians and was monitored by the British and the Russians. With their interference, the boundaries were determined for each state. The most important clause of the treaty centered on preventing Iranian interference in the internal affairs of the Sulaimani area. In return, the Ottomans gave up their privileges to Iranian land in Muhamra Port and the island of Alkhizir, among other key locations.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Zachary, Kara Bell, ‘Erzurum Treaty of 1823’, *Encyclopaedia of the modern Middle East and North Africa*, 2004, at www.Encyclopedia.com, re-visited on 20 June 2014. See also Taylor & Francis, ‘The Treaty of Erzurum (1823 and 1848) and the changing status of Iranians in the Ottoman Empire, Burse’, *Master Degree, Iranian Studies*, 1991, p.13.

When we closely consider the clauses of Erzurum I and II, we can see that there was not any particular emphasis on the rights of the Kurdish people living on this land. Moreover, according to Erzurum II, the *Emirs* and local authorities lost the advantage of changing sides and were completely divided between the two empires. This imposed a limitation on the powers and authorities of the Kurdish dynasties, which subsequently led to their decline. Finally, the treaty was supervised by Russia and Britain.

After the treaty of Erzurum II, British and Russian interests increased in the region; as Olson suggests, their influence in Persian and Ottoman affairs increased accordingly in order to get free access to the Persian Gulf, along with their economic exploitation objectives. As for the British-controlled lands, securing a commercial road between India and Europe through Kurdistan, weakened the Kurds, for the Russian-controlled lands, the unhappy Persian-Ottoman Kurds were a critical element in helping gain territorial advances and keeping its rivaling southern neighbors of Turkey and Iran preoccupied with internal affairs.⁶⁸ When the Ottomans realized this intention, they they against the Russians for a decade, from 1877 to 1878, that brought devastation, famine and general hardship accompanied by disease, banditry and violence, especially in north and south Kurdistan.⁶⁹

Three decades later, when oil was discovered in south Kurdistan in 1908, the policies of the colonial powers of Britain, France, Germany and Russia changed, and they viewed the Middle Eastern region with greater economic interest than before.⁷⁰ This happened as the Ottoman Empire entered into a period of declining power. The influence of the Young Turks had a direct effect on the Kurds and Kurdish issues since some of the founders of this organization were Kurds who worked for awakening the different nations living within the Ottoman Empire. However, in the later stages, this organization showed its real face which denied the rights of other nations in favor of the Turks.

In this context, Kurdistan became a strategically important place in international politics prior to the onset of WW1. That is why the British promised the Kurds an independent Kurdish kingdom in return for their opposition to the Turkish-German alliance.⁷¹ Finally,

⁶⁸ Olson, Robert., The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880–1925, University of Texas Press, 2013, p 5.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Mudhir, A. K., Kurdistan during WW1. Baghdad. Afaq Al-Arabiya Printing House, 1984, pp. 31-40.

⁷¹ Ibid.

it is worth mentioning that these frequent negotiations were able to produce the Tehran Protocol in 1911. This emphasized the restoration of the Treaty of Erzurum II.⁷² The Teheran Protocol was agreed upon so that disputes relating to the demarcation practice would be submitted to an arbitration tribunal at The Hague.⁷³ This was followed by the Constantinople Protocol in 1913, which was also related to the delineation of the Otto-Persian boundary signed at Constantinople on November 4th 1913,⁷⁴ and Kurdish issues became more prominent in the wider world. The Delineation Commission's agreement was signed in 1914,⁷⁵ which provided the actual demarcation of the border between Iraq and Iran, and further divided Kurdistan. Thus, one can argue that these three international instruments directly partitioned Kurdistan before the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916. Moreover, they directly weakened Kurdish nationalism as a result of separating the Kurds.

2.2 The Treaty of Sevres of 1920

After the Balfour Declaration 1917, the Armistice of Mudros ended WW1 hostilities with the Ottoman Empire on 30 October 1918, and the Treaty of Sevres took another twenty months to conclude. As with many other treaties that ended the war, the victorious countries presented the terms, which were not subject to negotiation, to the defeated nations.⁷⁶ When the Ottoman Empire declared defeat, it is fair to believe that the Empire should have lost control of its provinces, particularly the regions outlying Anatolia, due to lack of military strength. This was outside of its western frontiers, known as European territory, which was expected to be divided between Greece and Bulgaria. Thus, it was ostensibly unlikely for the Ottoman Empire to survive in any recognizable form. This scenario was a grand opportunity for the Allied forces to colonize the new occupied regions, or at least to achieve what they concluded in Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916. Hence, under the guise of promoting peace, the Ottoman Empire came under pressure to sign the treaty to protect itself; the treaty was concluded

⁷² FO 371/64575, Publication of the texts of the Yalta, Potsdam and Tehran protocols, Code 18 File 4447, 1947, The National Archives, Kew.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Schofield, R., 'The Near & Middle East Titles: Iran-Iraq Border 1840-1958', *Cambridge Archive Editions Ltd-UK Publishers Of Primary Source Research Collections*, 1989, at <http://www.archiveeditions.co.uk/titledetails.asp?tid=49>, re-visited on 20 July 2016.

⁷⁵ Cusimano, Joseph J., 'Analysis of Iran-Iraq Bilateral Border Treaties', *24 Case W. Res. J. Int'l L.* 89, 1992, pp. 89-95, pp.50-55.

⁷⁶ 'Tucker, Spencer and Roberts, Priscilla Mary., Vol. 4 WW1', *Encyclopedia, WW1*. ABC-CLIO, 2005, pp. 1079-1080.

in Sevres, France on 10 August 1920. The treaty envisaged the virtual dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and called for large-scale territorial changes and redistribution of imperial control in the Near East.

According to the treaty, the Ottoman Empire was to recognize the independence of its former Arabian possessions of Hijaz⁷⁷ and to cede Mesopotamia and Palestine as mandates of Britain, and Syria and Lebanon as mandates of France.⁷⁸ In this context, Spencer believes that while Arabia was nominally free of foreign rule, it was in reality under British suzerainty. Similarly, the British and French mandates regarding Palestine, Mesopotamia, Syria and Lebanon were supposed to lead to eventual independence under the supervision of the League of Nations.⁷⁹ That is why the United States declined to participate in the negotiation as American leaders thought there would be a furtherance of European major allied power in the region, and the US had never been at war with the

⁷⁷ Section VIII of the Treaty deals with the independence of Hijaz. Accordingly, Article 98 states that “Turkey, in accordance with the action already taken by the Allied Powers, hereby recognises the Hedjaz as a free and independent State, and renounces in favour of the Hedjaz all rights and titles over the territories of the former Turkish Empire situated outside the frontiers of Turkey as laid down by the present Treaty, and comprised within the boundaries which may ultimately be fixed.” *Also* Article 99 states that, “In view of the sacred character attributed by Moslems of all countries to the cities and the Holy Places of Mecca and Medina His Majesty the King of the Hedjaz undertakes to assure free and easy access thereto to Moslems of every country who desire to go there on pilgrimage or for any other religious object, and to respect and ensure respect for the pious foundations which are or may be established there by Moslems of any countries in accordance with the precepts of the law of the Koran”. Article 100 further states that “His Majesty the King of the Hedjaz undertakes that in commercial matters the most complete equality of treatment shall be assured in the territory of the Hedjaz to the persons, ships and goods of nationals of any of the Allied Powers, or of any of the new States set up in the territories of the former Turkish Empire, as well as to the persons, ships and goods of nationals of States, Members of the League of Nations.”

⁷⁸ Section VII of the Treaty deals with Mandates on Syria, Mesopotamia and Palestine. Article 94 states therein: “The High Contracting Parties agree that Syria and Mesopotamia shall, in accordance with the fourth paragraph of Article 22. Part I (Covenant of the League of Nations), be provisionally recognised as independent States subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. A Commission shall be constituted within fifteen days from the coming into force of the present Treaty to trace on the spot the frontier line described in Article 27, II (2) and (3). This Commission will be composed of three members nominated by France, Great Britain and Italy respectively, and one member nominated by Turkey; it will be assisted by a representative of Syria for the Syrian frontier, and by a representative of Mesopotamia for the Mesopotamian frontier. The determination of the other frontiers of the said States, and the selection of the Mandatories, will be made by the Principal Allied Powers.”

⁷⁹ Treaty of Sèvres, *The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition, Encyclopedia.com*, 2008, at <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-Sevres-T.html>, visited on 20 March 2013. See also Treaty of Sevres. *Hellenica, Information about Greece and Cyprus, Michael Lahanas*. GNU Free Documentation License, at <http://www.mlahanas.de/Greece/History/TreatyOfSevres.html>, visited on 20 March 2013. See also Reguer, Sara., ‘Sèvres, Treaty of (1920)’, *Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and North Africa*, 2004, at <http://www.encyclopedia.com>, visited on 20 March 2013.

Ottoman Empire;⁸⁰ the Ottoman Empire had a good economic and diplomatic relationship with America throughout the nineteenth century.⁸¹

Furthermore, the Sevres Treaty called for an independent Republic of Armenia, which prior to the war was known as Turkish Armenia.⁸² In addition to this, the treaty established that the East Thrace, including Gallipoli and the Turkish Aegean islands, come under Greek control, whereas Smyrna and the adjacent area were to be administered by Greece for five years, after which a plebiscite was to be held.⁸³ Finally, and most importantly, a plebiscite was also planned for Kurdistan,⁸⁴ although it never took place, as it did not stand in parallel with the British interests for the whole

⁸⁰ Tucker & Roberts, *supra*, note 76.

⁸¹ The United States and the Ottoman Empire first established diplomatic relations with the Treaty of May 10, 1830.1 With the treaty, the Americans claimed the same rights and privileges in the Ottoman Empire accorded to European nations under the terms of the capitulations. The treaty also allowed American missionaries, who had been working in the Empire since 1820, to establish more missions, schools and hospitals in the Empire. The 1830 treaty remained the basis of Ottoman-American relations until WW1. Lippe, John M V., The 'other' treaty of Lausanne 31 the 'Other' Treaty of Lausanne: the American Public and Official Debate on Turkish-American Relations, *The Turkish Yearbook*, Vol. XXIII: 1993, pp.31-32.

⁸² Section VI of the Treaty is on Armenia, in which Article 88 provides that "Turkey, in accordance with the action already taken by the Allied Powers, hereby recognises Armenia as a free and independent State." Treaty of Sèvres, *supra*.

⁸³ Article 219 of the treaty states that "...The said land will include in particular the land in the Gallipoli Peninsula shown on map No. 3 [see Introduction]; the limits of this land will be notified to the Greek Government as provided in the preceding paragraph. The Government in whose favour the transfer is made undertakes not to employ the land, nor to allow it to be employed, for any purpose other than that to which it is dedicated. The shore may not be employed for any military, marine or commercial purpose." Ibid.

⁸⁴ Section III of the Treaty defines the right of plebiscite for the Kurds in Kurdistan; Article 62 states that "A Commission sitting at Constantinople and composed of three members appointed by the British, French and Italian Governments respectively shall draft within six months from the coming into force of the present Treaty a scheme of local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas lying east of the Euphrates, south of the South boundary of Armenia as it may be hereafter determined, and north of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia, as defined in Article 27, II (2) and (3). If unanimity cannot be secured on any question, it will be referred by the members of the Commission to their respective Governments. The scheme shall contain full safeguards for the protection of the Assyro-Chaldeans and other racial or religious minorities within these areas, and with this object a Commission composed of British, French, Italian, Persian and Kurdish representatives shall visit the spot to examine and decide what rectifications, if any, should be made in the Turkish frontier where, under the provisions of the present Treaty, that frontier coincides with that of Persia." Next, Article 63 states that "The Turkish Government hereby agrees to accept and execute the decisions of both the Commissions mentioned in Article 62 within three months from their communication to the said Government." Finally, Article 64 states that "If within one year from the coming into force of the present Treaty the Kurdish peoples within the areas defined in Article 62 shall address themselves to the Council of the League of Nations in such a manner as to show that a majority of the population of these areas desires independence from Turkey, and if the Council then considers that these peoples are capable of such independence and recommends that it should be granted to them, Turkey hereby agrees to execute such a recommendation, and to renounce all rights and title over these areas. The detailed provisions for such renunciation will form the subject of a separate agreement between the Principal Allied Powers and Turkey. If and when such renunciation takes place, no objection will be raised by the Principal Allied Powers to the voluntary adhesion to such an independent Kurdish State of the Kurds inhabiting that part of Kurdistan which has hitherto been included in the Mosul Vilayet." Ibid.

Kurdistan, thus was limited to the areas under the control of Sheikh Mahmud, which also never happened as will be discussed in Chapter Five.⁸⁵

The Ottoman Empire had to renounce all claim to ethnically non-Turkish territories. Thus, the Ottoman government confirmed the Italian possession of Dodecanese and Rhodes and the British control of Cyprus and Egypt. The Turkish Straits were to be demilitarized and internationalized, and the coastal regions around Antalya and Adana were to be occupied by Italy and France, respectively. Finally, the strength of the Turkish army was limited to 50,000 men and the country was placed under de facto entente's protectorate.

The terms of the Treaty were drafted at the first London Conference from February to April 1920 and finalized at the San Remo Conference at the end of April 1920.⁸⁶ The terms were considered harsh and punitive, mainly attributable to the condition that imposed control on Turkey's finances, budget and customs by an international financial commission. Moreover, Turkey had to pay its debts and the costs of the allied military occupation, and the new frame of the Turkish state would be confined to Anatolia, with the Sultan being allowed to remain in Constantinople. However, as Spencer suggested, the provisions of the Treaty made him a virtual prisoner to the interests of the victorious nations.⁸⁷ A harsher condition was that the Allies, via the Tripartite Pact, would enjoy economic spheres of influence. For example, France would focus on Cilicia and Italy would focus on Adalia, and in these circumstances, Christian minorities would be protected.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Article 95 states that "The High Contracting Parties agree to entrust, by application of the provisions of Article 22, the administration of Palestine, within such boundaries as may be determined by the Principal Allied Powers, to a Mandatory to be selected by the said Powers. The Mandatory will be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2, 1917, by the British Government, and adopted by the other Allied Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country. The Mandatory undertakes to appoint as soon as possible a special Commission to study and regulate all questions and claims relating to the different religious communities. In the composition of this Commission the religious interests concerned will be taken into account. The Chairman of the Commission will be appointed by the Council of the League of Nations." Ibid.

⁸⁶ T 1/12559/20247, 'Foreign Office, Implementation of the recommendations of the San Remo Conference with respect to indemnities: query by the Belgian Government', File classification: category C, 1920, The National Archives, Kew.

⁸⁷ Tucker & Roberts, *supra*, note 76.

⁸⁸ Fry, Graham M., Goldstein, Erik., and Langhorne, R. Guide to International Relations and Diplomacy. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004, p. 146.

It was argued that when the allies imposed the Treaty of Sevres on the Sultan's government, the Sultan knew it would not be enforced, which is why took a gamble by signing it in order to provide time for the Empire to reassert dominance in the region. The first justification for this was that he knew that the treaty's fate rested in the Turkish nationalists and Mustafa Kemal, believing that it would be a good card to play.⁸⁹ Mevin noted that the harsh conditions of the treaty engendered great resentment in Turkey, and the republican nationalist movement under Kemal Ataturk, which began in 1919, one year before the Treaty was created, refused to recognize the Treaty of Sevres. Kemal's success at this time forced the Allies to negotiate a new treaty with Turkey in Lausanne in 1923,⁹⁰ which will be discussed further in subsequent sections of tis thesis.

The second justification for the Sultan signing the treaty was that even several allied politicians doubted the enforceability of the Treaty since its harsh conditions would not be accepted by any nation, even as a result of the war. Needless to say, the Turks would have refused to give up their empire just by ratifying a treaty. For the Sultan, the enforcement of the Treaty would greatly depend on whether the Greek army would be able to subdue the Turks in Anatolia.⁹¹

The gamble that the Sultan played ended in his favor as the powerful Turkish national movement established a new regime under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in Ankara, Western Anatolia. By astute negotiation and military success against the British and the Greeks, Ataturk forced a final resolution of the Eastern Question. On the basis of recognizing a fully national Turkey, ruling over territory principally populated by ethnic Turks, a revised settlement was imposed by Ataturk to overturn Sevres.⁹² Most nationalists understood that reviving the Ottoman Empire and recapturing the lost Arab lands could not, and should not, be accomplished. They bristled, however, at any ethnically Turkish lands falling under foreign control. Kamal set out to regain all Anatolian and Armenian lands for Turkey.⁹³ This was a point of strength for Ataturk to

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰ Page, Mevin E., Colonialism, An international Social, Cultural, and Political Encyclopedia, ABC-CLIO, 2003, p. 527.

⁹¹ Fry, *supra*, note 88. The principal architect of the treaty was David Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister who had immediately recognized that Great Britain could not enforce these terms. While the Greeks were already showing an appetite for more of Anatolia than the treaty permitted, Britain was facing intense domestic pressures to demobilize. Tucker & Roberts, *supra*, note 76.

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Ibid.

fight. Thus, Ataturk was free to exercise ethnic cleansing against the Greeks,⁹⁴ or displace many other minorities and relocate them within Turkish lands.

The Treaty of Sevres was the last in a series of peace treaties concluded by the allied powers with Germany's allies. The preparation for this treaty was the most prolonged, and in several respects, the most difficult of all the treaties, yet there was less to show for these efforts because the treaty never came into force, as previously mentioned.

One of the early and less significant problems of the allies was the reshaping of Arabia. The secret partition treaties of the wartime period, in so far as they affected the interests of those great powers that still had a military presence in the Near East, proved more important than might have seemed from the various statements made during the last year of war. Hussein, the Sharif of Mecca who had proclaimed himself King of Hedjaz, together with his sons represented liberated Arabia at the Paris Conference, but he was forced almost at once to accept a curtailment of his sphere of influence. His eldest son, Feisal, played a less than happy role on the diplomatic stage in Paris which was unfamiliar ground to him. At the suggestion of his Foreign Office advisers he tried, by an arrangement with Zionist leaders, to deal with the Palestine problem independently of the Great powers in such a way as to meet the wishes of the Jews to gain the Zionists' support for the Arab cause. The Feisal-Weizmann agreement of January 1919 was the result of the dynastic ideas of Hussein's family which tried to achieve a rapprochement, through concessions, with the leader of Zionism. But with the growth of the Jewish settlement, Palestine became a crisis area and the presence of a strong protectorate power became justified, indeed inevitable.⁹⁵

As far as the nature of the mandates under the Sevres Treaty were concerned, there were three kinds of mandate. For the German colonies, annexation became an accomplished fact, although de jure the possibility of terminating this state was not excluded. Another

⁹⁴ James, Alice, "Memories of Anatolia: generating Greek refugee identity" *Homelands in question: Paradoxes of memory and exile in South-Eastern Europe*, Vol. V, No. 1-2, Décembre 2001, <https://balkanologie.revues.org/720>, visited on 10 February 2017.

⁹⁵ In his official capacity in Paris, Feisal was merely the head of the Hedjaz delegation. The French were in possession of large parts of Syria which under the Sykes-Picot agreement was part of the zone earmarked for them. But the British, at first with Arab troops under the British commander of the Palestine front, had occupied Damascus even before French marines marched into Beirut; and at the last hour of the war Britain recognized the Arabs as allies which entitled them to attend the Paris Peace Conference. But unlike Britain, France had never had any relations with Feisal. It therefore refused to recognize him as spokesman for Syria. Like Palestine, Syria therefore acquired a status that put it outside the influence of Grand Sharif and his sons. Schulz, Gerald., *Revolutions and Peace Treaties 1971-1920*, Taylor & Francis, 1972, pp. 209-211.

form of mandate was established in Arabia.⁹⁶ Following the Wilson's suggestion, the situation in the Near East, and particularly in Syria, was to be settled by an American commission which would establish the wishes of the population. The relevant clause of the fourth paragraph of Article XXII of the League of Nations Covenant clearly states:

“Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering administrative advice and assistance by Mandatory until such a time as they are able to stand alone. This was more or less in line with the unknown protectorate principle. But another sentence followed: "the wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.”⁹⁷

The Treaty of Sevres, though ultimately considered unsuccessful, showed that the treaty provided for Turkey's Arab territories, and made clear that these territories were states. It referred to the 'states' detached from Turkey in its provisions on citizenship, on Turkish assets, and the Turkish public debt.

When WW1 ended in the Middle East with the signing of the Armistice of Mudros by the Ottoman Empire on 30 October 1918, each nation and group came with its own agenda. British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, while stating all the proper slogans about goodwill to Middle Eastern people, was there to advance the interests of the British Empire. These included British-controlled sea and land routes to India and assurance that no other power be given important strategic areas. French president Georges Clemenceau, compensating for heavy French troop losses, adamantly adhered to each wartime agreement signed by the Allies that would give France a hold on Syria and South Anatolia. He also hoped for dominance over the Turkish Straits and perhaps over what would become Turkey. The United States president Woodrow Wilson came with his Fourteen Points. Under this, clause XII states that “The Turkish portion of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an unmolested opportunity of autonomous development.”⁹⁸ Hence, the term 'other nationalities' included the Kurds, notwithstanding that it was not specifically mentioned by name.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ 'President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points (1918)', at <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=62>, re-visited on 10 February 2017

General Sharif Pasha was the only Kurdish representative at the signing of the Treaty of Sevres in 1920 in Paris. As recorded in Rafiq Hilmi's Diary, Pasha was a Kurdish historian, writer and politician born in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. He founded the Kurdish party Hîwa in 1938, which will be discussed further in Chapter Five. His diary highlighted Sharif Pasha's representation at the signing of the treaty. In this researcher's view, Pasha's role at this conference was to determine why the Kurds were not successful in gaining the status of an independent nation yet the Jews were, considering the same promises were made to the Kurds in this treaty that were made to the Jews in the Balfour declaration. According to Hilmi's Diary:

“Treaty of Sevres which was backbreaking for Turkey (Kemalists Turkey), three articles were included by Kurds independence freedom of Kurdish Nations, which means Articles 62, 63 and 64 of the Sevres Treaty. The Transcript of Sheikh Mahmud and Iraqi Kurds had not been sent to Sharif Pasha by the French forces in Syria due to the English efforts and because Sheikh Mahmud's representative had stayed in Aleppo and they had not been allowed to enter Paris. But the Kurds from Turkey and the Kurdish political associations from Istanbul were able to send general proxies to Sharif Pasha in their name and all Kurds and make him their own representative by the officials of peaceful conference”.⁹⁹

Hence, it can be argued as a negative that Pasha was the only Kurdish representative and that there were not Kurds representing other parts of Kurdistan at the conference. This would have increased the pressure on the superpower countries, yet as a result, the Kurdish lobby appeared weak and was unsuccessful. Therefore, Sharif Pasha was hindered to establish a strong lobby at the Paris Peace Conference.

As for Hilmi said,

“Except Sharif Pasha's concern on the right of Kurdish nations, on the 22 March 1919 under the title of *Memorandum Sur Les Revendications Du Peuple Kurde*, he presented it in the French language to the conference in addition to his efforts to include the mentioned Articles 62, 63, and 64 that were special to Kurds and independence of Kurdistan in the framework of other chapters of the Treaty of Sevres”.¹⁰⁰

Mohammed Sherif Pasha was an Ottoman diplomat that became a leading Kurdish nationalist. He was firstly an Ottoman Ambassador to Stockholm and before 1908, a supporter of the Young Turk movement; he provided economic support to Ahmed Riza, a Young Turk leader in Paris.¹⁰¹ After 1918, he rejoined the Ottoman government

⁹⁹ Hilmi, Rafiq., *Yadasht* (Kurdish), (Tra: Diary), 3rd Edi, Sulemani, 2003, p.21.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p.22.

¹⁰¹ Ozoglu, Hakan, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, SUNY Press, 2004, pp.110-112.

service, however, he soon defected from the Ottoman side, joining the *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti* (Society for the Rise of Kurdistan) which will be discussed further in Chapter Five. He reached an agreement with the Armenian delegation in Paris which involved the division of eastern Anatolia into a Kurdish state and an Armenian state. In fact, his aim was to bring Kurdish issues into the spotlight, and to achieve legal recognition for the Kurds through diplomatic channels, but ultimately not successful.

Expect local Kurdish efforts to support Sharif Pasha's representation, there was no other outside supports for him. The countries of Britain, France and other participants of the conference did their best to divide the countries of the Middle East and Mesopotamia, especially Kurdish lands. The major allied powers formed a committee to determine a local region in a period of six months to draw the borders especially for those areas located in the east, west and south of Euphrates river as a border of Armenia, while south Turkey from the land of Syria which separates the border of Mesopotamia and where Kurdish race dominates. This plan was finally included at the Treaty of Sevres in Articles 2, 3, 11, and 21. Although the members of the committee had been the official representatives of their countries for voting on this issue, a vote was not held as referenced in Hilmi's diary mentioned above. That is why the three-men committee did not have an effective role in Kurdish history and the treaty did not affect the non-Kurdish minorities, considering that the rights of the Christians or Assyrians were protected.

