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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KURDS OF IRAQ  
SINCE THE OTTOMAN CONQUESTS

by

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THE KURDS OF IRAQ

Prados

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss the development of the Kurds in Iraq through a description of these people and a resume of their history. The year 1515, which marks the beginning of the extension of Ottoman control over the Kurdish areas of Iraq, has been chosen as the point of departure for the events and conditions to be considered, whereas the year 1958, which marks the establishment of the republican regime in Iraq, has been selected as the terminal point for this thesis.

The first chapter seeks to define and delimit the Kurds of Iraq as a group of people by a descriptive analysis of certain basic criteria. These include the area of inhabitance, population, ethnic origin, subdivisions, language, religion, and physical characteristics. A short description of each tribe is included. Character, customs, and dress are not considered here, but reference is made to appropriate source material wherein these aspects are treated.

The second, third, and fourth chapters are primarily chronological. The second chapter is concerned with the various means whereby the Kurdish areas became in fact as well as in name a part of the Ottoman Empire; in this chapter consideration is accorded both to the early Kurdish principalities which were virtually independent from the Porte, the consolidation of Ottoman control, and the subsequent regrouping of Kurdish national movements around intellectuals such as the Badr Khans and tribal groups such as the Barzanis and Barzinjis. The third chapter is concerned with the Kurds under the Mandatory regime in Iraq; the major points included here are the steps by which the Kurdish areas were incorporated into the Kingdom of Iraq, the specific measures which

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guaranteed the status of Kurds in Iraq, and the revolts of Shaykhs Mahmud Barzinji and Ahmad Barzani. The fourth chapter treats the Kurds under the independent regime in Iraq; after the relatively quiet decade of the 1930's and the role of Bakr Sidqi have been summarized, the events from 1941 to 1958 are followed from two separate aspects--the role of Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the role of the Iraqi Government, with respect to the Kurdish problem. With the establishment of the republican regime and the return of Mulla Mustafa in the latter year, a new era began in the story of the Kurds of Iraq.

After examining this problem, the author came to the conclusion that Kurdish nationalism is still in a rudimentary stage and furnishes a fertile field for exploitation by outside currents which are not necessarily germane to the life of the Kurdish people themselves. He further concluded that with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in which Kurds had shared with other ethnic groups a common membership in the "Community of Muslim Believers", and with the establishment of modern secular nations, it has become necessary to find a new basis by which the Kurds may identify themselves with the states of which they currently form a part.

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## CHAPTER I: IRAQI KURDISTAN: COUNTRY AND PEOPLE

## 1. DEFINITION OF TERMS

In order to arrive at a correct understanding of the problem of the Kurds in 'Iraq...it is necessary to bear in mind two very important points. The first is that the Kurds in 'Iraq form only a fraction, though admittedly an important fraction, of a race which is divided between Turkey, Persia, 'Iraq, and Syria. The second is that the 'Iraqi Government<sup>1</sup> was not in existence until some time after the war...

The preceding excerpt from a report published by the United Kingdom during the interwar period helps to clarify the basic relationship between the ancient race and the modern nation with which this thesis will be concerned. The existence of the Kurdish people antedated by many centuries the formation of the modern Iraqi state; consequently in tracing, as we propose to do, the development of the Kurdish groups in Iraq, it becomes necessary for us to define both our principal terms and the area on which we shall focus our attention.

The definition of the Kurds as a group of people involves an examination of certain criteria such as area of inhabitation, name and origin, components, language, religion, and group characteristics; consideration will be accorded to these factors in the succeeding portions of this chapter. The term "Iraq" will be construed to refer both to the independent country of that name created after World War I and to the former Ottoman provinces roughly correspondent thereto,

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1. United Kingdom, Special Report on the Progress of Iraq 1920-1931, p. 125.

namely, the wilayats of Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra.<sup>2</sup> A problem is encountered in identifying the Kurds of Iraq; inasmuch as some Kurdish tribes are still totally or partially nomadic and periodically traverse international frontiers during their annual migrations, the various listings of these tribes feature some discrepancies. In dealing with the Kurds of Iraq, we shall limit our discussion to those Kurdish tribes located wholly or partially in Iraq as enumerated by Abbas Azzawi.<sup>3</sup> The terms "Kurdistan" and "Iraqi Kurdistan" will be used to denote areas which will be delimited in the second topic of this chapter.

In our discussion of the Kurdish area and people we shall be concerned primarily with these aspects as they appertain to Iraqi territory, but we will include data on the Kurds and Kurdish regions outside of Iraq

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2. During the Ottoman era, of these areas only a small portion of the wilayat of Baghdad and a considerable portion of the wilayat of Mosul were populated by Kurds. Stephen H. Longrigg, 'Iraq 1900-1950, p. 8; C.J. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks, and Arabs, p. 9. In so employing the term "Iraq" we are following the precedent set by Longrigg, who in writing on this territory as it existed prior to World War I states: "The territory whose history during the four latest centuries forms the subject of this book is that--with differences in detail only--of the Turkish provinces of Mosul, Baghdad, and Basrah in their final form. The propriety with which the name 'Iraq can thus be applied may, indeed, be disputed; during most of the period itself it was not in general use with this significance, and it has been used at times to denote a quite different territory; but no more convenient name suggests itself...." Stephen H. Longrigg, Four Centuries of Modern 'Iraq, Preface, p. v. For a detailed discussion of the evolution in usage of the name "Iraq" one may refer to League of Nations, Question of the Frontier Between Turkey and Iraq, 30 Sep 1924, pp. 24-29.
  3. Abbas Azzawi, The Tribes of Iraq ('Asha'ir Al-'Iraq), Volume II. Published in 1947, this work gives the most recent comprehensive listing of Iraqi Kurdish tribes. In our discussion we shall include certain former tribal groupings and principalities from which the present tribes have developed, and shall exclude certain groups such as the Lurs, Laks, and Yazidis whom Azzawi lists but whose claim to Kurdish status is refuted by most commentators.

where such data is necessary to provide a more complete picture.

## 2. DELIMITATION OF THE AREA

### a. Greater Kurdistan

Before proceeding with an examination of our specific area of concentration, namely, the north-eastern portion of Iraq, it would be beneficial to consider first the entire area of Kurdistan. Several determinations of this area have been made, not all of them co-inciding. We shall note and compare three determinations made during the current century.

The Encyclopedia Britannica identifies the area of Kurdistan as follows:

Kurdistan, in its broadest or ethnographical acceptation, means the region inhabited by the Kurds, an area stretching north and south from Mount Ararat to the Diyala tributary of the Tigris, and east and west from about 28 E. to the Kara Su. Thus the country occupied more or less continuously by the Kurds is 600 m. in length from south-east to north-west and from 120-150m. in breadth.<sup>4</sup>

Edmonds' determination corresponds roughly to the preceding, but gives a more detailed outline of the boundaries. He writes as follows:

Kurdistan in its broadest sense means the country inhabited by the Kurds as a homogeneous community. It is divided between Turkey, Iraq, and Persia with small overlaps into the Soviet Union and Syria; thus its boundaries do not coincide with any international frontiers or internal administrative divisions. On the north the border follows roughly the line through Erivan, Erzurum, Erzinjan, (Erzincan), and thence in an arc through Mar'ash (Maras) towards Aleppo; on the south-west it runs along the foothills as far as the Tigris, then just east of the river downstream, then a little north of the line of the Jabal Hamrin to a point on the Iraqi-Persian frontier near Mandali; on the east, in Persia, the limit of the Kurds runs in a south-easterly direction from Erivan so as to include the districts of Maku, part of Khoi, Riza'iya (Urmiya), Mahabad (Sauj Bulaq), Saqqiz and Senna to Kirmanshah.

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4. Encyclopedia Britannica, 1956 Edition, Volume 13, p. 520. It is believed, as a result of map study and other comparisons, that the figure 28 E. may be a misprint for 38 E.

The great high road from Kirmanshah to Karind and thence the straight line to Mandali is approximately the dividing line between the Kurds proper and the kindred Lakks and Lurs, who are sometimes classed as Kurds.<sup>5</sup>

In the British Foreign Office Handbook we find a slightly different determination. Treating Armenia and Kurdistan as a unified area with coterminal boundaries, it placed this composite region between the geographic coordinates 36°30' and 41° North Latitude and 36° and 45° East Longitude, and gave its dimensions as being approximately 325 by 475 miles with an area of between 160,000 and 170,000 square miles.<sup>6</sup>

A comparison of these determinations indicates that the area as outlined by Edmonds comprises additional territory to the south and east not included in the Foreign Office delimitation; by placing the southern and eastern boundaries of Kurdistan respectively at 36°30' North Latitude and 45° East Longitude the latter excludes from Kurdistan the heavily Kurdish Arbil-Kirkuk-Sulaymaniya region of Iraq as well as parts of the Mukri and Beni-Ardalan tribal areas of Iran. Since both areas have had long-standing Kurdish associations and populations,<sup>7</sup> we may conclude that Edmonds' trace of the boundaries is probably a more accurate determination of Kurdistan than is that of the Foreign Office, whose delimitation in terms of geographic coordinates may be taken as a general guide line.

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5. Edmonds, op. cit., p. 2. It is interesting to compare this comprehensive definition with that of a 19th century traveller, Buckingham, who relegates Kurdistan to a tract extending from Diarbekr to Mosul bounded by the Tigris on the north-east, the Arab Desert on the south, and the Euphrates on the west. Thus he would seem to omit the entire Zagros Mountain areas east of the Tigris. J.S. Buckingham, Travels in Mesopotamia, p. 169.
  6. United Kingdom, Foreign Office, Armenia and Kurdistan, p. 2.
  7. For example, the Sulaymaniya region was for 150 years a center of Kurdish activity in Iraq. The Beni Ardalan tribal area has been characterized as "the Kurdistan par excellence of Persia." E.B. Soane, To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise, p. 376.

As was suggested in the preceding paragraph when we made reference to the joint determination of Armenia and Kurdistan, the Kurds have throughout their history shared their habitats with several other ethnic groups; conversely, Kurds may be found outside of Kurdistan as previously defined. In elaborating on his definition of the area of Kurdistan Edmonds states the following:

The inhabitants of Kurdistan as so defined are, of course, not exclusively Kurdish. Before 1914, for instance, there was a large population of Armenians in the part lying north of the 38th parallel of latitude, and the Nestorian Christians well known in England as the Assyrians were numerous in the Hakari province of Turkey and the adjacent Persian district of Urmiya; most, if not all, of these have disappeared from Turkish territory, but several thousands of the Assyrians are now compactly settled in the Amadiya region of Iraq. There are also ancient colonies of Turkomans in a string of towns along the highway from Baghdad to Mosul: Qara Tapa, Kifri, Tuz Khurmatu, Tauq, Kirkuk, Altun Köprü, Arbil, and, beyond Mosul, Tall Afar. But taken by and large the great majority of the population is Kurdish. On the other hand there are islands of Kurds established outside these limits; to the west, for instance, at Damascus, in the Aleppo district, and as far away as Ankara; to the east in the provinces of Qazvin, Khurasan and Kirman.<sup>8</sup>

b. Iraqi Kurdistan

In Iraq, the Kurdish areas comprise the north-eastern regions. Applying the determination made by Edmonds for greater Kurdistan to Iraqi Kurdistan, we find that the south-western borders cutting through Iraqi territory remain the same as outlined in the above-mentioned determination, whereas the eastern, northern, and north-western borders coincide with the three international frontiers of Iran, Turkey, and Syria.

Under the Ottoman regime most of this area was included in the

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8. Edmonds, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3. This same statement is found verbatim in C. J. Edmonds, "The Place of the Kurds in the Middle Eastern Scene," Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, Volume XLV, Part II, April 1958, p. 142.

Mosul wilayat although a very small enclave containing the cities of Khanaqin and Mandali was included in the Baghdad wilayat. Since World War I, the area of the Mosul wilayat has been divided into four liwas: Mosul, consisting of the territory beyond the Greater Zab River and its tributary the Rukuchuk to the Syrian and Turkish frontiers; Arbil, consisting of the territory between the Mosul boundary and the Little Zab River; Kirkuk and Sulaymaniya occupying respectively the western and eastern portions of the territory lying between the Lesser Zab River and the Diyala River. The two adjacent qadas of Khanaqin and Mandali, situated across the Diyala River from Sulaymaniya and now organic to the post-1918 liwa of Diyala, also have large Kurdish populations and may be considered as comprising part of Iraqi Kurdistan.<sup>9</sup> Although Azzawi in his volume dealing with Kurdish tribes lists a tribe from the Diwaniya liwa, he notes that its people speak Arabic rather than Kurdish;<sup>10</sup> in any case this enclave in Diwaniya lies well outside the commonly accepted boundaries of Kurdistan as previously defined, and so this tribe may be regarded (if it is to be considered Kurdish) as forming one of the islands of Kurds established outside of their natural habitat. Thus we may consider Iraqi Kurdistan as comprising the liwas of Sulaymaniya, Arbil, Kirkuk, Mosul, and Diyala; of these five, the first three are located wholly in Kurdistan as defined by Edmonds while the other two are situated partially in Kurdistan.

### 3. GEOGRAPHIC ASPECTS OF THE AREA

Our discussion of the geographic aspects of Kurdistan will include a brief summary of the topography of Greater Kurdistan followed by a

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9. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks, and Arabs, p. 9.  
 10. Azzawi, op. cit., pp. 187-188.

detailed examination of the physical features of Iraqi Kurdistan.<sup>11</sup>

a. Greater Kurdistan

Nikitin observes that the primary feature of Kurdistan is its mountainous topography;<sup>12</sup> we find that the area lies along a north-west to south-east (and in some cases a west to east) axis conforming to the general trend of the mountain ranges.<sup>13</sup> The Kurdish axis may be said to begin at Mt. Ararat whence a great chain of mountains extends south and south-east to a distance of some 2000 kilometers, through south-eastern Turkey, north-eastern Iraq, and western Iran. This north-west to south-east axis forms the long expanse of the Zagros Mountains extending first along the Iraqi-Iranian frontier and subsequently for a thousand kilometers through Iran where it branches out into a group of small ranges inclining toward the Persian Gulf. Meeting the Zagros chain in the northern part of the liwas of Mosul and Arbil is the Armenian extension of the Taurus Mountains running on a west-east axis. Between this area and Mount Ararat, the Kurdish highland area takes on the aspect of a plateau surrounded by higher peaks, for in addition to the mountains just named,

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11. The principal sources employed in our discussion of the geography of Kurdistan are the following: C.J.Edmonds, Kurds, Turks, and Arabs, pp. 15-21; Basile Nikitin, Les Kurdes, pp. 23-42; United Kingdom Naval Staff, Handbook of Mesopotamia, pp. 32-55 (for climatic conditions); United Kingdom Naval Intelligence Division, Iraq and the Persian Gulf, pp. 81-115; League of Nations, Question of the Frontier Between Iraq and Turkey, pp. 20-24. Of these, the first and last mentioned are especially elucidating with respect to Iraqi Kurdistan (although the first is confined in its consideration to the liwas of Sulaymaniya and Kirkuk). In addition to these sources, we mention here three others which are interesting in their verbal descriptions of this region: A.M.Hamilton, Road Through Kurdistan (for the liwa of Arbil); Freya Stark, East is West; and W.A.Wigram and E.T.A.Wigram, The Cradle of Mankind (for the area which is now the liwa of Mosul and south-eastern Turkish Kurdistan).

12. Nikitin, op. cit., p. 37.

13. H.M.Burton, "The Kurds," Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, Volume XXXI, Part I, January 1944, p. 64.



this region is bordered by the highlands of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iran; all of these, excepting the uplands of Azerbaijan, are higher than this plateau whose periphery they form.<sup>14</sup>

Lakes and rivers of some importance are to be found in Kurdistan. Adjacent to the plateau area mentioned in the preceding paragraph we find Lakes Van and Urmia situated in the Kurdish highlands at respective elevations of 5643 and 4180 feet above sea level, the former located in eastern Turkey and the latter in north-western Iran. With respect to river systems, the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers are located in the mountains of Turkish Kurdistan, while the Aras River, flowing subsequently through Armenia to the Caspian Sea, roughly coincides with the northern boundary of Kurdistan. Traversing Iraq are several rivers which will be shortly considered, and smaller streams abound.

b. Iraqi Kurdistan: General Characteristics

Although in Iraqi Kurdistan, as in Greater Kurdistan, the mountainous motif is an important factor, there are some definite topographical differences between this southern Kurdish area and its sister area in Turkey. One of these differences was noted by the Mosul Commission in 1924 which observed: "...in the south we have a country of broad valleys descending rapidly, step by step, to the circle of hills and the plains of the Mosul district; to the north we have an alpine country."<sup>15</sup> Then too not all of Iraqi Kurdistan as previously defined is mountainous; in the south-west, the territory between the Kifri-Altun Köprü highway and the Jabal Hamrin range, like the small enclave from Khanaqin to Mandali in the south-east, is flat or gently undulating.

Cutting across Iraqi Kurdistan in a south-westerly direction and

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14. Kazim Haydar, Al-Akrad, p. 14.

15. League of Nations, op. cit., p. 21.

flowing roughly parallel to each other are three tributaries of the Tigris: these are the Greater Zab, the Lesser Zab, and the Diyala Rivers of which the first named rises in the Armenian Taurus mountains of Turkey and the other two have their sources in Iran. Internally these rivers form the boundaries between the Kurdish liwas of Iraq, with the exception of the boundary between the liwas of Kirkuk and Sulaymaniya; this is formed by another prominent topographic feature, the mountain range known as the Qara Dagh which not only separates the two liwas administratively but also separates topographically the upland area of the former from the mountainous area of the latter. This division into uplands and mountains is a characteristic feature of Iraqi Kurdistan and both types of terrain are found in the other Kurdish liwas, the mountains succeeding the uplands as one progresses north-eastward.

Geologically this area of the former wilayat of Mosul belongs to the Zagros Mountain system, in that it occupies part of the south-western slopes of this chain, consisting of cretaceous rocks and nummulitic calcareous formations, and a part of their foothills, a characteristic gypsum formation which begins at Jazirat Ibn Umar (now Cizre) in extreme southern Turkish Kurdistan and extends south-east toward Baluchistan. The greater part of Iraqi Kurdistan has no geologic connection with the Mesopotamian plain which is formed by slightly undulating strata.<sup>16</sup>

With regard to climatic conditions, the area features a great variety. In the southern flatlands summer temperatures approach those of Baghdad while even in the uplands the summer heat may be considerable. On the other hand the mountainous highlands are snowbound for three months out of the year. The duration of the rainy season is about five

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16. Ibid., p.24.

months, from November to April, but in the highlands thundershowers may occur in the summer. The Mosul Commission has described the climatic conditions of this area in the following terms:

...a combination of the climatic areas of the Zagros Mountains, Lower Mesopotamia, the Syro-Arabian desert and the southern slopes of the Armenian Taurus--a district which even possesses certain of the characteristics of the Mediterranean climate. Its principal feature is the contrast between great aridity in summer and the clearly-defined rainy season in the late winter and spring. These features are made far more apparent by the physiognomy of the country than by the differences in the rainfall.<sup>17</sup>

At this point we shall turn to a more detailed examination of the individual areas of Iraqi Kurdistan. In our discussion we shall follow the outline adopted by the United Kingdom Naval Intelligence Division by which the uplands and mountains are considered separately.<sup>18</sup>

c. The Uplands

The transitional upland country between Lower Mesopotamia and the Kurdish mountains is divided into three parts by the Lesser and Greater Zabs. The Southern Upland Region conforms generally to the liwa of Kirkuk plus the qada of Khanaqin; this rectangular area is bounded on the south-west by the Jabal Hamrin, on the south-east by the Persian frontier, on the north-east by the Bazian ranges which include the Qara Dagh, and on the north-west by the Lesser Zab River. The Central Upland Region corresponds to the south-western part of the liwa of Arbil; it is

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17. Ibid.

18. It may be noted that this work refers to Kurdistan as comprising only the mountainous areas and refers to the uplands under the name "Assyria" inasmuch as they correspond to the ancient empire of that name (p. 6). The value of this work is enhanced by its inclusion of six maps which show the mountains and basins, watersheds and river valleys in detail. The information to be contained in this geographical summary will be derived from this work unless otherwise footnoted.

bounded on three sides respectively by the Greater Zab, Tigris, and Lesser Zab Rivers and on the north-east by the mountain range including the Sefin Dagh. The Northern Upland Region represents a part of the liwa of Mosul and is the triangle of country between the Tigris, the Great Zab, and the Jabal Bakhair and Aqra Dagh ranges. Structurally akin to the Kurdish mountain areas and often historically associated with Lower Mesopotamia, this area is climatically transitional between the two.<sup>19</sup> Passage is generally easy throughout the region.

(1) The Southern Uplands

The principal features of this region are the Jabal Hamrin, the Diyala River Basin in the foothills, the hills and plains of the Kifri-Qara Tepe district, and the Shatt al-Adhaim Basin.

The Jabal Hamrin, which separates the Kurdish uplands from the Mesopotamian plains, is a long narrow treeless range whose highest points vary between 1500 feet above sea level in the north-west and 700 feet in the south-east near the Diyala; a small continuation beyond the Diyala about 500 feet in altitude runs for about 15 miles. The name, meaning "the red range," is derived from the quality of the soil which contains much red clay and sandstone. There are four principal passes through this range: the Sakaltutan and Ain Lailan between the Diyala and Shatt al-Adhaim, the Abu Ghuraib pass six miles south-east of the break made by the Shatt al-Adhaim, and the Ain Nukhaila pass to the north-west.

The Diyala River, which separates the liwas of Kirkuk and Diyala, is fed by three streams on its left bank and gravelly wet-weather torrent beds from the right; from the Qara Dagh it plunges from an elevation of

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19. Sir Reader Bullard, ed. (The Middle East, p. 238) gives the annual rainfall as 13 inches, sufficient to yield a winter crop without irrigation.

1300 feet to an elevation of 300 feet above sea level at Qizil Rabat just above the Jabal Hamrin Gorge. On the left bank, the terrain of the qada of Khanaqin features undulating plains and low hills; the soil is gravel but overlaid with sufficient alluvium for agriculture. On the right bank there are pasture lands to the north and marshy plains to the south; on this side there are parallel folds whose extensions north-westward punctuate and separate the plains of Qara Tepe and Kifri. The Shatt al-Adhaim, a tributary of the Tigris located between the Lesser Zab and the Diyala, and its three principal sources, the Aq Su, the Tauq Chai, and the Qadha Chai, collect the drainage from the large area bounded by the Kifri hills on the south-east, the Bazian ranges on the north-east, the watershed of the Lesser Zab on the north-west, and the Jabal Hamrin on the south-west; portions of this stream network are intermittent.

The valley of the Lesser Zab in the uplands consists of two segments: the upper portion from the defile in the Hab al-Sultan Dagh to the partly Turkoman town of Altun Köprü, and the lower portion flowing from this town to the confluence of the Lesser Zab with the Tigris. The two segments are 50 and 55 miles respectively in length and feature drops of 900 feet and 400 feet in elevation. The river is fed by more tributaries on the right bank than on the left, and the foothills on the right bank of the lower segment are considerably higher than those on the left.

## (2) The Central Uplands

The principal features of this region, from south-west to north-east, are the plain of Qaraj (Makhmur), the parallel ranges of Jabal Qara Chauq and Avana Dagh, and the plains of Koi Sanjaq and Arbil.

The plain of Qaraj is a triangular area bounded by the Tigris,

Lesser Zab, and Qara Jabal Chauq interspersed with several water courses, most of which are intermittent and drain into the Wadi Fadha, and punctuated with a few small hillocks rising one or two hundred feet above the plain which slopes from an elevation of 500 to 1000 feet above sea level from south-west to north-east. The climate is torrid and during most of the year the region has the aspect of desert; the soil, though reputedly fertile, is wasted through lack of rainfall which fluctuates somewhat between years.

The Qara Chauq extends 40 miles between the two Zabs and rises to 2636 feet and 2915 feet on either side of a low gap (1200 feet) known as the pass of Hussayn al-Ghazi; it is a treeless black range worn by rain. Parallel to it runs the Avana Dagh, also treeless but grass-covered, and stretching for about 30 miles between the two Zabs. The two ranges are on a north-west to south-east axis; between them is a generally fertile, 12-mile wide trough known as the Kandinawa.

North-east of Altun Köprü is the plain of Koi Sanjaq which is drained by the right-bank tributaries of the upper segment of the Lesser Zab; water and vegetation here are not overly plentiful. A much more fertile area, consistently cultivated, is the Arbil plain, the most important area between the two Zabs, stony and undulating in the northern part and gently rolling elsewhere.

### (3) The Northern Uplands

The principal features of this region are the plains of Mosul, the Great Zab River, and the foothill belt.

The plains of Mosul consist of undulating steppe country featuring a gentle slope from 700 feet above sea level in the southern part to 2000 feet in the north where the foothills begin to rise; the slope is

punctuated by short but prominent hills. The eastern half of the area is drained by the Great Zab and its tributary the Khazir Su; the western half, by a number of smaller streams including the Wadi Khosar.

The Great Zab River, from the Bekhme Gorge to its junction with the Tigris (a distance of 75 miles), drops from 1300 feet above sea level to about 700 feet; at Isteriya, 6 miles below Bekhme, its width has been recorded as 400 yards and its depth as about 3 feet (in January), while at Eski Kellek the width has been recorded as 150 yards (in October) and the depth as 10 feet. At the former location the current was measured at 6 miles per hour; the stream is unfordable during the flood season. Between the Great Zab and its tributary the Khazir Su there is an open plain, whose southern portion has a rich heavy soil and is well cultivated. The Khazir Su is augmented by its tributary, the Gomel Su.

The foothills, ranging in height between 3000 and 4000 feet above sea level, consist of broad ridges and plateaux, frequently of limestone soil, leading to a barrier of mountain ranges which are, from west to east, Jabal Bakhair, Tang-i-Daria, Chiyakiri Dagh, and Aqra Dagh. Twelve miles east of the western end of the Jabal Bakhair is the Geli Spi which is the pass leading to Zakho. The Gomel Su drains a fertile valley between the Tang-i-Daria and the Chiyakira Dagh.

#### d. The Mountains

The mountainous area of Iraqi Kurdistan is divided into the four river basins of the Diyala, the Lesser Zab, the Greater Zab, and the Khabur, i.e., the basins of the upper or mountainous segments of these rivers. These regions are separated from each other by the watersheds of their major component rivers; they are bordered on the north and east by the international frontiers and on the south and west by those mountain

ranges and foothills which have been previously identified as the delineators of the upland areas from the mountain areas.

(1) Mountain Basin of the Diyala and Shatt al-Adhaim

The principal features of this region are, from west to east, the Bazian ranges, the Bazian Trough, the Baranand Dagh, the plain of Sulaymaniya, the plain of Halabja, and the Hawaraman Dagh. Most of the drainage from this area flows into the Diyala by means of its two right bank tributaries, the Avi-Tanjero and the Cham-i-Dawana; a left bank tributary, the Zinkan, takes some of the drainage from the small acute angle of the qada of Khanaqin. The exception is the Bazian Trough which is drained by high-land tributaries of the Tauq Chai which as we have seen subsequently combines with other streams to form the Shatt al-Adhaim.

The Bazian ranges, which form the boundary between the liwas of Kirkuk and Sulaymaniya, are composed of four segments which are, from south-east to north-west, the Qara Dagh, the Sagirama Dagh, the Hasan Dagh, and the Kani Shaitan.<sup>20</sup> This mountain range for the greater part of its length is over 5000 feet above sea level and is crossed by three passes: the Darband-i-Sagirama, the Darband-i-Basira, and the Bazian Pass.<sup>21</sup> This last takes the asphalt road from Kirkuk to Sulaymaniya. Parallel to the Bazian ranges is the somewhat lower Baranand Dagh; enclosed between it and the three north-western segments of the Bazian range is the Bazian Trough, a small valley drained at about 2000 feet by the headwaters of the Tauq Chai.

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20. Edmonds (*op. cit.*, p. 16) refers to the entire 80-mile range extending from the Diyala to the Lesser Zab as the Qara Dagh.

21. Freya Start (*op. cit.*, p. 183) has christened the "Gap of Darband" as the "inner gate of Kurdistan." As the term "darband" means defile, it is not certain which pass she means.



To the east of the Baranand Dagh is the Sulaymaniya plain which extends south-eastward down the valley of the Tanjero until it merges into the Halabja plain. The former is only about 9 miles wide at Sulaymaniya town where it is limited on the north-east by the Lesser Zab watershed but becomes wider to the south-east. Both plains are the recipients of alluvial deposits brought down by the mountain streams and have rich heavy soil, on which snow may lie for 2 months during the winter. The Hawraman Dagh, rising to heights between 8000 and 9000 feet, forms an impassable barrier for more than 20 miles on the eastern frontier.

(2) Mountain Basin of the Lesser Zab

A great deal of the left bank of the Lesser Zab in the mountain basin is drained by its principal tributary the Qala Chulan whose confluence with the former stream occurs near the Persian border. From here the Lesser Zab changes direction and flows north-west for 28 miles until it breaks the central mountain range, the Kuh-i-Resh at Darband-i-Ramakhan, whence it flows south until it reaches the western edge of the mountain basin. On the north bank, the Kuh-i-Resh, a narrow, black, rocky ridge, separates the Pizhdar plain on the east from the Rania plain on the west; the latter covers about 150 square miles and as a result of poor drainage the ground in winter and spring tends to be marshy.

(3) Mountain Basin of the Greater Zab

This region is intricate. Its component mountains do not in actuality form a single chain; rather they are part of the "chaotic region in which the chains of the Zagros system and those of the Armenian Taurus meet."<sup>22</sup> The Greater Zab itself, entering Iraq flowing north-west

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22. League of Nations, loc. cit. For a discussion of the validity with which this northern boundary may be described as a natural frontier see *ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

to south-east, abruptly changes direction at a point near its confluence with the Rubar-i-Ruwandiz to continue its flow to the south-west. Beyond the point of confluence the river cuts a deep trough through the impeding mountain ranges; this trough is known as the Bekhme Gorge. The other principal tributary of the Greater Zab, the Rukuchuk, forms a part of the boundary between the liwas of Arbil and Mosul until its confluence with the Greater Zab 15 miles upstream from the Rubar-i-Ruwandiz, after which the boundary follows the Greater Zab.

These watercourses divide the mountain basin of the Greater Zab into four blocks. The southern block, included between the Greater Zab, the Rubar-i-Ruwandiz, and the Lesser Zab watershed, consists of five principal ranges: Sefin Dagh, Khati Dagh, Shakh-i-Harir (with crests between 3000 and 4000 feet) and Bejan Dagh, Karokhi Dagh (with crests between 7000 and 8000 feet); there are several passes in this region including the Spilik Pass north of Bejan Dagh, and between the Khati Dagh and the Shakh-i-Harir is found the fertile, 20-mile long Harir Plain. The eastern block, included between the Rubar-i-Ruwandiz, the Great Zab, the Rukuchuk, and the international frontiers (Turkey and Iran), contains the 25-mile long limestone range of the Baradost Dagh which is part of the same fold as the Karokhi Dagh, the Dubor basin which is a partially eroded plateau whose elevation ranges between 4000 and 6000 feet, and several confused knots of high mountains. The northern block, contained by the Rukuchuk, the Turkish frontier, and the Greater Zab, includes several tributaries of the latter flowing south from Turkey; it is a little charted country, almost impassable in many places. The western block, included in the bend of the Greater Zab, contains two main chains separated by tributaries of the Khazir Su; these are the Berat Dagh and the Piris

Dagh, both of which are extensions of ranges located to the west.

(4) The Khabur Basin

The Khabur River enters Iraq at 37°22' North Latitude and 43°10' East Longitude, carves a winding course south through the frontier ranges for 14 miles, then flows west to form the Zakho plain, a treeless, grassy plain, 5 to 10 miles wide with rich clay soil; the river continues west of the town of Zakho for about six miles, follows the Turkish frontier, and subsequently joins the Tigris. This basin is bounded on the south by Jabal Bakhair, Tang-i-Daria, Ghara Dagh which have been previously cited as among the northern limits of the Mosul uplands; on the east, by the Amadiya highlands; on the north, by the Turkish frontier; the basin comes to a point at its western extremity at the confluence of the Khabur and the Tigris. This point is the north-western apex of Iraqi Kurdistan.

e. Mandali

Not included in our previous discussion and not properly belonging geographically either to the uplands or the mountains of Kurdistan is the 50% Kurdish populated town and qada of Mandali located in the liwa of Diyala. Located at the north of a belt of streams originating in Iran and dissipating shortly after they cross the borders, Mandali is situated at the southern apex of Iraqi Kurdistan.

4. POPULATION

a. Basic Considerations

The Kurds of Iraq, if fewer in actual number, represent a higher proportion of the population than do those of Turkey and Iran. For several reasons it is difficult to determine their population figures. Although unlike the regimes of Turkey and Iran the Iraqi governments

have recognized the existence of the Kurds as an individual element in the nation,<sup>23</sup> they have not published the detailed Arab-Kurdish breakdowns of the population in their censuses;<sup>24</sup> estimates made during the last half-century of the Kurdish population of Iraq have varied by as much as 500,000 persons. Besides the normal changes in population over a period of time, these disparities can generally be traced to one of three factors: exaggeration or under-exaggeration by interested persons; the differences of opinion existing as to whether certain tribes or groups should be reckoned as Kurds; and the presence (and resulting difficulty in classification) of mixed elements--persons with partially Kurdish antecedents or "Arabized" Kurds. Still, it would be profitable to examine some of these estimates, both on the basis of total population statistics and of the ratio of Kurds to the total population as found in the administrative districts.

b. Population Statistics

The Kurdish population of Iraq has been variously estimated in the 20th century at figures ranging from 500,000 to 1,000,000. The former figure was adopted by the Mosul Commission in 1924 and represented a fairly detailed study of currently available statistics;<sup>25</sup> Edmonds feels that

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23. Albert Hourani, "Race, Religion, and Nation-State in the Near East," A Vision of History, p. 97.
24. Adams, Doris G., "Current Population Trends in Iraq," The Middle East Journal, Volume 10, No. 2, Spring 1956, p. 156.
25. League of Nations, op. cit., p. 57. In their respective memoranda to the League, the Turks on the basis of censuses taken (allegedly) in 1906 and 1916 submitted the figure 263,830 while the British on the basis of a census of 1922-1924 claimed 494,007. Ibid., p. 31. The Commission noted an inherent weakness in these censuses, namely, that they had in the past been conducted for purposes of military conscription and tax assessment, a fact leading many subjects to try to conceal their identity; thus the figures tend to be misleadingly low. The Commission observed that since compulsory military service was not a factor in the 1922-1924 census, its findings were probably more accurate than those of the Ottoman enumerations cited by the Turkish government. Ibid., p. 32.

the figure was set too low,<sup>26</sup> and Morris, writing of conditions in Iraq in 1921, gives the number of Kurds as approximately 700,000.<sup>27</sup> Subsequent estimates made in the decade of the 1940's placed the figure variously at 750,000 and 800,000.<sup>28</sup>

For an examination of more recent statistics we will once more consider Edmonds' figures. Writing in 1957, he estimates the total number of Kurds in all countries at between 4 and 4½ million and breaks down this grand total as follows: Turkey--2,000,000; Iran--1,100,000; Iraq--900,000; Syria and the Soviet Union--the remainder.<sup>29</sup> All these must be regarded as educated guesses and in the case of Turkey Edmonds admits especial difficulty in arriving at an estimate inasmuch as the government calls them "Mountain Turks" and denies that they form a separate ethnic group. In Iraq, he has based his estimate on the census figures of 1947 which, while not giving the Arab-Kurdish breakdown, did give the totals by nahiyas to which he applied his own estimates of their racial compositions.

Edmonds does not state whether his calculation included a correction factor for the natural population increase which occurred during the 10-year interval between the 1947 census and the publication of his estimate. If we assume that he made no such correction, while crediting the accuracy of his figures for 1947, then we may accept Hourani's estimate published in 1961 of 1,000,000 Iraqi Kurds as being

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26. Edmonds, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

27. James Morris, *The Hashemite Kings*, p. 90.

28. Burton, *op. cit.*, p. 65 and W. G. Elphinstone, "Kurds and the Kurdish Question," *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, Volume XXXV, Part I, January 1948, p. 41. Elphinstone's is the only estimate which the author has found which assigns a higher figure for the Kurds of Iraq than for those of Iran.

