THE FORMATION OF IRAQI NATIONALISM UNDER THE BRITISH MANDATE
(1920- 1932)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

PIRIL AKIN

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN THE PROGRAM OF
MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

DECEMBER 2009

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

THE FORMATION OF IRAQI NATIONALISM UNDER THE BRITISH
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Akın, Pırıl

MSc. Graduate Program of Middle East Studies
Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Recep Boztemur

December 2009, 125 pages

This thesis examines the development of a national identity and the ideology of nationalism, and the formation of nation-state in Iraq under the British Mandate from 1920 to 1932. The study focuses on the influences of the early Arab nationalist movements during the last decades of the Ottoman Empire and under the British Mandate over Iraqi nationalism and nation-state process. The study specifically examines the Mosul question and its effects on the formation of the territorial unity of the state in Iraq. The study also explores the successive civil administration during Mandate period while making Iraq a "nation-state" by taking actions concerning the politics, social structure, the government, army and economy. The British Mandate period in Iraq witnessed many important developments such as the drawing of Iraq's boundaries and the shaping of the foundations of the state structure. These developments continue to affect the country in a variety of ways even today. In the final part of the thesis, it is pointed out that understanding some of the policies and strategies implemented in Iraq by the British can help to make meaningful interpretations of current affairs in this country.

Keywords: Iraq, nationalism, nation-state, British Mandate, Mosul question.

ÖZ

İNGİLİZ MANDASI DÖNEMİNDE IRAK MİLLİYETÇİLİĞİNİN OLUŞUMU
(1920- 1932)

Akın, Pırıl

Yüksek Lisans, Ortadoğu Çalışmaları

Tez Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. RecepBoztemur

Aralık 2009, 125 sayfa

Bu tez, 1920-1932 yılları arasındaki dönemde, İngiliz etkisi altındaki Irak'ta milliyetçilik ve ulus devletin oluşumu konularını incelemektedir. Çalışma, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu döneminde yaşanan Tanzimat reformlarının, İmparatorluğun Arap topraklarında ve Irak'ta erken dönem Arap milliyetçiliğini nasıl etkilediği ve daha sonra Irak'taki İngiliz Mandater yönetim döneminde Irak milliyetçiliği ve ulus devlet olma süreçleri üzerine odaklanmıştır. Tezde, ayrıca, Musul sorununun Irak milliyetçiliği ve yine ulus devlet olma süreci üzerindeki etkileri detaylı olarak incelenmiştir. Tez, Manda döneminde politika, sosyal yapı, siyasi partiler, devlet yönetimi, ordu ve ekonomi konularında yapılan düzenlemelerle gerçekleştirilen ulus-devletleştirme sürecini incelemektedir. Irak'ta İngiliz Mandası dönemi, Irak'ın sınırlarının çizilmesi ve devlet yapısının oluşturulması gibi önemli gelişmelere sahne olmuştur. Bu gelişmeler ülkeyi günümüzde de hala çeşitli şekillerde etkilemektedir. Tezin son kısmında İngiliz Mandası tarafından uygulanan politika ve stratejileri anlamanın, ülkenin güncel gelişmelerini anlamada son derece yardımcı olacağı belirtilmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Irak, milliyetçilik, ulus devlet, İngiliz Mandası, Musul sorunu.

To My Lovely Parents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are several people I would like to thank for helping me complete my thesis. In particular I would like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Recep Boztemur for not only being my advisor but also for being an extraordinary academic mentor and an active supporter of my work. During writing my thesis, I realized the importance of an academic advisor. Dr. Boztemur was not only an advisor and mentor, but also a friend and a colleague, a person who always taught me very useful things, listened patiently to my problems and helped me solve them. In this context, I would like to express my gratitude to him for trusting and encouraging me to complete my present work. As a result of his efforts, I also have received numerous grants and been able to participate in several foreign programs abroad which have influenced my academic studies and thesis profoundly. I know that without Dr. Boztemur, my thesis would never have been completed and in turn, I would have missed these valuable opportunities to work abroad, so thank you for all your help Professor.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ceylan Tokluoğlu and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Şen were also two fundamental influences during my studies at Middle East Technical University (METU). I would like to stress my gratitude for their constant availability and willingness to help me whenever I required their insight and assistance. I consider myself a very lucky person to have met them and studied from such respected and renowned academics in their field.

I also feel indebted to Prof. Dr. Aykut Çelebi, who taught me the valuable lesson of examining issues from different frameworks and multiple perspectives. Without his encouragement and support, I would have lost hope for completing my studies.

I recently joined the Council of Higher Education as an Expert in Bologna Process and this has been a challenging and immensely rewarding experience which has helped me acquire important professional skills, but it has not always been easy working on my thesis during this time. In this context, I would like to express my

appreciation to my Director, Assist. Prof. Dr. Armağan Erdoğan, for helping and encouraging me to complete my thesis.

I cannot finish this acknowledgment without expressing my deepest appreciation for the people that have constantly provided me love, support, and help throughout my life, particularly during my academic career. I consider myself very lucky to have a great brother, Doğa Akın and a great friend like Tuğçe Tolay, who made the taxing process of writing a thesis more bearable with their endless support and encouragement.

Finally and most importantly, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother and father, Derya and Aydın Akın, because they have always supported me through my entire academic journey, even when I sometimes seemed to lose my way and sense of purpose. Words are insufficient to describe my gratefulness to them. Their love and support during my graduate education at METU was especially important because without them this thesis would not have been written.

In conclusion, this thesis represents the culmination of years of study and collaboration with various professors, academic mentors, fellow students and family members, and I would like to thank them all for their contribution to this work and providing me the confidence to explore my ideas and interests in the field of education. Thank you for being there and for teaching me to be self-confident.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Iraqi nationalism in the modern sense started to develop under the British Mandate in the 1920s and 1930s in response to the policies of the Hashemite Kingdom and to British imperialism in Iraq. However, Iraqi nationalism had its origins in the 19th century developments in the Arab world which became manifest in the changes in the administrative and education systems, as well as in cultural and religious spheres. Political, social and cultural changes in the Arab territories of the Ottoman Empire paved the ground not only for the development of cultural Arabism, but also for early Arab nationalism.

The Arab intellectuals moved, in the beginning of the 20th century, from "a kind of" cultural Arabism to Arab nationalism as a reaction to the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) policies which, they thought, favored the Turkish community against the other communities in the Ottoman Empire. However, the Turkification policy of the CUP governments before the World War I was not the only reason of the development of Iraqi nationalism. It must have affected or maybe encouraged it to a degree, but we cannot assert that the spread of Turkish nationalism or the Young Turks' Revolution of 1908 created the ideas of Arabism or the early Arab nationalist movement itself. Arabism was not only a response to Turkification; it remained a minority tendency in the Arab world generally until 1918. There are other dimensions which affected the development of early Arab nationalism such as the Western influence, particularly the British existence in the area and convergence of Arabs to Arabism as a response to Ottomanism, which were the other reasons of the development of Iraqi nationalism.

The Arab nationalist intelligentsia connects the development of modern Arab nationalism to the social, cultural, and religious tenets of Arab society. They argue that modern Arab nationalism has it rules in the long history of Islam and Arab culture. Although this view is shared by others, it does not cover all the dimensions

and reasons for the development of early Arab nationalism and modern Arab nationalism. A second perspective argues that Arab nationalism emerged from the developments that have been experienced as a result of the British policies during the Word War I and against western influence.

Iraqi nationalism was affected from all these processes mentioned above. In other words, nationalism in Iraq grew in accordance with these developments. Moreover, due to the transformation of Arab nationalism, Iraqi nationalism was also transformed. The reasons of the difference of Iraqi nationalism from other nationalisms in the region would try to be found in the administrative style of the British Mandate of this country.

In the British type of colonization, the colonizer ruled the mandate from the center by a central administration in general sense. They did not prefer to penetrate into the society of its mandate but to rule it from the main base. Their relations with the mandate population were in the local level, the British Mandate sought to realize and protect its economic benefits. However, in Iraqi case Britain had also effort to create a modern state, in the sense. It tried to preserve its interest while carrying out a state-formation process and penetrated to the mandate of Iraq in all dimensions. It also aimed to penetrate into the society therefore, this type of British rule also marked Iraqi nationalism different from other forms of Arab nationalisms in the region. Additionally, Britain did not implement the principle of divide and rule which prevailed in the French type of colonial policies which did not work in the case of Iraq. It tried to support the state building process by entering into agreements in order to control Iraq's affairs while endeavoring to avoid direct responsibility.

As well as the effects of a different type of mandate rule of British in Iraq, in the Iraqi case, the disengagement from the Ottoman Empire, i.e. from the *millet* system to the British imperialist mandate system, caused opposition movements against the British rule. With the effects of early Arab nationalism, this situation also made Iraqi nationalism differ from other forms of Arab nationalisms in the region. In this study, I examine the causes of this difference, particularly with reference to the emergence of Iraqi nationalism.

One of the most important outcomes of this study is the answer to the question whether Iraq can be considered as a territorial nation-state. By comparing what actually happened in Iraq especially during the British Mandate period, which is the main period discussed in this thesis, with an outlined model of state-formation process, the above mentioned question will be discussed in detail. The study also attempts to analyze whether a nation-state was established in Iraq in accordance with the following four criteria which defines a nation-state: the existence of a bureaucratic organization, the monopoly of use of violence, territoriality and lastly idea of the people. The state is a bureaucratic organization which has an organized territory with definite geographical boundaries that are recognized by other states. It has its own population and also has the right to use violence in order to keep security within its borders and protect its population. This definition of a modern state is also valid for the Middle Eastern states in general.

In Iraq, the process of creation of a modern state started in the 1920s. Contrary to the general estimations in the literature asserting that Iraqi nationalism started between 1935 and 1936, it started against the CUP policies parallel to the development of early Arab nationalism. It also started and progressed against the British policies in Iraq during the Mandate period. In the literature it is mostly argued that Iraqi nationalism started in the 1930s as a consequence of the Palestine question and progressed during the 1940s and reached its peaks in the 1950s and 1960s with the emergence of pan-Arabism. However, there is a shortage in the literature about the historical background of Iraqi nationalism. Thus, this study aims to analyze the early hoods of Iraqi nationalism with reference to the policies of the Ottoman state and the period of British Mandate. In other words, this study focuses on early Iraqi nationalism aiming to contribute to the literature on Iraq. I argue that Iraqi nationalism has its roots in early history and in accordance with early Arab nationalism. It started as an opposition movement against the policies of the CUP which became the government of the Ottoman state following the 1908 Constitutional Monarchy. Iraqi nationalism was also affected by early Arab nationalism, as well as by the British policies in Iraq during the 1920s. Although later actions and processes significantly shaped the future of Iraq, events during this early period set not only the

foundations of Iraqi nationalism, but also Iraq's long-term relationship with Britain. At this point, it should be mentioned that Iraqi nationalism in the 1950s was influenced by pan-Arabist ideologies which will be detailed in next chapters. In order to understand Iraqi nationalism with its all dimensions, it is important to analyze the reflections and effects of the emerging period of Iraqi nationalism to its later periods. In order to recognize the main dimension of probably the most important nationalist ideologies in the Middle East, which affected the national independence periods of almost all regional states, pan-Arabism and Ba'thism during the 1950s, particularly in Iraq, it is important to analyze history and roots of these concepts that I intended to do in this study.

This study examines some of the sources of Arab nationalism such as the strict and biased policies of centralization of the CUP, rising Turkish nationalism, the Western influence, the experience of British rule, and convergence of Arabs to Arabism as a response to Ottomanism. Furthermore, the policies of Arab intellectuals toward the CUP's Turkism policies through secret societies, journals, gazettes, the Congress of 1913, as well as the revolts of 1916 and 1920, which took place in Iraq, will be analyzed. After analyzing all of these sources of influence, I focus on the Iraqi sources of nationalism and examine the role of the military, political parties and the civil administration in the growth of Iraqi nationalism and nation-state formation process. This discussion will take place within the context of British Mandate period, i.e. from the invasion of the region by Britain in 1914 until Iraq's independence in 1932. The focus of this period will be the Mosul question since it had important consequences for the process of state-formation in Iraq.

In Chapter Two, I examine the emergence of early Arab nationalism. While studying this issue, early Egyptian nationalism is emphasized due to its effect to the development of early Arab nationalism. According to many scholars, Egyptian nationalism was the father of Arab nationalism. Similarly, the same scholars also emphasize that Iraqi nationalism is the pioneer of late Arab nationalism, especially during the period before and after World War II. In addition to this, Chapter Two also examines the Tanzimat Era and its effects on Arab society, as well as on early Arab nationalism. It also covers the entrance of western influence to the region and its

consequences for the Arab sense of nationalism, the opposition movements to the western intervention such as Islamic reformist and Islamic puritanist movements, which gave rise to the nationalist feelings among the Arabs against Europe, as well as against the local rulers. The course of Arab nationalism is also examined in Chapter Two. In order to discuss the reactions of the Arab people to these evolutions and how Arab nationalism was shaped during this period, the effects of non-Muslim Arabs on Arab nationalism, cultural awakening, the challenge of Arab awakening to the Ottoman state during the CUP administration, Arab secret political and literary nationalist societies and the politicization of nationalism under the second constitutional era, the First Arab Congress of 1913 and the Great Arab Revolt in 1916 is also examined with respect to early Arab nationalism. Through this historical perspective I argue that the sources of early Arab nationalism which was not yet a real nationalism, but a feeling of Arabism among the Arab people, did eventually lead to Iraqi nationalism in long term.

In Chapter Three, I focus more on Iraqi nationalism and its development process under the light of the progresses outlined in Chapter Two. Chapter Three seeks to analyze the state-formation process in Iraq under the British Mandate period between 1914 and 1932. The entrance of Britain to the Middle East region with World War I in 1914, its policies in the region, particularly in Iraq, the declaration of the British Mandate over Iraq and the oppositions among the Iraqis to the British rule, the revolt of 1920, and finally a detailed analysis of the process of the state-formation of Iraq are analyzed. In this Chapter, I discuss what kind of an Iraqi state Britain intended to create, what kind of policies and measures it took from 1914 to 1932 in Iraq, and how Britain created this new state. In order to answer these questions I focused on the Paris Peace Conference and Arabs' demands during the conference and the San Remo Agreement, the creation of British Mandate in Iraq, and the 1920 Revolt and its effects to the formation of the Iraqi state. I also discuss the spread of Iraqi nationalism among the Iraqis. Finally I examined the Cairo Conference of 1921 and the enthroning of Faisal as the king of the newly established mandate in Iraq, as well as the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, which originally set for the mandate a term of twenty years. The analysis of this period suggests that an unstable period of state-building was

initiated in Iraq by Britain. Additionally, the rise of Iraqi nationalism was witnessed during the same period. There was a growth of an organized Arab nationalism amongst the urban population of Iraq which became the main drive behind the continuing evolution of British involvement in the region.

Chapter Four analyzes the Mosul question and its effects on the process of Iraqi state-formation and Iraqi nationalism. A detailed analysis of the Mosul question is provided considering "territoriality" as one of the important elements of modern states. In other words, the maintenance of Mosul in Iraq helped the fulfillment of the criteria of becoming a state. With Mosul, the integrity of the newly established Iraqi state was ensured and this facilitated the route to be followed for Iraq to become a modern state. Throughout the period of the Mosul question, the attitudes of the Iraqi nationalists demonstrated the importance of the territory principle also for the Iraqi people.

In Chapter Five, I focus on Britain's forging of institutions at the national level in Iraq and its management of the Iraqi civil administration. For this aim, politics, social structure, government, army, and economy which created the nation-state and nationalism in Iraq under the Mandate period is analyzed. In the aftermath of the 1920 revolt, the British realized the weakness of the state institutions in Iraq. They were also aware of the importance of the establishment of these institutions and civil administration as a prerequisite to the establishment of a modern state. Therefore, Britain proceeded to lay the foundations of politics, army, economics, education, health and many other related issues during its rule. The successful management of these institutions was equally important for the establishment of an executive ruler and for the creation of a national security apparatus. Therefore, to better understand the British experience and state-formation process in Iraq, the tools which Britain used in order to create a modern state and a civil administration are examined.

In the concluding chapter, the major findings of this study is discussed with reference to various dimensions of Iraqi nationalism, especially with reference to pan-Arabism which emerged during the 1950s and with reference to the effects of the British Mandate period. In this context, the state-formation process and its

consequences for Iraqi nationalism, including the current situation in Iraq, are analyzed.

Concerning the methodology in this study, I adopted a descriptive and an historical analysis. In order to draw an accurate profile of events, persons or objects, the thesis describes the emergence and development of both nationalism and nation-state-formation period in Iraq within the context of descriptive and historical analysis.

Incorporating the method, the initial stage has been the source scanning. The investigation to reach the appropriate sources helping towards an objective interpretation has mainly included the search among the library and the internet queries among other sources. Secondary sources included books and articles, masters and doctorate thesis dealing with Arab nationalism, nationalism and nation-state in Iraq, the British Mandate period in Iraq, state-formation and civil administration in Iraq and also Iraq history which were generally used in the research to produce meaningful answers to the research question.

To sum up, in the thesis, the period of 1908-1932, focusing on the British experience in Iraq was examined. Although the British maintained a military presence in Iraq until 1958, their experience from 1920 to 1932 is the most relevant for the exploration of this thesis. During this time frame, the British invaded Iraq, established the country as a League of Nations Mandate in 1920, then recognized its independence in 1932, and created a new civil administration, politics, government, army, economy, and system of education in that country. Although later actions would significantly shape Iraq's future as well, events during this time frame will lay the foundation for the country's independence and its long-term relationship with Britain.

CHAPTER 2

THE EMERGENCE OF ARAB NATIONALISM

There are many reasons for the emergence of Arab nationalism. When we look at the historical background of the emergence and development of Arab nationalism, we could mention mainly four periods of it; firstly the entrance of modernity to the Middle East, to the land of Arabs, secondly the new dimensions in the Arab world like the new Arab societies, thirdly the 1913 Paris Arab Congress and lastly the Revolts of 1916 and 1920. There had always been a belief among the Arabs asserting that language, culture, ethnicity and religion constitute the social bases of Arab nationalism and the Arabs were devoted to realize the Arab unity. As a result of the unifying effects of these factors, national consciousness prevailed in Arab countries and firstly created local nationalisms. Constructing their nationalism, the Arabs considered that the roots of Arab nationalism would meet the ideological needs the Arabs are seeking. They desired to create a nation-state based on the Arab unity over the whole area of the Arab people. The fundamental idea was that all Arabs constituted one single nation, a single political entity with a common culture and language that predominates in the Arab peninsula.[1] The Arabs did not exclude religion from nationalism and they adopted Islam with its Arab character as a fundamental part of Arab nationalism. The basic characteristics of Arab nationalism were the feeling of homogenous entity, common religion tying the Arab people, common history forging the sense of belonging to a part of group and a common language.

Some scholars like A. A. Duri assert that Arab nationalism emerged out of the impact of the Western world as a defensive nationalism against the Western

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[1] İpek Demirel, "*The Failure of Peace Process in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict:The Clash of Arab Nationalism and Zionism,*" Master Thesis, Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University, December 2006, p. 25.

influence over the Arab world.[2] This expression underestimates the internal dynamics of the national building of the Arabs. Surely, the Western effects on Arab national development were apparent. Nevertheless, it was not forgotten that the tribal groups and bedouins on agricultural lands served to create common and stable bonds of loyalty to their territory, which loyalty was provided by the commitment of the Arabs to the same history, culture and religion and it also created the basis of the Arab identity.

With the Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1798, the impact of the European expansion began and resulted in the total opening of the Arab world to the European influence. It would not be wrong to assert that this invasion was in short the beginning of an interaction between East and West and as a result of this interaction; Western-educated Arab intellectuals expressing the desire of the Arabs for liberation from foreign rule emerged in the Middle East as the first supporters of a national movement.[3] Furthermore, as a result of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt there came into being a "general Arab awakening, the introduction of the printing press, revival of Arab classics and culture and hence to national consciousness and lastly the introduction of the European ideas of nationality"[4] inspired by the French Revolution.

With the seizure of power by Mehmet Ali Pasha, the new Ottoman governor of Egypt in 1805, the beginnings of externally generated social change in the region had been started. In the emergence of early Arab nationalism, Egypt could be seen as a pioneer. During this period, Mehmet Ali Pasha's reforms in Egypt included the start of modern schooling system, modernization in military, administrative and legal systems. He completely renewed the armed forces, reorganized the administration and established a centralized bureaucracy. Besides changing the patterns of landholding and agricultural production, he also introduced heavy industry came to the scene and developed the country through all of these modernization processes.

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[2] A. A. Duri, *The Historical Formation of Arab Nationalism: A Study in Identity and Consciousness*, London, New York, Sydney, Croom Helm, 1987, p. 29.

[3] Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism*, 3rd edition, New York St. Martin's Press, 1997, p. 93.

[4] Hazem Zaki Nuseibeh, *The Ideas of Arab Nationalism,* 2nd edition, New York, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1959, p. 35.

He began a state sponsored development program of industrialization, especially on war-related materials and textiles for the local market in order to make his country, Egypt, self sufficient. He renewed the taxing system of the land in favor of state control over land and revenue. He adopted the European model of modernization, especially in the army field, in order to create an Egyptian army independent from the Ottoman Empire. He also invaded Sudan in 1820 with these newly established armed forces. Ali Pasha understood the importance of a strong army to achieve his goals for the independence and expedited the creation of the military forces. He enlarged his army up to almost 130.000 soldiers which means that Egypt became a big power in the region.

Besides modernizing the army, Mehmet Ali Pasha also make effort to modernize the education system. During a twenty-year period beginning in the early 1980s, schools of medicine, veterinary, engineering and chemistry opened and many Egyptian students were sent to Europe in order to experience the western type of education and learn their cultures and languages, which experience enlightened the young Egyptians. In order to harmonize the Egyptian type of higher education with the European one, he established the School of Languages in 1835 for training translators and preparing Arabic textbooks and useful materials. This school had an important influence on the development of the Egyptian cultural and educational life.

Ali Pasha also paid attention to developing the press and the first Arabic-language newspaper al-Waqai al-Misriyyah (Official Gazette) was published in 1828. This was a big achievement for Egyptian modernization history represented in Mehmet Ali Pasha's acceptance and support of printing press and which was a break from the cautious cultural tradition of the Ottoman world and was a very important way to spread the newly adopted European ideas to the educated Egyptian elite and society.[5]

According to Cleveland, maybe the most important reformist change among all these achievements was the reorganization of the central administration.[6] At the

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[5] William Cleveland, *A History of Modern Middle East*, 3rd Edition, USA, Westview Press, 2004, p.68.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

highest level, there emerged different functioning ministries and simultaneously at the middle level there emerged a new group of officials educated in technical and administrative schools who were appointed on the basis of their qualifications. Government became more bureaucratized and powerful and also more conventional under the rule of Mehmet Ali Pasha.

As mentioned above, in the emergence of early Arab nationalism, Egypt could be seen as a pioneer. In the late 18th century, the conflicts between the Ottoman rule and Egyptian local notables were the first indicators of conflict that would produce a nativist, furthermore a patriotic attitude in the Middle East region. As mentioned above, the invasion of Egypt by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798 and provocation of the Egyptians against the Turks were also important in the emergence of an Egyptian challenge against the Ottoman Empire.[7] However, it is too early yet to talk about the emergence of Egyptian Arab nationalism in the early 19th century. The conflict between the Arab and Mamluk notables and the Ottoman governor was due to economic, more basically, taxation reasons. Looking all these modernizing efforts, we cannot still talk about an "Arab" feeling among Egyptian or other Arab people yet. These efforts were effective but still Mehmet Ali Pasha was a dynast, still a member of ruling Ottoman elite, not an "Egyptian". He played a very important role in the modernization of Egypt but despite implementing modernized rules and structures, Ali's administration was still "Ottoman." It would not be just to talk about an Arab nationalist feeling and an Arab awakening in the beginning of the 19th century Egypt. As İlber Ortaylı also asserts, Mehmet Ali Pasha was not a representative of Arab nationalism[8] but all of these reforms, modernization and development movements (especially in the army and education fields) affected peoples', especially the intelligentsias' and elites' ideas and planted the ideas of Arabism and supported Arab nationalism in the long term.

As a result of this early modernization, the first generation of European educated Arab intellectuals, like Rifa Rafi al-Tahtawi as one of the earliest modern

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[7] Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, *Osmanlı Devleti'ne Karşı Arap Bağımsızlık Hareketi (1908-1918)*, Ankara, Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayınları, 1982, p. 11-12.

[8] İlber Ortaylı*, İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2005, p. 53.

intellectuals, started to enter into the intellectual life of the Arab society, and the Arab literary and bureaucratic circles started to talk about patriotic, if not national, thinking in the Arab world.

2.1 Tanzimat Era and Its Effects over Arab Society

The period from 1839 to 1876 is known in Ottoman history as the Tanzimat era and witnessed the most intensive reformist activities of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. During these years, the reforms were executed by the Europeanized Ottoman elite and bureaucrats. There were two decrees which constituted the main essence of the Tanzimat Period. The fist decree was known as *Hatt-ı Sharif of Gulhane,* was issued in 1839 on the insistence of Rashid Pasha who was the dominator of the first fifteen years of the period. It was a statement of royal intent, rather than a legislation, which the Ottoman Sultan issued to his people. The Ottoman ruler promised certain administrative reforms, such as abolition of tax farming, the standardization of military conscription, and the elimination of corruption.[9] The importance of the statement was that the Sultan accepted to extend the foreseen reforms to all Ottoman subjects regardless of their religion.

In 1856, the second decree, *Hatt-ı Humayan* was encouraged by another Tanzimat era leaders Ali and Fuad Pashas. The new decree repeated the principle of 1839 and the guarantee of the equality of all subjects- regardless of their religion- were emphasized and made further clarified.

According to Cleveland, the intent of the two decrees was to secure the loyalty of the Christian subjects of the empire at a time of growing nationalist agitation in the European provinces, in the Balkans.[10] But it also had some side effects on the Arabian early nationalism. It also influenced the Arab intellectuals as well as the Arab world. At this point in time, some writers assert that the early type of Arab nationalism was established on the basis of defensive feelings against these new reforms of Tanzimat period and also against external intervention.

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[9] Cleaveland, *op.cit.,* p. 83.

[10] *Idem.*

During the Tanzimat, reforms in the Ottoman Empire started modern schooling system, modernization in military, administrative and legal systems started. Tanzimat officials established institutions of higher education for civilians like the *Civil Service School (1859)* and *The Imperial Ottoman Lycée Galatasaray (1868).* [11]Those colleges educated the political and administrative elites of the Ottoman Empire. In addition to these reforms in higher education areas, there was also a change in the secondary school system in that in 1847, the *Ministry of Education* was established as another component of the state. In addition to educational reforms, there was also the promulgation of new legal codes. The Ottoman Land code which centralized the measures designed to regularize landholding patterns and to increase the tax-collecting efficiency of the central government was issued in 1858. After that, *the Mejelle*, which was completed in 1876, which was inspired from European legal codes, represented the combination of the new and customary regulations that characterized so much of the 19th century Ottoman reform movement of Tanzimat was accepted and its administration was given to the jurisdiction of a newly created Ministry of Justice.[12] In 1876, with the dethroning of the Sultan Abdul Aziz and his replacement with the new Abdul Hamid II, new Ottoman constitution was declared.