The issue of Mosul Villayet had changed the balance for the worse for Kurds and other minorities in the region. If it was not for the British oil privileges in Mosul, the Kurdish issue would have turned out differently. In other words, the clauses in the Treaty of Sevres may have materialized on the political map and the Kurds may have established their own state. However, the British government had ambitions in Mosul to access to its oil. Therefore, Britain assisted Ataturk in establishing the new Turkish state in the north, while allowing the establishment of other Arab states, such as Syria to the west of Mosul, and Baghdad as the capital of the newly formed Iraq. These newly formed states occupied a vast area of Kurdistan, and did not leave an opportunity for Kurds to settle on their own land. What remained was not enough for the Kurds to establish their own state on. This was the new reality.

Another reason for the success of the new Turkish state and its allies was Mustafa Kamal Ataturk. He was such a charismatic figure that was not panicked by the Ottoman Caliph or by the Treaty of Severe, which was not in his interest. The Young Turks did not fear

the establishment of martial Diwan of the Ottoman Caliph nor did they fear the recent violence of WW1. In fact, at this stage, Turkey was divided by two forces, the first one was the Ottoman military forces in western Turkey and Istanbul, while the second one was in eastern Turkey led by Ataturk, who was also supported by the major allied forces. Eventually, Turkey was formed in a weak shape and each side had to take full control of the state to establish a strong Turkey. In this context, Rafiq Himli suggested that when Damat Farid Pasha who became the Prime Minister of the Ottoman Empire, and the head of the Ottoman's Divan of Military, he sent an army led by Ahmad Anwer Pasha of Charkas to Anatolia, it suffered an embarrassing defeat at the hands of Mustafa Kamal's forces. With the defeat of his army, Fared Pasha stopped his smear campaign against the newly formed Kamalist authority.

The people of Anatolia were no longer influenced by the Ottoman army because Fared Pasha was no longer respected by the key military commanders in the army. Hence, the subsequent changes of ministries and the cabinet also effectively contributed to the Kamalists' success, especially when Farid Pasha was removed as Prime Minister and Tofiq Pasha was appointed and he formed a new cabinet."¹⁰² Hence, one can see that these changes to the political and high administrative posts in the Ottoman Empire to those closest to Ataturk himself, gave him a better chance to take power and freely act on behalf of the Ottomans.

Ataturk's cabinet was run solely by his close allies. They pursued a peaceful policy towards the Kurds and all minorities in Turkey until they submitted to their authority. This is evident when considering the time in which Ataturk's authority in Istanbul worked for total peace and settlement of affairs in the region. In this period, matters were settled in the distorted status between the authorities of Ankara and Istanbul, in other words the Ottomans and Ataturks. It did not take long for Kamal Ataturk resumed his oppression of the Kurds and the era of Kurdish confrontation began. Here, the point that needs to be explained is the exacerbation of the Kurdish, Ottoman and Turkish conflict. Although it has a long history, Kurdish nationalism became more prominent after 1908. One can argue that the Young Turk revolution was a watershed moment in Kurdish nationalism, when the focus shifted to promoting Kurdish issues through civic activities and publications. This is evident as Kamal Ataturk started abolishing national and ethnic

¹⁰² Ibid, p.25.

rights for the Kurds, including language and education, although under the Ottomans, Kurds did not enjoy equal rights, as can be seen in the previously mentioned example of the Rushdiya Al Askari School.

Under the Ottomans, Kurds had independent dynasties, an army and, to an extent sovereignty. This is despite the fact that sometimes the Ottomans used Kurds and their dynasties to strengthen their position and deprived Kurds of their rights.¹⁰³ However, there was a sentiment that sharing the same religion meant that Kurds were closer to the Ottoman authorities during this time. Thus, it would be illogical for readers and the researcher not to differentiate between the two periods regarding the situation for Kurds; in the first period, Turkish nationalists rose to prominence during and after Ataturk's reign, and in the second period, the Ottomans' ruled until 1908. The Kurdish struggle entered a new phase during and after the Turkish nationalists came to power. This time was known for a phase of revolts, uprisings and the feeling of being different from the Turks. This feeling became the focal point in the Kurdish struggle for achieving the right to exist in an independent Kurdistan. These conflicts, though, have a deep history Sykes –Picot Agreement of 1916, yet this treaty became the turning point for Kurdish nationalism, and its effects can still be felt today. This is because the formation of the political map and the unnatural border of the Greater Kurdistan was orchestrated by the major allied power forces during WW1 for the sake of their political, economic, and military interests in the region.

2.3 Treaty of Lausanne of 1923

Many commentators have suggested that the Treaty of Sevres of 1920 remained a dead as it was not honored by its drafters nor its would-be participants. Simultaneously, the international turmoil in the area served to benefit the Turkish state and its transformation; which entailed the creation of a new treaty and convention to effectively replace the Treaty of Sevres.

From the outset, the Peace Conference of Lausanne, held from 20 November 1922 to 4 February 1923 and then again from 23 April to 24 July 1923, produced the Treaty of Lausanne and a specific convention dealing with the Straits. Under the treaty, Turkey had to abandon all its Arab lands within the vast Ottoman Empire, but it was able to retain all the territories that were inhabited by Turks. The loser in this redistribution of

¹⁰³ Zaki Beg, *supra*, note 24, p. 130.

territories in the Eastern Mediterranean was Greece, which yielded all of East Thrace, the area of Smyrna, and the islands of Imbros and Tenedos to Turkey. Needless to say, the Kurds in the Southeast of Anatolia were in a better position for the fact that South Anatolia had not fallen under the control of any allied powers during WW1, and the majority of Kurds were loyal to the Ottoman Empire. In addition to this, both French and British powers were not interested in occupying those regions, as clearly seen in provisions of the Treaty of Sevres.¹⁰⁴ Regarding the Straits, a compromise was sought at the Conference of Lausanne between Britain, France and Italy (the major allied powers) on one hand, and Russia on the other. While the Great powers wanted to maintain the provisions established by the Treaty of Sevres as much as possible, Turkey was hesitant and inflexible towards the conciliatory approach. The Soviet regime in Russia proved to be extremely reluctant in accepting interference of extra-Black Sea powers in what Moscow considered to be an intra-Black Sea powers affair. Russian persistence in not recognizing the regime of free passage through the Straits led to Russian withdrawal from negotiations and the Lausanne Convention of 20 January 1923 was signed by other parties in the Soviet Union's absence. Eventually, the Russian objections were curbed, as the Convention of Lausanne became a reality and the Soviet Union did not want to remain outside the new international agreement. Moscow signed convention in Constantinople on 14 August 1923. The Convention of Lausanne, related to the Straits, was concluded between Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Yugoslavia, Turkey and, later, the Soviet Union. The convention accompanied the Treaty of Lausanne but it was not directly connected to it. The likely reason for this was the desire to ensure the viability of the Straits regime from possible adventures based on a peace treaty that was heavily dependent upon the political circumstances at the time.¹⁰⁵

The Lausanne conference resulted in seventeen diplomatic achievements. Turkey recognized the loss of its Arab provinces, but plans for an independent Armenia and an autonomous Kurdistan were abandoned. The reason was that the geographical location of both the Armenians and Kurds was attached to Turkish lands, thus if independence was granted to them, then the land of Turkey would become much smaller. Next, if the Kurds and Armenians were granted independence, then Ataturk had to deal with another two newly formed neighboring states, other than the Arabs. This would further limit

¹⁰⁴ Article 28 of Sevres Treaty 1920. Reguer, *supra* note 79.

¹⁰⁵ Rozakēs, Chrēstos L.1987. *Turkish Straits*. Vol. 9. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, pp. 97-98.

Turkey's power in the region. The European powers no longer demanded capitulation, and although Turkey agreed to minor financial burdens and tariff restrictions, there were to be no war reparations. The Greeks lost their zone around İzmir, and no other powers retained zones of influence. Turkish territory in Europe expanded, but control over Mosul in Iraq and Alexandretta in Syria remained with the British and French, respectively. Finally, the conference recognized Turkish sovereignty over the Straits, although there were some concessions in the form of a demilitarized zone and an international commission to supervise transit through the Straits. In short, Ismet achieved virtually all that nationalist Turkey under Kemal's leadership desired.

According to several reports, there are close to fifty identifiable ethnic groups in Turkey. All rights indicated in articles 37 to 45 in section 111 of the Treaty of Lausanne apply only to non-Muslim minorities, which are explicitly named; they refer only to the established Christian minorities (including the Armenians and the Greek orthodox) and additionally confirm the rights of Jews. With regards to the non-Turkish minorities, the Treaty of Lausanne stipulated the right to use their own language in private conversation, in media, in publications and at public occasions (Para. 39). The treaty thus extrapolated the Ottoman understanding of minorities. It referred only to religious minorities; ethnic minorities were not mentioned. As a consequence, the Kurds were counted as Muslims. This seems odd because, initially, Atatürk used Islam and the term 'Muslim' deceitfully to convince the Kurds that he was going to recognize their right to independence once they, i.e. Turks and Kurds, removed the major allied powers in the region who were non-Muslims. Therefore, as no special protection was required officially, Turkey had the basis to refuse acknowledgment of the Kurds' existence. The treaty made no provisions for a future autonomous reign for Kurdish tribes on Turkish territory. On the country, it was silent on the Kurdish question and the fate of the Mosel region, and paved the way for the creation of a single ethnic Turkey. However, after the Treaty of Lausanne, Atatürk's secularization of Turkey was revealed; he denied that Kurdish identity was different from the Turks and he merely called them 'mountainous Turks'.

Finally, the Treaty of Lausanne is still seen as the beginning of Kurdish displacement throughout the region that was their homeland. This has been part of Kurdish life since the treaty was signed. Nevertheless, the treaty signaled the beginning of a desperate Kurdish nationalist movement, which started in the 1930s. Simultaneously, successive

Turkish governments began a long and intense assimilation campaign. In parallel, Kurds have refused to assimilate.

2.4 The Kurds: A critical appraisal

For Kurds, the time as the best opportunity to proclaim independent state had come once. However, disunity among the clans and tribes did not provide the basis upon which a powerful resistance movement could be built. One of the reasons to consider was the newly installed borders and the actual partition of Kurdistan. Each Kurdish tribe was trying to protect themselves from either the Turkish, Syrian, Iraqi or Iranian central government. This, from the very start, minimized any chance of becoming an autonomous or independent state.

The Kurdistan region was scheduled to have a referendum to decide its fate, which, according to Section III Articles 62, 63 and 64 of the Treaty of Sevres 1920, was to include the Mosul Province.

In fact, no general agreement among Kurds; as Özoğlu indicates, there was a disparity between the areas of Kurdish settlement and the political and administrative boundaries of the region.¹⁰⁶ Sharif Pasha, who represented the Society for the Ascension of Kurdistan at the Paris Peace Conference, attended the conference in order to propose the outlines of Kurdistan as an independent entity. He defined the region's boundaries as follows:

“The frontiers of Turkish Kurdistan, from an ethnographical point of view, begin in the north at Ziven, on the Caucasian frontier, and continue westwards to Erzurum, Erzincan, Kemah, Arapgir, Besni and Divick; in the south they follow the line from Harran, the Sinjihar Hills, Tel Asfar, Erbil, Süleymaniye, Akk-el-man, Sinne; in the east, Ravandiz, Başkale, Vezirkale, that is to say the frontier of Persia as far as Mount Ararat.”¹⁰⁷

This claim seemed ambitious, as it defined the borders of Kurdistan that Sharif Pasha wanted the great powers should grant the independence to the Kurds in accordance with this map and discretion. However, this description excluded the Van region, which led to controversy among other Kurdish nationalists. Subsequently, an alternative map was

¹⁰⁶ Özoğlu, Hakan., Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries, SUNY Press, 2004, pp. 38-40.

¹⁰⁷ Şerif Pasha, Memorandum on the Claims of the Kurd People, Imprimerie A.-G. L'Hoir, 1919, p. 3.

proposed by Emin Ali Bedir Khan, who included Van and an outlet to the sea via Turkey's present Hatay Province.¹⁰⁸

The Paris Peace Conference marked a turning point for both the Ottoman Empire and Kurdish tribes. It specified the precondition for the foundation of two independent states, namely Armenia and Kurdistan. Within one year, the Kurds and the Armenians could claim autonomy, provided that this wish was explicitly expressed. Moreover, the tribes had to internally support this process of autonomy; readiness and the capability to maintain a new state were preconditions for autonomy. However, at this stage, the international situation was not as favorable for the Kurds as it was for the Armenians.

What happened, conversely, was that none of these proposals were endorsed by the Treaty of Sevres, which only outlined a truncated Kurdistan located on what is now Turkish territory (leaving out the Kurds of Iran, British-controlled Iraq and French-controlled Syria). However, this plan was never implemented, as the Treaty of Sevres was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne. The current Iraq-Turkey border was agreed in July 1926. At the same time, the clan system stood in opposition to the new state, which made autonomy impossible. Due to a lack of ethnic self-awareness and disunity, Kurdish nationalists were not successful in forming a unified nationalistic movement until 1923. Finally, international support for an independent Kurdish state was minimal during this time.

Finally, one can argue that the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 was the basis for the foundation of modern Turkey. It replaced the Treaty of Sevres of 1920, which marked the end of the Ottoman dynasty. For the Kurdish tribes, the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 brought a dramatic change. As planned in the Treaty of Sevres of 1920, the former Arab provinces were separated from modern Turkey and became mandates of the League of Nations, and were subsequently transformed into independent states. However, the Kurdish provinces were given to Syria, Iran, Iraq, Turkey and the Soviet Union, all of which brought different claims on the basis of ideology, history and culture.

2.5 Conclusion

At the end of Chapter Three, a particular reference was made to the political and historic stages of those overt and covert international treaties and agreements that formed the foundation for the partition of Kurdistan. For instance, the chapter discussed the

¹⁰⁸ Özoğlu, *supra*, note 106.

treaties of Zuhab 1639 and Erzurum I 1823. The it discussed the Treaty of Erzurum II 1847 which opened the door for the major allied powers to interfere with the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. Despite the topography of Kurdistan, the motivation for each tribe to join the Ottomans or the Persians, the weaker regions of Kurdistan acted as the battlefield for the two empires. Kurdish leaders attempted to obtain autonomy, at the least cost against the Ottomans and the Persians in order to keep their Kurdish identity and protect Kurdistan. They did not favor confrontations with the two empires as long as they were not under pressure to engage in conflict.

Although Kurdish nation, for the first time in its political history, saw the articles 62, 63 and 64 of the Treaty of Sevres of 1920 which formally gave the right for self-determination for the Kurds, there were some related external and internal factors that the researcher has already mentioned in this thesis. In the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923, the rights prescribed by the Treaty of Sevres were ignored and later excluded by major allied powers so that the Turkish and Arab nations would be supreme in the Middle East with their support. The Kurds have remained the only nation in the area without a state.

Taking these agreements into consideration, it was only the-Treaty of Sevres of 1920 that indicated a desire to include Kurdish political circumstances, whereas the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 not mention Kurds or Kurdistan at all. This was due to the strength of Ataturk in the region and his increasing influences after 1920 by virtue of winning battles against foreign powers and national movements. He organized several plans and deceived Kurdish elites while ceding to the allied powers by giving Mosul Vilayet to the Arabs in Iraq, which was under the British sphere of influence by virtue of the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916. It was clear that the British interest to make Turkey an ally, rather than the Kurds, was better for maintaining British political, economic and historical interests. This will be clearly seen in Chapter Five in the discussion on Kurdish revolutions and the factors related to Kurdish nationalism, such as the lack of a strong Kurdish nationalism among the Kurds.

The next chapter, will give a detailed analysis on the identity of Kurdistan as a prominent nation in the Middle East in terms of history, ethnicity, common religion and land, multiple ideologies and religious paths practiced by Kurds, and the national elements of language and culture, which are significant factors for the Kurdish nation. This will be detailed with a brief comparison with the history of the Jewish identity, particularly in terms of the Jewish religion.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF KURDISH NATIONAL IDENTITY

3.1 Introduction

The identity of any nation is directly associated to its history, in particular how it survived throughout history and how many historical stages it went through in order to survive till modern times. To be more precise, identity is related to how this history is actually remembered in popular and political culture. History also shows us the social structure of a particular nation, in order to highlight the weaknesses or strengths of that nation. For example, Gellner was of the opinion that national identity, or more precisely nationalism, was a product or made possible by modern social developments.¹⁰⁹ Thus, from this perspective, a nation's identity connects its past to the present; this will further reinforce the nation's identity, which will provide answers/reasons for any contemporary hardships. In this context, this chapter will mainly focus on the history of the Kurdish nation's identity and nationalism through analyzing various aspects related to the Kurds, within the context of this thesis's subject. This chapter will begin with an examination of Kurdish identity through analyzing the origins of the Kurds. The chapter will then analyze the shared history, religion, culture, territory and language of the Kurds in the Middle East. The contributions brought forward by this chapter to the thesis main question is that from sociological perspective, the chapter will analytically establish that the great Kurdistan belongs to the Kurds from the ancient time, and all the elements of nationhood for the Kurds as a nation can materialize.

3.2 Kurdish Identity and Kurdistan

Like all nations in the region, the Kurds have their own history of nationalism in the Middle East. This has multiple roots such as involving religion and competition with other nations. This chapter applies the elements of nationhood discussed in chapter two by initially focusing on the origins of the Kurdish people origin of the Kurds, Kurdish language, Kurdish culture, Islam and Kurdish national identity. This will be followed by a discussion of the geographical concept of Kurdistan.

¹⁰⁹ Gellner, *supra*, note 33.

3.2.1 Kurdish Language

When we talk about the Kurdish language, we need to mention the era of the Mad or Medes, who were the ancestors of the Kurds and settled in the northeast of Persia. The origin of the Kurdish language is directly related to the *Avestan* language, which is also a Zoroastrian language. This language is closely related to the old Indo-Aryan language and the Medes language, which was the country where Zoroaster originally came from. Subsequently, the people of Zoroaster left Medes to live in Khorasan located in the northeast of Iran, which is further considered as the Zoroasters second hometown.

As to the historical analysis of Kurdish language, Mirawdali suggested that the term ‘Gord’ in Persian meant hero or brave, and it is possible that the Persians inherited both the name and the military training institution of Karda from the Medes. The Medes, in turn, might have used the Karduchis as the core force of their army and gave them a dominant military and political position to the extent that ‘Karda’ became identified with their military practice and institution as a whole.¹¹⁰ After many centuries, including the post-Sassanid period, the name Mad [Medes] changed into Mang then to Mas, and in the Islamic period into Mah, which gradually disappeared yet the people survived. The Parthian King Ardashiri Papakan¹¹¹ considered the conquest of the Medes as his greatest enterprise, and he considered the Medes and the Kurds together as one nation. Thus, until the sixth century A.D. the Kurds and the Mad were mentioned as one people. After this the name Kurd gradually incorporated the name Mad to create the new word Kurdmad or Kurdmah- Kurdmanj.¹¹²

Today, the Kurdish language has three main dialects that vary in each location where they are spoken. The three dialects are: north Kurmanji, which is spoken by the Kurds in modern Turkey and Syria; the central Kurmanji, which is called ‘Sorani’ and is mainly spoken by the Kurds of Iraq and Iran; and south Kurmanji, which is spoken by other Kurds living in Iraq and Iran. It has been difficult for Kurds from different parts of Kurdistan to understand each other. A recent example of this can be seen in Iraqi Kurdistan; both Sorani and north Kurmanji are studied in school, yet it is still very different and therefore

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ardashir I or Ardeshir I (180–242 AD), was the founder of the Sasanian Empire. He was the ruler of Estakhr since 206, subsequently Pars Province since 222, and finally “King of Kings of Sasanian Empire” in 224 with the overthrow of the Parthian Empire, ruling the Sasanian Empire until his death in 242. Shahbazi, Shapur., ‘Sasanian Dynasty’, *Encyclopedia Iranica*, July 20, 2005, at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sasanian-dynasty>, re-visited on 30 March 2015,

¹¹² Ibid.

difficult for all to understand properly. However, this low level of understanding among the Kurds has not been a problem for foreigners to certain degree, since they tend to use local interpreters or those who understand the individual dialects the dialects.

Language can gather different dialects into one cultural and literary form. For example, Ahmadi Khani's literature,¹¹³ a figure who is regarded as the father of Kurdish nationalism,¹¹⁴ can serve this argument, while Haji Qadri Koye (1815-1892), in one poem said: "If a Kurd does not know his father's speech [Kurdish language], certainly he was born illegitimate."¹¹⁵ One can understand from Koye that he meant that if a person claims to be a Kurd, he or she must speak the Kurdish language.

When discussing the relationship between the Kurdish language and the notion of nationhood, it is noteworthy to mention that Kurdistan was partitioned between four contemporary deferent states, which are populated by three nations, they are; Turks, Arabs and Persians. Yet, the Kurdish language, with its three different dialects (Kurmanji, Sorani and Hawrami), has become one of the distinctive factors that distinguishes the Kurds from non- Kurds. In spite of the existence of other minor dialects, like Lori and Zazaki, it can be argued that such 'non-unified Kurdish language' phenomenon was due to the lack of a government that can control Kurdish territories and plan for such language unification. That is why, in any attempt to look at language as the strength of a nation, one must take into account the fact that governments can control the whole nation, including the official language. For example, the Hebrew language as a recognised language for the state of Israel, as Graham and Erik argued, "is very different from the original Hebrew taken from the Torah".¹¹⁶ Hence, gathering all the dialects in one literary text and the choice of which which dialect should become the

¹¹³ Ahmad Khani (1651 to 1707 AD), was a great Kurdish poet was born amongst the Xani's tribe in Hekari province in Kurdistan. He was fluent in Kurdish, Arabic and Persian languages. He wrote his Arabic-Kurdish vocabulary "Nú-Buhar" in 1683 to help children with their learning process. He is also the author of Kurdish classic love story "Mem and Zín", is considered to be the Epic of the Kurdish literature. His works are a amongst the good examples of the rich Kurdish literature. Ehmedé Xani creates a good picture of Kurdish life from 16 century in his works. In his work Kurdish patriotism and Kurdish reality are incredibly powerful. His nationalist interest and awareness was amongst pioneers for his time. The remarkable fact is that he lived before the rise of modern sense nationalism. His literature was always criticising Kurdish tribes for submitting themselves to the hands of the enemy. 'Ahmad Khani (1651 - 1707)', *Kurdish Academy of Language enables the Kurdish language in new horizon*, at <http://www.kurdishacademy.org/?q=node/81>, revisited on 20 March 2017.

¹¹⁴ Khani, Ahmadi., *Mamu Zin 1650-1707* (Kurdish), (Tra: Mam and Zin 1650-1707), Jahiz publishing, Baghdad, 1970, p.12.

¹¹⁵ Koyi, Haji Qadir., *Diwani Haji Qadiri Koyi*. (Kurdish), (Tra: Diwan Poetic of Haji Qadir Koyi), 1852, p. 112.

¹¹⁶ Fry, Goldstein and Langhorne, *supra*, note 88.

official language needs a prominent individual's awareness, determination and the works of experts in the field to be involved at the nation's highest administrative levels. Therefore, in this context, national identity can, in many ways, be constructed.

In fact, Kurdish identity is in dire need to have a standard language, to certain extent, if the Kurds want to establish a state. A similar example of this is, the nationalist Hebrew Jewish language which was created or reanimated when Israel was established. This language had been transmitted from a different area due to the suppression of Jewish culture in their adopted countries, many Jews had forgotten Hebrew. It is clear that language was not the basic element of Jewish and national identity; rather, that religion formed the basis of identity. Anderson in this context thought that the phenomena of abandonment of Latin language in Europe led to the return of the European nations to people's language as a basic of their national awareness. Anderson stated that

“in 1804, for example, Ukrainian literature appeared first through poetry and after forty years, the first nationalist Ukrainian organization was established and started striving for establishing a national state. The Hungarian nationalism had started striving for establishing national state by returning to the people's language and abandoning the Latin language which was the official language of Borussia (a state of Austria-Hungary) until the middle of the nineteenth century.”¹¹⁷

However, Kurdish language, in any period of time, could not get access to the outside world due to its closed geography. The only Kurdish cultural wealth was poetry, written in three distinct dialects (Kurmanji, Sorani and Hawrami) that were spoken in three disconnected geographical areas. Therefore, they did not have the literary or cultural power to influence the other cultures. Nevertheless, throughout hundreds of years, Kurds focused heavily on protecting the Kurdish language to prevent it being assimilated into the Turkish and Persian cultures, especially as the Ataturk authority in Turkey and the Pahlavi in Iran did not accept the Kurdish language as equivalent to their own.

The Kurdish language was continuously attacked from many sides. The strength of the Arabic language was taken from the Quran and religious texts, and the strength of Persian was taken from literary cultural and philosophical texts, which was then confirmed in state power. As to the Turkish language, its strength goes back to the fact it was the language of the Ottoman Empire, although Ataturk later changed the alphabet and made it distinctly Turkish. For the Kurdish language, notwithstanding it has a related history dating back to the *Avestan* era, as well as the political influence of the Turks,

¹¹⁷ Anderson, Benedict, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Verso, 2006, pp. 75-76.