29. Edmonds, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4. Elphinstone (*loc. cit.*) assigns 250,000 Kurds to Syria and 20,000 to Armenia (i.e., the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic).

reasonably reliable.<sup>30</sup> It is interesting to note that this figure coincides with the claim put forth by certain Kurdish nationalist groups around 1946.<sup>31</sup>

c. Areas and Percentages<sup>32</sup>

For a more detailed breakdown of populations in Iraq by districts we may again refer to Edmonds' calculations. Both the city and liwa of Sulaymaniya are exclusively Kurdish.<sup>33</sup> Kirkuk city is very mixed and contains a large Turkoman element; its Kurdish population is about 25%; the liwa as a whole which contains the string of Turkoman towns previously mentioned has a slight Kurdish majority--about 51% of the population. Arbil city and liwa have Kurdish percentages representing respectively 60% and 91% of their populations; everywhere in the liwa the Kurds form a majority except for the nahiya of Guwer wherein they comprise about half the population. Mosul city could hardly be reckoned as a Kurdish metropolis in that its Kurdish population is only 5%, though in the liwa itself the figure is about 34%; five of its eight qadas have Kurdish majorities (this includes the qada of Sinjar whose Kurdish element--if it may be considered Kurdish--refers mainly to the Yazidi group). In the liwa of Diyala the qadas of Khanaqin and Mandali have respectively 79% and 50% Kurdish populations. We will conclude our discussion of populations with Edmonds' following summary of Kurdish statistics for the several liwas and other subdivisions of Iraq:

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30. Hourani, loc. cit.

31. Malcolm Burr, "A Note on the Kurds", Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, Volume XXXIII, Parts III & IV, July-Oct 1946, p. 291. He believes that this total must include some of the border-line cases such as the Lurs.

32. The information in this paragraph has been extracted from Edmonds, op. cit., pp. 438-440.

33. This is Edmonds' view. G.L.Harris (Iraq--Its People, Its Culture, Its Society, p. 40) states that it is "almost exclusively Kurdish."

Mosul liwa	210,970
Kirkuk liwa	151,575
Arbil liwa	218,995
Sulaymaniya liwa	222,700
Khanaqin and Mandali qadas	72,360
Elsewhere	23,400
Total: Kurds in Iraq	900,000

#### 4. ETHNIC ORIGINS

##### a. Current Theories

It has been said that "...the ethnical composition of the Kurdish nation is as obscure as its history."<sup>34</sup> Although it is generally, if not universally, conceded that the Kurds are primarily an Aryan race,<sup>35</sup> there exist a number of theories as to their origins, their precise ethnic status, and their connection with neighboring groups such as the Persians, Arabs, and Turks. In particular, the controversy as to whether the Kurds are of Iranian or Turanian origin has assumed not only academic but also international implications during the recent era. An examination of the viewpoint of Arabic, English, and Turkish sources and commentators would be fruitful at this point.

Azzawi, in listing several opinions of Kurdish origins representing the ideas of previous Arab and Persian writers who have explored the geneological aspects in some detail, gives consideration to the theory, first, that the Kurds are the offspring of an early Persian dynasty, second, that they are an Arabic people either through origin or in-breeding, and third, that they are a special race apart from all others.

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34. League of Nations, op. cit., p. 44.

35. Haydar (op. cit., p. 12) says: "Some historians assert that the Kurds are of Aryan origin...and in reality, the learned men passed through other beliefs before arriving at this last one." Soane (op. cit., p. 369, footnote 1) states that the modern Kurd is pure Aryan.

The first theory he does not consider decisive inasmuch as it is based on the existence of an alleged similarity in the Persian and Kurdish languages; in actuality there are many differences between the former and a number of the dialects of the latter. In examining the second theory he cites both historians who have upheld and historians who have refuted the allegation that the Kurds are of Arab origin, but observes that this refutation does not rule out the possibility of a considerable intermingling of Arabic elements with Kurdish, subsequent to the appearance of Islam. He is able to bring up a number of references in support of the third theory, namely, the concept of the Kurds as a completely separate people.<sup>36</sup> But his admission of the impossibility of drawing a definitive conclusion is implicit in his peroration which is an amalgamation of the preceding theories he has discussed: "We do not say more than that they are a people independent from other peoples, influenced by the neighboring Arabs and Iranians."<sup>37</sup>

The British sources tend to emphasize the Iranian identification of the Kurds as well as the alleged historical solidarity between them and the ancient Medes. Longrigg and Stoakes refer to the Kurdish race as

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36. Azzawi, op. cit., pp. 19-20. Azzawi actually mentions five opinions of which we have summarized the first, fourth, and fifth in the main body. The second and third comprise the two legendary stories as told by the Kurds themselves; according to the former the Kurds are the descendents of youths and maidens earmarked for sacrifice to the Persian usurper Dahak, who required two brains for daily nourishment, and saved and smuggled away to the mountains of Kurdistan by a clever minister; according to the latter they are the progeny of 300 virgins ordered by King Solomon but deflowered by devils in Kurdistan before they could be delivered to the monarch. The two stories are also found in Edmonds, op. cit., p. 4 and Soane, op. cit., p. 368, varying somewhat in detail. It is interesting to note that Azzawi dismisses the latter story as "unworthy of mention" but makes no comment on the former.

37. Ibid.; p. 23.



"purest Iranian and perhaps direct successor of the Medes"<sup>38</sup> whereas Soane identifies modern Kurdistan with Media;<sup>39</sup> Edmonds states: "Speaking in general terms, then, I think that on geographical and linguistic grounds one may reasonably say that the Kurds of today represent the Medes of the Third Great Oriental Monarchy...but that the Iranian component has been reinforced by subsequent east-to-west migrations...."<sup>40</sup>

The British Handbook of Mesopotamia espouses the Iranian theory but admits of a wider range of cross-breeding. According to it:

The Kurds are mainly of Iranian stock, but in some regions they include a good deal of wreckage and cross-breeds of other races (Aramaean, Arab, &c.), and the name covers a very heterogeneous collection of tribes. The race is on the whole least mixed in southern Kurdistan (Turkish and Persian), though even here on the Turkish side there is known to be a certain amount of Arab blood in some of the Kurdish communities.<sup>41</sup>

It will be observed that the previously cited references whether Arabic or British have made no allusion to a Turanian element in the composition of the Kurdish people. Although the theory is espoused in its extreme form by the Turks, the British commentators have not ruled out the possibility of a Turanian component in the origin of the Kurds, although they believe that the race has become Aryanized. In the Foreign Office Handbook dealing with Armenia and Kurdistan it is stated that the Kurds are traceable to the ancient Turanian warrior-inhabitants of the mountains above Assyria, known as the Gutu, who coalesced with the Medes

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38. Stephen H. Longrigg and Frank Stoakes, Iraq, p. 26.

39. Soane, op. cit., p. 369.

40. Edmonds, op. cit., p. 7.

41. United Kingdom, Naval Staff, Handbook of Mesopotamia, p. 109. Since this book was prepared in 1918, the term "Turkish" (used here geographically) may be construed as meaning "Iraqi."

after the fall of Nineveh and were subsequently Aryanized by the Aryan immigration of enormous numbers.<sup>42</sup> In the following excerpt from Elphinstone's article, we see this theory combined with several previously quoted ideas:

The Kurds belong to the Aryan group. They have been described as the result of the impact of Iranian elements on indigenous racial stocks which occupied the mountainous mass east of the Euphrates. One of their earliest ancestral tribes, the Guti, is said to have been Turanian. In the north there has been an admixture with Armenian-Caucasian elements and in the South the Kurds have intermarried with the Semitic Arabic-speaking people of the Fertile Crescent.

After the Turkish invasions other elements were superimposed, but, despite all these contacts, the Kurds have retained their individual characteristics.<sup>43</sup>

In the context of their former aspirations toward the annexation of Iraqi Kurdistan and of their subsequent policy of denying separate ethnic status to the Kurds located within their own borders, the Turks, as one might expect, have made the most uncompromising allegations of Kurdish-Turanian solidarity. In 1924 the Mosul Commission noted as follows:

The Turkish memoranda state that the Kurds are not of Iranian but of Turanian origin. They quote the Encyclopedia Britannica, in which the Gudu, who from the remotest times have inhabited the mountains of Assyria, are described as a Turanian people. The Turkish Government also states that there are no differences of race, religion or customs between Turks and Kurds and that the two peoples, though they speak different languages, form one single unit.<sup>44</sup>

Faced with these divergent theories we propose to examine and compare certain historical evidence, including the term "Kurd" with its alleged derivations and the several ancient races who are said to have had connections with the Kurds.

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42. United Kingdom, Foreign Office, op. cit., p. 4.

43. Elphinstone, op. cit., p. 38.

44. League of Nations, op. cit., p. 43.

b. The Term "Kurd" and its Alleged Derivations

In our examination of the origins of the Kurds it is fitting to devote some attention to the origin of the term itself. According to Safrastian, its first appearance in extant literary documents occurs in a book in the Pahlevi language in the third century A.D. wherein the founder of the Persian Sassanid Dynasty mentions among his foes a certain king of the Kurdan or Kurds. He further theorizes that the Sassanid founder shaped the name "Kurd" from the much older term "Guti." Allowing for the similarity between the consonants "K" and "G" as for "D" and "T" (in previous references we have seen the ancient term "Guti" spelled with a "D") and for the insertion of the letter "R" after the vowel "U"--a practice which he says is not unusual in Indo-European languages--Safrastian feels that the connection between the two words is philologically valid; on this basis he opines that the name "Kurd" has been derived from the ancient Guti people.<sup>45</sup> A complicating factor, however, is injected by the philological similarity of the word "Kurd" to "Kardukhi," the tribe who made their debut in history as the horsemen encountered by the Greek Xenophon; the belief has been widespread that it was the Kardukhi who sired the Kurds.<sup>46</sup>

Safrastian reconciles the two theories by mentioning the Kardukhi as being among the tribes of Gutium.<sup>47</sup> The Mosul Commission, however, is

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45. Arshak Safrastian, Kurds and Kurdistan, p. 16. We have made the basic assumption that the terms "Gutu", "Guti", and "Gudu" are synonymous. Safrastian notes that by a coincidence the word "Koort" means wolf in both the Turkish and the new Iranian languages; he observes that this similarity has been exploited by the etymologists of the two Empires although the hypothesis is false. Ibid., p. 97, Notes, Chapter 1, (a).

46. Nikitin, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

47. Safrastian, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

not so certain of this connection; although admitting the possibility of this connection,<sup>48</sup> it observes: "The Gutus appeared at the dawn of our Eurasian history. They disappeared from history long before the Karduchi were heard of."<sup>49</sup> Thus, the attempt to identify the origin of the Kurds by means of verbal similarities leads to complications. Let us examine pertinent aspects of the groups with which the Kurds have been linked.

c. Ancient Races Cited as Progenitors of the Kurds

(1) Guti

Cuneiform inscriptions have indicated that Gutium, or the Guti Kingdom, is one of the oldest of the ancient civilized east. The site of ancient Gutium has been placed in the quadrilateral bounded by the Lower Zab, the Tigris, the Sulaymaniya hills, and the Diyala River.<sup>50</sup> The Mosul Commission concurs, assigning the site of the kingdom to the districts now known as Khanaqin, Kifri, and Kirkuk.<sup>51</sup> Thus a geographic link between Kurdistan and Gutium is established, although it is significant in this connection to note that Nikitin has opined that the Kurds started their society somewhat north of this region in the area of the Greater Zab, Khabur, and Bohtan Rivers.<sup>52</sup>

Safrastian, as we have noted, subscribes to the theory that the Kurds have their origins in the Guti civilization, and in his 12-page resume of this ancient Guti state, he uniformly refers to "the Guti-Kurdish kingdom" or "Gutium-Kurdistan"; it is also worth mentioning that

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48. League of Nations, op. cit., p. 44.

49. Ibid.

50. R. Campbell Thompson, The Cambridge Ancient History, vol. III, pp. 218-223 et passim, quoted in Safrastian, op. cit., p. 18.

51. League of Nations, loc. cit.

52. Nikitin, op. cit., p. 37.

in this summary he makes no mention of the Guti as a Turanian people but rather considers the Guti dynasty as one of the hereditary monarchies of the ancient East.<sup>53</sup> The Mosul Commission goes so far as to say that notwithstanding the statements by the Encyclopedia Britannica and the United Kingdom Foreign Office, not only do we lack decisive proofs of the Turanian origin of the Guti people, but furthermore we cannot as yet formulate any definite theory as to their origin.<sup>54</sup>

(2) Kardukhi

A second race frequently identified with the early Kurds is that of the Kardukhi. Much of the publicity given to this identification is due to the accident of their encounter with the Greek adventurer-historian Xenophon in the Zakho gorge and for many years it was commonly believed that these early foes of the Greek contingent were the progenitors of the Kurds. Safrastian accepts this theory and refers to the encounter as the emergence of the Kurdish tribes on the world stage.<sup>55</sup> However since the 19th century many Orientalists have advanced cogent arguments against this identification of the Kurds with the Kardukhi.<sup>56</sup>

(3) Medes

One final group of ancient peoples commends itself to our consideration in view of the many references which have been made to it as an ancestor of the Kurds; this is the Median people. The Medes left

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53. Safrastian, op. cit., pp. 16-28.

54. League of Nations, loc. cit.

55. Safrastian, op. cit., p. 28.

56. Discussions of these arguments are found in Nikitin, op. cit., pp. 2-12, and League of Nations, loc. cit. Other peoples have been linked with the Kurds. Among them are the Cyrtii and the Chaldeans. The latter theory, widely subscribed to in the 18th century, is based in some degree on the writings of Marco Polo who recorded observations of a Kurdish Christian people in the mountains of the Mosul area. Haydar, op. cit., p. 12.

no written records; in order to reconstruct their history we must resort to conjecture and to such meager inscriptions concerning them as have been left by their contemporaries, such as Assyrians, Sumerians, and Babylonians. Thus we have few clues to their relationship with the Kurds.

Safrastian makes virtually no mention of the Medes and seems to relegate them to a very minor role in the ancient eastern scene. When referring to the part they allegedly played in the destruction of the Assyrian Empire he states that it was actually Gutium, who "under the covering appellation of 'Media'" shared in this operation.<sup>57</sup> Commenting on Xenophon's references to the "Medes" and "Scythians" whom he encountered in the mountains of Kurdistan, he states:

There can be little doubt that there were no "Medes" or "Scythians" in the area, at least at that time, and that these ethnic groups existed only as preconceived notions, then current in Greek literature. The moment the Ten Thousand began to skirt the lower slopes of Jabel Hamrin, they were in contact with the tribes of Gutium, which are represented here as "Medes" or "Scythians."<sup>58</sup>

Edmonds, while not establishing a definite link between Medes and Kurds, accords some attention to the former. Identifying them as an Iranian people who came from some uncertain region north of the central Persian plateau, in company with or following their brother people, the Persians, he notes that Assyrian texts of the 8th century B.C. refer to Median princes bearing Iranian names. By 650 B.C. they dominated the Zagros area; it is not improbable that the Medes, like the Persians, constituted a ruling aristocracy controlling certain local populations whom they did not exterminate but upon whom they imposed their religion and language.<sup>59</sup> Whatever may have been the nature of their empire in

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57. Safrastian, op. cit., p. 26.

58. Ibid., p. 29.

59. Edmonds, op. cit., p. 5.

Kurdistan, it was terminated by Cyrus of Persia in the latter 6th century, B.C.

#### (4) Subsequent Powers

After 500 B.C. the story of the Kurds ceases to be the unraveling of the network of alleged antecedents of the Kurdish people, but becomes rather an enumeration of the empires of which Kurdistan formed a part in succeeding centuries. In general, these powers have not been cited as possible progenitors or major contributors toward the Kurdish race, but in certain cases they had an influence upon the Kurds, as in the case of the Arab expansion as a result of which the Kurds embraced Islam.

Persian power was broken in 331 B.C. with the defeat of Darius III by Alexander the Great. Thereafter Kurdistan formed a part of the following empires: the Seleucids (331 - 129 B.C.), the Parthians (247 B.C.-226 A.D.), the Persian Sasanians (226 - 636 A.D.), the Arab Caliphate (636 - 1258 A.D.), the Mongols and Turkomans (1258 - 1509 A.D.). In the 16th century the frontiers stabilized so as to leave about three fourths of Kurdistan in the Ottoman Empire and one fourth in Persia.<sup>60</sup>

#### d. Discussion

The preceding resume illustrates the uncertainty which exists regarding the ethnic status and origins of the Kurds. A detailed trace of the various alleged progenitors of the modern Kurds from the establishment of Gutium to the rise of Islam is beyond our scope.<sup>61</sup> Even if we could establish the identity and ethnic designation of the first ancestors

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60. Ibid., p. 6.

61. Detailed information on this ancient period is found in Safrastian, op. cit., pp. 16 - 30 and Soane, op. cit., pp. 369 - 371.

of the Kurds, we would still face the problem of ascertaining the nature and extent of additional ethnic elements which have been incorporated into the Kurdish entity, since it appears from the foregoing that the Kurds have absorbed features of several diversified cultures since their earliest times. Edmonds summarizes the matter as follows: "By the seventh century A.D., that is about the time of the Arab conquests, the name Kurd was being applied as a racial term to the Western Iranians established astride the Zagros and to the neighbouring iranized populations; it is perhaps an echo of similar names used with more restricted application by the classical writers..."<sup>62</sup> In concluding its discussion of the Kurds from the ethnic standpoint, the Mosul Commission observes: "The Kurds are neither Arabs, Turks nor Persians, though they are most nearly related to the Persians. They are different and clearly distinguishable from the Turks, and still more different and remote from the Arabs."<sup>63</sup>

In discussing their simultaneous capacities for absorption of foreign elements and maintenance of their ethnic integrity, Elphinstone writes of them: "They possess some trait which enables them to absorb the influences of their neighbours without losing their own separate identity. This I believe to be an important factor in studying the Kurdish problem; if they have been Kurds for 4000 years are they not likely to remain Kurds for some considerable time to come?"<sup>64</sup>

## 6. SUBDIVISIONS

In our discussion of the various groups into which Iraqi Kurdish society may be classified, we propose first to define the three principal

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62. Edmonds, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

63. League of Nations, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

64. Elphinstone, *op. cit.*, p. 38.



subdivisions of the Iraqi Kurds together with the principalities from which they are derived, second, to enumerate and discuss the tribes of which Iraqi Kurdistan is currently composed, and third, to mention certain groups which are not Kurdish by strict definition but which bear considerable resemblance thereto.

a. Major Groups

(1) Enumeration

The Greater Zab River forms a dividing line between the Northern and Southern Kurds, the former having many affinities with the Turkish Kurds and the latter featuring similar connections with the Persian Kurds. The Southern Kurds are often further subdivided thereby producing three major subdivisions which are defined by Harris as follows:

Three general groups of Iraqi Kurds are recognized, conforming to tribal affiliation, linguistic differences, and geographical location. The first group, the Badinan, an extension of the Turkish Kurds, lives in villages which range from Lake Van in Anatolia to the Greater Zab River in Iraq...The second group, the Suran, lives between the Greater and Lesser Zab. The third, the Baban, inhabits the region from the Lesser Zab to the Diyala River.<sup>65</sup>

From the preceding area determination, it follows that the Bahdinan group comprises the liwa of Mosul; the Suran, the liwa of Arbil; and the Baban, the liwas of Kirkuk and Sulaymaniya.<sup>66</sup>

(2) Origins

In the above-quoted excerpt, Harris has named three distinguishing characteristics peculiar to these groups; of these groups, the geographical locations he has already defined, whereas the tribal

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65. Harris, op. cit., p. 40. The terms "Badinan" is spelled "Bahdinan" by Edmonds and Azzawi employs the "H" consonant in his Arabic transcription. Accordingly Edmonds' spelling will be employed here.

66. This is clarified in Edmonds, op. cit., pp. 9 - 10.

affiliations and linguistic differences we shall consider under appropriate succeeding headings. He might easily have added a fourth criterion of distinction, namely, the principalities from which these groups are derived, inasmuch as each of these subdivisions takes its name from a former Kurdish principality which occupied essentially the same territory as its modern counterpart.

After the stabilization of the Ottoman-Persian frontier in the 16th century, several autonomous Kurdish principalities located on the territories of the two empires rose to prominence and retained their quasi-independence until the latter part of the 19th century. Among these were Bohtan, Hakari, Bahdinan, Suran, and Baban in Turkey and Mukri and Ardalan in Persia. The Suran and Baban, representing the principalities in what is now Southern Iraqi Kurdistan were always in touch respectively with their Persian Kurdish counterparts the Mukri and Ardalan.<sup>67</sup> The Bahdinan have already been cited as an extension of the Turkish Kurds; conversely the Hakari, which survive as a large semi-nomadic tribal group, are found in Iraq as well as in Turkey.<sup>68</sup>

### (3) Current Significance of the Terms

There is a certain amount of confusion as to the actual significance of the terms Bahdinan, Suran, and Baban; commentators differ in referring to them as families, tribes, or tribal groups. Azzawi includes them in his work dealing with the tribes of Iraq; each one he

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67. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

68. Soane (*op. cit.*, p. 406) refers to the Hakari as residing in Bitlis, the Great Zab Valley, the Tiyari, Amadiya, Jazirat Ibn Umar. It appears that he uses the term Hakari more broadly than do Edmonds and other commentations as is indicated by his classifying the Bahdinan as a subtribe of the Hakkari. The Bohtan are also classified as a subtribe of the latter.

styles as a principality and links with a geographic area. He observes that the term "Bahdinan" has come to denote the tribes of Northern Iraq (i.e., the liwa of Mosul), some of which are actually descendents of the original Bahdinans while others merely had Bahdinan authority imposed upon them; he states that the line of Suran still survives in the tribe of Miran Beki in the Great Zab River valley; he does not comment on the current significance of the Baban.<sup>69</sup> The terms are not official designations. Nonetheless, they are convenient names to use in the broader classification of the Iraqi Kurds according to area, dialect, antecedents, and tribal affiliation.

#### b. Tribes

The importance of the tribal factor in Kurdish society merits a detailed enumeration and discussion of those tribes currently extant in Iraqi Kurdistan; prior to this resume we should like to mention certain features of tribal life among the Kurds. Although nomads were once numerous, they now form only a small percentage of the population, and Kurdish rural elements consist mainly of settled villages; in the villages, distinction is made between those who claim tribal origin and those who do not, the former claiming more prestige than the latter. Outside the villages, the organization of society is for all practical purposes tribal.

A group of villages, like the tribe in whose sphere of influence it falls, usually gives allegiance to a landlord, to a shaykh of one of

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69. This resume was taken from Azzawi, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-100, p. 155, pp. 189-90, p. 193. With respect to the current status of the Babans, it must be noted that the leadership of their stronghold Sulaymaniya was assumed by the Barzinji family subsequent to the fall of the Baban state. Longrigg (*Iraq 1900-1950*, p. 8) refers to the three categories as "the three traditional or mistily historical groups."

the dervish orders, or to a ruling family in the tribe. The members of these ruling families bear the title Agha and there is usually a paramount Agha who, as head of the family, claims the allegiance of all members of the tribe and affiliates. Inasmuch as many of the Aghas belong to a class different from that of the tribesmen who acknowledge their sway, there is evidence that many of the Agha families are the descendents of nomadic invaders who imposed their rule on indigenous tribes inhabiting the area at an earlier date; thus the paramount Aghas are more like feudal landlords than fathers of clans.<sup>70</sup>

In general the Aghas do not possess title to their lands, and with the extension of education and government control many of the villagers are beginning to refuse to submit to the impositions these barons have imposed upon them, impositions established by custom but unenforceable at law. Justice is meted out by the tribal Aghas in accordance with Quranic law; Burton describes the system as analogous to Medieval England.<sup>71</sup> It may be noted that the Iraqi Government has made allowance, by the imposition of more lenient penalties, for offenses committed in accordance with tribal custom.

In our discussion of the tribes of Iraqi Kurdistan, we shall include the major tribes (though not the numerous subdivisions except in a few cases) enumerated by Azzawi, who has furnished us with the most recent comprehensive list; we shall also conform to his system of grouping the tribes according to the liwas in which they are located. This system is more precise and more timely than the methods employed by previous commentators whose various listings differ considerably

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70. Burton, op. cit., p. 69.

71. Ibid.

from each other. Discussion of the tribes will be limited to names, population estimates as available, approximate locations, origins, major characteristics and intertribal relations; detailed accounts of their histories, where available, will be reserved until the following chapters.<sup>72</sup> It must be recognized that a given tribe may be common to more than one liwa, since a few are still nomadic and others have enclaves scattered in several areas.

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72. The references employed in this resume of the Kurdish tribes of Iraq are as follows: Azzawi, op. cit.,; United Kingdom, Naval Staff, Handbook of Mesopotamia, pp. 110-113; United Kingdom, Naval Intelligence Division, Iraq and the Persian Gulf, pp. 371-378; Nikitin, op. cit., pp. 153-175; Soane, op. cit., pp. 372-388, for narrative description and pp. 406-407, for table of tribes, sub-tribes, and locations. Other references will be footnoted as cited. Population figures have been taken from the first three references listed above, and each statistic is followed by a comma after which is indicated the year of publication of the reference from which the figure is taken. The publication dates of the first three references are respectively 1947, 1918, and 1944. Attached to this thesis as Appendix 1 is a Tribal Map copied from an overlay prepared by U. S. diplomatic personnel accredited to Iran in 1944 and made available to the author by the U. S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq. Allowing for some differences in subdivisions and groupings and for different procedures in transcribing names into the Latin script, the information on this map harmonizes in most cases with that contained in the other references. Another, but somewhat older, comprehensive listing of Kurdish tribes is found in Sir Mark Sykes, The Caliph's Last Heritage, Appendix, pp. 553-588. Here he lists 183 individual Kurdish tribes arranged in 6 sections, of which the first (Section A) contains 76 and corresponds roughly to the group of tribes currently found in Iraqi Kurdistan, with the inclusion of a few which are not found in South-eastern Turkey. He makes a further division into three classes: the semi-nomads of the plains and southern uplands, the sedentary mountaineers, and the semi-nomad mountaineers. These categories do not seem to correspond to the liwa groupings of Azzawi. Persian tribes are not treated. Statistics generally agree with those of the U.K. Naval Staff publication. His listing is interspersed with commentaries on the Kurds which are instructive, though brief.

## (1) Tribes of the Liwa of Kirkuk

SALHA (50 villages, 1947). This tribe is scattered between the liwas of Kirkuk and Arbil, predominately in the former. Its tribal leaders were Indian Sufis who settled in the area of Altun-Kopru over 150 years ago, and it has always been amenable to rule by learned religious men. Those in the Arbil liwa speak a dialect unintelligible to others.

SHAYKH BIZAYNI (4000 families, 1918; 130 villages, 1947). Straddles the Kirkuk-Arbil liwa boundary N.N.E. of Altun Kopru, its chiefs reside in Kirkuk. It has a reputation for pugnacity and theft.

SHAWAN (15,000 souls, 1918; 2000 families, 1944; 72 villages, 1947). This tribe is located in a nahiya bearing the same name on the Kirkuk-Koi Sanjaq Road between Taqtaq and Chamchamal somewhat closer to the former city. Some espouse the theory that its name means "shepherd" and others assert that it is derived from an Arab tribe named "Shahwan." Formerly affiliated with the Qadiri tariqa, its members now adhere to the Naqshbanda.

JABBARI (no estimates). Located in the vicinity of the town of Kil, south-east of Kirkuk, this tribe is considered as representative of some of the refined and aristocratic elements of the Kurds. Its members speak Arabic but are not well-versed in the literary language.

DAUDI (4000 families, 1918; 1000 families, 1944-- no explanation for drop). Scattered from Tauq to Tuz Khurmatu, this tribe is originally from the Kalhur tribal group and came to Iraq over 150 years ago. Its members belong to the Shafi'i school and the Qadiri tariqa; many of their shaykhs are from the Barzinja family.

DALO (500 families, 1947). This tribe, located in the vicinity of Kifri and Khanaqin, once acknowledged the Baban hegemony.<sup>73</sup>

ZAND (no estimates). Largely an Iranian group, this tribe has had enclaves in Iraq on the northern bank of the Diyala since one of its number, Zaki Khan, the Mutasalit of Persia, made forays into Iraq 200 years ago.

ZANGANA (500 families, 1944). Living in two enclaves, one directly east of Kifri and the other between Kifri and Sulaymaniya, this tribe has existed for a long time but we

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73. In 1834 Fraser describes this tribe as a branch of the Baban. J.B.Fraser, Travels in Kurdistan, Mesopotamia, &C., p. 176.

have no reliable information as to its origins. Its members are Kurdish speaking, except for those at the borders.

KIJ (no estimates). Centered around the village of Qara Tipi, they are originally from Persia but we do not know the details of their emigration and subsequent settlement.

PALANI (no estimates). These reside on the bank of the Diyala north of Khanaqin.

TATARAN (80 families--Qara Tipi area, 60 families--Kukuhan area, 1947). Originally a tribe from the Tartars, they are becoming increasingly Kurdish in character, and now live in the regions mentioned above. Their languages are Turkish and Arabic, with the former predominating.

KAKA'YA (1500 families<sup>74</sup>). Found in the vicinity of Dakuka, Khanaqin, Kirkuk, and other places this group was not originally considered a tribe but rather a sect; its early chieftans had connections with the Barzinji family, and founded a creed known as Kaka'iya. Gradually the name came to be applied to its adherents and it is now generally regarded as a tribal group.

(2) Tribes of the Liwa of Sulaymaniya

JAF (4000 horsemen, 1918<sup>75</sup>). Originally from Juanru, a district in the Arealan region of Persia from which many of them emigrated around 1700, the Jaf now occupy a wide sweep of territory in portions of the liwas of Kirkuk and Sulaymaniya as well as Iran. The tribal center is the city of Halabja; there is a large nomadic element which winters in the Khanaqin-Kifri-Qara Tipi area and in summer moves in an arc through the Qara Dagh to Penjwin and even to Senna in Persia; some 2000 families are sedentary and around 8000 are semi-nomadic. The tribe included many subdivisions.

The political history of the Jaf has been eventful but we will wait to mention their relationships with Ottoman, Persian, and Baban until the following chapter. We may note that they enjoy considerable fame supplemented

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74. Taha al-Hashimi, Mafsal Jaghrafat al-'Iraq, p. 422, quoted in Azzawi, op. cit., p. 181.

75. Nikitin (op. cit., p. 171) confirms this figure, noting that their leader in 1914 asserted that he could put 4000 cavalry in the field within a few hours. He further estimates the total population at 100,000; Azzawi (op. cit., p. 28) feels that there is a tendency to exaggerate the numbers of this tribe.

with a somewhat sanguinary reputation for wartime prowess.

HAMAWAND (2000 souls, 1918; 1000 families, 1944). Occupying the vicinity of the Baziyan valley or trough of the Tauq Chai, this tribe is said by some to be an offshoot of the Jaf, with whom they have lived on varying terms; by others, it is said to have emigrated from Iran some 70 years after the Jaf migration. There are indications that the original name of this tribe was Ahmad-wand. Sharing the Jaf reputation for predilection toward depredatory activity, the Hamawand are well led by their Aghas and faithful to the practices of Islam; a number of them are familiar with the Persian language. On the other hand, Sykes has observed that they also speak Arabic, reckon themselves of Arabian origin, and intermarry with Arabs.<sup>76</sup>

KILALIYA (1000 warriors, 1947). Residing in the area of Shahrizour and the settlements of Daturk and Nahawand, they came to Iraq before the Jaf emigration but through long association with the latter they have come to regard themselves as affiliates of the Jaf tribal group. Their leaders have acquired some ascendancy over neighboring Kurdish groups.

KASHKI (no estimates). This tribe moves from Kamran in the summer to Kij Khamran Khan in winter. Originally part of the KILALI, it has been separated from them for a long time.

HAWRAMAN (no estimates). This tribe inhabits the Auramani Mountains between Persia and Iraq, exchanges of border areas between the two nations having given them enclaves in the latter country. Although it had intermittently owned the suzerainty of the Persian Kurdish principality of Ardalan, it has generally been very tenacious of its independence; its ruling family traces descent from Rustum and its people speak their own dialect and do not acknowledge themselves to be Kurds. Many of them are Shafi'i Muslims, some worshipping according to the Qadiri and others according to the Naqshbandi tariqa; some of the Hawraman are heterodox and worship the Sultan Ishak and other deities.

EIL GHAWARA (no estimates). This tribe is nomadic and covers considerable territory during its annual moves; inhabiting the Sulaymaniya-Qara Dagh region during spring and fall, it moves as far south-west as Chamchamal or even the vicinity of Kirkuk during the summer, whereas the winter finds it in Persian territory

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76. Sykes, op. cit., p. 559.



in the area of the old principality of Mukri. Relations between it and the Persian tribes are good; in temperament, its people are said to resemble the Arab tribes.

PIZHDAR (no estimates). This tribe is located in the extreme north-eastern part of the liwa of Sulaymaniya and is considered to be of the same origin as the Bilbas, whom we shall shortly consider, and as that of the Baban family; all three are described as possessing a common ancestral family known as the Khalidi. There are no large cities in the tribal area, the people being largely villagers and nomads. Though small, the tribe has a fierce and warlike reputation.

BABAN. This group, as we have noted, is not properly a tribe but rather the name denotes both a family and the principality which it ruled. We shall examine its history in the following chapter.

### (3) Tribes of the Liwa of Arbil

BILBAS. Living on the eastern borders of the liwa of Arbil, as well as inhabiting portions of the liwa of Sulaymaniya and of Iran, the Bilbas is a large tribe with many branches, some of which may be considered as tribes to themselves. Some difference of opinion exists as to the origin of this tribe. Frequently involved in conflicts with the Mukri to the east and the Babans to the south, the Bilbas are described by Soane as being of the same stock as the former<sup>77</sup> while Azzawi links them with the latter.<sup>78</sup> Their residence in Iraq is of long standing.

Azzawi lists six sub-tribes among the Bilbas; these are the Mankur, the Mamish, the Biran, the Sann, the Ramk, and the Hawtizbar. The first two are listed by the United Kingdom Naval Staff as semi-nomadic tribes of some 2000 families each inhabiting the district around Ranya; all excepting the Hawtizbar are shown on the tribal map. These last are closely associated with the Ramk.

GIRDI (6000 families, 1918; 80 villages, 1947).

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77. Soane, *op. cit.*, p. 376.

78. Azzawi, *op. cit.*, pp. 95, 102. In the latter reference the author elaborates on his views as expressed in the former, i.e., that the ancient Khalidi family is the progenitor of Pizhdar, Baban, and Bilbas alike. Nikitin (*op. cit.*, pp. 164-165) links Mukri, Baban, and Bilbas in a common relationship, thus combining the views of Soane and Azzawi.

Situated on the northern fringe of the Arbil plain, this tribe is reputed to have come from the vicinity of Agra in the liwa of Mosul; it is also reputed to have been connected with the Bilbas. Usually it is in opposition to the Dizaih tribe.

AKO (6000 males, 43 villages<sup>79</sup>). Most of the Ako tribesmen inhabit the qada of Ranya. Once this tribe was a part of the Bilbas but has long since dissociated itself.

KHUSHNAWU (2000 families, 1918; 10000 souls, 1944). Inhabiting Ranya and Koi Sanjaq this tribe claims origin from the Khalid family. Its people are known to be religious and not given to war and brigandage; it is said that they work for the Shaykh Bizayni and Girdi.

HARKI (20000 souls, 1944; 2000 families--nomadic, 2000 families--Iran, 1000 families--Iraq, 1947). Observers generally agree in describing their tendencies toward theft and wreckage of the countryside.<sup>80</sup> They have been described as a rather low class of Kurds.

SURJI (300 families, 1918). This tribe, centered on both sides of the Great Zab west of Ruwanduz, has enclaves in Persia and in the liwa of Mosul near Agra; it controls the Spilik Pass. Its leaders claim descent through Abu Bakr al-Sadiq. Hamilton considers them more aggressive than the Harki.<sup>81</sup>

HARUTI (no estimates). The tribe resides southwest of Ruwanduz.

BALIKI (1000 warriors, 1918; 60 small villages, 1944; 40 villages, 1947). This tribe is found on the Iraqi-Persian border east of Ruwanduz. Their original dwelling was said to be the village of Balkan.

BALKA (no estimate). An undetermined connection between this tribe and the Baliki seems to exist; the Balka are variously described as an offshoot of the Bilbas and as a group resident in what is now the Turkish Republic who came to Ruwanduz as a result of war and settled in the area of Gali Ali Beg. Some of them own land in the mountains of Persia to which they migrate in the summer.

KARD (no estimates). The origin of this now independent

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79. Siyahatnama Hudud, p. 272, quoted in Azzawi, op. cit., p. 128.

