

*Exemplaire n° 8166/10*

# **KURDISTAN ou ARMENIE**

## **TYRANS ou MARTYRS**

**PAR**

**Le COMITÉ de L'INDÉPENDANCE KURDE**



**LE CAIRE  
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## INTRODUCTION

### **Le Congrès de Vienne. - La Sainte Alliance**

La question arménienne, qui préoccupe si fort l'opinion publique européenne est le résultat des intrigues politiques de l'ancienne diplomatie impérialiste et tire ses origines des décisions du Congrès de Vienne de 1815.

L'Europe d'alors, convaincue de ne pouvoir morceler l'Empire Ottoman seulement par les armes, conclut un pacte, sous le nom de Sainte-Alliance afin d'arriver le plus vite possible au démembrement de cet Empire et d'hériter de ses riches et fertiles provinces.

Les deux principaux moyens adoptés par la Sainte-Alliance étaient : 1° l'excitation à la rébellion de la population non-musulmane de l'Empire afin de posséder le prétexte nécessaire pour intervenir dans ses affaires intérieures tout en sauvegardant les apparences et de s'emparer de quelques morceaux du territoire pour l'affaiblir stratégiquement ; 2° pousser l'Empire Ottoman, sous le prétexte de réforme, à copier la défectueuse constitution centraliste occidentale afin d'affaiblir son organisation militaire et civile.

Les résultats préconisés ne se firent pas attendre longtemps et les révolutions des provinces de Morée, de Bosnie, du Danube et de la Moldavie donnèrent naissance aux royaumes de Grèce, de Serbie, de Bulgarie et de Roumanie.

Des populations non musulmanes de l'Empire il ne restait que les Arméniens qui avaient gardé une tranquillité relative durant toute cette période. Mais les Arméniens, ne formant nulle part la majorité, entourés de tous côtés par des masses compactes musulmanes ne possédaient ni les moyens, ni les capacités que les peuples Balkaniques possédaient et les pousser à la révolte était un peu plus difficile, exigeait plus de préparation et ne pouvait aboutir qu'à leur préjudice.

La Russie, quoique consciente de cette situation particulière arménienne, jugea nécessaire de se poser en protectrice de l'Arménien afin d'arriver à ses visées impérialistes et à ses buts politiques et économiques.

Après une entrevue avec le Patriarche Arménien, Narcisse Effendi, à San Stefano, l'Empereur Alexandre III fit inscrire à l'article 16 du traité de San Stefano que « la Turquie s'engageait à introduire, dans les provinces habitées par les Arméniens, les réformes nécessaires pour les protéger contre les Kurdes et les Circassiens » et cette clause fut conservée dans le traité de Berlin — sur la demande formelle de la Russie — comme article 61.

Ceci se faisait à une époque où la race arménienne, loin d'être maltraitée par la Turquie, constituait la race presque la plus favorisée de l'Empire qui y prenait des Vizirs, des ministres et des hauts fonctionnaires.

Depuis treize siècles elle vivait entre le Turc, le Kurde, l'Arabe et le Circassien en vrai compatriote, possédant ses églises, ses écoles, ses constitutions nationales et une liberté absolue dans l'exercice de son culte ; tandis que beaucoup d'Etats Européens la privaient d'un grand nombre de ces droits.

Cette Russie, qui se posait en protectrice, fermait leurs écoles, défendait l'usage de leur langue, confisquait les biens de leurs églises.

Après le traité de Berlin, des comités révolutionnaires arméniens se formèrent comme ceux de Hindjak et de Dachnaksoution et toutes les révoltes et les massacres qui ensanglantèrent cette malheureuse contrée de 1892 jusqu'à 1918 furent les résultats déplorables mais inévitables de l'intrigue impérialiste russe et du nihilisme arménien.

Nous n'avons point l'intention de nier que la mauvaise foi et l'incurie de l'administration turque furent pour beaucoup dans la naissance et l'expansion de ces intrigues politiques et de ces visées impérialistes ; mais il faut avouer aussi que, si les promoteurs des réformes étaient sincères dans leurs paroles et si au lieu de demander ces réformes pour une minorité chrétienne des six vilayets, ils les avaient demandé pour la population entière, qui pâtissait sous une même administration, bien des deuils auraient pu être évités.

Voilà, en un bref résumé, les causes qui donnèrent naissance à la question arménienne, que nous exposeront en détail dans notre brochure.