At this period in time,, a new group of intellectuals and bureaucrats called *Young Ottomans* came to the scene. They tried to create a link between the modernizing European modeled empire and the Islamic foundations of state and society. According to this newly emerged group, reforms were desirable and inevitable but as long as they based on Islamic tradition. One of the prominent of the group was Namik Kemal. His poems and his most famous play, *Vatan,* were based on his secular conclusions. Respect for the Islamic foundations of the Ottoman Empire and the society was crucial while modernizing the county according to the European model. Those feelings of love of homeland, patriotism, allegiance to its own country etc. also affected the Arab elements of the empire and maybe it would not be wrong to say that those developments planted the ideas of Arabism in Arab lands in the long term as it did in the Egyptian case.

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[11] *Ibid.,* p. 84.
[12] *Idem.*

Although those Tanzimat reforms brought greater efficiency to the Ottoman administration of the Arab provinces, they also distorted the political and social arrangements which have meant relative communal harmony for nearly 300 years. The local Arab notables generally opposed the Tanzimat[13] but they also found out how to benefit from them. They saw the importance of the western type of modern education of young people who would be trained in the government schools became very important status at the administrative level. With the effects of this situation, at the beginnings of 1870s, many of leading Arab families sent their children to the higher schools in Istanbul. After a tough education period in these academies, these young Arabs had the chance to participate in the Ottoman administration and due to this position they provided access to their families for the administration.

It could be asserted that, throughout the Tanzimat, the Arab urban elite managed to preserve their privileges and to render themselves indispensable to the Ottoman officials sent out from Istanbul as is apparent in the statement of Cleveland: *"The politics of the notables survived the centralizing reforms."*[14]

While talking about the emergence of early Arab nationalism, we should mention Ali Mubarak (1823-1893), one of the most influential and talented of Egypt's 19th century reformers as well as Rifa'a Rafi al- Tahtawi (1801-1873), who brought the concepts like "nation" "homeland" "patriotism (love of country)" to the Arab lands and founded the first notions of Arab nationalism in long term. Mubarak was the director of the entire system of government schools in Egypt. That was very important, and thus he was the first native Egyptian Muslim who charged for such an important high-ranking position. He served his country as an extremely talented educator, engineer, and administrator. He had the chance to shape the Egyptian educational life with the naive feelings of *"Egyptianism"*.

Al- Tahtawi was one of the pioneers of educational modernization movements in Egypt and at the same time was the first person who got in touch with the western world. He was educated in France between 1826 and 1831 and absorbed the principal works of French political thought and also French customs. He was aware that they

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[13] *Ibid.,* p. 92.

[14] *Idem.*

were far less civilized than Europe or western countries and he wanted to bring the Islamic countries up to the level of the west and was insisting that the well being of the Arabs required fundamental social and cultural changes to restore Islam's original dynamism through revising the prevailing view of ijtihad. Without doubt, he was criticized by the conservative Ulama.[15]

As mentioned above, in those days, there was not a real separatist Arab nationalist feeling among Arab people, or an intention of separation from the Ottoman Empire. On the contrary, the feelings of Arabism bloomed among Arab intellectuals under the Ottoman rule with great ties and loyalty to their empire.

As seen in the cases of Mubarak and al-Tahtawi, many Arab intellectuals started to become familiar to the Western type of modern life, and also to the aspects of European civilization. This intelligentsia started to use their authority in their positions in favor of spreading Western ideas and the adoption of a Western system of education and administration. The education budget expanded, and the European-educated elite were encouraged. Besides these, legal reforms, new civil code and mixed courts were also affectuated. In economic life, we witnessed that Western type of economic reforms started to be implemented with the government of Mehmet Ali Pasha, in order to industrialize the country. It would be asserted that his type of "enlightenment" seeded the feelings of early Arab nationalist feelings which were not visible on the stage yet.

But on the other hand, while emphasizing the importance of Western type of modernist movements in the emergence of Arab nationalism, we should also mention that there was also a counter and defensive feeling against the Europeans who came to reside in the country and assumed high ranking positions of the state. The result of those kinds of appointments of foreigners just as the British officers with a higher salary was the cause of tension among Egyptians. They believed that they should equally be on equal footing with those foreign officers and were determined to cash in on an advantageous economic opportunity.[16] In addition to this, Egypt's economic

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[15]Ali Bilgenoğlu, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Arap Milliyetçi Cemiyetleri,* Antalya, Yeniden Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Yayıları, 2007, p. 31-35.

[16] Cleveland, *op.cit.,* p. 95.

situation got worse during the reign of Ismail, one of the most important and reformist figures in modern Egyptian history. With the declaration of bankruptcy in 1876, the Public Debt Commission was established a few months later. It was composed of four European creditor nations' representatives and the Commission was charged with ensuring that the Egyptian debt was serviced. In addition to this, two more controllers, one from Britain and one from France, were also appointed to the Egyptian government to supervise the expenditures of Egyptian revenues.[17] With this dual control over the Egyptian economy, financial affairs in Egypt went under the control of Europeans. While losing the control over the state's economy, they also lost their political independence. European powers found the chance of freedom to arrange the Egyptian economy as they saw fit. There was great discontent within various sectors of the elite and among elements of the population at large and which led to a reaction against European intervention.

To sum up, in the mid-1860s, Europeans with their economic privileges, their diplomatic protection, and their patronizing manners became a source of irritation at all levels of Egyptian society, particularly at newly established intelligentsia level. Consequently, the opposing movements had started among Arab people.

2.2 Uprisings to the Western Intervention and Islamic Revivalism

One of the opposing positions to the western intervention was the *Urabi* Revolt which took place between 1879- 1882. Ahmad Urabi, the leader of the uprising, was an Egyptian peasant who became a colonel in the army. He was not a European-educated officer, who was coming from the field and had the chance to sound out the Arab people. With his Egyptian traditional education background, he was easily accepted by the people as an "authentic voice" of Egyptian people. According to Cleveland, it was the voice of a peasant population whose labor and taxes had produced the wealth for foreign powers, the voice of impoverished rural discontent

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[17] *Ibid.,* p. 99.

against tax-exempt foreigners and wealthy local landlords.[18] It was the voice of the repressed, the humiliated, the fooled and the frustrated Egyptian people.

The Urabi protest movement started in 1881 under the leadership of Colonel Urabi with the large support of the army, reformist notables and peasants against European domination of Egyptian affairs and also against the Khedive Tawfiq, who was appointed after Ismail in 1879, with the aims of managing the affairs of their own country, eliminating foreign control of Egypt's finances and restricting the autocracy of the Khedive by establishing constitutional limits to his authority.

The movement gained support and became very powerful in many parts of the country. Urabi was appointed as the Minister of War and empowered his own strong army. But this situation disturbed both the British and French governments in that they felt like they are going to lose their control over the country as well as losing the security of their interests in the region. They believed that a strong government dominated by Urabists would not accept their financial obligations. In addition to this, they were alarmed that the nationalist government would not permit their access to the Suez Canal which means the loss of economic security. Consequently, on September 13th 1882, the British forces defeated the Urabi's army, Urabi was captured and the movement came to an end. Khedive Tawfiq's authority was restored by the British government and in Cleveland's words; "Egypt became a part of Europe, but not in the way that Ismail had intended."[19]

Some historians have consensus that the Urabi movement was a pioneer for Arabist nationalism. Urabi was a patriot who wanted to preserve his country's independence from foreign economic and political control with a feeling of "Egypt for Egyptians."

In parallel to the reforms in the Arab region, we also witnessed two different forms of Islamic revivalism, the Wahhabi movement and the late 19th century modernism of Afghani and Abduh. We can talk about mainly two kinds of Islamic puritanist movements; the *Wahhabi* and *Sanusi*.

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[18] *Idem.*

[19] *Ibid.,* p. 100.

Islam would be counted as one of the most important factors of Arab nationalism. According to many scholars, Islam oriented many Arab tribal communities towards a national consciousness based on cultural affiliation. Islam and Arabic became the basic foundations of this cultural entity. Yet, the first and foremost achievement of the Islamic movement was the unification of the Arabs for the first time in their history. Islam united the Arabs, by bringing the opportunity to the Arabs for setting an organized state. It bound the Arabs together around a single cause to carry the message of Islam beyond their lands. In this regard, Islam imbued the Arabs with a sense of mission. It also emerged as a gift to the Arabs for the creation of a community and the establishment of a state. As a major part of Arab civilization, Islam became the most influential effective element of Arab nationalism for the Arabs. It proved to be a religion and a national cause for the Arabs at the same time.[20]

The domination of Islamic countries by western European countries also posed a dilemma for Muslims as it did in the rest of society, especially among notables. In the atmosphere of opposition to the western values both in societal and religious areas, Muslims started to question the newly established secular constitutions, legal codes, economic regulations, educational formations. This opposition was not only against the western power, it was also against the western educated elite whose ideologies were in favor of modernist European tradition. They started to ask why we have to implement new codes. Why the western type is better? Our religion is not compatible with western values, why do we abandon the shari'ah in order to adopt foreigners' rules? This is totally against the Islamic heritage. These feelings created a reaction against the adoption of European regulations and created a reassertation of Islamic values, or in other words, European expansionism was an inspiration for Islamic revivalism, prominently in Egypt.

In the early years of the twentieth century, the Muslim Arabs put forward the basis of Arab nationalist view. According to Islamic revivalists such as Muhammad Abduh, Abd al-Rahman al Kawakibi, Rashid Rida who will be mentioned below, the

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[20] Duri, *op.cit.,* p. 45.

new Arabism appeared as the successor of Islamic modernism and revivalism. For those revivalists, humiliation and disparagement of the Muslims could be healed by returning to the true Islam of their leaders who were Arab. Hazem Zaki Nuseibeh stated that this meant the revival of Arab culture and the Arabism and to the Arabs, this idea of return started the Arab national awakening.[21] The reference to religion that claimed to be universal strengthened Arab's solidarity against the growing influence of the West.

2.2.1 Islamic Puritanist Movements

One of the most prominent Islamic puritanist movements was the Wahhabism. The founder was a scholar from central Arabia; Muhammad ibn Abd-al Wahhab (1703-1792) who was educated in strict Islamic sense of education in Mecca and Medina and was a supporter of affirmation of tawhid belief which asserts that there is only one God. He was also a supporter of that the Quran and the hadith were the only reliable sources to be considered. Wahhabism was an example of self-generated purification and fundamentalism of Islam and influenced many Arab people. Wahhabism stipulated that deviations from true Islam resulted in corruption and distortion in the Arab regions and that the Muslims should return to the beginnings of Islam. According to them, the Arabs as the generation of the Prophet, and therefore the real representatives of Islam, could alleviate the deteriorating conditions of the Muslim world by mobilizing the Muslims towards Islam, so that Wahhabis unified scattered local tribes for the resurgence of Arab vitality. This let Islam assume an important role as a unifying factor for the emergence of Arab nationalism.

The successor of Abd-al Wahhab's preaching; Muhammad ibn Sa'ud (1787-1859), an Algerian who spent several years studying and teaching in Mecca, created another movement called the Sanusi movement which had its base in Libya. This movement had more tight ties with Sufism than Wahhabism and was supporting the idea of recreating the original community of the Prophet. Sanusi's were against the

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[21] Nuseibeh, *op.cit.,* p. 25.

Ottoman and Egyptian forms of reformist Islamism in favor of a desert life. It would not be wrong to say that the Sanusi movement was not very effective and influenced people as much as Wahhabism- it was not a big supporter of strict puritanical implementation of Islam as much as Wahhabism- but it also played an important role in the response of Islamic society against European expansionism. Thus it is also believed that the Sanusi order became the basis for the contemporary Libyan state.[22]

2.2.2 Islamic Reformist Movements

In the response of Islamic society, the need for Muslims was to understand and to adopt the original principles of Islam and also to recover the spirit of solidarity and piety that had brought such triumph to the prophet and his successors. Although some of the members of the Ulama were totally against the European regulations and also the ways of implementation of reforms, there were still some Islamic revivalists who were aware of the importance of science and technology which did not totally exclude the way of western educational implementing ,but would harmonize it with in the Islamic rules. The concept of Islamic modernism started to be considered. Though it shared the idea of 'revitalization of Islam' with the Wahhabi movement, its method to achieve this goal was different. Instead of turning to the ancient times of Islam, it contended the survival of Islam in modern world along with the elements of European science without allowing it to attack the roots of Islamic civilization and it was a defensive reform movement against the West. The leaders of this movement tried to make principles of Islam compatible with the contemporary needs for change. Within this context, the Islamic reform movement undertook an important role in the early formulations of Arab nationalism.

One of the leaders of these Islamic revivalist movements was Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897), who was raised and educated in Iran and moved to Egypt in 1871. He impressed a group of young people with his political and religious reformist ideas. He was forced to leave the country by Khedive Tewfiq, the ruler of

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[22] Cleveland, *op.cit.,* p. 123-124.

Egypt, because of his opposing views and moved to Paris in 1884. He and his student Muhammad Abduh published an Arabic newspaper called *al-Urwah al-Wuthqa* (The Indissoluble Bond) which emphasized the importance of religiously based political unity. Al-Afghani wanted to awaken Muslims determined to overcome their weakness. If they would reimplement the power of Islam, then they will fight more easily the western domination. For al-Afghani, Islam was in accord with the scientific spirit and the demands of human reason, but Muslims had become ignorant of the true disciples of their faith. Now, they had to take it upon themselves to rediscover these principles and to discard the superstitions that had corrupted the community together.[23] Two core elements of Al-Afghani's ideology were unity of the ummah and action. According to him, in order to rebuild the glorious Islamic civilization as it was in the past, and also to resist the European influence, the ummah should gather and act together. This goal will be achieved due to the powerful force of pan-Islamic sentiment that united people once in the history without any discrimination against them by differentiating people according to their races or languages. However, this goal can be achieved also by actions of the Muslims. They have to be mobilized and to reform the whole Muslim community. Only if this happens, then the Arabs would be able to take collective action and reconstruct their national independence.

To realize those wishes and aims with more intellectual inquiry and institutional reforms were left to his successful disciple, Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) who was born and studied in Egypt. He was an active supporter and a member of the Urabi Revolt and was then exiled to Paris in 1882. He was awarded the title of *mufti*. His purpose was to demonstrate that Islam was compatible with modernity and that an educated Muslim did not have to choose between being modern and being Muslim, as these two ideologies can work together. Abduh attempted to bring together the questioning obedience demanded by divine revelation with the freedom of independent human reasoning. According to Cleveland, Abduh was calling for the reopening of the gate of *ijtihad* which means the application of informed human

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[23]*Ibid.,* p. 126.

reason to new situations.[24] Change and modernity did not scare Abduh, as long as it is not excluding Islam and a change that compatible with Islam at the end. He tried to bring new conceptions, ideas, and practices to the Islamic society.

Both Islamic revivalist movements directed against the foreign domination and emphasized the Arab origins of Islam. They tried to create a unique nation including all Muslims. The Arabs were influenced from ideas such as nationalism, freedom and equality and with those movements they focused on the characteristics of their identity by emphasizing 'the Arab origins of Islam' as a result of Islamic revivalism. As mentioned above, all those movements and new sentiments were firing, maybe not yet firing but seeding the nationalist feelings to the people against Europe as well as against the local rulers.

2.3 The Course of Arab Nationalism

As mentioned in the previous pages, the Arab sense of nationalism had developed with the influence of the Western thoughts in the 1850s among Arabs. Nevertheless, all Arabs were not Muslim. Additionally, Christian Arabs considered Islam within the framework of a common culture. The language and culture emerged as the link that bound the Christian Arabs with the other Muslim Arabs. The new type of organic tie between the Christian Arabs and the West and also the new researches in cultural, historical and social eras developed by those new intelligentsias, especially among the Christian intellectuals, particularly in Lebanon and Syria, supported the creation of the bases of the early Arab nationalism. With the increasing contact with European modes of thought, the spread of the 1789 French Revolution's main ideologies fraternity, liberty and equality, influences of the missionaries and migrations to the states had also facilitated and founded early Arab nationalism.

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[24] *Ibid.,* p. 126-127.

2.3.1 Cultural Awakening

"The awakening of Arabness" started with "cultural awakening (*al-nahdah)*" in Arab language and literature, Arab history and cultural arenas especially among Christian Arab intellectuals who were educated in western schools and universities. Nazif El-Yazıcı, Butros El- Bustani, Corci Zeydan and El-Yazıcı's son Ibrahim El-Yazıcı were among those who became very influential in the foundation of Arab cultural awakening. These intellectuals played important roles in the emergence of "Arabness" by writing in some newspapers like *Cuneyne and Cinan*, where *Cinan* was accepted as the first press agency of Arab cultural nationalism, and also in some journals like *Hilal*. The commonality among these intellectuals was their types of education in that all members of this intellectual class were educated in missionaries' schools, the most important ones were *Syrian Protestant College* (later the American University of Beirut) and *French Jesuit School*, founded in Syria and also Université St.Joseph in Beirut. It is not wrong to state that the feeling of "Arabness" and "Arab nationalism" entered the region through the education system of those schools [25] and also with the influence of Arabic printed materials and press.

At this point, if we would like to talk about the emerging currents of Arab cultural distinctiveness, we should mention Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (1854-1902), a Syrian reformer, a journalist and also a municipal administrator. He analyzed the causes for the degeneration of Islam and offered suggestions for its regeneration in his books named *Taba'Iial-Istibdat* (The Nature of Despotism) and *Umm al-Qura* (The Mother of Cities: Mecca). It could be said that Al Kawakibi's way of defending the Islamic civilization was a glorification of the Arab role in the development of this civilization.[26] He was supporting the idea that the regeneration of Islam would begin with the establishment of an Arab caliph in Mecca, the mother of cities in his words, who will be responsible to stick to purely religious matters. According to some writers, he was not an Arab nationalist, but he was suggesting

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[25] Bilgenoğlu, *op.cit.,* p. 57.

[26] Cleveland, *op.cit.,* p. 128.

that the Arab version of Islam was the only pure one and Arab people could oppose the Ottoman rule.[27]

Look from the Christian minority's perspective to the new currents of Islamic reformism, during the second half of the nineteenth century, the Arab Christians of Syria and Lebanon experienced an economic, literary and cultural renaissance known as the awakening. The main tools for the awakening were Christian missionaries' activities, the printed materials, and the press.

One of the most important prominent people of the awakening was Butros al-Bustani (1819-1883). He was a Lebanese Maronite Christian who was in contact with American missionaries in the region and was obviously impressed by their ideas. He founded a school, the National School in 1863 which taught Arabic and scientific subjects. His objective was to expand the usage of Arabic language. Al-Bustani also encouraged a receptiveness to the scientific discoveries made in Europe, with the belief of if Middle East wants to recover its proper place in the world, it has to have that willingness of acquiring modern knowledge.

During the 1860s and 1870s, literary clubs and scientific societies became active especially in Beirut and acted as centers for the discussion of political as well as literary topics. The emphasis on the Arabic language and Arabic literary which was the core elements of nahdah, the awakening, made the Arab community to become aware of their cultural identity. This movement was supported especially by Christian Arabs who were open to new European ideas and reforms. Still, there had not been a feeling of a real nationalism although this was a kind of patriotism, of the love of a territory and also the starters of Arabness.

In addition to the literary publications, the western type educated intellectuals founded the Beirut Secret Society in 1875. This society was against the Ottoman rule and the Turkification process. It can be asserted that it was the first organized cultural, as well as political movement of Arab awakening which had some ambitions like creating a new independent Arab state by separating from the Ottoman Empire.[28]

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[27] *Ibid.,* p. 129.

[28] Bilgenoğlu, *op.cit.,* p. 59. See also Cleveland *op.cit.,* p.157.

The role of Christian Arabs became more important in the 20th century. Christian Arabs supported the idea of a separated Arab entity independent from the Ottomans because eligible Syrian Christian notables were not given a place in the administration just as Muslim Arabs. They were also demanding a place at the executive level from the central administration. When they failed to achieve those prominent places in the state organization, they contributed to the development of the national awakening. For them, nationalism was the only way to break out of their boundaries constituted by the Empire. In this regard, the cultural revival in the second quarter of the nineteenth century spread to Syria, Egypt and Iraq by 1914 and put forward the origins of the general Arab awakening in the Arab East.[29]

The Arab awakening represented a challenge to the Ottoman system. However, there has been a softening in Arab attitudes against the Ottoman Empire under the reign of Sultan Abdulhamit II between the years of 1876-1909. In those years, with the new policy of Sultan's "Islamic Unity", Arabism lost pace and the Arabs returned back to supporting the Ottomanism/Islamism policies of the Empire. One of the most important progresses of this policy was the Hedjaz Railway Project which foresaw to connect Damascus to Medina in order to make an easy way to arrive to the holy lands, as well as fastening the soldier's shipping and expediting the transportation in order to save the unity of the Empire. Because of the lack of connection between the Arab people and the Ottoman Empire despite of these binding experiences, the attempts of the Empire to deepen the relations between the Arabs and the state could not achieve its aims to create loyalty to the government. However, it opened the way to the western powers to influence people living under Ottoman rule by penetrating the regions.[30]

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[29] Duri, *op.cit.*, p. 46.

[30] Kürkçüoğlu, *op.cit.,* p. 19.

2.3.2 Arab Nationalism during the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) Administration

The origins of Arab nationalism became more apparent during the Ottoman rule. However, they did not identify themselves as a separate identity within the borders of the Empire. The Arabs expected from the Ottoman administration to give them significant positions at the administrative levels. The decentralization period started mainly in the European territories of the empire and sprung to the eastern parts too. The Arab awakening influenced from Western ideas firstly appeared in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire in the middle of the 19th century. Arabism emerged as a measure to help them benefiting from the decentralization period and gaining more privileges from the Ottoman administration. Both Mehmed Ali Pasha's modernization efforts and Islamist Arab's Islamic revivalism contributed to these expectations of the Arabs. While every entity intended to benefit from the decentralization period of the Ottoman Empire, the Arabs also supported this movement desiring more liberality from the Empire. Therefore, they would also be able to obtain more significant and beneficial positions in the administration.

The gradual emergence of self-awareness among the Arabs along with emphasizing their identity urged them to transform their ideological framework from Ottomanism to Arabism. The Arabs supported their separation from the idea of Ottomanism for only gaining some benefits from the decentralization period within the Empire. However, the transformation from Ottomanism to Arabism consolidated their national construction.[31]

One of the most important effects of the evolution of Arab Nationalism was the Ottoman reform movement. The reform period began with 1839 Tanzimat until the break out of World War I. During this period, for the reasons previously mentioned, the hopes for decentralization in which the Arabs would pursue their own culture and political development and design their self-government became the main themes of Arab nationalism.

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[31] Demirel, *op.cit.,* p. 35.

The Tanzimat period produced the *Young Turk* movement and later the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) which consisted of Westernized military officers, the exiled community of long standing, and civil servants and students, trying to reinvigorate the structure of the Ottoman Empire in reference to the achievements of contemporary Europe.[32] There was a growing wave of anti-Hamidian sentiment among those groups. People wanted to curb the royal autocracy and preserve the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire by establishing a new constitution which restores the principle of Ottomanism. In order to realize these wishes, a group of students founded a secret society in 1889 known as the Committee of Union and Progress which soon attracted other intellectuals and civil servants. In 1908, the CUP declared the constitution and in 1909 they took control of the country from Abdul Hamid with the spirits of Ottomanism and political liberty, and they adopted the idea of Ottomanism as a multi-national constitutional monarchy. From that time on, the Young Turk period from 1909 to 1913 had started. New forms of cultural and political identification with the dominant ideology of Ottomanism were adopted by the new administration, led by Enver (1881-1922), Talat (1874-1921) and Jamal Pashas (1872-1922). They believed that the only way to restore the power of the Empire was through constitutional government which would limit the power of the monarch and guarantee the rights for non-Muslims (including Christian Arabs) by incorporating them under the umbrella of Ottomanism. In order to achieve their goals, first of all they abolished the millet system, they improved the primary and secondary education systems as well as military, abolished censorship over the press and media and finally and maybe the most important, they emphasized the territorial integrity by the commitment of all entities to Ottomanism.

Contrary to expectations, it did not work. With the uprisings for independence in the Balkan territories shortly after the restoration of the 1908 constitution, it became clear that the minorities of the Empire were not willing to respect the territorial integrity. They wanted their own sovereignty more than living under Ottoman rule. They undermined the proposition that Muslims and Christians could

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[32] Cleveland, *op.cit.,* p. 130-131.

share in a common Ottoman bond. This situation also affected the other elements of the empire such as the Arabs in the east.

After those uprisings against the Empire, Young Turks left to support the idea of Ottomanism and the Turkish cultural movement had emerged. The importance of Turkism and Turkish language started to be emphasized. The doctrine stressed the crucial Turkish contribution to the success of the Ottoman Empire and posited the notion that there was a special pre-Islamic, pre-Ottoman cultural heritage of Turks that distinguishes them from the other citizens of the Empire.

The CUP rule following the declaration of the Constitutional monarchy in 1908 and CUP politics were turning points for the pan-Arabist and Arab nationalist ideas, and the Arab political movements considerably evolved between 1908 and 1914. The Young Turks period provided the Arab nationalists a greater opportunity than Abdulhamid's reign did. Arabism was a developing movement before the Young Turk Revolution, but the 1908 Revolution made it more visible and there seems to be a relative increase in the politicization of Arab demands after 1908. When the Committee of Union and Progress overthrew the Ottoman ruler, Abdul Hamid, the Arabs, as Ottoman servants working for the Empire, cooperated with the members of the CUP because Arab nationalists hoped for equality and representation with this new regime. The constitution of 1908 aimed to uniting all Ottoman elements without any distinction. The restoration of the Parliament, the consequent flourishing of party activity, the expansion of the press as well as the increased number of civil servants and military officers, teachers and journalists were among the reasons for the development of Arabism by facilitating political debate and by providing an opportunity for the Arabists to win recruits.[33]

As mentioned above, modern Arab nationalism seemed to emerge in reaction to the government of the CUP and its politics. Arab nationalists opposed to the system established before the Young Turks, which had not recognized their autonomy and met their wishes. They also opposed after the Revolution of 1908, that the Arab nationalists realized that modernist Ottomanists would probably fail to heal the

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[33] Rashid Khalidi and Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih, Simon S. Reeva, eds. *The Origins of Arab Nationalism,* New York, Columbia University Press, NewYork, Chichester, 1991, p. 16-17.

inferior situation of the East to the West and also to meet their nationalist demands. The measures of CUP government within the framework of Ottomanism and after Turkism intensified the Arab discontent and triggered the Arab nationalists.[34] Keeping in mind that Arabism was a means through which some members of the Arab notable families protested against the CUP's attacks their political and economic status, it also represented a confirmation of Arab cultural identity and a desire for that identity to receive greater recognition by the government.[35] Although the majority of Arab nationalists were also loyal Ottomanists, Arabism rose as a majority movement especially after the 1908 Revolution due to the economic and political policies of the CUP which threatened the economic interests of Arab rural and merchant classes and the restoration of Parliament in 1908 without regard to the balance of Arab representation and as well as the Party's activities that glorified Turkification policies. It would not be wrong to say that the Arab elite perceived the CUP as a Turkifying government. The leadership of the party was dominated by Turks as well as the officials who were appointed to replace Arabs in the provincial administration. Although the intentions of the CUP leaders were to centralize the government, not necessarily Turkify it, their policies caused important divisions for the Arab population to become dissatisfied with the regime.[36] As a reaction to this exclusion from power and the destruction of their demands and plans by the Young Turk's government, some Arab elite members began to consider alternatives to the CUP's brand of Ottomanism that planted the seeds of Arabism. Yet it was not an organized political movement for national independence. Their grievances were directed against the CUP regime which excluded them from their proper role within the Empire, not against the Ottoman state itself.