Persians and Arabs, experienced difficult stages until it reached a higher level of usage by the Kurdish elites during the first decade of the twentieth century up to the present day. Yet the Kurds did not have one single dialect, thus Kurdistan was unable to develop a single national literature and culture. This can be considered one of the fundamental factors that debilitated Kurdish nationalism in terms of linguistic usage. In addition to this, the division of the empires in the region added to such language fragmentation among different dialects. None of these dialects was able to impose itself on Kurdish intellectuals due to the power of the literature and knowledge of each dialect. For example, the masterpieces of Ahmad Khani were written in north Kurmanji, while Haji Qadir Koye, Nali, Salim and Kurdi wrote in Sorani, although both had contributed to and recorded Kurdish literature.

If there was national awareness about uniting these dialects, Kurdish culture may have reached a level of healthy political organization during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in order to stand against imperial influences. Therefore, we can say that language played a good role for retaining Kurdish culture but at the same time was the source of Kurdish problems and the disconnecting of its culture. Not only that, but even had been more sacrificed due to political and local crises. Kurdish intellectuals did not fight against the distortion and dispersion of Kurdish language and culture and try to prevent its extinction Minorsky stated:

“All the Kurdish dialects, except (Zaza and Goran), despite their differences, they could be wonderfully united in the content that their values appear when they are compared with the multi Iranian languages...There is a constitutive unity in Kurds sourced from one language that a large number of important people speak in it”¹¹⁸

In addition, Minorsky highlighted that the Kurds might be the Medes; “Kurdish nationalists prefer considering them their own ancestors”.¹¹⁹

Furthermore, the famous linguist David Mackenzie criticized the views of Minorsky and suggested that here is in memories that in one hand there are few numbers of common moral and expression of Kurdish styles which organize each other. On the other hand, it is different from Iranian languages. He also thought that ‘native Kurds’ in terms of some basic sides from the language of Medes, while the Iranian languages also carry some

¹¹⁸ Minorsky, Vladimir Mongol Place names in Mukri Kurdistan, London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1957, pp.15-21.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p. 22.

sides of Medes language. Thus, there are similarities between the two languages. Since the Medes were near the northwest of Iran, one can say that the two Kurdish accents of Zaza and Goran, which are located in the north-west of Iran, can suggest that Kurdish language is close to the language of Medes.¹²⁰ Therefore, Mackenzie argues that there are some differences in origin of the accent of the northern Kurdish (Kurmanji) and the southern Kurdish (Sorani). This might be related to the great effect of the Goran accent upon the Sorani accent.¹²¹

It is worth mentioning that the Kurdish language has insufficiencies in written expression, which draws to which draws attention to the fact that there is not a united standard language. As previously mentioned, language is considered one of the major elements of nationalism. Instead of strengthening the development of Kurdish nationalism, the variety of accents and dialects in fact had a negative influence on the notion of nationalism for the Kurdish people. To illustrate this further, it is imperative to refer to Kurdish intellectuals' statements regarding this issue as most of them have specialized in addressing the weaknesses of this element of nationalism for the Kurdish nation.

First of all, Mukryani suggested that those intellectuals came from the Ottoman Empire spread in different parts of Kurdistan, had published their writings in Turkish language. When Major Soane opened his publishing office in Sulaimani, he rewarded those who presented fluent Kurdish writings. Hence, one can understand that why Kurdish elites at that time could rarely write in Kurdish language. The language the Kurdish intellectuals wrote in generally included Arabic, Persian and Turkish. Encouraging people to write in Kurdish was a key concern for the British officials. Kurdish intellectuals published their writings on Kurdish culture and history in Turkish, such as Shukri Fazli (1882-1926), who was a Kurdish intellect, journalist and poet, who wrote poems in Turkish, Arabic and Persian., Amin Faizi Beg (died in 1928) was another Kurdish intellectual who specialized in literature and mathematics. In 1893, he published a book in Turkish titled 'Total Results'. The prominent Kurdish poet like Piramerd, wrote poems and

¹²⁰ Mackenzie, D.N., *The Origin of Kurdish* transactions of the philological Society, 1961, p.81, at https://archive.org/stream/MacKenzie.D.The_origins_of_Kurdish/MacKenzie.D.The_origins_of_Kurdish_djvu.txt, re-visited on 20 September 2016.

¹²¹ Ibid.

articles in Turkish for twenty-five years, particularly when he lived in Istanbul and served as a member of the High Majlis of Istanbul.¹²²

There is an opposing view to the argument outlined above. In a special recorded interview, Qazaz said; “Lack of a political independent entity is the effective direct factor of the lack of Kurdish standard language, because if we had an independent entity, we would have a better and stronger language. It might have settled an accent.”¹²³ So, this can be a correct view of the historical space for Kurdish standard language from all the parts of Kurdistan. Yet we should not forget that the external factors mentioned earlier, like Kamalism, Arabism or Persianism, had a great impact upon imposing this political reality on the Kurdish language, though the Kurdish language has survived until the present day. However, Qazaz was of the opinion that this fact as a positive factor. He said “the division of Kurdish language is the result of the externally imposed division of Kurdistan, and the only positive feature of this division has enriched the language.”¹²⁴

3.2.2 Kurdish Culture

One of the most distinctive characteristics in identifying Kurds to people of other nations in the Middle East is Kurdish clothes. The traditional Kurdish dresses are still used for everyday wear and are not reserved only for holidays, especially by the older generation of men and women. The dresses worn on a daily basis tend to be modest in color and have little or no accessories or embroidery. In the present day, the Kurdish dress is more commonly worn on special occasions.

A traditional Kurdish woman’s outfit includes either a vest or long-sleeved jacket or long overcoat worn over a gown. An under dress and puffy pants are worn beneath the gown. A belt over the gown is also needed. Traditionally, women wore Kurdish hats ornamented with valuable colored stones, beads and gold pieces. Over time this has become less common. Now it is more popular among women to only accessorize with gold jewelry. Usually younger women and young girls wear brightly colored dresses adorned with many beads and sequins, and the older women wear darker colors. However, older women tend to wear more gold jewelry because traditionally when women married they would receive a dowry of gold jewelry pieces from their groom;

¹²² Khaznadar, Marif., Mezhui Adabi Kurdi, (Kurdish), (Tra: The History of Kurdish Literature), (5th Edi), Erbil, 2005, p.95.

¹²³ Ibid, pp.54-55.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p.55.

the tradition implied that the amount of gold pieces a woman wore signified their status amongst other women in their society. This still applies today, to a lesser extent.

As for Kurdish men, the traditional outfit comes as a set, a top worn over a shirt, then puffy trousers covering from the waist to the toe. Then, between both the top and the trousers there is a different colored belt. There are different styles which are still common in Kurdistan, like *Rank u chogha*, *Sharwal u Mraxani*, *Kattafi* and *Star Xani*, worn by men, each of which has a distinctive characteristic from the others. There are other accessories worn on men's clothing which are not very common nowadays, like *Kawa u Salta*, *PuzaVana* and *KolVana*. Men's shoes are called *Klash* and are sewn with thread.¹²⁵

Archie Roosevelt, in describing Kurdish clothes, said:

“Kurdish dress consists of a tasseled turban of blue silk, embroidered vest, baggy gray pants of homespun wool, and a huge crimson cummerbund, intricately knotted in front, from which protrudes a pipe, the top of a tobacco pouch, and a long curved dagger...the Kurds are incorrigible dandies and a poor man among them would rather spend his last coins on a fine sash than on a good kebab”.¹²⁶

In another note, Roosevelt said “...the villager's clothes and their buildings made me feel attached to the differences between Kurdish men's and women's dresses”. As to Kurdish women's dress, Roosevelt said: “Kurdish women's dress is not less gorgeous than men...” then he gave the above description.¹²⁷ The reason for this is that Kurdish women like to appear in such a stunning dressing style especially silk clothes as it shows their reputation, pride and nobility among Kurdish society. This is one of the distinctive characteristics of Kurdish women's clothes, which genuinely belongs to Kurdish culture even though it might have some similarities to Turkish women's clothes. These Kurdish clothes did in fact resemble Kurdish national identity, as they were exclusively worn by Kurds in the region, in such a way that any foreigners who visited the Middle East and saw Kurdish clothe immediately knew that they were in Kurdistan, and not in other areas, like Arabic countries or Turkey. When the orientalists visited Kurdistan, they dedicated part of their writings to describing Kurdish cultural dress, like Claudius James Rich who visited Sulaimani during the early nineteenth century, as will be discussed further.

¹²⁵ The researcher is a Kurdish native; therefore, the statement is made from the researcher's experiences.

¹²⁶ Roosevelt, Archie, *Kurdish Republic of Mahabad*, in Chaliand, Gérard, (Edi), *A People Without a Country: The 'Kurds and Kurdistan*, Interlink Books, 1993, p. 137.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

In fact, Kurdish culture is quite unique from other cultures in the region. It has aspects of both hardship and fascination. Life in Kurdish villages was traditionally hard; it was a difficult agricultural lifestyle and the land was covered in stones and rocks, making it hard to plant on. In addition to that, the villagers lived as migrants between summer and winter. Before the real heat of summer started, they migrated to the cooler hilly areas, and when the winter came again, they moved back to the plain areas to less harsh conditions.¹²⁸

Rich described Kurdish culture in his book during the nineteenth century when he visited Kurdish areas (presently located in modern Iraq). In fact, Rich and Roosevelt's writings were imperative for the Kurdish nationalists of the early twentieth century. Therefore, descriptions of Kurdish history referred to the writings of these orientalists since they best described Kurdish culture in the region. Kurdish nationalist, historian and writer Muhammed Amin Zaki, writing in the early twentieth century, is one example of what. Similarly, Kurdish writer, poet and academic Aladin Sajadi, who lived during Sheikh Mahmud's time and wrote the famous book titled "The Kurdish revolution and the Iraqi revolution", referred to these nineteenth century orientalist's writings on Kurdish culture. In short, one can argue that Kurdish nationalists of the early twentieth century have benefited from the orientalists' writings in terms of culture and national identity.

Hence, the researcher briefly refers to some of the descriptions of Kurdish culture written by Rich. He mainly talked about Kurdish parties and dances in which the Kurds pay an immense amount of attention and significance to even nowadays for national religious celebrations, or political parties and other occasions. One of the occasions he saw was a Kurdish party in a house in the entrance part of the city of Sulimani, which attracted Rich and made him get closer to observe how Kurdish parties are carried out. He saw a dance known as Tchopee in which people form a ring not joined at the end,¹²⁹ which is still the dance practiced in Kurdistan for national and political parties, and is strictly particular to Sulaimani and its suburbs. Although this type of dance is exclusive to the people of Sulaimani, Kurdish dance in general has characteristics that belong to the Kurds only and no other nation has a similar type of dance similar type of it.

¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 83.

¹²⁹ Rich, Claudius James, Narrative of a residence in Koordistan, and on the site of ancient Nineveh: with journal of a voyage down the Tigris to Bagdad and an account of a visit to Shirauz and Persepolis, Vol. 1, J. Duncan, 1836, p.282.

Furthermore, it should be taken into consideration that Kurdish culture is diverse and differs from one location to another. For example, Kurdish dance in Jwanro-Mariwan (presently in modern Iran) has many shapes, which is the same case as Hawrami dance. However, the dance is totally different in northern Kurdistan (presently in modern Turkey). This shows that Kurdish is a rich culture; as well as the various accents used by the Kurds, such as Sorani, the culture has traditions and customs that are unique in the region,

To prove Rich's statement, Kurdish women always fight against enemies, alongside their husbands, fathers, sons and brothers. Not only that, Kurdish women have a better quality of life than Turkish and Persian women. In this context, Rich said "The condition of the women is far better in Koordistan [Kurdistan] than in Turkey or Persia. That is to say they are treated as equals by their husbands, and they laugh at and despise the slavish subjection of Turkish women".¹³⁰

One can argue that the western policy towards the Kurds during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was shaped by these orientalist's and foreign delegates' writings about the culture and the nature of Kurdish personalities in order to find suitable ways of treating the Kurds and in what way they should approach them. That is why in the Treaty of Sevres of 1920, the major allied powers recognized the Kurds as a separate nation from the Turks, Arabs and Persians, and that they should have the right of their own independent state.

Nevertheless, Kurdish societies were not aggressive, as Rich highlighted that the phenomenon of manpower in some Kurdish villages that created a sort of tranquility within the society. Rich said "There is something approaching to domestic comfort in Koordistan [Kurdistan]; in Turkey the idea is quite unknown."¹³¹

But some Kurdish rulers used force against the poorer families, whereas this was unacceptable among Turkish societies. He mentioned a species of tyranny practiced by some of their powerful and licentious princes, which would not be submitted to in Turkey. If a person of this character took a fancy to a girl, he would often force her

¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 285-286.

¹³¹ Rich, *supra*, note 301, p. 286.

parents to marry her to him.¹³² This practice is still the case in a few areas in Kurdish societies but does not occur often.

It is true that men were the leaders of most Kurdish tribes, but this does not mean that Kurdish women did not participate in the concerns of their kin. In fact, in the history of Kurdistan, there are several cases in which Kurdish women successfully ran the affairs of their clans and became the focus of many foreign orientalists and local historians and writers when talking about the role of women in their societies. One of the reasons for this focus stems from the fact that these Kurdish women took two roles in the society, the first one to look after the family and indoor affairs as was required by tradition, while the second was to evolve in outdoor social progress and political affairs. Hence, they were not like Turkish, Arab and Persian women who were only involved in indoor matters.

This high social and political respect enjoyed by Kurdish women came from their relatives and tribe leaders, and was a source of pride for their societies and Kurds in general that was hardly seen elsewhere. Thus, many Kurdish women have drawn the attention of world historians, orientalists and foreign travelers who have mentioned Kurdish women in their writings. In this paradigm, Minorsky considered Kurdish people as a more developed and civilized nation than the Turks, Arabs, and Persians, and women in Kurdistan enjoyed full independence and respect in their societies.¹³³ It can be argued that Kurdish writers at the time seize on this point, like Zaki Beg who described the Kurds and the differences between Kurdish nation and the other nations in the region. This can be clearly seen in his writings.

Jaff women are a good example of women who received this high degree of respect among the other Kurdish communities.¹³⁴ In fact, Jaff women took an independent role

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Minorsky, V., "The tribes of western Iran" in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 75, 1945: pp. 73-80.

¹³⁴ There have not been, in the old authoritative Islamic texts, references to the Jaff as an independent tribe under such a specific name. The acclaimed Kurdish historian Sharfaghan Al Badleesi, in his invaluable text *Sharafnama* of 1595, presented no significant information which may lead us to trace the history of the tribe and the role it played in the history of the Kurdish people as he did of other tribes of which he outlined comprehensively. The Jaff people are one of the biggest Kurdish tribes, if not the biggest, native to the Zagros area, which is presently divided between Iran and Iraq. The Jaff dialect is a branch of the Sorani language family. The region inhabited by this tribe is south of Sanandaj all the way to Javanroud and also areas around the city of Sulaimaniyah in South Kurdistan. "A Short History Of Jaff Kurdish Tribe", *Jaff Biz Website*, at http://www.jaff.biz/english_index.htm, visited 26 March 2016.

in supporting their kin especially those from the Bedouin families that journeyed between Germian and Kwestan annually. Moreover, Jaff women were independent in their views and handling of their affairs within their society and at social meetings where decisions had to be made in connection to Jaff affairs. They were also very well-known in Kurdish poetry and literature.¹³⁵ Among the orientalist, Major Saone, the famous traveler who came to Iraq and Kurdistan in 1919, was astounded with Kurdish women's performance in general and Jaff women in particular and he respectfully made known the liberty and independence of Kurdish women in his writings. He said in his book:

The veil and all it implies is unknown, and the women are, for all practical purposes, as free as in England. My first walk through the streets of Halebja brought this vividly to view. In place of the black-draped ghosts which in other Mohammedan countries peep and giggle, or else bolt like frightened rabbits on the sudden appearance of a European, the good dames of Halebja sat and gossiped on their doorsteps just like Mrs Brown and Mrs Jones in any village at home, quite unperturbed by the passing of a stranger. The younger ones among them were strikingly handsome girls, a little Jewish in type, with a splendid bearing and an honest, frank expression, as different from the sallow, dark-eyed "beauties" of the harem as a healthy English country girl from a bedizened actress."¹³⁶

Last but not least, the educational level of the Kurds is worth mentioning here. Rich said: "...the Kurds are generally very thirsty for knowledge and gather it." He believed in general that the Kurds are much more eager for information, much more different of themselves and much easier to instruct than the Turks and even, to certain degree, the Persians. There are things which a Persian will readily adopt, but others in literature and science in which he conceives himself to be highly superior to other nations. Still, the Iranians are proud to have been the Be more specific here – 'the first nation to have discovered these fields. Meanwhile, Rich suggested that a Turk has a comfortable idea of his own superiority in everything, and has a thorough contempt for whatever he does not understand.¹³⁷ However, he declined to admit/acknowledge that the Turks and Iranians were better than the Kurds; he used the proverb of "one swallow does not make a summer" to illustrate this view".¹³⁸

The importance of referring to Rich's work written during the nineteenth century and Major Soane's work of the early twentieth century, is that they highlight the distinctive characteristics of Kurdish men and women for the two different times that Kurds served

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ IOR/L/PS/20/67, Report on the Sulaimania district of Kurdistan. By [Ely Banister] Soane Calcutta: [Govt of India Foreign Dept], 1910, British Library: Asian and African Studies.

¹³⁷ Rich, *supra*, note 301, pp. 305-306.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

their colonial empires, when they set plans for their new territories in the Middle East. This was the case not only in this region, but everywhere that the British and French had colonized. In this context, Edward Said stated that, “During the early years of the twentieth century, men like Balfour and Cromer could say what they said, in the way they did, because a still earlier tradition of Orientalism than the nineteenth-century one provided them with a vocabulary, imaginary, rhetoric, and figures with which to say it”.¹³⁹ However, he criticized the Orientals and named them ‘antihuman and persistent’ people since they were the road mappers for the colonial powers to take over the lands of others.¹⁴⁰

Referring back to Rich’s views of the Kurds, one can understand that he was describing the general population, not solely a few elites and Kurdish leaders. At this point, one significant question arises: if the Kurdish nation is considered as a nation thirsty for knowledge and development, as Rich described, why could it not establish an independent state in the region, notwithstanding the fact that it is the fourth largest nation in the Middle East? Any attempt to answer this question should stem from analyzing the emergence of Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish issues.

3.2.3 Sufism and Kurdish national identity

Religion as an ideological and spiritual system might be the factor of separation of (me) and someone else. That is, common history, language and land are important as the basis of nationality. Humans, at the same time, have a group of identities, including nationality, religion, social class and gender, among others. There are some important points to mention as follows:

Firstly, generally speaking, the majority of the Kurds are Muslim with practicing Sufism, to some extent they were influenced by Islamic teachings in terms of their social life, principles and social and moral values. Most Kurdish literature was produced by religious centers, which were influenced by Islamic philosophy and nations. Therefore, religion had a significant influence on Kurdish culture, morality, society and tradition. However, religion, particularly Islam and Sufism did not partake any role in the political and ideological elements, did not have significant influence on the development of Kurdish nationalism in comparison to other aspects of national identity. Besides that, the

¹³⁹ Said, Edward W., Orientalism, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2014, p. 41.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p.44.

religious struggle for protecting Kurdish identity was not a factor to encourage the Kurds to stand against the invaders, and to support the political principles of Kurdistan of independence.

Secondly, the two empires in the region, instead exploited religion to use the Kurds for their interests, and later on wanted to abolish Kurdish language and culture in order to impose their languages and cultures on them. Accordingly, the Kurds were never tortured by the Ottoman Empire for the cause of religion, since the Kurds are Muslims. On the other hand, they tried to oppose Kurdish issue through dismantling Kurdish culture and identity. If the Kurdish language began to fade, Kurds would assimilate and become part of more dominant nations. An example of this is the imposing of the French language upon millions of Arab people in Algeria and Tunisia. This did not have the desired effect of Arabs assimilating into the French culture because Arab people in Algeria belonged to another religion, Islam.

Thirdly, if we compare the role of Islam for Arab and Kurdish nationalism, it comes to the minds that as for Arabs, Islam was often a part of Arabic cultural, ideological and political life, and to certain degree was exploited during the early days of Arab nationalism. This is not the case for Kurdish nationalism because there were so many different religions, including *Kakaei*, *Yezedi*, *Shabak* and Christianity, as well as the methods of *Qadiri* and *Naqshbandi* who are Sufi Muslims. Therefore, Kurdish nationalism did not have strong relations with religion because it did not have a great influence on it. Another point was that for Arabs, religion was an important basis of Arabic nationalism; firstly, Islam was a basic religion and unity of spirits and the Arabic civilization totally depended on the Quran and Sunnah that with the help of other nations this religious message would spread across the world. Secondly, Islam, for Arabs provides spiritual, cultural and ideological armor against the forces of Latin cultures, such as atheist Europeans and the Pope, and against the cultural and civilized momentum of western colonialism. Nevertheless, for the Kurdish nation, although the methods of Qadrie and Naqashbandi appeared as two religious forces that were to some extent disharmonious, religion generally was not able to impose its ideological system upon Kurdish nationalism.

Fourthly, the Kurdish revolutions and movements, from the uprising of Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri to the uprising of the Khoibuni Association in north Kurdistan in 1925 and the uprising and revolution of Sheikh Muhamud Hafid in 1918 by Kurdish

religious figures was not considered a religious element in Kurdish nationalism because the goals and requests of these Kurdish leaders was for national rights and the independence of Kurdistan against invaders. This is evident when we consider that when the Kurdish Revival Association was established, most of their members were students, religious men and members of religious centers in Kurdistan. They were not graduates of Tehran and European universities. Despite their strong belief in Islam, they established the first Kurdish Nationalist Association in eastern Kurdistan, which had been the basis of establishing the Republic of Kurdistan in Mahabad in 1945.

Finally, even in north Kurdistan, this was the same. For example, Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri in 1878, as a religious man supported the Ottoman military not only with weapons but with military individuals against the Russians.¹⁴¹ In addition to this his intention was not to establish an Islamic State in Kurdistan because he started to struggle against the Ottoman authority and Iran two years later. He turned against the Ottoman state. If the revolution of Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri was given a religious background, he would not have struggled against the Ottoman military; he would have followed Islamic principles. So, any Islamic explanation and interpretation for the revolution of Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri was completely wrong to reduce the value and importance of their patriotism.¹⁴² This uprising, and the previous uprisings, were the result of oppression and disunity between Kurds and non-Kurds.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Barzwy, Mujtabi., Awza'i seyasi Kurdistan Az Sal 1258-1325, (Persian), (Tra: Kurdistan Political Situations as per year 1258-1325), 1st Edi, Tehran, Publishing Fkr Nw, 1999, pp.15-18.

¹⁴² Ghuryanis, Askanadar, Qiam Sheikh Ubeydullah Shamzini Dar Kurdistan (Persian), (Tra: The of Sheikh Ubeydullah Shamzini In Kurdistan), Tehran, 2536 [1914], p. 329.

¹⁴³ In comparison, Jewish culture is the diverse international culture of the Jews. Since the formation of the Jewish nation in biblical times, the international community of Jewish people has been considered a tribe or an ethnoreligious group rather than solely a religion. Judaism guides its adherents in both practice and belief, so that it has been called not only a religion, but an orthopraxy. Not all individuals or all cultural phenomena can be classified as either "secular" or "religious", as it is suggested that a distinction should be made. Biale, David, Not in the Heavens: The Tradition of Jewish Secular Thought, Princeton University Press, 2011, p. 15. Jewish culture in its etymological meaning retains the linkage to the land of origin, i.e. the previously mentioned Kingdom of Judah, study of Jewish texts, practice of community charity, and Jewish history. The secular Jewish culture should therefore refer to many aspects, including religion and world view, literature, media, and cinema, art and architecture, cuisine and traditional dress, attitudes to gender, marriage, and family, social customs and lifestyles, music and dance. Torstrick, Rebecca L., Culture and customs of Israel, Greenwood Press, 2004, pp. 165-168. "Secular Judaism" is a distinct phenomenon related to Jewish secularization - a historical process of divesting all of these elements of culture from their religious beliefs and practices. Beit-Hallahmi, Benjamin, "The Secular Israeli (Jewish) Identity: An Impossible Dream?", in Barry Alexander Kosmin, Ariela Keysar, eds., *Secularism & secularity: contemporary international perspectives*, Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture, Trinity College, Hartford, 2007, p.157. As far as Jewish dance is concerned, it is associated with Jews and Judaism. Deriving from Biblical traditions, Jewish dance has long been used by Jews as a medium for the expression of joy and other communal emotions. Ashkenazi and Sephardi traditional

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter examined Kurdish identity as a nation. It started with defining Kurdish nation, followed analyzing the origins of the Kurdish people, how Kurdish language developed with diversified dialects, the differences of Kurdish culture with the cultures of the neighboring nations. Then the chapter turned into another important topic, which is related to Islam and Kurdish national identity, which was later one compared with Judaism and Jewish national Identity. Finally, the chapter briefly discussed the geographical concept of Kurdistan.