L'Europe qui, angoissée par cette sanglante guerre et conseillée par le Président des Etats-Unis d'Amérique, se propose la création d'une Ligue des nations afin d'empêcher le retour de telles calamités, semble néanmoins vouloir en préparer de nouvelles par le fait de suivre le chemin tracé par l'Impérialisme russe au Congrès de Berlin.

Nous n'avons aucune objection à faire à la création d'un Etat Arménien Indépendant dans les limites de l'Arménie proprement dite, mais nous attirons l'attention européenne sur les inconvénients qui s'en suivraient si elle insistait à ne pas prendre en considération les droits de la population musulmane des provinces convoitées jusqu'à 1917 par les Russes et aujourd'hui par les Arméniens.

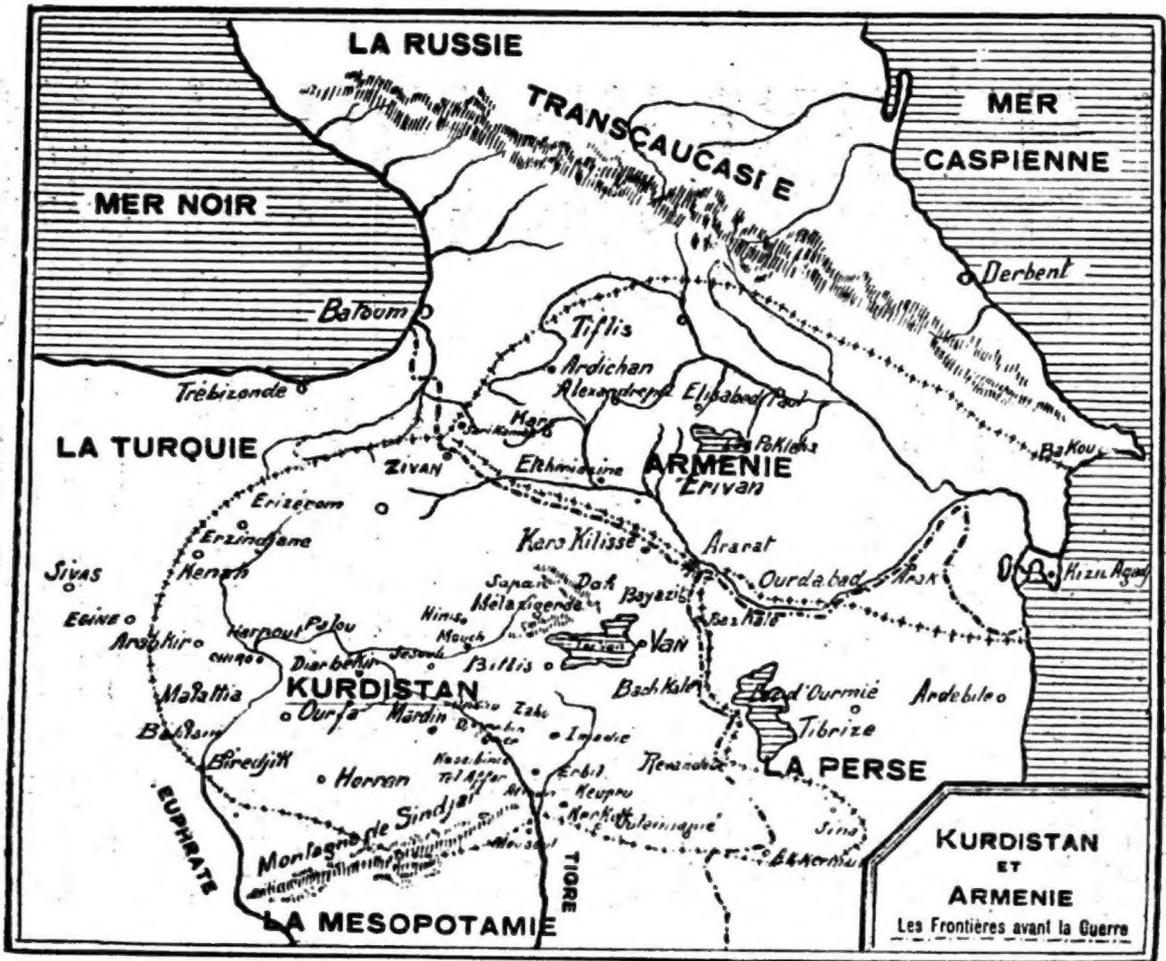
Nous nous proposons donc, dans cette brochure, de faire une étude impartiale et rapide pour démontrer l'innocence des Kurdes de toutes les accusations extravagantes sous lesquelles on veut les accabler et le droit sacré qu'ils ont hérité des siècles indéfinis sur les six provinces turques d'Asie-Mineure.