The modern schooling, especially the military modernization produced a group of Arab nationalist officers and intellectuals, who were later organized within associations, clubs and societies which formed the bases of the ideological

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[34] Aparajita Gogoi, and Gazi Ibdewi Abdulghafour, *Arab Nationalism: Birth, Evolution and The Present Dilemma*, New Delhi: Lancers Books, 1994, p. 93.

[35] Cleveland, *op.cit.,* p. 137-138.

[36] *Idem.*

developments in the Arab world. These developments reached their peak with the politicization of nationalism within the anti-Ottoman revolt of 1916-1918. Until these years, they expressed their demands for a decentralized administration and equality with the Turks within the Empire as they declared in the Arab National Congress of 1913. However, the Young Turks did not recognize their right for self-determination. Then they discarded their idea of local federalism and started to ask for total independence with the break out of World War I in 1914 as the other entities of the Empire demanded with the encouragement of European powers. The Arab Revolt of 1916, which will be examined in the next chapters, was a common fight towards a common goal, the independence of all Arab provinces and the creation of a united Arab state. It failed but strengthened the national consciousness by confirming those demands and it launched the Arab nation as a political entity. Finally, in the process of emergence of Arab nationalism, we saw the course of that nationalism in post-World War period with the untrue European promises concerning the Middle East region.

The Arab nationalist societies established in the first quarter of 1900 also played an important role in the development of the Arabian nationalism after 1908. Arabism manifested itself in the formation of variety of literary clubs and organizations established in Istanbul and throughout the Arab provinces. The twin standards of political protest and cultural affirmation became intermingled in the programs of these societies, which called for the recognition of Arabic as an official language, the appointment of Arabs to administrative posts within the Arab territories, and a greater political autonomy for all the Arab provinces which shows that Arabism was full prepared to accept Ottoman rule, but they wanted it to be decentralized.[37] In the next chapter the most important among these societies will be examined.

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[37] *Idem.*

2.4 Arab Nationalist Societies and Politicization of Arab Nationalism During the Second Constitutional Era

After the overthrow of Abdulhamid's reign with the Young Turk revolution in 1908, and with the beginning of some degree of political freedom, the first secret political and literary Arab societies started to appear. In 1908, Western educated Arab intellectuals living in Istanbul established *al-Muntada al-Adabi* (The Literary Club), which published a magazine bearing its name. This society was established as a simple literary club to publish gazettes, journals and reports about Arab feelings of freedom, but with its political activities it has been realized that this club was indeed a political group that implanted pan-Arabist feelings and spread pan-Arabic ideas to the Arab youth. Another Society, the *Jam'iyyat al-Ikha al-Amli al- Uthmani* (Society of Arab-Ottoman Brotherhood) was founded in September 1908. Its main principle was that although the Arabs should continue to live within the Ottoman Empire, they should have their own rights as a nationality, such as their own administrative and educational system. They also demanded that Arabic should be on equal footing with Turkish in schools in the regions inhabited by Arabs. [38]

The nationalist Turkification policies of the Young Turk administration, according to the Arab nationalist writings, meant to restrict the claims of various peoples in the Ottoman Empire (the people in the Balkans, as well as the Arabs) who were aspiring to liberation. As a result of this ideological change, from Ottomanism to Turkism, the society of Arab-Ottoman Brotherhood was dissolved eight months after its establishment. The Literary Club was also banned and Arab nationalists, who simply desired a national cultural autonomy within the Ottoman Empire, were limited and victimized.

Among the Arab secret societies, the *Jam'iyyat al umma al- 'Arabiyya al-Fatat* (The Young Arab Society) was the most important. It was founded in Paris in 1911 by Syrian students and graduates. Its members were almost entirely Muslims. It was founded in order to fix the problem of the underdevelopment of Arab people and

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[38] Tibi, *op.cit.,* p. 108.

increase the social, economic, political and cultural status of the Arabs to the level of developed countries.[39] The ultimate target was not to separate from the Ottoman Empire just as the other societies, but they planned to develop within the Ottoman Empire. *Al- Fatat* had an important role in the Arab national awakening movements; it was like a school which raises statesmen for the modern Middle East as well as its work for the freedom of the Arabs. George Antonius' words prove the importance of the society: "No other society did play such a determinative role in the history of national movements."[40]

Another organization, the *Jam'iyyat al-'Ahd* (The Society of the Covenant) was founded in Istanbul in 1913, as a successor to the *Qahtaniyya* Society, founded in 1909 again in Istanbul, part of whose organization had been undermined by treachery.[41] The *Qahtaniyya* defended the idea of the transformation of the Ottoman Empire to an Arab-Turkish federal state like the Austria-Hungarian Empire. The most important aims of the society were the progress of the Arabs in cultural, social and economic fields, to create equality between the Arabs and Turks under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, and to create a new Arab monarchy with its own local parliament, local government, with also Arabic as the official language. With these ideas, the society was rejected by the CUP because of the federal wishes of the society and the Party declared it as a destructive and separatist kind of organization.[42] The society was important because there were a high number of officers as well as civilians within its membership, who started to participate actively in the political arena of the Arabism movements.

There were disagreements among the *Qahtaniyya* members, and some of whom were concerned that the followers would submit complaints to the government about the activities of the society. Therefore, the society dissolved itself because of these internal conflicts. Many of the leaders and administrators were also sent to wars, thus it was difficult to fill up the administrative board.

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[39] *Ibid.,* p. 109-110.

[40] George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening,* Florida, Simon Publications, 2001, p. 112.

[41] Tibi, *op.cit.,* p. 109.

[42] Bilgenoğlu, *op.cit.,* p. 77-78.

While the Qahtaniyya contained officers and civilians, the *Jam'iyyat al-'Ahd* was composed entirely of Arab officers, under the command of the high-ranking Egyptian Aziz al- Misri.[43] The society was insisting on the recognition of education in their language, in Arabic. Like *al- Qahtaniyya* Society, the main aim of *al- 'Ahd* was the creation of an Arab-Turkish federal state. However, Albert Hourani asserts that the ultimate wish of the society was total freedom and separation from the Ottoman Empire.[44]

The society supported decentralization. We can say that this was the general attitude of Arab societies established between 1908 and 1914 and also of Arab policy makers. The members were against the CUP's Turkification policies.

Thus the *al-'Ahd* ranked next to *al-Fatat* as the most effective political organization; in 1914 it had 315 officers.[45] With the arrest of al-Misri, the society was dissolved and split into two branches; the Iraqi branch of *al Jam'iyyat al-Thawriyee* (the Arab Reformist Society) and as a successor of *al-'Ahd; al Jam'iyyat - us Suriyet'ul Arabiyye* (the Syrian Reformist Society). Although this society was secret, it had several public activities contrary to the traditional activities of the *Qahtaniyya* and *al-'Ahd.* The most important and effective activity of the Syrian Reformist Society was to provoke Arab people against Turks in order to establish a totally independent Arab state. It legitimized the ideas of Arab opposition and hostility against Turks.

In addition to these secret societies, the *Jam'iyyat al- Islahiyya* (The Reform Society) is also important and worth mentioning. It was founded in Beirut in 1913 and consisted mainly of Lebanese Christians and Muslims who favored Ottoman decentralization. There was also *al-Hizb al-Lamarkaziyya al-Idariyya al-Uthmaniyya* (The Ottoman Decentralization Party), founded in Cairo by the Syrian urban notables in 1912.[46] Its president was Rafiq al-Azm, one of the members of the al-Abid family probably the wealthiest and strongest family in Damascus. As seen from its name,

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[43] Tibi, *op.cit..*

[44] Bilgenoğlu, *op.cit.,* p. 91.

[45] Tibi, *op.cit.,* p. 110.

[46] *Idem.*

the party was defending decentralization in the framework of Ottomanism until 1914. With the Ottoman Empire joining World War I and subsequently the weakened power of the Empire, the society started to defend separatism and an independent Arab state. This society was in close contact with the other Arab societies, and indeed it played a unifying role among the Arab organizations.

To sum up, we can assert that those societies always uttered the feelings of pan-Arabism in cultural, social, economic and political areas. They always emphasized the "Arabness" of the people living under the Ottoman regime. They defended the same rights, same liberties as well as the other elements of the Empire, especially the Turks. But after all these efforts, we could not still witness 'a real eager' of separation or independence among the policies of those societies. The newly emerged Arabists had been loyal Ottomanists before 1914 or 1916.[47] The demands of Arabism of the Arabic speaking people, such as political decentralization, cultural autonomy, and the replacement of the CUP regime had existed within the dominant ideology of Ottomanism. During the period from 1908 to 1914, the majority of Arabs, both the elite and the population at large, whose emphasis was on Arab identity, were linked to continued loyalty to the Ottoman Empire, and the tiny minority of extreme Arab nationalists was calling for secession from the Empire. The wish for a total separation from the Empire and total independence started in 1913 with the Arab Congress and reached its peak with the big Arab Revolt in 1916. At this point in time, we can say that the policies of those societies helped and precipitated these separatist movements and also the creation of Arab nationalism. Just as the Turkification process, which has gained pace during the last years of the Ottoman Empire accelerated and triggered Arab Nationalism, the Arab movements during the early 1900s had also affected and accelerated the Turkish nationalism. While Arabs were revolting against the Ottoman Caliphate-Sultan in 1916, Turkish nationalists were going to imitate them and revolt against the Sultan after 1919.

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[47] Khalidi, *op.cit.,* p. 16.

2.4.1 The First Arab Congress, 1913

The Young Arab Society (*al- Fatat*), which was mentioned above, made a final effort to secure administrative decentralization within the framework of the Empire. There is no doubt that the Arab Congress was one of the most important activities of the Fatat. This secret society negotiated with another one, *al-Hizb al-Lamarkaziyya al-Idariyya al-Uthmaniyya* (The Ottoman Decentralization Party) and they initiated an Arab Congress in June 1913 with the support of France, which was able to maintain good relations with the Arab national movement. The Congress was an important initiative for Arab people living under the Ottoman Empire in order to destinate their own future. There had been many secret negotiations and meetings held by al-Fatat before the Congress but this meeting in 1913 was the most comprehensive and effective one for the process of early Arab nationalism.

The participants were carefully selected considering the equal division between the Muslims and Christians, aimed to preserve the identity of the whole Arab nation. They did not differentiate between Muslims and non Muslims; for them every Arabic speaker was an Arab. Attended by twenty-four delegates representing many Arab parties, the Congress adopted the platforms of the Decentralization Party and the committee of reform.[48] Muhammad al-Mahmasani, Abd al-Ghani al-Arisi, Sukru Ganem, Cemil Merdam, Avni Abd al-Ghadi, Na'um Mukarzal, K.T. Khairallah, Ahmad Tabarra, Alexander Ammun, Nadra Mutran, Charles Debbas, Najib Azouri and Dr. Said Kamil were the prominent Arab intellectuals of the Congress. And the chairman of the Congress was Abd al-Hamid Zahrawi.[49]

There were opposing reactions to the Congress from Ottoman Empire and also from some Arab people. The support of France for the Congress was criticized because of the interference of a foreign power in the interior affairs of the government. The CUP believed that this was a betrayal of the empire and will cause the external western power entrance to the region. The Arabs, especially the

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[48] Sydney Nettleton Fisher, *The Middle East, A History*, second ed., New York, Alfred A. Knopf Publisher, 1969, p. 354.

[49] Bilgenoğlu, *op.cit.,* p. 112.

Ottomans, were opposing the Congress by asserting that it was not representing the whole Arab's ideas and demands and it was actually accepting the French as a superior. They believed that this situation will offend the real central government of the Ottoman Empire and will create problems between. The common point of the whole reaction against the Congress was emanating from the place of the meeting. France was accepted as an eager and demanding country for the Syrian territory. Due to this situation, it was not a welcomed country by Arabs as well as the Ottoman Empire.

Arab participants tried to defend themselves by asserting that they still adhered to the ideology of Ottomanism. Their demands did not go beyond a decentralized administration, national cultural autonomy, and equality with Turks within the framework of a multinational constitutional monarchy. All the participants at the Conference agreed that the "Arab nation" only included the Arabic- speaking portion of the Ottoman Empire; they were not concerned with Egypt or other Arabic-speaking parts of North Africa. The Arab national movement, which the Congress represented, declared itself responsible only for the Ottoman Arabs and was not interested in the Arab regions outside the Empire as the chairman of the Congress Abd al-Hamid Zahrawi stated in his speech to a Parisian newspaper Le Temps.[50] Zahrawi also declared the aim of the Congress in this speech as "(…) to prevent the failure of Arab lands just as the European territories of the Ottoman Empire and to prevent the dual standards which exclude the Arabs.[51] The whole participants declared themselves ready to struggle to bring the Arab nation into being by means of a literary and reformist revolution.[52] All political beliefs and aims were articulated by all participants in the Congress.

Arabs declared their demands from the Ottoman Empire being the implementation of the reforms in differentiated areas and emphasized that they did not wish to separate from the Empire. The most important desires which came during the Congress were: the call for the introduction of reforms, the recognition of the

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[50] Tibi, *op.cit.,* p. 111.

[51] Bilgenoğlu, *op.cit.,* p. 186-187.

[52] Tibi, *op.cit.,* p. 112.

Arab people and the claim for its balanced representation in the central administration of the empire, decentralized administration for the Ottoman provinces, the recognition of Arabic as an official language of equal status with Turkish at the very least in Parliament and in the Arab provinces. They also requested that Arab soldiers of the Ottoman army shall not be required to serve in other regions except in time of war. The Arabs also tried to protect themselves with all of these demands from the side effects of a possible entrance of the Ottoman Empire to the World War I.

The CUP sent a delegation to the Congress which led by Mithad Sukru Bleda, the General Secretary of the party, in order to compromise the improvement of the reforms demanded by Arabs and also in order to discuss with Arab participants about the current situation and the future. At the end, the results of the Congress were ostensibly accepted by the Young Turks and they agreed to make an agreement with those early Arab nationalists and an Imperial Decree in August 1913 incorporated the declarations as stated policy in Arab provinces. However, the reforms remained unenforced.[53]

At the end of the Congress, many representatives of the CUP and the Young Turks opposed the aims and desires of the Arabs which they had previously agreed and when it finally came to the point of putting the provisions of the agreement into effect, the CUP was no longer prepared to recognize the right to Arab self-determination.[54] Those representatives were totally against this concept. In addition to this, with the entrance of Ottoman Empire to World War I on the side of Central Powers, the agreement had never been put into effect and the most prominent members of the Arab national movement, including a big number of the participants at the Arab Congress for example Zahrawi, its chairman, were arrested and executed during the war years of 1915 and 1916. Breaking the reform promises which were compromised during the Congress by the Ottoman administration frustrated the Arabs and caused the loss of Arab trust for the CUP whose authority was already loosened after the defeats of Tripoli and the Balkan wars. They felt that they had

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[53] Fisher, *op.cit.,* p. 354.-355.

[54] Tibi, *op.cit.,* p. 113.

been duped. This situation caused Arabs to change their policies and to demand Arab liberation.

The pre-1914 early Arab nationalists asserted that they only desire national cultural autonomy and equality within the framework of the Empire. The Congress was a national gathering and had no religious as well as separatist characteristics from the Ottoman Empire. The participants insisted on the changes to the existing political system. The first Arab Congress was an indicator of those desires. One of the most important dimensions of the Congress was, Arabs declared their desires as a unified voice for the first time. With the secret societies after 1908, they have started to announce their feelings and demands as different unions. There was no unity between them. With the Paris Congress, the separated Arab societies united and had the chance to submit their demands to the central government as a one unified voice for the first time. Although this situation which is unity for the first time was right and significant, according to Tibi, the Congress was showing a certain degree of immaturity and its aims were not very clear amongst the Arabs.[55] However, all the participants concurred in the acceptance of an Arab nation distinct from other nations. This would be considered as the first indicator and starter of Arab nationalism which will also lead to Iraqi nationalism in the long term.

2.4.2 The Great Revolt, 1916

The practical expression of the Arab demands for separatism found ground in the Arab revolt of 1916. It was the first organized movement of Arab nationalism emerging from the Arabian Peninsula led by Sharif Hussein of Mecca with the support of his sons; Faisal and Abdallah. It was very important that it included the Arab nationalist identity and also it had a unique position in Arab history in that it was the symbolic touchstone of Arab nationalism.[56]

The Ottoman Empire took part in the Middle Eastern scene of World War I, under the terms of the Ottoman-German Alliance in 1914. After that decision, the

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[55] *Idem.*

[56] Khalidi, *op.cit.,* p. 204.

Empire weakened day by day. First, even before the war, the Ottoman Empire had experienced separatist movements in the Balkans. The most violent storm broke out in Albania, when in the process of Turkification, the government took steps to enforce a decree forbidding the possession of arms. Albanians objected to a census, taxes and the appointment of the young men to suppress the revolts started in Yemen and Asir. The Albanian rebellion was quelled early in 1911 after diplomatic intervention by Montenegro and a grant of local autonomy. These concessions of autonomy gave hope to the other nationalities in the Balkans. Officers in Macedonia, Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia started to hope for the establishment of a similar regime during 1911 and 1912. All those decentralization processes and sacrifices had weakened the Empire. In February of 1913, war resumed and Janine, Edirne and Skodra fell to Greek, Bulgarian and Montenegrian forces. Meanwhile, the Greek navy defeated the Turkish forces in the Dardanelles and occupied many of the Aegean Islands. The Young Turks had lost almost all Ottoman possessions in Europe after the Balkan revolts and wars.[57]

In the chaotic World War environment, with impacts of those decentralization movements in Balkans, and also with the Ottoman policies of upholding the ban on the official use of the Arabic language and its teaching in schools, while arresting many Arab nationalist figures in Damascus and Beirut, the Arabs were further threatened by the construction of the Hedjaz Railway, connecting Damascus and Mecca, which promised to facilitate the mobility of Turkish troops into the Arab heartland.

The Arabs, with the encouragement and incitement of their new British and French allies in Egypt and Beirut decided to revolt against the Empire. Arab governors and semi-autonomous rulers, revolutionary societies of the Ottoman Arabs employed every means to gain independent positions. Imam Yahya in Yemen and Muhammad ibn al- Idrisi in Asir were the leaders of first Arab uprisings against the Empire. Shayks of Kuwait and Mohammerah and Sayid Talib Pasha of Basra, Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud, Ibn Rashid of the Shammar tribes and Shayk Ajami of the

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[57] Fisher, *op.cit.,* p. 347-348.

Muntafik tribes also rebelled but were not successful to the extent of those in Yemen and Asir because of rivalries and jealousies among these Arab leaders. The Young Turks were not successful in suppressing the revolts and in the end they reached an accord with the two, in Yemen and Asir, by granting them many powers and a liberal subsidy just as was the case in the Balkans. But all of those were just the sacrifices for saving the time for Ottoman Empire. It was only a question of time before Arab nationalism would flare into the open. World War I and the disturbances, confusion, influences of Balkan independencies, and promises it brought hastened the day of Arab revolt.[58]

The colonial powers which fought against the Ottoman Empire and its ally Germany provided wide support to the separatist movements. Sharif Hussein, the figure head of the revolt was appointed as the Sharif of Mecca in November 1908 after the Young Turks revolution. In the years before World War I, Ottoman policies of centralization increasingly threatened to limit Hussein's exercise of power in the Hedjaz for re-implementation of the vanished authority of the Young Turks over him. This situation created a coalescence of the ideology of Arabism. During the years 1908-1914, Sharif Hussein was considered to be an Ottoman loyalist by the Arabs, but at the same time he was believed to have begun to think of Arab interests in the War. As Ernest Dawn has pointed out, although Sharif Hussein had his own problems with the Ottoman authority, it was in his interest to act as the agent of the Ottoman rule in his relations with neighboring tribes.[59] However, with the increasing tension between Istanbul and Hedjaz, and with the threat to extend the Hedjaz Railway into Mecca and to impose the new Law of the Vilayets in March 1913, which would regularize and rationalize provincial government and destroy the special status and privileges of the Hedjaz, further demonstrated to Hussein the trend of Ottoman policy. He naturally reacted in ways designed to protect the traditional autonomy of the region and his own position. For this, the first well-known dialogue was realized between his son, Abdallah and Lord Kitchener, the British agent in Cairo in February 1914 which emphasized that Abdallah was guaranteeing his

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[58] *Ibid.,* p. 356-357.

[59] Khalidi, *op.cit.,* p. 209.

father's wish and he was stating that Hussein was open to suggestions of assistance from them for rebellion against Turks.[60] After this meeting, he hoped that Britain would throw its diplomatic pressure against the Ottoman centralization in Hedjaz by recognizing his independence from the Sultan. Confirming this, Britain supported the autonomy of Hedjaz, and used a terminology that also supported "Arab nationalism" in those meetings.

At the beginnings of the year 1914, the Young Turks understood that Hussein had consolidated his position with the tribes of the Hedjaz, and to forestall a violent revolt against the Empire with the helps of British, the central government acted to limit his authority. Prior to the break out of the revolt in June 1916, an army under the control of Jemal Pasha, an Ottoman viceroy and commander of the Fourth Army, maintained discipline and tried to stabilize the region. In 1915, arrests were made and eleven people were hanged in the main square of Beirut. A year later, in early 1916, about two hundred Arabs, especially members of well educated and well known prominent families were arrested and sentenced. Twenty-two were hanged in Beirut and Damascus. According to some writers, this last act fired the start of the Hussein's declaration of Arab independence culminating in the Great Arab Revolt.[61] But according to some of members of the CUP, this statement was not reflecting the truth. In the memories of Amir Shakiyp Arslan, one of the significant actors of the period, he said that "(…) it was not true that those sentences and arrests caused the revolt, Sharif Hussein's cooperation with British and his willingness to revolt against the Empire was an old story that was in his mind since the Abdulhamid period and was waiting for the right moment."[62] In addition to this, the Arabs decided to separate from the Empire since 1914 with the outbreak of the World War I and started to look for an ally in the region. According to this, it could be said that Sharif Hussein and his sons had already decided to establish an independent Arab state in those territories before 1916 by fighting with the Ottoman troops with the support of Britain. Therefore, Jemal Pasha's implementations would have been just co-reasons

[60] *Ibid.,* p. 210-211.

[61] Fisher, *op.cit.,* p. 366-367.

[62] Emir Şekib Arslan, *İttihatçı Bir Arap Aydının Anıları*, İstanbul, Klasik Yayınları, 2005, p. 191-192.

for the Revolt, surely they affected and hastened the process but the revolt did not start only due to these arrests and deaths.

Before examining the history and process of the Revolt, we should look to the relations between Britain and the regional countries, especially those located on the western shore of the Persian Gulf and the southern coasts of Arabia. The first steps for the cooperation between Britain and the Arabs started with the appointment of Lord Kitchener for the Ministry of War in August 1914. After this, with the replacement of Kitchener by Sir Henry McMahon in December 1914, the process gained pace and almost every single Arabian state signed a treaty of friendship with Britain, giving this big power the right of interference over their foreign relations in the future. Britain's protectorates, especially if they offer subsidies, were welcomed by the rulers of the Arab countries. One of the most important of these correspondences was the one between Sharif Hussein and Britain which will lead to the great revolt of 1916.

The political objectives of the Arabs were not to be realized, however, due to the conflicting promises made by the British to their wartime allies. The first of these came during 1915 in an exchange of ten letters between Sir Henry McMahon, Britain's High Commissioner in Egypt and Sudan, and Sharif Hussein of Mecca. Britain gave its word to support Arab independence if Hussein's forces revolted against the Turks in those letter exchanges from July 1915 till February 1916, in what became known as the "Hussein-McMahon Correspondence." These negotiations resulted in Britain promising, upon the successful conclusion of the war, an Arab state. The area of the state was to be fixed in the north by a line drawn eastward from Alexandrite to the Iranian frontier and thence southward to the Persian Gulf and was to include the entire Arabian Peninsula.[63] However, the British refused to pledge the rest without the consent of France. At this point, we can mention about the secret treaties between Britain and France which prevented Britain to act and promise lands freely to the Arabs.

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[63] Fisher, *op.cit.,* p. 369.

At the end, the Hussein- Mc Mahon correspondence should be regarded not as a negotiation between just two individuals but as a negotiation between representatives of two principals: the British government and the Arab people.[64] That correspondence showed clearly that in negotiating with Britain, the Sharif consciously adopted the language and terms of nationalism. He chose the exact words which emphasized the "Arab nationalism" and the "Islamic" character of their case in order to gain the support of "Muslim" Arabs because he was aware that personal ambition was not sufficient to realize the aims. He also had to gain the support of the Arab people.

The interests of the colonial powers became more important than promises made to the Arabs. While accepting the principle of Arab independence mentioned in the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence, the Allies were engaged in formulating their famous secret treaties, dividing both the Turkish and Arab parts of the Ottoman Empire among themselves. With the outbreak of the war in 1914, Russia pressed Britain and France for Istanbul and the straits and for considerable hinterland on each side. After many diplomatic exchanges, Russia was unwillingly promised in March 1915, possessions of her very old seek.[65] In exchange, British and French rights in Asiatic Turkey would be defined by special agreement, and the neutral zone in Iran was included in the British sphere of influence. The Sykes-Picot Agreement, signed by Britain, France, and with the connivance of Russia in April 26, 1916, divided the area into zones of permanent colonial influence. The agreement allotted Russia the already promised straits area, the vilayets of Erzurum, Trabzon, Van and Bitlis. France was granted the coastal strip of Syria northward from Tyre, the vilayets of Adana, Sivas and Mardin. And finally, Britain obtained Haifa and Acre on the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia from Baghdad to the Persian Gulf. The area of Syria from Damascus and Aleppo eastward through Mosul and the Iranian frontier was consigned to French protection while the region from Kirkuk to Akaba and from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf became a British colony.[66] To sum up, the

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[64] *Idem.*

[65] *Idem.*

[66] *Ibid.,* p. 370.

agreement recognized French interests in Greater Syria and northern Iraq, while accepting British designs on a belt of influence from the Mediterranean to the Gulf to protect its trade and communications links with the Indian subcontinent. Russia was promised free liberty of action in the Balkans as a reward for its consent. This secret agreement was signed only a few months after the Hussein- McMahon correspondence and apparently it contradicted the promises made to Sharif Hussein of Mecca. It should be keep in mind that the Arabs were not aware of the deception until late in 1917, when the Bolsheviks published the secret agreements found in the archives.