In their writings, Orientalists defined the Kurds, their culture, language, religion, and the fundamental elements of 'nationhood' existed in the Kurds. In this thesis, the researcher has referred to the different views of Rich, Edmonds and Archie Roosevelt, along with some others depending on the availability of primary sources in archives. These historians, diplomats and politicians, in their definitions and writings, defined the Kurds as a different and independent nation.

Kurdish language forms the second basis of nationhood and Kurdish identity in the world and differentiates Kurds from other nations of the region. It is also the reason for the survival of Kurdish identity in the world in general and the Middle East in particular. Earlier historians mentioned that Kurdish language rooted back to the Indo-European languages, and specifically originated from the Medes civilization. Despite the Kurdish language has various dialects which was the source of problems as the language was not standardized. In addition to, this different topography in the different regions of Kurdistan also form the basis of Kurdish identity. Throughout history up until the present day, the Kurdish language consists of the Sorani, Kirmanji, Haurami, Zazaki, and

dances, especially the type associated with Jewish wedding dances, are an integral part of Jewish life in America and around the world. Patai, Raphael., Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore and Traditions, Routledge, 2015, pp. 162-166. Last but not least, dancing was a favorite pastime and played a role in religious observance. Alves, William., e-Study Guide for: Music of the Peoples of the World: Arts, Performing arts, 2nd Edi, Textbook Reviews, 2012, p. 67. Each Jewish diasporic community developed its own dance traditions for wedding celebrations and other distinguished events. For Ashkenazi Jews in East Europe, for example, dances, whose names corresponded to the different forms of klezmer music that were played, were an obvious staple of the wedding ceremony of the *Shtetl*. Jewish dances were both influenced by surrounding Gentile traditions and Jewish sources preserved over time. Nevertheless, the Jews practiced a corporeal expressive language that was highly differentiated from that of the non-Jewish peoples of their neighborhood, mainly through motions of the hands and arms, with more intricate legwork by the younger men. "Yiddish, Klezmer, Ashkenazic or 'shtetl' dances", *Borzykowski Website*, at <http://borzykowski.users.ch/EnglYidDance.htm>, re-visited on 28 July 2015. In general, however, in most religiously traditional communities, members of the opposite sex dancing together or dancing at times other than at these events was frowned upon.

Kalhuri dialects, and because of the various invasions in, these dialects remain distinct from one another. However, Kurds have managed to prevent these dialects from disappearing. Those which are in the most danger of fading away are Zazaki and Kalhuri which do not holding a strong position among Kurds.

Although the Kurdish language is one of the richest foundations of Kurdish nationhood, it is the main problem for Kurdish nationalist identity. The reason can be given through an example of Kurds in the north who speak Kurmanji who do not fully understand those in the south who speak the Sorani dialect, even though they are all Kurds. On top of this problem, in terms of alphabets in Kurdish writing, it has become an issue for Kurdish nationhood identity. That is why these Kurds are forced to rely on the language of those who have invaded their land, such as Turkish, Arabic, Persian and sometimes English to talk to each other.

Next, Kurdish language became subject to genocide in the 1920s and 1930s, at the hands of the Turks and Persians. The secular system of Turanism was established by Kamal Atatürk and became the core of Turkish identity, and Turkish nationalism further imposed itself and its fundamentals on Kurds, making Kurdishness disappear into Turanism. This meant that the Kurdish population in this large part of Kurdistan, which accounted for millions of people, were deprived of using their mother tongue.

This chapter also examined culture, and manifested itself in a variety of characteristics and distinguishing features of Kurdish identity.

With regards to Kurdish religious identity, the majority Kurdish people were and still practicing Islam, while some of them followed the sect of Sufism either Naqishbandi or Qadiri. The researcher argues that the religious factor did not have significant contributions to Kurdish nationalism.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EMERGENCE OF KURDISH ISSUES AND NATIONALISM

4.1 Introduction

Kurdish national issues are central to the contemporary Middle East and are considered to be deeply rooted in the struggle for nationalism, a struggle for which no practical solution has emerged, and which has not yet been achieved for a number of significant reasons. This chapter will examine the weaknesses and strengths of Kurdish nationalism during the time of the Kurdish dynasties but will focus more broadly on the period from 1850 to the 1930s and the stages that Kurdish nationalism went through, including Kurdish literature, poetry and the role of newspapers and political organizations which were the voice of the Kurdish struggle and displayed Kurdish identity to the world. The chapter will then analyze the role and impact of suppressing the Kurdish revolts and the execution of Kurdish revolutionary leaders. The chapter will finally examine whether Kurdish nationalism was too naïve to be relied on for establishing an independent state, or whether it was capable yet overlooked. Hence, it is imperative look back through history to find out when and how Kurdish issues emerged and evaluate the progress of Kurdish nationalism.

4.2 Kurdish Issues

Most Kurdish and non-Kurdish historians are of the opinion that Kurdish issues first emerged when the Ottoman's conquered Kurdistan, after their victory at the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514 A.D, which established the partition of Kurdistan into two parts. One part was controlled and ruled by the Ottomans, while the rest remained under the control of the Safavids.¹⁴⁴

This incident supports the argument that the year 1514 was when the struggle for Kurdish nationalism emerged. The late twentieth century prominent Kurdish nationalist, historian, writer and leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) Ghassemlou considered the year 1514 as 'doom year' for the history of the Kurdish nation.¹⁴⁵ He looked at Kurdish history in a more general sense, focusing on the rule of

¹⁴⁴ Hussein, Said Othman, 'Kurdistan Wal-Imbratoyat Al Uthmaniyah: Dirasat fi tatawriha Assyasi 1514-1851', (Tra: Kurdistan and The Ottoman Empire: Its Political Development Studies 1514-1851), Master Research, (Unpublished), Salahaddin University, Erbil, 1995, p. 28.

¹⁴⁵ Ghassemlou, M. Kurdu Kurdistan, (Kurdish), (Tra: Kurds and Kurdistan), Nilu Far Publication, 1987, p. 24.

the Kurdish dynasties. In fact, the history revealed that the Ottoman Empire carried out strict policies against the local Kurdish dynasties while simultaneously attempting to weaken the power and reputation of the dynasties. The Ottomans replaced any ruler with someone else if they wished. This fact had been clearly mentioned in the Sharafnama, when the author said: “when Umattulghu was the ruler of Azerbaijan, he ran away from the imminent attacks by the Safavids and went to meet Sultan Suleiman Qanoon (1520-1566) who instead empowered him to rule Badlis,” where Sharafkhan, the grandfather of Sharaf Khan of Badlis, the Kurdish historian, lived. Sharaf Khan of continued, “...this step by Sultan Suliman Qanoon led the ruler of Badlis side. As a result, war between the Ottomans and the Safavids broke out which subsequently led to the Kurds being dragged in to the war.”¹⁴⁶

The geopolitical structure of Kurdistan had a great role in bringing the Kurds into the battle of Chalderan. At this time, the Persian Safavid Empire controlled the east of Kurdistan and the Ottoman Empire in the northern part, which meant the Kurds were trapped between the two empires. Shah Ismail Savavid’s policy replaced Kurdish rulers and the *mirs* of Kurdish dynasties with members of the Qizilbash tribe/group/clan/people, who made up several Turkish Shia groups living in northwest Persia (Azerbaijan) in the fifteenth century.¹⁴⁷ Shah Ismail went further to force and oppress the Kurds to convert from Sunni Doctrine into Jaafari Shia Doctrine. The Kurdish *mirs* finally responded to the Shah’s policy, and together went to see him in order to pledge allegiance to him but Shah Ismail did not accept this. Instead, he captured them and handed them to the Qizilbashes, then gathered a strong army and mobilized it from Azerbaijan and across Kurdistan, towards Diyarbakir, Mosul and Luristan. When the Shah’s army crossed into Kurdistan, they destroyed many places and implemented strong Shia religious policy against Sunnis in Kurdistan and even Arab areas. The Shah then incorporated the new occupied land into the Persian Empire. Thus, hatred between the two Sunni-Shia doctrines emerged. In response, the Kurds and Arabs sent messages to the Ottoman sultans Bayazid and Salim requesting help in defeating the Persian army and removing their influences from the region.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Badlisi, Sharafkhan., *Sharafnama* (Persian), (Tra: Letter of Honour), Translated into Kurdish Language by Hazhar Mukryani, No’man Publishing, Najaf, 1973, p. 34.

¹⁴⁷“Qizilbash”, *Ethnonym*, at <http://www.everyculture.com/Africa-Middle-East/Qizilbash.html#ixzz4ZETqsjHM>, visited on 15 February 2017.

¹⁴⁸ Badlisi, *supra*, note 144, pp. 104-106.

The Kurds gradually gave their support to Sultan Salim and soon established an army, which was mobilized to march to Azerbaijan, the central area of power for the Safavids. After a battle, the Safavid's army withdrew from Azerbaijan, but during their withdrawal, whenever they came to a Kurdish village, they burned it down and destroyed it so that the Ottomans could not gain support from Kurdish villages. When both the Ottomans and Persian met at Chalderan Valley, which is located at Werme Lake, battle broke out. Following the Ottomans' victory, a large part of Kurdistan fell under their power. Later, the Ottomans re-instated the Kurdish *mirs* to their original positions. The Ottoman and Persian empires remained steadfast against each other in the region and from this time onwards, they forcefully recruited Kurds to fight for them.¹⁴⁹

The endless conflicts between the two empires and the frequent army deployments to battlefields in Kurdistan led to the destruction of Kurdistan through dividing Kurdish communities and engaging them in the war.¹⁵⁰ When the two empires exhausted their armies in Kurdistan in a no-win situation, they decided to stop the war and enter into a pact regarding a geographical location that did not originally belong to them, but to the Kurds. Thus, Kurdistan became the prime victim of this conflict, which ignited Kurdish issues. The Ottomans and Safavids had agreed to a number of treaties throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including the Treaty of Amasya 1555, the Treaty of Constantinople 1590,¹⁵¹ the Treaty of Nasuh Pasha 1612,¹⁵² however, the most important one was the Treaty of Zuhab 1639. This formally restored all the borders between the

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 108.

¹⁵⁰ Ahmad, Kamal Mazhar., *Dirasat fi Al-Ta'rikh Iran Al-Hadith wal Mu'asir* (Arabic), (Tra: Contemporary Iranian Studies of History), Baghdad Publishing, Baghdad, 1985, p.23.

¹⁵¹ The Treaty of Constantinople 1590, also known as the "Treaty of Ferhad Pasha". Mikaberidze, Alexander., *Conflict and Conquest in the Islamic World: A Historical Encyclopedia*, ABC-CLIO, 2011, p. 698.

¹⁵² Treaty of Nasuh Pasha 1612 was a treaty between the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Persia after the war of 1603–1612, signed on 20 November 1612. It was made after a decisive Safavid victory. The Ottoman Empire agreed to return all territory gained by the Treaty of Istanbul of 1590. The border became the line drawn in the Peace of Amasya in 1555, in which Kurdistan was part of the border line issues. In turn, Persia agreed to pay an annual tribute of 200 loads (59,000 kilograms) of silk. A'goston, G., and Masters, Bruce Alan., *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, Infobase Publishing, 2009, pp. 23-25. See also Hatamzad, Zieneb., 'Foreign Policy of the Safavid Empire During Shah Abbas I', *Life Science Journal*, Vol. 10(8s), 2013, pp. 404-406, at http://www.lifesciencesite.com/ljsj/life1008s/067_17307life1008s_405_407.pdf, revisited on 25 May 2016. See also Ali, Shkir Ali., *Ta'rikh Al-Iraq fi Ahd Al-Uthmani, Dirasat Ahwal Assyasiyah 1638-1750* (Arabic), (Tra: The History of Iraq during the Ottoman Era; A Study of Political Status 1638-1750), First Edition, Baghdad Publishing, 1985, pp. 74-76.

two empires that had been agreed upon in the previous treaties, but particularly in the Treaty of Amasya 1555.¹⁵³

It is worth mentioning that these treaties had mentioned border issues and land controls in geographic locations that Kurds inhabited. For example, the Treaty of Amasya 1555 established the division of Kurdistan between the two empires, just as non-Kurdish areas were divided between them, like any other non-Kurdish areas in the region.¹⁵⁴

In addition to this, a number of Kurdish castles were destroyed as a result of the wars or as part of treaty commitments, such as Qutur and Mako castles in the Van region, and Maghazird and Zinjir castles located near Qaris. Needless to say that travel between Kwestan and Garmian was prohibited. At the social level, this treaty led to social fragmentations, for example, the Jaf tribe became fragmented into two parts.¹⁵⁵ The Treaty of Amasya was in fact regarded as the cornerstone of subsequent treaties between the two empires.¹⁵⁶

In this context, Ghassemlou stated that the partitioning of Kurdistan in the Treaty of Zuhab 1639 was a disaster since it had a significant impact on all subsequent events recorded in the history of the Kurdish nation.¹⁵⁷ As a result, the Kurds could no longer control local political turmoil and they were incapable of avoiding the political pressures set upon them by the two empires. This situation led to the Kurdish uprising that further developed into a military movement in some regions in Kurdistan. The main objectives of those uprisings were demanding freedom and reformations of their territories. That means, they were not considered revolutions in their perfect meaning, but uprising in a broader sense. Revolution has a broader meaning than uprising. Revolution can take

¹⁵³ A'goston-Nikolova, Elka., *Shoreless Bridges: South East European Writing in Diaspora*, Rodopi, 2010, p. 280. See also 'Historical Dictionary of the Kurds, July 13, 1978', *International Boundary Study, Iran – Iraq, Boundary (Country Codes: IR-IZ)*, USA Department of State, USA: The Geographer, Office of the Geographer, Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

¹⁵⁴ According to the Amasya peace agreement, the Ottoman Empire and Iran divided countries of Transcaucasia and the Near East between them. Iran took for itself: Kartli, Kakheti, the East part of Samtskhe-Saatabago with Akhaltsikhe, the East Part of Armenia with Yerevan, North and South Azerbaijan with Tabriz, East Kurdistan, whereas the Ottoman Empire took for itself: Imereti, Guria, Samegrelo, and western Kurdistan. The Ottomans also took Kars, but they were not allowed to restore fortresses and strongholds there. Giorgi, Mikheil Svanidze., 'The Amasya Peace Treaty between the Ottoman Empire and Iran (June 1, 1555)', *Bulletin of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2009, pp. 191-197, at <http://www.science.org.ge/3-1/Svanidze.pdf>, re-visited on 09 June 2016.

¹⁵⁵ Barasdust, Manuchahr., *Rishai Ta'rikhi Ikhtilafati Iranu Iraq 1514-1980* (Persian), (The Roots of Historical Conflicts Between Iran and Iraq, 1514-1980), Forth Edition, Tehran, pp. 482-487.

¹⁵⁶ Hussein *supra* note 144, p. 114.

¹⁵⁷ Ghassemlou, *supra*, note 145, p.42.

even from outside, while uprisings normally take at internal level, which is to remove the current authority from power by the people. Examples of these uprisings are, the uprising of Jan Pola Beg of 1605 and the series of uprisings throughout the eighteenth century, including the one led by Abdul Rahman Pasha of Baban from 1806 to 1813.¹⁵⁸

Despite the Ottoman Empire's strict policy against the Kurdish dynasties, these dynasties continued to expand until the second decade of the nineteenth century, which to certain degree impeded the active functions of the Ottoman's administrative bodies. Therefore, the Ottomans thought it necessary to eliminate them and accordingly introduced a harsher policy that would mean the entire empire would be governed by a centralized system during the reign of Sultan Mahmood II (1808-1839) in the 1830s. According to this new centralized system, which was called Tanzimat, and carried the policy of so-called Ottomanism, all of the different peoples living in Ottoman territories must unite, no matter who they were; Muslim and non-Muslim, Turkish and Greek, Armenian and Jewish, Kurd and Arab. This was a declaration of equality before the law for both Muslim and non-Muslim Ottomans.¹⁵⁹ In fact, this Tanzimat policy was part of the reformation process for the entire Ottoman Empire following the losses in the wars against European nations. This is the reason why both Sultan Mahmood II and Sultan Abdul Majid and the men of Tanzimat decided to abandon the decentralized Ottoman system which was based on the Vilayat system. They wanted to change the Ottoman Empire, which was established by various nations, into a one nation-state based on the model of the western nation-states. It is worth mentioning that this policy (Ottomanism) continued from 1839 until 1879, and was subsequently developed into Turkism by Ataturk through the Committee of Union and Progress (hereafter the "CUP") in 1889 to 1920. The CUP will be discussed further later in this chapter.

According to the Tanzimat system, all Kurdish regions must fall under the direct supervision of Babi Al-a'li in Istanbul, and all the local or regional dynasties were removed one after another despite the fact that they were self-governed and had a local semi-autonomous governing form. Before Tanzimat, the Soran dynasty had a battle in 1836 with the Ottoman army, under the command of Rachid Muhammad Pasha. Soran's

¹⁵⁸ Zaki Beg, *supra*, note 22, p. 199. *See also* Amin, Nawsherwan Mustafa, Mirati Baban la new bardashi Romu Ajamda (Kurdish), (Tra: The Legacy of Baban between Rome and Foreigners), 1st Edi, Khak Publishing, Sulaimany, 1998, p.48.

¹⁵⁹ Deringil, Selim, "The Invention of Tradition as Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1808 to 1908", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Jan., 1993), pp. 5-6.

territorial boundary extended to Hakari (eastern Kurdistan) and was located between the Greater and Lesser Zabs rivers (the two tributaries of the Tigris River). In the south, it was connected to the Baban dynasty and in the west was connected to the Badinan dynasty. Soran's capital was Rawanduz. While the dynasty's territory was under Ottoman siege, *mir* Muhammed left for Istanbul to meet Sultan Mahmood II, who later set him free. Upon his return to Soran, he was ambushed and killed. The Soran dynasty was left with no *mir*, and no one could take his place while under Ottoman siege, thus it finally collapsed. In fact, Soran's location was strategic for the Kurds as it was in the center of the region and connected all the Kurdish dynasties together. Upon its collapse, then the western and eastern dynasties were disconnected, which further weakened the Kurds in the region. Thus, Badinan dynasty was located in what is today northern Mosul in Iraq and collapsed in 1842 due to the Ottoman Tanzimat policy. This was followed by the Bohtan dynasty's collapse in 1847, which was located in Cizre of Bohtan, between the Badinan and Hakari dynasties. *Mir* Badir Khan was the final *mir* of the dynasty, whose territories expanded into the Ottoman Empire's land. The Ottomans did not accept this expansion. Hence, both the British Empire and the French supported the Ottomans in limiting this expansion. At the internal level, Yazdansher, who was the Bohtan army commander and the cousin of Badir Khan, was said to have betrayed the latter, and finally surrendered all the weapon stores to the Ottomans. Although the political and administrative system of the Bohtan dynasty collapsed in 1847, the family of Badir Khan managed to sustain itself and migrated to different parts of Kurdistan. In subsequent decades, this family became a dynamic source for reviving the Kurdish liberation movement through the means of journalism not military, as will be discussed later in this chapter. After Bohtan, the Baban dynasty collapsed in 1851.¹⁶⁰ The Babans revolted against the Ottomans for independence for three years. This revolution was defeated by a coalition of Ottoman forces and Kurdish tribes who disliked the Babans and its ruler, Ahmed Pasha Baban. When the Baban army was defeated near Koya in 1847, the region of Shahrazur was annexed to the Ottoman Empire. Ahmed Pasha left Sulaimaniya in 1850, and in 1851 his dynasty finally collapsed.¹⁶¹

Eastern Kurdistan, which was under control of the Persian Empire, was in a similar position to the Kurdish people living under the Ottomans. For example, during the reign

¹⁶⁰ Mukiryani, Hussien Husni., Mezhui Mirani Soran (Kurdish), (Tra: The History of Soran Dynasties), 2nd Edi, Kurdistan, 1962, pp.58-60.

¹⁶¹ Soane, Ely Banister, To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise, Cosimo, Inc. (2007), p.371

of Nasrading Shah Qajar of the Persian Empire (1836-1896), the Ardalan dynasty, which had a semi-autonomous administration for seven hundred years, was tremendously weakened and finally eliminated in 1867.¹⁶² In fact, the geopolitical location of these Kurdish dynasties did not encourage the Kurdish uniting and standing together. The internal circumstances of the dynasties led to a greater weakening of their positions. Sometimes the rulers were betrayed by close family members to secure a new ruler's position. The Ottomans and Persians had knowledge of these tense internal affairs and used it to their own advantage, and to easily skirmish their status. Finally, the strength of the Ottomans and the arrival of the great allied powers in the region were further factors in the demise of these Kurdish dynasties. Hence, after the collapse of the Baban dynasty in 1851, one can suggest that Kurdistan fell under the complete control of the Ottomans and Persians, which created a political vacuum for the continuation of Kurdish nationalism until a new era dawned with Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri's Revolution of 1880-1881. In other words, by the end of the nineteenth century, no dynasty in Kurdistan remained; this led to the disintegration of the relationship between the communities that had lived under the rule of these dynasties, and consequently had negative impacts on the development of Kurdish nationalism. This situation made it necessary to revive nationalism in Kurdistan in the form of revolution, the following sections of this chapter will focus on Sheik Ubeydullah Nehri's Revolution of 1880-1881 and Sheikh Abdulsalam Barzani of 1908.

It is argued that implementing such a strict centralization policy by the Ottomans and the Persians created an internal balance in order to control the other internal crises occurred due to their wars. This process was useful in the short-term, but this imbalance continued in an unsustainable manner and created more burdens for the empires that almost ruined all their administrative functions, which extended to Kurdish regions. Thus, the Kurds had to struggle even more while living under the control of the two empires.

As evidence for this, the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878 resulted in Ottoman defeat, which substantially weakened the empire's control in many regions, particularly in

¹⁶² Qadir, Naznaz Mohammed., Mirnishnakani Rozhhalati 'Kurd'istan la sardami farmanrawai Qajarakanda; Lekolinawayaki Mezhui Ramyari Aburi (Kurdish), (Tra: The Dynasties of East Kurdistan During the Ruling of Qajars; a Political Economic Historical Analysis), First Edition, Ministry of Education Publication, Hawler, 2001, pp. 36-52. *See also* Baqi, Muhammed Hama, Mirnishini Ardalan, Baban, Soran (Kurdish), (Tra: The dynasties of Ardalan, Baban and Soran), Parwarda Publishing, 2002, pp.29-32.

Kurdistan.¹⁶³ This brought Kurdistan into a more volatile situation particularly when the power from the central Ottoman administration was the gradual retreat of the empire from the region.

When the Ottomans were defeated in the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878, the Treaty of San Stefano was agreed in March 1878.¹⁶⁴ The treaty ended the Ottoman presence in the Balkans and established Russian dominance over South Europe and the Turkish Striates. Ga'bor A'goston and Bruce Alan Masters suggested that this radical shift in the European power balances was opposed by the rest of the great powers, particularly France and the British Empire, leading to a new peace settlement at the Congress of Berlin in June 1878, in which the Ottoman presence was restored in Albania and Macedonia despite territorial losses in Europe and Anatolia,¹⁶⁵ which is still part of the Kurdish populated area in the present state of Turkey.

The most important fact to mention about the Congress of Berlin of 1878 is the significant part of the treaty referring to Kurdistan as a specific land, that is to say as a geographic term and not to the Kurds as a nation. For example, the Russians returned occupied Kurdish territories, such as Bayazid and Alaskir Vally, to the Ottomans in consideration for the Ottoman's returning the Qutur region to the Persian Empire. Therefore, the Congress clearly showed no reference to the Kurds as a nation, however, it explicitly mentioned the Armenians as part of protecting a nation. This undermined and challenged Kurdish issues and rights.¹⁶⁶ In other words, Kurdistan as a region became an item for exchange between the rival empires without recognition of the rights

¹⁶³ A'goston, *supra*, note 153. Also Zaki Beg, *supra*, note 24.

¹⁶⁴ Treaty of San Stefano (1878) was signed on 3 March 1878. This treaty concluded one of the major wars fought between Russia and the Ottoman Empire (1877–1878). Among the provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano were the following: 1. Serbia and Montenegro received their independence from the Ottoman Empire and were granted additional territory. 2. Independence was also gained by Romania, which lost South Bessarabia to Russia but was compensated by the acquisition of the Black Sea province of Dobrudja. 3. Bosnia and Herzegovina were granted autonomy and were promised reforms, to be supervised jointly by Russia and Austria. 4. In addition to South Bessarabia, Russia also acquired a substantial part of northeast Anatolia, including the provinces of Batum, Kars, and Ardahan. 5. Unexpectedly, the treaty also called for the creation of Greater Bulgaria. Its territory extended from the Danube and the Black Sea. 5. Great Britain was the main beneficiary of the Congress of Berlin. Supported by Austria-Hungary, Britain denied Russia the opportunity to become the sole arbiter of the affairs of the Ottoman Empire. The congress also prevented Russia from becoming the patron of Greater Bulgaria. Great Britain also acquired Cyprus; strategically located in the East Mediterranean, the island was used four years later to effect the British occupation of Egypt. Smolansky, Oles M., 'Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and North Africa.', *The Gale Group, Inc.*, 2004, at http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Treaty_of_San_Stefano.aspx, re-visited on 27 May 2016.

¹⁶⁵, p. 7.