80. Longrigg, op. cit., p. 26; Wigram and Wigram, op. cit., p. 127; Fraser, op. cit., p. 61.

81. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 148.

tribe is in the liwa of Sulaymaniya where it was connected with the tribe of Eil Ghawara. Subsequently it moved to the edges of Koi Sanjaq.

AL-KHAYLANIYA (no estimates). This tribe is said to be Bedouin and makes assertions of nobility. It lives in the vicinity of Batas west of Ruwanduz.

DIZAIH (30,000 souls; 5000 warriors of which 600 were mounted, 1944). This tribe inhabits the plains of Qaraj west of Altun Kopru between the two Zabs. One of the largest tribes in the liwa of Arbil, it enjoys a great deal of prestige and has been looked upon as a principality; however the power of its Aghas seems to be on the wane. Relatively recent comers to the area, the Dizaih tribesmen expelled the former inhabitants who were Arab tribesmen. The Dizaih are considered intelligent and progressive and are typical of the Kurds of the Arbil liwa in their use of the Suran (Mukri) dialect.

ZARARI (no estimates). This tribe inhabits the nahiya of Batas; it is considered by some to have a Persian, by others an Arab, origin. Known for their religious zeal and obedience to their leaders, its members have traditionally defied the attempts of tax-collectors.

#### (4) Tribes of the Liwa of Mosul

In discussing the Kurdish tribes of the liwa of Mosul, we shall continue to follow the outline of Azzawi by which, in this case, the tribal breakdown is made according to the major towns around which the tribal groups are centered. The picture is quite complex, in that there is considerable interchange and contact among these Kurds and those of Arbil, Iran, and especially Turkey. Azzawi feels that these tribes belong to the former principality of Bahdinan; Longrigg indicates that some of them have connections with the Hakari, which Edmonds has described as a principality separate from the Bahdinan.<sup>82</sup> It may be noted that the tribal map does not follow Azzawi's procedure, but rather shows the individual tribes.

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82. Azzawi, op. cit., pp. 189-190; Longrigg, op. cit., p. 27; Edmonds, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

AMADIYA TRIBES. The Amadiya tribal group formed the nucleus of the Bahdinan principality; its leaders came from Taroun in what is now a part of the Turkish Republic, under circumstances which are not yet known. Their dialect, though Kurdish, is mingled with Arabic. Their subtribes are actually groups of villages; they are as follows: Barwari Zir, south of Amadiya; Barwari Bala, consisting of 61 villages north-west of Amadiya; Nirva-Raikan, actually two tribes consisting together of 79 villages north-east of Amadiya, formerly dominated by the Oramar tribe.<sup>83</sup>

ZAKHO TRIBES. This group of tribes, though not related to the Bahdinan, acknowledged the suzerainty of this principality in times past. Its origin is from the north of Amadiya in what is now the Turkish Republic.

AQRA TRIBES. The tribes of the Aqra vicinity include elements of several tribes which were previously discussed as belonging to the liwa of Arbil; among them are the tribes of Harki and Surji and a subgroup of the Dizaih tribe. This tribal group is originally from Shamsdinan and consists of many villages along the Aqra road. Excluding the Arbilian tribes mentioned above, its principal components are seven other small subtribes.

ZIBAR TRIBES. Azzawi explains the word "Zibar" as a compound word whose syllables respectively signify "river" and "bank" and which was applied to a point between Aqra and the Greater Zab where a town of the same name is currently located; gradually it began to be applied to the tribal groups who inhabited this area. Like those of Aqra, the tribes of Zibar include elements of tribes which are considered as belonging to the liwa of Arbil; among them are the Harki and Girdi which we have listed before. Other components shown on the tribal map as native to Arbil are the Shirwan (1800 families, 1947) and the Baradost (2000 families, 1947). Two more components are the Barouzh and the Mazouri and finally a smaller group also known by the name of Zibar.<sup>84</sup>

THE BARZANIS. (750 families, 1918). The principal centers of the Barzani tribe are the town of Bira Kupra and the village of Barzan from which the tribe takes its name and traces its origin. Both towns are located in

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83. Longrigg (*loc. cit.*) reckons the Barwari as a sub-group of the Hakari, whom he regards as a tribe. He also includes as sub-groups of the Hakari the tribes of Mazouri and Shirfan. Soane (*op. cit.*, p. 406) lists 17 subtribes under the Hakari.
84. Sykes (*op. cit.*, p. 561) assigns to this last component 1000 families and 30 villages.

Zibar territory and the tribe is considered by Azzawi to be derived from the Zibar, with whom the Barzanis have been in almost uninterrupted conflict for many decades. The importance of this small tribe has been greatly enhanced by the prestige enjoyed by its leader who is considered and revered as the Shaykh of the Naqshbandi tariqa. We shall have occasion to devote considerable attention to this group in the third and fourth chapters; we may observe that their two major subdivisions are the Baroush, headed by Mahmud Agha, and the Nizal, headed by Shaykh Ahmad, brother of Mulla Mustafa.<sup>85</sup>

DOHUK TRIBES. The Five major sub-tribes of the Dohuk area are the Mazouri, Shirfan, Dooski, Koufah Pay, and Shimiskan. The Mazouri are considered to be one of the oldest of the Kurdish tribes; the origin of the tribal name is said to have been "Madaria" whence it evolved to the currently used cognomen. A populous tribe, some of its elements are dispersed in several areas of the republics of Iraq and Turkey. The Shirfan consist of both settled and nomadic elements; the former reside in the qada of Shikan while the latter are found in the valley of Silivani between Dohuk.<sup>86</sup> The area of the Dooski, consisting of a number of villages, lies between the towns of Dohuk and Amadiya; reckoned as a subdivision of the tribal groups of the former, it seems to have some connection with those of the latter also. Regarding the Koufah Pay and the Shimiskan we have virtually no information.

MIRAN. This nomadic tribe is found in north-western Iraq in the summer, but during the winter it migrates to Turkey in the area between Jazirat Ibn Umar and Lake Van.

SHAKAK (6000 families total, 1918). This tribe is native to Turkey and Iran, but small groups thereof are dispersed in northern Iraq.

(5) Tribes of the Liwa of Diyala

QARA AWLUS. Located in the vicinity of Mandali, this

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85. Wigram and Wigram (op. cit., p. 141) elaborates on the influence of the Barzani leader: "The Sheikh, in the eyes of his followers, is not merely a great tribal chieftan. They believe in his hereditary sanctity; and his clansmen are also his devotees."

86. The tribal map does not show the Shirfan tribe, but it does point out the Silivani which it indicates as a tribal area. It is likely that this designation refers to the nomadic Shirfan inasmuch as they inhabit the valley of Silivani. Azzawi, op. cit., p. 199.

tribe has become Kurdish in character through long associations but it seems originally to have been among the Mongols or Turkomans. Among its people, the Turkish language is being superceded by the Kurdish. This group is Shi'i.

BAJLAN. Situated on the left bank of the Diyala near Qasr al-Sharin, the Bajlan are variously reported to have their origins in Iran or the Ural Mountains of Russia; it has been further suggested that they are scions of the Turkish-Mongol groups and that they are an offshoot of the Jaf. The Turkish-Mongol theory is supported by the etymological findings regarding their name. They belong to the Shafi'i school.

FAYLIYA. This group belongs properly to the Lurs, who will be mentioned in a later subparagraph.

(6) Tribe of the Liwa of Diwaniya

KIRDI. (1000 families, 1947). Located well outside the area commonly understood as Kurdistan, this tribe is nonetheless reputed to be of Kurdish origin; it is said to have been formed by elements of the Shaykh Bizayni, Hamawand, and Dizaih tribes. Its people live in the province of al-'Akr in Khaz Ali belonging to Julayha, a part of Diwaniya liwa. Their language is Arabic; no one among them speaks Kurdish.

(7) Scattered Tribe

KALHUR (3000 families, 1918). Originating in the area of Mandali, the Kalhur now reside primarily in Iran rather than in Iraq; in the latter country they are found in the liwas of Sulaymaniya, Kirkuk, and Diyala. There are those among them who claim kinship with the Southern Persians rather than with the Kurds, but it is probable that they are Kurdish, intermingled perhaps with some Lurish blood. The tribe is generally Shi'i in religion in Iran, but the Kalhur tribesmen residing in Iraq are said to be Sunni.<sup>87</sup> From their position astride the Kirmanshah-Khanaqin road they have been perhaps the most accessible of the Kurdish tribes to European observers.<sup>88</sup>

c. Related Groups

We now turn to a group of peoples who although frequently

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<sup>87</sup>. Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>88</sup>. George Keppel (Personal Narrative of a Journey From India to England, Vol. I, p. 298) tells of their fame for robbery; he spells the name Calor.

classified with the Kurds seem to be distinct from them in ethnic origin and language, although they have long lived in close association with the Kurds. We do not propose to treat these groups in detail but will briefly introduce them; among these groups are the Lurs, the Laks, the Yazidis, and the Guran.

(1) Lurs. The Lurs are settled in the eastern part of Iraq, which they entered generations ago over the Pusht i Kuh Mountains in Iran; they are found largely in the two east-central liwas of Diyala and Kut al-Amara, in which they form an important element of the border towns of Mandali and Badra, respectively; many are settled along the nearby canal system. Their number is estimated at 60,000.<sup>89</sup> Sandwiched in between Persians and Kurds they are ethnologically related to both; they speak a dialect of their own which shows the effect of both languages as well as some Arabic influences. Not a politically conscious group, they have resisted the attempts of nationalistic Kurds (whom they regard unfavorably) to style them as Fayliya Kurds and claim them for inclusion into a proposed Kurdish state. The Lurs are Shi'i.

(2) Al-Lak. The Laks are originally a Persian tribe which expanded into Iraq and now live in close proximity to the Kalhur; they were at one time neighbors of the Qara Awlus. Most of them are affiliated with the religious cult known as the Ali Illahi, whose adherents have accepted Ali as the personification of the Deity.<sup>90</sup>

(3) Yazidis. The majority of the Yazidis reside in the Senjar hills about 50 miles due west of Mosul, but a smaller number are

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89. Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

90. Soane (*op. cit.*, pp. 382 - 386) gives a discussion of the beliefs of this sect.

found in the Mosul plain 27 miles north of that city at their holiest place, the shrine of Shaykh 'Adi. Their current population is estimated at between 30,000 and 40,000;<sup>91</sup> never a large group, they have been depleted by the active antipathy of Turks and Arabs alike. Organized into tribes, they speak a dialect akin to Kurdish. Notorious for their unique religious code,<sup>92</sup> they have long been the objects of execration and victims of persecution by Christian and Muslim alike.<sup>93</sup>

(4) Guran. We face now a group which has been widely classified as Kurdish but which has generally been described as a group distinct by European commentators;<sup>94</sup> cutting across the geographical pattern of Kurdistan, this group is found in Persia, Iraq, and Turkey; in the first two countries it is known as Guran and in the last named it is referred to as Zaza. Although Guran has been used to denote the name of a single tribe,<sup>95</sup> it would seem more accurate to designate as Gurani those groups which speak the Gurani dialect; in Iraq these include the

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91. Longrigg and Stoakes, op. cit., p. 27.

92. A description of their beliefs is found in Soane, op. cit., pp. 100-101 and United Kingdom, Naval Staff, op. cit., p. 134. It may be noted that among the tenets of their belief is the doctrine that Satan is the chief angel, currently in outcast status, but subject to reinstatement; their resulting propitiation of him has led to their being incorrectly labelled "devil-worshippers." In lieu of a central ecclesiastical authority they have a hierarchy of castes of whom the highest are the mirs, or princes; after them come the shaykhs, mullas, and qawals (preachers), then the pirs (priestly men of great ascetic sanctity), and finally the fagirs, who tend the shrine of Shaykh 'Adi, their saint and prophet, who appears to have been a Muslim of somewhat heterodox tendencies living in the 9th century A.D. United Kingdom, Naval Staff, loc. cit. Soane's description of the hierarchy differs slightly.

93. Safrastian, op. cit., p. 89 and Wigram and Wigram, op. cit., p. 47. The former, whose sympathies almost always lie with the minority groups of the Middle East, defends them against the contumely poured upon them by travellers and oppressors.

94. Edmonds, op. cit., p. 10; Soane, op. cit., p. 381.

95. United Kingdom, Naval Staff, op. cit., p. 111.



Kaka'iya and elements of the Bajlan and Zangana;<sup>96</sup> all of these have been discussed according to the liwas in which they are located. Soane states that the Guran are probably related either to the Lurs or Persians and observes that from the religious standpoint they adhere to the cult of Ali Illahi.<sup>97</sup> Whatever may be their origin or proper status, Edmonds has observed that the Gurani people feel themselves to be Kurds in every way.<sup>98</sup>

## 7. LANGUAGE AND DIALECTS

### a. Nature of the Language

It is generally acknowledged that the Kurdish language is of the Iranian family, but the extent of its relationship to modern Persian has been the subject of some debate. On the one hand, the British Foreign Office has described it as a Persian patois with considerable Turanian and Semitic fusion.<sup>99</sup> Soane, Burton, and the Mosul Commission unite in opposing this statement, the substance of their arguments being the numerous differences existing between the vocabulary and syntax of the Persian and Kurdish languages, as well as the frequently divergent paths which the two have followed in their historical developments.<sup>100</sup> The

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96. Edmonds, loc. cit.

97. Soane, op. cit., pp. 381-382.

98. Edmonds, loc. cit.

99. United Kingdom, Foreign Office, op. cit., p. 5.

100. Burton, op. cit., p. 67; Soane, op. cit., p. 387; League of Nations, op. cit., pp. 45-46. The latter reference, in developing these differences, makes the following points, on the strength of information furnished by the interpreter and linguistic expert furnished to the Commission: "In type, the Kurdish language is sufficiently near to Persian to allow us to group the two languages under one denomination: 'Central Iranian.' These two types of Iranian have developed in divergent directions since the date when the Iranian tribes established themselves in Western Asia. For instance, certain phonetic changes have occurred in Persian but not in Kurdish....A very striking example taken from the morphology of the languages is this: Kurdish can only express the past of transitive verbs by using a passive mode of expression, whereas Persian has developed a form for the past tense of all verbs."

theory that the Kurdish language is a purer Aryan language than is Persian has found adherents; among them are Soane who writes as follows:

Probably the Persian of to-day, beautiful language as it is, and perfect--the most euphonious and complete of all the Aryan tongues--cannot show such manifest signs of antiquity as does Kurdish. For there is a Kurdish language, a complete tongue, having rich grammatical forms, distinct syntax, and a total freedom from those Arabic importations which have, while enriching Persian, thrown into abeyance the old words of pure Aryan origin which were formerly used.<sup>101</sup>

Despite the previous quote, however, it would appear that the Kurdish language has absorbed certain elements of neighboring tongues. The fact that the Kurdish language has borrowed and partly assimilated Arabic words which had first passed through Persian or Turkish indicates some receptiveness on the part of Kurdish to Semitic and Turanian as well as Aryan elements.<sup>102</sup> The British Handbook of Mesopotamia further observes that in addition to the mixtures of Kurdish and Arabic, there has also been some intermingling of Kurdish and Aramaic (Syrian).<sup>103</sup> Finally it is worthy to note that among those who espouse the theory that the Kurds are not of Iranian origin it is believed that there existed an original non-Iranian Kurdish language which was subsequently exchanged for the one which is currently spoken by the Kurds.<sup>104</sup>

#### b. Dialects and Distribution

Although there is sufficient unity in the form and vocabulary of the Kurdish dialects to enable one to refer to a Kurdish language, these dialects differ considerably in syntax, grammar and vocabulary and are not always mutually intelligible. In general three principal dialects

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101. Soane, loc. cit.

102. Encyclopedia of Iranian Philology, Geiger-Kuhn, p. 251, quoted in League of Nations, op. cit., p. 45.

103. United Kingdom, Naval Staff, op. cit., p. 45.

104. Nikitin, op. cit., p. 13.

are recognized in Iraqi Kurdistan in addition to the Zaza-Gurani group of dialects which some regard as a separate language.

The distribution of Kurdish dialects conforms rather closely to the major subdivisions and political divisions of Iraqi Kurdistan which have been previously examined. Northern Kurdish, known as Kirmanji, is spoken by the Bahdinan Kurds in the liwa of Mosul; it is also spoken by the Turkish Kurds and the Persian Kurds west and north of Lake Urmia. Southern Kurdish, known by those who speak it as Kurdi,<sup>105</sup> falls into two groups: Suran-Mukri, spoken generally by the Suran Kurds in the liwa of Arbil as well as their counterparts, the Mukri in Persia, and Sulaymani-Ardalan, spoken by many of the Kurds of Sulaymaniya and Kirkuk as well as their counterparts, the Ardalan of Persia. These last two are generally intelligible to each other.<sup>106</sup> Cutting across this geolinguistic scheme, we find another group of dialects, still Iranian, but differing considerably from the three preceding groups; this group is composed of the Zaza-Gurani dialects which are called Macho-Macho by the Kurds themselves. In Iraq, there are enclaves of Gurani speakers in the liwas of Sulaymaniya, Kirkuk, and Diyala; among them are the Kaka'iya, the Zangana, the Bajlan, and the Hawraman. In addition, the individual tribal dialects feature distinguishing attributes of their own; these are most pronounced with the Dizaih and Khashnawu. The dividing lines between these areas are in general not rigid; the dialects tend to merge into one another.

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105. Edmonds, *op. cit.*, p. 11. Some European commentators style both Northern and Southern Kurdish as Kirmanji, in which case it is possible to distinguish the two from Gurani without any intimation that those who speak the latter are not Kurds.

106. Ernest N. McCarus, *A Kurdish Grammar*, p. 1.

c. Characteristics<sup>107</sup>

## (1) Phonology.

The linear phonemes consist of nine vowels and thirty-one consonants, of which two--the sounds "v" and "s" (the equivalent of "ص" in the Arabic alphabet)--occur only rarely. Of the vowels, four are considered of longer quality than the other five; the consonant distribution is as follows: stops--8, affricates--2, fricatives--12, nasals--3, laterals--2, vibrants--2, semiconsonants--2. In syllable formation, a word has as many syllables as it has vowels; unlike the Arabic language it is possible in the Kurdish language for two vowels to occur contiguously thus forming two syllables. A single consonant between two vowels forms a syllable with the following vowel; usually in clusters of two or more consonants syllable division occurs between the last two consonants.

## (2) Word Formation and Morphology.

Kurdish is an inflected language in its methods of conjugation of verbs and declension of nouns, pronouns, and adjectives. Conjugation involves six inflections (three persons in singular and plural); declension of nouns denotes definiteness and number whereas adjectives have an additional inflection to indicate comparison.

In Kurdish, words are derived through reduplication, compounding, and affixation. Reduplication is the repetition of a complete word stem, thereby deriving a new word stem. Compounding is the joining together of two words to form a new word. Affixation in Kurdish generally takes the

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107. For this brief description of the characteristics of the Kurdish language, McCarus' A Kurdish Grammar has been employed. This book deals with the structural aspects of the Sulaymani Kurdish dialect which has achieved a position of pre-eminence during the current century. An orthographic, phonetic, philological, and grammatical analysis of the language, this book contains an extensive bibliography.

form of the attachment of a suffix although there are two common prefixes.

(3) Syntax. The normal word order for a sentence in Kurdish is as follows: subject, object, verb. Indirect objects are normally expressed by means of a prepositional phrase. The position of the modifiers in the sentence depends upon several factors: the modifiers of the subject usually precede it or may be linked to it by affixation; expressions modifying the entire clause generally follow the subject; expressions of manner or indirect objects precede the verb while expressions of time and place follow it.

(4) Orthography. In Iraq Kurdish is usually written in a modified form of the Persian-Arabic script, although experiments have been made in the utilization of the Latin script; Burton has opined that the latter is more adaptable to the rendition of Kurdish inasmuch as it is based upon vowel sounds as opposed to the Semitic use of consonants.<sup>108</sup> The use of a form of Arabic script for Kurdish goes back to the eleventh century of the Christian era when Ali Hariri of the Hakari wrote a collection of poems in his native dialect,<sup>109</sup> although Kurdish was not written extensively until after World War I, a factor which militated against its developing a standard form.

#### d. The Kurdish Language in Recent Times

Of the non-Arabic languages extant in Iraq, Kurdish is the most widely spoken. In the mountains of Kurdistan, Persian is a common second language, whereas in the lower Kurdish districts Arabic is widely known.<sup>110</sup> Of the dialects previously cited, the Suran-Mukri has traditionally enjoyed

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108. Burton, op. cit., p. 67.

109. McCarus, op. cit., p.12.

110. United Kingdom, Naval Intelligence Division, op. cit., p. 324.

the greatest prestige, having an affinity with the language allegedly spoken by Zoroaster,<sup>111</sup> but in the 20th century it has yielded to the Sulaymani-Ardalan dialect as the standard vehicle of literary and verbal expression. This has resulted from Baban patronage of literature in the 19th century, Ottoman establishment of a military preparatory school in Sulaymaniya, and the designation of the Sulaymani as the first official Kurdish language in Iraq subsequent to World War I. It is interesting to note, however, that the early poets of the Baban court used Gurani for their compositions as a more advanced and artistic medium of expression than the cruder dialect of their conversation.<sup>112</sup>

#### 8. RELIGION

The Kurds of Iraq are mostly Sunni Muslims; it is through this circumstance that the Sunni in Iraq narrowly outnumber the Shi'i.<sup>113</sup> A majority of them belong to the Shafi'i rite. As we have noted in our resume of the tribes, there are a few small Kurdish groups which are Shi'i. The mystical orders have made great headway among the Kurds; those with the largest following in Kurdistan are the Qadiri and the Naqshbandi. The former, founded by the 12th century saint Abd al-Qadir al-Qailani, has always been regarded as orthodox; the latter, founded by Muhammad Beha al-Din in the 14th century, though considered orthodox, lacks responsible leadership and as a result its Kurdish adherents have

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111. Soane, op. cit., pp. 387-388.

112. Edmonds, op. cit., pp. 10-11. For a discussion of Kurdish literature one may refer to ibid., pp. 11-12; Soane, op. cit., pp. 388-392; Nikitin, op. cit., pp. 255-297.

113. Longrigg and Stoakes, op. cit., p. 26. United Kingdom, Naval Intelligence Division (op. cit., p. 326) takes the opposite view, namely, that the Arab and Kurdish Sunni populations combined still do not outnumber the Shi'i. Bullard (op. cit., p. 240) espouses Longrigg and Stoakes' view.

been notably inclined to manifestations of eccentricity.<sup>114</sup>

The question of the existence of Christian Kurds merits some comment. Marco Polo spoke of Christianity among the Kurdish inhabitants of the mountains above Mosul.<sup>115</sup> Sykes feels that the Nestorian Christians of Hakari, Amadiya, and Zakho may be of Kurdish origin; he writes on this subject as follows:

The question as to whether these Nestorian Christians of Hakkiari, who have a tribal organisation, are indigenous Kurds or fugitive Christians of Aramean stock, is I think still open; several learned Kurdish notables are of opinion that the Nestorians of Hakkiari are Kurds who were converted to Christianity before the advent of Islam; on the other hand the Christian clergy are firmly convinced that this is not the case. Personally I suspect that both theories are in part true, and that when the Christians fled from Mosul and Iraq, they took refuge with the Kurdish Christians of Hakkiari.<sup>116</sup>

Nikitin observes that there are Kurdish tribes today which trace their descent from Nestorians who moved to these areas and subsequently adopted the Islamic faith;<sup>117</sup> it is evident that close political and social relationships have existed between these Kurdish and Nestorian tribes. Stafford notes that in the 19th century many Assyrians (Nestorians) dwelt among the Kurds and were often subject to Kurdish aghas;<sup>118</sup> conversely the head of the Assyrian community, the Mar Shimun, enjoyed a certain prestige among the Kurds in the regions which the two peoples shared.<sup>119</sup> Given the closeness of these associations and the fact that the Kurd "has not even the strict commands of Islam before him,"<sup>120</sup> it

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114. Edmonds (*op.cit.*, pp. 59-79) discusses the mystic orders in some detail. Nikitin (*op. cit.*, pp. 209-254) gives a discussion of religious factors among the Kurds.

115. Nikitin, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

116. Sykes, *op. cit.*, pp. 454-455.

117. Nikitin, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

118. R.S. Stafford, *Tragedy of the Assyrians*, p. 12.

119. In at least one case, though for obvious practical motivations, a Kurdish chieftan acknowledged the Mar Shimun as "The Religious Head of Kurdistan." Wigram and Wigram, *op. cit.*, pp. 378-379.

120. Soane, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

may be assumed that the Kurds have absorbed foreign features into their religious practice at various times, but we have found no commentator who actually lists a specific group of Kurds as Christians.

#### 9. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The distinction between Southern Kurds and Northern Kurds carries over into their physical description. The Northern Kurds are described by Soane as tall, thin, possessed of a long nose and, in many cases, of yellow hair and blue eyes; the Southern Kurds he describes as broader in facial features, heavier in frame, and shorter in stature.<sup>121</sup> A similar distinction is noted by Nikitin, although instead of employing the terms "Southern" and "Northern" he uses "Eastern" and "Western". The dark-complexioned, brachycephalic type he classifies as "Eastern" and similar in physique to the Persian, whereas the fairer-complexioned dolichocephalic type he refers to as "Western."<sup>122</sup> Iraq features both types, with the Southern (Eastern) apparently predominating; a British official publication describes them as follows:

The Kurds are short-headed (brachycephalic), medium-tall in height (5 ft. 5 in.-6 ft.), with dark brown hair, brown eyes, olive complexion, and thin acquiline noses, but there is a certain proportion of blue-eyed, fair-haired, and fair-complexioned individuals. In physical strength they exceed the average Arab....Statistical information is not yet available for Kurdish head measurements....<sup>123</sup>

In this chapter it was sought to identify the Kurds of Iraq by the enumeration of certain features of their entity which distinguish them as an ethnic group within the limits of the political boundaries as previously defined. European writers have given considerable attention to the description of additional aspects of Kurdish culture,

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121. Ibid., p. 398. He states: "Judged as specimens of the human form, there is probably no higher standard extant than that of the Kurds."

122. Nikitin, op. cit., p. 18-19.

123. United Kingdom, Naval Intelligence Division, loc. cit.



such as temperament, customs, and dress, which will not be treated here.<sup>124</sup> The remainder of this thesis will be concerned with the development of these Kurdish groups as described in this chapter during the last few centuries.

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124. Discussions of these characteristics can be found in the following references: Edmonds, op. cit., pp. 14-15 and elsewhere as he describes the various districts; Nikitin, op. cit., chapters 3 through 6; Soane, op. cit., pp. 392-403. Most of the British travellers cited in the bibliography give interesting, if disorganized, glimpses of life among the Kurds.

## CHAPTER II: THE KURDS OF IRAQ DURING THE OTTOMAN ERA

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## CHAPTER II: THE KURDS OF IRAQ DURING THE OTTOMAN ERA

## 1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Ottoman conquest of the Iraqi provinces during the early 16th century has been chosen as the point of departure for the forthcoming historical resume of the Kurdish groups of that area, although primary consideration will be accorded to events and conditions subsequent to the 17th century. In the preceding chapter the status of the Kurds and of Kurdistan prior to the 16th century was outlined. During the period following the Ottoman conquests, the territory of Iraq began to assume the form in which it is known today; furthermore, this period saw the rise and decline of the several Kurdish principalities enumerated in the previous chapter, as well as the crystallization of the tribal pattern which exists today in Iraqi Kurdistan.<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that the Ottoman conquests did not securely establish Ottoman sovereignty over the Kurdish areas of Iraq until the expiration of more than three centuries; in the meantime the authority of the Sultan was frequently challenged by the influence of his nominal appointee the Pasha of Baghdad or by that of his opponent the Shah of Persia, both of whom were able to manipulate with some success the separatist tendencies of the Kurds themselves. Because

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1. Despite the alleged and probably antiquity of the Kurds and of their inhabitation of north-eastern Iraq, it would seem that the tribes composing Iraqi Kurdistan as enumerated in the previous chapter are relatively recent in organization and area of residence. Burton (*op. cit.*, p. 69) writes that "although this [tribal] form may have been maintained from time immemorial, the present tribal organization cannot be traced to any very remote past. In a list of eighteen principal tribes drawn up by the Arab historian of the tenth century only two or three names can be recognized today." Large-scale Kurdish migrations to north-eastern Iraq in the 17th and 18th centuries coupled with the influence of the principalities altered the ancient tribal picture considerably.

of the importance of these influences, an examination of the historical framework of this period would be valuable.

During the two and one half century interlude between the destruction of Baghdad by Hulagu and its occupation by the Persian Shah Ismail, the story of Iraq is one of disorder, division, and obscurity; Mongol and Tartar control of Iraqi Kurdistan was contested by Armenians, Turkomans, and Kurds alike. By the termination of this period the political situation had changed so as to place Iraq in the position of a buffer between the Safawi Empire of Persia and the Ottoman Empire. In 1508 it succumbed to the former under the Shah Ismail, only to change hands less than a decade later, with the conquests of the Ottoman Sultan Salim I. From this time it belonged nominally to the Ottoman Empire, with the exception of another short interlude of Persian rule under Shah Abbas lasting from 1621 to 1639. In the latter year, following the reconquest of Iraq by the Ottoman Sultan Murad IV, the Ottoman-Persian boundary was demarkated by the Treaty of Zuhab, which is the earliest extant document defining these borders.<sup>2</sup> Some three fourths of Kurdistan was assigned by this treaty to Ottoman territory; the remainder, to Persian territory. "The political and economic life of the Kurds has been profoundly influenced by their position astride this international frontier...."<sup>3</sup>

Although the Treaty of Zuhab had defined borders which were, with periodic revisions, to remain in force, it did not preclude further hostilities between the contracting parties. The Kurdish portions of Iraq remained susceptible to Persian invasion and intrigue for two centuries thereafter; the situation was further complicated by the

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2. The text may be found in J. C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, Vol. I, pp. 21-23.

3. Edmonds, op. cit., p. 125.

appearance in Baghdad of a regime of Pashas who, from a de facto standpoint, operated virtually independently from the Porte and extended their sway over a great deal of modern Iraq. Not until the approach of the midpoint of the 19th century during the era of the tanzimat did the Porte succeed in effecting the elimination of incursions from Persia and the subjection of the autonomous rule in Baghdad; these steps paved the way for a consolidation of Ottoman authority over Iraqi Kurdistan and for the appearance of Kurdish nationalism as it is known today. Thus the period under consideration falls into two parts: the first, lasting from the Ottoman conquest of 1515 to the middle of the 19th century, featured a power struggle for the control of Iraqi Kurdistan which was at the time largely composed of autonomous principalities; the second, lasting from the middle of the 19th century to 1918, featured a consolidation of control by the Porte over the Iraqi Kurds and the birth of the modern Kurdish national movements.

The following two topics will deal respectively with the status of Iraqi Kurdistan in regard to neighbor and suzerain and with the development of the Kurdish principalities of the time, prior to 1850; succeeding topics will be concerned with conditions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

## 2. STATUS OF IRAQI KURDISTAN, 1515 TO 1850

### a. Initial Ottoman Administration

Kurdish tribal groups, of which some were of the nature of principalities, existed in a primitive form prior to the Ottoman conquests and it was to the chieftans of these groups that the Ottoman Sultan Salim I addressed himself, even before commencing his expedition against the Persian Safawi dynasty. As a result of a diplomatic mission sent by Salim

in 1515 to Kurdistan and headed by his minister Mulla Idris, himself a Kurd, nine of the more influential Kurdish tribal leaders were induced to declare themselves on the side of the Ottomans and place themselves under the supreme military command of the Anatolian Beylerbey, the Commander-in-Chief of Ottoman Asia.<sup>4</sup> Among the leaders who so declared themselves were three resident in Iraqi territory; the hereditary princes of Arbil, Kirkuk, and Sulaymaniya, while another who espoused the Ottoman cause was the head of the Badr Khan dynasty which, although centered at Jazirat Ibn Umar (now Cizre) in modern Turkey, on several occasions established its rule in the area of Mosul.<sup>5</sup> Once the Persians had been successfully dealt with, the Sultan confirmed by imperial firman the position of these tribal chieftans who were styled as Derebeys while their administrations were given the title of hukumats (governments). Liable only to an annual nominal tribute and an armed force levy in time of war, these Derebeys were secured in the hereditary possession of their fortresses and lands.<sup>6</sup>

In theory advantages accrued from this relationship both to Ottoman and to Kurd. The former were able to secure their eastern frontiers by the presence of the Kurdish hukumats and were provided with an additional source of revenue. The latter enjoyed the benefits simultaneously of protection and self-government. In practice, however, for many decades the agreements remained largely unfulfilled; in most cases the Kurdish hukumats avoided payment of tribute, nor could it be

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4. Safrastian, op. cit., p. 40.

5. Ibid., p. 103 (Note a to Chapter 3).

6. Ibid., p. 40. For a fuller discussion of Ottoman administration in Kurdistan and Armenia see H.A.R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, Islamic Society and the West, Volume I Part I, pp. 161 - 165.

said that they provided consistent border security against the Persian inroads of the time. Several explanations may be advanced for this situation: In the first place it was not unnatural for the Kurdish tribes to neglect payments of tribute to a power which, as a result of its involvement in European affairs and its subsequent stagnation, could with difficulty enforce its claims in the East. Second, the proximity of Persia militated against a strongly pro-Ottoman stand on the part of the Kurds. Third, the Ottoman regime does not seem to have inspired the loyalty or respect of its Kurdish affiliates. Safrastian has stated:

Moreover the civilisation of the Turks failed to impress the Kurds. Although illiterate and, for all practical purposes, cut off from the outer world until recent times, the average Kurdish chief is a keen observer and intelligent enquirer; his perception is sharp and his judgement in matters of immediate concern is often accurate. He could hardly fail to note that the Turkish conquerors had neither a literary language nor a literature of their own; that they had borrowed the Arabic alphabet and both the Arabic and the Persian vocabulary; whereas the Kurd himself delighted not only in the epic tales of his own race, but in the poetry of the Arabs and Persians as well.<sup>7</sup>

Rich feels that Ottoman policy with respect to the Kurds was short-sighted; in writing of the attitudes current in Sulaymaniya he observes:

...it is easy to see that their [the Ottoman] cause is not very popular, and that the generality here have neither respect nor confidence in the Ottomans; nor do they deserve it. Their political conduct is blind, arrogant, and treacherous. With a little prudence and conciliation, and by a skillful application to the Sunite feelings of the bigoted Koords, who detest the Persian sect, they might have attached firmly to them a brave and numerous people-- who possess the most important lines of their frontier-- and who, at particular moments, might turn the scale in favor of the power whose cause they espoused.<sup>8</sup>

Longrigg, while admitting a lack of insight on the part of the Turks in

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7. Safrastian, *op. cit.*, pp. 41 - 42.

8. Claudius Rich, Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, Vol. I, p. 72.

their administration of Kurdish lands, feels that they are not greatly to be censured in that circumstances were against them. In summarizing Turkish attempts toward control of Kurdish areas in Iraq he writes:

The Turkish part was that of the occasional bestower of farmans, receiver of nominal homage and contributions of military force. Even these could be withheld by the stronger Begs if a correct tone were maintained. This was not government; yet modern experience finds it difficult to quarrel with so light a hold on a region inaccessible, alien, and (to the Sultan) profitless. The general Turkish policy to the Kurdish states was one of commitments avoided, of the fruits of Empire expected without the labours. It was that which any government, so placed, must have adopted. It would have succeeded better if more firmness and goodwill had been behind it, if Kurdish pride and fickleness had been studied, and if a rival Empire had not been striving constantly to regain the place of the suzerain.<sup>9</sup>

b. The Iraqi Kurds and the Pashaliq of Baghdad

Nominally subordinate to, though in actuality often autonomous from, the Porte was a power which, although it never acquired a real ascendancy over Iraqi Kurdistan, came to enjoy a much more living relationship with the Iraqi Kurds than did its suzerain prior to 1831; this was the Pashaliq of Baghdad.<sup>10</sup> The 16th and 17th centuries saw development in the relations of the Iraqi Pashas with the Kurdish tribes, while in the 18th and early 19th centuries these relationships were close

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9. Longrigg, Four Centuries of Modern Iraq, p. 43.
10. In an examination of the local administration of Iraq from the 16th to the 19th century, detailed consideration need be accorded only to the role of the Pasha of Baghdad. In most cases, he exercised jurisdiction by imperial firman over the territories of Basra and those areas of northern Iraq over which he could enforce his rule. (In the course of his 400-year resume, Longrigg lists virtually every Pasha of Baghdad and the area which he controlled both from de jure and de facto standpoints. Ibid.) Usually Mosul and Kirkuk were governed by their own Pashas but the latter's authority did not extend beyond the open plains near the cities. United Kingdom, Naval Intelligence Division, op. cit., p. 262. We may note that the status of Mosul as a wilayat was not made final until 1879. Longrigg, 'Iraq, 1900-1950, p. 1.



if not always cordial. The importance of these relationships justifies a short sketch of the local Baghdad regime.