L'asservissement de millions d'hommes, à une minorité de cinq pour cent au nom de la liberté des nations de disposer de leur sort, constituerait pour l'avenir un tel foyer de luttes et de révoltes sanglantes que la paix universelle serait exposée à un danger permanent et serait toujours à la merci d'un premier événement quelque peu important.

Donc, ce n'est pas seulement aux sentiments d'équité et de justice Européenne que nous faisons appel, mais bien plutôt au sentiment universel de solidarité humaine.

Nous conjurons les Puissances Alliées, qui détiennent les destinées du monde entier, de faire bénéficier cette malheureuse contrée, intitulée injustement *Arménie* et qui n'est autre que le *Kurdistan* de l'ère de paix et de progrès en la rendant à ses propres fils, orphelins depuis plus de trois siècles.

COMITÉ DE L'INDÉPENDANCE KURDE.



# KURDISTAN OU ARMÉNIE

## TYRANS OU MARTYRS



Nous avons lu dans les journaux un compte rendu du dernier congrès Arménien où Boghos Pacha Nubar réclamait les six Vilayets de Sivas, Kharpout, Diarbékir, Van, Erzéroum et Bitlis comme faisant partie de la nouvelle Arménie.

Nous protestons, au nom de la nation Kurde, contre ces prétentions injustifiables, car les provinces sus nommées forment une partie du patrimoine Kurde et jusqu'au jour où différents intérêts politiques ont soulevé, ce qu'on est d'accord à nommer la question arménienne, étaient reconnues officiellement par toute l'Europe sous le nom de Kurdistan.

Dans ces jours où la justice va décider du sort des nations et où, à la conférence de la paix, toutes les questions en suspens vont être réglées selon les lois du droit et de l'équité, nous avons décidé de porter notre cas devant le Tribunal des nations et de lui laisser le soin de déterminer si les droits que nous avançons sur le Kurdistan ne méritent point d'être examinés, avant de décider du sort de ce malheureux pays.

Selon le droit international, un pays appartient à la nation qui peut prouver qu'elle possède la priorité de jouissance ou la prééminence de la nationalité.

Examinons maintenant, qui des arméniens ou des Kurdes, peuvent apporter le plus de preuves à l'appui de leur réclamation.

*La Grande Encyclopédie Française* dit : «Kurdes.— Peuple montagnard de l'Asie antérieure, établi surtout à l'Ouest de l'Iran, dans les montagnes du bassin moyen du Tigre et de l'Euphrate. Le Kurdistan s'étend de la province Perse de Lauristan à Kharpout au confluent des

deux branches de l'Euphrate sur une longueur de 900 kilomètres du Nord-Est au Sud-Ouest et une largeur de 100 à 200 kilomètres. 34° et 39° de latitude et 37° et 46° long. Est. les principales vallées du Kurdistan le Batmantchai de la rivière de Bitlis, les deux Zabes de l'Edhem et du Chirvan, le massif de Zagra et le lac de Van sont comme la citadelle de ces populations historiques et belliqueuses.

Les Kurdes habitent ces contrées de temps immémorial, sous le nom de Gardu ils figurent parmi les adversaires des assyriens, sous celui de Koudrahas dans les documents Perses, sous ceux de Kardugues et Gardéens, les grecs les ont connu et ils furent les plus redoutables ennemis de Xénophon dans la retraite des dix milles,....»

Nous lisons, aussi dans l'*Encyclopedia Britannica* : « Kurdes.— Auparavant il était considéré suffisant de les décrire comme les descendants des Cardugues qui s'étaient opposés à la retraite des dix milles à travers les montagnes.

Mais les recherches modernes ont retracé leur passé jusqu'à une période bien avant l'arrivée des Grecs. Aux premiers jours de l'histoire les montagnes surplombant la Syrie étaient habitées par un peuple nommé les Gutus, titre qui signifie un guerrier, et qui était traduit en assyrien par le synonyme Gardou ou Kardou. Précisément le terme utilisé par Strabon pour expliquer le nom de Cardacs. Ces Gutus étaient une race assez puissante pour mériter d'être placée dans les premières inscriptions cunéiformes au même rang que les Hitites, les Susians Elamites et les Asekdiens de Babylone.