Among all developments during the process which paved the way for the revolt, maybe the most important one was the imposition of a British embargo on trade in the Red Sea. After all calculations concerning the immediate provisioning of the Hedjaz seemed crucial and Sharif Hussein of Mecca proclaimed his personal rule in Hedjaz and revolt was declared in June, 10 1916.[67] With the support of British troops, Hussein captured almost all of the Arab territories of the Empire: first they took Jeddah, Taif and Medina and then Aqaba, Jerusalem and Aleppo in the next step. The revolt weakened the Ottoman Empire's power during the World War I.

Hence, the ideology of Arabism was not espoused by the Hashemites until it became of particular use to them with particular audiences, especially in the dialogues with European powers. Until the Revolt of 1916, the Arab struggle for power with central Ottoman regime was not directed at the destruction of that regime, nor at the independence. The Arabs had a national sentiment but did not have the self-confidence to separate and needed a powerful protector and support for themselves in the region. With the appearance of a new protector; Britain, and the Hashemites suddenly had an alternative: they could trade on their loyalty to the Ottoman Empire that they had imagined all the time or, with Britain temporarily willing to fill the material gap, they could break with the Empire and build a new framework of support: an Arab state including territories also from outside the

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[67] Khalidi, *op.cit.,* p. 213.

Hashemite province. The creation of this state would be legitimized by the ideology of Arab nationalism.[68]

Sharif Hussein's aim in implementing the Great Arab Revolt was to create a single independent and united Arab state consisting of Aleppo (Syria) to Aden (Yemen), based on the ancient traditions and culture of the Arab people, the maintenance of Islamic ideals and the full protection and inclusion of ethnic and religious minorities. Arab nationalists in the Fertile Crescent and the Arabian Peninsula found in the Hashemite principles of the Revolt the leadership that could realize their desires, and thus united around them. In addition to this, it would not be wrong to say that the Great Revolt was the opposition of the Arabs towards the CUP, which was mainly based on the opposition towards the Turks. This opposition was even more obvious in Hedjaz among Sharif Hussein and his entourage. The Arabs believed that they were going to become independent and the only strong representative of Islam, taking over the succession of Islam. This type of Islamic-oriented propaganda dominated the Sharif's proclamations during the revolt. Arabs were convinced that they were going to receive huge support from the West, once they left the rule of the Ottoman Empire and established their own independent Arab state. Although, their plans did not materialize and they lost their control of the "Western States" in which they invested. They lost their sovereignty, and their land was divided into parts. The Arabs, who declared war on the Ottoman Empire in 1916, were colonized by Britain and France until the mid 20th century. Contrary to expectations, the independency efforts rendered them mandates. As we shall see, this situation was one of the reasons which led to the building of Iraqi Nationalism which will be discussed in the next chapters.

As previously mentioned, until that year, Ottomanism, with its Islamic associations, remained the dominant ideology in the Arab-speaking territories. For all the attention that Jamal Pasha's repression and Sharif Hussein's revolt later received, they did not detach the majority of Arabs from their Ottoman loyalties during the war years. However, by the end of the war in 1918, Ottomanism became invalid and

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[68] *Ibid.,* p. 214.

irrelevant. Now a new question was posed: Which forces of political loyalty and cultural identity could replace it? The answer is thought to be the Arab independence and nationalism.

By 1918, the coalescence between Turks and Arabs which started in 1516 came to an end. With the end of Ottoman rule, the Lebanese coast was occupied by French troops as early as 1918. The Hashemite Emir Faisal proclaimed himself King of Syria near the end of 1918, but was soon dethroned by French troops. However, his demand at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference for independence throughout the Arab world was rejected by the colonial powers. In 1920 and for a brief period, Faisal assumed the throne of Syria and his elder brother Abdallah was offered the crown of Iraq by the Iraqi representatives. However, the British government ignored the wish of the Iraqi people. Shortly afterwards, the newly-founded League of Nations awarded Britain the mandates over Transjordan, Palestine and Iraq. France was given the mandate over Syria and Lebanon, but had to take Damascus by force, removing King Faisal from the throne to which he had been elected by the General Syrian Congress in 1920. [69]

As a result, the failure of Hashemite leadership of the Arab revolt of 1916 was full of betrayals. That revolt first brought the Hashemites and Arab nationalism together. But what was vital for their reputations as nationalists was the nature of their cooperation with Britain after World War I. Hence, the development of Arab nationalism rested less on the revolt itself than on the imposition of the mandates just afterwards.[70] Even after 1920, Sharif Husain continued to wait in vain for the fulfillment of the promises which were offered to him by Britain. In 1924, after the success of the Kemalist revolution in Turkey, and the dissolution of the caliphate, he declared himself as Caliph of all Muslims. However, shortly afterwards, he was driven out of Mecca by the Wahhabis.[71]

We tried so far to analyze early Arab nationalism and the reasons behind it in a historical perspective. For the development of Arab nationalism, we can consider

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[69] Tibi, *op.cit.,* p. 115.

[70] Khalidi, *op.cit.,* p. 219.

[71] Tibi, *op.cit.,* p. 115.

such motives as the CUP's strict and discriminative politics and CUP inspired centralization, Turkish nationalism, Western influence, British existence and Ottomanism among the reasons for the emergence of Arab awakening. But special to Iraq in the region, the reason of early Arabism was the opposition to the foreign, and in particular British, expansion. Mahmoud Haddah finds this more important than any anti-centralization tendency. The opposition to the CUP particularly arose because the Ottoman authorities were perceived as being insufficiently active in the defense of Iraq against foreign powers, and they were even accused of complicity in facilitating foreign penetration.[72] The resulting stimulation of local patriotism in turn contributed to the growth of Arabism in Iraq.[73] The dominant character of the 1909 Episode in Iraq was neither anti-Turk nor anti-CUP It was nationalistic and anti-European on the popular plane. But the second phase of the manifestation of the anti-European pattern before World War I in Iraq occurred in 1913. In this case, it was directly linked to the movement of early Arab nationalism.[74] Nevertheless, this anti-British aspect of the Iraqi version of Arab nationalism was not incompatible with Ottomanism. In fact, Ottomanism was an integral part of the basic ideology of the mainstream Arab nationalists before World War I in Iraq. Decentralization and autonomy -not separation and independence- were thought to be the way out.[75]

In order to analyze the development of nationalism in a country, we should start by analyzing the formation of that region in a historical perspective. Next Chapter will focus more on Iraqi nationalism and its development process and will seek to analyze the state-formation process in Iraq under the British Mandate period between 1914 and 1932, under the light of the progresses outlined in this Chapter.

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[72] Khalidi, *op.cit.,* p. xi.

[73] *Ibid.,* p. xiv.

[74] *Ibid.,* p. 129.

[75] *Ibid.,* p. 138- 139.

CHAPTER 3

THE BRITISH MANDATE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF IRAQ
DURING 1914-1932

When Europe stumbled into the war in 1914, so too did Great Britain. The gravity and dimension of the World War was very heavy and Britain did not experience before that many changes had occurred in the internal and external politics of the country. With the new government led by Prime Minister Lloyd George, British foreign policy started to change due to the new alliances of the war. France was the cooperative ally which had similar imperial ambitions over the same territories. The Middle East was one of them.

The British had no desire to have Ottomans as enemies and they did not wish to see the collapse of the Empire during their relations before 1914. Yet they were not seeking the Ottomans as loyal allies. The British had not perceived any threat from the Turks. Even that at the beginnings of the World War I, the Ottomans were pro-German however, British were still keeping the same distance with her future hostile; with the Ottoman Empire. When the Ottoman Empire joined the War on the side of the Central Powers, Britain realized the gap of alliance in the Middle Eastern region which started immediately to develop a new "Eastern Policy", which foresees to develop relations with Arabs. Indeed, in their nineteenth century pursuit of naval control, and securing their transportation and communication links to India, the British had already moved into the region. They had not sought to destroy the Ottoman Empire. As long as they maintained a control over coastal regions, they were quite satisfied to leave interior regions well alone.[76] But over the years, new circumstances occurred and the British began to work against the Turks in order to

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[76] David G. Lamb, "*The British Mandate in Iraq: The Reasons for Its Failure, and the Concomitant Results on That Country, 1920-1932,*" Master Thesis, Faculty of California State University Dominguez Hills, Spring 2007, p. 5.

save their interests. Indeed, the British were already aware that their French and Russian allies held designs on Ottoman lands.

In the process of developing its Eastern Policy, the Lloyd George government had some critical decisions like the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence followed by Arab Revolt which were mentioned in former chapters. Although all those decisions were taken for the best reasons, they unfortunately created vital problems in the region for the future.

The British Empire developed a time in the world in which quick communication was not possible. In order to solve this quick communication problem, Britain created agencies dealing with its own local issues.[77] One of the most important and powerful ones were the British East India Company which brought the British into the region of the Persian Gulf. Company established a trading port at Basra in early 1720s and spread the British influence throughout Gulf region.[78]

The Middle East region was remained underdeveloped under the Ottoman regime but starting from the beginnings of the nineteenth century, Europeans, especially Britain were becoming increasingly aware of the region's potential strategic and commercial importance. Britain already controlled the Gulf region and now saw Iraq as a gateway to India, and an important mandate. All the routes leading to India should be safeguarded and this policy explains the reasons behind British attention on Mesopotamia, on Iraq apart from any additional strategic or commercial benefits that this country might offer. Britain would like to protect the trade routes to India because in 1904 India was the largest consumer of British goods [79] and perhaps for this reason it was a principal concern of the British government. As well as trade, strategic and commercial advantages of the region, oil was another important enticing factor for the interest of the Western powers over the region. Oil was discovered in Egypt in 1869, in Persia in 1908 and thirty years later an even more fertile well was discovered in Kuwait. These and the other many discoveries of oil in

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[77] *Ibid.,* p. 12-13.

[78] *Idem.,* see also Ahmed Mustafa Abu Hakima, *The Modern History of Kuwait*, London, Luzac&Co., 1983, p. 15.

[79] Geoff Simons*, Iraq: From Sumer to Saddam*, New York, St. Martin's Pres, 1994, p. 183.

the region ensured that those countries, including Iraq, would for long be the focus of imperial ambitions.

The importance of protecting British India was never in doubt. It was to this defense that the whole British military and naval machine was heavily geared and it believed that "Britain would remain the world's greatest power as long as it ruled over India."[80] The India Office was very powerful in that it gained position in the cabinet and also it was very successful. In fact, it was the India Office which was initially behind events in Mesopotamia when war broke out in 1914.

With the opposition of the British against the Ottoman Empire which entered the war besides Central Powers, this office took some initiatives in the region and seized Basra by Anglo-Indian Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force (MEF) in 1915. According to Charles Tripp:

> "Initially planned by the British government of India as pre-emptive move to protect interests in the Persian Gulf, the capture of Basra began a process that ended in British occupation of the three provinces of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul by the end of 1918. These actions laid the foundations for the establishment of the Sate of Iraq, and it is from this period that the history of the State begins." [81]

Although MEF was very effective in the region, as we saw the in the example of the conquer of Basra, the armies of British India Office could not capture the province of Baghdad on their own until 1917 due to the distances and issues affecting communications etc. Therefore, Britain decided to seize a second agency, namely the Arab Bureau in Cairo. The Arab Bureau was more flexible and autonomous than the Indian one. In this regard, the Arab Bureau's ability to act freely was facilitated by prior contacts with Arabs who had approached the Office in Cairo to demand British assistance for their own desires, just as was the case in the Great Revolt of 1916 which we examined in former chapters. The new Bureau's troops completed the capture of Baghdad in March 1917 after it started in April 1915. They also occupied Kirkuk by defeating the Ottoman 6th army in 1918. And then when they benefited from the weakness of the Empire because of the Armistice

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[80] Liora Lukitz, *A Question in the Middle East: Gertrude Bell and the Making of Modern Iraq,* New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p. 11.

[81] Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq,* New York, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 31.

of Mudros at the end of the war, British troops captured almost all Ottoman territories in Mesopotamia including Mosul. The Ottoman governor protested that Mosul was not a part of Mesopotamia but for reasons and the conditions which will be mentioned later, the Ottomans had to leave Mosul in 1918, establishing an armistice line at the northern border of this province.

Arab connections with the Bureaus resulted in two very important things for the long term development of Iraq and the Middle East: the Hussein- McMahon Correspondence and the relationship between one of the members of Arab Bureau T. E. Lawrence and Faisal, Sharif Hussein's son. As mentioned earlier, the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence was interpreted by the Hashemites as promising them wide territories of the Middle East for their own foreseen state. Its significance in 1915 and 1916, as Lamb stressed, was that it gave impetus to the Cairo Bureau to sell a strategy to the government in London. This strategy was to attack Turkey and due to this, weaken the German power which was centered in the idea of the Great Arab Revolt.[82] Soon after, Cairo became more and more powerful and effective than Delhi and it took the advantage in the region. This resulted in very important future prospects for Iraq: first of all it established a relationship between Lawrence and Faisal as mentioned ealier, and secondly it brought another key player to the region, Gertrude Bell, an officer of the Arab Bureau. She was transferred from Delhi to Basra in order to arbitrate between Cairo and Delhi[83] and acted as a competent expert in the formation process of Iraq and she also became a strong advocate for Iraqi self-government under British tutelage.

Among the diversity of the Iraqi people, some concerns started to be felt against the unavoidable strengthening British power over the region. The great majority of the Arab people was disquieted with the struggle between the British and Ottoman forces. They were not supporting the Ottoman rule in their territory but they were neither supporting nor welcoming the new colonizing ruler, Great Britain. In some areas of Mesopotamia, counter feelings and movements started to appear in early 1918. A few months after the British had established their control over Najaf;

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[82] Lamb, *op.cit.,* p. 16.

[83] Lukitz, *op.cit.,* p.110.

the Society of Islamic Revival (*Jam'iyya al-Nahda al Islamiyya*) was established in Najaf, bringing notables, clerics and tribal sheiks together with the aim of defending Islam against the British and also destroying the administrative control of British over their city.[84] Similarly, in the Kurdish areas, the British were not also welcomed. After the capture of Kirkuk by the British troops in 1918, Great Britain was surprised with the uprising full of demands for independent Kurdistan in May 1919 by prominent sheiks led by Sheik Mahmud Barzinji. This uprising was suppressed and the Sheikh was arrested but this was not the end of outbreaks of revolts and disobediences in Kurdish areas.

Particularly in Baghdad, in the central regions of the three provinces, Arab people started to be cautious against the British power because they were aware of the secret treaty, Sykes-Picot which was planning to divide the former Ottoman provinces between Britain and French. This situation was countered by the Anglo-French declaration of 1918 which promised self-government to these provinces but still there was fear in the hearts of people. Actually, the self-government system was the first aim of Iraqi people and in order to realize this wish, the Iraqi branch of *al-Ahd al- Iraqi* was created in 1918, drawn almost entirely from the ranks of the Sunni Arab officers. For its members, the ultimate goal was the independence of three Ottoman provinces: Basra, Baghdad and Mosul within a framework of Arab unity.

During the war, British civil administration had grown, reflecting the immediate desire for order and incorporating a distinctive set of ideas and practices in the Middle Eastern region, shaped largely by the experience of administration in India. This brought the idea of British administrative system by offices in the area and British political officers were stationed throughout the provinces, backed by British-staffed departments in Baghdad which already treated the three provinces as a single administrative unit in order to create direct rule[85] and the British had established a high commissionary system in Iraq which would provide government and direction in the absence of a clear policy from London. It was a combination of direct and indirect rule: the enterprise was controlled by British-staffed ministries in

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[84] Tripp, *op. cit.,* p. 33.

[85] *Ibid.,* p. 36-37.

Baghdad, but British political officers in the provinces depended upon local community leaders to guarantee social order and to collect revenues. The British central administration was headed by a civil commissioner. Sunni Arab or Arabised Turkish administrative and military elite of the former Ottoman state were mainly excluded from these administrative arrangements. A distinct British imperial order began to emerge, centered in Baghdad, step by step penetrating all levels of society and appearing to strengthen the British interests.[86] In order to consolidate their direct rule, the British started to abolish all former Ottoman entities. They abolished institutions such as Ottoman elected municipal councils, and depended instead on the political officers who worked directly through local notables on whom they relied to maintain order. British policy was instrumental in shaping the tribal hierarchies and units which constituted the natural order and traditions of the society. This policy was realized by the implementation of the *Tribal Civil and Criminal Disputes Regulation* (based on the Government of India Act of the same name and later to be encoded into Iraqi law in 1924.)[87] With this regulation, tribal sheiks had gained power to settle all disagreements with and between the members of their tribe and also to charge them with collecting taxes on behalf of the government. According to Tripp, and also to some other authors, this was showing that Great Britain was paving the way for the merger of Iraq directly into the British Empire.[88] The first British High Commissioner to Iraq, Colonel Arnold T. Wilson, who was "a quintessential civil servant, educated in the imperialist tradition of the "white man's burden"[89] was against this idea. He believed that continued British control over the region was vital and Iraq should not be prepared for a self- government but should be ruled by Britain. The only thing that Wilson managed to do in the spirit of nation-building was to unite Iraqi people in their abhorrence for the British.[90] Contrary to

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[86] Charles Tripp, "Iraq: The imperial precedent," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, January 2003.

[87] Tripp, *A History of Iraq,* p. 37.

[88] *Idem.*

[89] Efraim Karsh and Inari Karsh, *Empires of the Sand: The Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East, 1789-1923,* Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 291.

[90] Lukitz, *Ibid.,* p. 132.

this belief, Gertrude Bell, his oriental secretary was supporting the Iraqi self-government under British guidance and for some of the other rulers in London this was logical. Thus they were concerned because of the cost of direct rule to British Treasury. Bell was convinced that Arab nationalism was developing under an unstoppable momentum. She believed that this situation meant that the British should start to cooperate with largely urban and Sunni nationalists and Shi'i clerics and tribal sheiks to modernize the country.[91]

3.1 Paris Peace Conference and San Remo Agreement

The Paris Peace Conference was the meeting of the Allied victors in World War I to set the peace terms for Germany and other defeated nations, and to deal with the empires of the defeated powers following the Armistice of 1918 which took place in Paris in 1919 and involved diplomats from more than 30 countries. They met, discussed and came up with a series of treaties (Peace of Paris Treaties) in an attempt to forge a lasting peace throughout the world. The most important results included a harsh punitive peace that declared Germany guilty, weakened it militarily, and required it to pay all the costs of the war to the winners. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was also divided and new states were created. Secondly, with the entrance of the United States to the World War I, President Wilson brought new concepts to the international government and imperialism. The Conference created the League of Nations which President Wilson brought with him. The British government under Lloyd George supported this new approach and decided to implement the same system in the territories they already occupied. The idea of League of Nations Mandates for territories of the defeated powers in the aftermath of the Peace Treaty of Versailles in 1919 was based on the principle that these territories should eventually become independent, self-governing nation-states but under the guidance of the Allies.

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[91] Tripp, *op.cit.,* p. 39.

Although the Middle East was only a small part of the total settlement, many important decisions affecting the fate of the region in the conference were taken. The big three, Britain, France and United States, kept major decision in their hands; but hosts of others had greater personal or national interests in the Middle East. One of them was Prince Faisal who came to Paris to represent the Arabs which shows the importance of the conference for them. Faisal expected Britain to abide by her promises given to the Arabs for their national state especially during the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, and demanded independence throughout the Arab world. This was rejected by the colonial powers.

This idea of League of Nations Mandates for territories of the defeated powers created fear among the Ottoman people. It was foreseeing a European imperial rule in the region in other words. These fears were reinforced with the award of the mandate for Iraq to Great Britain at the San Remo Conference in April 1920. The San Remo Conference was an international meeting of the post-World War I Allied powers, held in San Remo, Italy, from 19 to 26 April 1920. It determined the League of Nations Mandates for the administration of the former Ottoman-ruled lands of the Middle East.

No permanent decisions regarding the Middle East could be reached in Paris in 1919, and the signing of a peace treaty for the region was as uncertain as before. Questions concerning the Middle East were dominantly lying between Britain and France. Meanwhile occupation armies governed the region and the people especially the Arabs became restless waiting for peace.

Britain was the master of Mesopotamia with an army from Mosul to the Persian Gulf besides controlling Egypt, Palestine and Lebanon. Official British policy was set to hang on as much of the occupied area as possible and to make the Middle East a definite part of the Empire. Both Britain and France were claiming mandates for their administration in Syria and Mesopotamia, while they agreed to recognize the provisional independence of those regions. France wanted to govern Syria directly by enforcing the French Mandate of Syria while Britain wanted to establish its own mandatory regime in Palestine and Iraq.

However, there were some concerns and some progress changed the equities in the region like elections of Faisal as king of Syria and Abdallah as king of Iraq by the Arab National Congress in Damascus. Growing tensions in Baghdad, insurrection in Egypt and the growing ambitions of France over the region drove Britain to realize that a regulation for the Middle East was urgent and important.

One of the critical issues urging a treaty between those two countries revolved around the Mosul oil. The Turkish Petroleum Company, whose shares were divided seventy-five percent British and twenty-five percent German, obtained in 1914, a few weeks before the war, a concession to exploit the oil of Mosul. The Sykes-Picot Agreement assigned Mosul to France as mentioned before. However, in 1918 Britain started to press the French to allow Mosul to be attached to Mesopotamia which meant under the control of Britain. Therefore, in order to discuss all issues mentioned above, negotiations started in the San Remo Conference and were finalized with the agreement. Oil, pipelines and mandates issues were decided and Britain received the mandate for Palestine and Iraq, while France gained control of Syria including present-day Lebanon.[92]

3.2 The Revolt of 1920

With the principles adopted in the conference, Britain created its mandate over Iraq, comprising the three Ottoman provinces of Baghdad, Basra, Mosul, apparently clearing the way for the British to set up a ruling Council of State, composed largely of British officials, with Iraqis in strictly subordinate positions.[93] The government decided to build an Iraqi state in order to maintain its global influence and control at minimum costs, financially and militarily on the basis of this new mandate concept. This decision was seem as the ideal solution for the British government which was dealing with the increased usage of public expenditures in 1919-1920 and also the alarm in government about the cost of the empire.[94]

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[92] Fisher, *op.cit.,* p. 376-380.

[93] Tripp, *op.cit.,* p. 41.

[94] Tripp*, Iraq: The imperial precedent.*

This set up has triggered the feeling of uprising among Sunni and Shi'i communities against the British administration. A coalition began to form among the people who were afraid of incorporation into the British Empire. Another secret society, *Haras al- Istiqlal* (The Independence Guard) was formed and like al-*Ahd al-Iraqi*, it also supported the independence of Iraq. The difference from the Ahd was that the majority of the members of the Guard were Shi'i. Many meetings were arranged among these communities, Shi'i ulema, tribal sheiks of the mid- Euphrates, Sunni officials, secret societies' members etc. in order to discuss the current situation, the possibility of acting against British forces and to produce a strategy against their rule. In the Shi'i city of Karbala, Ayatollah al-Shirazi, who had become the leading Shi'i mujtahid in Iraq after the death of Ayatollah Yazdi in 1919, [95] published a fatwa declaring that service in the British administration was illegal. Finally, at the beginning of 1920s many, people started to be mobilized and a protest started in Baghdad, the castle of British power. This situation was very important in that, for the first time members of the two sects;: Sunnis and Shi'is came together in order to cooperate for a shared goal; the Iraqi independence. But not all of the population was supporting these separatist revolutionary ideas. Many Sunni notables and ulema in Baghdad were not satisfied with this new type of politics, unification attempts between Sunni's and Shi'is which enhances the tribal and Shi'i's power at the governmental level. They did not want to jeopardize their safe and secured situation by participating in such ambiguous movement of uprising. Thus the tribal sheiks of the regions of Kut and Amara refused to join the revolt and also worked against it.[96]

The British were totally against the idea of separatism and the total autonomy of Iraq. They wanted to pursue their policy of limited self-rule for Iraq under their tutelage. In order to suppress those newly bloomed nationalist feelings, Britain gave a degree of autonomy to some leaders who were against the revolt and enlarged their share of benefit from the privileges which they had enjoyed when they were under the Ottoman rule. But we should keep in mind that, although there were oppositions

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[95] Tripp, *A History of Iraq,* p. 43.

[96] *Ibid.,* p. 44.

from some sects of the population, Arab nationalism was developing as an unstoppable momentum as we mentioned before.

At the end of June 1920, an armed revolt broke out and gained remarkable support amongst Arab people. British troops arrested many tribal sheiks in the mid-Euphrates region believing that they could suppress any rebellion. But contrary to all expectations, it created more furor among people and triggered a number of events. The revolt gained impetus and strengthened and spread especially in the mid-Euphrates region as well as in Baghdad. However, they could not gain power and fight at the desired level, and it failed in the end. The British succeeded in regaining the control of all areas by the end of the October 1920 and with the surrender of Najaf and Karbala the revolt was finally over.

The revolt was important for Shi'is because there was a strong religious element. For many Shi'i in that area "nationalism meant the erection once again of an Islamic State with the priesthood in their rightful position"[97]. The Shi'i ulema played a leading role in mobilizing tribes and sheiks by issuing fatwas against the British rule. But there were grievances against the increasing power of Shi'is among some communities as mentioned above. Also many of the tribes and sheiks were alienated by the high level of taxes and in the cities inflation rates were high. People were seeking Ottoman days' prospect and richness. The military had also occupied many of the houses of notables. Post-war retrenchment resulted in the dropping of some infrastructural projects. In short, the insurrection in Iraq was aimed against this ongoing occupation of the country, and it was a general reaction to the realities of foreign occupation, sparked off by evidence of apparent British military weakness in Mosul and given a crusading spirit by the clerics.[98] Still the revolt had some weaknesses. First of all, contrary to the expectations and triggering events, there was little support for the uprising in main towns like Baghdad, Basra even Mosul where the Syrians were expecting to find strong support. Secondly, there was no national figure to lead and inspire the whole community. The Hashemite Faisal was perceived

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[97] David Kenneth Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East 1914-1958,* New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 87.

[98] *Ibid.,* p. 86-87.

as someone alien, someone from out of the region, and thus he could not be a real leader for whole Arabs. In the end he was not welcomed.

The costs were really too high for both sides at the end of the revolt. It took the British several months, and cost thousands of lives of both British and Iraqis, to suppress the revolt and restore Baghdad's control. Approximately 6.000 Iraqi insurgents and 500 British and Indian soldiers lost their lives. The financial cost of the military occupation and of the Revolt for the British government was also very high. Thus the government went aboard major post-war savings. This was also proof of need of changes in the British policy over the region in order to pay less for an effective control of this mandate. This policy change will lead to the establishment of a new form of an Iraqi state, to be examined in the next chapters.