During and immediately subsequent to the period in which Baghdad was changing hands between Persian and Ottoman, the local administration of Iraq tended to be weak and confused. This situation changed abruptly in 1704 with the accession of Hasan Pasha to the Pashaliq of Baghdad; he and his son and successor Ahmad Pasha repelled Persian invasions under Nadir Shah, extended their influence over a great part of what is now modern Iraq, and made their regime virtually autonomous from the Sultan. They also established a bureaucracy of Mamluks consisting of Circassian youths purchased from Georgia and trained for civil and military service; upon the death of Ahmad without heirs in 1747, the leader of this bureaucracy assumed the reins of government in Baghdad, and Istanbul was forced to acquiesce. Thus was established the Mamluk regime in Iraq, a regime which for 80 years remained resolute and stable in its remoteness from the Porte to which it accorded only a nominal submission. Among the famous reigns of this period was that of Abu Laila, the first Mamluk (1747 - 1762); Sulayman the Great (1780 - 1802), under whom Iraq was extricated from a partial Persian reoccupation; and Daoud Pasha (1817 - 1831), the last of the line. With the termination of his reign--the result of the centralizing policies of the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II aided by a series of natural calamities in Baghdad--the rule of the Mamluks ended; thereafter "The provinces of Iraq, so long half-severed from their empire, were to take their place anew as parts of the reformed and progressive whole."<sup>11</sup>

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11. Longrigg, Four Centuries of Modern Iraq, p. 276. In addition to the comprehensive coverage found in Longrigg, summaries of the Iraqi Mamluk regime in Iraq can be found in the following works: Al-Madina, Mutali' Al-Sa'ud; R. Coke, Baghdad, The City of Peace; Seton Lloyd, Twin Rivers; Zaki Salih, Mesopotamia 1600 - 1914.

Inasmuch as the Mamluk regime often pursued policies independently from the Porte, it cannot be said that the former sought to enhance the prestige of the latter among the Kurds. Rather their propinquity to the Kurds and their attempts to increase their own influence in Iraqi Kurdistan caused the Mamluk Pashas to become inextricably involved in the dynastic quarrels of the Kurdish principalities, particularly, the Babans; this factor served to aggravate the friction between the Mamluks and the Persians. "The constant intrigues of rival claimants were encouraged both by Mamluks and by Persians, in order to maintain their own ascendancy."<sup>12</sup>

### c. Persian Influence and the Power Struggle

In the preceding pages we have mentioned the names of Shah Ismail, Shah Abbas, Nadir Shah and the years 1508, 1621, and 1733 which are the highlights in an extended, if intermittent, attempt by Persia toward western expansion through Iraq. A further attempt was made by the Persians under Karim Khan in 1774; not until 1843, following a number of skirmishes and in response to an Anglo-Russian proposal of mediation, did Persia begin to abandon its forays on the easternmost Ottoman province. These military operations, often involving Iraqi Kurdistan, were only one aspect of the Persian attempt to extend her influence westward; the other was her previously noted propensity for the manipulation of Kurdish aspirants toward tribal leaderships in opposition to the candidates whose claims were being supported by the Mamluk Pashas of Baghdad.

The situation of Iraqi Kurdistan prior to the middle of the 19th century with respect to the three powers contesting for its control may be summed up as follows: although regularized in 1515, Ottoman suzerainty over the Kurdish areas remained little more than nominal; for the most

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12. United Kingdom, Naval Intelligence Division, op. cit., p. 273.

part Kurdish tribes and principalities enjoyed over three centuries of virtual independence punctuated with short periods during which effective control was exerted upon them by Sultan, Pasha, or Shah. This three-way power struggle over the issue of Kurdistan consisted of intermittent military operations and constant dynastic manipulation; because of their proximity to the area in question the Persians and Mamluks were for a long time more successful than was the Sultan in pursuing this policy.

Rich gives the following description of this melee:

There is at present a game going on, the intricacies of which it would be difficult thoroughly to unravel; but it is evident that it is a kind of ruse contre ruse affair. The Pasha of Bagdad is endeavouring to cheat the Pasha of Koordistan and the Shahzadeh of Kermanshah--while the Shahzadeh is cheating both the Pasha of Bagdad and the Pasha of Koordistan; and all of them, both collectively and severally, are endeavouring to cheat the Porte, who will unquestionably come off worst of the whole set, and who in every thing contrives to make herself the common enemy.<sup>13</sup>

That the Porte was nonetheless able to eliminate its rivals and consolidate its influence in the Kurdish areas was due to a series of occurrences which Rich could not have foreseen; among these were the cessation of Persian inroads, the fall of the Mamluk regime in Baghdad, and a decrease in virility on the part of certain Kurdish dynasties. Conversely, from the reign of Sultan Mahmud II the Ottoman Empire began to make desultory attempts toward reform and to exhibit a proclivity for asserting its authority in formerly neglected fringe areas. Before examining this subsequent period of Ottoman consolidation of control, we shall summarize the histories of the several quasi-independent Kurdish states which flourished during the period just considered.

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13. Rich, loc. cit. The Shahzadeh was the Prince-Governor of Kermanshah who often represented the Shah in war or diplomacy as it concerned Iraq.

### 3. THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE EARLY KURDISH PRINCIPALITIES

The early Ottoman period saw the rise and decline of powerful Kurdish principalities, some of which were enumerated in the first chapter. It is proposed here to discuss five such principalities which were located wholly or partially in the territory of Iraq; in the chronological order in which they attained the crest of their influences, those to be discussed are the principalities of Bahdinan, Suran, Baban, Ruwanduz, and Jazirat Ibn Umar. A discussion of the first three will necessarily involve their close relatives and probably progenitors who were respectively the Hakari, Mukri, and Ardalan.

#### a. The Bahdinan

##### (1) Origins

Historians and commentators have established a connection between the Bahdinan state centered upon the town of Amadiya and the Hakari state centered upon the town of Bitlis in the territory of modern Turkey, but they differ in defining the nature of this relationship. Among such historians are Soane and Longrigg whose opinions diverge both with respect to the relation of Hakari to Bahdinan and with respect to the origin of the Hakari themselves. Both theories will be summarized, and the comments of Azzawi will be noted.

It should be mentioned first that Soane regards the Bahdinan as a subtribe of the Hakari.<sup>14</sup> The Hakari he identifies as a wealthy tribe existing in the area of Diarbekr prior to the conquests of Tamurlane; a member of the latter's entourage, upon his appointment as governor of the area, chose the expedient of allying himself to the Hakari by marriage, after which there occurred a renaissance of Hakari power which did not

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14. Soane, op. cit., p. 406.

dissipate until the 19th century. Meanwhile, according to Soane, by sagacious matrimonial and other alliances the tribe threw out branches in Jazirat Ibn Umar, Julamark, Ruwanduz, and Amadiya--by supplying princes from its own clan to this last-named, the Hakari became the progenitors of the Bahdinan.<sup>15</sup>

Longrigg identifies the Amadiya principality, with its dependencies of Aqra, Dair, Dohuk, and sometimes Zakho, as having existed for a long time, antedating the appearance of the Bahdinan tribe which he identifies as an aristocratic family of great sanctity which established its rule over the Amadiya principality in the latter part of the 14th century.<sup>16</sup> Unlike Soane, who considers the Bahdinan subordinate to the Hakari, Longrigg records that the Bahdinan ruled over "the peasant Hakari Kurds"; the latter he calls "a distinctive branch of the Kurdish race, with a Seljuk ruling family" and in listing the capitals over which they held suzerainty he mentions only Jazirat Ibn Umar and Julamark.<sup>17</sup>

Azzawi, noting that Bahdinan, Hakari, and several others are listed by ancient historians as having been among the rulers of Amadiya, does not discuss in detail their relationship. In discussing the origin of the name Bahdinan, he suggests that it is a corruption of the name of the first known prince of the Amadiya area, Bahaa' al-Din. He believes that the principality was founded at the end of the Mongol period, but of the early rulers he merely observes that no one has ascertained conclusively the circumstances of their coming to Amadiya.<sup>18</sup>

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15. Ibid., p. 373.

16. Longrigg, op. cit., p. 7. Rich (op. cit., p. 153) also styles the Bahdinan as an aristocratic family and mentions the prevailing belief that it traced descent from the Caliphate. But he believes that the family may date from a much more remote antiquity.

17. Longrigg, loc. cit.

18. Azzawi, op. cit., pp. 191-192.

## (2) Bahdinan Rule

The Bahdinan state rose to prominence at the beginning of the 16th century by the diplomacy of its prince Hassan; having submitted to the Persian Safawi ruler in 1508 in anticipation of the latter's impending expansion over Iraq and thus gained favor with Persia, Hasan quickly transferred his allegiance to the Ottoman side as Salim I began his preparations to wrest Iraq from the Shah. The prestige acquired thereby on behalf of the Bahdinans by Hasan was enhanced by his successor Husayn who performed services for Sulayman the Magnificent. Following a dynastic quarrel which both the Shah and the Hakari sought unsuccessfully to exploit, the tribe was shown further favor by Sultan Murad IV, and for a century thereafter enjoyed power and virtual independence. During this time "The tribes between the Tigris and the Great Zab centered on Amadia with Dohuk, Aqra, and Zakho as dependencies. At Amadia, remote and defensible, the Bahdinan family ruled in virtual independence till Ahmad Pasha [of Baghdad] reduced them to effective vassalage (c. 1730)."<sup>19</sup> The circumstances of their subjection by Ahmad are not known, it is sufficient to note that thereafter they were invested with their firmans of office by the Pasha of Baghdad. Although the Pasha of Amadiya never regained his former status as a near-independent ruler, he continued to exercise some influence over the rulers of Aqra, Dohuk, and Zakho who were usually recruited from the Bahdinan family.<sup>20</sup> The relics of this principality as found today in the tribes of northern Iraq have been discussed in the preceding chapter.

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19. United Kingdom, Naval Intelligence Division, op. cit., p. 262.

20. Rich (op. cit., pp. 153-154) gives a description of the Bahdinan ruler and his retinue in the early 19th century. The best summary of the Bahdinan principality is found in Longrigg, op. cit., pp. 7, 37, 42, 159, and 209.

## b. The Suran

Contemporary to the Bahdinan both in the period of its autonomy and in the period of its subsequent vassalage was the principality of Suran which ruled part of the area between the two Zabs from its capital at Koi Sanjaq.<sup>21</sup> With respect to the origins of this principality there is a lack of information; the prevailing view that there exists a close relationship between the Persian Kurdish principality of the Mukri and the Suran is shared by Longrigg who states that both the family of Suran and the tribe of Pizhdar trace their origins from the Mukri.<sup>22</sup>

There is likewise little to tell of the history of Suran. The period of their quasi-independence was marked by occasional family feuds; in general the Suran cooperated with local and imperial Ottoman forces in resisting Persian encroachments. Autonomy came to an end in 1730; unlike the Bahdinan, the Suran were subdued not by the Baghdad Pasha but rather by a new Kurdish principality, the Baban. For the remainder of the period under consideration Koi Sanjaq was under Baban dominion, although in most cases its own Suran family continued to be invested with its gubernatorial office nominally by the Pasha of Baghdad.<sup>23</sup>

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21. United Kingdom, Naval Intelligence Division, loc. cit. Rich (op. cit., p. 157) locates the capital at Harir where he says one may find many relics of the Suran principality.

22. Longrigg, loc. cit. The connection between Mukri, Suran, Pizhdar, and Bilbas has been examined in the first chapter; the details of this relationship are still confused, but it appears that the Murki principality is the progenitor. The Mukri, an old Kurdish dynasty located in Persia, have for many years had their capital at Sauch Bulaq (Mahabad) which was the seat of the short-lived Kurdish republic in 1946. Unlike their offshoots the Suran, the Mukri throughout the period under consideration supported the Shah against the Sultan. The Mukri are discussed in Nikitin, op. cit., pp. 164-167; Soane, op. cit., pp. 375-376.

23. The trail of the Suran may be followed in Longrigg, op. cit., pp. 7, 36, 54, 80, 98, 126, 159, 179, 186, 207, and 209.

## c. The Baban

## (1) Area

We turn now to the most famous and influential of the dynasties of southern Kurdistan during the 18th and 19th centuries, namely, the principality of Baban. The Babans began to consolidate their power in the area between the Lesser Zab and Diyala Rivers and eventually extended their influence to the north of the former river as well; the south-western limit of their region was the ancient Kifri-Altun Kopru highroad.<sup>24</sup> This region was referred to generally as Shahrizour,<sup>25</sup> and in the 18th century it was placed under the jurisdiction of the Mamluk Pasha of Baghdad and given the status of an eyalat composed of the six sanjags of Kirkuk, Arbil, Koi Sanjaq, Qara Chulan, Ruwanduz, and Harir.<sup>26</sup> These sanjags were ruled by Beys appointed in theory by the Mamluk Pasha; of these, the Beyship of Qara Chulan became the appanage of the Babans who came to exercise de facto and sometimes de jure control over the other five. In 1783 the capital of the principality was transferred from Qara Chulan to a new city named Sulaymaniya in honor of the Mamluk Pasha of the time; significant in illustrating the importance of town and tribe alike is a British officer's reference in 1819 to Sulaymaniya as "the capital of Kurdistan."<sup>27</sup>

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24. United Kingdom, Naval Intelligence Division, loc. cit. Rich (op. cit., p.157) gives a wider area as having been under Baban authority, including the towns of Zangabad, Mandali, Badran Jassan, Altun Kopru, Arbil, and at times Sanna (in Persian territory).

25. The connotation of this area has varied. Ibid. As will be seen, in the 19th century it denoted a slightly different area.

26. Nikitin, op. cit., p. 163.

27. William Heude, A Voyage Up the Persian Gulf and a Journey Overland from India to England, in 1817, p. 300.



## (2) Origins

Much has been written, but little has been concluded, as to the origins of the Babans. Attempts to trace them involve an examination of possible connections between the Babans and two principalities antedating them: the Bani Ardalan of Persian Kurdistan and the previously mentioned Suran. With respect to the former, various similarities between Ardalan and Baban were noted in the first chapter; it is also worthy of mentioning that beginning with the 12th century, the Ardalan ruled a large tract of Kurdistan including, but not limited to, Shahrizour and had for several centuries thereafter been regarded as the most powerful Kurdish dynasty.<sup>28</sup> No commentator, however, has established a definite link between the two tribal groups. With respect to the latter theory, the Babans emerge as yet another complicating factor in the already confused pattern of Suran, Bilbas, and Pizhdar. Rich states that the Babans had been the feudal chieftans of the Pizhdar tribe under the Suran principality and rose to prominence as their former suzerains, the Suran, became extinct;<sup>29</sup> Longrigg states that the relationship is unclear, but believes that the ancestors of the Babans hailed from Pizhdar country.<sup>30</sup>

## (3) Founding

The establishment of the Baban dynasty dates from the 17th century when one Ahmad al-Faqih, a denizen of the Pizhdar territory, bore and bequeathed the family name of Baban.<sup>31</sup> He acquired some lands and followers to which his son made additions. But it was a later descendent of Faqih, probably a grandson, known as Baba Sulayman, who came to be known

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28. Longrigg, *op. cit.*, p. 7. Descriptions of the Bani Ardalan are found in Nikitin, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-170; Soane, *op. cit.*, p. 376.

29. Rich, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

30. Longrigg, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

31. *Ibid.* Edmonds (*op. cit.*, p. 52) states that the original and correct form of the name is Baba (with short A's), Baban (with long A's) being a Turkish corruption. Rich employs the transcription Bebbeh.

as the father of the Baban house. After rendering signal services to the Ottoman Sultan he was rewarded with the position of Sanjaq Bey with headquarters at Qara Chulan. By the end of the 17th century the Babans had made themselves a power in the Shahrizour.

(4) The Apogee of Baban Rule

For a century thereafter the principality flourished under the rule of the Baban family. The history of the ruling family is filled with incidents of family rivalry and disputed succession, and perhaps more than any other Kurdish dynasty of the time the Babans afforded an opportunity to the Persians and Baghdad Mamluks for exploitation of opposing candidates for the leadership of the principality. A few highlights of the era will be summarized.<sup>32</sup>

Among the first of the influential rulers was Khana Pasha (1715-1732) who briefly, in cooperation with Ahmad Pasha of Baghdad, established Baban sway over the Ardalan province in Persia, from which his son was shortly expelled by the Persian Nadir Shah. There followed a period during which the Baban contestants for leadership became the playthings of the Persian Shahs and Mamluk Pashas, and fratricidal struggles became the order of the day during the Persian-Mamluk conflicts of the 1770's. In 1783 the Babans were brought under partial control by the Mamluk Pasha of Baghdad, Sulayman the Great, who expelled an ambitious Baban ruler with designs on the Pashaliq of Baghdad and installed a rival contestant, Ibrahim Baban. Ibrahim is best remembered for having moved the seat of the Baban

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32. A geneological table of the more important Babans is appended, as adapted from tables found in Edmonds, *op. cit.*, p. 53 and Longrigg, *op. cit.*, p. 348. A chronology of the family is found in Ainsworth, Personal Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition, Vol. II, pp. 298-300; much emphasis is placed here on the unpleasant events connected with intradynastic changes, as is evidenced by his opening comment: "The history of the successive chiefs of this family is one of horrors."

principality to the newly-built town of Sulaymaniya named in honor of his Mamluk patron in Baghdad. As long as Sulayman the Great retained the Pashaliq of Baghdad, the Babans were generally loyal to the Mamluk regime; both Ibrahim and his successor Abd al-Rahman Pasha were periodically deposed for having incurred the displeasure of Sulayman.

The death of Sulayman in 1802, followed by three feeble Mamluk successors, paved the way for a greater degree of assertiveness on the part of the Babans; Abd al-Rahman Baban emerged as the most influential figure in the area and on more than one occasion assumed the role of king-maker among the rival contestants to the Baghdad Pashaliq. With his authority consolidated over Sulaymaniya, Harir, and Koi Sanjaq, he was able to intrigue with Mamluk, Shah, and Sultan alike and retain, with brief interruptions, his position until his death in 1813.<sup>33</sup> "After Abdur Rahman Pasha Baban autonomy became more and more compromised, yet almost to the last the character of the administration remained essentially Kurdish, and the rulers maintained their own regular army and other signs of petty royalty."<sup>34</sup>

#### (5) The Decline and Fall of the Babans

The intricacies of rivalry between the last Mamluk of Baghdad, Daoud Pasha, and the Persian Prince-Governor of Kirmanshah which were inevitably to involve the Baban rulers, combined with the renewal of fraternal conflict between the two sons of Abd al-Rahman, Mahmud and Sulayman, led to a weakening of Baban power. Mahmud succeeded his father

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33. Longrigg (op. cit., pp. 231-233) describes the events of the reign of Abd al-Rahman Pasha.

34. Edmonds, op. cit., p. 54.

in 1813; although considered by Rich<sup>35</sup> to have been originally of the pro-Turkish party as a result of his religious orientation, growing animosity between him and the Mamluk Daoud led Mahmud to flirtation with the Persian authorities. A further complication appeared in the form of intervention by the Kurdish prince of Ruwanduz. These factors, accentuated by Mahmud's rivalry with his brother, led to a Persian occupation, an invasion from Ruwanduz, and a second Persian intervention after which a Persian garrison was quartered in Sulaymaniya until 1834; two years before this Mahmud had been replaced by his rival brother. By that time the Baban principality was more dominated by Persia than at any time by Turkey; Fraser in 1834 observed that "The small state...of Suleimaniyah...has of late been the prey of an accumulation of misfortunes, which have reduced it to extreme misery."<sup>36</sup>

Following the accession of Ahmad Pasha in 1839 there was a brief Indian summer of the Babans, "which shone on little outside their capitol";<sup>37</sup> a final intradynastic quarrel ensued in the late 1840's. By this time the international situation had changed so that Persia was prepared to relinquish her claims on Shahrizour to the Ottomans, while the Mamluk regime in Baghdad had collapsed; Sulaymaniya, nominally tributary to Baghdad, was by now under the effective control of the Porte. Tribute was raised; imperial troops were garrisoned. Eventually in 1850 a Turkish general replaced the last Baban and the principality passed away.

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35. Rich (op. cit., chapters 2 and 3) gives a vivid description of the Baban court during the early reign of Mahmud. On p.69 he summarizes Mahmud's comments to him on the political situation and adds his estimate of the latter's political orientation. On pp. 76-78 he describes Mahmud's official retinue; his brother (whom Rich describes as being pro-Persian), his famous prime minister-treasurer Mahmood Masraff, his council, his police chief, and officers.

36. J.B.Fraser, Travels in Kurdistan, Mesopotamia, Etc., pp.147-148.

37. Longrigg, op. cit., p. 287.

## d. Ruwanduz

During the period which witnessed the fall of the Mamluks and the concurrent twilight of Baban power, and while the Ottomans were still in the process of completing their consolidation of power over Iraq, a fourth Kurdish principality emerged briefly at the forefront; this was the principality of Ruwanduz. Of the origins of this group, we have only broken fragments; our information is confined to the meteoric career of Kor Muhammad Pasha who ruled from 1826 to 1836,<sup>38</sup> after which his principality dissolved.

Muhammad appears in 1826 as the leader of the small Ruwanduz tribe, his father Mustafa having died in that year.<sup>39</sup> Recognizing no superior, he strengthened his followers and resisted any attempts by the Porte to impose its authority upon him; clashing with the Babans on the South and the Badr Khans on the West, he took advantage of the Russo-Persian War to encroach on the lands of the latter power. After subduing the Shirwan, Baradost, and Surji tribes he wrested Harir, Arbil, Altun Kopru, Koi, and Ranya from the Babans and forced the new Ottoman-appointed Pasha of Baghdad Ali Rida to elevate him to the grade of Pasha. This done, he turned westward and took Amadiya, Aqra, Dohuk, and Zakho from the Bahdinans after which he terrorized the Badr Khans of Jazirat Ibn Umar. Under his brief rule, wild tribes were checked and order and security were imposed; at the height of his power some 50,000 men responded to his orders.<sup>40</sup> But

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38. The term "Kor" means blind, an appellation resulting from an eye infection from which the ruler suffered. Longrigg, op. cit., p. 285. Safrastian refers to this prince under the name Ahmad rather than Muhammad. Safrastian, op. cit., p. 52.

39. Soane (op. cit., p. 372) identifies Kor Muhammad as having been of Baban stock. Since during the 18th century the Baban Pasha as Wali of Shahrizour seems to have controlled the appointment of the Beys to the six subsidiary sanjaqs which included Ruwanduz, the assertion is plausible.

40. Fraser, op. cit., p. 64. Longrigg (op. cit., p. 286) and Soane (loc. cit.) indicate that his regime was harsh.

his power could not last; eventually he succumbed to Ottoman expeditions dispatched against him and surrendered under guarantees of good treatment. Sent to Istanbul, he vanished mysteriously. Although his brother was installed in Ruwanduz, the authority of the family ceased and the territories he had conquered were brought under effective Ottoman control.<sup>41</sup>

e. The Badr Khans of Jazirat Ibn Umar

The last manifestation of an autonomous Kurdish power during this period was the principality of Badr Khan. The Badr Khan family had long been established in the town of Jazirat Ibn Umar, located just inside the territory of modern Turkey 30 miles west of Zakho. Following the dissolution of the Ruwanduz state in 1836, a particularly energetic member of the Badr Khan family extended the influence of the Jazirat Ibn Umar state until it extended from Diarbekr in modern Turkish territory to Mosul. This done, the prince set out, in conjunction with two allies, Khan Mahmud of Mukus and Nurulla Bey of the Hakari, to resist recent Ottoman tendencies toward centralization and create an independent Kurdistan. After tentative efforts at approximation between Badr Khan and the new Ottoman regime of Sultan Abd al-Majid, the former definitely broke with the Porte over the issue of conscription. The period from 1842 to 1847 featured intermittent strife between the two sides until in the latter year the power of the Kurdish prince was definitely broken, and the ruling family was exiled.<sup>42</sup>

A feature of interest in the story of this last Kurdish principality is the relationship of the Badr Khan regime with the Armenian and

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41. The sources of information on the principality of Ruwanduz are the following: Fraser, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-69; Longrigg, *op. cit.*, pp. 285-286; Safrastian, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53; United Kingdom, Naval Intelligence Division, p. 262.

42. Safrastian (*op. cit.*, pp. 54-61) summarizes the regime of Badr Khan.

Assyrian Christians who inhabited his territories. Safrastian avers that Badr Khan's intention was to include the Armenian and Assyrian communities in his proposed Kurdish state; he further indicates that Christian peasantry hailed the Khan as prince of Kurdistan, although their patriarchs for interested reasons sided with the Porte.<sup>43</sup> Sarkissian, in describing the revolt of the Kurds under "the gallant Beder-Khan," observes that they sought aid from the Armenians.<sup>44</sup> As against this theory of Badr Khan-Christian rapport, the Wigrams point to the massacres of Assyrians in 1845 and 1847, stating that they were perpetrated by Badr Khan;<sup>45</sup> this occurrence is glossed over by Safrastian.<sup>46</sup> Soane, in suggesting that Badr Khan may have been incited by the Ottomans toward these risings, opens the door to additional theories as to the real nature of these incidents and the forces behind them.<sup>47</sup> Whatever may have been the factors underlying this revolt,

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43. Ibid., pp. 56, 58-59.

44. A.O.Sarkissian, History of the Armenian Question to 1885, pp. 16-17.

45. Wigram and Wigram, op. cit., pp. 272, 279.

46. Safrastian (op. cit., p.56) does mention a massacre in 1843 which could have been brought on by jealousy of missionaries; he seems to consider it an accident. R.S.Stafford (Tragedy of the Assyrians, pp. 22-23) mentions the massacre of 1847 but does not directly implicate Badr Khan.

47. Soane (op. cit., p. 156) reviews Kurdish-Christian relations and analyzes pertinent factors. He says: "A very significant fact in support of the assertion that the Kurds were incited to rise, is the treatment of Badr Khan Bey, when, after the repeated protests and considerable pressure from Europe, the Sultan was forced to capture him. The officer deputed to his task, one Osman Pasha, made such lenient terms with the Kurdish chiefs as made it practically certain that he had not been acting without the acquiescence of the Turks. Nor was any part of the Kurdish territory invaded, except in the expedition against Bader Khan Bey, after which troops were withdrawn. The opinions of contemporary Chaldeans, as expressed in some old letters I saw at Mosul, confirm these views, and state that the Kurds, although ever alive to the supposed wealth of the Chaldeans, had always been on fairly good terms with them; indeed, as we have seen, for over four hundred years they had lived side by side without any disturbances occurring."

it is sufficient to say that its failure marks the disappearance of the independent Kurdish principalities of the early Ottoman era.

f. The End of an Epoch

Although it cannot be said that the centralizing policies of the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) immediately resulted in establishment of Ottoman control over the Kurdish areas of the easternmost province, nonetheless Mahmud's policies set in motion certain factors which helped to terminate the era of autonomous Kurdish regimes. In this connection, perhaps the most important single event of the Sultan's reign was the suppression in 1831 of the Mamluk Regime in Baghdad. During the century preceding this act, the Mamluk Pashas, while nominally representing the Porte, had often pursued their interests in Kurdistan to the detriment of those of Istanbul, whereas after 1831 Baghdad was to act in concert with its suzerain in the suppression of refractory elements in Iraq; the prompt suppression of the shortlived Ruwanduz principality in 1836 is indicative of this new-found power of the central authorities. A second factor in the strengthening of the Porte's authority was the elimination of Persian intervention. In 1840 occurred the last major Persian inroad and in 1843 there began diplomatic proceedings between the Sultan and the Shah for the final delineation of the Turko-Persian frontier; while this process was not to be completed until 1914,<sup>48</sup> its commencement nonetheless marked the termination of serious border incidents.

Thus, in seeking to consolidate its influence in Kurdistan, the Porte could now concentrate on bringing the dissident Kurdish tribes under its orbit; it no longer had to contend with rivals in the form of Shahs or

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48. Edmonds (op. cit., pp. 130-138) gives an account of the rather amusing diplomacy involved in these protracted negotiations.



Mamluks. The pristine energy of the Kurdish principalities had been spent by the middle of the century and for some time thereafter there appeared no Kurdish leader of stature sufficient to put up a large-scale defiance of the Sultan's authority.

In looking at the preceding period of the principalities in retrospect, it is difficult to form a conclusion as to the degree to which their regimes may be said to have embodied an expression of early Kurdish nationalism. Nikitin, in listing some of them, describes their activities as revolts without a general plan or scheme.<sup>49</sup> Soane considers them as the awakening of a national spirit which "asserted itself in attempts to throw off the yoke of the Turks." Among the specific events he lists are the conflicts between Abd al-Rahman Baban and one of the Mamluk Pashas of Baghdad from 1806 - 1808, the establishment of the Ruwanduz state under Kor Muhammad, and the insurrection of Badr Khan.<sup>50</sup> Although this last might be construed as a revolt against the Ottomans, it is more difficult to consider the first two exclusively in this light. Abd al-Rahman Baban, engaged in an intradynastic conflict, strove alternately with Persian and Mamluk and at one time entered into an alliance with the Porte to the discomfiture of both;<sup>51</sup> Kor Muhammad was impartial in his opposition to Ottoman, Persian, Baban (the Sulaymaniya branch), and Badr Khan. It seems possible that all of these uprisings were localized separatist movements motivated by the ambitions of individual Kurdish families toward the domination of a principality and pursued in opposition not only to

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49. Nikitin, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-194. This is the first section of his chapter dealing with the Kurdish national movement.

50. Soane, *op. cit.*, pp. 371-372. Safrastian takes a similar view. Safrastian, *op. cit.*, p. 104 (Notes to Chapter 3, g).

51. Longrigg, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-233.

Ottomans but also to Persians, Mamluks, and other Kurds; in all of them intertribal and intratribal disputes were a factor. It was at the end of the century that a more coordinated nationalism began to arise, and in Iraq new families were to undertake its leadership.

#### 4. THE ERA OF OTTOMAN CONSOLIDATION AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS

##### a. The New Era

The quarter century following the suppression of Badr Khan is an era of slack water in Kurdish development; during this period not a great deal of information on Kurdish activities is available.<sup>52</sup> After 1874, however, the picture becomes richer in details. During the latter half of the century and thereafter, two currents became evident: on the one hand there was a clever and determined effort on the part of the Sultan Abd al-Hamid II (1876-1909) and his successors the Young Turks to cause the Kurds to identify themselves with the Ottomans; on the other hand, despite this attempt, there was a continuous spreading of the spores of a Kurdish national movement which for the first time achieved intellectual expression. Interlocked with these currents were the complex questions of Kurdish relations with the nearby Christian communities. In Iraq, after a period of additional Kurdish migration, Kurdish separatist tendencies were once more to appear, this time under the direction of tribal groups which were to achieve much notoriety in the 20th century. During this topic we will first review some of the main currents in the Kurdish scene and will subsequently consider developments in Iraqi Kurdistan in more detail.

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52. The only notable event is the revolt of Yezdan Cher, 1853 - 1855; this primarily concerned areas and tribes in the territory of Turkey. The revolt is summarized in Nikitin, op. cit., p. 194.

b. Utilization of the Kurds by Abd al-Hamid II

(1) New Ottoman Policies; the Kurdish Attack on Persia

Ottoman consolidation of authority over the Kurdish areas was not a gesture of unmixed tyranny. Shortly after the revolt of Badr Khan had been crushed, the stage for a conciliatory policy on the part of the Porte toward the Kurds was set by the liberation of Kurdish tribal leaders who had been previously captured, a measure taken in anticipation of the Crimean War.<sup>53</sup> It is indicative of Ottoman policies in this regard to note that the next major outbreak of Kurdish resentment, as embodied in the uprising of Shaykh Ubaydullah of the Hakari, was directed against Persia rather than Turkey. In 1880 the Shaykh, in league with the son of Badr Khan, launched an invasion of Persian territory with the object of taking Sauch Bulaq; whatever secret approval the Porte may have given to this movement was checked by pressure from Russia and England and fear that the movement might develop into a new bid for Kurdish independence.<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, Ottoman suppression of the movement was gentle, and the subsequent policy of the Sultan Abd al-Hamid II toward the Kurds was one of dalliance and utilization.

(2) The Hamidiya

One of the projects of the Sultan involved the organization of Kurdish tribes into irregular light cavalry regiments as auxiliaries to the Turkish army. The goal of this seems to have been to secure the close adhesion of the Kurds to the Khalif by paid employment without deserting tribalism.<sup>55</sup> Accordingly, 76 regiments each consisting of 400 men were to be recruited, officered by their tribal chiefs, and placed under command

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53. Safrastian, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

54. For an account of this movement one may refer to *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

55. Longrigg, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

of the Fourth Ottoman Army Headquarters;<sup>56</sup> the government supplied the arms and ammunition and appointed officers for their training.<sup>57</sup> Actually, not all of the regiments were constituted. In general it was the northern Kurdish tribes who participated in this movement, although one of the tribes of Iraq, the Miran, also furnished volunteers.<sup>58</sup> As an additional gesture to increase personal loyalty to himself, the Sultan honored the new force with the name of Hamidiya. Longrigg and Safrastian have commented on the overall usefulness and effect of this creation of a Kurdish force; the former feels that "Something was gained by the paid attachment of powerful Kurds to government: but the bullying indiscipline of the Hamidiyyah, their still doubtful loyalty, their limited fighting uses, and the retrogression implied in their formation, leaves this phase of policy on the whole to be condemned."<sup>59</sup> Safrastian evaluated the effect of this measure on some of the major currents in the Kurdish life of the period:

The incorporation of Kurdish youth into the body politic of Turkey injured the natives in two ways. It increased their violence towards their neighbours, the Armenian as well as Kurdish agricultural population; but above all, it considerably retarded the growth of Kurdish nationalism, by deflecting the energies and the aspirations of a healthy race into negative and anti-national channels.<sup>60</sup>

### (3) Religious Factors

The question of Kurdish relations with the nearby Christian communities merits further discussion in the context of the establishment of the Kingdom of Iraq, but brief mention must be accorded to this subject both in connection with the policies of Abd al-Hamid and occurrences

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56. Safrastian, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

57. M. F. Jamali, *The New Iraq*, p. 140.

58. For a list of the tribes, see Safrastian, *op. cit.*, p. 103 (Notes to Chapter 4, *b*). Longrigg (*op. cit.*, p. 310) states that the movement affected only extreme northern Iraq.

59. Longrigg, *loc. cit.*

60. Safrastian, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

during the First World War. Throughout the 19th century, Kurds had lived in close proximity to Armenians and Assyrians on varying terms. Although it is true that the Kurds had on occasion tyrannized over their Christian neighbors,<sup>61</sup> the opinion is widespread that Kurdish-Armenian and Kurdish-Assyrian relations were basically good but suffered from external manipulation. During the reign of Abd al-Hamid, regrettable incidents were to culminate in the massacres of Armenians in 1884-1855.

Safrastian and the British Foreign Office have discussed the factors leading them to the conclusion that the incidents were inspired. The former explains Abd al-Hamid's point of view as follows: "Two distinct revolutionary movements, Armenian and Kurdish, although outwardly antagonistic and mutually hostile, might conceivably join hands under certain given circumstances and bring about the real partition of Turkey. Somehow or other a wedge must be driven between the two neighbouring peoples and something done to set one against the other."<sup>62</sup> The latter sees the Armenian massacres as an integral part of the Sultan's policy of Ottomanization: "a supreme concession to conciliate the Kurds and at the same time to commit them."<sup>63</sup> Stafford relates a deterioration in Assyrian-Kurdish relations to the reign of Abd al-Hamid.<sup>64</sup>

Conversely the Kurds were quite receptive to the increased emphasis placed by the Sultan upon the Islamic religion. Longrigg has noted: "The active Sunni propoganda of 'Abdu'l Hamid had its effect in the towns and the Kurdish tribes of the 'Iraq provinces who appreciated

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61. Sarkissian (op. cit., pp. 33-34) describes the unauthorized taxes levied by Kurds upon Armenians and certain other encroachments, such as Kurdish "requisitions" of quarters and supplies.