¹⁶⁶ Zaki Beg, Muhammed Amin., Muhasib Nyabat 1925-1928 (Arabic), (Tra: Prosecutor's Account 1925-1928), Baghdad, p.100.

of the local Kurdish inhabitants. This greatly disappointed the Kurdish people and quickly sparked the first major Kurdish revolution led by Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri in 1880 and 1881 in the northern Kurdistan.

4.3 Kurdish Nationalism

Roosevelt stated that, up until the mid-nineteenth century, Kurdish nationalism was very different to the nationalism that developed later and the Kurds did not consider themselves different to other nations within the Ottoman Empire. As previously mentioned, mir Badir Khan was in the process of expanding the territory of Bohtan within the land controlled by the Ottoman Empire, and he began to remove Turkish inhabitants in the Kurdish areas and established a form of autonomous administration separate to the Ottoman Empire. Hence, Kurdish nationalism was born, albeit initially on a temporary basis.¹⁶⁷ One can support Roosevelt's opinion about Kurdish nationalism by taking into account Badir Khan's attempt to gather smaller Kurdish tribes first, and then the greater ones, under one umbrella to strive for Kurdistan and develop Kurdish nationalism, instead of tribal nepotism and local affiliation. He successfully implemented the Piroz Pact (Sacred Pact) in 1839 with the agreement of all Kurdish tribes, which aimed to end all internal conflicts and unite the Kurds against the Ottomans. In fact, the political circumstances favored Badir Khan as he gained advantages that arose from the conflict between Sultan Mahmud II and his son Abdul Majid I and the Ottoman army's defeat by Muhammed Ali Pasha of Egypt in 1839. For Badir Khan, Muhammed Ali Pasha was a source of inspiration and they later communicated in order to limit Ottoman power in both Kurdistan and Egypt.¹⁶⁸ Badir Khan's actions can be considered the first attempt in gaining Kurdish independence during the Kurdish dynastic periods.

In the early twentieth century, inside the Ottoman Empire, as a political reaction against the danger of Turkish nationalist authority, the Kurds began to outwardly or publicly display their nationalism. Kurdish nationalism, was reflected in Kurdish poetry and literatures but it had no proper modern shape. Kurdish nationalism was quite contrary to Turkish, Persian and Arab nationalism, and did not have a chance to change their ideas and beliefs into reality. Instead, the major allied powers of WW1, divided the

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 83.

¹⁶⁸ Jalili, Jalili., *Kurdakani Imbratoryati Usmani (Kurdish)*, (Tra: The Kurds of the Ottoman Empire), Translated from Russian by Kaus Qaftan, Sulaimani, pp. 156-158.

country. Then Kurdish nationalism faced severe internal oppositions among the Kurds themselves. Kurdish nationalism, therefore, fought to protect itself at the local level from all parts of Kurdistan. This led to Kurdish nationalism development at the local level based on the local conditions that could not go beyond its boundary and reach to the other parts or could be a part of it.

In order to understand Kurdish nationalism more clearly, some key points are necessary to bear in mind.

Firstly, Kurdish culture; Kurdish nationalism is a product of this culture. Secondly, the nature of society, politics and the authority of dynasties were the only model for Kurdish political authority. Thirdly, the nature and specification of regionalism of Kurdish nationalism.

To illustrate the first point, the Kurds were able to protect themselves because their culture as an ethnic group differed from Turkish, Persian and Arab cultures. Therefore, the division of Kurdistan and separating Kurds resulted not only in political and geographic divisions, but cultural divisions as well, was the main factor for Kurdish survival. Therefore, the cultural and geographic divisions gradually appeared in the Kurdish language. In fact, the survival of the language and different dialects protected Kurdish culture. The process of such protection was first started via poetry. Poetry gradually became the Kurdish cultural identity. Kurdish language through the medium of poetry has changed from the spoken language to written language, with distinct Kurdish style that was different to neighboring countries.

The poets were part of the Kurdish Literate Staff who were educated in mosques and religious centers. These poets had written on their subjects, including philosophy and history, in Persian and Arabic, up until the early nineteenth century. However, during the tenth century, poets like Baba Taher Oryan Hamidani (938-1021 A.D) wrote in Arabic and Persian. Even during the sixteenth century, Malaye Jaziri (1570-1640) wrote his poems in both Kurdish and Arabic. Yet, there were not any great Arab or Persian poets writing in Kurdish, since the Kurdish language was not that important to them, however, Arabic and Persian were important to the Kurds. In this context, Ricks

Christopher referred to Eliot's statement who said: "...it is easier to think in a foreign language than it is to feel in it".¹⁶⁹

By the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the Goran dialect appeared in poetry in western Kurdistan particularly during the period of the Ardalan Dynasty and was used by poets such as Mawlawi, Besarani and Qwbadi. However, by the early nineteenth century, this form of literary language had weakened. In Sulaimani, in southern Kurdistan, a new form of language emerged during the reign of the Baban Dynasty. Poets including Nali, Kurdi, Salim and Mawlana Khalid used this language in poetry and it is now the form of written language in southern and eastern parts of Kurdistan.¹⁷⁰

Rasul, in his book titled 'Some Focuses on the United Kurdish Language', said: "...concerning quick spreading of this literary language from the age of Haji Qadiri Koye 1815-1897, the Kurdish Poet Akhtar 1832-1866, Kayfi Jwanroyee from the Soran land, Majdi 1849-1925 from Ardalan and many other poets from other areas of Sanandaj and Mukryan. They wrote with the same style that Nali and his friends had written a century before their lifetime."¹⁷¹ This depends on various literary documents. We can say the literary language which is referenced in Sulaimani from the beginning of its construction, was the literary language of the Kurmanji dialect.

This is part of an incomplete process of attempting to separate the Kurdish language and culture from Turkish, Persian and Arab cultures. This process occurred at a time when Kurds had an opportunity to fight against the geographical restrictions placed upon them by dominant powers, and as result, the Kurds were able to prove their cultural and ethnic differences from Turkish, Persian and Arab peoples. Hence, Kurdish nationalism first emerged from this environment through the medium of poetry. Although Kurdish culture was under a strong influence of the great power nations. Yet, the Kurds were able to preserve its culture and its identity despite the fact Kurdish culture was different from one part to another.

¹⁶⁹ Ricks, Christopher, T.S., Eliot and Prejudice, University of California Press, 1988, p.191. "*Banquet Speech*", Thomas Stearns Eliot's speech at the Nobel Banquet at the City Hall in Stockholm, December 10, 1948, at http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1948/eliot-speech.html, re-visited on 20 August 2016.

¹⁷⁰ Rasoul, Izaadin Mustapha, Chand Sarnjek Darbarai Zmani Adabi Yakgrtui Kurdi, (Kurdish Language) (Tra: Some Focuses on the United Kurdish Language Literature), Baghdad, 1971, p.108.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p. 94.

In short, the Kurdish nation not only contended with political and geographical divisions, but also with the separation of cultures in the three different regions. However, this diversified culture sustained itself by emphasizing elements of Kurdish cultural identity at the local level, such as clothing, language, literature, and antiques. All these elements reflected on the national identity of the Kurds, and further became the root of Kurdish political nationalism on the local level, and not within the context of the greater Kurdistan. In other words, there was no one unified culture to support one nationalist political system, however Kurdish culture in general still protected the identity of the Kurds. This is, if the separation of Kurdish culture was the result of the political division of Kurdistan, then attempts to unite Kurdish culture could formulate the basics of political union. As the German philosopher Frederick Engels said, “Every step forward to culture is a step towards freedom”.¹⁷² Apart from the issue of Kurdish culture, the differences in ideology, spiritually and physiological circumstances provided the foundation for an independent Kurdistan.

Kurdish nationalism weakened further after the year 1889, particularly after Abdulrazaq Najib Badir Khan, who was a member of the Badir Khan family and head of the Divan of the Sultan, tried to establish secret communications with the Russians. When the Sultan became aware of this, he exiled the Abdulrazak to Libya. Amin A’li Badir Khan and his brother Saleh were also exiled to Sparta until 1908. In 1908, they returned to Istanbul under pressure from the Kurdish elites on the basis of the 1876 mandate of equality and justice for all. Upon their return to Istanbul, they immediately established the Kurdish Association for Development, which was later banned by the Ottomans in 1909, as it was seen as a threat to the security of the Ottoman Empire. The founding members were once again sent into exile, in Palestine, Greece, Akka and Nablus.

Moreover, in 1922, the Badir Khan family faced another torture and were subjected to elimination by Ataturk, as he saw them as a threat to the newly established state of Turkey. Amin A’li Badir Khan and his five sons left Kurdistan to live in Cairo. The second prominent Kurdish nationalist group was considered the first generation of Kurdish secular nationalists, including Ishak Skuti, Abdulla Jawdat and Sharif Pasha of Khandan. These elites were popular Kurdish nationalists in Turkey who came into

¹⁷² Engels, Frederick, ‘Anti-Dühring; Part I: Philosophy: Abstract from: Chapter 10: Morality and Law, and Equality’, *Marxist Internet Archive*, at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/subject/hist-mat/anti-durhing/p1.htm>, re-visited on 30 August 2016.

conflict with Ataturk, who considered himself to be in alliance with them in order to gain support for his coup in 1908. After the coup, Ataturk started a conflict with the Kurdish nationalists, and as a result, they escaped to Europe.¹⁷³ From 1908 onwards, Kurdish nationalism went through gradually tougher stages and had to prove itself and survive between three other nationalist movements, Turkish, Arabic and Persian. Meanwhile, the goals of Kurdish nationalists were the protection and confirmation of their nation's rights. This fight in southern Kurdistan in the 1920s had spread from the struggle inside cities to a struggle in the countryside and mountains, and armed conflict had arisen.

4.4 Emergence of Kurdish National Awareness

The emergence of Kurdish national awareness in southern Kurdistan was related to the political circumstances, economic deal and culture of the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly during the time of the Baban dynasty in the 1850s. At that time, the Ottoman Empire faced economic, social and political difficulties. European powers were encroaching on the empire's lands, and connecting the region to an emerging global capitalist economy. On the other hand, the struggle of freedom fighters in non-Turkish nations and the continuous war between the Ottomans and Russia, Britain and France caused economic, social and political troubles for the Ottoman Empire.

The southern Kurdistan was independent by virtue of its geographical location. This condition empowered Baban dynasty's cultural and economic revival that led them to build a new city called 'Sulaimani city' in Kurdistan. This step was considered as a new civilization phenomenon by Baban dynasty. This was due to the economic revival of the Baban dynasty on one hand, and rural tribal power on the other hand. Opening factories, such as; weaver, soups, fabric, and schools connected the city of Sulaimani to other cities in Kurdistan and even outside Kurdistan, which gave prestige to this city in the Middle East. As Lazarev added that from the early nineteenth century, and after Caucasus were joined to Russia, Russia began trade with Kurdistan because Kurdistan's border was adjacent to Caucasus. Thus, commercial roads in these areas towards west near eastern Kurdistan were established. In addition, Russian businessmen had interest that they opened a bazaar for selling goods.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Hawar, Muhammed Rasul., Kurdu bakuri Kurdistan La saratai Mezhuwawa hata Shari Duwami Jihani (Kurdish), (Tra: The Kurds and The Northern Kurdistan from the Begining of History to the WW2), 1st Edi, Sulaimani, 2000, at pp. 444-445.

¹⁷⁴ Lazarev, M.S., Imperialism and the Kurdish Issue (1917-1923), by Temure Khalil (From Russian to Kurdish), Roja Nû Publishers, Stockholm, 2002, p. 388.

Similaly, Kamal Mazhar stated that:

“From the nineteenth century was the beginning of building one bazaar from all over Kurdistan. This was important because the bazaars of Kurdistan linked to bazaars of global capitalism, which improved gradually to the level that the division of Kurdistan could not have obstacles in front of them. The road of northern and southern Kurdistan was developed further.”¹⁷⁵

In addition to this, Jamal Baban mentioned that during WW1, that:

“with the help of Russian and French specialists, the weapons factories were established; most of the weapons and cannon at that time in Kurdistan were made by Kurds. The changes appeared when there was the danger of threats on Kurdistan by the Ottoman and Iranian militaries. Due to the lack of a legal guarantee and great political power, which was the main conditions of success, capitalism had not reached the level in which it had political and cultural influences.”¹⁷⁶

In addition to these factors, the researcher suggests that there were two other main factors that influenced Kurdish national awareness; firstly, the emergence of a Kurdish literary language or lyrical language transformed into spoken and written languages that sparked the beginning of a new intellectual movement, compared with previous periods. In other words, they transformed learning environments from religious chambers to modern schools and used Latin words, as mentioned earlier. This was evident in 1889, when Abdullah Jawdat established the Committee of Union and Progress. The second key factor was, the oppression and attacks by the Ottoman and Persian empires and the problems between the Kurds and those empires throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.

Religious centers were the only places for education and writing in southern Kurdistan. There were some religious and scientific centers which improved science and literacy; the great scientists from other parts of Kurdistan came to southern Kurdistan, which was ruled by the Baban dynasty in Sulaimani city. When the Italian explorer Alexandro visited Kurdistan during the nineteenth century, he said: “From the nineteenth century, Sulaimani has been the Kurdish cultural and nationalistic center”¹⁷⁷ There were the poets in Sulaimani city, including Nali (1797-1855), Salim (1800-1866), Kurdi

¹⁷⁵ Ahmad, Kamal Mazhar., Srwshty Raparinakay 1925 la Kurdstani Turkeya (Kurdish), (Tra: The Nature of Kurdish Uprising of 1925 in Turkish Kurdistan, Govari Rozhi Kurdistan, Bagdad, 1971, p.25.

¹⁷⁶ Baban Jamal., Al Sulimaniya Min Nawahi Al- Mukhtalifa,(Arabic), (Tra: Sulaimaniyah From Different Perspectives), Vol. 8, Bagdad, 1981, p.403.

¹⁷⁷ Hubbi, Yusuf., Al-turas-Al-Kurdi Fi Mualafat Al-Italiyah,(Arabic), (Tra: Kurdish Heritage in the Italian Author's publications), Mujalat Mujamae Al-alia Al- Kurdi, Vol. 8, Bagdad, 1981, p. 29.

(1809-1849) Mawlana Khalid Naqshbandi and Haji Qadir Koyee, who played a significant role in raising the spiritual and national awareness for the Kurdish nation.¹⁷⁸

Another aspect of this cultural movement was that a new literature school was established in southern Kurdistan known as 'Nali School'. The poets Nali, Salim and Kurdi established the school and soon after, similar schools were set up in eastern and southern Kurdistan. This school was important to Kurdish spiritual, and ideological nationalism. Firstly, through this school, the Kurdish language in southern Kurdistan was built and fixed in all the five Sorani regions, which are Silemani, Sanandaj, Soran, Mukryan and Garmyan. Soon after, due to high levels of awareness of the literary language, the poems of Nali, Kurdi and Salim soon spread to all other parts of Kurdistan. Secondly, through this school, the traditions of classical eastern literature, the beginning of philosophy mysticism thoughts, and the spirit of patriotism appeared in Kurdish literature from eastern and southern Kurdistan. Therefore, for the first time through these texts, the image of the Ottoman military attacks upon Kurdistan was reflected in Salim's poems, and later in Haji Qadir Koye's work (1816-1897) and other poets. In their work, all wars and crimes took place in Kurdistan were mentioend. For the first time, a line was drawn between Kurds and non-Kurds in Kurdish history, although the literary language did not spread further because the development of national awareness needed economic capitalism in order to produce campaign materials such as printed leaflets.¹⁷⁹

In this context, Anderson believed that by virtue of print-capitalism, nationalist awareness and the literary language was established on a stronger basis since printing and publishing books in the national language became the direct form of communication with the people.¹⁸⁰ In applying this context to Haji Qadir's poetry, he developed a nationalist perspective after reading Mamu Zin's book and various European works that were available in Kurdistan, and wrote his first poem in 1863. When he left Koya for Istanbul to study, he felt homesick for Koya, but he overcame it by approaching the Badir Khan's family. This made Haji Qadir's sense of nationalism stronger. Haji Qadir knew that Kurdish society was suffering from illiteracy, which is why he relied on poems

¹⁷⁸ Rasoul, *supra*, note 170, p. 33.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Anderson, Benedict., Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Verso, 1991, pp. 42-45.

to propose his nationalists' ideas to the Kurdish people. The best place for the poems to be recited were the mosques, attended by many people on a daily basis.¹⁸¹ His poems were very influential and will be discussed further in this chapter. Thus, one can see that, instead of proposing Kurdish nationalist ideas in halls and education centers, which were not available in Kurdistan during the middle of nineteenth century, Kurdish elites used mosques to spread their ideas, but did so without using Islam.

One should not forget that in 1880 Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri raised the issue of Kurdish nationalism without print-capitalism and started a revolution in the areas under Ottoman jurisdiction and other parts (East Kurdistan) under Iranian jurisdiction. By virtue of his religious background (from Naqishbandi path), which allowed him to be followed by thousands of Imams, tribal heads, and the ordinary public followed him, and his political status among his people and his level of education he had all were supported him in becoming a prominent leader in Kurdistan. As Nehri village was located between the Ottoman and Persian lands, he was able to travel from one location to another and gather people and talk to them. Not only by traveling, but according to Curzen, he was visited by a number of people, between five hundred to one thousand people at his *Divan* on daily basis. This is how Nehri's pronouncements reached among the wider Kurdish population¹⁸² and that is why he is regarded as the 'father of Kurdish nationalism'. The people were drawn to him because he argued for the following points:

Firstly, he wanted to unite all the Kurds together regardless of their genders, races, tribes, languages, idioms, dialects, religious background or geographical location, and to isolate Kurdistan from both the Ottoman's and Persian lands. Secondly, to separate the land of Kurdistan completely from the Ottoman and Persian empires, then unite it, and provide security for trade, literacy, council services and industry. Thirdly, he wanted to create an alliance with other Muslim nations in the region, mainly Arabs from Mosul, Baghdad, Hijaz and Egypt, and other Iranian nations. He also wanted to build cooperation with the Christians and Assyrians in the region, and to educate Kurdish citizens on religious tolerance. Finally, he attempted to obtain international legal and political recognition for

¹⁸¹ Khaznadar, *supra*, note 122, pp. 119-121.

¹⁸² Curzon, George N., Persia and the Persian Question, Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1892, pp.105-108

the implementation of his main political goals. This was to be achieved through diplomatic, political, and military means.¹⁸³

It was considered the first political and military struggle in the fight for Kurdish nationalism. Whatever the background to the revolution might have been, historians argue, the letter that was sent to the British delegates from Kurdistan displayed a national awareness and nationalistic view of the revolutionary leadership and stated: “The Kurdish nation is independent. Its leaders, Muslims or Christians, those under Ottoman and Persian authorities are united and agreed on rejecting their current status of their affairs with these two states and do not wish to continue. We want to rule ourselves.”¹⁸⁴

Although the uprising was repressed by the Ottoman army and many areas of Kurdistan were destroyed, it played an important role in raising national awareness in Kurdistan. It also paved the way for the Kurdish nationalistic movement. That is why towards the end of the nineteenth century, the crisis of the Ottoman Empire deepened. It became so financially dependent on the European states that it became very much like a classical colony of theirs. It intended to end these crises through a series of reforms; however, the crises were related to the political, social and economic structure of the state. They were too deep to be resolved by such reforms.¹⁸⁵ In fact, the Ottoman constitution and its other legal restraints were the main obstacles for the development of social and economic relations to develop. On the other hand, the nations within the empire were on a continuous progression towards democratic awareness and revolutions. In particular, the impact of the French revolution which spread quickly and influenced the intellectuals.¹⁸⁶

It was then for the first time, a new group of intellectuals appeared who were educated at the most advanced political schools in the Ottoman Empire. The publishing of the first Kurdish newspaper (Kurdistan) in 1898 by Miqdad Madhad Badir Khan and his brother Abdulrahman Badir Khan, who were part of Badir Khan family, as the most important activity for became the voice for announcing the Kurdish nationalist agenda to the

¹⁸³ Afshar, Ali., Shorsh Sheikh UbadaAllah (Persian), (Tra: Sheikh Ubaeydullah’s Revolution), Shafaq Publishing, 1347 [1968], p. 536.

¹⁸⁴ FO 881/6565X, ‘Turkey: Military Report. Eastern Turkey in Asia. Vols. I and II. (Captain. F. R. Maunsell, R.A.) (W.O.), 1893, National Archive, Kew.

¹⁸⁵ Jalili, Jalil., Entifazat Al- Akrad Sanat 1880, (Arabic), (Tra: Kurdish Uprisings in 1880), Beirut, 1979, p. 48.

¹⁸⁶ Ahmad, Kamal Mazhar., Tegashni rasti, Shweni la Rozhnamagari Kurdida, (Kurdish), (Tra: Understanding Truth [Kurdish magazine] and its place in Kurdish News agency), Bagdad, 1978, pp.57-58.

outside world.¹⁸⁷ Kurdistan Newspaper was a new beginning for the Kurdish political and intellectual life and was a sign of the development of Kurdish nationalistic awareness. As part of Kurdish history, this period considered as the eve of Kurdish nationalism. At this time, a nationalistic tribe, i.e. Badir Khan's family, wanted to put forth a special view about Kurdish culture, giving it a political insight defined as ethno-cultural and making nationalism a popular movement. As Sherko described, Kurdistan Newspaper was the representative of the Kurdish patriots from its first publishing,¹⁸⁸ while Jalili added that it expressed the Kurdish movement's ideology at the end of nineteenth and the beginning for the twentieth century.¹⁸⁹ If we look at the articles and materials published in the newspaper, one can see that they are different in their levels.

It is worth highlighting some aspects of the writings of that time, as they were important and necessary. A certain degree of intellectual nationalism can be detected in these writings. Such nationalist topics include the importance of education and confronting illiteracy and social underdevelopment, ethnic segregation and tyranny against Kurds. It was aimed to create a united nationalist sentiment among the Kurds, and the importance of a Kurdish-Armenian friendship since they were geographically adjacent to each other; and the Kurds did not want conflict with other ethnicities in the region on the account of protecting Kurdish interests and to show that Kurds accepted harmony with other nations. The Newspaper also emphasized freedom guaranteeing the constitutional rights, and the granting of the rights to the Kurds by the central Ottoman and Persian authorities were the Newspaper's key mottos.¹⁹⁰

When Kurdistan Newspaper talked about the issues of Kurdish and Armenian peoples under the Ottoman Empire, it described the Ottomans as the enemy of the two nations, and also displayed the political and ideological disputes in the society at this time. The Newspaper similarly reported on the crimes of Hamidiye Cavalry, some Kurdish tribes who fought with the Ottomans against the Armenians, that had been condemned and

¹⁸⁷ 'Kurdistan Newspaper', No.1, 1898, *Public Library Archive*, Sulaimani City.

¹⁸⁸ Sherko, Blic., *Al-Qadhiyat Al-Kurdiyah, Madhi Al-Akrad Wa Hadiruhum* (Arabic), (Tra: Kurdish Issue, The Kurds' Past and Present), 1930, p.51.

¹⁸⁹ Jalili, Jalil., *Nahdat Al-Akrad althaqafiyati wal qawmiyati, nhayat al-qarn atasa' a'shar wa bidayat alqarn al a'shrin*, (Arabic),(Tra: Kurdish Cultural and National Renaissance, the end of nineteenth century and the beginning of twentieth century), Kurdish Cultural Society, Vol.1, 1986, p.14.