It was not just a revolt against Britain, but it was also a socio-economic revolt of people who were oppressed in their homeland for a long time. The revolt was not successful in driving the British from Iraq but it had some important consequences. First, it led to a campaign in the British press which questioned the wisdom of British involvement in Iraq.[99] Second, this costly revolt made Britain to change in their method of controlling the country. In crushing the insurgency, London decided to reorganize its relations with Iraq, establishing an Iraqi monarch as a ruler of an independent British protectorate. The ideal solution was to set up a client indigenous state whose rulers could claim to be in some sense independent but which also recognized the benefits of underlying British influence and would accept some limitation on their sovereignty. This would probably reduce the hostility against the British presence and would also make it possible to reduce the military expenditures for Britain. Now the question which remained was how to build an Iraqi state from the wreckage of three Ottoman provinces and to find a credible king both to take the chair of his people and gain their support while allying with the British as a mandate power.

Most probably, the most important dimension of the revolt was that for Iraqis it became part of the founding myth of Iraqi nationalism, however remote this idea

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[99] Lukitz, *op.cit.,* p. 136.

may have been in the minds of the most participants. It was to be claimed by different groups of Iraqis and used to assert their own roles in the foundation of the state, privileging their particular ideas about the meaning, identity and interests of the new Iraqi political community. And also the events that happened before the revolt showed that Sunnis and Shi'is would cooperate in pursuit of a national issue. This shows that an Arab nationalist feeling had started to settle down in Arab people's minds without considering the sects or differences which were seeking to unite the society.

In October 1920, Sir Wilson was replaced by Sir Percy Cox as the High Commissioner of Iraq and the chief instrument of British policy. Contrary to Wilson's policies, he was insisting that the British government should carry out a complete and a rapid transformation of the existing administration in order to end the rebellion and to reduce British Mandate costs. Cox believed that the Iraqis should govern themselves. Upon his arrival in Baghdad, he stated that he would like to set up an Iraq for the purpose of setting up an Arab government under the supervision of Great Britain.[100] His task was to modify Britain's role in the country in order to conform to the new international norms and to the government's pressing need to reduce expenditure in line with its weakened strategic and economic position. Cox had to find a way of creating a government which would publicly transfer power to Arab politicians and opening it up to international inspection while legalizing Britain's position under the Mandate regime.[101] He believed that the first thing to be done was to create an Iraqi state to replace the current military occupation.[102] In fact, Cox had no intention of losing control of Iraq and these expansions were just a matter of creating a façade country. He accepted the presidency of an appointed Council of Ministers working under British supervision under the *Naqib* (Sunni religious leader, keeper of the shrine) of Baghdad, Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Kailani, with a number of carefully selected notables and leading sharifians as

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[100] Lamb, *op.cit.,* p. 19.

[101] Toby Dodge, "The British Mandate in Iraq, 1914-1932," *The Middle East Online: Series 2: Iraq 1914-1974*, a Gale Digital Collection.

[102] Fieldhouse, *op.cit.*, p. 88.

ostensible heads of the main departments of the new government. The Council planned an electoral law for calling a Constituent Assembly which would draw up a constitution and also the creation of a national army was planned.[103] In November 1920, the government was formed, headed by Naqib and twenty one eminent Iraqis from all three old provinces of the Ottoman Empire. As usual, Sunni Arabs were predominated again by holding the most important posts that old Sunni-dominated order of ancient Ottoman times was re-established. Britain supported the Sunni Iraqis while ignoring the rest of the majority of the country and this situation created the alienation of many Iraqis, especially the disadvantaged groups.

Cox pretended creating an 'autonomous' state but indeed the ultimate power was still the British rule. The High Commissioner had a right of veto on all Council's policy proposals and also each Arab officer had a British advisor who was appointed by and was responsible to the High Commissioner. To sum up, the nominal differentiation between the two Commissioners, Wilson and Cox was not actually reflecting the truth. The instant creation of an Iraqi state by Cox was largely a deception.

3.3. Enthroning Faisal and the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty

Administratively, the new Iraqi state began to take shape but still remaining was the question of who will be the new ruler of the country. Iraq should import a king as many of the new states of Eastern Europe did in and after 1919. Large promises were given to the Hashemite family during the Hussein- McMahon Correspondence and 1916 Arab revolt. Now it was reasonable to select a king from among the sons of Hussein: Abdallah or Faisal. Faisal had become the key actor of the Arab Revolt and had just been deposed from Syria after the French occupation in 1920 and also had experience of international affairs through his negotiations in Paris. Thus he was suitable to be appointed as the new king of Iraq. In order to take the last decision, the Cairo Conference was held in March 1921 chaired by Winston

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[103] *Ibid.,* p. 88-89.

Churchill with participation of main service chiefs in the Middle East region: Sir Percy Cox for Iraq, Sir Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner for Palestine, T.E. Lawrence, Gertrude Bell and Jafar al-Askari, the only representative and the leading member of the Sharifian Iraqis who cooperated with Britain.[104] In the Conference, Amir Faisal of the Hedjaz was appointed as a king of Iraq and the evolution of political power to a cabinet made up mainly of Sunni Arab former Ottoman Iraqi officers and officials. For Iraq, the Conference had to take some important decisions. First, an Arab ruler will be appointed, decision will be taken in order to manage how to deal with northern Kurds, deciding how to reduce Britain's military expenditures and also arranging for defense after the projected withdrawal of British forces.[105] The Cairo Conference was the cornerstone stone in the formation of the new Iraqi state. The throne of Faisal, the organization of new bureaucracy and the situation of the army were mostly determined in this conference by Churchill and his entourage. After the Conference, some steps were taken in that in order to strengthen the defense issue, it was decided that British and Indian forces should be run down rapidly thus the new established Royal Air Force, was launched in 1922 and had former successes in conflict areas like Somalia, decided to be the responsible power for both internal and external security of the newly established Iraq. The Kurdish problem remained unsolved for many years and northern borders could not be drawn. Their future and their borders were left uncertain.

Faisal was not welcomed in the region with enthusiasm when he was pushed to the state by his supportive British sponsor. Within a few weeks, the Council of Ministers passed a resolution declaring him as the king of Iraq. A so called referendum was also held and then it was claimed by the British that almost the whole population, 96% was satisfied with the throne of Faisal, and finally on August 23rd 1921, he was accepted as the King of Iraq, without any alternative choice.

Faisal was aware that he was on the horns of a dilemma position in that he had to strike a balance between the Iraqi people and Britain. He had to gain the support of

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[104] *Idem.*

[105] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

his new people while serving the British interests. This balancing, in Fieldhouse's words had two dimensions:

> "First, British rights and obligations would have to be defined, probably in a treaty willingly accepted by the new Iraqi government. Second, it was essential to persuade Faisal, once he was firmly established, to see that it was in his interests to accept British rights and carry his government with him. These became the central issues during the remaining eleven years of the British mandate to 1932."[106]

The next thing was the negotiation of a treaty. Administrators were still inexperienced and under the guidance of British advisors. There was a reality that Iraq could only become independent if Britain was willing to testify to the League of Nations that Iraq is suitable to become a sovereign state. But the Iraqi people believed that a treaty should be signed between two independent states and, which signature would mean that they become sovereign. Then negotiations had started in 1922 and draft texts were prepared. Drafts were not foreseeing a totally independent Iraq. There was still a British influence all over the country, in that Britain would assist in the defense issues of Iraq. Iraq was not free to adopt military conscription. Capitulations were abolished but courts holding cases affecting foreigners were to have at least one British judge. A High Commissioner will keep on guiding the king on important financial and international issues which meant that Britain was still willing to ensure its interests and finally the draft was considered to last for twenty years. These terms offended Iraqi and Arab nationalists who were totally against this draft and it was only accepted by Faisal and the puppet Council. Basically, it was ensuring the colonial system on Iraq whose leaders especially the ex-sharifians believed that they had been fighting for full independence and to realize the Anglo-French promise of 1918 of self-determination. Looking through this perspective, these kinds of politics and drafts were a betrayal of their cause. In order to reduce Shi'i opposition, a number of adverse notable majorities were exiled. The cabinet was reinstated and a twenty year treaty of alliance and protection was signed between the governments of Great Britain and Iraq in 1923. This treaty had originally set for the mandate a term of twenty years. In a few years, both sides realized that this twenty years alliance was a utopia, and therefore the British started to think of

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[106] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

leaving Iraq by 1927 because of the anti-British feelings and the self-determination desires of both the Iraqi people and the government. Also, owing to agitation in parliament and the press about the cost of holding Mesopotamia, the Conservative government which succeeded Lloyd Geroge's administration reduced the duration of the protocol to four years which meant that it would be valid until 1927.[107] This change on the validity of the treaty reduced the oppositions against it. In addition to this, in 1923, Sir Percy Cox retired from public service and appointed Sir Henry Dobbs to replace him. It was now the turn of the Conservatives to extract themselves from Iraq as quickly and as inexpensively as possible. This common sense also showed that the British would leave Iraq by 1927, much sooner than any of politicians both Iraqi and British had considered.

The rise of Iraqi nationalism could be witnessed in this period. There was a growth of organized Arab nationalism amongst the urban population of Iraq which became the main driving force behind the continuing evolution of British policy after 1920. The coordination of mass protests by the urban educated classes against the Mandate meant that, from 1923, the British had to redefine their policy. As Dodge asserted, this involved a move away from Mandate control, wrapped up as it was with notions of direct long-term rule.[108]

Sir Henry Dobbs was the longest serving High Commissioner to Iraq who worked from 1923 to 1929. Dobbs believed that his duty was to create a sovereign but an obedient Iraqi state. He also believed in the autonomy for Iraq. According to him, there should be an independent government of Iraq, ruled by a government under the leadership of Faisal, friendly to and bound by appreciation and compulsion to the British Empire.[109] Despite all of these so-called democratic attitudes and wishes, we cannot still talk about a nation building effort and a real democracy in Iraq.

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[107] Elie, Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version and Other Middle-Eastern Studies*, New Edition, London, University Press of New England, 1984, p. 256.

[108] Dodge, *op.cit.*.

[109] Lamb, *op.cit.,* p.38.

Under the Dobbs commissioning, we witnessed a movement for independence in Iraq. Policy towards Iraq was rived with contradictions. It was attempting to meet international commitments given to the League and at the same time minimizing political pressure from both British and Iraqi public opinion. In 1927 these tensions among Iraqis led to another and final shift. The idea of creating a sustainable, stable Iraqi state able to rule efficiently over its population was quitted altogether. Britain's primary policy aim from 1927 onwards was to unburden itself of its international responsibilities towards Iraq as quickly as possible. Britain had decided to construct a 'quasi-state', which had the appearance of a state but was in fact a façade built in order to allow Britain to disengage as quickly as possible.[110]

It is obvious that 1927 was a very critical year in British-Iraqi relations. Britain took many measures in order to seize the increasing national feeling of independence among Iraqis. However, they did not choose to act but preferred to maintain the situation. This situation in the country continued to drift without clear direction through 1928 and into 1929 as Sluglett asserts "(…) the whole period between those years, 1927 to 1929, is marked by a sense of impotence of Iraq government."[111]

In 1929, an important event changed the future of Iraq. In February 1929, Sir Henry Dobbs was replaced as High Commissioner by Sir Gilbert Clayton. And as soon as he was appointed, he decided to enter into an agreement with Faisal on the date of the independence. Sir Clayton believed that 1932 was the precise year for Iraqi independence just as Faisal did. We also witnessed the decreasing will and support for Iraqi mandate in the British government in London too in those dates.

The Mosul issue was still remaining as an unsolved problem in the treaty and was left until 1927, and this period will be examined in next chapters. This deadlock on the topic brought a new consideration that there should be a new Anglo- Iraqi treaty valid for twenty-five years unless Iraq was in the meantime admitted to the League of Nations as a sovereign state. This situation complicated the issue to a great extent and necessitated a second treaty.[112]

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[110] *Ibid.,* p. 3.

[111] Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq 1914-1932*, London, Ithaca Press, 1976, p. 161.

[112] Fieldhouse, *op.cit.*, p.92-93.

There was also an election for the new Assembly in 1924. Iraq now had a constitution and its modern political life began. The new treaty draft which was negotiated and accepted subject to the proviso that it would be come into force if Britain could secure Mosul for Iraq, and valid for twenty-five years, was ratified by the Iraqi Parliament in November 1930. This treaty was foreseeing more independence to Iraq due to the insistences of Faisal. At this point in time, he provided that independent Iraq had full control over defense and was free to adopt military conscription which had been previously blocked by Britain. Also the principle in the former treaty that there will be a British judge in the cases which affect foreigners, especially British subjects, was now abolished in this second treaty. Many advisers at the capital and in the provinces lost their directorial and veto powers and many were dismissed to be replaced by Iraqis. The last, maybe the most important change was about the High Commissionary system. The High Commissioner lost his role as an effective governor and was replaced by an ambassador with the main central departments of the government taken over by Iraqis leaving the British as civil service advisors. British officials would continue in their posts only if they were invited by the Iraqi government. The terms of the treaty showed that the British government was driven more by self-interest as opposed to securing any long term development of Iraq. It was intended to secure the essential British interests in the newly established country with a minimum cost to Britain. Its terms were to be critical for British interests in Iraq until the 1950s.

Now Britain would recommend Iraq to the League suggesting that the mandate would be over and Iraq would now become a fully independent country with the exception of an agreed common foreign policy with Britain. The treaty was sent to the League for approval and Iraq became the first, and until 1945 the only, mandate to be recommended for independence. Finally, it was unanimously approved by League's Assembly in October 1932. The British Mandate ended and Iraq was declared a free country.

All groups in the population were not satisfied with the terms of the new treaty. The Sunnis, felt abandoned by the British with the terms of the treaty which foresaw a British Mandate which had seen the establishment of a Sunni dominated

Iraq and excluded the majority of the population. Consequently, they were concerned about their future in their own country.

Some questions were addressed after independence: like how much difference in practice did independence make to the position of Britain in Iraq? What will Britain do now in the Middle Eastern region? It would not be wrong to say that Iraqi independence did not influence the British in the region. It did not sacrifice any interest or benefit while it had during the Mandate time. Accepting the two conditions of two Royal Air Force bases, which were very crucial in order to save the roads to another mandate, India, and the right of transit in time of war, Iraq still remained as a valuable connector between the Mediterranean and India. In addition to this, not surprisingly, Britain was still holding the dominant position in commercial economy, large scale business in Baghdad, in the river steamship, as well as in the oil industry. These interests were well protected under the terms of the founding treaty.

If we look generally over the Mandate period, it would not be wrong to say that the British had been successful in their management of the mandate as they designed for the region in their minds from the beginning. They created a state, but a quasi one, and maybe a so-called nation out of the ashes of three Ottoman provinces. They asserted that they had built an apparently democratic state where there was no tradition of democracy and established the rule of law which gave equality to all of the groups in the country. But was that true? Was Iraq a real democracy? They have done the things just written in the rules. Was that enough? They managed to fulfill the terms of mandate and transferred their authority to an elected government while retaining much of the substances of their influence. Where they really successful in doing this? Where all groups really represented and had equal rights? How did the mandate serve Britain's own interests? What was the underlying reason of the establishment of the mandate in the first place and then acceptance of the new independent state? Could it be possible that this period seeded the roots of the militarist autocracy in Iraq? There are many questions waiting to be answered but we could assert that Britain did not write a real success history in Iraq.

When Iraq was accepted as an independent country in the League of Nations, actually it was not a really independent state. In reality, the situation was totally different. The state was run by a small group of mainly Sunni politicians and was not really strong enough to control the country without armament and technical assistance from the Royal Air Force. The economic situation was the same. Iraq was still financially dependent on the British Treasury. In 1932, the new Iraqi governing elite appointed by the British inherited a badly built and unstable state. Also the promises given to the League by both Britain and Iraq about protecting the country's different ethnic and religious communities were simply ignored in order to ease Iraq's independence and this situation also confirmed the concerns of the rest of the population mentioned above. For the British existence in Iraq, we can finally talk about the concerns and wishes for the lower risk, the lesser cost and the short-term advantages were more important than the possible future benefits of fundamental social transformation in Iraq. Changes in British policy towards Iraq created an unstable period of state-building in the country. Iraq in 1932 was a quasi-state, dependent for its survival not on its military strength or administrative competence but on international guarantees of its borders.[113]

To sum up, Britain's intervention and struggle to build an Iraqi state lasted eighteen years. During this period from the invasion of Basra at the beginning of World War I to the membership of Iraq in the League of Nations in 1932, there was no steady and lasting British policy in Iraq. The British employed a policy in Iraq away from conflict to accommodation, from force to appeasement depending on the policies of the party in power, the Iraqi attitude towards the British policies in Iraq, and international struggle for power in the region. But, all in all, the changes which emerged in the British government fundamentally influenced the mandate policies not only in Iraq, but also in Palestine and Egypt. When the British invaded Mesopotamia in 1914, they probably did not intend to create a state. Their immediate objective was the security of their position in the Persian Gulf. However, military successes led to greater ambitions and by 1918 the British forces had occupied the

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[113] Dodge, *op.cit.*.

whole of what is now modern Iraq. When they were leaving Iraq in 1932, they still did not have a stable British policy.

In order to analyze the other principle of the state-formation process and also another source of Iraqi nationalism, the Mosul question will be examined in next chapter. Considering "territoriality" as one of the important elements of modern states, keeping in mind the question whether the maintenance of Mosul in Iraq helped the fulfillment of the criteria of becoming a state or not, a detailed analysis of the Mosul question will be done.

CHAPTER 4

MOSUL QUESTION AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE IRAQI STATE FORMATION

The Mosul question can be examined in a historical context beginning from Mudros Agreement and the occupation of the province by the British in 1918, and then the Lausanne negotiations in which the fate of this province became the key issue on the way to peace. Moreover, the 1923-1926 period of increasing tension between Britain and Turkey with League of Nations negotiations, and finally, the 1926 Anglo- Iraqi- Turkish Treaty and its consequences would be examined in this context.

Mosul was a province of the Ottoman administrative organization, connecting Anatolia and its trade to Baghdad and Basra. The city of Mosul was a capital itself for the other smaller cities and towns, since it was always an important center of socio-economic activities. Mosul has always had close connections to the Mesopotamian economic centers, including Baghdad, not only in terms of economic relations, but also the ties of family, tribal and religious sects with other Ottoman provinces. The population of Mosul was composed of a great mosaic of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. It was composed of Kurds, Yazidis, Arabs, Turks and finally Christians (the majority were Nestorians and Caledonians).[114]

Until the centralization of the Tanzimat reforms, the Ottoman Empire had governed the province of Baghdad through local notables. However, these centralization efforts were not sufficient, and actually led to only a change of local authority from one hand to another. By the end of the 19th century, there were oil explorations led by Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II. It was discovered that Mosul and Baghdad had rich oil reserves. The Mosul province therefore, became a more important center due to its rich underground resources, mainly oil. Therefore,

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[114] İhsan Şerif Kaymaz, *Musul Sorunu*, İstanbul, Otopsi Yayınları, 2003, p. 29.

although they deny, western countries mainly Britain, France and Germany were racing to obtain concessions from the Ottoman Empire in Mosul. The Ottoman Empire tried to ally with Germany to create a balance between those states and themselves in order to prevent their influence on its region. This was the most important reason of the privileges given to Germany for the construction of the Berlin-Baghdad railway. In addition to this, Germany was allowed to search for mines and oil in the Bagdad and Mosul region. After dethroning the Sultan in 1908, the CUP government tried to give permission to a company for the construction and management of railroads and ports, and also to provide mining and oil concessions. But these concessions were not ratified by the Ottoman parliament. The possibility of oil concessions triggered the Anglo- Iraqi Government, in the name of D'Arcy Group, Royal Dutch Shell group and finally German government in the name of Deutsche Bank began to negotiate with Ottoman Empire and in order to get oil privileges in the region.

Later in 1910, the Turkish Petroleum Company (TPC) was founded with an agreement which provided the basis for future claims to Mosul oil. The exploitation of Mosul oil was recognized in March 19, 1914 at a meeting held in the Foreign Office in London in the presence of British, German and Dutch oil companies' representatives. The Ottoman Empire did not have any shares nor did it participate in the meeting.[115] This was actually a partnership, in which D'Arcy Group had a share of 50%, and the Deutche Group and the Anglo-Saxon Oil Company had of 25% each and also Gulbenkyan, an Ottoman geologist and one of the founders of TPC had a 5% share. As obvious from the shares, Britain had a great dominance in the exploitation of Persian and Turkish oil companies. However, the agreement was not ratified but this situation provided a basis for future claims to Mosul oil.

Mosul and the partition of its oil resources were also one of the important reasons of World War I. For this reason, while World War I was ongoing, there had been several secret treaties signed in order to divide the Ottoman Empire territories. One of the most famous one of these was the Sykes Picot Treaty which had been

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[115] Ferruh Demirmen, "Part II: The Region of a Monopoly Great Power Conflict over Iraqi Oil: the World War I Era," *Global Policy Forum*, April 25, 2003, p. 1.

mentioned in the former chapters, signed in April 26, 1916, between Britain and France with the involvement of Russia.[116] Designed to partition of the Ottoman Empire after the war, the agreement assigned the Tigris and the Euphrates region between Baghdad and Basra, namely Mesopotamia provinces to the British control and zone of influence. The treaty also gave the Mosul region and a good portion of the province of Damascus (including Beirut, Mersin and Adana) to the French zone of influence. Britain left Mosul to France as a part of its plan to enlarge the French sphere of influence from the Mediterranean coast to the east in order to provide a shield against Russia. Britain also aimed to place another barrier in the path of Russia's advance by leaving Mosul under French control. Russia got the provinces of Eastern territories, Van, Bitlis, the region between Fırat, Muş and Siirt and the Black Sea shores in the west of Trabzon and also it was promised free liberty of action in the Balkans as a reward for its consent.[117]

According to Aydın, there are two important points about the Sykes-Picot Treaty. Firstly, the territory of Mosul was neither included in the lands promised to Sharif Hussein, nor in those promised to Faisal. Ismet Pasha had explained this situation to Lord Curzon during the Lausanne Conference and had shown personal declarations of Sharif Hussein as proof. Secondly, this Treaty, which was revealed by the Bolsheviks following the Russian Revolution in 1917, created a big disappointment among the Arabs. After signing an agreement with Sharif Hussein, the British had betrayed the Arabs by signing the Sykes-Picot Treaty with the French.[118]

Britain, aiming to control the oil reserves in the province, occupied Mosul with a fait accompli on November 1st of 1918 after the Mudros Armistice, signed on October 30th 1918, which ended World War I, and removed the Ottoman State de

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[116] Esra Sarıkoyuncu Değerli, "Mosul at the Lausenne Peace Conference," *Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi,* cilt 10, sayı 18, Aralık 2007, p. 128.

[117] Melek Fırat, "OrtaDoğu'ya İlişkin Gizli Anlaşmalar Kutusu," *Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar,* Baskın Oran (ed.), Cilt 1, 6.Baskı, İstanbul, İletişim, 2002, p. 198-199.

[118] Alev Dilek Aydın, *"Mosul Question (1918- 1926),"* Master Thesis, Bilkent University The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences, June 2004, p.17.

facto from history.[119] Article 16 of this Treaty provided that: "Turkish troops had to retreat and leave the territories to the nearest ally control." Turkish troops had to leave Mosul to the British and left for Anatolian territories in order to fulfill the provisions of this article.

After the invasion of Mosul in 1918, the basic problem became where Mosul belonged to, since the British had claims over Mosul for economic and political reasons, France had claims stemming from the secret treaties entered into during the war, and Turkey had claims over Mosul for population, geographic and economic reasons. France was regretting to leave the province to the British control in the negotiations of the Paris Peace Conference which was held on January 18th 1919, in order to clarify the details of the peace treaties. The British Prime minister was not pleased with the Sykes- Picot Treaty and started to negotiate in order to get Mosul under British control again. In order to achieve this goal, they decided to hold a conference.

As previously mentioned, in the San Remo Conference which was held on April 24th 1920, it was decided that Britain and France would establish mandatory administrations in Syria, Lebanon and Mesopotamia and it was also decided, with a change in Sykes-Picot Agreement, that Mosul was left to Britain. In addition to this, with the Treaty of San Remo signed at the end the conference, France would get 25% of the crude oil production and would own the %25 of the company's shares (effectively pre-war German share in TPC) where Britain still owned 75% and 25% share.[120]

The British started to claim its rights to the province after San Remo. Turkish claims were already laid on into the Turkish National Pact. Firstly, British occupation of Mosul (in violation of the Mudros Armistice, signed October 30, 1918) and secondly the enclosure of Mosul into the Turkish National Pact (accepted by the last Chamber of Deputies on January 28, 1920) which aimed to create an

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[119] Zekeriya Türkmen, *Musul Meselesi Askeri Yönden Çözüm Arayışları (1922-1925),* Ankara, AKDTYK Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2003, p.15.

[120] Değerli, *op.cit.,* p. 129.

independent Turkish nation-state, are the two most important developments in the formation of the Mosul question.[121]

The Treaty of Serves, which aimed to wipe the Ottoman Empire from the face of history, was signed on August 10th 1920. According to articles 45 and 56 of the Agreement, Mosul was going to be left to the newly established Kurdish state. However, the Turkish national liberation war was successfully ended with the Mudanya Armistice on October 11th 1922 and this success invalidated the Serves.

After the successful ending of the national independence war of Turkey, it has been decided to gather in Switzerland, in Lausanne in order to negotiate the independence and sovereignty of Turkey. The Lausanne Conference, which began on November 20th 1922 and suspended on February 4th 1923, was unique among post-war conferences, as it was the only one in which allies met the defeated enemy on anything like equal terms. The aim of the Turkish delegates at Lausanne was to add a diplomatic victory to their already won military one. The Turkish side based their claims on the Mudanya Armistice, whereas the Western powers' standpoint was the Armistice of Mudros which accepted the terrible defeat of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. The Western powers were stating that they were sacrifying many things and granting privileges to a defeated empire. Therefore, they tried to prevent the Turkish demands via those kinds of statements. But the Turkish side was claiming that they already won their war of independence, Turkey was a free state, not the survivor of the Ottoman Empire, if an agreement would be signed, it should be on similar footing as between two sovereign countries. In addition to this, Turkey went to Lausanne to secure its primary objective. The national pact which was previously mentioned, came to present the nationalist's requirements and formed the basis of all negotiations with the allied powers. This was the issue which divided both sides.

For Turkey, the program of negotiations was specific: the complete scrapping of the Treaty of Serves, a plebiscite for Western Thrace, the restoration of Mosul, the freedom of Straits, no minority provisions other than those in the European treaties,

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[121] Aydın, *op.cit.,* p. 3.

no military restrictions, no financial and economic control, no capitulations, and the full sovereignty and independence of Turkey. For Britain, they aimed to restore its prestige in the east and in particular to ensure freedom of the Straits by establishing an international regime under the British control, to win the oil rich Mosul for Iraq, which was under the British Mandate and to secure their communications to other mandates by driving a wedge between Ankara and Moscow.[122]

The Mosul question was lying at the root of the British claims and was one of the most divisive issues of the conference. They were aware that this question would constitute a principal obstacle to the establishment of peace in the region. And by insisting on disagreed issues like Mosul, Straits, Western Thrace and capitulations, the chief negotiator of Britain, Lord Curzon knew that the negotiations would be slowed down and probably would reach a deadlock.