62. Safrastian, op. cit., p. 66.

63. United Kingdom, Foreign Office, Handbook, Volume 58, Turkey in Asia, p. 14.

64. Stafford, op. cit., p. 23.

(as was intended) his skillful playing upon elements the most conservative and reactionary."<sup>65</sup>

(4) Summary

For a final evaluation of the nature and effects of Abd al-Hamid's Kurdish policies the comment of the British Foreign Office is quoted here:

Nevertheless, it was among the Kurds as a whole that Abdul Hamid scored his most conspicuous success in comparison with his predecessors. By enticing or compelling Kurdish chiefs to visit Constantinople, by dealing drastically with the persons, families, and property of open rebels like Bedr Khan, by subsidies and honours to those who had not rebelled, by enrolling tribal warriors in the Hamidie Horse and giving them the uniform and training of the Ottoman cavalry, by planting Ottoman administrators under the protection of detachments of regular troops wherever possible at a tribal centre or market, and finally by granting them the fields of Christians to ravage and the persons of Christian women to violate--by such means the Sultan tried to make the Kurds, from Erzerum to Khanakin, identify themselves with the Ottoman tradition and hope.<sup>66</sup>

c. Kurdish Nationalism and the Young Turks

Despite the sublimating effect of Abd al-Hamid's measures, there began to be formed at this time a Kurdish nationalist movement with coherent aims. It is difficult to assign a particular date or circumstance as marking the beginning, or the turning point in the development, of Kurdish nationalism as we know it today. The uprisings during the period of the principalities were probably primitive expressions of this movement, and it must be noted that during and subsequent to the Baban era there were poets who extolled a form of

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65. Longrigg, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

66. United Kingdom, Foreign Office, *loc. cit.* Stafford (*loc. cit.*) has gone so far as to observe that "The new Sultan's policy was to use the Kurds to strengthen his throne, for he feared the Ottomans."

Kurdish patriotism.<sup>67</sup> However, by the end of the 19th century Kurdish nationalism had advanced considerably in its aims, concepts, and media of expression. Edmonds suggests the date 1892 as marking a milestone in the Kurdish national movement at which time a trend toward journalism began.<sup>68</sup> This project was under the direction of three princes of the Badr Khan family, Midhat, Abd al-Rahman, and Thuraya, and involved the publication of a newspaper "Kurdistan" whose copies appeared at various times in Cairo, Geneva, and even Folkstone, England. The promising movement collapsed after it had entered into competition with another movement sponsored by the Nahri family.<sup>69</sup>

Concurrently with the journalistic activities, Kurdish societies began to be formed, and in this movement the Badr Khan family was also active. The Young Turk regime, which at first appeared to espouse the causes of the Empire's many racial components as brothers in Ottomanism, gave some initial encouragement to Kurdish aspirations and in 1908 a Kurdish club was formed in Constantinople; similar clubs were established in Baghdad, Mosul, and Diarbekr.<sup>70</sup> In the next year, however, the Young Turks closed down this club,<sup>71</sup> and at the same time "the secret agents of the Young Turk Committee were touring the eastern provinces, sowing suspicion and discord among Armenians and Kurds."<sup>72</sup>

Thus it would seem that the attitude of the Committee of Union and Progress did not represent a material change with respect to the

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67. Edmonds, op. cit., pp. 10, 58.

68. Ibid. Nikitin (op.cit., p. 194) gives the date as 1898.

69. Nikitin, op. cit., pp. 194-195.

70. Safrastian, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

71. Nikitin, op. cit., p. 195.

72. Safrastian, op.cit., p. 71. During the same period, the Committee of Union and Progress tried to enroll the Kurds of the Shahrizour district in a corps modeled after the Hamidiya. A few Hamawand, Jaf, Dizaih enlisted but little was accomplished. United Kingdom, India Office, Review of the Civil Administration of Meopotamia, p. 43.

Kurds from that of Abd al-Hamid. The attitudes of both regimes toward the embryonic national movement have been characterized as follows:

The relations of the Ottoman Government with the Kurdish tribes upon their eastern frontier may be summarized as having consisted in ineffective efforts to exercise control on the one hand, and rebellion on the other. Since the declaration of the Constitution in 1908, disorder had tended to decrease rather than to diminish, partly owing to the high-handed dealings of the Committee of Union and Progress and partly to the political unrest engendered by the disappointment of those hopes which had been aroused by the constitutional movement. Both causes led to vague yearnings for a racial autonomy, which, if they never assumed a dangerously practical form, at least give a cadre embracing the general discontent with things Ottoman which was prevalent among the subject races in Turkey before the war.<sup>73</sup>

We shall now turn to examine more closely Iraqi Kurdistan during this period in the context of the conditions as previously discussed.

d. Iraqi Kurdistan in the Late Ottoman Era

(1) Administrative and Tribal Patterns

During the 19th century as the previously examined currents were developing, the administrative structure and tribal pattern in Iraqi Kurdistan was crystallizing into a form approximating that of today. From the administrative standpoint Iraqi Kurdistan largely comprised the wilayat of Mosul, which had emerged as a wilayat in 1879. Exceptions were the qada of Amadiya, organic to the sanjaq of Hakari which in turn formed part of the wilayat of Van, and the qadas of Khanaqin and Mandali, which were organic to Baghdad sanjaq (of the wilayat of Baghdad). As finally organized, the wilayat of Mosul consisted of three sanjags: Mosul, Sulaymaniya, and Shahrizour. The first two were roughly equivalent to the present-day liwas of the same name, while Shahrizour corresponded to the liwas of Arbil and Kirkuk.<sup>74</sup> Of these sanjags, about

73. United Kingdom, India Office, op. cit., p. 42.

74. United Kingdom, Naval Staff, op. cit., pp. 140-141. The detailed breakdown by qadas is also included.



half of Mosul was Kurdish country, two thirds of Shahrizour, and almost all of Sulaymaniya.<sup>75</sup>

Though principalities had vanished and the freedom of the valley dynasties belonged to the past, the importance of the tribal structure was unabated. The tribes, compact, barely accessible communities of one to fifty thousand, were still more loyal to their leaders than to Turkish officialdom to which they adhered only when the latter were sympathetic, strong, and flexible. Turkish officials, often Kurdish by race, were established in most of the qadas and nahiyas while conversely the Kurds supplied many officials and soldiers to the empire. However the educated class among the Iraqi Kurds was small, and the educated Kurd was usually in culture and in sentiment a Turk.<sup>76</sup> Thus, although a Kurdish nationalist movement was present as has been previously seen, it could hardly be considered widespread; in Iraq its manifestations were to be centered not so much around principalities or clubs, but rather around tribes which had achieved prominence since the era of the principalities.

Although the Kurds have been in unbroken occupation of this area for many centuries, it was not until the beginning of the 19th century that the tribal pattern became fairly fixed; around this time there occurred a considerable migration during which some of the tribes in Persia began to move across the frontiers and other tribes already in Iraq began to push westward toward the Tigris. In the early 18th century the Jaf arrived in Shahrizour where they served to strengthen the Baban, while the Hamawand arrived around 1830.<sup>77</sup> Perhaps as late as the 18th

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75. Longrigg, *'Iraq 1900-1950*, p. 8.

76. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

77. United Kingdom, Naval Intelligence Division, *op. cit.*, p.263. Azzawi assigns earlier dates for the arrival of the Hamawand (Chapter 1).

century the Girdi and Zarari came down from Persia to the Arbil plain. In the 19th century the Dizaih occupied the plains west of Arbil where Arab tribes had formerly dwelt, and only around the turn of the century did they push west of the Qara Chau Dagh to cultivate the plains of Qaraj.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, it would seem that in the 19th century the Kurdish tribes began to exhibit a definite predilection for engaging in transmontane treks to the hills and plains of Iraqi Kurdistan; in describing these treks the British Foreign Office made a revealing prediction:

But the future of the Kurds lies less in Armenia (under whatever regime Armenia may come) than in Northern Mesopotamia, which is on the eve of economic development. So long as it lay fallow, the steppe-country between Aleppo and Mosul was an Arab domain...but where Kurds and Bedawi have taken to the land, the Kurd has shown himself so far to be the better man. If, therefore, the economic development of the country proceeds gradually, and if the local population is not swamped by reservoirs of man-power from abroad, Northern Mesopotamia seems destined to become Kurdish land.<sup>79</sup>

During the latter part of the 19th century two new tribal hegemonies began to appear, one in Southern and the other in Northern Iraqi Kurdistan; the most important elements in these two were respectively the Barzinji family of Sayyids and the Barzani tribe. An early tendency in both hegemonies was an anti-Ottoman and a pro-British leaning. A study of Kurdish orientations in the 20th century involves in great measure an examination of the roles of these two tribal groups and their relationships with their neighbors. These groups will now be considered during their early stages of formation.

(2) Southern Iraqi Kurdistan: the Barzinji Family

The fall of the Baban dynasty did not terminate the importance

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78. League of Nations, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

79. United Kingdom, Foreign Office, *Handbook*, Volume 57, *Turkey in Asia*, p. 104, quoted in *Ibid.*

of Sulaymaniya as a focal point for Kurdish nationalist movements in southern Kurdistan and in succeeding years it was to become a clearing house for the individualist tendencies of the tribes which inhabited its vicinity. Edmonds, very familiar with this area, has commented as follows on the position of this town in the minds of Kurdish aspirants:

...at Sulaymaniya there was present in addition, among all classes of the population, an abiding conviction, rooted in their history, that the town contained the germs of a revived and extensive Kurdish state of which it was the fore-ordained capital. The belief had little apparent justification either in the physical appearance and commercial importance of the place, or in the academic attainments or political experience of the citizens. But it was always in the air and seemed to give to what was little more than a tumbledown village something that I can only describe as a 'personality', so strong that few Kurds, whether strangers or returned exiles, could stay there very long without succumbing to its heady influence.<sup>80</sup>

The most important participants in the emerging role of Sulaymaniya and Southern Iraqi Kurdistan were the Jaf, Hamawand, Hawaraman, and Bajlan tribes and the Barzinji family of Sayyids.

According to Azzawi, the Jaf were utilized extensively by the Babans in the latter's struggles against the Bilbas tribes. With the fall of the Baban principality, both the Ottoman and Persian governments realized that the Jaf were a potential power in the area and accordingly courted them with favors and with the absence of demands such as taxation, and there ensued for the Jaf a period of stability and progress.<sup>81</sup> However in 1910 the Ottoman government antagonized the Jaf by an attempt to extract a heavy annual tribute and the temporary detention of their chieftan Mahmud Pasha Beg Zadah in Mosul.<sup>82</sup> Thus the stage was set for anti-Ottoman policy on the part of the Jaf, and the feeling was accentuated by

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80. Edmonds, op. cit., p. 59.

81. Azzawi, op. cit., pp. 38-40.

82. United Kingdom, India Office, op. cit., p. 43.

the pro-British orientation of their lady chieftan Adela Khanim. Also incited to riot against the Porte were the neighbors and kinsmen of the Jaf, the Hamawand; in this case the issue was their suspicion that the Ottomans had contrived the murder of the Barzinji Shaykh Sa'id.<sup>83</sup> The Hawaraman, lying partly in Turkish and more in Persian territory, retained virtual independence from either suzerain as a result of their impregnable stronghold in the mountains on the international borders.<sup>84</sup> The Bajlan, whose territory was similarly split, were no more amenable to outside control; those occupying Ottoman territory acknowledged the leadership of Mustafa Pasha Bajlan between whom and the Ottoman government there had been constant friction. Exiled at one time to Istanbul and subsequently detained in Baghdad as a suspect, Mustafa was feared by the Turks for his pro-British leanings.<sup>85</sup>

Emerging as the leading group in the Sulaymaniya area was the Barzinji family, which takes its name from its native village of Barzinja located 14 miles east of Sulaymaniya. A leading family of Sayyids, whose distinguished ancestor Kak Ahmad lay buried in the Mosque at Sulaymaniya, its members had come to enjoy a high reputation as holy men by right of heredity rather than behavior.<sup>86</sup> The family's religious prestige enabled it to exercise influence on all the tribes of the district, although the characters of its leaders have been open to question. Early in the 20th century, the acknowledged leader of the tribe was Shaykh Sa'id Barzinji: although he had a reputation as a tyrant and disturber of the

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83. Ibid.

84. Soane, op. cit., p. 379.

85. United Kingdom, India Office, loc. cit.

86. The foundation of the Barzinji family of Sayyids, an event "of some importance in the history of certain social and confessional developments in Southern Kurdistan" is discussed in Edmonds, op. cit., pp. 68-79.

peace he had also a reputation for sanctity, and when he was murdered in Mosul under circumstances which left the Ottomans open to the imputation of complicity, the Hamawand arose in 1909 to avenge his death.<sup>87</sup>

Shaykh Sa'id was succeeded by Shaykh Mahmud, whose controversial character and importance during the post-war period merit extensive consideration in the following chapter. It may be noted here that "His sinister power was proved by the fact that Sulaymaniya under his direction had been one of the most turbulent parts of the Ottoman Empire...."<sup>88</sup>

### (3) Northern Iraqi Kurdistan: the Barzani Tribe

In the northern regions new powers were appearing as focal points of additional dissidence, which began to center around the small but influential Barzani tribe. The Barzanis, whose name was derived from the village of Barzan on the northern bank of the Greater Zab,<sup>89</sup> had been sworn enemies for many years of the Zibar tribe which occupied an area across the river. These feuds were exploited by the Ottomans but with little ultimate advantage to them.

In the early 20th century the tribal leader was Shaykh Abd al-Salim, a chieftan noted for his anti-Ottoman and pro-British orientation.<sup>90</sup>

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87. United Kingdom, India Office, loc. cit.

88. Ibid., p. 73.

89. The names of Barzani and Barzinji seem to bear philological relationship but the nature of this connection is not clear. Azzawi makes no reference to such a connection. It must also be noted that the villages of Barzinja and Barzan are located some 120 miles apart respectively in the liwas of Sulaymaniya and Mosul.

90. Wigram and Wigram (op. cit., pp. 136-143) give a contemporary account of the Shaykh, his retinue, and his orientations. His initial quarrel with the Ottomans involved a dispute with Porte representatives in Mosul over some lands; during the course of this dispute the British Consul intervened on his behalf and thereby earned his gratitude. His attitude was further demonstrated by his refusal to sanction a  Jihad  preached by neighboring Kurds (with some Ottoman incitement); in adopting this policy he was motivated by his desire to win over the British, by his "prejudices in favor of law and order," and by his hostility to certain groups inciting the  Jihad .

Active hostility between the Barzanis and the Porte in 1909 was succeeded by a truce in 1910 as a result of the good offices of Nazim Pasha who was placed in supreme control of the three Iraqi wilayats in that year, but upon his fall in 1911 the settlement crumbled. In 1914 Abd al-Salim was considering accepting the overtures which the Russians had been making to him; to forestall this, the Porte incited Faris Agha of the Zibar against the Barzani chief who was ultimately entrapped and hanged.<sup>91</sup> Abd al-Salim was succeeded by his younger brother Shaykh Ahmad, who "inherited his feuds but not his wits."<sup>92</sup> Like Shaykh Mahmud Barzinji, Shaykh Ahmad will be discussed at length in succeeding portions of this thesis, since his family is even today involved deeply in Kurdish national movements and separatist activity in Iraq.

It was in the context of this atmosphere of blandishment, intrigue, and irredentism that the assorted races of the Ottoman Empire were drawn into the First World War, which was to have profound repercussions upon their future political dispositions.

##### 5. THE KURDS AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

A detailed consideration of Kurdish participation in World War I belongs rather to the realm of military history and leads to situations beyond the scope of this commentary on the Iraqi Kurds. For the sake of continuity, certain salient points must be mentioned with respect to the role of the Iraqi Kurds in the events of 1914-1918. These points will involve primarily the relations of the Kurds with the Porte, with the Allies, and with their Christian neighbors, and the initial consolidation of British power in Iraqi Kurdistan. The peace conferences and mandatory settlement will be reserved for the next chapter.

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91. United Kingdom, India Office, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

92. *Ibid.*

a. The Kurds and the Porte

In the context of the previously cited incidents of Kurdish disaffection it might be expected that the Kurds did not cooperate with the Ottoman government in the pursuance of the latter's war aims. The situation, in actuality, is complicated and several divergent opinions on this matter have been proffered. On the one hand, Lenczowski in writing of the attitude of the Kurds in general has the following to say:

...the Kurds were altogether loyal to Turkey during the war. The secret of this "correct" behavior lay in the fact that the Turks skillfully channeled the Kurdish anarchistic tendencies into war against the Christians, and in particular against their close neighbors, the Armenians and the Assyrians. In this way the Kurdish minority appeased both its Islamic conscience and its predatory instincts. For the Ottoman Empire, therefore, the Kurds not only presented no problem during the war but proved relatively useful in the accomplishment of certain disagreeable tasks in the eastern provinces. Only after the end of the war were their autonomist tendencies revealed in a violent form.<sup>93</sup>

Nikitin takes a slightly different view.

The war stopped these first attempts aiming toward the organization and composition of a common national idea. And the call to the Holy War, the Jihad, permitted the Turks for another time to orient the Kurds in a direction completely opposed to their true popular national interests, under the cloak of Islam. The Turks wanted to benefit from the Kurds for their military purposes. But they did not cease to observe their movements closely, and there is a very long list containing the names of Kurdish nationalist leaders executed by hanging during the World War.<sup>94</sup>

An opinion differing from that of Lenczowski is expressed in the following resume of Kurdish-Ottoman relations during the war:

Since the beginning of the war dislike of Turkish rule on the part of the Kurdish tribes had been greatly intensified, as, being unable to emigrate, they suffered severely under the impositions of the Government; while their religious leaders, to whom they hold with singular tenacity, were subjected to humiliation and extortion. In the early days of the war, before the Jihad campaign had been discredited,

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93. George Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs, p. 47.

94. Nikitin, op. cit., p. 195.

the Turks tried to draw from the Kurds levies of irregular horse. A small contingent went to Shu'aibah, but after serving well they were scurvily treated by the Turkish authorities. The Kurds then returned to their home and did not subsequently supply a single horseman against us, although the Turks worked ceaselessly to raise hostility to us [the British]. The lack of success which attended Turkish propaganda was largely due to the action of the religious leaders. They unanimously refused to preach the Jihad and proclaimed the war to be one of self-aggrandisement on the part of the Turks, who were, they pointed out, the hereditary enemies of the Kurds.<sup>95</sup>

In evaluating these comments, it must be noted that the last quotation deals primarily with conditions in Iraq and as such may be considered more accurate for purposes of this thesis. However it must also be noted that during the 1920's British sources showed a definite proclivity for emphasizing the unamenability of Turkish-Kurdish relations, with an eye toward the ultimate disposition of the Mosul wilayat.

b. The Kurds and the Christian Communities

Even more complex is the problem of the Kurds in their relationship to the neighboring Christian communities during the World War. Disagreeable tasks, as noted previously by Lenczowski, were undoubtedly performed by unorganized groups of Kurds who allowed themselves to be used as tools of the administration: the murder and despoilation of nearly one half the Armenian people in Turkey<sup>96</sup> and the assault on the Assyrians in 1915 in which the Barzanis aided and abetted<sup>97</sup> were two such incidents in which the Kurds participated. It may also be noted that an Allied attempt to form a front from Baghdad to the Caucasus to consist of a tripartate bloc of Kurds, Armenians, and Assyrians foundered on the rocks of internal strife among the Armenians and treachery on the part of the Kurdish

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95. United Kingdom, India Office, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

96. Safrastian, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

97. Wigram and Wigram, *op. cit.*, p. 379. By this time the Barzanis were led by Shaykh Ahmad who did not share the tolerant attitude toward Christians evinced by his predecessor Abd al-Salim.



chieftan Simco.<sup>98</sup> On the other hand, with respect to the Armenian massacres, a study by the British Foreign Office indicates that at the time the Kurds had little more than a tribal consciousness; consequently, while some tribes participated in the massacres, others showed themselves friendly to the Armenians.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, on several occasions the Kurds were put to flight and slaughtered by the Armenians.<sup>100</sup>

c. The Kurds and the Allies

The relationships of the Kurds with the Allies were also complicated. The pro-British orientations previously noted were partially off-set by the ambiguous and generally unfavorable attitudes of the Kurds towards the Russians.

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

These sentiments suffered considerable modification as the Russians drew near. Cossacks are apt to be a heavy charge on the inhabitants of any country which they occupy, and reports of the excesses committed at Rawanduz in 1915-16 were not reassuring to southern Kurds.<sup>101</sup>

Notwithstanding these factors, the overall strategic scheme gave the Russians the first prerogative of occupying certain southern Kurdish

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98. Stafford, *op. cit.*, p. 30. Wigram and Wigram (*op. cit.*, p. 378) state that the flaw in the plan was the fact that the connecting link was a Kurd.

99. United Kingdom, Foreign Office, *Armenia and Kurdistan*, p. 29.

100. Djemal Pasha, *Memories of a Turkish Statesman*, Appendices.

101. United Kingdom, India Office, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

areas, notably Khanaqin, where they repeated their depredations and pillage of the local Kurdish population whom they treated as Turks. Despite piteous representations by the chief notable of Khanaqin, Mustafa Pasha of the Bajlan,<sup>102</sup> the British Commander Maude felt that he could not occupy the town or interfere with Russian administration, and thus many of the tribal groups along the Persian frontier suffered some disaffection from the Allied cause.<sup>103</sup> At first the evacuation of the Russians only opened the southern Kurdish areas to new horrors in the form of Turkish reprisals. The British, however, were able to maintain friendly relations with their Kurdish allies in the Kifri-Sulaymaniya-Khanaqin areas, notably the Daudi and Talabani, and their occupations of Khanaqin in December 1917 and of Kifri in April 1918 were welcomed.<sup>104</sup> Prompt attention was given to the devastated condition of Khanaqin. Meanwhile the Hamawand and the Barzinjis of Sulaymaniya indicated their amenability to British control.

October of 1918 found British occupation of Iraq still incomplete and the terms of the Armistice of Mudros, not to mention the terms of the Sykes Picot Agreement, left some ambiguity with respect to the question of the rightful possessor of the territory of Mosul. With respect to the latter, it soon became tacitly understood that the agreement would be modified with respect to Mosul. With respect to the former, the British General Marshall insisted upon such an interpretation of the armistice agreement as would require the complete evacuation by Turkish

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102. *Ibid.* Also Longrigg, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

103. A. Wilson, Loyalties: Mesopotamia 1914-1917, p. 262. He notes that General Maude's proclamation to the people of Iraq was used by German and Turkish agents to arouse in certain Kurdish groups a fear of future Arab domination. *Ibid.*, pp. 266-267.

104. United Kingdom, India Office, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

troops of all parts of the Mosul wilayat in a period of 10 days.

To the resolute and successful attitude of Marshall in these exchanges was due, it would appear, the effective establishment of the Mosul wilaya as a de facto part of 'Iraq; if an Armistice line had been accepted such as to include in Turkish-held territory that city and its fringe of Kurdish qadhas, these would form part today, in all probability, of Turkey and not of 'Iraq.<sup>105</sup>

The preceding statement in retrospect is valid, yet in November of 1918 the future of Iraqi Kurdistan was hardly clear. One last abortive attempt had yet to be made by Turkey to incorporate this area into its own territory. More pertinently, serious consideration was given to the idea of creating an independent Kurdistan, possibly under British suzerainty. It is probable that few people would have predicted the ultimate disposition, namely, the incorporation of the Mosul wilayat into a predominantly Arab Iraqi state. In the next chapter it will be seen how this ultimately happened.

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105. Longrigg, op. cit., p. 92.

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## CHAPTER III: THE KURDS OF IRAQ UNDER THE MANDATE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will deal with events during the period beginning with the Armistice of Mudros of 1918 and ending with the entry of Iraq into the League of Nations in 1932. For convenience these 14 years are referred to as the period of the Mandate, although in theory the term is not altogether correct. From the Armistice of Mudros in 1918 until the San Remo Conference in 1920 British control over Iraq was theoretically of a temporary nature, the result of wartime conquest. Although by the terms of the conference Great Britain was awarded the territory of Iraq as a Class A Mandate, she chose to avoid the direct use of this term by exercising her control over Iraq according to the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of Alliance of 10 October 1922,<sup>1</sup> which, in effect, lasted until 1932. However this treaty did not basically modify the mandatory instrument; consequently the entire 14-year period was characteristic of a mandatory regime. With respect to the actual administration of Iraq, during the first two years it was largely the function of the newly appointed British civil commissioner; in 1920 Britain sponsored the establishment of a transitional Iraqi government followed by the election of the Amir Faysal a year later as King of Iraq. Subsequently the machinery for a permanent Iraqi government was installed, but extensive British controls were maintained throughout the period.

The situation involving the territories of the former wilayat of Mosul, in which virtually all of the Kurdish area was included, was even more complex. Not until seven years after the Armistice was its

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1. Text in J. C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, Volume II, p. 111.

incorporation into the Kingdom of Iraq given final legal sanction.

Although, as a result of the prompt and decisive interpretation given by General Marshall to the terms of Mudros, Britain held the disputed area, the juridicial problem of its possession remained unsolved, as is pointed out by Toynbee in the following citation:

Under the terms of the Armistice this extension of British occupation was undoubtedly in order. At the same time a line provisionally occupied (whether lawfully or unlawfully) during the Armistice Period by the British forces had no juridicial bearing on the future frontier between Turkey and 'Iraq, which might eventually be drawn, with equal validity, either to the north or to the south of it. Meanwhile, the juridicial sovereignty over the occupied territory remained in the possession of the former sovereign, Turkey, until she renounced her rights, either by a unilateral declaration, or else by a treaty in which she either transferred her rights directly to another party or parties or empowered some third party to take a binding decision as to whether the territory should be transferred or not.<sup>2</sup>

Turkey was not prepared to relinquish this position without first resorting to partisan warfare and diplomatic litigation. Kurdish nationalist aspirations, enthusiastic at first over the originally adopted plan of creating an independent Kurdistan and later moved to fear at the increasingly imminent spectre of domination by an Arab kingdom, were in some cases susceptible to Turkish propoganda, but later tended to lose confidence in Turkey as a result of the latter's policy of Turkification with respect to the Kurds in Anatolia. Kurdish outbreaks were numerous both before and after the final settlement of the Mosul territory; besides the inherent Kurdish resentment of control and propensity for inter- and intra-tribal feuds, these outbreaks were directed not so much against British but rather against Iraqi centralized authority. Nonetheless, even before the legal incorporation of the Kurdish areas into Iraq, the

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2. Arnold J. Toynbee, Survey of International Affairs, 1925, Volume I, pp. 481-482.

British were able to lay in Kurdistan the groundwork for an administrative apparatus whose control was by a gradual process shifted from the British High Commissioner to the Iraqi government, and by the time of the admission of Iraq into the League of Nations great strides had been made in the integration of the Kurds into Iraq.

The two succeeding topics will be concerned with the steps toward the formal incorporation of Iraqi Kurdistan into the Hashemite Kingdom-- the former will deal with the international diplomatic steps while the latter will deal with the internal political and administrative steps. Subsequently we shall enumerate and discuss the various measures adopted to guarantee a "special position" to the Kurds of Iraq in lieu of the oft-demanded independence or autonomy which no Iraqi government was prepared to consider. After this we shall trace the course of events in some of the individual Kurdish areas with special attention to the Barzinji and Barzani activities. The concluding topic will be devoted to the attitudes of the Kurds and conditions in Kurdistan at the threshold of Iraqi independence.

## 2. STEPS TOWARD INCORPORATION OF IRAQI KURDISTAN: DIPLOMATIC AND INTERNATIONAL ASPECT

### a. Dispositions of the Peace Conference

#### (1) Kurdish Claims

Even before the Armistice the idea of creating a southern Kurdish autonomous province had been broached to the British by General Sharif Pasha, by origin a Kurd from Sulaymaniya but out of touch with his native country as a result of extended military and diplomatic assignments for the Ottoman government from which he had lately been

estranged.<sup>3</sup> About this time a Committee for the Independence of Kurdistan was formed in Cairo by Prince Thuraya Badr Khan, whose nationalistic activities were mentioned in the previous chapter, and this committee nominated Sharif Pasha as delegate to the Peace Conference to present the Kurdish case in Paris. He was able to obtain a hearing and made "vigorous representations on behalf of Kurdish autonomy."<sup>4</sup> A secondary feature of this phase of the conference was coordination on the part of the Kurdish and Armenian representatives to eliminate areas of conflict in their respective claims and act in unison, a development surprising to European commentators.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile in the Mosul wilayat non-Arab groups had submitted declarations asking for some measure of British protection, and the Kurds had asserted that they would never live under Arab rule.<sup>6</sup>

#### (2) Provision of the Treaty of Sevres

As a result of the abortive Treaty of Sevres of August 1920 which concluded the San Remo Conference, the claims of the Kurds were favorably considered. Provision was made for the creation of a locally

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3. United Kingdom, India Office, op. cit., p. 60. In the same reference we find that "In 1914 he had offered us his services in Mesopotamia, with a view to winning over the Kurds, but we were not then in contact with them and the offer could not be accepted. Ibid."
  4. Zeidner, op. cit., p. 25.
  5. Safrastian, op. cit., p. 77. He writes as follows: "As some of the Kurdish territorial claims clashed with those of Armenia, the principal representatives of the two nations, Boghos Nubar Pasha (Armenia) and Sharif Pasha, signed an agreement as to the common pursuit of the interests of these two countries. European diplomats, experts, third-rate journalists in every camp were dumbfounded at this Armenian-Kurdish understanding, because for nearly half a century they had recorded and proclaimed that the two neighbouring races were 'deadly enemies' and could never work together."
  6. Phillip W. Ireland, Iraq: A Study in Political Development, p. 160. By virtue of his position, the writer seems to have had access to ten Mosul declarations submitted at that time.



autonomous Kurdish state on Turkish territory with the possibility of future independence and adhesion thereto by the Kurds of Iraq by Articles 62 and 64 of the Treaty as follows:

Article 62: A Commission sitting at Constantinople and composed of three members appointed by the British, French and Italian governments respectively shall draft within six months from the coming into force of the present Treaty a scheme of local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas lying east of the Euphrates, south of the Southern Boundary of Armenia as it may be hereafter determined, and north of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia.... The scheme shall contain full safeguards for the protection of the Assyro-Chaldeans and other racial or religious minorities within these area.<sup>7</sup>

Article 64: If within one year from the coming into force of the present Treaty the Kurdish peoples shall address themselves to the Council of the League of Nations in such manner as to show that a majority of the population of these areas desires independence from Turkey, and if the Council then considers that these peoples are capable of such independence and recommends that it should be granted to them, Turkey hereby agrees to execute such a recommendation and to renounce all rights and title over these areas.

The detailed provisions for such renunciation will form the subject of a separate agreement between the Principal Allied Powers and Turkey.

If and when such renunciation takes place, no objection will be raised by the Principal Allied Powers to the voluntary adhesion to such an independent Kurdish State of the Kurds inhabiting that part of Kurdistan which has hitherto been included in the Mosul vilayet.<sup>8</sup>

### (3) From Sevres to Lausanne

It was the fate of the Treaty of Sevres to be stillborn. Even before its signature, the Turkish nationalists under Kemal Attaturk had assembled in Ankara and issued the National Pact, whose provisions not only rejected the creation of an independent Kurdistan, but also refused to contemplate the separation of the wilayat of Mosul from Turkish dominions. Eventually Attaturk's victories forced a revision of the

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7. Text quoted from Safrastian, loc. cit.

8. Lenczowski, op. cit., p. 101.

Treaty of Sevres in the form of the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923. This Treaty omitted all reference to an independent or autonomous Kurdish area in Turkish territory and stipulated that the Turko-Iraqi boundary would be left to arbitration between Turkey and Great Britain as the mandatory power for Iraq, with the Mosul area to remain under British-Iraqi jurisdiction until conclusion of such agreement; it was further stipulated that, if such an agreement failed to be realized within a year, both sides would agree to accept arbitration by the League of Nations. Thus by 1923 official responses to Kurdish claims had been diluted to a "mere statement of Turkish recognition of unspecified 'minority rights.'"<sup>9</sup> But the Kurdish problem was in no sense solved: the idea of an independent Kurdistan, once adopted, was not easily shelved. Edmonds writes:

The treaty of Sevres was stillborn, but this dream of an independent Kurdistan remained on record in an international document and was not forgotten. The fate of the Mosul wilayat was not to be definitely settled for another six years and the dark incubus of uncertainty continued to hover over the political scene, bedevilling all efforts to establish a secure and stable administration.<sup>10</sup>

b. The Evolution of British Policy on Kurds

Since the British are primarily responsible for the dispositions which gave Iraqi Kurdistan its present shape, an examination of the evolution of their policies during the transitional period between Mudros and the Mosul Commission would be of value. British-Kurdish friendship antedates by many years the end of the First World War. Friendly contacts had long been established between Kurdish chieftans and British military and commercial officers;<sup>11</sup> the United Kingdom Naval Staff has noted that

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9. Zeidner, loc. cit.

10. Edmonds, Kurds, Turks, and Arabs, pp. 116-117.

11. Cf. the comments of the British travellers and residents whose works were utilized in the second chapter of this thesis; in most cases these commentators evince strong interest in and liking for the Kurds.

"It is remarkable that Englishmen who have travelled in Kurdistan generally show a strong liking for the typical Kurd."<sup>12</sup> As we have noted in the second chapter, further contact was established between British and Kurdish representatives during World War I, and a number of British intelligence officers stationed in Iraq during and subsequent to the war entertained the idea of carving out an independent Kurdistan under British influence from the territories of Iraq, Turkey, and possibly Iran.<sup>13</sup> This early concept, which never received definitive formulation, is explained by Lenczowski as follows:

After the First World War, the British toyed with the idea of a British-protected Kurdish state, which would enable them to push their influence northward into the strategic area bordering on the Caucasus. Moreover, the support of Kurdish aspirations could be used as a lever of pressure on recalcitrant Kemalist Turkey, on Iran, and especially on Iraq, in which the percentage of Kurds was higher than in any other country.<sup>14</sup>

Even if this policy had been adopted, several factors would have militated against its continuance. First, it was impracticable in view of the lack of cohesiveness among the people and areas concerned. In justification of their country's change of heart, British commentators have emphasized this point; we shall cite two of their statements. With respect to the disunity of the people themselves and their lack of leadership, Stafford has written:

Of all people in the world, even taking into account the Arabs, the Kurds are probably the least united. Difficulty of communication in the mountains is, of course, the principal reason for this. Though in the first days after the Armistice there were some signs of a nascent Kurdish nationalism there was nothing approaching unity. There was

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12. United Kingdom, Naval Staff, op. cit., p. 110.

13. Lenczowski, op. cit., p. 131. Although some officers such as Major Soane favored the idea enthusiastically, the ruling clique of Sir Percy Cox was generally opposed. Ibid. (footnote).