¹⁹⁰ 'Kurdistan Newspaper', Nos.1-10, 1898, *Public Library Archive*, Sulaimani City.

regarded as attempts by the Ottomans to encourage enmity between the Kurds and the Armenians.¹⁹¹

In addition, reporters focused on those Kurdish representatives who worked for the Ottoman state government. This evidently illustrates the Kurdish people's level of awareness of these crimes. That is why Kurdistan Newspaper was repeatedly proclaimed to be the newest cultural and political endeavor of the educated Kurds in the history of Kurdish nationalism as it sought to gather the Kurdish intellectuals and nationalists on a cultural and intellectual basis within a political organization. The writers of this newspaper wanted to publicly portray the Kurdish struggle and the realities of the Kurdish society. When the Kurdish intellectuals were let down by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in 1908, they formed their own organization under the name of Kurdish Knowledge Publication Society in 1910, which will be discussed in further detail later. They paved the way for the publishing of many political and cultural newspapers and magazines, including *Kurd* in 1908, *The Kurdish Sun* in 1909, *Kurdish Day* in 1913. In addition, some social and cultural clubs were established in Istanbul and other cities of northern Kurdistan. They were demanded the recognition of the Kurdish language and culture, and the creation of Kurdish schools. In their immediate areas, they promoted Kurdish patriotism.¹⁹²

With regards to the education system within the Ottoman Empire territory in general, and in Kurdistan in particular, we need to again refer to the years around the middle of nineteenth century. In 1846, the Ottoman government for the first time introduced an institutionalized system for compulsory and free education through passing a special law,¹⁹³ although this law was not fully implemented. While there is no accurate record of the number of in Kurdish areas, there are some documents dating from the twentieth century illustrates that there a small number of Kurdish students that received an education' or 'benefited from an education in these schools. for education as Alexander Jaba, who was a Russian Consul for thirty-three years in Erzurum form 1826

¹⁹¹ Jalili, *supra*, note 189.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ Al-Haj, Majid, Education, Empowerment, and Control: The Case of the Arabs in Israel, Suny Press, 1995, p. 37. *See also* Mizel, Omar., 'An Historical Review of Educational Policy for the Arab Palestinian Population in Israel', *International Journal of Education and Research*, Vol. 1 No. 5 May 2013: pp. 2-3.

to 1869,¹⁹⁴ he referred to developments in education and schooling in the Kurdish areas of Jazira, Amedy and Soran.¹⁹⁵

There is a limited information regarding that we have got in this field in terms of education and schooling in south Kurdistan in the last of nineteenth century, however, it does highlight the education levels in Kurdistan. As previously mentioned, at the beginning, education was only available to children of tribe leaders and rich men in the Kurdish areas. For example, in 1892, a school was opened in Istanbul with the name of ‘School of Clan’, which aimed to educate a group of Kurdish literary figures with political affiliations with the Ottoman Empire, who cared about this type of schooling. They educated individuals from different societies but also had another aim; those types of school as stated in Hilmi’s Diary “a foreign commissioner said: indeed, the Sultan was able to keep the children of tribe leaders as hostages”.¹⁹⁶ On the other hand, these Kurdish students of this school made a lot of troubles for the Ottoman states because they were directly influenced by the intellectual and cultural movement in Istanbul, and thus, the idea of Kurdish independence was born here. As a result, the Ottoman state closed the Clan School in 1907.¹⁹⁷

Throughout the history of the Kurdish nationalist political movement, there were some political figures like Sharif Pasha, Miqdad Badir Khan and Abdulla Jaudat in northern Kurdistan. Simultaneously famous poets appeared in southern Kurdistan like Piramerd, Ahmad Mukhtar Begi Jaff, Haji Qadiri Koyee, Dildar, Ramzi, Salam and Ahmad Begi Fattah Beg in southern Kurdistan between 1880s and 1930. Their poems’ contents were expressing the feeling of Kurdish nationalism against the Ottoman and Persian empires, and the existence of foreign powers in the region. However, the Kurdish nationalist movement was unable to use this poetry to influence a united discourse that would promote Kurdish nationalism. That is why after 1908, which is considered the year that the Ottoman state began to weaken, the Turks, as the prominent nation within the empire, were able to quickly increase the strength of their own nationalism in the region. They became a major threat for the other nations of this weakened empire, mainly the Kurds and Armenians, and the Arabs to a minor degree. Consequently, the Turkish nationalist

¹⁹⁴ Mirawdeli, Kamal, Love and Existence: Analytical Study of Ahmadi Khani’s Tragedy of Mem u Zin, Author House, 2012, p.5

¹⁹⁵ Jalili, *supra*, note 189, p.15.

¹⁹⁶ Hilmi, Rafiq, Yadasht (Kurdish), (Tra: Diary), Vol. 1, Maareef Publishing, Baghdad, 1956, p.49.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p.39.

struggle against the Sultan shifted focus and became a struggle against other nationalist movements in the region. They tried to impose their political authority and culture on the neighboring nations. In this context, Mazhar referred to the situations in Kurdistan, stating "...the discontent and disagreement of the Kurds about the general status in Kurdistan was quite clear before the WW1, in which assuming that that this war had not happen, then Kurdistan could have become a new Balkan."¹⁹⁸

The weakness of Kurdish nationalism was that the Kurds were not united; while the Kurdish elites and leaders in Istanbul were far away and disconnected from the Kurdish people in the other parts of Kurdistan, and therefore their voices could not reach to the Kurdish population in general. Hence, as Hilmi said:

"We live in the stage of nation making, and a nation is the people who have independent and special figures. A nation which does not know and understand its past cannot determine its future: nor can it be the host of its land. A divided nation cannot have freedom and is always persecuted by others. Talks and discussions from Istanbul do not benefit those people who are minding their daily business (eating bread) in the villages, unless there is clear encouragement toward civilization. Is this all that a Kurdish young man can do! A sound and solid mind and soul cannot be obtained from a sick body."¹⁹⁹

Hilmi's statement indicates that Kurdish nationalism was limited to a fragmented agricultural society and that its socio-economical and geopolitical circumstances were not supportive in harnessing Kurdish society to move towards a wider intellectual society. For Hilmi, Kurdish nationalism was a kind of disjointed, locally base; and was not inclusive. Thus, it can be argued that Kurdish nationalism was unable to take advantage of the opportunity that arose after WW1 for the nations under the Ottoman rule. The victorious allied powers which won the war did not show much interest in cooperating with the Kurds. They did not even allow them a minimal form of independence in the different parts of Kurdistan, like the Arabs and the Jews were given.

After the war, although it was a new era for the nations under the Ottoman rule, the situation was even more difficult for the Kurds, which was the only nation to lose their land. Kurdish nationalism, the political movements and the revolutions, distanced itself from the Turkish, Persian and Arab nationalist movements. This was especially apparent in northern Kurdistan as it was the center for growing Kurdish nationalism because of its location within Turkey. For example, the Sheikh Said Piran revolution and the Self-

¹⁹⁸ Ahmad, Kamal Mazhar, *Dawr Al-Sha'b Al-Kurdi Fi Thawrat al-ashrin Al-Iraqiya* (Arabic), (Tra: The Role of the Kurdish Nation in the Iraqi Revolution of 1920), Al-Hawadis Publishing, Baghdad, 1978, p.39.

¹⁹⁹ Hilmi, *supra*, note 196, pp. 2, 5-6.

Determination Group did not gain the least democratic rights for Kurds but rather faced a campaign of extermination, with most of their leaders being executed. Following this, Kurdish identity and culture was placed under apartheid policy in that part of Kurdistan. Those who worked with the Kurdish nationalist movement in the northern Kurdistan were originally from the south, and later on returned to the south after 1908. Their return created an opportunity for south of Kurdistan to become a center of political and cultural activities for the Kurds, to an extent. However, this did not happen.²⁰⁰

In fact, the problem of this persistent tribal and clan loyalties were existed even before 1847. The researcher argues that there were differences between the northern and southern nationalist intellectuals; was the fact that unlike in the north, a suitable political, cultural and social environment did not exist for the Kurds in the south. Rather, they were forced to be part of a new political and cultural reality created under the British major allied power system of the south which had no intentions of granting Kurdish independence. They tried to advance their political and cultural struggle under Sheikh Mahmud's mandate. Here, the Kurdish intellectuals in the south split into two groups. One supported Sheikh Mahmud, while the others supported the British. In this regard, Jamal Nabaz considered this group as a fairly bourgeois, who did not have the support of the people and could not work independently, they worked for their own interests. Hence, their role on the political scene did not exceed beyond that of the follower of a Kurdish classical leader.²⁰¹ At this time, the northern Kurdish nationalists became increasingly active with the aim of achieving independence for the Kurdish nation. Although their activities took different forms, there were two main types, foreign diplomacy and internal circumstances, as discussed below:

As far as the foreign diplomacy was concerned, some of the Kurdish nationalist movement leaders addressed European audiences at various forums to explain their agenda, including European parliaments, national audiences, the League of Nations, particularly the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, and the Treaty of Sevres of 1920 in particular, which we explained earlier. In these sessions, Kurdish leaders explained their reasons for establishing an independent nation-state from the Ottomans. Yet the

²⁰⁰ Amin, Nawsherwan Mustapha, Mirayatai Baban La newan Bardashi Romu Ajamda (Kurdish), (Tra: The Baban Emirate between the borders of the Romes and Persians), Berlin, 1998, pp. 247-248.

²⁰¹ Nabaz, Jamal, Biri natawai Kurd na biri qawmiyati rozhhaltiya, and biri nationalism rozhawaya, (Kurdish), (Tra: Kurdish Nation's thoughts are based on neither eastern nations, nor western nationalism), Sweden, 1984, p. 162.

European powers did not keep their promises and sacrificed the Kurdish cause for the sake of their own interests. The best illustration for this case is the role of General Sharif Pasha as the only Kurdish representative at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, as all were Although you mentioned this in chapter three, perhaps repeat briefly here²⁰²

As to the internal circumstances, the role of the Kurdish intellectuals inside Kurdistan are referred to. They conducted many cultural and political activities in order to raise political, national and patriotic awareness among the Kurds. Newspapers, magazines and political organizations played a significant role in the effort to raise awareness. The issues tackled included Kurdish independence, annexation of Kurdistan to Iraq, and fighting against Britain major allied powers. They appeared in the headlines of these publications This was because, after 1922, the British used force to strengthen their position in Sulaimani and its surroundings and clashed with the political forces of Sheikh Mahmud.²⁰³ The most prominent Kurdish organizations and newspapers at this stage and their role in the national awakening of Kurdish people will be discussed in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

Despite this, the main weaknesses of Kurdish nationalism at this stage was the inability to act on political principles when treating their opponents, this included the British, the Arabs in the newly-formed Iraq and the Turks, although the Turks took a radical approach towards the Kurdish struggle. Nevertheless, Kurdish nationalists did not originally have a developed political program that would create a popular movement, as Hilmi recorded in his Diary that Kurdish intellectuals and nationalists were in general divided and had problems among themselves. They were basically divided into three political groups, the patriots and independence supporters, supporters of the Turks, and the supporters of the British.²⁰⁴

Although the majority of the Kurdish intellectuals were educated at the top Ottoman schools, as explained earlier, and some held key positions in the Sheik Mahmood government, particularly in the fields of education, publication and culture, although they did not have much involvement in the leadership and organization. Therefore, when

²⁰² See chapter three, section 3.4: The Treaty of Sevres of 1920.

²⁰³ Ghassemlou, M, Kurdu Kurdistan, (Persian), (Tra: Kurds and Kurdistan), Translated from Persian into Kurdish Language Abdula by Hasan Zada, Kurdistan, 1973, pp.102-105.

²⁰⁴ Hilmi, *supra*, note 196, pp. 5-13.

Sheikh Mahmud's government collapsed, a political vacuum grew which could be filled only by political organizations, which did not develop in Kurdistan until the 1930s.²⁰⁵

In this context, it can be argued that the Kurds in both eastern and southern Kurdistan were undermined because the project to create a Great Kurdistan was based on the local, rather than national, level. Thus, Kurdish nationalism was reduced to the extent that it could not progress achieving limited national, cultural and administrative autonomy requirements within the boundaries of the newly formed Iraq, Iran and Turkey. This shows another failure of Kurdish nationalism that led to a new crisis that had an impact lasting half a century i.e. from the leadership of Sheik Nehri in 1880 until the collapse of the Mahmud Kingdom in the late 1920s.

4.5. Kurdish Organizations before 1930

After the destruction of the Kurdish dynasties one after the other by the Ottomans and Persians, from 1851 onwards there was a political and historical vacuum in Kurdish history in terms of political activities, revolutions and the fight for independence. When the major allied powers arrived the region, and the continuous dissensions between the Ottoman and Persian empires in the region, the Kurdish freedom fighters' movement, which was the Kurdish dynasties before, change to revolution and serious political conflicts between Kurds and the Kurdish rivals either inside or outside the great Kurdistan. We can see two apparent stages of this.

Firstly, The first stage can be named as the stage of revolution and took place in the time of Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri, who was known as the father of Kurdish nationalism in history. The second stage refers to Kurdish nationalism which belongs to the time of those civil, cultural and political organizations emerged that their goals and slogans of each organization have been illustrated briefly. They were established at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. Each of these Kurdish cultural and political organizations raised slogans of independence for Kurdistan in content. They had tried to develop the idea of Kurdish nationalism among the people of Kurdistan.

Although the majority of these organizations were from the northern Kurdistan and they were established by the descendants of Badir Khan and Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri, there

²⁰⁵ Zaki Beg, *supra*, note 166, p.100.

were varying levels of awareness of Kurdish nationalism in different parts of Kurdistan. compared to southern Kurdistan.

At this point, some political and cultural groups and organizations emerged; even before the rise of these organizations, there were Kurdish individuals who actively sought to inspire Kurdish awareness while working for non-Kurdish organizations like Abdullah Jawdat and Ishaq Skuty who both worked for the Party of Union and Progress, which was established in March 1889. Jawdat and Skuty worked for the *Osmanli Newspaper* (1897-1904) and *Ijtihad Magazine* (1904-1919) in order to spread the Kurdish voice and culture to the world outside the Ottoman Empire, and focused on reforming the internal problems of the Empire.

Among The most important organizations established at this stage that played a significant role in inspiring Kurdish nationalist awareness included:

First, *Kurdish National Determination Group 1900-1904*: this was established in Cairo in 1900 by Ahmed Ramz. However, there is little information about this group, and thus not enough for an analysis here.

Second, *Kurdish Progress Society 1908*: this was established in Istanbul by several Kurdish politicians and elites after the constitutional revolution to overthrow the Ottoman Empire. The most prominent figures were Amin A'li Bader Khan and Sheikh Abdul-Qadir Nehri. This organization had five hundred members and supporters. One of the most important figures was General Sharif Pasha, who published the 'Kurd' Newspaper which was managed by Haji Tofiq Beg known as *Piramerd* and was a prominent Kurdish poet. The writers of this newspaper were Said Nawrasi, Abdulla Jawdat and Ismail Haqi Baban. These individuals were successful in spreading Kurdish nationalist awareness inside Kurdistan. These individuals are still respected today and are well-known people in Kurdistan. The establishment of this Society came as a reaction to the Turkism policy implemented by the Party of Union and Progress.²⁰⁶

One can argue that this Society wanted to make sure that Kurdish nationalism would not dissolve into Turkism and fade away for good. According to Aziz Yamulki, believed that this Society had religious and cultural goals and worked for the independence of

²⁰⁶ Sherko, *supra*, note 188, p.382.

Kurdistan.²⁰⁷ Also, they wanted to save the Kurdish language and establish a friendship with the Armenians. Ramzi Qazaz added that when the Turks found about the activities of this Society, they banned it in the same year and sought to execute its founding members. That is why Sharif Pasha and Amin A'li Badir Khan fled Kurdistan.²⁰⁸

Third, *Hevy Group 1910-1912*: this was formally established in Istanbul in 1912, although its foundation was laid in 1908. This group was considered as the first Kurdish political and cultural group in the political history of the Kurds that particularized and focused on Kurdish students. It was established in Istanbul in 1912. The founders were Jamil Pasha, Qadri Jalil Pasha, Khalil Khayaly and some other learned Kurdish individuals. They were mainly interested in developing Kurdish national thoughts and were successful, especially after they published *Rozhi Kurd* (Kurdish Day) magazine, which was subsequently changed to and *Hatawi Kurd* (Kurdish Sun) magazine. Both magazines were managed by Abdul-Karim Afandi.²⁰⁹ As Bruinessen suggested, that the members of this group were influenced by the Ottoman bourgeois and the Young Turks, thus they had a nationalist approach. This group is also considered the first to have participated in the Kurdish liberation movement after it opened a branch in Lausanne in 1912 by a supporter of the Badir Khan family. Both the 'Kurdish Day' and 'Kurdish Sun' magazines played a great role in advancing Kurdish nationalist awareness. This group remained active until the dawn of the WW1, but due to the fact that most of its members were sent to the war zones, the group's activities were stopped.²¹⁰

Fourth, *Kurdistan Istikhlas Society 1912*: this was the first organization created in eastern Kurdistan and was established in 1912 in the Urmia region. The founder was Ubeydullah, the son of Sheikh Abdulqadir Nehri. It was supported by said Taha Nehri, and Smkoi Shikak, who was the leader of the Kurdish revolution in Iranian Kurdistan.

Fifth, *Jihandan Group 1912*: This was a cultural group which was established in 1912 by Abdul Razaq Badir Khan, supported by Smkoi Shekak in Khoyee city which was located in eastern Kurdistan. One of its important activity was establishing a primary

²⁰⁷ Hawar, Mohammad R., Sheikh Mahmudi Qaramanu Dawlatakai Khwarui Kurdistan (Kurdish), (Tra: The Hero Sheikh Mahmud and the State of Southern Kurdistan), 1st Edi, London, 1990, p. 245.

²⁰⁸ Qazaz, Ramzi., Bzutnawai Syasiu Roshinbiri Kurd, la Kudatai Charxi nozdada Ta nawarasti Charxi bist (Kurdish), (Tra: Kurdish Political and Cultural Movement during the end of the Nineteenth Century until the Middle of the Twentieth Century), Slemani, Zhin Press, 1971, p.68.

²⁰⁹ Sharif, Tahir Abdul-Star Sharif., Al Jameyat wa al munazamat wal ahzab al Kurdiya (Arabic), (Tra: The Kurdish Societies, Organisations and Parties), Volum1, Bagdad,1989, pp,37-38.

²¹⁰ Bruinessen, Martin van., Agha, Shaikh, and State: the social and political structures of Kurdistan, Zed Books, University of Michigan,1992, pp.182-183

school and teaching Kurdish children in the Kurdish language. Their teachers were Kurds and from Yarivan city. It was for the first time in Iran, this group published a newspaper called “The Roji Kurd (day of the Kurds), and the night of the a’jam (Iranians) in both the Kurdish and Persian languages”. Later, on the name of the newspaper was changed into Roji Kurd (Kurdish Day) and then production moved to Kurdistan. It is worth mentioning that this group sent several students to Russia in order to gain the experience of the outside world and to import it to the local Kurdish communities. Although this group was an intellectual and political group with many supporters, yet it did not last for long and was dissolved later on due to the onset of WW1.²¹¹

Sixth, *Kurdistan Superiority Association 1917*: This was established in November 1917 in Istanbul, by Sheikh Abdul Qadir Nehri. This association at that time, since it brought together Kurdish elites and learned individuals. They also established Kurdistan Women’s Superiority Association in 1919, and also published Zhen Magazine (1918-1919) and Kurdistan Magazine (1919-1920).²¹²

Seventh, *Kurdistanian Group 1922*: This was considered as the first group founded in Sulimani city under the leadership of Mustafa Aziz Pasha Yamolky. The most prominent member was Rafiq Hilmi, the Kurdish historian, Azad Beg, Tawfiq Beg and Shukiri Beg, who published Bangy Kurdistan (Kurdistan Call) on 2 August 1922. One of its major aims was to support Sheikh Mahmood’s revolution in south Kurdistan, which was to a certain degree an autonomous government in south Kurdistan and most particularly located in the heart of the Ottoman, Iraqi and Persian states.²¹³

The researcher argues that the Kurdish nationalist movement, when taking into account the above-mentioned organizations, was evidently a local movement, one that could not become a national movement for the whole Kurdistan. The reason for this was that the organizations established in Istanbul were only focused on political and civil activities and did not have military supporters, whereas the organizations established in southern and eastern Kurdistan were mainly focusing on military activities rather than civil activities. In other words, there was no balance between the two sides, and thus no

²¹¹ Hawar, Muhamad Rasul., *Smko, Ismail Aghai Shkaku Bzutnawai Natawayati Kurd*, (Kurdish), (Tra: Smko, Ismail Agahi Shkak and Kurdish National Movement), 2nd Edi, Sulaimani, 2005, p.134.

²¹² ‘Zhin Newspaper’, Istanbul, No.23, 1918.

²¹³ ‘Bangi Kurdistan Newspaper’, No. 1, Slemani, 2 August 1922. *Zhin Centre Archive*, Sulaimani City.

organization could represent Kurdish nationalism for all Kurds. Even Haji Qadir Koye attempted to make the Kurdish elites and intellectuals aware of this imbalance long before these Kurdish organizations were established. He said in one of his poems during the nineteenth century:

“With Sword and Pencil, the state will stand powerful and sovereign, I have the pencil, but the sword is missing!”²¹⁴

4.6 Kurdish Newspapers and Magazines before 1930

The Kurdish nationalist movement was reflected in the Kurdish newspapers and magazines of this historic time. This section analyzes these publications according to the available documents. They were the key way for expressing of Kurdish intellectuals' nationalist views. They are as follows:

First, *Kurdistan Newspaper*: This was published in Cairo, Geneva, London, and Folkstone from April 1898 to April 1902, in the Kurdish and Turkish languages.²¹⁵ To elaborate more on that, this newspaper is still considered the first in Kurdish journalism. It was published by Miqdad Madhat Badir Khan during 1898-1902. and its role was so influential that even today when the start of Kurdish journalism is celebrated the articles written by Kurdish intellectuals are still praised are well praised which were written by the Kurdish intellectuals of the time. The newspaper presented Kurdish rights to the world, and for political reasons (pressure from anti-Kurds forces) it was published in many international cities. It was first published in Aleppo, then moved to Cairo and then to Geneva for its final issues. It opened a door for spreading Kurdish voices around the world. It also laid the foundation for the publication of another magazine, called *Ijtihad* in Geneva in 1904.²¹⁶ It served the Kurdish cause well as writers were able to publish articles about Kurdish history in the Ottoman languages. Some of its well-known editors included Abdula Jaudat (1869-1932) and Abdulrahman Badir Khan, the brother of Miqdad Madhat Badir Khan.

These endeavors by Kurdish intellectuals to develop Kurdish publishing continued, especially after the famous Kurdish political figure Hussein Hussney Mukiryani opened a publishing house in Aleppo. This was after he had visited Germany and learned the

²¹⁴ Miran, S., and Sharaza, Karim M., *Diwani Haji Qadiri Koyi*, (Kurdish), (Tra: Diwan Poetic of Haji Qadir Koyi), Intisharat, Sinanadij, p.136.

²¹⁵ *Kurdistan Newspaper*, 22 April 1898, Cairo, Egypt, No. 6, p.1.

²¹⁶ Khaznadar, Jamal, *Rabari Rozhnamagari Kurdi*, (Kurdish), (Tra: The Leader of Kurdish Journalism), Al-Jumhuryat Publishing, Bagdad, 1973, p.88.

Arabic alphabet and tried to mix some Persian alphabets. After moving this publishing house to Rawanduz City in southern Kurdistan in 1926, Mukiryani was able to publish a magazine in the Krmanji dialect. Later, the publishing house was moved again to Erbil, by his brother Guiy Mukiryani and renamed Kurdistan Publishing House. However, at this stage the British authorities brought with them some old publishing equipment to South Kurdistan. They established a publishing house in Kirkuk, and published a newspaper named *Understanding the Truth* in 1918. Also, the British governor of south Kurdistan, Major Soane,²¹⁷ established another publishing house in Slemani and published a newspaper named *Peshkawtn (Progress)* on 29th April 1920 and this remained active until 1922.²¹⁸

Despite the flaws and deficiencies of the Kurdish publishing houses, newspapers, and magazines we might see about them, for that phase of the Kurdish movement they were new and effective in making Kurdish voices heard around the world. Linguistically and in terms of the usage of the proper Kurdish alphabet, they were not impeccable, especially as most of them used a mixture of Farsi and Arabic or Ottoman Turkish letters. However, in later years they switched to the Kurdish language and were able to do a linguistic innovation in their writings. Kurdish intellectuals perceived the alphabetic mixture on the political of Kurdistan, being influenced by the Kurdish enemies who imposed their languages and cultures. The most famous newspapers and magazines which were published between 1898 and 1932 are the followings which we try to mention briefly.

Second, *Kurd Newspaper*: This was published by Tofiq Slemani (Piramerd), who was a poet. Its first issue was published on 5th January 1908 and was printed until 30th January, 1909 in Turkish and Kurdish.²¹⁹

Third, *Understanding the Truth Newspaper*: This was published in Baghdad on 1 January 1918 and was printed until 27th January 1919 in Kurdish, with Major Soane and Shukri Fazli as its editors. A total of 67 issues were published.²²⁰

²¹⁷ Soane, Ely Banister, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise: with Historical Notices of the Kurdish Tribes and the Chaldeans of Kurdistan*, London, 1912, pp. 188-195.

²¹⁸ 'Peskawtn Newspaper', Sulimani, 4 April 1922, Number (1-116).

²¹⁹ 'Kurds Newspaper', Istanbul, 5-12-1908, until 16-1-1909

²²⁰ 'Understanding the Truth Newspaper, Political and Social Newspaper for Uniting the Kurds', 4 January 1918, Nos. 1-19, Sulimani City.

Fourthly, *Progress Newspaper*: this was published in Slemani on 29 April 1920 and was printed until 1922, supervised by Major Saone. A total of 118 issues were published in Kurdish.²²¹

Fifthly, the *Call of Kurdistan Newspaper*: this was published in Slemani in 1922. It was printed from 2 August 1922 to 1 April 1926 in Kurdish, Turkish and Persian languages. Mustafa Beg was in charge of the Kurdish and Persian sections and Rafiq Hilmi was in charge of the Turkish section.²²²

Finally, the *Hope of Independence Newspaper*: this was published in Slemani in 1923 and was printed until 1924 in Kurdish language. Khuaja Afandi was the editor-in-chief.²²³

When looking at the life-span of these Kurdish newspapers, we can see that they were short-lived for political and financial reasons of that time. The political reasons refer to the lack of an independent Kurdish state to politically support the publishers, while the financial reasons refer to the fact that the economic circumstances of Kurdistan were not encouraging at this time. Thus, none of these publications could last for a long period since the political situation was mainly in the hands of the Ataturk, who stood against them due to conflict of interests. As a result, these publishers were either tortured, imprisoned or executed. Then, Both the Ottomans and Ataturk banned these publications, which is why we can see Kurdistan Newspaper 1898 was forced to move to five different locations throughout this period.