Ismet Inonu was selected as the head of the Turkish delegation to the Lausanne Conference. During the conference, he advocated the Turkish point of view that Mosul should be reattached to Turkey and based his argument on several ethnographic, political, geographical, economic, military, and strategic grounds. When Turkey insisted that Mosul is a part of Turkish territory due to these reasons afore mentioned, the British side never accepted this and replied that it is impossible to leave Mosul to Turkey in that they already had an agreement with Iraqi government signed in October 1922. According to article 8 of this Agreement, this territory was promised to them to them and that any territory would not be separated from Iraq. As such, they cannot be in breach of a duly signed agreement now.

The British side proposed that the issue be referred to the League of Nations for arbitration, but the Turkish side opposed. As a counter proposal, the Turkish side offered to solve the issue through a plebiscite, but this time the British opposed asserting that the people of the region are highly illiterate to decide the future of the province.

On 4th February, 1923, the Conference was adjourned due to the deadlock which emanated from the disagreements especially between Turkish and British

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[122] Nevin Coşar, Sevtap Demirci, "The Mosul Question and the Turkish Republic: Before and After the Frontier Treaty, 1926," *The Turkish Yearbook,* Vol. XXXV, 2004, p. 47-48.

delegations. Then both sides agreed to re-gather in order to finish what they had started, and the second phase of the conference re-started on April 23rd 1923, and was concluded with the acceptance of the Lausanne Peace Treaty on July 24th 1923. In order to avoid public disagreement in the conference and not to offend the international community, and also they were aware that, as long as the Mosul issue was not solved, Turkey would not be able to arrange its relations with the Western world. The Turks would not jeopardize what they had already obtained and start a new war for Mosul, where Great Britain had vital interests, because the national war of liberation was just over. Both sides, Turkey (unwillingly because it was not even a member of the League and the influence of Britain over the League was obvious that it would not be wrong to say that the League was almost dominated by Great Britain in those days) and Great Britain, decided to stop arguing the Mosul question during the conference and carried the issue to another platform. With no solution in sight, and also after receiving veiled threats from Lord Curzon on renewed hostilities in Iraq, Ankara reluctantly agreed in March 1923 to the British proposal to refer the Mosul question to the League for arbitration if direct negotiations with Britain failed. They decided to settle the issue through bilateral negotiations within nine months from the signature of the peace treaty in view of article 3 of the Treaty of Lausanne which provided that "in the event of no agreement being reached between the Turkish and the British governments within nine months, the dispute would be referred to the Council of the League of Nations."[123]

However, before it was brought to the League of Nations, it should have been negotiated between Turkey and Britain. Through the negotiations, the arguments of both sides mostly addressed three major concerns: the popular will, security and historic affiliation. Both of the disputing countries referred primarily to the desires of the population, consistent with the emerging rhetoric of self-determination which assumed that people's "identity" determined their political desires. Two governments tried to prove that either Turks or Arabs were predominant in the uncertain area.[124]

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[123] Aydın, *op.cit.,* p. 4.

[124] Reeva Spector Simon and Eleanor H. Tejirian, *The Creation of Iraq 1914-1921*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2004, p. 53.

The Turkish government insisted that the Kurds and Turks were brothers and gave them a significant majority in the region while the British claimed that the Kurds were different and did not want the Turkish rule. Every government claimed that the people of Mosul participated in representative assemblies: the Turks listed who represented the area in National Assembly in Ankara, while the British listed the representatives of Mosul in attendance at the National Assembly in Baghdad. The Turkish side noted the links between the area and the Ottoman Empire by emphasizing the historical connections and claimed that the major postwar agreements (Sevres and Sykes- Picot) and the Encyclopedia Britannica defined Iraq without including Mosul. However, the British argued that the Treaty Lausanne and the League of Nations defined Mosul as part of Iraqi territory. The Turkish side was also claiming that the occupation of Mosul was definitely after the Armistice of 1918, which situation was against the international law as well as being contrary to Wilson's principles. Both claimed that geography was on their side, with Great Britain emphasizing that the new Iraqi state could not survive without Mosul's mountainous boundary considered essential for securing the new Iraqi state from Turkey and its neighbors. If Mosul was left to Turkey, then Turkey will be 60 miles close to the northern border of Iraq creating big security problems and threatening Iraqi territory.[125]

Probably, the most significant difference was the definitions of the problem by both sides. Britain was concerned only about where the northern border of Iraq should be located while the Turkey was considering the dispute as over the entire province of Mosul, which they claimed should be part of Turkey.

There was also another dimension of the dispute. Mosul was a very oil-reach region which situation rendered the allied countries, especially Britain interested in it. Although Lord Curzon argued that their policy of Mosul was not in any way related to oil, and that instead it was guided by the desire to protect the interests of the Iraqi people consistent with its mandatory obligations and that they had never spoken to an oil magnate or to an oil concessionaire regarding Mosul oil. According

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[125] Baskın Oran, "*Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar,* Baskın Oran (ed.), Cilt 1, 6. Baskı, İstanbul, İletişim, 2002, p. 259-270.

to Reeva Simon, historians argue about whether Great Britain and probably Turkey were really most interested in oil, with some claiming that this was really the main issue.[126]

Many joint meetings were arranged in order to discuss the topic between the two countries as agreed in Lausanne. One of them was the Golden Horn (Haliç) Conference, known as the Istanbul Conference, held in Istanbul from May 19th to June 5th 1924. Britain also demanded Hakkari, another eastern region of Turkey, for Nasturis, knowing that the Turkish side would never accept such a demand. This was a diplomatic tactic in order to lock the negotiations and to refer the issue to the League of Nations easily. The two sides could not reach an agreement in that meeting, and negotiations were called off. On August 6th 1924, the dispute was referred to the League by the British Government by asking them if the Mosul question be put on its political agenda. Britain put forward its political, economic, strategic and historical considerations and insisted that Mosul should stay as part of Iraq just as they promised in the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty which was signed with King Faisal. On the contrary, Ankara waged its diplomatic counter offensive on August 25 in a note sent to the League which underlined their demands that their old province should be considered in the territories of Turkey, and stated that they are not against referring the issue the League of Nations as Britain accused them with this claim before. Then the issue started to be discussed on September 20th 1924.

On September 30th 1924, the Council of the League of Nations decided to establish a special commission in order to investigate the question posed by Turkey and Great Britain and to collect local opinion on whether the people of Mosul wanted to be included in Iraq or Turkey. The commission consisted of three impartial League of Nations Commissioners from Hungary, Sweden and Belgium, but it would not be wrong to say that they were under the influence of British dominated League's ideas. In the meantime, the dispute was shifted by Britain to the issue of fixing the Iraqi border rather than determining the future of the Mosul province. In order to avoid the increasing tension between two sides, Turkey applied to the League of

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[126] Simon, *op.cit.,* p. 54.

Nations on October 29th 1924 in order to set a temporary border, which would become almost the stable border in the future, between Iraq and Turkey known as the "Brussels Line."[127]

The Commission arrived first to Baghdad and then Mosul on January 27th 1925. First of all, they tried to discover the city and also interviewed hundreds of local notables including tribal chiefs, sheiks, religious notables, merchants, landowners, craftsmen etc. in order to get an idea of the points of view of the people of the region on the current situation. When the League of Nations agreed to investigate the question posed by Turkey and Great Britain, they assumed that self-determination would be a major component of their negotiations with the consensus of all parties, and that the future of Mosul should be what its people wanted. At this point in time, we noticed that the problem also had another dimension, the dimension of "ethnicity." All the parties assumed that what the people wanted would probably be the result of people's ethnic identities. However, they were mistaken in that the region witnessed proof of this statement in a while when Commissioners started to analyze the region.

The results were impressing and surprising. They founded that, the political destiny that Mosulis requested was not related to identity issues. People's ideas were very divisive, political, economic, or historical concerns affected the intentions and decisions. Contrary to the initial belief of the Commission, the notes of interviews conducted by the Commissioners showed that ethnicity was clearly not the determining factor of politics in the region. It also showed that identity did not directly correlate to politics. Therefore Commissioners concluded that identity is not fixed yet, and people's self definitions were quite fluid. Mosul's locals were aware of many other political issues like economic, power, and leadership issues. Economic well was clearly mattered for Arabs. Some Iraqis were afraid of the British control whereas some Turks would have favored union with Turkey, but disliked the new government of Mustafa Kemal. Being a Turk was well and good, but if a Mosuli opposed secularism, they refused to consider the connection with Ataturk's new

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[127] Coşar and Demirci, *op.cit.,* p. 50.

regime. Similarly, Arab nationalists often preferred Turkey to Iraq, controlled by a foreign army. Some Iraqis who identified themselves as Arabs favored union with Iraq but only if Iraq was independent whereas many of them were supported British protectorate.[128]

The League of Nations assumed that one's ethnic identity would determine one's politics and made a big mistake at that point. Confronted with such basic questions like "Are you Turk or Iraqi?" the population insisted on complicating the options. They refused to go along with the notion that who one's ethnicity determined one's politics, and introduced more complex concerns.[129]

The Commission also discovered that the mandatory regime viewed escalating military conflict in the disputed region as a threat to stability and to their control.[130] People were also feared from Britain because of their strict repressing control politics in order to restore the order after the 1920 uprising.

Britain was asserting that Turkish troops were attacking Assyrian Christians in the neighboring territories that influenced some respondents and many abroad. They also asserted that Mustafa Kemal's destruction of the caliphate alienated many Muslims in the region. Looking to the Kurdish Sheikh Said revolt which started in the eastern part of Turkey aiming at the reestablishment of the caliphate, which had been a strong symbol among the Kurdish people, its abolition was the reason behind the revolt. According to some writers, the reason was that the revolt was based on Kurdish nationalism aiming a separated Kurdish state was a façade.[131]

The British claimed that Turkey is incapable of protecting the region's security because it still had quarrels within its own country. Additionally, as seen from the picture, the Kurds and Turks were not brothers at all contrary to Turkish former claims, the and Kurds did not want to live under a Turkish rule. It is still a dilemma if

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[128] Simon, *op.cit.,* p. 54-55.

[129] *Ibid.,* p. 58.

[130] Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, *Iraq, 1900 to 1950: A Political, Social, and Economic History*, London, Oxford University Press, 1953, p. 144-148 and 152-158.

[131] Baskın Oran, "Şeyh Sait Ayaklanması Kutusu ," *Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar,* Baskın Oran (ed.), Cilt 1, 6.Baskı, İstanbul, İletişim, 2002, p. 198-199.

Britain supported the Kurdish revolt that it would be too naive to think that this revolt was a coincidence at that critical time.

In the end, the Commission rejected the ethnic considerations which they thought they were significant. The economic well being would be compromised of a division along ethnic lines, they concluded. And in any case, the communities were too mixed to make such divisions feasible.[132] As they asserted in the report which was presented on July 16th 1926: "The Commission is of the opinion that from the legal point of view, the disputed territory must be regarded as an integral part of Turkey until that Power renounces her rights." They decided that the British-proposed frontier made the greatest sense strategically.[133] Finally, the Commission recommended that Mosul should be attached to Iraq, but on condition that the area continues under the League of Nations Mandate for twenty five years and the Kurds should definitely be appointed in the administration, education, and judicial office in the region, with Kurdish as the language of these services.[134] It has also been decided that the small Zap River would be determined as a boundary between Iraq and Turkey.

This decision was met with pleasure by Britain while it encountered great reaction in Turkey. Although Turkey seriously thought about the possibility of war, it could not risk renewed fighting after intense wars, especially against a country such as Great Britain, the world's major power at the time.[135] Turkey only signed a treaty of Friendship and Neutrality with Soviet Union on December 16th 1925 in order to show its reaction against this decision. Another important internal reason which stopped Turkey from going to war for Mosul was the Sheikh Said revolt which was mentioned above. This revolt weakened Turkish claims on Mosul and played an important role in the loss of Mosul due to its effect on the decision of the League of

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[132] Simon, *op.cit.,* p. 57.

[133] League of Nations, *Question of the Frontier between Turkey and Iraq: Report submitted to the Council by the Commission instituted by the Council Resolution of September 30th, 1924*, p.88.

[134] *Ibid.,* p. 88-89.

[135] Aydın, *op.cit.,* p. 5.

Nations. In addition to this, it indicated Turkey's need for stability and the necessity to reach an agreement on the Mosul question.[136]

Considering the fact that Britain was the strongest member of the League and a permanent member of the Council and that Turkey was not even a member, it was not surprising that the Commission reported that Iraq should keep Mosul and the Brussels line be made the permanent border. After an eight year struggle, Turkey agreed to leave Mosul and on June 5, 1926, Turkey, Great Britain and Iraq signed the Frontier Treaty; the Treaty of Ankara. According to this treaty, the Brussels Line would become the border between Turkey and Iraq as the League of Nations had decided and Turkey would take a 10% share from the revenue of Mosul petroleum for twenty-five years.[137] By signing this treaty in 1926 with the Iraqi government, the Turkish government made the choice of peace supported the independent Iraq, and aimed to normalize its relations with Britain.

The whole project of "assigning Mosul," the issue that became the "Mosul question," was only an issue as a result of the nation-state system created as a result of European assumptions about state structures and belongings. Perspectives of European assumptions to the issue rendered Mosul as a problem. And once the problem was resolved, a set of assumptions that destroyed Mosul's economy and left it open to the new oil economy waiting in the wings.[138]

There are many questions which could be asked concerning the whole period. What was the importance and effects of the Mosul issue for Iraqi state-formation? Did Britain consider Mosul as a bumper region between Turkey and Iraq due to its geographic features and its high and protective mountains? Was Mosul a bumper area to protect Iraq from Turkey? Or, in the alternative, did Britain consider Mosul as an economic connection in order to control its roads to Aleppo? Furthermore, did Britain see the importance of that region for the establishment of a nation-state in Iraq due to the territoriality principle of becoming a state it occupied and had never given up its demands on Mosul? Or did Britain wish to exploit the oil rich Mosul? Or

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[136] *Ibid.,* p. 76-77 and Oran, *op.cit.,* p. 198-199.

[137] Aydın, *op.cit.,* p. 5-6.

[138] Simon, *op.cit.,* p. 58-59.

its principal aim to occupy this region was just only to control Basra and Iran? Would it be asserted that after the failure of Egypt case, Britain wanted to establish a real state in the region, which was Iraq, in order to prove to the other countries in or outside the region that it succeeded this time in that Mosul was an important element for establishing a real, unified Iraqi nation-state? Did the integration of Mosul to Iraq really create the territorial state as Britain mentioned?

The answers to these questions would probably tell us the British demands in Mosul. It would not be wrong to say that the maintenance of Mosul in Iraq has helped the fulfillment of the criteria of becoming a state. With Mosul, the integrity of the newly established Iraqi state was ensured and as told above it facilitated the road for a real state. In addition to these, throughout the period of the Mosul question, the attitudes of the Iraqi nationalists demonstrated the importance of the territory also for the Iraqi people.

Actually, after the invasion of Mosul, Britain could not control the country as it wanted. The efforts in order to keep the tribes in the region under control were very hard and abrasive for Iraq. The Kurds, in particular, did not want to be under foreign rule. At that point in time, we can talk about a nationalist opposition against the British after the invasion period which also fed Iraqi nationalism.

Now we would start to analyze the other sine qua non trivet of a state, constitutional works and political parties and the efforts for civil administration particularly during King Faisal era under the Mandate period. In this context, politics, social structure, government, army, and economy which create the nation-state and their effects on Iraqi nationalism will be examined.

CHAPTER 5

NATION-STATE FORMATION IN IRAQ UNDER THE BRITISH MANDATE

In the aftermath of the 1920 revolt, Iraq was a country without either an indigenous central authority or any significant structured and functional institutions. Aware of these weaknesses, the British authorities founded a government; loyal to them, in October 1920 and shortly afterwards proceeded to lay the foundations of politics, army, economics, education, health, taxes, press, land policy etc. The successful management of those issues was equally as important as the establishment of an executive ruler and the creation of a national security apparatus. Therefore, to best understand the British experience and state-formation process in Iraq overall, it is important to examine the details of the tools of civil administration as well.

5.1 Politics and National Opposition

The early 1920s, which brought the creation of the state and its instruments, also marked the beginnings of opposition to foreign control. Nationalist opposition was to dominate the political scene right up to the revolution of 1958. Until the nominal independence in 1932, there was a growing national opposition to western influence.

The period of opposition can be divided into overlapping waves: the first wave was the 1920 revolt which was already discussed in the former chapters. It was basically a tribal rebellion, and was the first and only armed conflict with the mandatory regime. Besides its effects on Iraqi politics, the revolt's impact on the British policy was also thoughtful. It showed that the decisiveness with which the tribes were defeated convinced the urban leadership that recourse to armed revolt would be useless while British troops remained on Iraqi territory and were not counterbalanced by an Iraqi force. The Iraqi people realized the importance of a

regular army, and thus they turned their attention to the development of such an army which would probably replace the tribes as a military force and could eventually be used as a strong instrument against the British, and therefore the revolt of 1920 diminished the power of the tribes, although they were not entirely destroyed.[139]

Another wave of the nationalist opposition was the treaty discussions by the cabinet in 1922 and the subsequent election of the Constituent Assembly which would not ratify the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1922 which excluded the Shi'i population from the Iraqi nationalist government and from politics. The proposal of the British Government to express the Anglo-Iraqi relationship by a treaty was approved by both sides. Iraq wanted to become a complete independent state at once by declaring its institutions freely and erasing the British influence while Britain wanted to continue its control over the country not as an undistinguished mandatory state, but as an advisor in a non-irritating way. As Treaty discussions in the Cabinet started in early 1922, oppositions have also started. Extreme nationalists including Shi'i ulama and leading supporters and even men of the King held an opposing position against the Mandate control and demanded a complete British fall back.[140] However, the cabinet which included notable politicians like Al- Sadun and Al- Timman, accepted the Treaty despite the objections in June 1922 with the addition of a proviso declaring that it must be ratified with the Organic Law and the electoral law by the Constituent Assembly.

Opposition was led mainly by urban nationalists and was expressed through political parties and the press. The opposition was supported mostly by Shi'is, was was Shi'i originated and led. In April 1922, Sheikh Mahdi al- Halisi, a Sh'i mujtahid, called a conference of two hundred Shi'i notables and tribal leaders in Karbala in order to discuss and show their opposition to the Treaty. Meanwhile, three political parties were licensed in Baghdad, the first was moderate and the other two were militantly anti-treaty mostly led by the Shi'is.[141] The Treaty's various articles justified the objections by these three nationalist political parties formed by Shi'i

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[139] Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, Oxford, Westview Press, 1985, p. 43.

[140] Longrigg, *op.cit.,* p. 140.

[141] Marr, *op.cit.,* p. 45.

political elements in Baghdad, the Watani (Patriotic/nationalist), Nahda (Awakening) and which were matched by the moderate Hizb al-Hurr (Free Party) of Sayid Mahmoud al-Gaylani which declared that the Treaty was only a sugar- coated mandate, which creates a façade Iraqi state. These parties were hybrid organizations. In the emerging politics of the new state, with its apparent commitment to the idea of popular sovereignty and its apparent attempt to represent the will of the people through elected representatives, the voice of the majority might count in a way which it had never done before. The new Shi'i parties and the press were characterized more by violent and irresponsible rhetoric while demanding the public to reject the Treaty and refused to participate in elections.[142] From the perspectives of the leaders of these parties, the natural majority in Iraq was Shi'i. Therefore, they realized that they needed to be organized in order to take advantage of the new situation in which this social fact would carry political weight.[143]

Sir Percy Cox, the High Commissioner of that period, suppressed the oppositions, closed vocal newspapers, and arrested and sent many of Shi'i notables and outspoken leaders to jail. However, these measures were not sufficient to suppress the nationalist opposition, and in 1923 a series of fatwas against the participation in elections were issued by important Shi'i leaders. Not only the British, but also the Iraqi Sunnis, especially the Sunni elite, did not want Shi'is to be represented in the government. They were afraid if Shi'is would gain too much power, this situation would open the door to sectarianism. Therefore, the rebellions were suppressed and the suppression of the Shi'i militants left the leadership of the nationalist movement in the hand of Arab Sunni nationalists.

As formerly mentioned, the Treaty which was ratified by the Constituent Assembly in October 1922 and was to last for twenty years after ratification, reproduced most of the provisions of the Mandate with no direct reference in the text.[144] With an added Protocol to the Treaty signed in 1923, the twenty year period of the Treaty was reduced to four years.

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[142] Longrrig, *op.cit.,* p. 141.

[143] Tripp, *op.cit.,* p. 53.

[144] Longgrig, *op.cit.,* p. 142.

The other wave of the opposition also came from Sunni nationalists and began at the Constituent Assembly in 1924 and continued until the end of the Mandate.

The signature of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty in 1922 was followed by further drafting and redrafting in both Baghdad and London, of the promised of Organic Law; by the completion and ultimate signature in March 1924.[145] The Constituent Assembly was opened on March 26, 1924 and had been called to ratify the three instruments; the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1922 and its protocols, the constitution, and the electoral law. Iraq adopted a parliamentary system modeled on the British system. The constitution (known as the Basic Law), which was broadcasted and passed by the Assembly provided for the right of free expression, publication, assembly, and the formation of and the affiliation to political parties within law.

Opposition within the Assembly by nationalist politicians had started with the launch of a campaign against the Treaty. There were three objectives of the opposition to the 1922 Treaty, namely: to remove the financial burdens placed on the new state as a result of the financial agreement with Britain, to develop a national army through conscription as a means of encouraging nationalism in the public minds and hearts, and to eliminate the dual system of responsibility embodied in the advisory provisions of the Treaty which was giving the British military and economic control over Iraq and also granting British nationals many immunities and privileges in the country.[146] However, the opposition was unsuccessful in achieving their suggested modifications to the treaty, yet their impact was considerable and strong. The demand of those nationalists to control parliament freely continued to the end of the monarchy. Those oppositions and modernizing and nation-building reasons were to become increasingly current among the officials of the Iraqi state and affected Iraqi public life in the 1930s.

The Treaty between the British government and Iraq adopted on September 27th 1924 was ratified by the British King on November 10th and by King Faisal on November 12th 1924. With this agreement, the Organic Law, the Iraqi constitution, endowed:

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[145] *Ibid.,* p. 148.

[146] Marr, *op.cit.,* p. 45-46, see also Longgrig, *op.cit.,* p. 151.

" Iraq with a semi-rigid Constitution which proclaiming it a sovereign state, independent and free with a constitutional heredity monarchy and a representative Government, set for the rights of people and the Crown, the legislature and the ministers, established the Courts, and regulated financial and administrative responsibilities."[147]

The Electoral Law enfranchised every adult male tax-paying:

"Iraqi, and provided for a procedure or primary and secondary election, whereby the secondary electors, one for every 250 primary, elected a deputy to represent every 20.000 voters. The deputy must belong to the same electoral circle, consisting of a group of liwas (provinces), as the voter. Separate representation was enjoyed by tribesman and by the Christian and Jewish minority communities of the liwas (provinces) of Bagdad, Basra and Mosul."[148]

The struggle and resistance over the Treaty during the early years of the Iraqi Kingdom had accomplished a large measure of the dreams and demands of the earlier nationalists. They witnessed an election of an authentic fabric of Iraqi self-government, while steps were taken in every department of national life and government towards the establishment of a modern nation-state.[149] The beginnings of a sense of national self-consciousness, in loyalty to their Kingdom, were coming from elements, even though they were still minority elements of the tribe and countryside quite unused to such concepts. But focusing only on the Treaty brought a failure of developing programs on social and economic issues which became really important especially in 1930s' Iraq.

5.2 Emergence of New Political Elite

Politics in Iraq ran mainly on personal lines and family relations. The politicians formed parliamentary blocs based mainly on personal ties and shifting political alliances. The failure of building broadly based political institutions or to reach out to the groups beyond their personal or family circles was a critical weakness of the Iraqi nationalist movement.[150] Political life was newly emerging in Iraq in that people did not really know about the necessities and about the importance

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[147] Marr, *Idem.*

[148] *Idem.*

[149] Geoff Simons, *op.cit.*, p.217-218 and also see Longgrig, *op.cit.,* p.162-163.

[150] Marr, *op.cit.,* p. 46.

of political life. They were inexperienced on lots of political issues and needed an advisor. The British used this gap very wisely and appointed one advisor to every single deputy in the Assembly in order to maintain its influence over Iraqi politics in a non- irritating way. This deficiency allowed the British and monarchical manipulation and it also prevented any group from establishing sufficient power to move the country in a particular direction.

A Sunni political elite and rulers emerged during this period. Abd al-Muhsin al-Sadun, Nuri al-Said and Ja'far al-Askari were prominent among these newly emerging politicians in Iraqi politics. Al- Sadun was coming from a prominent family from Hedjaz, was trained in the Ottoman school and served as an officer during the Young Turk revolution and was selected as an Arab representative in the Ottoman parliament in which Faisal also had a place. His wealth, experience, and social standing in Iraq gave al-Sadun a degree of independence possessed by few other politicians. He assumed a cabinet position at the request of the British during 1922 and 1923 and he had a position against the Shi'i ulama and tribal leaders while supporting the Treaty of 1922 and being a pro-British politician. These features were pleasing the British while irritating King Faisal.

Looking to the other prominent politicians of the period, Nuri al-Said and Ja'far al-Askari had no personal wealth or family background like al-Sadun and they were more dependent on Faisal's power and on the sustainability of his throne. Nuri al-Said was educated in the Ottoman military academy and had many positions in military issues. He also joined the Arab revolt against the Turks. He was appointed Chief of Staff of the newly established Iraqi army, and later Minister of Defense. It would not be wrong to say that he was one of the most reliable men of Faisal and was his right hand man as a loyal Arab nationalist.

Al-Askari, another Sunni notable and Faisal's trusted associate, was appointed Prime Minister in 1924. His government was already in crisis due to the endless question of the relationship with Great Britain and also due to the continuing Shi'i unrests. With the resignation of a number of powerful figures from his government, al-Askari had to resign in January 1928. He was succeeded by Abd al- Muhsin al-Sadun who called for general elections, believing that a new parliament would allow

him to renegotiate the troubling military and financial agreements with Great Britain and consequently to ensure the acceptance of the draft treaty of 1927. But he and his entire cabinet were also forced to resign by Great Britain in January 1929, which he supported at a certain time. Iraq remained without an official government for three months. In April, a government was finally formed under Tawfiq al-Suwaydi, but accomplished nothing with respect to the Treaty and resigned in August to give way to Abd al- Muhsin al-Sadun once more in June 1929, and the crisis was resolved with this maneuver.