14. Ibid., p. 236.

no individual who could by any stretch of imagination be termed a national leader. In consequence, during the various Kurdish risings which occurred in Turkey, Persia, and Iraq, there was no coordination at all.<sup>15</sup>

The United Kingdom in its special report has discussed the division among the various areas:

In the first place the Kurdish districts of 'Iraq were found to be almost completely divorced geographically, economically, and politically from the Kurdish districts of Turkey. The same factors which subsequently led the League of Nations Frontier Commission to recommend that these districts would be included in 'Iraq gave an air of complete unreality to any scheme for their ultimate absorption into the projected Kurdish state. Nor was there any generally expressed desire for this solution. It is true that in the Sulaimaniya liwa in the south-east there was a well-defined Kurdish national spirit, but in the other Kurdish districts it was non-existent. It was also found in practice that the Kurdish districts would not agree in any case to be treated as an administrative unit. The Arbil liwa strongly objected to a decision by the Council of State to combine that liwa with Kirkuk, as had been done under the Turkish regime, while Kirkuk, with a mixed population of Turkomans, Arabs, and Kurds, would not consent to inclusion in Sulaimaniya. Moreover, even if union among the different Kurdish districts could be obtained, it was evident that to separate the Kurdish districts from 'Iraq would be to sever the produce of Kurdistan from its market with serious economic results to the Kurds themselves.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the difficulty in its execution, the idea of an independent Kurdish state came to be increasingly at variance with the British policy toward the Middle East in general and toward Iraq in particular. The change in British policy is discussed as follows by Lenczowski:

The scheme of a Kurdish puppet state was, however, abandoned, because Britain realized that the matter was too explosive, that it was likely to upset the balance and stability of the Middle East, and that its promotion would eventually benefit the Soviets more than anyone else. This view coincided with the definite British policy of influencing Iraq by winning over Arab public opinion through various

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15. Stafford, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

16. United Kingdom, Special Report on the Progress of Iraq 1920 - 1931, p. 253.

political concessions. Choosing to follow a definitely pro-Arab policy, Britain found it difficult to promote at the same time schemes that would reduce the Arab-ruled area, and for this reason she changed her stand on the Kurdish question.<sup>17</sup>

At the Cairo Conference in March, 1921 the foundation was laid for the new British policy with respect to the Kurds of Iraq. By this time as a result of Attaturk's national rising it was evident that the national state of Kurdistan as provided for in the Treaty of Sevres would never exist. Cogent arguments could be advanced that the Kurds of Mosul, Kirkuk, and Sulaymaniya were not yet ready for self-government; on the one hand, many of them would have favored direct control by the British High Commissioner, but on the other hand this proposal met with opposition from the Iraqi ministers who felt that the Kurds must be integrated into Iraq. "No expedient remained but that which was tacitly accepted, both in Cairo and on the spot; to admit the distinctness of Kurd from Arab by a measure of administrative variation, to treat them with sympathy, and to hope for their ultimate willing adhesion to the 'Iraq State, to which in any case they could not but be economically united."<sup>18</sup> The new British policy was in no sense a complete reversal of its former one. As Lenczowski writes:

This, however, did not mean that friendship with the Kurds was thrown overboard. On the contrary, it continued to be cultivated, especially on the local level, by various British political agents, both in Iraq and Iran. This served two purposes at once: first, to keep the Kurdish question as a tactical reserve in case of difficulties with Baghdad or Tehran and, secondly, to ward off foreign penetration, whether Soviet or German.<sup>19</sup>

### c. Turkish Activities

During the entire transitional period the Turks made every effort

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17. Lenczowski, *loc. cit.*

18. Longrigg, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

19. Lenczowski, *loc. cit.*

to restore the wilayat of Mosul to their territory. Besides territorial, economic, and sentimental considerations, the Turks were motivated by nationalistic considerations: "It was indeed essential to Turkey to prevent the detachment from them, under another and perhaps more liberal Government, of a large part of the Kurdish people for whom they themselves proposed (and were later to carry out) a policy of strict assimilation and repression."<sup>20</sup>

Turkish efforts were accentuated by the inability of the British to hold securely some of the outlying areas of Iraqi Kurdistan; although she quickly consolidated her position in the uplands and foothills, the mountainous areas were periodically unamenable to British control and were frequently centers of Kurdish separatist movements which sought to play Turk against British in pursuit of their aspirations for local independence, particularly from an Arab regime. Turkish agents and irregulars made the most of this situation, especially after the rise of the Attaturk regime. With respect to the circulation of Turkish propaganda among the Kurds, which was received with conflicting emotions, Edmonds has written as follows:

After the signature of the Treaty of Sevres the Turks had not unnaturally redoubled their efforts to impress upon all the inhabitants of the wilayat that it was not worth the paper it was written on: there were threats of large-scale invasion, clandestine correspondence with leaders of urban society, secret missions to tribal malcontents, open incitements to rebellion, warnings to "traitors", and, pervading all, the religious appeal for loyalty to the Sultan who was also Caliph.<sup>21</sup>

With respect to direct intervention, it must be noted that Ruwanduz and Ranya had been out of control by the British since 1919, and in March

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20. Longrigg, op. cit., p. 145.

21. Edmonds, op. cit., p. 118.

1922 the Turkish Government went so far as to dispatch a Qa'im Maqam to Ruwanduz. Later in the spring Turkish semi-regulars joined forces with dissident Kurds and pushed as far as Koi Sanjaq.<sup>22</sup> Similar forays on the northern foothill towns of the Mosul area however were repulsed. Finally the Turkish agents did not hesitate to exploit the separatist activity of Shaykh Mahmud Barzinji and an anti-British wing of the Pizhdar tribe.

These Turkish advances could not be sustained. In 1923 action by Iraqi Army, Levies, and Police cleared them from most of the areas of Iraqi Kurdistan in which they had established themselves. Kurdish elements becoming increasingly disaffected from Shaykh Mahmud reacted strongly against the Turks, who had connived with him. Most important of all, "On the northern frontier the Turks' treatment of their own Kurds was confirming, within the 'Iraq border, Kurdish resistance to their return."<sup>23</sup> Thus at the time of the Signature of the Lausanne Treaty on 24 July 1923, Toynbee was able to describe the situation in the Mosul wilayat as follows:

The districts adjoining the former northern administrative boundary of the vilayet, along its whole length from the Tigris to the Persian frontier, were under the effective occupation and de facto administration of the British and 'Iraqi Governments, and so was the rest of the vilayet, except for a portion of the Sulaymaniyah Division. This portion was in the hands, not of the Turks, but of a local Kurdish notable, Shaykh Mahmud Barzanji; and the territory which Shaykh Mahmud dominated was isolated from the territory effectively occupied and administered by the Turkish Government owing to the Anglo-'Iraqi occupation of Rowanduz in the previous April.<sup>24</sup>

It was against this background that the exhaustive negotiations began for the ultimate disposition of the wilayat of Mosul.

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22. Toynbee, op. cit., pp. 487-488.

23. Longrigg, op. cit., p. 146.

24. Toynbee, op. cit., p. 489.

d. The Mosul Commission<sup>25</sup>

## (1) Preliminaries

Fresh Turkish inroads on the northern towns of the Mosul area followed by reprisals from the R. A. F. and the British organized Assyrian Levies of Iraq created a tense situation in 1924. Over a year had elapsed without the conclusion of an agreement on the Turko-Iraqi border; consequently in September the matter was brought up in Geneva at the 30th Session of the League Council. Both the Turkish and the British<sup>26</sup> advanced their respective claims which included historical, ethnological, economic, strategic, and political considerations. The debate became bogged down in semantics and subtle distinctions.

The natural inference from all these facts was that a disposal of the Mosul vilāyet could not be determined a priori on racial, linguistic, or religious lines, but that it must be settled by economic and strategic considerations and by the preference of various elements in the population for one or other of the alternatives open to them, as revealed by some impartial method of inquiry.<sup>27</sup>

In regard to such a method of inquiry, the Turks objected to the idea of arbitration as being unfair in view of the number of persons whose fates were at stake, whereas the British opposed the Turkish suggestion of a

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25. The most comprehensive source dealing with the basic factors underlying the work of the Mosul Commission is the League of Nations report, Question of the Frontier between Turkey and Iraq, an excellent study to which reference was made in the preparation of the first chapter of this thesis. Summaries of the entire proceedings may be found in Edmonds, op. cit., pp. 386-435; Abid A. al-Marayati, A Diplomatic History of Modern Iraq, pp. 48-54; and Toynbee, op. cit., pp. 471-531.

26. "Iraq, as a mandated territory, was unable to present her case directly before the League, but the United Kingdom, as the mandatory power, did so. The Treaty of Lausanne did not provide for Iraq to participate in settling this question, and therefore Iraq channelled its efforts into the form of urging the United Kingdom to win Mosul for her." al-Marayati, op. cit., p. 49.

27. Toynbee, op. cit., p. 480.



plebescite as grossly impractical. In the end, both sides agreed to the appointment of a League Committee of Inquiry whose decision would be accepted as final. To obviate untoward incidents, an interim frontier known as the "Brussels Line" was delineated.

(2) Recommendation of the Committee

Operating out of Mosul, the Committee spent two months making exhaustive inquiries from persons in every class. In its comprehensive report as submitted to the League in July 1925 it analyzed all facets and came to the following conclusion:

On the basis of this consideration the Commission, having assigned a relative value to each of the facts which it has established, is of opinion that important arguments, particularly of an economic and geographical nature, and the sentiments...of the majority of the inhabitants of the territory taken as a whole, operate in favour of the union with Iraq of the whole territory south of the "Brussels line", subject to the following conditions:

(1) The territory must remain under the effective mandate of the League of Nations for a period which may be put at twenty-five years;

(2) Regard must be paid to the desires expressed by the Kurds that officials of Kurdish race should be appointed for the administration of their country, the dispensation of justice, and teaching in the schools, and that Kurdish should be the official language of all these services.

The Commission is convinced that if the League of Nations' control were to terminate on the expiry of the four-years Treaty now in force between Great Britain and Iraq, and if certain guarantees of local administration were not to be given to the Kurds, the majority of the people would have preferred Turkish to Arab sovereignty.<sup>28</sup>

Partition was considered unfeasible, but in the event of its adoption, the line approximately following the Lesser Zab was proposed as the best line of demarkation.

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28. League of Nations, op. cit., pp. 88 - 89.

## (3) Results

In the end, the recommendation of the Commission was adopted, although Turkish intransigence necessitated a decision by the International Court of Justice.<sup>29</sup> Turkish opinion violently opposed the decision at first, but in the end diplomacy prevailed and the ratification of a tri-partate Anglo-Iraqi-Turkish pact, including some concessions to the last-named power, brought about acceptance by all parties.<sup>30</sup> Iraqi opinion, jubilant over the finalization of its borders to include the long-disputed wilayat, was unhappy over the extension of British supervision as enjoined by the first reservation but acquiesced. The second reservation is important inasmuch as it served as a basis for the definition of the "special status" to be accorded to the Kurds of Iraq; the necessary measures, which Great Britain as mandatory power was required to lay before the Council for its consideration,<sup>31</sup> will be examined in a subsequent topic.

### 3. STEPS TOWARD INCORPORATION OF IRAQI KURDISTAN: INTERNAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECT

#### a. Basis of Administration

During the entire period of diplomatic negotiations as reviewed above, the internal administration of Iraq under British sponsorship was undergoing a process of organization and evolution. Even before the

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29. It must be recognized that the disposition not only of Kurds, but also of Armenians, Assyrians, other Christian groups, and Yazidis hung in the balance of the Mosul Commission's recommendation. In this connection, "Some historians considered the Turkish activities against Christians to have had a certain influence on the Council in arriving at its final decision." Toynbee and Kirkwood, Turkey, p. 284, cited by Foster, p. 171, cited by al-Marayati, op. cit., p. 51.

30. Text of treaty in Hurewitz, op. cit., pp. 143-146.

31. Hourani, Minorities in the Arab World, p. 97.

Armistice was concluded, the territory of Iraq as fast as it was conquered by the British was organized into divisions each under the general supervision of a British Political Officer; the divisions were subdivided into districts supervised by an Assistant Political Officer. This procedure was given final official sanction by the India Office in 1919 which telegraphed the Political Administration in Baghdad as follows:

"We authorize you to take in hand the construction of...provinces for 'Iraq proper....You will also proceed with the creation of the Arab province of Mosul fringed by autonomous Kurdish States under Kurdish Chiefs who will be advised by British Political Officers...."<sup>32</sup>

Outside of the predilections of a part of the British staff, cogent reasons could be advanced for the temporary and autonomous nature of the dispositions of the Iraqi Kurdish areas as implied or envisioned in this telegram of instructions. As Britain was later to report:

When His Majesty accepted the Mandate for 'Iraq in May, 1920, the Treaty of Sevres had just been handed to the Turkish Foreign Office. It was signed in August, 1920, and it was not for some considerable time that any question was raised as to the practicability of the Kurdish policy embodied in it. It was not in fact until the signature of the Treaty of Lausanne three years later on 24th July, 1923, that this policy was finally abandoned. The result was that during the whole of these three years the policy firstly of His Majesty's Government and secondly of the 'Iraqi Government, which first came into provisional existence on the 10th of November, 1920, had to be framed with a view to the possible implementation of Articles 62 to 64 of the Treaty of Sevres.<sup>33</sup>

The first division to be organized in the Kurdish area was that of Khanaqin in 1917; as 1918 progressed, two more divisions were brought into being, Sulaymaniya and Mosul. In 1919 Kirkuk was separated from

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32. Telegram, S/S for India Political, Baghdad, May 9th, 1919 cited by Ireland, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

33. United Kingdom, Special Report on the Progress of Iraq 1920 - 1931, p. 252.

Sulaymaniya and Arbil from Mosul, both becoming independent divisions.<sup>34</sup> Thus at the end of 1919 five divisions existed in the Kurdish area and these divisions corresponded closely to the five present-day liwas. In May of 1921 as a result of new policies dictated by the Cairo Conference of the previous March, the British High Commissioner laid down the following broad lines of administrative procedure for Iraqi Kurdistan:

The High Commissioner has under active consideration the administrative arrangements to be made for the future of the Kurdish districts in 'Iraq. It has been represented to him that apprehension exists lest the interests of the Kurds should suffer by subordination to the national government established in Baghdad, and that for this reason there is some demand for an autonomous regime.

At the same time the leaders of Kurdish opinion are understood to be fully alive to the economic and industrial ties connecting their areas with 'Iraq proper and to the inconveniences which separation might involve. In these circumstances His Excellency desires if possible to obtain an indication of the real wishes of the Kurdish communities. Should they prefer to remain under the 'Iraqi Government, he is prepared to recommend to the Council of State a solution on the following lines:--

One.--As regards the Kurdish districts of the Mosul Division which fall within the sphere of the British Mandate, a sub-liwa should be formed comprising the districts of Zakho, 'Aqra, Dohuk, and Amadiya, with headquarters at Dohuk, the sub-liwa to be under a British Assistant Mutasarrif. Qaimmaqams for the time being should be British, but will be replaced by Kurds or Kurdish speaking Arabs acceptable to the Kurds as soon as competent men are forthcoming. This sub-liwa would be generally subject, for all practical purposes, to the National Government in Baghdad and would then naturally send representatives to the Constituent Assembly; but for the purposes of general administration the qaimmaqams would address the Sub-Mutasarrif while administrative appointments would be made by His Excellency the High Commissioner in consultation with the local authorities.

Two.--The High Commissioner will endeavor to arrange to associate British officers with the administration of Arbil, together with Keui Sanjak and Ruwandiz, and will secure that in the appointment of government officials

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34. United Kingdom, India Office, op. cit., p. 77.

regard will be had to the wishes of the people. Details should be elaborated as soon as the situation admits.

Three.--Sulaimaniya will be treated as a Mutasarrifliq governed by a Mutasarrif in Council, the Mutasarrif to be appointed by the High Commissioner and to have a British advisor attached to him. Pending the appointment of a Mutasarrif the British Political Officer will act in this capacity.

To the Mutasarrif in Council will be delegated such powers, including right of appeal to the High Commissioner, as may be approved by the High Commissioner, after consultation with the Mutasarrif in Council on the one hand and the Council of State on the other.

Qaimmaqams for the time being should be British, to be replaced by Kurds as soon as competent men are forthcoming.<sup>35</sup>

At the same time the Arbil division was merged with that of Kirkuk. This arrangement, unpopular with the local notables of Arbil, was modified by constituting Arbil, together with Koi Sanjaq and Ruwanduz, as a sub-division of Kirkuk with its own Deputy Mutasarrif who became virtually independent of his nominal superior, the Mutasarrif of Kirkuk. In 1923 Arbil was once again separated in name, as well as in fact, from Kirkuk. The projected Kurdish sub-liwa in the Mosul division was never actually established inasmuch as Kurdish nationalism in that area was virtually inarticulate.<sup>36</sup> Sulaymaniya, whose status was to vary from month to month for some time, refused for the time being any rule except that of the High Commissioner; it continued to be administered by a British Political Officer assisted by a local elective council. Gradually as the inhabitants of the various divisions in the Kurdish areas agreed to accept incorporation into the Kingdom of Iraq, the divisions were

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35. United Kingdom, Special Report on the Progress of Iraq, 1920 - 1931, pp. 253 - 254.

36. Edmonds, op. cit., p. 119.

reconstituted as liwas,<sup>37</sup> governed by mutasarrifs, this being the current arrangement.

b. Kurdish Reactions

Concurrently with the issuance of his policy declarations on administration, the High Commissioner instructed the British Political Officers in Mosul, Kirkuk, and Sulaymaniya divisions to ascertain the wishes of the Kurdish people with respect to inclusion in the Iraqi state and also to the candidacy of the Amir Faysal.

In general, the arrangements were accepted by the Kurds of Mosul and Arbil, but not by those of Sulaymaniya, while the reaction of Kirkuk was mixed. With respect to the High Commissioner's previously quoted administrative recommendations, these proposals were accepted by the Mosul and Arbil Kurds "who thus definitely assumed 'Iraqi citizenship,'"<sup>38</sup> but Sulaymaniya rejected the idea of inclusion into the Iraqi Kingdom; as for Kirkuk, a Kurdish section asked for a Kurdish government but were averse to inclusion into Sulaymaniya.<sup>39</sup> Similar results were attained on the question of the election of the Amir Faysal. Again, the Kurds of Mosul and Arbil (with the exception of the Ruwanduz district where there was a small force of Turkish irregulars) participated in the referendum, voted in favor of Faysal's candidacy, and swore allegiance to him as King. The Kurds of Kirkuk participated in the election but accounted

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37. This is inferred from Longrigg, op. cit., p. 136. In most of the sources here utilized, the terms division and liwa are often used more or less synonymously. It is possible that the former term continued to be used by the British Colonial Office whereas the latter came to be employed by the Iraqi Government. It is further assumed that the districts (which were directly subordinate to the divisions) corresponded with qadas.

38. This is the interpretation given in United Kingdom, Special Report on the Progress of Iraq 1920 - 1931, p. 254.

39. Ibid.

for most of the negative votes cast; they asked that the decision be postponed for a year and in the meantime declined to take the oath of allegiance to Faysal.<sup>40</sup> Sulaymaniya refused even to participate in the referendum.<sup>41</sup> Even those who accepted the dispositions made their acceptance contingent upon certain reservations which provided for a measure of decentralization to be accorded by the 'Iraqi Government, nor were the population compelled to abide by their decision should the independent Kurdish state envisioned in the Treaty of Sevres come into being.

### c. Progress of Integration

Nevertheless, as the vista of a Kurdish national state began to fade, progress was made toward the integration of the Kurds into the Iraqi state. In 1924, after the second expulsion of Shaykh Mahmud (to be considered subsequently), the Iraqi government assumed the administration of Sulaymaniya,<sup>42</sup> which until that time had only accepted government by the High Commissioner through a Political Officer, and the same year witnessed the first "wholehearted participation of the Kurdish districts in the elections."<sup>43</sup> By the time of the Mosul Commission formal incorporation of the Kurdish districts was virtually complete, and Longrigg was able to characterize the conditions in Kurdistan at this time as follows:

Normal administration of an elementary type prevailed in all four of the Kurdish liwas, save in a small Persian-frontier area....Reasonable allowance was being made, with a good grace, for Kurdish susceptibilities in matters

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40. United Kingdom, Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of Iraq for the Years 1922-1923, p. 32.
41. Ireland, op. cit., p. 333.
42. Longrigg, op. cit., p. 152.
43. United Kingdom, Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of Iraq for the Year 1924, p. 33.

of language, law, procedure, schools, and the appointment of officials. Hundreds of Kurds were serving the 'Iraq State in civil and military posts at every level. Every corner of their own countryside had been penetrated by the disciplined forces--Army, Levies, Police--of the Government. Roads had been built or improved and were patrolled, telegraphs were extended, the tobacco trade encouraged and organized. Municipal government was progressing, security was general. Kurds sat in the Chamber of Deputies, in the Senate, and in the Cabinet. Their complete integration in the 'Iraq State seemed a not impossible hope.<sup>44</sup>

#### 4. STATUS OF KURDS IN IRAQ: GUARANTEES AND ATTITUDES

##### a. General Considerations

At this point we shall examine certain aspects of the Kurdish position in Iraq both with respect to the legal definitions of their status and with respect to their attitudes toward the administration and toward their neighbors. Edmonds has written:

Of the four Muslim countries, it is only in Iraq that the Kurds are officially and legally recognized as a minority having certain rights of their own qua Kurds. This is due to the facts that: (1) from 1918 until 1923 there was an obligation on the Mandatory Power to keep open for them the possibility of adhering to a Kurdish state that might be formed; and (2) that [sic] in 1925 the League of Nations, when it awarded the disputed Mosul wilayet to Iraq, made it a condition of the award that "regard should be had to the desires expressed by the Kurds that officials of the Kurdish race should be appointed for the administration of their country, the dispensation of justice, and teaching in the schools, and that Kurdish should be the official language of all these services."<sup>45</sup>

The precise nature of this special status has often been problematical, as the United Kingdom points out:

One of the basic difficulties of the Kurdish question in 'Iraq arises from the wording of some of the resolutions of the League which have given recognition to the special rights of the Kurds. In these such expressions as "guarantees

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44. Longrigg, op. cit., p. 157.

45. Edmonds, "The Place of the Kurds in the Middle Eastern Scene," Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, Volume XLV, Part II, April, 1958, p. 145.



of local administration," "legislative and administrative measures to secure for the Kurds the position to which they are entitled," and "natural rights as explicitly recognized by the Mandatory Power and the League of Nations" have occurred and there has always been doubt as to the form and scope of "the guarantees," "administrative measures" and "natural rights" in question.<sup>46</sup>

An examination of this special status may best be made by the enumeration of the several measures which guarantee to the Kurds their status as citizens of Iraq and also accord to them certain concessions.

b. Formal Guarantees

(1) The Organic Law

The diplomatic basis of the guarantees to be conferred upon Iraq's ethnic, as well as religious, minorities may be found in the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of Alliance of 10 October 1922 which has been previously cited. Article III stipulated that:

His Majesty the King of Iraq agrees to frame an Organic Law...which...shall take account of the rights, wishes and interests of all populations inhabiting Iraq....It shall provide that no discrimination of any kind shall be made between the inhabitants of Iraq on the ground of race, religion or language, and shall secure that the right of each community to maintain its own schools for the education of its own members in its own language, while conforming to such educational requirements as the Government of Iraq may impose, shall not be denied or impaired.<sup>47</sup>

When framed and finally ratified in 1925, the Organic Law (amounting to a Constitution) generally embodied these provisions. Article 6 stipulated equality before the law, Article 17 recognized Arabic as the official language, but permitted special laws to be passed for areas wherein Arabic was not widely spoken, and Article 18 forbade discrimination in governmental appointments.<sup>48</sup>

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46. United Kingdom, Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of Iraq for the Year 1931, p. 18.

47. Text in J.C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, Volume II, p. 112.

48. Hourani, op. cit., pp. 92-93.

## (2) Law of Nationality

The status of Kurds as citizens was insured in most cases by the Law of Nationality, passed on 9 October 1924. Article 3 provided as follows: "All persons who on the 6th day of August, 1924, were Ottoman subjects and who were habitually resident in Iraq are hereby declared to have ceased to be Ottoman subjects and to have acquired Iraqi nationality on that date."<sup>49</sup>

## (3) Prime Minister's Statement of Policy

On 21 January 1926 the Prime Minister made the following unequivocal pronouncement of the policy to be pursued by the Iraqi Government with respect to the Kurds:

This country cannot live unless all elements of the 'Iraqi State enjoy their rights. We shall give the Kurds their rights. Their officials shall be from among them, their official language shall be their own tongue, and in their mother tongue their children shall be taught in the schools.

At the same time there was issued the following directive to each cabinet minister:

Your Excellency has no doubt seen the speech made by the Prime Minister in the Chamber of Deputies and published in the press on the following day. This speech embodies the policy which the government has pursued and will continue to pursue in the administration of the Kurdish areas, namely, that the officials shall be Kurds and the official language Kurdish. His Excellency has therefore directed me to request you to endeavour to carry out this policy and to adhere thereto in all that appertains to the administration of the areas in question.<sup>50</sup>

## (4) Local Languages Law

A matter of concern to certain ethnic minorities was the question of the official language. In accordance with the provisions

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49. United Kingdom, Foreign and State Papers, Volume 121, p.451.

50. Texts found in United Kingdom, Special Report on the Progress of Iraq During the Period 1920-1931, pp. 259-260.

of Article 17 of the Organic Law, the Local Languages Law (Law Number 74, 1931) was passed and included the following pertinent provisions: Article 2 specified Kurdish as the language of the courts in 12 qadas located in the Kurdish areas, while Article 3 authorized Kurdish, Turkish, or Arabic in 6 other qadas. Article 5 designated Kurdish as the official language for administration in 15 qadas located in the Kurdish areas, with the exception of technical departments, correspondence between liwa headquarters and ministries, and correspondence between headquarters of the Mosul liwa and attached qadas; Kurdish and Turkish were authorized in the qadas of Kirkuk and Kifri. Article 6 specified that the language to be utilized in the schools would be that language spoken by the majority of the pupils. Article 8 stated that the particular Kurdish dialect to be employed in the liwas of Sulaymaniya, Arbil, and Kirkuk would be the dialect in current use; as for the Kurds of the Mosul liwa, delegates were to meet within one year and decide which dialect they wished to employ.<sup>51</sup> Accordingly the delegates from the Kurdish qadas of the Mosul liwa convened and decided to use the indigenous Bahdinan dialect.<sup>52</sup> As was noted in the first chapter, the Sulaymaniya dialect has in general proved dominant.

#### (5) Final Guarantees

The Anglo-Iraqi Preferential Alliance of 1930 slated to become effective in 1932, was to give Iraq the status of an independent country with membership in the League of Nations. In spite of the assurances given by Iraq in the previously-mentioned guarantees, the

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51. United Kingdom, Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of Iraq for the Year 1931, pp. 73-75. The entire provisions of the law are attached.

52. United Kingdom, Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of Iraq for the Year 1932, p. 5.

Permanent Mandates Commission of the League was hesitant and asked the Iraqi Government for a statement of guarantees for the protection of minorities and respect for human rights. On 30 May 1932 Iraq issued a declaration embodying the requisite assurances.<sup>53</sup>

c. Attitudes

Many comments representing divergent opinions have been made concerning the attitudes of the Kurds toward the Iraqi regime and toward their non-Arabic neighbors in the wilayat of Mosul. Yusuf Malek, illustrating an extreme view, writes of Kurdish attitudes toward the Baghdad regime as follows:

The Kurds, though Moslems, are not Arabs. This is the last thing they want to be. The difference between the two is like that between the angel and the devil. The Kurd far from being fanatic is tolerant if left alone. The Kurds enjoyed a wide measure of autonomy long before the Arab dreamt of any self-government.<sup>54</sup>

Neither the Kurds nor the other Minorities, or, rather, the indigenous inhabitants of the Mosul Wilayet, are Arabs in any way, and to attempt to merge them in the despised Iraqi unity by corruption and coercive measures, can bring nothing but resistance by force of arms as has already been the case.<sup>55</sup>

Regarding Kurdish feeling towards the Arab Iraqis, Freya Stark gives a different light: "The truth is that the Kurds dislike the Iraqis of the plain in the same way as the 18th-century Scottish Highlanders disliked the English; and it will be an excellent thing if Iraq remembers this analogy, and deals with the problem on the same lines--by encouraging rather than suppressing their local nationalism."<sup>56</sup> Morris notes that the Kurds only became citizens of Iraq after years of dispute and that, with blood brothers across the borders, they felt themselves to have

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53. Lenczowski, op. cit., p. 242.

54. Yusuf Malek, British Betrayal of the Assyrians, p. 32.

55. Ibid., p. 71.

56. Stark, op. cit., p. 184.

little in common with other Iraqis.<sup>57</sup> Hourani observes that their reluctance to accept Iraqi government was not only due to the spread of Kurdish nationalist ideas, but was also a result of the persistence of tribal loyalties and customs, making them oppose not only an Arab government but any government.<sup>58</sup>

Despite unfortunate incidents between the Kurds and their Christian neighbors it has been widely opined that Kurds could co-exist with Armenians and Assyrians in the absence of outside instigation. Such views are expressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury with respect to Armenians<sup>59</sup> and by Hamilton with respect to the Assyrians.<sup>60</sup> Malek goes so far as to comment:

Since the war, the Kurds, especially those in southern Iraq, have been very friendly to the non-Moslems, but the malicious policy planned in Baghdad and supplied by the Arab provincial officials of setting them against the non-Moslems was the sole cause for certain incidents that have occurred between the two friendly elements.<sup>61</sup>

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57. Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

58. Hourani, "Race, Religion, and Nation-State in the Near East," *A Vision of History*, p. 98.

59. These views were expressed by the Archbishop in the Parliamentary Debates (Volume 38, Number 112) as cited by Malek, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

60. Hamilton (*op. cit.*, p. 203) quotes a conversation with an Assyrian in which the latter states: "Where else have the Assyrians lived for centuries but in Kurdistan?...We are much like them in many ways and we all speak Kurdish."

61. Malek, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33. Malek, an Assyrian, writing in 1933, is understandably bitter but his preconceptions preclude an objective evaluation of either the British or the Iraqi stand; consequently, throughout much of his book he throws vitriolic vituperative villification at both governments. He shows a predilection for emphasizing the solidarity among all Iraqi minority groups in a common struggle against the central regime; the following statement is indicative: "Kurds and Assyrians have been living together in the Mosul Wilayet for years, and they could still live peacefully together, had it not been for the evil seed sown by the Arab Minister and alleged politicians to cause friction and dissension among the two friendly elements." *Ibid.*, p. 37. This theory of solidarity is espoused by Safrastian, although the villain of his story is Ankara rather than Baghdad; he does not express hostility to the Arabs. The Wigrams' attitude toward the Kurds is somewhat equivocal; they have recommended Malek's book, but many of their statements seem to conflict with the latter's theory of Kurdish-Christian rapport.

The role of the Kurds in the Assyrian incidents of 1933 will be discussed in the following chapter; it may be observed that during the decade of the 1920's large numbers of Kurds and Assyrians were united in common opposition to the Iraqi regime and in common pursuit of their goals of independence or autonomy under British protection.

It would be well to conclude with a comment on the attitudes of the Mandatory Power and the Iraqi Government. Great Britain, as the Mandatory Power, was constantly compelled to walk a tight rope between her policy of supporting Faisal's Baghdad regime and her desire to insure a measure of protection and autonomy for the Kurdish minority. Her policy made her constantly vulnerable to the charge by Iraqi nationalists of following a parochial policy among the Kurds to the detriment of the central regime and to the countercharge by the Kurds of having betrayed their interests. Regarding the attitude of the Iraqi regime it must be realized that, besides whatever personal prejudices which may have been held by the ruling Sunni Arab clique, self-preservation decreed that it must take a firm hand in suppressing any nationalistic movement among the minorities having as its goal the immediate or ultimate detachment of a minority group from the State of Iraq. For the sake of internal tranquility and national unity, wisdom decreed that it should take a tolerant view of the local customs and civil rights of each group. We shall see how the Iraqi Government fulfilled this admittedly difficult role.

## 5. THE COURSE OF EVENTS

### a. Southern Iraqi Kurdistan: Barzinji Uprisings

Even before the final establishment of the Iraqi Government under the British Mandate, Kurdish intransigence reared its head. Until 1924 Sulaymaniya was the focal point for activities of refractory Kurds under

the leadership of Shaykh Mahmud Barzinji, and British military and political personnel were kept constantly in the field. Since many of these operations centered around the personality of Shaykh Mahmud it would be well to examine his character briefly.

(1) Character of Shaykh Mahmud

It will be recalled from the previous chapter that Shaykh Mahmud had assumed the leadership of the Barzinji family in 1909 and in so doing had become the leading figure in Southern Iraqi Kurdistan. Opinions of him as expressed by different commentators vary; Longrigg, admitting that with his personal following and prestige he was the logical choice for the head of a local government in Sulaymaniya, styles him as "unbalanced, violent-tempered, and childish,"<sup>62</sup> while Edmonds writes that even in Ottoman times he had terrorized the area with his gangs of roughs.<sup>63</sup> Hamilton takes another view of him: "He was a religious leader of considerable sanctity, had the reputation of being a fearless warrior, and had survived so many fights that he was regarded with almost a religious awe. In fact, it was said that bullets could not harm him..."<sup>64</sup> Freya Stark writes: "Shaykh Mahmud is delightful....He has always been a good fighter, a good enemy, and a good friend."<sup>65</sup> Finally, Hamilton has succinctly expressed his attitude toward outside control: "He was also a man of his word, and when put on parole...[after a period of captivity] he would probably not have broken it and rebelled against any purely British administration. But when it was proposed to transfer him from British to Arab control, he objected most strongly...."<sup>66</sup>

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62. Longrigg, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

63. C. J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks, and Arabs*, p. 30.

64. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

65. Stark, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

66. Hamilton, *loc.cit.*

## (2) The First Revolt and the Soane Regime

Since the British occupation of Khanaqin and Kifri, British political officers had been in touch with local Kurdish magnificoes including Mahmud; facing the problem of installing a regime in Southern Kurdistan better than anarchy but harmless to its neighbors, the British first decided to sponsor a loose Kurdish state headed at Sulaymaniya under Shaykh Mahmud who would be advised by a British Political Officer. Accordingly the Shaykh was installed and a Major Noel was appointed as his Political Officer; it was announced that any Kurdish tribes from the Greater Zab to the Diyala would be permitted to join Shaykh Mahmud's confederacy. The upland townspeople of Kirkuk, Kifri, and Arbil remained aloof, and, as was previously mentioned, Kirkuk (with these other areas) became an independent division; however a score of chiefs representing the mountain Kurds from Ruwanduz to Halabja rallied to him, and when Major Noel arrived on 1 January 1919 he found the population generally favorable to the Shaykh.<sup>67</sup>

However problems soon appeared. There began to be indications that in some cases the Shaykh's popularity had been more seeming than real.<sup>68</sup> The situation was aggravated by two succeeding events: the secession of the Jaf Kurds of Halabja and the replacement of Major Noel

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67. United Kingdom, India Office, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

68. The India Office (*ibid*) noted that "...so anxious were the Kurds at that time for peace, so reduced by privation, that they were ready to sign any document or make any statement to procure tranquillity and food. Thus tribe after tribe which hitherto had been barely cognisant of Shaikh Mahmud, or at best had known him as an unworthy descendent of a good man, signed the stereotyped memorial praying for inclusion in the new State under Shaikh Mahmud, a condition which they imagined the British Government to have made essential, for reasons of its own."



by Major Soane, a man of strong views and stern character, with whom Shaykh Mahmud soon found himself at odds. Friction led to Mahmud's imprisoning a British officer while Soane was away on leave and raising the banner of revolt. The British, assisted by the Jaf of Halabja, succeeded in crushing the revolt and reinstating the Soane regime; Mahmud was sentenced to death by a military tribunal but this was commuted to a long term of imprisonment.<sup>69</sup>

During the period following the expulsion of Shaykh Mahmud, the dominant figure in the Sulaymaniya regime was the British Political Officer, Major Soane. Familiar with Kurdistan from previous travel and fluent in the Kurdish language, Soane was an enthusiastic proponent of an independent Kurdish state protected by Britain; he pushed road-building and bridge-building, established schools conducted in the Kurdish language, and began building the tribes into a progressive and industrious Kurdish state so as to inspire the Sulaymaniyans to emulate Western standards of government. However following British acceptance of the Mandate for Iraq in 1920 it soon became evident that rule by a political officer in the Sulaymaniya division (and elsewhere in Iraq) must give way to something more compatible with the status of the new Iraqi State, for which a central government was in the process of being established. Thus, receiving little encouragement in his policy of creating a Kurdish nation, Soane retired.<sup>70</sup>

### (3) Mahmud's Reinstatement and Second Expulsion

With the departure of Soane it became increasingly necessary to find someone to fill the vacuum. Soane's successor was in poor physical

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69. Longrigg, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-105.

70. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-136. Also Sir Arnold Wilson, "E. B. Soane, a Memoir," appended as introduction to Soane, *op. cit.*, pp. xiv-xv.

health and found difficulty in coping with various trouble-makers both in Sulaymaniya proper and in the two attached districts of Halabja and Ranya. In the former even the pro-British Jaf tribesmen were conniving against the Assistant Political Officer posted there, while in the latter the local Assistant Political Officer had constantly to contend with the depredations of the Pizhdar tribesmen laced with a filagree of Turkish soldiers. Throughout the area the Barzinji family was plotting and clamoring for the return of Shaykh Mahmud.

Edmonds, relieving the Assistant Political Officer at Halabja, believed that the Shaykh was incorrigible<sup>71</sup> and Longrigg considers the High Commissioner's arrangements for his reinstatement as perhaps the only instance of poor judgment on the part of the latter;<sup>72</sup> nevertheless, as Hamilton notes, "When it came to the question of appointing local rulers...there seemed no one better fitted to be put in charge of this district than its hereditary chief, so he was liberated and reinstated. This was by no means bad policy for the man was truly a power among his people."<sup>73</sup>

Once established over Sulaymaniya and its subsidiary districts, Mahmud proceeded to form a Kurdish government, appointed ministers, and even issued postage stamps. King Faysal supported the appointment and lent the Shaykh some Kurdish army officers; Major Noel was appointed his advisor. Nonetheless, in the "intoxicating mountain air" of Sulaymaniya, the Shaykh forgot his promises of allegiance to the Iraqi King, and his separatist aspirations, fanned by the rash councils of some of his henchmen and by clandestine Turkish propaganda, revived. Longrigg, with little

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71. Edmonds, op. cit., pp. 122-123.