If education was available, it was for the specific few and in generally taught Turkish, or Farsi or Arabic. Despite this, the Ottomans purposefully accepted the children of some noble Kurdish families with authority in their schools. This was not to simply educate them but rather to create a more positive sentiment in them and their families towards the state. This had a direct impact in later years on the lower classes in Kurdish society. The education of Kurdish nobles sought to encourage them to support the Ottoman Empire rather than outside forces. This is evident when considering the opening of the Maktab Ashirat (Clan School) in Istanbul in 1892 by the Ottoman State.²²⁴

²²¹ Peskawtn Newspaper, Sulimani, 1920, p.1.

²²² The Call of Kurdistan Newspaper, Sulimani, 1922, Nos 1-14.

²²³ The Hope of Independence Newspaper, Sulimani, 1923.

²²⁴ Jalili, Jalil., (Hande simaw zheyani komalayati Gali Kurd La Kotayeyakani Saday Nozdaw Saratay saday Bist. (Kurdish), (Tra: Some of the Paces of the Social Lives of Kurdish Nation during the end of Nineteenth

This step clearly shows that the Ottoman authorities did not want to create an opportunity for Kurds to develop a nationalist mentality. Similarly, during and after the WW1 when the major allied power countries came to Kurdistan, the British for instance, who had power over the area, did not establish schools and other education institutes that would enabled Kurds to learn foreign languages and develop intellectually. The only school where Kurdish historians and intellectuals were educated was Rushdiya Askary.

After Kurdish and other ethnic students had graduated they were sent to Baghdad and then to Istanbul to continue their education. Historians such as min Zaki Beg, Ihsan Noori Pasha, Ismael Haqi Shawais, Maaruf and Chyrok and others were among those who graduated from this school located in Slemani city. Although these intellectuals' views were well reflected in their writings about the history of that time in addition to their services, the influences of the Ottoman schools' administration were also evident in part of their writings. This is especially apparent in the writings about the Kurdish military revolutions, where they praised the British and the Ottomans; the Sheikh Mahmud revolt, for example, was confirmed by writers like Nawshirwan Mustafa.²²⁵

After the form of education offered at Rushdiya Askary School soon expanded to other Kurdish areas, such as Akre, Amedi, Sinjar, Dohuk, Zakho, Koya, Sharbazher, Kifri and Qaladze. The educational institutes opened their doors to Kurdish students. Also some Schools also opened in the cities of Erbil, Sulaimani, Kirkuk and Rawanduz. The first Kurdish school, called Kurd Nmuna Maktab (Kurdish Exemplary School), was opened in 1910 through the effort of some Kurdish personalities by an association called Kurd Nashir Maarif. Later, other prominent Kurdish figures like Abdulrazaq Badir khan and Simkoi Shkak opened school opened more schools in 1913 in 1913.²²⁶ Alongside with their armed revolutions, Kurdish nationalist leaders intended for Kurds not be left behind in the advancement of education happening around the world. However, when looking at the history of these Kurdish schools, we can realize how late they were established by the Europeans, the Ottomans or the Persians in the Kurdish areas or the Kurds themselves opened. This is shown as a negative point in

and early twentieth Century) Originally translated from Russian to Kurdish Language by Anwar Qadr MuhAmid, Stockholm, 1993, p.106.

²²⁵ Amin, Nawshirwan Mustapha., Kurdu Ajam: Mezhuuyaki Syasi Kurdakani Iran, (Kurdish), (Tra: Kurds and Ajam, A Political History of Iranian Kurds), 3rd Edi, Slemani, 2005, p. 98.

²²⁶ Khwaja, Ahmad., Chim Di (Kurdi), (Tra: What I saw!), 1st Edi, Shafiq Publishing, Baghdad, 1968, p.130.

Kurdish nationalism as they were not large scale comprehensive educational institutes created to develop nationalist mentality in Kurdish people. All they achieved for Kurdish individuals was resistance in the form of armed revolutions against those considered enemies of the Kurds. Therefore, the Kurds became genuinely aware that their nationalism was in danger not due to the regional empires' interferences, but even at a larger scale from outside the region. These included, firstly, the changes and revolutions in Europe, especially after the eighteenth century.

A series of changes and revolutions in the European countries propelled independence sentiments in other nations around the world. They directly influenced the literature of the writers and intellectuals from many nations in the world, and the Kurds were not an exception to these intellectual developments. In this context, we can see that several intellectuals appeared to hold these European reflections and thoughts which were not compatible with the Kurdish culture. Thus, these Kurdish intellectuals were not well-received by the local Kurdish people since the latter one were not much aware of the developments of outside Kurdistan. Among Such Kurdist intellectuals are, include Rafiq Hilmi, Miqdad Madhat Badir Khan, Adula Jaudat, Hussein Husney Mukiryani, Ahmad Khwaja and Sharif Pasha. When Sharif Pasha became the Kurdish representative at the Paris Peace Conference on 1919 and the Treaty of Sevres of 1920, he presented those demands prepared by the Kurds to the members of both conferences.

Before the reveal of the Turkism mentality by the Young Turks, they were joined by Kurdish intellectuals like Pirrot Fanun and Fajri Agha, who mentored other Kurds, so that they would become familiar with the modernizing views of the west. Changes that were brought about towards the end of the nineteenth century by the western schools directly affected the Turkish intellectuals in Istanbul. Hence, the Kurds and the above-mentioned group of intellectuals lived there, and became part of it. This was because most of the Kurds who carried this modernization view were educated and lived in Istanbul and even took administrative posts in the Turkish government. They included Piramerd, Abdulraheem Rahman Hakary, and Mustafa Shauqi.²²⁷

Compared to the influence of the Turkish, Arabic and Persian nationalist philosophy on the Kurdish nation, it can be argued that during the early twentieth century that these 'nations' stood in opposition to the Kurdish fight for independence because they held

²²⁷ Ibid, p.184.

control over some Kurdish lands. Despite this, Kurds managed to protect their language and culture from them, yet Kurdish intellectuals faced multi-cultures and spoke Arabic, Persian and Turkish in a way that often a reflection of those cultures and languages was clearly seen in their writings.

4.7 Kurdish Nationalist Poetry and Revolutions before 1930

This section focuses on Kurdish nationalism from the 1850s to 1930 in terms of nationalist poetry and revolutions, as follows:

4.7.1 Kurdish Nationalist Poetry

First of all, before in 1850s, Ahmadi Khani (1650-1707), in his Mamu Zin poetry book, when he focused on Kurdish identity and nationalism throughout his poem. Thus, he is considered as the father of Kurdish nationalism as he was the first to focus on Kurdish nationalism, three centuries ago.²²⁸ In one poem he said:

Look, from the Arabs to the Georgians,
The Kurds have become like towers.
The Turks and Persians are surrounded by them,
The Kurds are in all four corners.
Both sides have made the Kurdish people
Target for the arrows of fate,
They are said to be keys to the borders,
Each tribe forming a formidable bulwark
Whenever the Ottoman Sea [Ottomans] and Tajik Sea [Persians]
Flow out and agitate
The Kurds get soaked in Blood,
Separating them [the Turks and Persian] like an isthmus.”²²⁹

In fact, classical Kurdish poets had benefited from Khani’s literature written poetry texts, including Haji Qadri Koye and Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri, whose nationalist thoughts were influenced by Khani’s works. However, his poetry will not be discussed further as it was written before the nineteenth century. In around the middle of nineteenth century, south Kurdistan was considered as the center of culture and Kurdish poetry; it was active later than the other part of northern in terms of political and organizational activities. In the south in particular, the Kurdish poets and intellectuals had tried to revive their Kurdish identity in their writings and literary texts. They played a vital role in reviving Kurdish heritages. The most famous poets were as follows:

²²⁸ Khani, Ahmadi., Mamu Zin 1650-1707 (Kurdish), Jahiz publishing, Baghdad, 1970.

²²⁹ Ibid, p. 53.

i. Abdulrahman Beg, son of Mahmud Beg, known as 'Salim' (1805-1869)

His poems were first printed in 1933 at Mariwan Printing house in Baghdad. According to some opinions, he wrote an emotional poem out of feeling grief for living far from Kurdistan; he wrote:

“I wish I knew when I get rid of Tehran
The total of my beloved, my Mashhad or my residence will be just Ray
I bet with my heart, Salm! If I get rid of Tehran
The plains of Ray will be Paradise for me, I won't pass through Tehran”

In another poem he said:

“From the sea of knowledge of edgy larynx of Whale
From the army of Turks will be the echo of threnody
If it is the nosh water of immortality, the enemy will not be beneficial
From the core wave of edgy of letters, lifeless will be appear”²³⁰

ii. Ahmad Beg Fatah Beg's poem

Beg was born in 1878, according to the Arabic lunar calendar, in Sulaimani. He studied in religious schools in Sulaimani at the time of the Kurdish poets Kurdi and Salm. He was referred to be the descendant of the Sahibqran family, the famous Kurdish religious family. He wrote in Kurdish and Persian languages. In 1934, his book of poems was burnt when the city of Sulaimani was on fire. After that date, he wrote so many more poems and his literature which were collected by and included under a special title called ‘foreigners attack on Kurdistan.’²³¹

He had a strong sense of nationalism and was known to have a bravery stance against the influences of the foreign nationalisms on the Kurds. He says:

“O my homeland the Romans and Persians are eager to your Kurdistan
The pride of Kurdish nation is your prestige title
The glory of your mornings, nights, months and days is sufficient for you
It was as a sign of pride for your stars rank at shoulders and chest
Your hand of Qandil Mountain is long for them
Piramagroon Mountain has got the glory of crown”²³²

iii. Haji Qadir Koye (1816-1897)

Haji Qadir was the most famous Kurdish poet and intellectual figure in Kurdistan. His strong sense of nationalism was sprung from Mamu Zin's book, written by Ahmadi Khani. as mentioned earlier. He lived for a long time in Istanbul. Due to the widespread

²³⁰ Al-Muddaris, A., Fatih A. and Mala Karim, M., *Diwani Salim* (Kurdish), (Tra: Salim Poetry Book), Zhin Centre, Slemani, 2016, pp. 98-100.

²³¹ Hilmi, Rafiq., *Shi'ru adabyati Kurdi*, (Kurdish), (Tra: Kurdish Poems and Literature), Vol. 1, Aras Printing, Baghdad, 1956, p. 10.

²³² Ibid, pp. 16-17.

illiteracy among the Kurds during this time, he depended on poetry in order to expose his political views to the Kurds. He identified one dangerous social disease among the Kurds, which was disunity and rivalry among Kurdish societies.²³³ For him, the only solution for this problem was unity and harmony among the Kurds. For example, he said:

“Until the Kurdish tribes abandon disunity [if not], It will continue to be in ruin and destruction”

He was the first Kurdish poet known as the Kurdish patriotic parrot of the nineteenth century, who, in his poems, always criticized the local Kurdish authorities for being obedient to the central authorities of the Ottomans and Persians. He said:

“The rulers and the emirs of Kurdistan,
From Botan until Baban [name of dynasties],
All of them were memorizing the [Islamic] Shariah,
They were leaders of the nation,
But when their dynasties were demolished,
Their hypocrisies soon revealed to the empires [Ottomans and Persians]”²³⁴
In another poem, he encourages the Kurds to unite and work together for the success of the Kurds against what he sees as the enemy he says:

“Start working as well as bees,
Plan together in silence”²³⁵

iv. Yunus Mala Rauf, Known as ‘Dildar’

Dildar was born in 1918 in Koya city. He wrote one important poem, ‘*ai Raqib*’, which was adopted as the Kurdish national anthem. This poem was first played and sung in 1946 on the proclamation of a Kurdish republic in Mahabad. Today, the song is played as the official anthem of Iraqi Kurdistan.²³⁶ In another poem describing Kurdistan, Dildar writes:

“Nice Kurdistan and pretty homeland
You are my compass
My eyes were opened with your mountains
They were familiar with your gardens
Yea Kurdistan, you have created me
You have created me, you gave me life
The joy of my life is your joyousness
The harm of my life is your threnody [melody]”²³⁷

²³³ Khaznadar, *supra*, note 122.

²³⁴ Miran & Karim, *supra*, note 214, pp.16-17.

²³⁵ *Ibid*, p.90.

²³⁶ ‘Flag and national anthem’, KRG, at www.cabinet.gov.krd, re-visited on 20 September 2016.

²³⁷ ‘Dildar., Zhyanu Barhami, (Kuridsh), (Tra: His life and publications)’, *Aween Kurdish Library*, at <http://evinebook.blogfa.com/post/124>, re-visited on 20 September 2016.

In fact, Haji Qadir Koye's writings and poems had great influence on Dildar's nationalist sentiment. His sense of nationalism sometimes reached the level of radical nationalism due to the suppressions against the Kurds used by the Iraqi governments during the 1920s and 1930s.

4.7.2 Kurdish Revolutions between 1850-1930

In this section, the most significant Kurdish revolutions will be mentioned in brief while the detailed analysis will come in the subsequent section:

i. The Revolution of Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri of (1880-1881)

Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri was born in 1830 in Nehri village and was the son of Siad Taha Nehri, the head of the tribe in the village. After his father's death, Nehri became the ruler of the Nehri people. He was a rich man and owned two hundred villages on a massive area of land. Thus, he had a strong and respectable political, economic and social status. His religious beliefs were affiliated with Sufism and Naqishbandi branch of Islam. Thus, he also had a respectable religious status among the Kurds. He firstly supported and eventually participated in the Otto-Russian war in 1877-1878, because he wanted to exploit the outcome of the war to benefit the Kurdish economy, which was going through a difficult period. He was skeptical about the Treaty of Berlin of 1878, as it left him disappointed with the Ottomans and he came to the realization that they would not listen to him. He opened communication with the Sherif of Makkah, Khedive of Egypt, Russian Counsel in Erzurum and the British delegates in the region. In his communications, he was repeated that "...Kurdish leaders and mirs are of the opinions that either in the Ottoman or Persian Kurdistan, an action must be made in which all the European states are made aware that Kurdistan is a different nation, and we want to have our affairs in our hands".²³⁸ That is why Sheik Ubeydullah was considered as the founder of the idea of the 'Kurdish Union'.

The Ottomans were angry with this and the European states did not support him. This led to increased tension between the parties and, finally, the revolution against the Ottoman Empire in 1880. Neither Britons and Russians backed Ubeydullah; and as a result, his revolution was defeated down and ended in 1881 and finally he was captured and exiled to Makkah where he died in 1883.²³⁹

²³⁸ Aziz, Jamal M., La tarikiyawa bo Runaki, Balga namakani Sorshi 1880, (Kurdish), (Tra: From Darkness to Light, the Documents of the Revolution of 1880), Sardam Press and Publishing, 1999, pp. 120-125.

²³⁹ Ibid, p.127.

Although his revolutionary headquarters were in north Kurdistan, at the start of the revolution Ubeydullah began his revolution against the Persian Qajar, in east Kurdistan; however, this resulted in the failure of the revolution.²⁴⁰

ii. The Revolution of Sheikh Abdul Salam Barzani of (1907-1914)

The revolution of Sheikh Abdul Salam Barzani (1909-1914). This entailed, an armed and political revolution originating in South Kurdistan and Barzani's main aim was freedom and independence for Kurdistan, including all areas controlled by the Ottomans and Persians. Due to the execution of Sheikh Abdul Salam Barzani by the Ottomans on 1 January 1914, this Kurdish patriotic and political movement disappeared. In fact, tribes surrounding Barzani had, to certain degree, a different social charisma from the Sheikhs and tribe leaders surrounding them. Indeed, the Sheikhs in Barzan had their own autonomy, which isolated Abdul Salam Barzani and meant he the only Kurdish leader striving for social and political reformation. To reduce the effects of such isolation, Sheikh Abdul Salam Barzani started to communicate intensively with famous and educated Kurdish personalities throughout Kurdistan.²⁴¹ This made the Turks uncomfortable about Abdul Salam Barzani's future, even though that they were aware that the Sheikh did not have much power in his region.²⁴² However, Sheikh Abdul Salam Barzani was clear in his ambitions until he started a revolution. He began from boosting political activities and social reformation by depending on the available local forces, and then benefiting from the other regional Kurdish forces. The Sheikh soon found himself in a strong position, particularly after the colonial states became too busy to deal with their own conflicts, on one hand, and the weaknesses of the Ottomans, on the other hand.

4.8 Why Kurdish Nationalism Failed in the early Twentieth Century?

After the end of the Yazdansher revolution in 1856, the Kurds went through a dark period for the next twenty-five years. The reason arguably refers to the fact that during the 1840s, all the Kurdish dynasties were destroyed which led to a political and administrative vacuum throughout Kurdistan that led Kurds towards revolution. Following this period of darkness, revolutionary sentiment began to grow again with the backing of Kurdish sheikhs and prominent families. In each part of Kurdistan, these sheikhs and

²⁴⁰ Mustapha, Newshirwan, *Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri 1880-1881*, Slemani, 1999, p. 25.

²⁴¹ Aqrabi, Mohammed Saleh, *Kurdistanu Dawlati Sarbakho bapei balganamai new dawlatiyakan*, (Kurdish), (Tra: Kurdistan and Independent State according to the International Documents), 1st Edi, Khani Publishing, Duhok, 2007, p. 18.

²⁴² Ismail, Zuber Bilal, *Shorshakani Barzani 1907-1935* (Kurdish), (Tra: Barzani's Revolutions), p. 73.

families were able to bring the people under their influences, notwithstanding that for several times they united all the Kurds for the purpose of one nation-state for the Kurds. These attempts failed for both internal and external reasons. This section will analyze all the relevant factors under two different subsections; the nature of Kurdish nationalism in the north and east, and nationalism in southern Kurdistan:

4.7.1 The development of Kurdish nationalism in northern Kurdistan

When discussing Kurdish revolutionary sentiment in northern Kurdistan, one should begin by looking at first major revolution led by Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri. The importance of Nehri's revolution in the history of Kurdish liberation was that it aimed to liberate the other parts of Kurdistan and organize the nation as one entity. Moreover, the revolution aimed to regain Kurdish political status in the region, which was almost eliminated by the Ottomans and Persians. That is why Nehri's revolution was considered as the first Kurdish revolution as it strived to advance the concept of establishing a Kurdish state.²⁴³

In 1880, Ubeydullah's army invaded northwest of Kurdistan's territories controlled by the Qajar dynasty in an attempt to expand his control, and demanded recognition of a Kurdish state and his rule over the region. His army was defeated by the Qajar army and he withdrew his forces to Ottoman territories. When he faced attacks from both sides of his territory, Ubeydullah eventually surrendered to Ottoman authorities in 1881. He was then exiled to Istanbul, and subsequently to Hijaz, where he died in 1883.²⁴⁴

It is noteworthy that the Ottomans did not honor all the terms of the Treaty of San Stefano of March 1878, although it was superseded by the Treaty of Berlin after four months in July 1878. Instead, the Ottomans wanted to achieve another goal, and wanted to find an excuse for it to the Russians.²⁴⁵ One of the excuses was that they were busy suppressing Nehri's revolution. When no major reaction was observed from the Russian side, the Ottomans implemented a new strategy which focused on providing incentives to Kurdish elites in an effort to bring them under Ottoman influence. However, the Ottomans did not seem to have good intentions. In other words, the Ottomans wanted to incite a hatred

²⁴³ Khalfin, N. A., Bor'ba za Kurdistan (Kurdsy Vopros v mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniyakh XIX veka, Russian), (Tra: Struggle in Kurdistan: Kurdish Question in International Relations of nineteenth-century), Moscow, 1963, Jalal Taqe (Translated from Russian to Kurdish), Raparin Publishing, 1971, p. 169.

²⁴⁴ Ozoglu, Hakan., Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries, SUNY Press, 2004, pp. 74-75.

²⁴⁵ 'The Map of Europe by Treaty Since the General Peace of 1814: Political and Territorial Changes', Vol. IV, 1875-1891, London, pp.2657-2658.

and conflicts between the Kurds and Armenians while seeking to achieve their own goals in the region and to further their own interests and controls of the region. To achieve this, the Ottomans provided both pecuniary and non-pecuniary means to the Kurdish Aghas (head of tribe or local ruler) to convince them that they were good friends of the Kurds, and keep the Aghas absent from engaging in the Kurdish nationalist movement, on one hand, and to inspire the Muslim Aghas on religious grounds to stand against the Christian Armenians, on the other hand. The Ottomans then established a special army for the Kurds in November 1890, and passed a decree authorizing the militarization of Kurdish people under the name of Swarai Hamidiah, the 'Knights of Hamidiah',²⁴⁶ under the command of Ibrahim Pasha Milli in 1908.²⁴⁷

Lazarev stated that one of the most important factors regarding involving the Kurds in this army was to influence those Kurdish fighters who posed enormous threats to the Ottomans. Thus, Kurdish fighters would be brought under strict Ottoman martial laws and their rigid military administration; if successful, they would be able to suppress Kurdish fighters and then prohibit Kurdish tribal freedom.²⁴⁸ The plan was to reduce further riots and anarchy in the Kurdish region following the major Kurdish revolution led by Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri (1880-1881) nine years earlier.²⁴⁹ At that time, the region was not only unstable, but Kurdish issues were rapidly escalating as the Kurds could no longer be deceived by the Ottomans nor by the Iranian rulers. That is why the Ottomans wanted to find a way to overpower the Kurds without encouraging a repeat of Nehri's revolution.

When Nehri's revolution failed, no similar revolution was seen again despite protests taking place in other regions of Kurdistan. This situation continued until the beginning

²⁴⁶ Lazarev, M. S., The Kurds and the Kurdish Issue (Russian), Kaws Qaftan (Translated from Russian into Kurdish), 1st Edi, Jahiz Publishing, Baghdad, 1989, pp. 72-74.

²⁴⁷ Chief of the Milan confederation of tribes was the most important commander of Hamidiye regiments, not only because of the many regiments he headed and the high number of armed men under his command, but also for his close ties to the Sultan, who referred to him as 'my son'. In the first years of Hamidiye, Milli Ibrahim raised six regiments from the Milan federation. Later, after having managed to gain control over other tribes in the region, he was eventually able to count some twenty regiments as under his direct and indirect control. The regiments he raised totaled some 16,000 armed men, and the Sultan gave him the rank of Pasha (equivalent to a brigadier-general) following a visit in 1902 by Milli Ibrahim to Abdulhamid II in Istanbul. Ibrahim's sons, Abdulhamid, Mahmud, Halil and Temur, all reached the rank of Kaymakam (equivalent to lieutenant colonel) and commanded a regiment. Ibrahim Pasha Milli, 1908, at <http://www.ekurds.com/english/ibrahimpash.htm>, re-visited on 29 February 2017.

²⁴⁸ Lazarev, *supra*, note 248, p. 87.

²⁴⁹ Jalili, *supra*, note 191, p. 42.

of the twentieth century when a series of Kurdish uprisings took place led by Sheikh Abdul salam Barzani in 1907 to 1908.²⁵⁰

Some Prominent Kurdish elites could not serve Kurdish nationalism although they had influences inside the Ottoman Empire's administration, on both internal and external. As to the internal level, many Kurdish elites were major role players and decision makers of the Union by fifty percent, such as Dr. Abdule Jawdat, Dr. Ishak Skuty and Ismail Enion. As to the external level, some Kurdish leaders became the main communication channels between the Ottoman Empire and Germany. In addition to this, Sharif Pasha introduced Latin letters to the Ottoman Arabic alphabet, and later played a great role in representing the Kurds at the Paris Peace Treaty of 1919 and the Treaty of Sevres, as discussed in chapter three.

Another important point to mention here is the emergence of the Young Turks in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Turkish dynasties remained in Anatolia, while Sultan Abdul Majid removed all the Kurdish dynasties earlier through implementing a centralized system for the Ottoman Empire. In the Ottoman system there was no racial difference; that is why implementing centralization was not a difficult process to do. For example, on the personal identification certificates, no race was indicated, only religion and place of birth was mentioned; this was called the Ottoman millet system. However, when the Young Turks in 1906 emerged in Turkey racial discrimination became a common practice. This was evident in the military services; Kurdish officers were given the letter K as an identifying initial, while for Arab officers, the letter A was given.

The failure of Kurdish nationalism can be seen from the failure of Kurdish revolutions as the ruling empires and major allied powers played a role in defusing and destroying Kurdish revolutions, in addition to local factors and the treachery of those against Kurds. If more elaboration is given to the internal factors, the Kurdish nationalist movement that Badir Khan's family started in Urmia had a decisive victory in their first battle against the Ottomans and the army of Omar Pasha in cooperation with the English. But after this victory, Badir Khan's cousin, the commander of the Kurdish revolution army, joined the Ottomans and betrayed Badir Khan. Although there were sometimes battles

²⁵⁰Asad, Srwa., Kurdistan mn bidaya Al-harb al-alamiyat al-ula ila nihayat mushkilat Mosul 1914-1924: drasat taarikhyk wassyay siya wathaiqiyah (Arabic), (Kurdistan from the beginning of the WWI until the end of Mosul issue 1914-1924: A Study of Political and Historical Development), 1st Edi, Ministry of Education Publishing, Erbil, 2001, p. 67.

and conflicts between Kurds and the Ottomans, the Kurdish did not win a battle because of individual Kurds who supported the Ottoman army. Finally, Badir Khan and those who fought at the Arokh Castle for eight months were captured by the Ottoman army because they lacked essential weapons and supplies. They were sent to Istanbul and from there, to Bulgaria and Tikrit Gulf and Damascus. Finally, he was given poison that killed him which led his revolution into end in Damascus.²⁵¹

This shows that internal factions had a great effect on defeating the Kurdish revolution. Due to the ambition of getting posts in the Ottoman administration, which were given to Kurds by Ottoman and British leaders, divisions formed that often resulted in Kurdish leaders killing and executing each other, this can, therefore, be viewed as a Kurdish civil war.