Durant toute la période de l'existence de l'Empire Assyrien, ils semblent avoir conservé tant bien que mal leur indépendance.

Après la chute de Ninive, ils se coalisèrent avec les mèdes et, pareils en cela à toutes les nations habitant les hauts-plateaux de l'Asie-Mineure, de l'Arménie et de la Perse, s'arianisèrent graduellement. Ceci était dû sans doute, à l'émigration à cette période de l'histoire, de nombreuses tribus, qui quoiqu'on ignore d'où elles venaient, appartenaient certainement à la famille Arienne.

Le Cardu fut obligé d'accepter la suzeraineté de Cyrus, quand celui-ci alla à la conquête de Babylone et fournit un contingent d'hommes armés à ses successeurs et ceux-ci sont nommés les Saspiciens ou Alaa-

radiens dans la liste des Armées de Xersès qui fut préservée par Hérodote.

En des temps plus récents ils passèrent successivement sous le joug des macédoniens, des Parthes et des Sassaniens. Si nous pouvons juger par la tradition et par les monuments existant encore dans le pays, ils furent spécialement favorisés par la monarchie Asanienne, qui était probablement de la même race. La tradition dit que Gotanza dont le nom peut-être traduit comme synonyme de chef des Gutus était le fondateur des Gaurans, la tribu principale du Kurdistan du Sud et son nom ainsi que ses titres sont encore préservés dans une inscription grecque découverte à Béhistan, près de la capitale Kurde de Kermenchah.

Sous les Khalifes de Bagdad les Kurdes furent très turbulents et en 888 a.d. et aussi en 905 des insurrections formidables éclatèrent dans le Kurdistan du Nord. L'Emir Adoud-El-Dévlé fut obligé de conduire les forces du Kalife contre les Kurdes du Nord et de saisir la fameuse forteresse de Sermag, dont les ruines existent encore.

La période la plus florissante de la puissance Kurde fût au Cours du XII<sup>me</sup> siècle quand le grand Saladin, qui appartenait à la Branche Ravindi de la tribu de Hadabani fonda la dynastie Eyoubit de la Syrie et les chefs Kurdes s'établirent non seulement à l'Est et au Sud des montagnes du Kurdistan mais, même étendirent leur domination aussi loin que Khorasan d'un côté et l'Egypte et la Syrie de l'autre.

Durant la domination Tartare et Mongole les montagnards Kurdes demeurèrent passifs et subirent malgré eux le joug des gouverneurs des plaines.

Quand Sultan Selim I<sup>er</sup>, après avoir vaincu le Chah Ismail en 1514 annexa l'Arménie et le Kurdistan, il confia l'organisation de ces territoires à Idris l'historien qui était un Kurde de Bitlis.

Idris trouva le pays couvert de châteaux forts appartenant à des chefs héréditaires de tribus Kurdes, arabes et arméniennes. Ceux-ci étaient presque indépendants et passaient leur temps à guerroyer entre eux et à piller les agriculteurs. Il divisa le territoire en sandjaks ou districts et accepta le principe d'hérédité, installa les chefs comme gouverneurs locaux.

*Les terrains entre Erzeroum et Erivan qui avaient été saccagés par Teymour Ling furent peuplés par lui de Kurdes de Hakari et Bohtan.*

Le système d'administration préconisé par Idris dura jusqu'à la fin de la guerre Russo-Turque 1828-1829.»

Nous avons donné cet extrait textuellement car il embrasse un résumé de l'histoire Kurde depuis les temps les plus éloignés et confirme que les arméniens non seulement ne furent jamais maîtres du Kurdistan mais aussi que la race Kurde existait longtemps avant la retraite des dix milles et le royaume arménien n'ayant été fondé qu'après cette retraite le droit de priorité appartient certainement aux Kurdes.

D'ailleurs, nous le répétons, les Arméniens n'ont jamais possédé le Kurdistan et s'ils nous opposent le règne de Tigran, nous répondrons que les conquêtes de Tigran n'ont été que passagères et que les légions Romaines ont eu bientôt fait de refouler les Arméniens jusqu'à leur ancienne frontière et ceci pendant que Tigran était encore en vie.

Voici ce que Momsen dit à ce sujet dans son *Histoire de Rome*, page 53, livre 5 :

«Pompée ravi de ce triomphe facile releva Tigran, lui rendit les insignes de sa dignité et lui dicta la paix. Outre un paiement de 35.500.000 francs et d'un présent aux soldats qui devaient recevoir chacun 52 francs 50, le roi renonça à toutes ses conquêtes, non seulement celles de Phénicie, de Syrie, Cillicie, de Capados; mais à la Saphène et à la Carduène sur la rive droite de l'Euphrate. Il était de nouveau réduit à l'Arménie proprement dite.»