72. Longrigg, op. cit., p. 144.

73. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 135.

love for the Shaykh, indicts his regime from the beginning: he states that Mahmud immediately began to intrigue with Turkish representatives in Kirkuk and shortly afterwards asserted his title "King of Kurdistan." He goes on to say: "In Sulaymaniya a fantastic regime of extortion and oppression represented 'Kurdish Government', and a mission sent by it to Baghdad proffered highly unrealistic claims."<sup>74</sup> Official British sources make reference to the Shaykh's levying of an exise tax on tobacco and attempts to encroach on the neighboring districts of Chamchamal, Ranya, Halabja, and Qara Dagh, which had been detached from Mahmud's Sulaymaniya regime after a partial operation against him in 1923 and were being peacefully administered from Kirkuk.<sup>75</sup>

In 1923, after some incidents of friction, a combined British column and force of Jaf insurgents defeated Mahmud who fled briefly to the Persian hills; returning, he was permitted control over only a narrow area representing the immediate vicinity of Sulaymaniya, while the other districts, as previously noted, were detached from his control. Late in the year he renewed his connivance with the Turks and made plans for an invasion of Halabja and Chamchamal; finally in the spring of the following year after issuance of ultimatums, a combined assault by the Iraqi Army, the Levies (largely composed of Assyrians), and the British R. A. F. compelled his capitulation. For three years thereafter Mahmud skulked in the mountain villages along the Iraqi-Persian frontier.<sup>76</sup>

It was now determined to establish an administration which would

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74. Longrigg, op. cit., p. 145.

75. United Kingdom, Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of Iraq for the Year 1924, pp. 30-31.

76. Longrigg, op. cit., p. 152. Several stories are related of the Shaykh's chivalry toward captured British opponents. Hamilton, op. cit., pp. 138-139.

definitely unite the division with the Iraqi State; henceforth the Iraqi Government took control of the administration of Sulaymaniya (and all Kurdish provinces) although in practice the British High Commissioner continued to intervene actively in Kurdish affairs. Conditions in Sulaymaniya improved; it is noted by the British that the population in 1924 had shrunk to 700 as a result of the Shaykh's rapacity--within a year it was to rise to 12,000.<sup>77</sup>

#### (4) Mahmud's Later Activities

The departure of Shaykh Mahmud to the outlying districts did not terminate the nationalistic sentiment which marked Southern Iraqi Kurdistan. In 1927 British administrators reported the following:

"National consciousness and sentiment are stronger in the Sulaymaniya and Arbil provinces and among the Kurdish tribes of the Kirkuk province than among the Kurds of the Northern Frontier of the Mosul province. In Sulaymaniya and Arbil, for example, there is a real enthusiasm for the use and development of the Kurdish language..."<sup>78</sup> And again, with respect to Sulaymaniya:

Added to the other elements making for separation--those of locality, character, color, and tradition--their specific nationalism, which flourished in a restricted circle centered in Sulaymaniya town, had survived their incorporation in the 'Iraqi State, the failure of successive campaigns, the stern repression of their Kurdish brothers in Turkey and Persia, and even their own profound disunion.<sup>79</sup>

In 1929 the elections produced a riot in Sulaymaniya, and Kurds there and elsewhere were profoundly disturbed by the draft of the new Anglo-Iraqi Treaty which contained no specific provision for safeguarding the rights

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77. United Kingdom, loc. cit.

78. United Kingdom, Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of Iraq for the Year 1927, p. 26.

79. Longrigg, op. cit., p. 193.

of the Kurdish areas.

Expecting support as a result of this dissatisfaction, Shaykh Mahmud was moved on two more occasions, in 1927 and 1930, to renew his activities. Evicted from Sulaymaniya in 1924, he haunted the mountains of the Iraqi-Persian frontier during the following three years. Although he officially dissociated himself from certain pernicious activities performed by the Hamawand near Chamchamal,<sup>80</sup> he nonetheless continued his raiding activities in which he tried, unsuccessfully to secure cooperation from the Jaf of Halabja. Eventually in 1927 the Iraqi Government, advised by the British, arranged certain terms with him by which he might remain in the extreme eastern town of Penjwin; in a matter of weeks he stepped out of bounds and the familiar story of joint Iraqi-Army-Levy-R. A. F. dislodgement activity was repeated. Driven from Penjwin, the Shaykh retreated across the Persian border thus removing once more the principal obstacle to orderly administration in the Sulaymaniya province.<sup>81</sup> Again, in September of 1930 Shaykh Mahmud emerged from his lair and invaded Iraqi territory, in spite of specific warnings to desist. He established himself in Penjwin and forwarded to the British High Commissioner a demand that he be recognized as King of Iraqi Kurdistan from Zakho in the north-west to Khanaqin in the south-east. Again R. A. F. action dislodged him from Penjwin but failed to expel him from Iraq, and guerilla warfare continued until March of 1931, when after an abortive troop-raising expedition in Kifri and Khanaqin he was decisively defeated in an encounter at Au-i-Barika 20 miles north-east

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80. United Kingdom, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

81. Longrigg, *op. cit.*, pp. 156 - 157, 193 - 194. We may note that by the terms of the 1927 negotiations the son of Shaykh Mahmud was taken to Baghdad; educated at Victoria and later Columbia, he later became a minister in the Iraqi Government.

of Tuz Khurmatu. Fleeing once more to Persia, he was not granted asylum, and was consequently compelled to surrender himself at Penjwin. He was turned over to the Iraqi authorities who spared his life, granted him an allowance, and restricted him to the town of Nasiriya on the lower Euphrates. For almost a decade, there was no recurrence of large-scale activity on the part of the Barzinjins.

b. Northern Iraqi Kurdistan: Early Barzani Uprisings

(1) Character of Shaykh Ahmad

In the previous chapter it was mentioned that the generally pro-British and pro-Christian leader of the Barzanis, Shaykh abd al-Salim, was murdered through the machinations of the Porte which played on the historic rivalry between the Barzani and Zibar tribes. His successor was his younger brother Shaykh Ahmad Barzani around whom centered most of the dissident activity of Northern Iraqi Kurdistan during the period of the Mandate. Longrigg considers Shaykh Ahmad as being mentally unbalanced,<sup>82</sup> and British administrators note that he had a "record of continuous and obstinate hostility towards the Government;<sup>83</sup> Hamilton states that, although he had not been particularly friendly in the past (Mahmud had always protested cordiality toward Britain), he was not openly hostile toward the British.<sup>84</sup> Although still alive, and reckoned by Azzawi as the leader of one of the two main Barzani subgroups, Ahmad has yielded to his brother Mulla Mustafa in the last two decades as the leading exponent of Barzani separatist activity.

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82. *Ibid.*, pp. 194 - 195.

83. United Kingdom, *op. cit.*, p. 25. This work does not explain whether it refers to the British or to the Iraqi Government.

84. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

## (2) Barzani-Zibar Activities

Concurrently with their engineering of the murder of Shaykh Abd al-Salim, the Turks were able to effect a temporary alliance between the two hostile tribes of Zibar and Barzani. In 1919 this unnatural Barzani-Zibar combination joined forces against the British political and military personnel dispatched to the northern portions of the Mosul division and subsequently attacked and looted the town of Aqra. A British punitive column retaliated by burning the houses of the respective chiefs who fled to the mountains; no other sympathetic uprisings took place.<sup>85</sup> Even during the period of the raids, division had occurred between the two tribes over the apportionment of the loot, and it is assumed that the Barzani-Zibar alliance broke down shortly thereafter, to be succeeded by the customary hostility which has characterized their relationship down to the present day.

## (3) Shaykh Ahmad: 1927-1932

The theory of mental disturbance on Shaykh Ahmad's part has been noted. In 1927 the Shaykh suddenly proclaimed himself to be the Almighty through his local mulla, Abd al-Rahman, whose earnest preaching gained Ahmad a number of converts. Not satisfied with the mere publication of a new theology, Shaykh Ahmad began fighting "a resolute jihad on his own behalf."<sup>86</sup> Under him, the Barzan area became a center of Kurdish resistance which the police were at first able to quell. The new religion temporarily died out and an uneasy peace reigned in Barzan from 1928 until 1931. In July of the latter year Shaykh Ahmad again went off on a tangent; this time he imposed "Christianity" on his followers, a step

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85. United Kingdom, India Office, op. cit., p. 73.

86. Morris, op. cit., p. 93.

from which his brother Mulla Mustafa tried unsuccessfully to dissuade him. Returning to the Muslim faith he continued to lead forays against his rival Shaykh Rashid of Baradost; temporarily checked again by the police,, in 1932 he ignored warnings from the High Commissioner and resumed his raids.<sup>87</sup> The Iraqi Army, dispatched to chasten him, would undoubtedly have been defeated had not the R. A. F. rescued it from the debacle; irrevocably defeated, Ahmad chose to cross the frontier and surrender himself to his old enemies the Turks,<sup>88</sup> who, at the request of the Iraqi Government, had brought police to the frontier.<sup>89</sup> At long last Barzan was brought under the sway of a normal administration and Iraqi Kurdistan in its entirety was now subordinate to the central regime. Sporadic Barzani activity occurred in the 30's but there were no major outbreaks until 1943 when effective leadership had passed from Shaykh Ahmad to Mulla Mustafa.

c. Other Groups and Areas

(1) Ruwanduz

It will be remembered that the British did not succeed in consolidating their control over Ruwanduz until 1923. In 1918 British officers were dispatched to the town where they took measures to relieve the starving population who had suffered greatly from the depredations of the Russians,<sup>90</sup> and were thus welcomed by the populace. However there

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87. More detailed summaries of events related to this revolt are found in Hamilton, op. cit., pp. 203-204; The London Times, April 7, 1932, p. 7; United Kingdom, Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of Iraq for the Year 1932, pp. 2-4. Hamilton quotes Ismail Beg of Ruwanduz as suggesting that Shaykh Ahmad may have been incited by a "mysterious political agent" from Baghdad.

88. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 174. Examples of Ahmad's chivalry are cited.

89. United Kingdom, op. cit., p. 4. It seems, however, that Shaykh Ahmad had returned to Iraq by 1933. See Malek, op. cit., p. 33.

90. United Kingdom, India Office, op. cit., p. 61. The population had been reduced by 75%.



existed in Ruwanduz a long-standing feud between the families of Nuri Bawil and Ismail Beg which were anti-British and pro-British respectively. The British under Captain Hay espoused the latter; Nuri was able to organize raids in collusion with Turkish irregulars and with the Surji tribe, and thus compelled the British to withdraw from Ruwanduz to Batas during 1919. On their reoccupation in 1923, the British decided to appoint a neutral candidate, Shaykh Sayyid Taha, a grandson of Shaykh Ubaydullah (see Chapter II). Subsequently, however, Ismail Beg regained his former status and served as a member of the Iraqi Parliament, only to perish some years later as a victim of the vengeance of his life-long foe Nuri Bawil. During this period, from a standpoint of administration, Ruwanduz was subordinate to Arbil, which as has been noted, acquired separate status in 1923.<sup>91</sup>

(2) Elsewhere

In the Mosul liwa, outside of the areas under Barzani, Zibar, or Surji influence, there was very little manifestation of Kurdish nationalism.<sup>92</sup> The principal incipient question was that of repatriation of Assyrians to the Kurdish areas in the vicinity of Dohuk and Amadiya. To this scheme the Kurds raised little opposition.<sup>93</sup> In general the Kirkuk and Arbil areas (with the exception of Ruwanduz) showed themselves amenable to the progress of orderly administration. An outstanding feature

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91. Additional information on the area can be found in the following sources: Administrative Report for the Mosul Division for the Year 1920, pp. 10-11; Hamilton, op. cit., pp. 187-210; John Hay, Two Years in Kurdistan; and United Kingdom, India Office, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

92. Stafford, op. cit., p. 90. Also Administrative Report for the Mosul Division for the Year 1921, pp. 2-3.

93. Wigram and Wigram, op. cit., p. 409.

in the area was the continued good behavior of the Dizaih tribe who, from its strategic recently-occupied area between the two Zabs and the Tigris, was an all important factor in the peace of the Arbil district.<sup>94</sup>

#### 6. KURDS AT THE THRESHOLD OF IRAQI INDEPENDENCE

By 1932 considerable progress had been made in the administration of Iraqi Kurdistan but various problems remained. Foremost among them were Kurdish fears of exclusive Arab domination which were heightened by the publication of the draft of the Anglo-Iraqi Preferential Alliance of 30 June 1930 by which Iraq was to obtain entry into the League of Nations. Although a final declaration had been issued by the Iraqi Government to guarantee the rights of minorities, the treaty itself contained no explicit provisions in this regard; Kurds, realizing that with the imminent departure of Britain a British-protected Kurdish state was out of the question, began to consider a League of Nations-sponsored Kurdish Government. A petition embodying this was forwarded by 10 notables of Sulaymaniya to the Permanent Mandates Commission in 1930; the latter commented that the League had never envisaged a Kurdish Government but merely a measure of special treatment. Further petitions sent by Kurdish groups urged the League to recommend that Britain should impress on the Iraqi Government the need of tolerance to evoke the allegiance of its Kurdish subjects. In some cases these petitions were treated as treason by the Iraqi Government and several Kurdish intellectuals sponsoring them were imprisoned.

With respect to current Iraqi treatment of the Kurds a real effort had been made to abide by the terms of the guarantees listed previously and to give the Kurds some additional assurances. The principle

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94. Administrative Report of the Kirkuk Division for the Year 1921, p. 2.

of employing Kurdish officials, other than technical, in Kurdish areas had generally been maintained, and, at the end of the Mandatory period, the Government reaffirmed this principle and appointed a translation bureau, a Kurdish Inspector of Education for Northern Iraq, and a Kurdish Assistant Director-General in the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>95</sup> As for education, the provisions of the Local Languages Law had been followed: Kurdish was used as the language of primary school instruction in the areas prescribed; most of the teachers were Kurdish by race; the textbooks were normally translated into the Kurdish Sulaymaniya dialect, except in certain areas of the Mosul liwa where in some cases Arabic texts were employed. A plan to place Kurdish schools under a special regime, formulated in 1924, was implemented in modified form in 1930.<sup>96</sup> Additional assurances were given to the Kurds by the Acting High Commissioner and the Acting Prime Minister, who visited Iraqi Kurdistan together and "made statements in which, while condemning separation and emphasizing the unity of Iraq, they spoke of the Government's resolve to satisfy the linguistic and other demands of the Kurds."<sup>97</sup>

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95. Longrigg, *op. cit.*, p. 196. Regarding the Kurdish appointments, we append Malek's perennial answer to Longrigg: "The Iraq Government, in order to throw dust in the eyes of the Kurds, appointed an area education officer who alleges to be of Kurdish origin from the village of Barzan, the fallahin of Sheik Qadir Agha, the brother of Sheik Mahmud. [?] This painted Kurd is, for all intents and purposes, an Arab, not a Kurd, and he is certainly the pet of Ja'far al 'Askari (now Iraqi Minister in London) who also attempted in vain, during 1930, to be a Kurd when he visited Sulaimaniyah with Major Hubert Young." Malek, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

96. United Kingdom, Special Report on the Progress of Iraq During the Period 1920-1931, p. 230. In 1932 there was in the Kurdish areas 33 primary schools with 2150 male students, 2 primary schools with 230 female students, and 2 intermediate schools with 109 male students. Government of Iraq, Report of the Educational Inquiry Commission, p. 94.

97. Hourani, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

Nonetheless, these measures and assurances were not sufficient to allay all fears or satisfy all aspirations, as was evidenced by the Barzani and Barzinji outbreaks of 1930-1932. Although the period of the Mandate had witnessed the incorporation of Iraqi Kurdistan into the State of Iraq and had seen great strides in the administrative integration of the Kurdish areas with the rest of the country, the assimilation of the Kurds remained--and remains to this day--unrealized. Thus, in characterizing conditions in 1932 Longrigg was able to write that "...the entry of 'Iraq into the League was unmarked by any true solution of the problem of its unassimilated Kurdish minority."<sup>98</sup>

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98. Longrigg, loc. cit.

## CHAPTER IV: THE KURDS OF IRAQ UNDER THE INDEPENDENT REGIME

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## CHAPTER IV: THE KURDS OF IRAQ UNDER THE INDEPENDENT REGIME

## 1. INTRODUCTION

## a. Background and Scope

The fourth chapter of this thesis will be concerned with the Kurds of Iraq under the independent regime and will cover the period from the entry of Iraq into the League of Nations in 1932 until the Revolution of 1958.<sup>1</sup> The latter date has been chosen as the terminal point in this discussion on the Kurds of Iraq inasmuch as the events since that time, though of considerable current interest, are too recent and indecisive to admit of any degree of evaluation. This period is in some respects reminiscent of the previous period of the Mandate; on the one hand, it featured a continued process of administrative integration of the Kurdish areas into the Iraqi State, while, on the other, it was punctuated with periodic outbreaks of Kurdish recalcitrance in which the leading role came to be assumed by Mulla Mustafa Barzani. In general the first decade of the independent regime was marked by an interlude in Kurdish separatist activity which was to resume on a larger scale shortly after the outbreak of World War II. Despite certain conciliatory gestures by both the monarchial and republican regimes during the decade of the 1950's, Kurdish dissidence once more appeared and continues to the current date. During this chapter these events will be summarized, and the local and international implications of the Kurdish situation in Iraq will be considered.

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1. In treating this period secondary sources have generally been employed. Subsequent to 1932 there is a dearth of the primary sources and first-hand accounts published by British administrators and travellers, whose works were a fruitful source of information on the Ottoman and Mandatory periods.

## b. Iraqi Politics during the Period

During the period of the independent monarchical regime the political situation in Iraq, now theoretically independent but still subject to British influence, was intricate at times and bears some examination. According to the Anglo-Iraqi Preferential Alliance of 1930 and related appendages, Iraq was bound to "full and frank discussion" with Britain on questions of foreign policy of joint concern, Britain should retain two airbases with the privilege of using Iraqi facilities for transit of forces, the British ambassador should enjoy diplomatic precedence, and British subjects should be given preference by the Iraqi Government when employing foreigners.<sup>2</sup> The treaty became operative in 1932 with Iraq's entry into the League of Nations and immediately became the bone of contention between rival pro-British and nationalist groups among the Iraqi leaders. The former were led by Nuri al-Sa'id, Ali Jawdat al-Ayubi, and to a lesser extent Jamil al-Midfa'i; the latter under Rashid Ali al-Qaylani, Yasin al-Hashimi, and Hikmat Sulayman formed the Ikha' Party and demanded revision of the treaty with restriction of British controls. Because of the identification of many of the minorities as the proteges of Britain in the minds of the Iraqi nationalists, the minority groups were not favorably regarded as a rule by the Ikha' and other nationalist groups.

The years 1933 and 1934 respectively featured control by the Ikha' Party, which proved powerless to alter the treaty, and by its opponents. In early 1935 the former group returned to power under Yasin al-Hashimi by the somewhat unconstitutional resort to tribal and Shi'i disaffection. Though stable and successful in internal improvements

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2. J.C.Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, Volume II, p. 178.

and foreign policy, the regime became increasingly intolerant of the opposition whose ranks began to be filled by both liberals and army officers; this opposition group was joined by Hikmat Sulayman who had been unwisely excluded from Yasin's ministry. By joining hands with the celebrated General Bakr Sidqi, Hikmat was able to promote an "unholy" and unnatural alliance between the army officers and the liberal Ahali group which favored social reform. This coalition overthrew the Yasin administration in the famous coup d'etat of October 1936. In the newly-created government the army element proved dominant; the Ahali were soon forced out. The principal result of this coup d'etat was to usher in an unstable period featuring six more coup d'etats; during this time the rival extremists Nuri al-Sa'id (1938) and Rashid Ali (1940) rose to the premiership. With the outbreak of World War II efforts toward compromise between these two were doomed to founder on the issue of relations with Germany. A final attempt toward compromise in the ministry of Taha al-Hashimi (from January to April, 1941) failed, and the last coup d'etats forced his resignation, the flight of the pro-British Regent the Amir Abd al-Ilah, and the formation of a nationalist pro-Axis administration under Rashid Ali. A month later there ensued the 30 days' conflict between the British forces and the Baghdad regime; the collapse of the latter at the end of May resulted in the termination of overt opposition to Britain.<sup>3</sup>

After 1941 the picture becomes much less complex. During the succeeding period from 1941 until 1958 the premiership on nine occasions was held by Nuri al-Sa'id for an aggregate of approximately eight years.

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3. This political resume is based on Majid Khadduri, Independent Iraq, Chapters III through IX.



Although it would not be correct to style the other premiers as puppets, still it may be said that the personality of Nuri was a dominant factor in Iraqi politics during this 17-year period. More pertinently, the policies of the central government with respect to minorities during this period featured a considerable degree of uniformity. The uncertainty and lack of information regarding the republican regime established in 1958 preclude an extensive consideration of Iraqi politics and minority problems since that year.

## 2. THE INTERLUDE, 1933 - 1941

### a. A General View

As compared with the Mandatory era which was rife with Kurdish revolts, the first years of the independent regime, insofar as they concern the Kurds, were relatively uneventful. A few outbreaks of Kurdish dissidence did occur, but they were rare and their narrow and compartmentalized nature stands in marked contrast to the widespread appeal made by the Barzinji and Barzani activities of the preceding decade. However, this lack of external manifestation of separatist tendencies did not presuppose a lack of restlessness on the part of the Kurds who continued to show an unwillingness to accept the authority of the Government. Hourani gives two reasons for this restlessness:

The first was the growth of Kurdish national spirit, due partly to the gradual appearance of a class of educated Kurds, partly to a natural reaction against Pan-Arabism. The encouragement given by the French to Kurdish nationalism in the Syrian Jazirah, and by the Russians to Kurdish autonomy in the Caucasus, may also have had a certain although a limited influence. The second and more fundamental reason was to be found in the particular administrative grievances of the Kurdish tribes. The Iraqi Government made little attempt to carry out the provisions of the various laws passed during the mandatory period. Government departments in Baghdad tended to neglect the claims of districts so far away from the capital; and

the Kurds had no way of making their voice heard effectively and compelling the Government to pay attention to their needs.<sup>4</sup>

The period will now be reviewed chronologically.

b. The Assyrian Incidents

Scarcely had Iraq gained its status as an independent kingdom when serious tension developed between the central government and the Assyrian community. This tension resulted, first, from the claims of the Assyrian Patriarch that his community should enjoy the privileges of a millet as it had under Ottoman dispositions, and, second, from the unfounded belief held on both sides that Britain might intercede on behalf of the Assyrians. Strained relations culminated in the regrettable massacres of 1933;<sup>5</sup> as was usually the case in their relationships with Christian neighbors, the Kurds played an ambiguous role in these incidents.

Previous references have been made to Kurdish-Assyrian relations and it seems that in the period following World War I they underwent a steady improvement. As was noted in the previous chapter, the Kurds raised little objection to various repatriation schemes which settled Assyrians in Kurdish country, and in many cases the Kurdish landlords welcomed the Assyrians as tenants. As relations between the latter and the Baghdad regime became increasingly strained, there was some talk of a Kurdish-Assyrian alliance to throw off the yoke of Iraqi control and establish an independent state. In a letter from the Commandant of

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4. Hourani, loc. cit. Khadduri's comment, to be quoted below in connection with the Ikha' ministries, gives a slightly different light on this question.

5. For discussions of the Assyrian incidents, one may refer to Longrigg, op. cit., pp. 229-237; Malek, op. cit.; Royal Government of Iraq, Correspondence Relating to Assyrian Settlement; Stafford, op. cit. Different viewpoints are represented in these sources.

Police to the Mutasarrif of Mosul reporting on his tour of the area in November, 1932, we read the following:

I could see nothing to show that there exists an effective movement at present, but what we have gathered from some Kurdish villages is that considerable propaganda is being spread by Assyrians and supporters of the Kurdish cause from beyond the frontier for an agreement to be reached between Assyrians and Kurds, even those outside the 'Iraq frontier, in order to gain a homeland for them and for the Kurds.

Actually, there is nothing to show that an agreement has been reached between the Kurds living within the area of this Liwa and Assyrians.<sup>6</sup>

During the climax of the massacres, attempts were made to inflame the Kurds against the Assyrians as Christians and it is worth noting that the officer largely responsible for the massacres, Colonel Bakr Sidqi, was of Kurdish origins; there were some isolated acts of violence committed by the Kurds but Stafford believes that they did not kill more than 50 Assyrians.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand many Kurds went to some lengths to protect the Assyrians, and Malek reports that "Sheiks Ahmad and Mahmud were interviewed and requested by the Arab Ministers to attack the Assyrians and join in the jihad, but they refused to do so."<sup>8</sup> In general the Kurdish attitude was praised by Assyrian commentators, but this rapprochement did not lead to a unified movement against the Iraqi regime.

c. The Ikha' Ministries, 1933 - 1936<sup>9</sup>

Kurdish dissidence, although subdued, continued to be a disruptive

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6. Letter, Commandant of Police to Mutasarrif (Mosul), Number 1599, dated 4 November 1932, quoted in Royal Government of Iraq, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

7. Stafford, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

8. Malek, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

9. There were actually two Ikha' ministries, one in 1933 under Rashid Ali and the other in 1935-1936 under Yasin al-Hashimi, but the intervening ministries did not feature any notable developments with respect to the Kurds.

element and reared its head in August of 1935 in the uprising of a certain Khalil Khoshawi, a Barzani, who led a raiding expedition in Northern Iraqi Kurdistan. Because of the mountainous nature of the terrain and its propinquity to Turkey, it took several months for a joint Iraqi-Turkish operation to suppress the movement. In Sulaymaniya liwa a similar character, Sayyid Muhammad Pichkola, led looting parties in Iraq from a base in Persia; eventually he was compelled to surrender in August of 1935. Regarding these events Khadduri observes: "The Kurds...had long complained of discrimination...but their complaint could hardly be justified, for the southern Arab areas, which were as poor and backward as the Kurdish, had been just as badly neglected and misgoverned by the central Government."<sup>10</sup> The revolts were suppressed and the leaders were punished, but the masses remained dissatisfied.

d. The Bakr-Sulayman Ministry, 1936 - 1937

A much different and more complex situation confronts us when we examine the Iraqi attitude toward the minorities under the Government of the coup d'etat engineered by General Bakr Sidqi (promoted from Colonel to General shortly after the Assyrian incidents) and Hikmat Sulayman. The former Ikha' Government had been avowedly Arab nationalist and not overly sympathetic with minorities. The new regime, though perhaps even more anti-British in sentiment than the preceding, was less Arab nationalist and even encountered some initial criticism from the proponents of the latter: Hikmat Sulayman, who had a strongly Turkish orientation, was not at heart a firm believer in Pan-Arabism, and Bakr,

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10. Khadduri, op. cit., p. 60. Malek (op. cit., p. 80) notes the disparity between the budget appropriations for education in the liwa of Baghdad and that of Sulaymaniya.

a Kurd, was suspected of favoring too strongly the aspirations of his compatriots. Khadduri's comments are revealing, however:

Bakr's party was attacked by the pan-Arabists on the grounds of championing the cause of the Kurds against the interests of the Arabs. This was partly due to Bakr's Kurdish origin, but mainly because his followers had not avowedly and immediately begun to work for the pan-Arab cause, and they were thus branded as anti-Arab. In point of fact, however, the majority of Bakr's entourage were Arabs; and to do Bakr justice...[he] often reiterated his support of the Arab national cause. A few enthusiastic Kurdish nationals, it is true, had taken the opportunity of the coup and secretly issued letters and pamphlets in which they ostensibly pleaded for cooperation between Arabs and Kurds, but in fact demanded freedom for the Kurdish people. These, however, had neither been originally inspired or were they subsequently supported by Bakr.<sup>11</sup>

One facet of Hikmat's foreign policy merits comment here. Hikmat's pro-Turkish orientation was reflected in 1937 in the conclusion of the Sa'dabad Pact, a treaty of friendship and cooperation among the four Islamic states of Iraq, Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan. Among the pertinent implications of this agreement was the fact that, of the participants, only one was included in the Arab World; furthermore, three of the states contained large Kurdish minorities. It is not certain whether this second fact bore any relationship to the conclusion of the treaty, but the Kurds appear to have thought so, and accordingly opposed it as a tool for the suppression of any manifestation of Kurdish nationalist aspirations.<sup>12</sup> In both respects, this treaty, although it soon became a dead letter, was a forerunner of the Baghdad Pact, which was to arouse criticism from Arab nationalists and Kurdish nationalists alike.

#### e. The Advent of the War

With the advent of World War II, additional complications were

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11. Khadduri, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

12. Edmonds, "The Kurds and the Revolution in Iraq," The Middle East Journal, Volume 13, No. 1, January, 1959, p. 2.

introduced into the Kurdish scene. Axis propaganda, under the astute direction of the German Minister Dr. Grobba, had been very active in Iraq in the pre-war years and some effort seems to have been made by the Germans to extend their overtures to the Kurds. But this attempt did not have far-reaching results.

During the year preceding the outbreak of the Second World War there were indications that the German Legation in Baghdad was spreading propaganda, especially among young men of the official classes, that the Kurds had been grossly betrayed by Britain at the end of the last war but that a victorious Germany was ready to create an independent Kurdistan after the next. But after the actual outbreak of hostilities the elder realists remained convinced that neither side was likely to alienate the Arabs for a small and internationally unimportant people like the Kurds, and preferred to take no initiative.<sup>13</sup>

Freya Stark makes the following comment on Kurdish attitudes during the war: "In the present war they have stood staunchly against all Nazi blandishments, and this is due to a scant dozen or so of British officers and officials who gained their trust and friendship--a proof, if any such were needed, of the influence of persons in the East."<sup>14</sup>

In fact, the most notable Kurdish outbreak in the early war years was channeled in the opposite direction; this was an attempt by Shaykh Mahmud Barzinji to exploit the coup d'etat of Rashid Ali in 1941 to obtain concessions from the Allies.

In the Spring of 1941, when Rashid 'Ali staged his coup d'etat against the Regent and the lawful government of Iraq, Shaykh Mahmud escaped from Baghdad, where he had been living in honorable exile, and did indeed obtain some support from the younger generation and among the tribes for the idea of a revolt, based on the belief that, "the unreliability of the Arabs" having now become manifest, the Allies would no longer hesitate to give the Kurds their

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13. Edmonds, "The Kurds of Iraq," The Middle East Journal, Volume 11, No. 1, January 1957, p. 59.

14. Freya Stark, op. cit., p. 184.

"rights"; but with the restoration of the Regent, a staunch friend of the Allies, the movement, such as it was, lost all momentum.<sup>15</sup>

Thus the short-lived revolt of Shaykh Mahmud came to naught, and the 10-year interlude in Kurdish irredentism was to be broken not by him but by the Barzanis in 1943. In examining the course of events since 1941, we shall consider separately two aspects of the Kurdish scene: the role of Mulla Mustafa Barzani and the policies of the Iraqi Government toward the Kurds.

### 3. THE ROLE OF MULLA MUSTAFA BARZANI, 1941 - 1958

#### a. The Revolt of 1943

It will be remembered that Shaykh Ahmad, after the collapse of his revolt in 1932, had surrendered to the Turks, but he returned shortly thereafter to Iraq after a general amnesty had been declared, and lived for a while in exile first on the lower Euphrates and later in Sulaymaniya. During this period control of the tribe began to devolve increasingly upon the Shaykh's younger brother, Mulla Mustafa.<sup>16</sup> In 1943 the latter with a few chosen companions escaped from Sulaymaniya, made his way through Persian territory to Barzan, and assumed control of the Barzan-Shirwan vicinity from which he swept away all traces of civil administration. Military operations against him achieved little, and a message from Nuri al-Sa'id urging him to surrender and conveyed to him through his still detained brother Shaykh Ahmad was flouted. An offer to permit him to

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15. Edmonds, loc. cit.

16. Unfortunately we have found little information on the nature and character of this influential Kurdish leader. Longrigg, with little love for the Kurdish nationalist hierarchy, refers to the Mulla as being "always unbalanced." Longrigg, op. cit., p. 325. He seems, in point of fact, to possess the qualities of organization and leadership to a greater degree than does his brother who is still the nominal leader of a major portion of the tribe.

cross into Persia or to live with the Pizhdar tribe was likewise spurned. Special measures were taken by Nuri at this time to allay some of the actuators of Kurdish discontent but these measures were not uniformly successful; they will be considered in the following topic.

Added to the Government's preoccupation with domestic affairs, the difficulty of carrying on military operations in the rugged Barzan country made it possible for the Barzani rebels to continue their revolt until the close of World War II.<sup>17</sup> Ill-will was unquestionably felt toward Baghdad by large numbers of Kurds, and Barzani power was increased by a marital alliance with the Zibar.<sup>18</sup> In mid-1945 the Iraqi Army launched a large-scale offensive to subdue the dissident Barzanis, and despite some initial combat successes, the latter were compelled to retire from the field by October. Mulla Mustafa fled to Iran with some 2000 followers.<sup>19</sup> He, his brother Shaykh Ahmad, and 30 followers including three army officers were condemned to death in absentia by a court martial convened for this purpose in Arbil.<sup>20</sup> Mulla Mustafa received a warm welcome in Mahabad (Sauch Bulaq) where he immediately identified himself with the Kurdish republic which was in the process of formation.

b. The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad<sup>21</sup>

The extensive participation of the Barzanis and other Iraqi Kurds

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17. Zeidner, (op. cit., p. 29) estimates that some 12,000 tribesmen were involved, but it is probable that this total includes not only Barzanis but also members of some allied tribes.
18. Longrigg, op. cit., p. 326. It is not certain how long this new Barzani-Zibar rapport endured, but it is probable that the age-old rivalry between the two tribes was quickly resuscitated.
19. Ibid., p. 237. Zeidner (loc. cit.) gives the number as 3000.
20. Ibid. It may be noted that Mulla Mustafa did much to incite Kurdish officers serving in the Iraqi Army toward disaffection from the central regime.
21. A comprehensive and interesting account of this short-lived republic is found in an article by Archie Roosevelt entitled "The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad" and published in The Middle East Journal, Volume 1, Number 3, July 1947. Information recorded here is largely taken from this article.



in the short-lived Kurdish Republic of Mahabad, as well as in the nationalist movements which spawned it, justifies a short description of this regime, although the movement took place on Iranian rather than on Iraqi soil. As an example of Soviet sponsorship of a purely Kurdish nationalist movement it also merits our consideration.

(1) Formation of the Regime

The establishment of the Kurdish Republic was preceded by the founding of Kurdish nationalist organization known as the Komala in Mahabad on 16 August 1943 by a dozen young Kurds. The membership was at first kept below 100 and limited to persons of Kurdish parentage on both sides.<sup>22</sup> Though founded in Iran, the movement spread across the borders and chapters were organized in Mosul, Kirkuk, Arbil, and Sulaymaniya. At first the organization of the group was essentially democratic.

It will be remembered that the joint Anglo-Russian occupation of Iran had given the Soviets control of Adherbayjan, whereas Britain still had many vested interests in neighboring Iraq; "It was inevitable that the two great powers primarily interested in the area should eventually hear of Komala." The British kept a watchful eye on developments and their political advisor in Mosul together with his subordinates kept in touch with developments in the Iraqi Kurdish areas. However, as before, the British could not lend open support to Kurdish nationalist activities without antagonizing the Arabs. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, launched a determined campaign to bring the movement under its sponsorship.

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22. An exception was made for persons having an Assyrian mother but otherwise ethnically Kurdish; this is an indication of the increasingly close relations between the two ethnic groups.

Disliking the democratic organization of the Komala, the Soviet agents turned to various tribal leaders who might be expected to join the movement and provide it with more autocratic leadership, but their suggestions were at first rebuffed. Finally they turned to the hereditary judge and literary leader of Mahabad, Qadi Muhammad, who was more responsive. Meanwhile the Soviets conducted strong propaganda to the effect that the Komala was a reactionary instrument of British imperialism and Qadi Muhammad was persuaded to set up a new organization, the Democratic Party of Kurdistan; accordingly the party assembled and drew up a program calling for self-government and autonomy within the limits of the Iranian State. Tribal opposition from conservatives fearing Soviet penetration might have unseated Qadi Muhammad had it not been for the timely arrival of the Barzanis in October of 1945. In December a Kurdish People's Government was inaugurated in Mahabad in the presence of Soviet officers with Qadi Muhammad as President and Mulla Mustafa Barzani as chief of the military arm.