As to the civic approach of Kurdish nationalism movement at the hands of the Badir Khan family, they were considered the family of hope for Kurdish nationalist victory and a source of achievement in the fight for Kurdish independence. These efforts belong to Abdulrazaq Badir Khan, Najib Pash's one of Badir Khan Pasha's generation. Abdulrazaq's fight for independence was significant because he was an intellectual figure, fight to issue a Kurdish newspaper in Urmia in 1912 until the Russians removed him from the city. After this, Abdulrazaq Smail Khan Shkak supervised this Kurdish bulletin, named *Rozhi Kurd*, until 1914.²⁵² This bulletin was evidence of the Kurdish awareness level at that stage and developed patriotism among the Kurdish people. Apart from the cultural and political organizations established in Khoy city on 24 November 1913 by Abdulrazaq Badir Khan, the main goal of this school was to educate Kurdish individuals and teach them in their mother tongue of Kurdish in order to create an intellectual and literate generation of Kurdish people so that the Kurdish children learn Kurdish language more than Persian language in Khoy city. The Iranian government immediately attacked and destroyed it. That is why the school center for Kurdish Youth had been transmitted to the Wan and Erzurum areas. These two cities had become the center of information and culture for the Kurdish nation.²⁵³ Moreover, the efforts of Abdulrazaq Badir Khan were the development of his predecessor's ideas of independence for Kurds and the land of Kurdistan. Therefore, he unified the Kurdish

²⁵¹ Hilmi, *supra*, note 231, pp.103-105.

²⁵² 'Rozhi Kurd Newspaper 1913-1914', *Zhin Archive Centre*, Sulaimani.

²⁵³ Hilmi, *supra*, note 231, p.206.

Union with Said Taha Shamzini, who was a Kurdish revolutionary and leader announced his support for Kurdish independence.²⁵⁴

The Britons and the Russians took the opportunity for their own interests in the region. If we look at the time period after the Russian Tsar was overthrown in February 1917, and when the Bolsheviks seized power in October 1917, this was a huge disadvantage for the Kurds because the Ottomans became got better liberty to take actions against the Kurds. When Abdulrazaq Badir Khan returned from Russia to northern Kurdistan, he was immediately captured by the Ottoman army and was sent to a prison in Mosul and was sentenced to death.²⁵⁵ Two other Kurdish leaders, Said Taha and Simkoi Shkak, in eastern Kurdistan continued in their revolutions, and brought awareness to Kurds; but on the other hand, they caused casualties and the death of Kurdish leaders and brought an end to Kurdish revolutions. After the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, Kurds had been completely ignored for the interests of the super power countries. As mentioned in chapter three, these countries took advantage of Kurdistan for the sake of their political, economic and military forces in the Middle East, generally, and particularly in the land of Mesopotamia.²⁵⁶ Kurds took opportunities to request assistances—from the international political forces in order to obtain independence and liberation from the Turks, Arabs and Persians. Whereas in responses, these forces reacted according to their interests in the region with Turks, Arabs and Persians, but not with Kurds.

Here is an example of Abdulrazaq Badir Khan's statement to the Russians:

“I never accept my people being restrained by Turks, Arabs and Qajari Persians. Our goals and hope is we liberate our nation and country from the restrictions of dictators and invaders in order to achieve this holy goal. Our nation needs literacy to a great extent. The key to this is to provide education and learning opportunities for Kurdish nation. For this purpose, help us if we cannot liberate Kurdistan by myself or my comrades. At the time when Kurds are literate and powerful then they could arise and see their freedom”²⁵⁷

This shows that Kurdish nationalism was no longer unknown to the Kurdish people, the Kurdish elites in particular, but was not strong enough to establish a united Kurdish nationalist movement because the majority were not educated to develop their sense of

²⁵⁴ Hamilton, A.M., The Road Through Kurdistan, Russell Square, 1958, pp.70-80.

²⁵⁵ Hilmi, Rafiq., Khulasai Maalai Kurd: Iraq Usbatul Umam, (Kurdish), (Tra: The Summary of Kurdish Issue: Iraq and the League of Nations), Musul, 1934, p. 32

²⁵⁶ FO 371/27055, Sykes-Picot Agreement. Code 65 file 4052, 1941, The National Archives, Kew.

²⁵⁷ Bruinessen, Martin van., Agha, Sheikh, and State: the social and political structures of Kurdistan, Zed Books, University of Michigan, 1992, p.107

nationalism. Instead, it was kept at the emotional level. This matter is connected with, the end of WW1 in 1918, Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and the Treaty of Sevres of 1920 came about. The only Kurdish representative at the signing of the Conference and the Treaty was General Sharif Pasha, who had been a representative of Kurds in Paris.²⁵⁸

At this juncture, the major allied powers had played negative role, as they ignored the clauses of (62, 63 and 64) for Kurds. The efforts of Ataturk had affected on the Kurdish issue. For example, on his visit to Erzurum in Kurdistan when he visited Sheikh Agha and other Kurdish leaders after WW1, he conducted a meeting with the Kurdish chieftains of that area of Kurdistan and promised to grant the Kurds their rights. He said:

“O Kurdish nation! We are brothers and coreligionist. Unbelievers want to make us under their supervision take us to the Armenians, at that time we will lose our religion and honor I pledge on my honor to unite and fight together against those infidel Armenians and drive them out of our country, then we come together like brothers and provide your rights as Kurdish nation.”²⁵⁹

Through an analysis of Ataturk’s speech, it is clear how much Kurdish people respected the opinion of other nations, despite that the Kurds had a great opportunity to obtain independence, but still did not want to let Ataturk down. This attitude stemmed from religious sentiment. This was the moment for Ataturk to exploit religion in attracting the Kurds towards him. Thus, he worked on the plan to convince the Kurds to support the Turks against the Armenians because the Turks and Kurds shared the same religion. Indeed, he succeeded. In this context, Kamaran Badir Khan pointed to the double-edged politics of Kurdistan, as he recorded that:

“...upon the request by a British committee, I and my brother visited Kurdistan in order to know the situation up close, at that time the allied powers promised an independent state for the Kurds, but the Kurds thought if they turn away from Turk, it would be an act of treachery, since Ataturk correspondingly promised independence for the Kurds.”²⁶⁰

Despite this, the Ataturk movement in later stages of development showed its true face as leaders moved progressively towards nationalist Turanism and the secularization of Turkey. Yet it is obvious that this played a huge role in deceiving Kurdish people into supporting the Ataturk movement and the Ottoman state. This become one of the main reasons for the League of Nations to neglect the Treaty of Sevres and the Kurdish issue.

²⁵⁸ FO 608/273/17, Situation in Kurdistan, Future of Kurdistan, Agreement between Boghos Nubar and Sherif Pasha, 1920, National Archives, Kew.

²⁵⁹ Hilmi, Rafiq., *Khulasai Maalai Kurd: Iraqu Usbatul Umam*, (Kurdish), (Tra: The Summary of Kurdish Issue: Iraq and the League of Nations), Musul, 1934, pp.22-30.

²⁶⁰ Deschner, Günther., *Saladins Söhne: die Kurden, das betrogene Volk*, (Germany), Droemer Knaur, 1983, pp.82-83.

On the contrary, because of the support from the Allied countries, it resulted in benefitting the Armenian people as they obtained independence, especially after the well-publicized Armenian genocide. For Kurds, the manipulations of Ataturk are considered the main feature of Kurdish nationalist failure. This is because while Ataturk was delivering a speech in support of the Kurds in Erzurum, he also moved against Kurds in a large meeting of the Ottoman government in Istanbul on 28 January 1920. This decision is known as ‘People’s Charter’ in the historical documents of Turkey. The content of the testament is as follows: “Kurdistan must remain under the authority of the Turkish government and the Villayets of Mosul and Kirkuk have to be annexed to Turkey. The Turkish government has to be in continuous effort to achieve this goal.”²⁶¹

In support of the newly formed Turkish state, one can argue that all major allied powers and the neighboring countries of Kurdistan did not have a clear and honest policy with Kurds. In addition to this, the Kurds internally were unable to develop strong positions and had been a victim of false promises and pledges given by the major allied powers and neighboring countries. Kurds were not able to decisively take advantage of the historical opportunities and use them to solve their internal and external problems in favor of their land and people.

As time passed and the Treaty of Lausanne approached, the Ottomans gained weight in the balance of power especially after they achieved some important victories against Greece and the Allied forces. This led to their participation in the League of Nations conference held in Lausanne, Switzerland on 10 November 1922. Ismet Inonu was the chief negotiator for Turkey and the British representative was Lord Curzon. Due to the length of the treaty, which took nine months to ratify, the Ottomans were able to fiercely stand against Kurdish interests and demands at every stage of the negotiations. At last, on 24 July 1923, the Treaty of Lausanne was completed and signed by all participating parties. Thus, all the clauses of the Treaty of Sevres in which many promises were made to the Kurds, were ignored but in the latter treaty neither Kurdish representatives nor interests were mentioned.²⁶²

One may wonder what happened to the clauses issued by the League of Nations after WW1 under the guise of protecting the rights of the minorities? Why did none of

²⁶¹ Qandil, Hawre., Kurdistan Nasnamai mn (Kurdish), (Tra: Kurdistan, my Identity), 1st Edi, Sandland Printing, 2006, p.75.

²⁶² FO 839, ‘Eastern Conference, Lausanne: Records’, 1922-1923, National Archives, Kew.

Wilson's fourteen points materialize? This was a valid question for the Kurds at that time. Conversely, the major allied powers privileged their interests in the territories they occupied and could not honor their promises to occupied nations when there was conflict of interests. This was especially true for the Kurdish revolutionary movement and the nationalist stages. Despite their continual attempt to be in close ties with the major power countries of the League of Nations, it became increasingly fruitless. An example of this is the letter written by Hapsa Khani Naqib to the League of Nations requesting help and support for securing independence for the Kurdish nation. Another example is Sheikh Mahmood Hafid's letters to the British during his revolution of 1918 to 1924, asking for assistance and support in gaining independence for the Kurdish people. However, depending on the different political circumstances, the Sheikh pursued a policy of shifting sides. He sometimes asked for assistance for independence from the British and other times from the Ottoman state.²⁶³ This indicates that the Kurdish leaders did their utmost to gain the support of the major allied powers for their civil and armed revolutions. Yet it can be argued that the relations between Kurds and these international parties did not reach an adequate level to ensure Kurdish needs and demands and they did not secure full and honest support for materializing Kurdish rights. They favored their interests over Kurdish interests; this included the British, French, Ottoman Turks and the Russians, who had power in the Middle East in this period of history. This is despite the deficiencies in the Kurdish movements and the nationalist leaders analyzed in this section.

Hopes to revive Kurdish nationalism did not die; Kurdish nationalist leaders and their revolutionary efforts continued and included Khalid Beg Jibry, who instigated to Sheikh Said Piran's revolution, and Ihsan Nuri Pasha's Revolution. After the execution of Sheikh Said and his companions, a group of young politicians and intellectuals formed the "Independence Society" in 1926. Among them, Ihsan Nuri Pasha continued with the political and military struggle of Sheikh Said in north Kurdistan. This was a proof of Said's statement that he gave to the Turkish authorities before his execution. This revolution was started in three different areas of Kurdistan. The Mount Agri area in north Kurdistan was under the command of Ihsan Nuri Pasha and the civil section was led by Ibrahim Pasha. On 27 November 1926, with the slogan 'Independence for Kurdistan', they raised the flag of Kurdistan on Mount Agri. This revolution passed through three

²⁶³ Hilmi, *supra*, note 259, pp. 305-310.

different phases in the years 1926, 1927 and 1930 due to aggressive opposition from the Turkish state.²⁶⁴

As part of the aggressive policy practiced by Ataturk's army against Kurds throughout history, they cruelly stood against any independence attempts in north Kurdistan, the part of Kurdistan that was annexed to the Turkish state. During this revolution, on Ataturk's orders, Sami Pasha massacred the Kurdish people and the independence movement's leaders in the city of Van. Similarly, the Iranian army started murdering Kurds and annihilated the Kurdish revolt. Therefore, throughout history, these two neighbors of Kurdistan acted like two blades of scissors against Kurds and the Kurdish nationalist movement. This revolution spread through the areas of Bayazid, Agri city and the surrounding villages. Hilmi recorded that Kurdish losses in this war included the destruction of 660 villages, and the Turkish army looted and burned 15,206 houses. Thus, the Kurdish populations was forced to move to Izmir and other Turkish cities and many lost their lives due to hunger and exhaustion. Even on their arrival in these Turkish cities, the Kurdish immigrants faced humiliation by the local population and the Turkish army.²⁶⁵

4.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter examined the weaknesses and strengths of Kurdish nationalism from 1850 to the 1930s although references to dates before that period made. Kurdish nationalism was discussed in various forms including Kurdish literature, poetry and the role of newspapers and political organizations which were the voice of the Kurdish struggle and displayed Kurdish identity to the world. At the end, the researcher argues that Kurdish nationalism weakened to the level of being unreliable to establish an independent state upon it. The main reason can be summarized that Kurdish nationalist movement was originally a local movement and not a movement that was institutionalized, programmed and educated on a philosophical ideology. It did not develop smoothly, and the movement was full of ups and downs alongside the conflicts against their surrounding enemies. The movement has not stopped and remains active to the present day. At any stage in which Kurds lost at the negotiating table, they resorted to armed conflicts and resistance movements. Meanwhile, external force often south to

²⁶⁴ Mella, Jawad, Kurdistan and The Kurds Under the Syrian Occupation, Xlibris Corporation, 2015, pp.133-134.

²⁶⁵ Hilmi, *supra*, note 259, pp. 200-201.

attract Kurdish sentiment by providing the Kurds with arms and military equipment and used Kurds against their rivals. However, the provision of arms was limited and was only done to weaken an opponent and not with the purpose of seeking decisive international support.

CONCLUSION

This thesis addressed an important issue, named: the dilemma of Kurdish nationalism during the Ottoman Empire between the years 1850 to 1930. The researcher attempted to answer a significant question in four chapters. The essence of the thesis question was: What went wrong that hindered the establishment of an independent state of Kurdistan in early twentieth century? In other words, why were the Kurds not able to achieve their legitimate right of to establish an independent state in the Middle East? Whether the concept of Kurdish nationalism was weak by its nature from the day of its emergence or there were other factors?

Before answering the above questions, it is important to bear in mind that previous Kurdish and non-Kurdish historians and writes whose works were on Kurdistan and Kurdish issues during the early twentieth century or even subsequent to that, they did not particularly talk about the dilemma of Kurdish nationalism as an independent subject. Instead, they narrated or addressed different aspects relevant to Kurdish nationalism such as Kurdish political, economic, language, religious, geographical and cultural issues. In other words, this thesis addressed a specific question and answered it upon relying on a significant number of primary and secondary sources in order to identify problems faced by Kurdish nationalism during the early twentieth century. This question was not addressed by any previous writers. The scholarly contribution brought by this thesis to the question of Kurdish nationalism, can be explained as follows:

First of all, the concept of Kurdish nationalism started to grow after the collapse of the Kurdish dynasties in the second half of the nineteenth century, when Kurdish dynasties fell under full control of the Ottoman and Persian powers, which led to the collapse of these dynasties. Before this, these dynasties had independent political authority within their territorial boundaries in Kurdistan which were adjacent to the Ottoman and Persian borders. When the Kurdish dynasties collapsed, the Ottomans and Persians imposed their rules on the Kurdish population which brought more difficulties in terms of imposing taxes and mandatory military recruitment for the two empires.

Next, Kurdish nationalism developed when the Kurdish armed revolutions emerged against the Ottoman and Persian empires. At the same time, Kurdish journalism began to reflect nationalist sentiment for the first time. This stage is considered a key period

of growth of Kurdish nationalism at the hands of Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri and stemmed from his armed revolution throughout Kurdistan. Therefore, he was called the father of Kurdish nationalism. This lasted until Ottoman Empire began to show signs of weakness in from 1908 onwards. Kurdish nationalism during Nehri's time reflected the Kurdish nation's demands and took both a civil and armed approach. As to the civic approach, it aimed to raise nationalist awareness and loyalty to the independence cause instead of loyalty to the Sheikhs and tribes. This also led the heads of tribes to show more support for pro-Kurdish issues rather than focus on their close relationship with the Ottomans and Persians.

The geographical nature of Kurdistan limited the freedom of Kurdish leaders. That is why at the beginning of any Kurdish revolution, the geopolitical factor was the main influencing factor in choosing allies and enemies. Hence, these Kurdish leaders were unable to make their decisions for independence in their hands, which is why their revolutions were not successful.

In early twentieth century, Kurdish nationalism become a robust awareness among Kurdish elites in the early years of the weakening of the Ottoman empire in the year 1908 onwards. However, this stage can be considered the most difficult stage of Kurdish nationalism. The reason is that the major allied powers had directly interfered with the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire and its territories, the newly formed Turkey, and the Persians, which was the main part of their strategic interests in the region. They then signed treaties between themselves and the Turks, Arabs and Persians, excluding the Kurds. They even went one step further by partitioning Kurdistan as part of these treaties. The Kurds in return reacted in many different ways, such as making agreements with the allied powers and the Turks in order to achieve their national goals. However, the Kurds saw more armed conflicts with these allied and the two regional empires that changed the demography of Kurdistan and the division of Kurdistan after 1916, but the Kurdish identity and Kurdish issue became more popular since then.

Hence, the researcher argues that despite a clear existence of Kurdish nationalism in all parts of Kurdistan especially during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, yet the concept of Kurdish nationalism was not able to lead the Kurds to establish an independent state of Kurdistan. The reason was that concept of Kurdish nationalism was in a real dilemma, as Jamal Nabaz named it as 'standard Kurdish

language. For him, such a lack was one of the main weaknesses of Kurdish nationalism, because language did not play a role in uniting the Kurds, as it did in Germany, as argued by Fichte. Rather, other languages were imposed on the Kurds, including Turkish, Arabic, and Persian. This was due to the inability of a Kurd who speaks the Kurmanji dialect to understand a Kurd from the East, and therefore, Kurds were obliged to use other languages such as Turkish, Arabic and Persian to communicate, in order to distance the Kurds from their own culture. This became more obvious after the arise of the Kurdish CUP in 1908, which subsequently gained influence in the Ottoman Empire. However, the researcher argues that standard language was not a real problem, but the problem was rather lack of unity among the Kurds in general, as the partitioning of Kurdistan had direct impact of the unity which left the Kurds without organization and ideology for their sense of nationalism.

Besides that, although there was a real sense of nationalism among Kurdish individuals, it can be argued that there was no united Kurdish opinion to form a strong basis for Kurdish nationalism. Instead, each leader demanded Kurdish rights according to the geography and nature of their authority. That means the Kurds were not aware of the Kurdish nationalism struggles in a broader sense. Every Kurdish organization or movement had been supported from their local parts of Kurdistan only and not form the entire parts of Kurdistan although they attempted to break that locality. In practice, they were only the representatives of their own regions. This meant that the Kurdish nationalist movement did not become a deeply-entrenched part of Kurdish society, rather it was formed of a limited number of elites within the community. Although Kurdish leaders wanted to bring all the Kurds under a united nationalist movement, yet Kurdish individuals remained loyal to their tribes and clans more than the Kurdish nationalist movement and of course, which consequently let to partitioning Kurdistan. In this context, it can be argued that Kurdish nationalism was not based on political thought, but it was rather a passive cultural product and never became a national project based on a well-founded ideology and philosophy.

It can also be argued that religion did not play key role in the partitioning of Kurds. This was not the problem of religion itself but rather the Kurdish followers of the different denominations that became the weak point for Kurds in solving political problems. Otherwise, religion for the Turkish nation was the pillar of the Ottoman Empire, which existed for more than four centuries. Similarly, religion and the Shi'ite

denomination played the same role for the Persian nation. It became the savior of the Persian nation as they were able to make religion the motivating factor of maintaining a Persian empire, from the Qajars, Afshars to Pahlavis and present-day Iran. A similar case for the Arabs who used Islam for the sake of their nationalism.

Although the majority of Kurds were Sunni Muslims and were followers of Sufi sects or Qadiri and Naqishbandi sects at that time, yet, they were not able to use Islam as a propaganda tool for the sake of achieving their nationalist rights. It is possible to state that religious sentiment had a negative impact on the Kurdish nationalism. Like Arabs, Kurdish identity was and still is connected to Islam, but because of the divided nature of Kurdish sectarian loyalties, Islam and Sufism were never been an important pillar of Kurdish nationalism.

At external level, Kurdish nationalism did not have supports from outside and external lobbying. It is considerably apparent during this period of time is the lack of lobbying activities outside Kurdistan. Only one Kurdish man, Sharif Pasha, participated in the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and the Treaty of Sevres of 1920. His voice however, did not have the direct effect as he was not able to establish a strong lobby for the Kurds and missed the golden opportunity for Kurdish independence and therefore suffered the imposition of clauses 62, 63, and 64 of the Treaty of Sevres.

As far as the Kurdish connection with Britain, France and Russia is concerned, Kurdish leaders lacked experience in political maneuvering. They were either too naive in believing the foreigners and handing their powers over to the hands of the foreigners. They soon stood against them and sided the regional powers such as the Persians and Ottomans. This means although Kurdish political strategy was clear in their fight for Kurdish independence, their political strategies did not foresee a long-term goal to achieve independence on their own land. As a result, Britain, Russia, the Persians, Ottomans, France and Arabs had their had interests and influence inside Kurdistan. They did not allow Kurds to have their own independent political system. On the other hand, the Kurds could not distance themselves from those mentioned powers, and each time they sided with one of them. Taking the historical context into account, one can say that the major allied powers did not have an honest purpose with Kurds. Thus, this lack of pragmatism costed the Kurds their independence.

At the internal level, there was a real lack of charismatic Kurdish figures in the same period. There were leaders, revolutionary figures and fighters willing to sacrifice their lives for the sake of Kurdistan. However, none of these Kurdish leaders had political and historical charisma to be the representative of all Kurds, like Atatürk who saved Turkey from the allied powers in the early twentieth century. At that time, this was an essential element for the Kurds. For example, despite Sheikh Ubeydulla Nehri's complete patriotism when he launched his uprising, the Kurds not only did not join his revolution and offer their support, they played a direct part in defeating this Kurdish nationalist movement. That means the social environment for Kurds was not appropriate for creating the chance for charismatic figures to rise.

Furthermore, there was no one symbolic figure for all the Kurds for various reasons. These include Kurdish society's illiteracy. Those who were educated were either removed from the circle of the authorities and leadership or had no effect in the changes that happened in their societies. Although most of them were from educated families in Kurdistan, they could only fill a limited gap for Kurdish nationalist movement, due to the overwhelming tribal influence on Kurdish population on one hand and the religious influence of the Sheikhs on the other hand.

Apart from that, independent economy was a crucial problem in Kurdistan. Although Kurdish land was rich with natural resources, it was controlled and used by the Arabs, Turks, Persians, Britain, France and Russia to serve their interests, not the Kurds. Thus, the Kurds could not finance revolutions and nationalist movements.

It can be argued that Kurdish nationalism had been an armed reaction against the foreign and regional powers on Kurdish soil. It was not based on a specific philosophical and political ideology on which Kurdish individuals could be educated, according to the scientific criteria established by philosophers, whose views in identifying nations and nationhood we have discussed in this thesis. In other words, Kurdish nationalism can be regarded as a defensive reflex during early twentieth century, protecting the culture and the dignity of Kurdish people rather than a fully developed political ideology. That is why it could not become a strong foundation to render the Kurds to establish their independence aim like the Turanism or Arab nationalism though the latter one was not a good model.

It is finally concluded that there was a strong relationship between civil and armed revolutions that served Kurdish nationalism. The civil revolution took place in the form of Kurdish journalism as a medium of communication, writers and poets which was backing and representing Kurdish armed revolutions at internal and external levels. In the meantime, they gave particular attentions to Kurdish culture, language and educate Kurdish individuals on that rhythm in order to break the influence of Arab, Turkish and Persian cultures on Kurdish society. However, the civil form Kurdish nationalism was only successful to protect Kurdish identity, culture and language. On the other hand, the armed revolutions were not able to become an umbrella to control and achieve the goal of independent Kurdistan due to disunities among the Kurds inside Kurdistan, and the already implemented strategy of the major allied powers in the region had impacts on Kurdish nationalism were the major factors to weaken Kurdish nationalism.

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