Croyant ces preuves suffisantes nous allons maintenant examiner la question de la prééminence de nationalité et nous donnerons simplement une copie du recensement officiel fait par le gouvernement français et publié dans son Livre jaune en 1892.

Population des Villayets de :	Musulmans	Arméniens
Van . . . . .	430.000	80.000
Erzérourm . . . . .	645.022	134.600
Bitlis. . . . .	388.625	120.000
Diarbékir . . . . .	471.462	95.000
Kharpout . . . . .	575.314	60.000
Sivas. . . . .	1.086.017	170.000
Adana . . . . .	403.439	97.000
<b>TOTAL. . .</b>	<b>4.012.879</b>	<b>756.433</b>

Le recensement fait par le gouvernement français en Asie Mineure en 1899 a donné comme population :

Musulmans . . . .	14.856.143
Chrétiens . . . .	3.054.633
Dont Arméniens . .	1.475.011

Selon un recensement fait par le général Zelenji et cité par l'*Encyclopédia Britannica* la population des neuf Vilayets Turcs d'Erzeroum, Van, Bitlis, Kharpout, Mamouret El Aziz, Diarbékir, Sivas, Adana et Trébizonde sont de 6.000.000 d'habitants dont :

Arméniens . . . .	913.875	ou	15 %
Chrétiens . . . .	632.875	ou	11 %
Musulmans . . . .	4.453.250	ou	74 %

L'auteur de cet article ajoute :

Dans les cinq premiers Villayets qui contiennent le plus d'Arméniens la population est de 2.612.000 dont :

Arméniens . . . .	632.250	ou	24 %
Autres Chrétiens .	179.875	ou	7 %
Musulmans . . . .	1.828.875	ou	69 %

et dans les seules sept cazas où la majorité est arménienne la population est de 282.375 dont :

Arméniens . . . .	184.875	ou	65 %
Autres Chrétiens.	1.000	ou	3 %
Musulmans . . . .	886.500	ou	34 1/2 %

Tâchons maintenant de localiser le Kurdistan et l'Arménie.

L'Encyclopédie de Nuttals dit :

•Kurdistan.—Une étendue de plateaux et montagnes, située dans le territoire Transcaucasien et appartenant maintenant aux Turcs, aux Persans et aux Russes, consistant en plaines vertes et en hautes rangées de montagnes que traversent des rivières comme le Zab, le Batman sou et l'Euphrate.

Diarbékir est la plus grande ville du Kurdistan à 194 milles d'Alep. *Van* est aussi une ville du Kurdistan située sur le lac *Van* à 145 milles d'Erzérroum.

Le tigre est un fleuve important de la Turquie d'Asie qui sort

des montagnes de Kurdistan, coule au Sud-Est jusqu'à Diarbékir et de là à l'Est jusqu'à ce qu'il reçoive le Bitlis.

Nous n'avons pas besoin de plaider pour Hakari, l'ancien Carrhes ou pays des Carducs pas plus que pour Kharpout ou Cardand et les collines de Sindjar, habitées par les Yézidis Kurdes et qui sont les limites naturelles des frontières Kurdes au Sud.

Moins avides que les arméniens, nous ne réclamons ni Kermenchah, l'ancienne capitale Kurde, ni Béhistan, ni même Ardelan; nous ne demandons que ces provinces de la Turquie où la prééminence numérique des Kurdes démontre être le pays national des Kurdes.

Nous ne nions point non plus, à l'instar des Arméniens, l'existence d'une arménie et nous allons essayer de définir la position de celle-ci.

En examinant la carte de Strabon, tracée 60 ans avant l'Ere Chrétienne voici ce que nous trouvons :

«L'arménie est située entre la mer Caspienne et les monts du Kurdistan, ses frontières sont au Nord l'Albanis ou l'Allani à l'Est Amiz.»

Nuttals nous dit :

«Arménie.—Un pays dans l'Asie Occidentale, à l'Ouest de la mer Caspienne et au Nord des montagnes du Kurdistan.

Un temps indépendante, maintenant divisée entre la Turquie, la Russie et la Perse. Occupant un plateau coupé de vallées fertiles qui culmine dans le mont Ararat où l'Euphrate et le Tigre prennent leur source.»