A newly elected labor government in Britain announced its intention to support Iraq's admission to the League of Nations in 1932, recognizing Iraq's responsibility for its own defense and negotiate a new treaty recognizing Iraq's full independence. Al-Sadun formed a new cabinet and started negotiations which soon failed and he lost his credibility before the King. He was assasinated and was then succeeded by Naji al-Suwaidi, brother of Tawfiq, as Prime Minister. His political life lasted a very short time, just as the other Iraqi leaders of the period, and he was compelled to resign and was succeeded by Nuri al-Sa'id in March 1930. As a successful leader, he gathered around him a circle of intimates, many of whom had been colleagues in al-'Ahd and in the Sharifian forces of the Arab Revolt. He also had the strong support and the backing of the King. He rapidly negotiated a new Anglo-Iraqi Treaty which was examined in detail in the former chapters, and which formed the basis of Iraq's relations with Great Britain after Iraq's independence in 1932. It was signed in June 1930.[151] If we review the process which we tried to analyze in the former chapters, it would not be wrong to say that his successful handling of the Treaty and the internal opposition raised him to the position of Iraq's first real powerful politician in the eyes of the British as well as in Faisal's.

In autumn, Nuri held a strictly controlled election and on November 16th 1930, Parliament ratified the treaty by sixty-nine votes to twelve.[152] It provided for mutual help in wartime, required close consultation on foreign affairs, and permitted the British to lease two airbases to be guarded by Iraqis at British expense. Iraq's

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[151] Tripp, *op.cit.,* p. 66.

[152] Marr, *op.cit.,* p. 51.

military forces were to receive aid, equipment, and training from Britain and in return British forces were to enjoy Iraqi assistance and access to all Iraqi facilities, including railways, ports, and airports, in time of war. The Royal Air Force was to remain at the Iraqi air bases and the High Commissioner was to be replaced by an ambassador. Lastly, the Treaty itself was to remain in force for twenty-five years from the date of Iraq's entry into the League of Nations.[153]

Iraqi reaction to the Treaty was strict. Nationalists were disturbed by the privileges given to the British and were specifically opposed to its duration. They believed that the Treaty was not cutting the tie between Iraq and Britain. This nationalist opposition continued until the Revolution of 1958 and was the basis of anti-western sentiment. The Iraq minorities, especially the Christians and Kurds were also against the Treaty but for a contrary reason, they were afraid to lose British support and also their status with this agreement. The Kurds in particular demanded specific safeguards from the League of Nations. There were several uprisings led by Shaikh Mahmoud and Ahmad al-Barzani, supported by many urban Kurdish leaders in the north of the country, mainly in the Kurdish intense areas and but were suppressed by armed force with the help of RAF. In spite of all these oppositions, Nuri al Sa'id's domination of parliament, with the support of the King, ensured the endorsement of the Treaty in October 1932 and Iraq was admitted to the League of Nations. However, economic crisis and transformations in the political world of Iraq faced Nuri with a challenge in another sphere during 1931.

5.3 Political Parties and State Government

Some political parties appeared on the political scene of the country. Political parties were in existence from the early days of the country's establishment. Once an associational law was promulgated on July 28, 1921, a group of men who had been acting against Britain formed al-Hizb al-Watani al-Iraqi. This was accepted and two weeks later, another party called Hizb al-Nahda al-Iraqiyya entered the political

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[153] *Idem.,* see also Tripp, *op.cit.,* p. 66.

arena. They were nationalist parties against the King and the British interference and members of two parties had strong anti-British views. They were demanding that an Anglo-Iraqi treaty should not be negotiated until an assembly was elected in complete freedom. Both two parties were closed and their leaders were expelled by Sir Percy Cox, the High Commissioner who had the full political power over Iraq in those days.

In years, the Nahda party which had been forced to close in 1922 reappeared on the political scene in 1924 and al-Watani al-Iraqi in 1928 as opposition parties. Their persistent opposition to British influence was particularly against the 1930 Anglo-Iraqi Treaty.

By then other parties had been formed such as the government parties Hizb al-Taqaddum, formed by Prime Minister Al-Sa'dun in 1925 and Hizb al-Ahd, formed by Prime Minister Nuri al Sa'id in 1930. Hizb al Sha'b (Peoples Party) formed in 1925 and Hizb al-Ikha al-Watani (the Patriotic/ (Nationalist) Brotherhood Party) created in 1930. All those parties were opposed to the government mainly in regard to Anglo-Iraqi relations, manifested in the Treaties of 1922 and 1930. Those opposition parties built up strong campaigns questioning a range of details of the treaties not just in parliament but also publicly through their own newspapers and other papers in the press.[154]

By the mid-1930s, most of these parties had disappeared from the political scene. After Iraq had signed the twenty five year Treaty with Britain in 1930 and after it had joined the League of Nations in 1932 having gained its independence and sovereignty, the reason behind the establishment of those opposition parties; being against British, diminished significantly and they disappeared from the political scene.[155]

To sum up, we can assert that Iraq's political parties in the country's early period had neither the institutional strength, nor the intellectual direction and purpose

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[154] Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation*, Princeton, N. J: Princeton University Press, 2009, p. 16.

[155] Majid Khadduri, *Independent Iraq, 1932-1958; A Study in Iraqi Politics*, 2nd ed., London, Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 29-30.

of the more established and sophisticated Western counterparts. Nevertheless, these parties contributed a relatively moderate political environment that allowed opposition to important policies by using the press and also were a tool to represent the triggered nationalist feelings of the Iraqi population.

A new nationalist opposition occurred against Nuri al Sa'id and his Ottoman-trained supporters who were backed by the British as well as by the King. This opposition has emerged as a movement to attack the new Treaty and the continuing British connection. Like the members of the government, the opposition leaders were mainly Ottoman-trained Sunni Arab army officers or officials like Yasin al-Hashimi, leader of the Al-Sha'b Party and Ja'far Abu al-Timman, leader of the Watani Party and Kamil al-Jadirji, a liberal, left-wing reformer from a well-known Baghdad family and in addition to these, a group of mid-Euphrates tribal leaders who had opposed the British in 1920 and during the Constituent Assembly. In the late 1930s, they began to build a broader base of forces with which to challenge Faisal and his supporters and due to this, those leaders joined forces to establish a new political party, the one which was mentioned above, al-Ikha al-Watani, which was totally nationalist, anti-British and anti-treaty. Yasin al-Hashimi's group was associated with Sunni Arabs who had long experience in political and administrative positions in the Iraqi state while Ja'far Abu al-Timman's party represented mostly the Sh'ii population who were willing to be engaged in Iraqi politics although it included a number of Sunni figures. And also Ikha al-Watani had very close relations with al-Nahda Party which relied more on Shi'i community and its concerns.

Those parties of Iraq Abu al-Timman and the Ikha al-Watani Party had close links with Jam'iyya Ashab al-San'a (Artisans' Society), a trade union founded, like a number of others, in 1929 partly in response to the effects of the economic recession in Iraq.[156] This society consisted of railway workshop employees, artisans, small traders of Baghdad, shortly lower-middle class workers in Baghdad who were the most taxation-hit community of the country. In 1931, the new party began to campaign against the government in the streets of Baghdad and in the provinces

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[156] Tripp, *op.cit.,* p. 72.

together with this Artisan group leaded by Salih al-Qazzaz, who turned to the new opposition party, the Ikha, for leadership. The alliance between the party and the group was not very successful, indeed it was also short-lived, but it illustrated the emerging social and political forces in Iraq, which is very important for Iraqi nationalism.

The strike of 1931 was the first large-scale rebellion of the lower class against numerous social ills, depression, unjust distribution of wages and income, but most importantly against the new taxes. It originated among the artisans, merchants, and industrial workers of the capital and gradually spread from Baghdad to the mid-Euphrates, including al- Hillah, al- Kufah, Karbala and al-Najaf, and to Basra. For many Iraqis, especially for those groups mentioned above, there was widespread dissatisfaction and anxiety caused by the country's economic mess and government inaction and ineffectiveness. The depression affected the urban working class, and unemployment had reached serious proportions, especially among railroad workers. Agricultural prices were depressed. People did not trust the link between the government and Britain. All of these factors made Iraqi people open to the calls of the Ikha Party and the strike was speeded up by the announcement of the government in July 1931, and by the new Municipal Fees Law which raised the taxes payable by all tradesmen. There were both urban and tribal rebellions against to the current situation and also the new regulations. About 8000 workers and artisans and 3000 petroleum workers participated in the uprising.[157] On July 15, the strike spread to Basra, and was crushed by government action.

Finally, the strike faltered in its second week. There were numerous diversed demands from the participants. The workers demanded nullification of the municipal taxes and unemployment compensation while the Ikha leaders asked for the resignation of the Nuri al Said cabinet and an election to replace it. Al-Sa'id government took the steps to meet the complaints about the Municipal Fees Law, removing a very strong case of objection. They also decided to deal with the strike by separating its two component elements: workers were mollified by rescinding

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[157] Marr, *op.cit.,* p. 53.

taxes on nineteen different classes of workers. In addition to this, the cabinet did not resign, but gained power. In late July, there was an attempt to restart the revolt but it failed and at the end, Nuri al-Sa'id was the winner of the conflict where al-Qazzaz and the Artisans' Society were disbanded by the government in August 1931.

Those developments were very important for the development of nationalism and also for the growth of the state in the Iraqi political history.

In 1931, the admission of Iraq to the League was ongoing. In June of the same year, the League Mandates Commission agreed that the conditions for Iraq's admission as an independent sovereign state seemed to be fulfilled but conditional on preserving and giving certain guarantees concerning the rights of the minorities, especially Kurdish groups, the Assyrians, the Turkomans and the Yazidis, within its borders. Finally, in October 1932, Iraq's membership of the League was approved by a unanimous vote of the League's Assembly. It did not create a big difference in British controlled Iraqi politics mentioned in former chapters. The British influence continued by virtue of the 1930 Treaty and also by the British related ruling traditions among numerous Iraqi elites.

In 1933, some of the elements of the coalition of Iraqi government were dropped out. Recognizing the strength of the anti-British forces, in March 1933 Faisal invited the Ikha leaders to form a cabinet as long as they accepted the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty. The leaders of this party accepted this offer but they lost their important Shi'i support with the withdrawal of Watani party from the coalition. And also Kamil al-Jadirji drifted away as well.[158] The reason for the collapse was obvious, being a coalition of the diverse interests and support groups with little to unite them aside from opposition to the Treaty and to the British influence. The policy of the Ikha was transformed to the willingness of cooperation with the British. Because of this, the party lost its support and reliability and also destroyed its legitimacy in the eyes of traditional opposition forces. This opposition which was led by the Ikha party was briefly allowed into the citadel of power. However, the movement compromised by al-Ikha' collaboration with the British and acceptance of the Treaty.

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[158] *Idem.*

5.4 The Parliament and the Press

Iraq's basic attitudes were drawn from its historical experiences, and were singularly authoritarian. During the 1920s and 1930s, we witnessed a lack of democratic institutions in Iraqi political life. The political parties in the country's early period which had been detailed above, had neither the institutional strength, nor the ideational direction and purpose of the more established and sophisticated Western counterparts nevertheless, these parties promote to a new political environment which allowed opposition to important policies by using the press and they acted as an instrument to present the triggered nationalist feelings among the Iraqi population. By the mid 1930s, the idea of opposition was no longer an unfamiliar concept as before during the Ottoman Empire period. Iraqi political parties were able to influence, even change the policies. They were responsible for implementing the concept of opposition, as an accepted and legitimate political endeavor, into the public consciousness.[159]

The parliamentary life was a characteristic of monarchial Iraq since the Constituent Assembly was elected in 1924. It consisted of a Chamber of Deputies elected by the people and a Senate appointed by the Monarch, whose membership cannot exceed one-fourth of the Chamber of Deputies. The Organic Law (Constitution) approved by the Constituent Assembly in 1924 accorded the Parliament powers and responsibilities not that different from its counterparts in Western Democracies.[160] However, the Parliament had weaknesses when compared to its western examples. The constitution was giving too many privileges and wide powers to the King which limited the authority of the Parliament. In addition to this, there was a predominance of tribal leaders in the Parliament many of whom were barely literate, mostly illiterate, insufficient and uninterested in parliamentary issues. Another reason for the weakness of the Iraqi Parliament was the ongoing continuous control of Britain from the very beginnings of the Monarchy throughout its whole political life. During the 1920s and 1930s, the British kept interfering in the workings

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[159] Dawisha, *op.cit.,* p. 21.

[160] Khadduri, *op.cit.,* p. 13-15.

of the Parliament, suppressing resolutions, preventing the amendments which were against its interests, and also threatening the closure of this institution.[161]

The Iraqi press in the early decades of the country, the similar liberal attitudes and practices evident in the activities of the political parties and in parliamentary debates can also be observed in the case of the press. Articles and editorials critical of governmental policies and personalities were the main character of Iraq's media from the very beginning of the monarchy. The press played an important role in shifting people's attitudes and minds by its records and publications against the absolutism. It prevented the attachment blindly to one idea and authoritarianism thus encouraged Iraqi people to question. This newly accepted tradition of questioning and criticizing among people came to the scene as an opposition to the King as well as to the British influence and control during the Mandate period. Most of the newspapers were associated with various political parties and groupings. Between 1919 and 1933, sixty one papers were published in Iraq, many of them were the voices of the opposition however most of them were fold in a year or two after their publication.[162] They tried to stimulate the consciousness of the middle and literate class, which constituted the prominent groups of nationalism in Iraq.

5.5 Economy

The establishment of the urban Arab Sunnis in the political sphere was accompanied by developments in the economic sphere which tended to strengthen their position. One of them was the growth of a new landed class, due largely to the acquisition by private individuals of prescriptive rights over large tracts of land. The 1920s was also marked by a wonderful growth in private ownership of irrigation pumps in the river zones of Iraq.[163] The main agricultural development of the time was river side pump irrigation. This had been started before 1914 and moderately

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[161] Dawisha, *op.cit.,* p. 22.

[162] *Ibid.,* p. 27.

[163] Marr, *op.cit.,* p. 48.

extended between 1920 and 1925.[164] With the help of fiscal privileges, it began to increase and success therefore became a main future of Iraq's economy. With the developments, it helped to attract capital to agriculture, to utilize the cheap oil available, to exploit the high-lying virgin lands and finally to avoid the precarious changes of flood irrigation. However, it was not a very smooth path for the peasants to adapt to a new type of agriculture. The attraction of peasants to these new lands rather diverted them from the old ones and increased their numbers. Improvements of yields due to fresh lands and secure irrigation, was not matched by superior type or purity of corps.[165] Also, the economic crisis of the early 1930 caused the decrease of the prices, and ruined many hopeful enterprises of this new project.

The politicians of the period encouraged these trends: private ownership of irrigation pumps by tax remissions and benefits to land and pump owners in order to ensure the success of the project. Many politicians were already landowners themselves and others became landowners via a new law in 1926 which encouraged the installation of mechanical pumps to increase the agricultural areas in Iraq and enabled townsmen who continued to irrigate the land by pumps to get a title for the land. They were also supporting this new group with new policies of land grants and tax remissions in order to gain their support and create a group of supporters. By 1930, the growth of a new oligarchy of landlords, urban entrepreneurs, and politicians was well underway.

The new taxation system was well handed by the Iraqi politicians and policy makers. By the end of the Mandate, virtually all citizens of every class were liable for taxes, rent on state land, an animal tax, a property tax, land revenue taxes, income tax and municipal tax on artisans and workmen. Although there were some rebellions and strikes against the collection of these taxes which emerged from some rural and urban groups, just like the 1931 strike, the tax laws were successfully enforced. However, when we look at other developments in the economy, it would not be wrong to say that the development pace was very slow. The Iraqi economy during the 1920s was predominantly agricultural in nature and the major exports were

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[164] Longrigg, *op.cit.,* p. 213.

[165] *Idem.*

focused on agricultural products. Cotton cultivation was tried but had only limited success. In those years, poverty was widespread, there was a big budget deficit, there were debts for their share of the Ottoman debts after its collapse which continued until 1927, and there were also payments for the public facilities constructed by Britain during the war. And like the other countries, Iraq also suffered from the great depression in the end of the 1920s. By 1930, bankruptcies had increased, the prices for cotton goods had decreased to 40% and urban unemployment had increased in key industries such as railroads. As a result, little was accomplished under the Mandate in economic and social development.

Also sensitive to the problems of government finance, were the emerging industries of Iraq, especially textile and the construction. However, in a few sectors, modern industrial methods were being used, generally manufacturing was still largely based on small workshops and traditional technologies and depended on specialized domestic demand and they were heavily dependent on government finance.[166] Problems of productivity, as well as the fall in agricultural prices, hit state revenues and concerns about these revenues in the light of growing world economic depression had led to a professional economists' visit to Iraq.

In 1930, Sir Hilton Young, a British expert, was appointed to investigate the causes of the economic and fiscal crises, the condition of the agricultural economy and land questions and to recommend possible remedies. His report summed up Iraq's economic situation. It demonstrated a substantial increase in agricultural produce due to the pumps, but no improvement in the quality or variety of products. He criticized the rising vast landholdings of southern Iraq and repeated his belief that this government should not rely on powerful mediators in its dealing with the countryside, but should establish direct contacts with all landowners, regardless of the size of their holdings. He also recommended that in the growing number of disputes between pump-owners and the poor peasants, the rights of both should be respected. In his view, this would be achieved through specially constituted land

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[166] Tripp, *op.cit.,* p. 68.

courts independent of the powerful local landed interests. [167] His report and recommendations led to the future Land Settlement Law of 1932.

In addition to those achievements in the agricultural era, we also witnessed some developments in the construction of railways and bridges. We also saw the decrease of Indian labor on railways day by day to be replaced by Iraqis. There were also rapid developments in Iraq's air route systems. The effect of these developments both in trans-desert roads by railway and also in east-west air services fastened the postal communications in that communications with Europe and the region were revolutionized. In addition to this, factories had been opened during the period such as cement, cigarette, shoe, sugar and soap. But the total of these could do little to solve the country's problems.

As mentioned above, industry in the modern sense was slow to appear, cotton-ginning and mechanical transport maintenance depending on the other forms of enterprise have been mentioned but still there were little for the modern manufacture. At a late stage of this period, the future source, which will become the country's greatest single enterprise and wealth advanced during the years and came to the scene; the oil.[168] Developments in the oil industry changed many things in Iraq's economic life contrary to the other industrial and agricultural efforts mentioned.

It would not be wrong to say that the tiny uplifting of Iraqi standards of life in the Mandate period was assisted by these developments in the economic field. The efforts of the public and the government were very important in this direction.

5.6 Army

Probably the most important of all new Iraqi institutions was the army. Military service, the government thought, would encourage the development of national spirit and the discipline and a uniformed life of the rebellious people might create homogeneity among the population which was diversed especially ethnically and religiously. In addition to this, a national army was seen as an important symbol of

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[167] *Ibid.,* p. 70.

[168] Longrigg, *op.cit.,* p. 174-175.

national sovereignty and was vital for the maintenance of internal security and for the suppression of both internal and external threats. First of all the need for the army occurred after the 1920 revolt. The Iraqi people realized the importance of a regular army, and therefore they turned their attention to the development of such an army which would probably replace the tribes as a military force and could eventually be used as a strong instrument against the British.

Following this period, there was a conflict in Mosul with Turkish troops in the north. Also in the north, the Kurdish chiefs and tribesmen were in a state of open revolt. In the south-west of the country, the desert tribes were in a state of disorder. There was also unrest in Shi'i cities, and finally in the west there was constant trouble from the raids by the Syrian tribes. Consequently, the unity and prosperity of the country were threatened by these divisions in that there was an urgent need for a national army. In accordance with all these perceptions, the Iraqi army and security system were built up under British asylum. As of the armed forces, there was the Iraqi army, which was based on voluntary recruitment from 1921 onwards, British forces of ground and air, Iraqi Levies and the Police. Many of the officers of the army formerly served in the Ottoman army but they successfully adapted in the newly established national Iraqi army.

From 1921 to 1925, the army raised its strength to 7.500 men and it remained constant for the next eight years.[169] The shortage of funds all through the 1920s and 1930s prohibited any large-scale building program in these areas but British wartime communication facilities and instruments were converted to Iraqi's commercial use. There were many policies were tried to be implemented in order to create an Iraqi army and great attention was paid to soldiers' training, and new schools and training centers were opened. In 1927, the first group of forty-seven army students graduated from the Royal Military Academy and thirteen more finished their studies in England. In years, after the establishment of new Iraqi state, British forces reduced their control over the Army as well as over the entire institutions of the Country.

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[169] *Ibid.,* p. 166.

The Levies, as latter force, showed a remarkable steadfastness in the dark days of 1920, took its place early in 1922 as a British paid and British commanded force at its disposal, for all purpose helpful to the Iraqi authorities, of the General Officer Commanding. The total strength of the force was some 7500 mainly Assyrians, Arabs and Kurds, with a British officer, successful in tribal and mountain war. Its value was obvious as a relief for outgoing British garrisons in northern Iraq. They had never become as strong as the Iraqi army. However, their services to Iraq were valuable and respected.[170]

The Iraqi Police was also an efficient supporter of the army. The police penetrated into rural districts, patrolled the routes, supported administrative officials and collaborated on active service with the military. At Police headquarters, they were responsible of the control of the specialized departments of criminal and special investigation, of fingerprints, passports, and training. Their number was really few and by 1932, the number of Iraqi police was less than 3000 having grown to a well-trained force of 8000.[171]

Until the early 1930s, the army gained support and enlarged. It was perceived as the nationalist hope of the Iraqi people. In 1933, with the death of King Faisal, a power vacuum occurred in Iraqi politics and revolts broke out and the country's political structure was threatened with total collapse until the final intervention of the army prevented both the outbreak of a wide revolution in all elements of the country and the collapse of the existing political system. The Assyrian crisis and the tribal Kurdish uprisings of 1935-36, which will be detailed below, were examples of those uprisings. The Iraqi army has gained many victories but the suppression of the Assyrian revolt was one of the most significant ones for the army. Therefore, from that time on, the army continued to develop its strength.

The Iraqi army had played a significant role in the Iraqi politics. It always continued to be the focus of nationalist hopes.

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[170] *Ibid.,* p. 167.

[171] Marr, *op.cit.,* p. 49 and also see Longgrig, *op.cit.,* p. 168.

5.7 Creating the Nation

The Shi'is and the Kurds were mainly excluded from the emerging structure of Sunni dominated power in Iraq. Beside these, there were also lesser true minorities such as the Christian sects, Assyrians, Yazidis, Jews and Turkomans.

There had always been troubles concerning the minorities and their situation in Iraq, especially during the Mandate period. Not surprisingly, after the end of the Mandate, a period of transition and of new troubles ushered for the new Iraq state and its leaders. Iraq came face to face with a variety of internal problems. The first and the most obvious was the breakdown of Iraq's fragile unity. A number of religious and ethnic groups reasserted their claims to autonomy or a greater share of power in the central government. The most troublesome were the Christian Assyrians, previously protected by the British, Kurds and Shi'is as well and finally the Yazidis caused problems. Dissatisfactions of these groups were provoked by politicians in Baghdad and finally culminated in a series of tribal revolts that shook the foundations of the newly established state and the new central government.[172]

During the Mandate, British underestimated and ignored the remaining majority of the country but Sunnis. National oppositions among those ignored groups thus evolved during this period. However, the rulers were aware of the importance of the representation of all national bodies in the government in order to create a strong government and a national unity. Therefore, Faisal moved to calm down the nationalist opposition by bringing some of its members into the government. In November 1932, he dismissed Nuri's cabinet and appointed a neutral Prime Minister to hold a parliamentary election and in March 1933 he appointed a new cabinet containing a majority of al-Ikha members.[173] However, in the summer of 1933, the tensions long brewing between the central government and newly settled Assyrian community exploded in a serious crisis.

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[172] Marr, *op.cit.,* p.55-57.

[173] *Idem.*

The Assyrian affair signified Iraq's incapability to deal fairly and firmly with a rebellious minority. Iraqi nationalists took the matter differently and saw Assyrians as a threat to Iraq's national unity. The reason of this perception had historical roots. In 1919, the British principally attempted to shape the Levies into a multifunctional, native force unit capable of conducting operations in a combined arms environment. The establishment of the Iraq Army in 1921 prompted the British to limit Levy recruitment to Assyrians only, and Arab or Kurd volunteers were required to join the army. The British chose the Assyrians due to their superior fighting qualities and their mistrust of Arabs and Kurds, which made them loyal and dependent on British support. Most Iraqis resented the Assyrians due to their unwillingness to assimilate and their subservient relationship with the British. Iraqi politicians thought the Assyrian relationship with the British promoted dependence and the Iraqi Army "likewise saw them as an insult to unity and independence" [174] This resentment of the Assyrians would boil over shortly after Iraq's independence in 1932. The British intended to slowly but surely reduce the number of the Assyrian Levies as the army eventually became self-reliant and independent. The Levies participated in multiple operations throughout the country from 1918-1923 to help suppress threats to the British and the new Iraqi government. During this critical time, the Assyrian Levies were also an important component of Britain's air control scheme in Iraq.

The Assyrian community claimed their autonomy under the leadership of Mar Sham'un in the face of a rising tide of Iraqi nationalism. The settlement of the Christian Assyrians in Iraq after the World War I and their protection under the British had long been resented by the Muslim population as mentioned above. British reliance on Levies, directly on Assyrians, was feared by the Iraqi army which was already sensitive to its own weakness and resented the Levies as a force controlled by a foreign power.[175]

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[174] Matthew W. Williams, *"The British Experience in Iraq from 1914-1926: What Wisdom Can the United States Draw from Its Experience?,"* Master Thesis, Faculty of the US Army Command and General Staff College, Kansas, June 2004, p. 59.

[175] S.Husri, Khaldun, "The Assyrian Affair of 1933 (I)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* Vol.5, 2, 1974, p. 165-166.

Shift of responsibility in the Iraqi army after the independence worried Assyrians. Under the leadership of Mar Sham'un, they attempted to regain their autonomy they once experienced under the Ottoman millet system. Therefore Sham'un went to the League off Nations in order to affirm his case but returned without success. Meanwhile, the Iraqi government started to think about bringing the community to an enclave territory in the north of the country, and they planned to settle the rest of the Assyrians on their own land. This willingness was opposed by Assyrian. Thus in June 1933, a group of them, especially the supporters of the Mar Sham'un, crossed the Tigris into Syria and demanded permission to settle there. However, they were refused by French authorities, and had to turn back. In August, armed Assyrians began to recross the frontier into Iraq, and serious fighting began between them and Iraqi troops.[176] Hundreds of Assyrians villagers were killed by Iraqi troops, joined by the Kurdish tribesman who took the opportunity to plunder dozens of Assyrian villages at the same time.

The anti-Assyrian sentiment among the Iraqi population started to be received as anti-British opposition. Nationalist attacks against the minorities had aroused. The consequences of these nationalist acts were far-reaching. It became obvious that Iraq's capacity for self-government and its policies against minorities was challenged inside and outside the country.[177] Those anti-western and minority affairs damaged Faisal's prestige and power as well.