## (2) Character of the Administration

The relationship of the Kurdish Republic with the Iranian State, with the other Soviet-sponsored Republic of Adherbayjan, and with the Soviet Union itself is complicated and an examination of its precise nature is beyond our scope; it may be noted that for a year the regime functioned with a considerable degree of autonomy although it was always under Soviet supervision. Iran, still the nominal suzerain, exerted almost no control; although it is possible that Qadi Muhammad was sincere when he proposed an autonomous regime within the Iranian State, it must be admitted that he and his followers held pan-Kurdish aspirations. These aspirations were borne out by the lively impetus

given to education, journalism, and literature in an attempt to make Mahabad a center of Kurdish culture which might replace Sulaymaniya. Because of the republic's short life, this goal was unobtainable, but for a year at least from the political standpoint Mahabad was the focal point of Kurdish nationalism.

### (3) Barzani Participation

Barzani's partisans who arrived in October of 1945 included not only tribal warriors, but a number of Iraqi petty officials, school-teachers, and deserters from the gendarmerie as well as Army officers. These Kurdish officers were men of high caliber and several of them were English trained and had held high positions on the Iraqi general staff. Mulla Mustafa quickly established contact with the Soviet military authorities in the Adherbayjan area and was told by them to attach himself to Qadi Muhammad and coordinate military activities. Even before the proclamation of the Republic, the Mulla had organized and equipped his forces with British rifles captured from the Iraqi Army, machine guns, and one field piece.

It was part of the initial agreement that the local Iranian Kurds would feed and house the destitute Barzanis who had fled from Iraq. As the months passed and the new republic began to feel the pinch of supply shortages, this sharing of rations and lodgings became an intolerable burden on the locals of the Mahabad district. Eventually a growing rift developed between Qadi Muhammad and the Barzani leaders. Thus, although in one sense the Barzanis had been the mainstay of the Kurdish Republic, in another sense they added to the difficulties which began to beset the infant state.

## (4) Collapse of the Mahabad Regime

Not only did Qadi Muhammad have to face the importunity of the Barzanis, but he was also confronted with the active hostility of the chiefs of the chiefs of two branches of the Bilbas tribe, the Mamesh and the Mankur. The impending withdrawal of the Soviets augured ill for the Kurdish Republic. In December of 1946 as a result of combined military action and negotiation on the part of the Iranian Government, the Kurdish leaders submitted and the Republic was abolished. Qadi Muhammad and others were subsequently hanged, but Mulla Mustafa escaped capture and made his way to the Soviet Union.

Roosevelt gives the following commentary on the underlying causes of the failure of this attempt to create a Kurdish state:

Like previous attempts it failed largely because of disunity among the Kurds themselves. One of the dilemmas of Kurdish nationalism is that while not only its leaders, but nearly all its rank and file, must come down from the more enlightened townspeople, its military strength has always had to come from the tribes and their chiefs, with neither the education nor the imagination to look for anything but gain and loot in the weakening of government authority. During 1946 the Kurdish tribes, naturally opposed to government control, felt as restive under Qazi Mohammad as they had under the Central Government, even though he was of their own race.<sup>23</sup>

## c. Mulla Mustafa in the Communist World, 1947 - 1958

Early in 1947 Mulla Mustafa fled to Soviet Armenia where he was welcomed. Far from being relegated to the status of a political refugee, he was given specialized training by communist officers and given the rank of Brigadier General in the Soviet Army. He was encouraged to continue in his role as a Kurdish nationalist by broadcasting to his compatriots in the Kurdish language from Yerivan.<sup>24</sup> Later on he spent

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23. Roosevelt, op. cit., p. 258.

24. The Yerivan broadcasting station continues to sponsor four programs a week in Kurdish. Haydar, op. cit., p. 38.

some time in Czechoslovakia; during his stay in the satellite countries he made contacts with the Syrian Kurdish communist leader Khalid Bukdash. Following the Revolution of 1958 in Iraq he was invited by Premier Abd al-Karim Qasim to return after an absence of 11 years.

d. Current Position of Mulla Mustafa Barzani

Without discussing in detail the Mulla's activities since 1958, we may observe that the honeymoon between the veteran Kurdish leader and the new Iraqi premier was brief. Hardly had he arrived in Iraq when Mulla Mustafa addressed a petition to Qasim in which he requested among other things the abolition of Western interests in Kirkuk;<sup>25</sup> soon afterward he was to launch the revolt which is currently in progress. This leads one to question in what manner do the Kurds of Iraq regard Mulla Mustafa Barzani.

On the one hand, he is only the de facto leader of one small Kurdish tribe (or more correctly, a larger portion of this tribe) and there is evidence that he faces opposition from certain neighboring tribes including the Zibar. Haydar feels that it is a fallacy to think that the Mulla speaks for a majority of the Kurds.<sup>26</sup> Zeidner takes a slightly different view:

Despite their failure to support him in his various clashes with the armed forces of Iraq and Iran, Barzani has become a more or less legendary hero of all the Iraqi Kurds. His acknowledged fighting prowess and his continued efforts to foster Kurdish nationalism from behind the Iron Curtain through various propaganda media have won their admiration and respect. Although he is now over sixty years old and has no doubt lost much of his former vigor, he constitutes a natural rallying point for the expression of Kurdish demands in the new Republic of Iraq.<sup>27</sup>

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25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., p. 73.

27. Zeidner, op. cit., p. 30.

#### 4. THE ROLE OF THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT, 1941 - 1958

##### a. Policies of Nuri al-Sa'id

It is perhaps early to comment upon the Kurdish policies of the Iraqi Prime Ministers of the last two decades; in lieu of a definitive evaluation which could obviously not be made at this time, we will confine our discussion to a resume of the more pertinent aspects of these policies. Nuri's policies have elicited criticism both from supporters and opponents of the Kurds; however his approach to the Kurdish problem has been characterized by Edmonds as "comprehending and liberal".<sup>28</sup> Two of the more salient features of this approach were the appointment of Majid Mustafa and the Provincial Administration Law.

##### (1) Appointment of Majid Mustafa and Related Measures

At the height of Barzani's revolt in 1943, Nuri sought to adopt a policy which would combine firmness with flexibility in dealing with the Kurds. Accordingly in January 1944 he appointed Majid Mustafa, a Kurdish nationalist of forceful character with a good record as a successful provincial administrator, as Minister without Portfolio charged with the special task of supervising Kurdish interests in general and in particular of pacifying Barzan. Thereafter Majid Mustafa made a tour of Iraqi Kurdistan, removed unpopular officials, arranged for distribution of barley, installed a competent Kurdish general as Mutasarrif of Sulaymaniya, and even succeeded in bringing Mulla Mustafa to Baghdad on a safe conduct trip. Nuri al-Sa'id himself toured the area in May, and offered a number of educational and economic concessions to the Kurds. But pan-Arab elements in the cabinet and in the parliament protested over these pro-Kurdish measures as did the Regent, the Amir Abd al-Ilah.<sup>29</sup>

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28. Edmonds, op. cit., p. 68.

29. Longrigg, op. cit., p. 325.

Nuri's government fell in June, and the succeeding ministry failed to renew either the appointment of Majid Mustafa or that of Baha al-Din, the Kurdish Mutasarrif of Sulaymaniya. Though Nuri quickly regained his power, he was compelled to exercise caution in his Kurdish policies.

(2) Provincial Administration Law

With the creation of the Development Board, considerable progress was made in Iraq with respect to internal improvements. A frequent complaint made by the Kurds, as well as by residents of other outlying areas, was the Government's propensity for spending most of the revenue on the environs of Baghdad and its corresponding neglect of the hinterlands. Accordingly during this period another measure was passed with the purpose of correcting this abuse. This was the Provincial Administration Law, a measure of devolution applying to the whole country, whereby funds were to be placed at the disposal of, or might be raised by, the local authorities to be spent according to dispositions locally determined.<sup>30</sup>

b. Policies of Abd al-Karim Qasim

It is proposed to mention here certain initial features of the Kurdish policy of the republican regime without elaborating upon the subsequent developments of Qasim's premiership. Qasim's policy began as an attempt to give an even more explicit recognition than before of the existence and rights of the Kurdish population of Iraq.<sup>31</sup> The new republican provisional constitution describes Arabs and Kurds as partners in the Iraqi State and guarantees the national right of each.<sup>32</sup> The Council of Sovereignty, provisionally established to replace the

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30. Edmonds, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

31. Hourani, "Race, Religion, and Nation-State in the Near East," *A Vision of History*, p. 99.

32. *Ibid.*

monarchy, consists of three members, a Sunni Arab, a Shi'i Arab, and a Kurd, this last being Khalid-i Naqshbandi, a retired officer and member of a revered Amadiya family.<sup>33</sup> A son of Shaykh Mahmud was given the post of Minister of Public Works in Qasim's first cabinet.<sup>34</sup> Also indicative of the Government's attitude was the invitation to Mulla Mustafa to return, the recall from exile of Shaykh Ahmad, and the liberation of another son of Shaykh Mahmud who had been serving a jail sentence.<sup>35</sup> Most important of all, Qasim's shift away from Cairo-directed Arab nationalism toward Iraqi particularism, whatever may have been the motives which dictated this move, served to allay Kurdish fears of absorption into a larger Arab entity. It appears, in the light of current conditions, that Qasim's measures, however conciliatory, were insufficient to break the long-standing tradition of Kurdish irredentism; nonetheless, had 'Arif's policies prevailed, Barzani's present revolt might well have erupted sooner and in a more violent form.

c. Kurdish Attitudes toward Iraqi Foreign Policy during the Period and Thereafter

In general Kurdish sentiment has not coincided with the orientation of Iraqi foreign policy when the latter has pursued a pan-Arab course or when it has sought an approximation with Turkey and Iran. In pan-Arabism the Kurds see a threat to the status which they have acquired in Iraq; they feel that union between Iraq and another Arab state would inevitably decrease their relative importance. In the periodic alignments of Iraq with its non-Arab Islamic neighbors, Turkey and Iran, both of which contain large Kurdish minorities, the Kurds have seen an attempt on the

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33. Edmonds, "The Kurds and the Revolution in Iraq," The Middle East Journal, Volume 13, No. 1, January, 1959, p. 3.

34. Ibid.

35. The nature of Shaykh Ahmad's exile is not known.



part of the governments concerned to cooperate in suppressing Kurdish nationalist movements. They approve, however, of the Iraqi stand on Zionism; "As Muslims they share with the Arabs their abhorrence of the Jewish settlement of Israel in what they regard as Islamic territory."<sup>36</sup>

In consonance with these orientations, the Kurds of Iraq have supported the boycott of Israel but have been out of step with certain other features of Iraq's foreign policy. They disliked the Baghdad Pact, whose participants included Turkey and Iran, just as they had disliked the Sa'dabad Pact 18 years earlier. They were not happy about the short-lived union with Jordan, "with the emphasis in the title on its Arab nature and the omission from its Constitution of some special mention of the Kurds for which they had pressed."<sup>37</sup>

Under Qasim, the Foreign Ministry seems to have been more sensitive to these Kurdish attitudes as we have previously noted, although the motives of the Government have undoubtedly been the product of many currents besides the wishes of the Kurdish minority. Zeidner has observed: "There can be little doubt, however, of Kurdish antipathy both for Arab nationalism and possible absorption into an expanded United Arab Republic. Kassim cannot fail to realize this, which may account for his actions to silence Arif. The present government almost certainly could not survive the loss of Kurdistan."<sup>38</sup> An interesting field for speculation would be the attitude of the Iraqi Kurds toward the recent measures for the furthering of Iraqi-Syrian ties as embodied in the Qasim-Qudsi Meeting at Rutba. Lack of information, as well as the uncertainty to which this trend was relegated after the Syrian coup d'etat of 28 March 1962, precludes

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36. Edmonds, op. cit., p. 2.

37. Ibid.

38. Zeidner, op. cit., p. 31.

an analysis of this subject at this time. One cogent and pertinent point may be considered in this connection: whereas Egypt and Jordan have virtually no Kurds, Syria has a sizeable Kurdish minority. Whether this factor would attract the Iraqi Kurds toward an Iraqi-Syrian rapprochement or whether it would cause them to reject such a tie as combining the worst features of an expanded United Arab Republic on the one hand and a neo-Baghdad Pact on the other remains open to conjecture.

## 5. CONCLUSION: KURDISH NATIONALISM AND MODERN TRENDS

### a. Growth of Kurdish Nationalism

The Ottoman-sponsored hukumats, the Baban Principality, Shaykh Mahmud's Regime at Sulaymaniya, and the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad are all examples of autonomous or semi-independent Kurdish regimes which received some form of external recognition; despite this list, "the Kurds have never formed a nation, still less a nation-state."<sup>39</sup> The degree to which they may be said to hold a common nationalist ideal is highly problematical. Soane, as has been previously noted, tends to regard the principalities of the early 19th century as an early expression of Kurdish nationalism, whereas Edmonds tentatively sets the literary movements of the late 19th century as the birth of this movement in its modern form. However it must be remembered that these movements only touched a relatively small educated class of Kurds, and the subsequent movements in the 20th century usually lacked a real unity of purpose. In describing these conditions, Edmonds also writes as follows:

By no stretch of the imagination is it possible to describe any of the troubles in Barzan up to 1943 as

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39. Hourani, Minorities in the Arab World, p. 96. Recognition was accorded to these Kurdish regimes as follows: to the hukumats and the Baban Principality (as the eyalet of Shahrizour), by the Porte; to the Regime of Shaykh Mahmud, by the British; to the Republic of Mahabad, by the Soviets.

inspired by Kurdish nationalism; the normal processes of ordered administration were just intolerable impositions to be resisted as long as possible. The Kurds of northern Iraq had remained completely indifferent to the early struggles of Shaykh Mahmud and the activities of the intellectuals of Sulaymaniyah, nor had they even claimed the application to themselves of the rights set out in the Declaration of 1932 to the League of Nations and the Local Languages Law.<sup>40</sup>

More recently, the failure of the tribes uniformly to support the regime of Qadi Muhammad in Mahabad and the continued opposition of certain Kurdish tribes to Mulla Mustafa Barzani are further loopholes in the theory of a united Kurdish national movement. Undoubtedly the concept of Kurdish nationalism exists in many minds and the term may be validly used with limitations; these limitations involve the simple and tribal nature of the existence of a majority of the Kurds, to whom nationalism means little more than separatism or adherence to a leader.

b. Position of the Great Powers

We have reviewed certain instances of Soviet sponsorship of Kurdish nationalist movements. Soviet sponsorship of movements seeking self-determination is a familiar tactic; added to this fact, even before 1918 Kurdish malcontents in Turkey and Persia were accustomed to appeal to Russia for support; thus, Russian exploitation of Kurdish unrest is nothing new. In adopting such a program of exploitation, Russia has the advantage of propinquity to Kurdistan, whose extreme northern portion actually forms a small enclave in the Soviet Union. Soviet support for Mulla Mustafa Barzani has undoubtedly strengthened the Russian position among the Kurds, but it would be inaccurate to opine that Soviet patronage of this individual tribal leader has resulted automatically in unanimous espousal by the Kurds of the Soviet cause.

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40. Edmonds, op. cit., p. 7.

In the event of continued Kurdish-Arab misunderstandings, Soviet attempts to pursue a course favorable to both Qasim and Barzani could lead to difficulties.

With regard to the Western Powers, we have seen the evolution of British policy with respect to the Kurds. The United States at first regarded developments pertaining to the Kurds in Iraq as an internal matter with which it should not be concerned. Subsequent to 1958, however, various circles in the Government became concerned that Kurdish separatist activity might provide an avenue for communist penetration toward the Persian Gulf.<sup>41</sup>

c. Position of the Iraqi Government

Despite the mistakes which have undoubtedly been made, it would seem that Hourani's commentary is valid: "The Iraqi government, both before and after the revolution of 1958, showed itself friendlier to... Kurdish aspirations than did other governments in the Near East."<sup>42</sup> In writing of Iraqi treatment of the Kurds, Freya Stark has stated: "Certainly neither Iranian nor Turk in the past has ever voluntarily given them as much liberty as is now given them by the government of Iraq."<sup>43</sup> Unquestionably the policy of Turkification carried out by the Ankara Government and the rigid suppression of Kurdish movements by the Tehren Government stand in marked contrast to the more tolerant and understanding attitude of the Baghdad regime as embodied in the guarantees which were enumerated in the third chapter, although they have not always been followed and were, in part, the result of British intercession. Despite whatever progress may have been made, however, the evidence of

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41. Haydar, op. cit., p. 50.

42. Hourani, "Race, Religion, and Nation-State in the Near East," A Vision of History, p. 98.

43. Stark, op. cit., p. 184.

history and of subsequent developments indicated that by 1958 the problem of the Kurds in Iraq was yet to be solved.

d. Final Commentary

In the preceding resume of the development of the Kurds in Iraq, the situation has been discussed throughout in terms of movements, groups, regimes, and policies. In a discussion of a people such as the Kurds, it is important to remember that these movements, groups, regimes, and policies are to an extent the result of external stimuli. Kurdish society is still tribal and life remains simple; it may be opined that the various national and international orientations which have become superimposed upon the Kurdish scene are as yet peripheral and not germane to the daily life of the people themselves.

Furthermore, since the fall of the Ottoman Empire and resulting abolition of the Caliphate, the status of the Kurds as components of a nation invites additional consideration, and, perhaps, re-definition. Under the Ottoman Empire, the Kurds, whatever may have been their ethnic distinction from the Turks and Arabs, were their equals in their common membership in the Islamic Umma, or community of believers. Retention of their own language, customs, and even autonomy constituted no barrier to full citizenship in the Ottoman State.

With the abolition of the Caliphate and the emergence of modern national states in the Near East, the frame of reference upon which the position of the Kurds had rested underwent a change. The concept of a community of believers often consisting of heterogeneous elements was shelved and replaced by the concept of a nation consisting of a single people. Consequently, the status of the Kurds was changed from that of participants in a nematic empire to that of minorities in alien lands.

In Turkey and Iran little or no recognition was accorded to the existence of a Kurdish entity, and determined attempts were made toward Turkification or Iranization of the subject minority. In Iraq, despite the more liberal attitude of the government as reflected in its guarantees of minority status and its subsequent constitutional definition of the Kurds as partners with the Arabs in the Iraqi State, the essentially Arabic character of the regime and its orientation has proved dominant. The attitude of its theoreticians, such as Sami Shawkat, is revealing:

The foreigner, according to the definition of the futuwwa of Iraq, is not he who does not possess an Iraqi nationality card; but, in our creed, the foreigner is he who does not feel as we do and does not hold the sacred dignity of Iraqi unity....The foreigner for us is he who intrigues...against Arab unity; and he is not only a foreigner to us in creed, spirit, and belief, but is also our sworn enemy.<sup>44</sup>

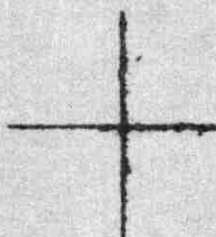
Under the Ottomans, Islam constituted the basis of unity among the subject races of the empire and the basis of their status. Under the modern Iraqi State, a new basis must be found. Until this is accomplished, verbal and written statements which guarantee the Kurdish position as one of a recognized minority or even as one of full partnership will remain largely a dead letter, and the Kurdish problem cannot be solved.

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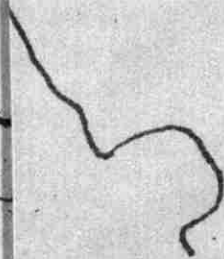
44. Sami Shawkat, Hadhihi Ahdafuna, Man Amana Bihi Fa Huwa Minna, pp. 5-6, quoted in Sylvia G. Haim, "Islam and the Theory of Arab Nationalism," published in Walter Z. Laqueur, The Middle East in Transition, p. 290.

K. A. L. A. J. R.  
(Summer)

L. H. G. C.  
(Winter)



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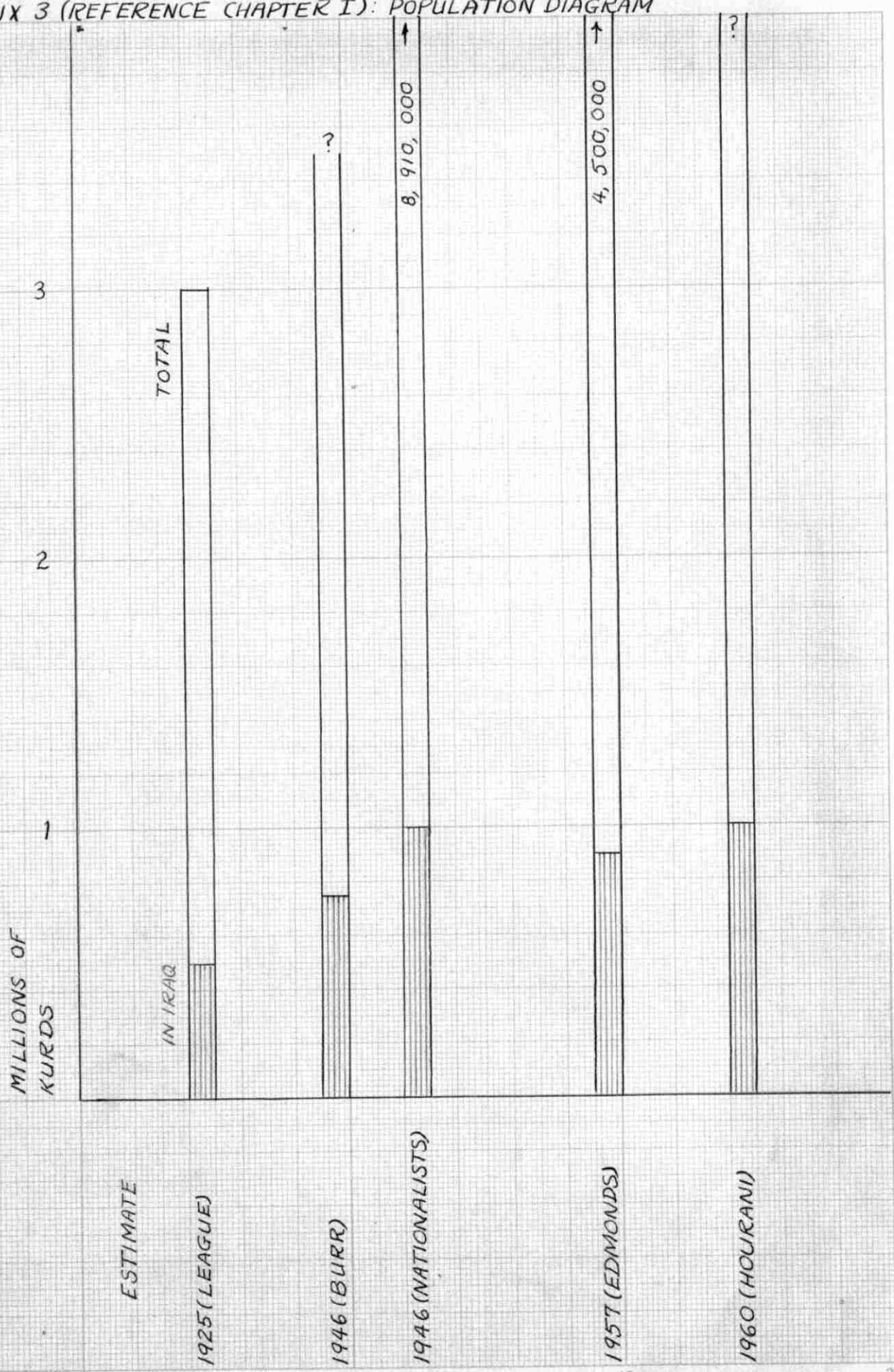
Appendix I  
KURDISH TRIBES IN IRAQ







APPENDIX 3 (REFERENCE CHAPTER I): POPULATION DIAGRAM



APPENDIX 4 (Reference Chapter II)

TIME TABLE OF MAJOR EVENTS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
1508	Persian conquest of Iraq by Safawi ruler Shah Ismail
1515	Ottoman conquest of Iraq by Sultan Salim I, preceded by mission of Mulla Idris to Kurdistan
1621	Persian reconquest of Iraq by Shah Abbas
1639	Ottoman reconquest of Iraq by Sultan Murad IV
1639	Treaty of Zuhab--first document concerning Ottoman-Persian boundary
1663	Baba Sulayman, progenitor of Baban principality
1700 (?)	Jaf immigration from Persian to Iraqi Kurdistan
1704	Appointment to the Pashaliq of Baghdad of Hasan Pasha, who laid foundation for autonomous rule in Iraq
1730	Subjection of Bahdinan principality by Ahmad Pasha of Baghdad, acting (nominally) on behalf of the Porte
1730	Subjection of Suran principality by the Babans
1733	Attempted subjection of Iraq by Persians under Nadir Shah
1747	Accession to the Pashaliq of Baghdad of Abu Laila, the first Mamluk ruler in Iraq
1774	Attempted Persian subjection of Iraqi Kurdistan and Basra
1780-1802	Reign of Sulayman the Great, Pasha of Baghdad and the most powerful of the Mamluk rulers in Iraq
1783	Transfer of the Baban capital from Qara Chulan to Sulaymaniya
1820 (c.)	Beginnings of decline of Baban principality
1826-1836	Apogee of short-lived Kurdish principality of Ruwanduz under Kor Muhammad
1830 (?)	Hamawand immigration from Persian to Iraqi Kurdistan
1831	Suppression of Mamluk Regime in Iraq; replacement of last Mamluk Daoud Pasha by Porte-appointed Ali Rida
1840	Last major Persian inroad on Iraqi Kurdistan
1843	Beginning of Ottoman-Persian negotiation re: boundary
1847	Suppression by Ottomans of Badr Khan principality at Jazirat Ibn Umar
1850	Replacement of last Baban Pasha by a Turkish general at Sulaymaniya
1850-1875	Era of slack water in Kurdish development; consolidation of Ottoman control over Kurdistan; scarcity of information on Kurds during this period
1876-1909	Reign of Ottoman Sultan Abd al-Hamid II
1885	First massacre of Armenians
1889	Organization of Hamidiya Cavalry
1892	Establishment of first Kurdish newspaper "Kurdistan"

- 1909 Deposition of Abd al-Hamid and assumption of authority  
by the Young Turks
- 1909 Suppression of Kurdish club by the Young Turks after  
initial honeymoon
- 1900 (?) Occupation by Dizaih of Plains of Qaraj west of Arbil,  
typical of Kurdish movement into formerly Arab-held  
areas in Iraq
- 1909 Ottoman complicity in murder of Shaykh Sa'id Barzinji;  
succession by Shaykh Mahmud
- 1914 Ottoman complicity in murder of Shaykh Abd al-Salim  
Barzani; succession by S. Ahmad
- 1917 British occupation of Khanaqin
- 1918 British consolidation of control over the wilayat of  
Mosul

APPENDIX 5 (Reference Chapter II)

CROSS SECTION OF RULERS

Date	Ottoman	Persian	Mamluk (Baghdad)	KURDISH Bahdinan	Baban	Rwanduz	Badr Khan
1502	Bayazid II	Ismail		Hasan			
1512	Salim I	Ismail		Hasan			
1520	Sulayman al-Qanuni	Ismail		Hasan			
1623	Murad IV	Abbas	++++	(Bahdinan & Suran principalities flourishing in this period)			
1663	Muhammad IV	Abbas II	++++	Baba Sulayman			
1704	Ahmad III	Husayn	++++	Bakra Sur			
1724	Ahmad III	Ashraf		Khana			
1730	Mahmud I	Tahmasp II	++++	(Bahdinan & Suran principalities suppressed)			
1747	Mahmud I	Adil		Salim			
1757	Mustafa III	Karim Khan		Salim/Sulayman II			
1780	Abd al-Hamid I	Zaki Khan	++++	Ahmad/Mahmud I			
1783	Abd al-Hamid I	Anarchy		Ibrahim			
1789	Salim III	Anarchy	++++	Abd al-Rahman			
1813	Mahmud II	Fath Ali		Mahmud II		Mustafa	
1817	Mahmud II	Fath Ali		Mahmud II		Mustafa	
1826	Mahmud II	Fath Ali		Mahmud II		Kor Muhammad	
1831	Mahmud II	Fath Ali		Mahmud II		Kor Muhammad	
1832	Mahmud II	Fath Ali		Sulayman		Kor Muhammad	
1839	Abd al-Majid	Muhammad		Ahmad			BadrKhanBeg
1843	Abd al-Majid	Muhammad	++++	Ahmad			
1876	Abd al-Hamid II	Nasir al-Din		Shaykh Abd al-Salim Barzani			
1909	(Young Turks)	Muhammad Ali		Shaykh Ahmad Barzani			Shaykh Sa'id Barzinji Shaykh Mahmud Barzinji
1914	(Young Turks)	Muhammad Ali					

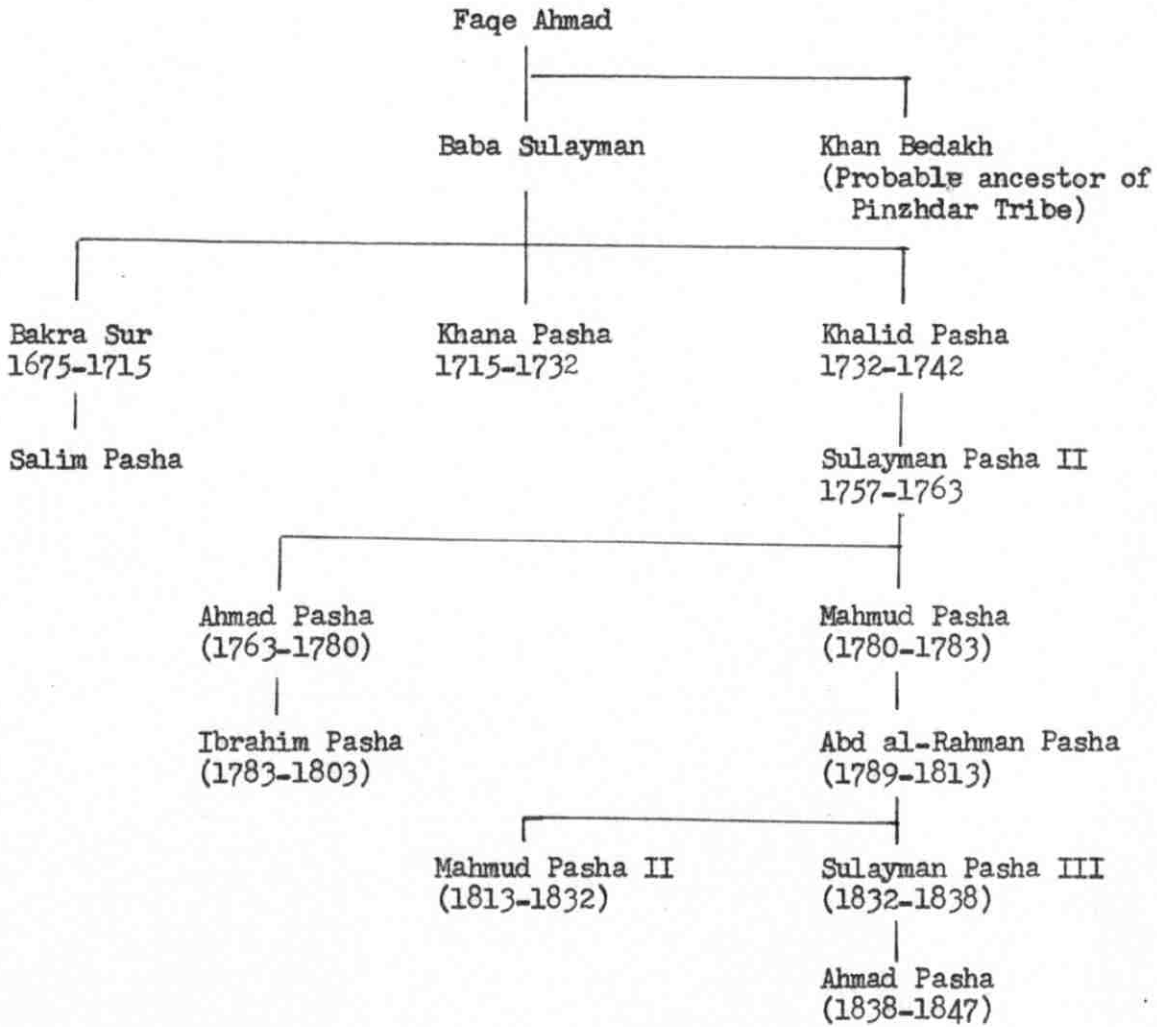
\* Pashas of Baghdad but not Mamluks, rather their predecessors

\*\* Port-appointed Pasha of Baghdad to suppress and replace Mamluk regime

No names of Suran rulers are available

APPENDIX 6 (Reference Chapter II)

THE BABANS



APPENDIX 7 (Reference Chapter III)

LOCAL LANGUAGES LAW, NO. 74 of 1931

We, KING of 'IRAQ,

With the approval of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, do hereby order the enactment of the following Law:--

Article 1:--The provisions of this Law shall apply to the Qadhas mentioned in Articles 2 and 3 below:--

Article 2:--The language of the Courts shall be Kurdish in the undermentioned Qadhas:--

Mosul Liwa

- (a) Amadiya
- (b) Zakho
- (c) Zibar
- (d) Aqra

Arbil Liwa

- (e) Koi Sanjaq
- (f) Rania
- (g) Rowanduz

Kirkuk Liwa

- (h) Gil
- (i) Chemchemal

Sulaimaniya Liwa

- (j) Sulaimaniya
- (k) Halabja
- (l) Shahr bazar

Article 3:--The Language of the Courts may be Arabic or Kurdish or Turkish in the undermentioned Qadhas:--

Mosul Liwa

- (a) Dohuk
- (b) Shaikhan

Arbil Liwa

- (c) Arbil
- (d) Makhmur

Kirkuk Liwa

- (e) Kirkuk
- (f) Kifri

The Court shall decide the language to be used in each case.

Article 4:--An accused person is entitled in all cases and in all the Qadhas mentioned above:

- (a) To be tried and notified in the Arabic language if the said language is a familiar one in his home.

(b) To have all proceedings interpreted verbally into Arabic, Kurdish or Turkish and to ask for a copy of a judgment translated into one of the above-mentioned languages. Any person may submit a petition to any court in the above mentioned Qadhas or to a higher court, in the Arabic or Kurdish or Turkish languages.

Article 5:--Kurdish shall be the official language in the undermentioned Qadhas, with the exception of technical departments, correspondence between Liwa Headquarters and Ministries and between the Mosul Liwa Headquarters and the Qadhas attached to it, which shall be in the Arabic language:--

- Mosul Liwa
  - (a) Amadiya
  - (b) Aqra
  - (c) Dohuk
  - (d) Zakho
  - (e) Zibar
- Arbil Liwa
  - (f) Arbil
  - (g) Makhmur
  - (h) Koi
  - (i) Rania
  - (j) Rowanduz
- Kirkuk Liwa
  - (k) Chemchemal
  - (l) Gil
- Sulaimaniya Liwa
  - (m) Sulaimaniya
  - (n) Halabja
  - (o) Shahr bazar

Kurdish and Turkish shall be used in Kirkuk and Kifri Qadhas.

Article 6:--In all elementary and primary schools in the aforesaid Qadhas, the language of instruction shall be the home language of the majority of the pupils of those schools, no matter whether it be Arabic, Kurdish or Turkish.

Article 7:--Any person may apply to the official authorities in the Arabic language, and he shall receive the reply in the same language. Any correspondence made in a language the use of which is permitted under the provisions of Article 5 of this Law shall be accepted and replied to in the language in which it is written.

Article 8:--In the Qadhas of Sulaimaniya, Kirkuk and Arbil referred to in this Law, the form of the Kurdish language shall be the form in use at present, and in the Qadhas of Mosul Liwa referred to in this Law the people may choose the type of Kurdish language they desire within one year from the coming into force of this Law.



Article 9:--All Ministers are charged with the execution of this Law each in so far as it concerns him.

Made at Baghdad this 23rd day of May, 1931, and the 6th day of Muharram, 1350.

FAISAL.

Nuri As Sa'id,  
Prime Minister

Muzahim al Pachachi,  
Minister of Interior

'Abdulla al Damaluji,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Rustam Haidar,  
Minister of Finance

Jamal Baban,  
Minister of Justice

Jamil ar Rawi  
Minister of Defence

'Abdul Husain,  
Minister of Education

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## ADDITIONAL NOTES

Appendix 1 (Tribal Map) was copied from a map prepared by United States diplomatic personnel accredited to Iran in 1944 and currently on file in the United States Embassy, Baghdad, Iraq.

The author is familiar, from other sources, with the general content of the once-cited reference John Hay, Two Years in Kurdistan, but this work was unavailable for examination.

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