Another, probably the most important outcome of the affair was that it brought the army into national importance and showed its future political potential for the first time.

For some of the people, this was a gloomy beginning to Iraq's independent existence. For another group of people, it represented the triumph of the new state over those who threatened the unity of the country, and at the same time it crushed a community associated with service to Great Britain.[178]

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[176] Marr, *op.cit*. p. 57-58.

[177] *Idem.*

[178] Tripp, *op.cit,* p. 80.

Another rebellious minority in Iraq were the Kurds. Kurds were the majority of the population in Mosul and were a different ethnicity than their fellow Arab Iraqis. Due to their unique ethnicity and culture, the Kurds have always sought autonomy so that they could handle their own affairs and retain their national identity. Following the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the victorious Allies initially promised the Kurds autonomy in the Treaty of Sevres in 1920. The Ttreaty called for an autonomous Kurdish state and "had stipulated that the Kurds of Turkey and Iraq could apply for admission to the League of Nations within a year"[179] However, Mustafa Kemal's emergence in Turkey effectively canceled this treaty after he secured control of the Kurdish areas in the eastern part of his country.

The British had attempted to establish an autonomous Kurdish area in Mosul as early as 1918. They appointed Sheikh Mahmud to lead this area in Sulaymaniya due to his local political standing and extensive landholdings, but he eventually alienated the British by attempting to become a legitimately independent ruler. He was the first leader of Kurdish risings against the British and then against the Iraqi state. The contradictionary character of his appeal well sums up the nature of Kurdish resistance in this period. His principal following came through the use of traditional tribal networks but he added Islam and the principle of self-determination, and thus he assumed the title of Kurdistan. The British later captured Mahmud and removed him from power in May 1920.[180] However, Turkish side's claim on Mosul in 1922 prompted the British to reinstall Mahmud to re-establish some kind of authority in the region which would act as a protection against further Turkish movements.[181] The British expelled Mahmud from Sulaymaniya again in July 1924 due to his attempt to establish an independent state and for collaborating with the Turks.[182]

In the summer of 1923, the Iraqi government guaranteed that Kurds would be appointed in Kurdish areas and that the Kurdish language would be employed in Kurdish territory, and it instructed officials to proceed with the elections in all

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[179] Marr, *op.cit.,* p. 40.

[180] *Ibid.,* p. 41.

[181] Tripp, *op.cit.,* p. 54.

[182] Marr, *op.cit.,* p. 41.

Kurdish areas under their control.[183] This declaration represented the Kurds' formal integration into Iraq. By 1924, the Kurds had dispatched delegates to the Constituent Assembly in Baghdad.[184] To sum up, Iraqi government had made a creditable effort to honor the Kurds in favor of the League of Nations' recommendations of 1925 which were mentioned in previous chapters. In 1927, Sheikh Mahmud was removed for the last time due to his endless claims for Kurdistan. The leadership of Kurdish opposition passed to Barzan family from about 1930 onwards.

The Kurdish reaction in 1929-1930 to threaten British withdrawal was one of concerns.[185] The elections in Iraq in 1929 created a riot in Sulaymaniya, due to the new Treaty which did not safeguard the rights of the Kurdish areas. In 1930, a Kurdish riot led by Sheikh Mahmud was based on the same claims. He wanted to create a Kurdistan under the British Mandate. However, troops of the Iraqi army with the support of Royal Air Force suppressed the rebellion in 1931 and Mahmud fled to Persia. To sum up, because of the increased nationalist feelings among the Kurds, the period between 1928 and 1931 was an uneasy one for the Kurdish regions of Iraq.[186]

When looking to the other minorities, the unselfconscious Turkomans of Kirkuk, Kifri and their villages made no efforts to emerge from a useful and honest obscurity. They created no problems since Mosul settlement mentioned before and were represented in Iraqi officialdom far beyond their numerical proportion. The Jews were still compact, assiduous, self-sufficient and unambitious. They had a Jewish Finance Minister who kept their place in the administration, in the government offices, dominated many of the markets, owned property, and supported their own schools and hospitals.[187]

During and after the Mandate period, in Iraq there existed both unassimilated minorities and outstanding differences in the level of evolution between social classes. For example the Kurd's character, tradition, habitat, and language and their

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[183] *Idem.*

[184] Longrigg, *op.cit.,* p. 193.

[185] *Ibid.,* p. 194.

[186] *Ibid.,* p. 193-194.

[187] *Ibid.,* p. 192.

separatist ambitions while Assyrians, Yazidis and resident Persians all represented heterogeneous, ill-absorbed elements.

The two biggest opposition groups, the Kurds and the Shi'is always opposed the Mandate and particularly the Sunni dominated government. The Kurds claimed the state of which they formed was Iraqi, not Arab while Shi'is claimed that the Baghdad government was creature of the British and the instrument of Sunni persecution. It would not be wrong to say that the real problem of Iraqi nationalism, both with regard to the Shi'is and the Kurds, has been the Sunnis' attempt to define Iraqi identity as entailing Arab Sunni cultural and political supremacy.[188]

British action from 1920 until the end of the Mandate in 1932, worked powerfully to create in Baghdad a centralized government ruling over a population different and heterogeneous, which had no ties of affection, loyalty or custom bound to its rulers. Therefore, the British had to put forth their power and influence and eliminate all potential and actual resistance to them in order to establish the authority of these rulers. The British controlled the Shi'is and Kurds and made it clear to the Jews, the Assyrians and the other minority groups that they had to obey Faisal and his governors for their protection and welfare.[189]

In Iraq, there were Sunnis ruling over Shi'is, Jews, Christians and other sects which caused the oppositions against the newly established state during the years. Shi'i grievances remained alive, and led again and again to revolts in the Euphrates. Exactly the same was true for the Kurdish tribes in the north. Both groups declared that they did not want to be ruled by the Sunni government of Baghdad. As mentioned in the former chapters, Sunni-Shii antagonism was a constant of Iraqi politics under the Mandate. The government, as the Shi'is complained, was the privilege of Sunnis given by the British Government's sectarian discriminative policy which was also obvious in the parliament where there were only a few ministers representing the Shi'i majority. The same policy also applied to the

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[188] Liora Lukitz, "Nationalism in Post-Imperial Iraq: The Complexities of Collective Identity," *Critical Review,* Vol. 21, No. 1, 04.07.2009, p. 14.

[189] Elie Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version and Other Middle-Eastern Studies*, New Edition, London, University Press of New England, 1984, p. 258-260.

appointment of the officials, the selection of civil servants and members of the Parliament. All of these discriminations deepened the Shi'is grievances. The new Iraqi government's discriminative policies caused resistance among almost all the minority groups of the country, especially among Kurds, Assyrians and Yezidis.

As a part of the modernizing colonial project, the British constructed Iraq out of the three provinces of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul, installed a monarchy, a constitution and parliament, and created a modern administrative bureaucracy centered in Baghdad. One of the trivets of this project was the creation of a unified nation, which is easier to keep under control. In order to achieve this goal, the new government under Faisal kept implementing a Sunni-Arab hegemonized administration in the country. There were oppositions, riots against this type of administration but in order to create a one-nation, the new Iraqi government suppressed all these opposing movements by force, sometimes an unbalanced one as witnessed in the Assyrian case. Those repressions were perceived as the triumph of the new state over those who threatened the unity of the country. At the same time, it crushed the foreign British power, which started to be perceived as anti-imperialism.

5.8. Education and Health

Education and medical services were well conceived and showed substantial advance during the period.

There was a lack of trained people in the country and there was also a shortage of funds in order to improve the educational system. But with the start of state-formation process of the new Kingdom, new steps were taken. The educational system started to be reorganized by focusing on primary schools first. While examining the progress of education in Iraq during this period, we should mention a British administrator, Major H.E. Bowman, who was the head of the educational department in Iraq. His policies were very fruitful in order to create a national education system in the country. Bowman concentrated on appointing and training qualified teachers because there were not enough trained teachers to staff the primary schools. In addition to finding qualified teachers, he overhauled the curricula to

include instruction in the Arabic language for most schools and Turkish, Persian, and Kurdish in regions where those languages were spoken. He promoted religious instruction dependent on the student's preference or family faith, in contrast to the old Turkish administration where only Sunni Islam was taught. He also promoted education for females, something practically non-existent under the Turkish rule. He encouraged Arab-style dress and did not allow schools to fly the British flag or its students to swear allegiance to Britain or to any other nation which demonstrated that Bowman supported the establishment of an Iraqi national education system. [190]

Development of secondary schools was reorganized as well. Secondary education was intended to be established in order to provide an eventual path to government service. As well as Islamic schools, all other religious schools like Catholic, Protestant, Jewish were also operated in Iraq. Bowman also continued supporting commercial and technical schools and managed to open a training college for teachers and a law school in Baghdad by 1920. Overall, despite the lack of resources, an efficient and well-rounded educational system which tried to accommodate all ethnicities and religions was tried to be established in Iraq.

The Ministry of Education was established in 1923 as an all Iraqi executive authority. Sati al-Husri, Faisal's Director-General of Education from 1923-1927 subsequently used this educational foundation in order to establish a coherent and controlled national ideology throughout the school system.

A monolithic education system had been adopted via these newly established schools, and thus there was an attempt to bring homogeneity to the population of Iraq. In the state making process of Iraq, in forming a society, a nation and a nation-state, to underrate the specific cultural and religious traditions of different ethnic/religious communities was important in order to provide a foundation for shaping a common identity. At that point, pan-Arabism was promoted throughout the educational system in new schools of Iraq in an attempt to unify the different ethnicities and religions of the Iraqi population. This educational system helped to stimulate an anti–British nationalistic passion in Iraq.

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[190] Arnold Wilson, *Mesopotamia, 1914-1917: Loyalties,* London, Oxford University Press, p. 175-177.

The Iraqi health system had been also revitalized during the Mandate period. There was no well qualified health system without real hospitals except in major cities nor doctors and pharmacists as well. In order o rebuild the infrastructure of the Iraqi health system, more than 1,000 personnel were appointed and fifty one dispensaries were operating full time and municipal health departments were established in major cities such as Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul. In addition to these, and in order to stem the spread of disease, a port health department in Basra and a quarantine station at Khanaqin were established. Overall, it would not be wrong to say that measures to improve the health system in Iraq were successfully implemented.[191]

The following policies or actions helped the British to accomplish their goals in Iraq: rapidly establishing an order, maximizing existing governmental infrastructure, facilitating economic activity, establishing an army, speaking the local language, and improving the quality of life by revitalizing the education and health systems. Without these accomplishments, developing Iraq as an independent nation-state would have been very hard. However, Britain's policies succeeded up to a certain extent. We could not talk about a real nation-state. Although the British promised liberty and a benevolent civil administration to all Iraqis, it ended up only privileging a select minority and oppressing the majority by proxy.

To sum of, the Iraqi nation-state, tried to ne constructed by British imperial power in 1921, was able to establish its own sense of unity and sovereignty in time. The legitimacy of the nation-state, rather than being derived from an external power, became in the 1930s dependent on mobilizing and organizing the various social and economic forces in the form of loyalty to the monarchy as well as to its supporter, the British. The Treaty of 1932 that concluded British Mandate rule and proclaimed Iraq as an independent state became the main point of political argument. The creation of a nation-state that was barely modern and hardly independent on the contrary was colonial, provided the context for the appearance of political opposition in Iraq as mentioned in this chapter.

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[191] Williams, *op.cit.*, p. 80.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study is to examine the concepts of nationalism and the formation of nation-state in Iraq under the British experience from 1920 to 1932 while keeping in mind whether or not Iraq can be considered as a territorial nation-state according to the parameters that we have investigated in the main chapters of this research. This thesis was based on the historical, political and cultural elements which influenced the shaping of the story of the formation of Iraq and Iraqi nationalism.

In describing this search with directions, it is important to underline that this was an attempt to present a historical case not just from top to bottom or from bottom up, but from both sides to the centre.

After drawing the main outline of this research in the introduction in order to introduce a way for the reader for better understanding of the main concepts of the thesis, the Second Chapter was dedicated to the emergence of an early Arab nationalism with a clear focus on the Tanzimat Era and the entrance of the western influence to the region. The formation of Iraq under the British Mandate period during 1914-1932 was the center of my attention in the third part. The Mosul question and its effects on the Iraqi state-formation and nationalism process was another pillar of this research and examined in the fourth part. In the Fifth Chapter, I examined Britain's forging of institutions at the national level, and its management of the civil administration in Iraq. Finally, in last chapter the reflections of the early periods of Iraqi nationalism and Iraqi state-formation to the current situation were examined.

The outcomes were evidently demonstrated that it was necessary to show how Iraq's official nationalism developed, under which circumstances and how it linked to the traditional, social, economic and political patterns of the state-formation process.

Reasserting the concepts of nation-building and nationalism in Iraq by reinserting it into its historical context, led to some important conclusions. Iraq's nationalism was not, in its infancy, a reaction against the CUP's policies at all. It should be mentioned that it was influenced by Ottomanism and Turkification policies to some degree and those pressures prepared the first national feelings among the Arabs. However, it is more accurate to assert that during its first stage, Iraqi nationalism was a reaction to the British and was directly linked to the idea of nation as being imported from Britain. Only in its second stage in the 1930s, when Iraq declared its independence and the state's institutions had been established, this nationalism was filled with a resentment that grew in intensity.[192]

Actually Arab nationalism, notably Iraqi nationalism, was started to be developed and evolved into a different concept that is pan-Arabism, whose origins lie in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The popular nationalism in the Middle East during the 1950s and 1960s was the idea of Arab unity, pan-Arabism, that the newly independent Arab states had a common and a shared culture as well as a historical experience and shared interests that was sufficient in order to create a union. Pan-Arabism has its roots in the 1930s, seeking for unification among the Arab peoples and the countries in Arab World. It was progressed and gained pace in the 1940s and finally it reached its peaks during the 1950s and in the mid 1960s. Pan-Arabism is closely connected to Arab nationalism which also asserts that the Arabs should constitute a single nation.

In one perspective, it has been argued by some scholars that, pan-Arabism had emerged as a replacement for pan-Islamism with the more narrowed focus on the Arabs rather than on Muslims. For another group of scholars, it was an expression of resistance to the colonialism of Britain and France which had imposed a territorial division upon the region. For yet some other scholars, pan-Arabism was an expression of opposition to the effort of the newly formed states and governments of the mandates to encourage separate national identities.

The most important pan-Arabist movements of the period were Ba'thism and Nasserism. The main theorist of Ba'th was Michel Aflaq, a Christian from

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[192] Liora Lukitz, *Iraq: Search for National Identity,* London, Frank Cass, 1995, p. 153.

Damascus, asserting that there was a single Arab nation, with the right to live in a single united state. This principle was covering all contemporary Arabic-speaking countries and all Arabs whether they were Muslims or not. The ultimate aim in this ideology was a single united Arab nation. Arab society could only be revitalized through the Arab unity and the Arabs should gather against imperialism. In the middle 1950s, the Ba'th ideology amalgamated with socialism and the Ba'th party, which was founded in Syria in 1944, was also combined with a socialist party. In this new form, its influence spread in Syria and in its surrounding countries, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq as well as in the other countries of the Arabian Peninsula. The Ba'th was important both in the movements which led to the formation of the United Arab Republic between Egypt and Syria in 1958 and in its dissolution in 1961 due to the differences of ideas and clash of interests between these countries. Similarly, in Iraq, after the 1958 Revolution it had a growing influence. Consequently, the concept of Ba'th as a movement changed and it became a powerful political force.

Another important pan-Arabist movement of the period was Nasserism which has taken its name from Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. Nasser was strongly defended the idea of the unification of the Arab world as a political, cultural and economic super power against external interventions, particularly against British imperialism. The ideology was foreseeing a united Arab union revived by a genuine social revolution and was met with a vast public acceptance in many of Arab countries. Therefore the United Arab Republic formed between Egypt and Syria in 1958 as mentioned above. For countries in the region, Nasserism remained as a powerful symbol of unity and revolution and throughout the 1960s, the public life of Arab countries was dominated by this idea of socialist form of pan Arabism with Abdel Nasser as its leader and symbol. However, pan-Arabism has started to be declined. The break up of the union between Egypt and Syria in 1961 showed the limits of Nasser's leadership and restrictions of the common interests of Arab states. The limitation of Egyptian pan-Arabism was shown more apparently in the crisis which occurred in 1967, the defeat of the Arabs in the Arab-Israeli War. In addition to the decline of Egyptian power, the inability of pan-Arabist governments to engender the economic growth and the rise of Islamist fundamentalism were also the

other facts of this weakening. Pan-Arabism was also challenged by nationalist particularism that each regime in the Middle Eastern region was started to stress on its own local territorial nationalism, especially in Egypt itself where people have a deep sense of their identity as Egyptians, not as Arabs. Also during and afterwards the Arab-Israeli War of 1973, the Arab states have started to use oil as an economic and political weapon in international affairs. And also by the signing of the Camp David accords between Egypt and Israel and by the Iran-Iraq War therefore Pan-Arabism lost its popularity among the Arabs and started to decline as formerly mentioned. After the decline of Nasser's power as the leader of the whole Arab world, different actors were eventually tried to take his place as leaders of pan-Arabism, notably Saddam Hussein of Iraq, in an attempt to stir opposition the UN coalition forces during the Persian Gulf War. [193]

It is important to obtain the close relationship between Arab nationalism and pan-Arabism. As mentioned above, the latter is a movement of unification of the Arab World that is based on the similar cultural, political and social characteristics of the countries that constitutes the Arab World. Pan-Arabism can be considered as a continuation of Arab nationalism whose early period was tried to be analyzed in this study. One of the common elements is the rejection of Western external involvement in Arab countries in the context of the colonization processes. Pan-Arabism has always had an anti-Western sentiment as well as Arab nationalism, particularly like Iraqi nationalism which is the main subject of this thesis.

Linking pan-Arabism with Iraqi nationalism, in the literature, the subject of Iraqi nationalism generally discussed as Iraqi nationalism had been started in the 1930s with Palestine question and progressed during the 1940s and it reached its peaks in the 1950s and the 1960s with pan-Arabism as briefly introduced in the introduction. However, there is a shortage in the literature about the historical background and study of the early hoods of Iraqi nationalism that I was intended to choose this topic in order to analyze in my thesis. This study extended the period of the studies on Iraqi nationalism and focused on early Iraqi nationalism which is

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[193] Albert Hourani, *Arap Halkları Tarihi,* İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1991, p. 467-475. See also Adid Davişa, *Arap Milliyetçiliği Zaferden Umutsuzluğa*, İstanbul, Literatür yayıncılık, 2004, p. 122-125.

thought to be the main contribution of this thesis to the literature. In order to understand the main dimension of probably the most important nationalist ideologies in the Middle East region, which affected the national independence periods of almost all regional states, pan-Arabism and Ba'thism during the 1950s, particularly in Iraq, it is important to analyze the history and roots of these concepts. Therefore, I intended to study the emergence of Iraqi nationalism during the British Mandate period. I argue in my thesis that Iraqi nationalism has its roots in early history of this state, in accordance with early Arab nationalism. It has started as an opposition to the CUP politics in 1908 and affected from the early Arab nationalism as well and it has also emerged and progressed against the British policies in Iraq during 1920s.

Going back to the period of this study, and in order to understand the essence of Iraqi nationalism, it is crucial to take into account the influence of the CUP policies, the disengagement from the Ottoman Empire, from a *millet* system and transition to the British imperialist mandate system, the transplantation to Mesopotamia of a foreign concept of a nation, a redefinition of the same concept in terms of resentment against the imported country, the oppositions to the British rule and further resentment, but this time originated inside the country, which were not analyzed in the context of this study however, should be mentioned in the further process of Iraqi nationalism especially in the late 1930s and afterwards and finally the effects of early Arab nationalism period marked Iraqi nationalism different from the other nationalisms in the region.

As analyzed during the chapters, Iraq's territorial continuity was an outcome of British interests in the area, as seen in the Mosul question, to no lesser extent than the interests of the Sunni political leadership. This is the reason why Britain played such an active role in helping Baghdad extend its Sunni hegemony to the provinces and in providing the legitimacy for a Sunni minority to rule over a Shi'i majority and Kurds. The later was accomplished by entering into agreements with Sunni leaders. It would be asserted that his legitimacy was drawn from the official recognition of pan-Arabism as the Iraqi national doctrine.

In this sense, we can affirm that one of the main conclusions is that Britain had served both as a model of emulation and as a source of resentment. The reaction to

an imported nationalism to its source of importation was witnessed in the Iraqi case; the resentment of Britain and its impression in the area remained a constant in Iraq nationalism, even long after the British era in Iraq had ended.

As highlighted in the introduction of this thesis that a territorial nation-state is formed with four criteria of: a bureaucratic organization, the monopoly of use of violence, territoriality and lastly the people. Those concepts are closely linked together. Britain tried to accomplish these criteria in order to create a modern Iraq. In this study, Iraqi case tried to be analysed whether if it fits the model of modern state-formation process of four principles. The state-formation of Iraq was implemented as projected at the beginning. However, as a result, Iraq became a colonial state in a sense rather than a modern state because the process did not grew naturally in this case, it was brought from top to down by an external power, by Britain, was not from buttom up, therefore new Iraqi state failed to become a "real modern state." There are also some inner and outer dynamics in a country which led to create a modern state and the formation of a modern state takes long time. A very short period of twelve years under the British Mandate was not a sufficient period for Iraq to become a modern state. In addition to this, efforts of modernizing a country by imposing the program from top to down did also not worked in the Iraqi case. Modern state and nationalism concepts follow and tied together in general. First, a nation feeling emerges in a population and then newly emerged elite creates the modern state. However, in Iraq, we witness that Iraqi nationalism emerged as an opposition and a response the British creation of so-called modern but colonial state. It would be asserted that there was not a state emergency from a national identity in Iraqi case. However, the patterns established during the first decades seemed to influence the political, economic and social aspects of Iraq's internal politics in the future.

This thesis examined the British experience in Iraq during 1914-1932. Britain invaded Iraq to secure its oil interests and to protect its lines of communication to India. The British initially defeated Ottoman forces and captured the Basra vilayet in December 1914. Although Basra's capture accomplished Britain's campaign objectives, it was followed by an ill-advised advance to Baghdad which culminated

in defeat by the Ottomans in the Great Revolt of 1916. The British regrouped and captured Baghdad in 1917 and Mosul in 1918. After the war, despite the Iraqi Nationalist Revolt of 1920, Britain proceeded with plans to rule the mandate of Iraq awarded to them at the San Remo Conference and confirmed by the League of Nations in 1922. The new state would consist of the three former Ottoman provinces of Baghdad, Basra and Mosul with their diverse religious and ethnic populations now tied in one country. Instead of direct colonial rule, the British administration decided to create an Iraqi government which was to be linked to Britain by a treaty instead of occupying the country as mentioned above. British advisers would oversee the work of new Iraqi cabinet ministers who would head the departments of a new constitutional monarchy. Additionally, instead of large numbers of troops, Britain decided to use its air forces and also supported Iraq in developing its own military.

The creation of Iraq was finalized by Sir Winston Churchill, the Head of the Colonial Office in Iraq, and his colleagues at the Cairo Conference on March 21st 1921. The borders of this new Iraqi state were drawn and decisions were made about the new government and administration which would last until 1958.

In Cairo, it was decided to establish a constitutional monarchy led by Amir Faisal leader of the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire which was examined in the former chapters, and a joint defense composed of an Iraqi Army, the Royal Air Force, and British-led Levies. British officers were confident that Faisal was the right choice and would be acceptable to most Iraqis due to his Sharifian lineage and his leadership during the Arab Revolt in 1916. They also believed that he would have no significant opposition and would be agreeable to British direction. Britain did not want to force the throne process of the new country which paved the way for the new administration. Alternative candidates were deported and a referendum was held. They declared that most of the population accepted the new king Faisal to rule Iraq. In August 1921 he was enthroned and the business of governing Iraq began.

Under the mandate and guidance of Britain, there was progress and institutions began to take root. To give the appearance of an equal arrangement between two independent nations, the British defined its relationship with Iraq through the Anglo-

Iraqi Treaty, signed in 1922. The final component of building the Iraqi nation-state took place with the Constituent Assembly. The Constituent Assembly ratified the Organic and Electoral Laws in March 1924. In 1930, the treaty with Britain was passed and the process of a not a modern, but a colonial state was implemented inclusive of: political parties and political elite, civil service, economy, military, schools and a medical care establishment. In 1932 when the League of Nations ended the Mandate, Iraq became a so-called independent country. However, Britain remained the ultimate authority of power, that the Royal Air Force retained its bases in Iraq until 1958.

When Iraq was accepted as an independent country in the League of Nations, it was not really an independent state. In reality, the situation was totally different. Although the policies of the modern state making process tried to be implemented, they did not work. In 1932 the new Iraqi governing elite appointed by the British inherited a badly built and unstable state. Regarding the British existence in Iraq, we can finally talk about the concerns and wishes for the lower risk, the lesser cost and the short-term advantages were more important than the possible future benefits of fundamental social transformation in Iraq.

In order to conclude, Britain's intervention and struggle to build an Iraqi state lasted eighteen years. Iraq in 1932 was a quasi and a colonial state, dependent for its survival not on its military strength or administrative competence but on international guarantees of its borders. Although the British promised liberty and a well implemented civil administration to all Iraqis, it ended in failure. However, it filled the hearts of the Iraqis full of nationalist feelings and resentment.

In order to analyze the situation in Iraq in the last decade, this study of Iraqi nationalism and state-formation under the British Mandate showed important reflections that related to the contemporary developments in Iraq's history. On March 20th, 2003, a US led coalition of western states invaded Iraq, removing Saddam Hussein from power and marking the end of the Ba'thist regime. The invasion and the use of pre-emptive war by the Bush administration can further be seen as the most significant example of undermining of post-colonial sovereignty to date. It was witnessed that the current modern state-formation process and regime

change in Iraq set the stage for the emergence on an unstable system with recurrent crises and conflicts just as it has happened during and after the British Mandate period. Iraqi nationalism regained power against the new US rule just as it was against British colonialism before. The Iraqis' reaction to the new ruler was clear: a rising Iraqi nationalism. The US led operation marked clearly the political agenda of Iraq at the beginning of the 21st century. President Bush determined the practice of promoting Western democratic values to Iraq further exacerbated the formerly mentioned resentment, ultimately leading to its expansion from Britain only, to the West in general. Both British Mandate and the US rule could not create a stable modern Iraq. In this context, I think it is appropriate to ask ourselves the following question: Is Iraq currently a territorial nation-state?

"Today, America has a dual responsibility: to help Iraq forge a better future and to leave Iraq to Iraqis"[194]. Eighty years after its independence, as seen from the speech of the President of the US, Barack Obama, it is obvious that the situation in Iraq still remains unsustainable with its still unsolved problems involving disputed boundaries, inappropriate political institutions and many national minorities which failed to be represented.

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[194] President Obama speech in Cairo, 4th June 2009,
http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2009/06/20096410251287187.html

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