Nous lisons dans l'*Histoire Romaine* de Momsen :

«Pompée instruit des préparatifs que le roi des Ibers faisait en secret pour attaquer les Romains dans le défilé du Caucase retourna au commencement de l'année 689 (165 A.D.), avant de reprendre la poursuite de Mitridate, vers les forteresses à peine séparées d'un demi mille Allemand d'Harmazika et Tsumar, qui un peu au-dessus de la Tiflis actuelle séparait les vallées du Cur et de son confluent l'Aranga et commandait les passages entre l'Arménie et les Ibers.»

Plus haut ce même auteur ayant écrit que Tigran avait été réduit à l'Arménie proprement dite, nous croyons avoir raison d'affirmer que l'Arménie était située dans la région qui est nommée aujourd'hui Elisa-

bethpol et où les villes d'Arasc, d'Erivan et d'Echtmiyazine (jusqu'à ce jour cité du Catolicos Arménien) se trouvent encore.

Ayant assez dit, nous l'espérons du moins, pour justifier nos droits; nous allons examiner les raisons sur lesquelles se fondent les réclamations Arméniennes.

Premièrement ils prétendent que Tigran a fondé Diarbékir et que le nom étant Tigranecta, a subi cette transformation par la différence de prononciation.

Ceci est contraire à la vérité car Diarbékir qui signifie textuellement le pays de Békir fut fondé par Békir Ibn Vail de la tribu de Rabi El Moudar.

Ils disent à un moment donné avoir fondé les royaumes de Sivas, Cilicie et de Van. Nous n'avons pas l'intention de nier que Kagig, le gouverneur Arménien de Van, fut couronné Roi par un caprice du Kalif Motakid, mais sa royauté fut si éphémère que nous le voyons, après l'invasion de Bazil II, Empereur de Byzance, échanger le royaume de Van pour celui de Sivas où il émigra avec les Arméniens. Toujours poursuivi par les Byzantins, il se vit obligé de quitter aussi Sivas et se retirer à Capadoce. Tout en acceptant ces faits nous ne reconnaissons point qu'ils suffissent pour leur créer un droit. Tous ces pays n'étaient point Arméniens; ils ne firent jamais partie de l'Arménie proprement dite; les Arméniens n'y étaient que des émigrés et si, profitant des troubles du temps, ils purent s'en rendre les maîtres pour de courtes périodes, ils s'y savaient eux-mêmes si peu propriétaires qu'ils les échangeaient avec d'autres lieux d'émigration dès qu'ils se voyaient en danger d'expropriation.

L'Europe, sans commettre une grande injustice ne peut donner aux Arméniens un pays où ils ne firent que passer, dont les habitants sont d'une origine différente et qui, en retombant dans les mains des Kurdes, n'a fait que retourner à ses propriétaires antérieurs. Nous croyons aussi que ceci serait d'une mauvaise politique, car aucune nation ne peut être vivace dans un terrain hostile et pour qu'elle donne des fruits il faut qu'elle soit enracinée dans le sol natal.

L'Empire Turc est une preuve vivante de ce que nous venons d'avancer; composé de races hostiles, placé dans un terrain dont il

n'est point originaire, il n'a jamais pu s'y établir solidement et a toujours été à la merci du premier choc.

Les Arméniens, une nation faible, pauvre et qui n'est pas même unie, ne pourrait guère espérer réussir là où les Turcs ont failli.

En parlant ainsi nous sommes inspirés par un sentiment amical pour les Arméniens. Nous, leurs anciens protecteurs, nous voudrions, si c'était possible leur tendre la main. Nos frontières étant voisines, nos intérêts identiques, nous préfererions être en bons termes ensemble.

Ceci cependant, ne peut avoir lieu que si ces derniers se contentent de réclamer ce qui leur appartient et ne pas vouloir piétiner les droits de leurs voisins. Nous avertissons l'Europe franchement que les Kurdes ne permettrons jamais qu'un pouce des terrains de leur patrimoine passe à une nation intruse. Les Kurdes qui ont défendu leur liberté séculaire contre toutes les races asiatiques ne se laisseront pas spolier sans résistance par les Arméniens.

D'ailleurs le malheur des Arméniens provient du fait qu'ils ont toujours écouté les mauvais conseils de ceux, qui, pour leur intérêt politique, leur inspiraient des idées mégalomanes et la Russie la première à été la cause de leur infortune en leur faisant accroire qu'ils souffraient à un moment où ils étaient les plus favorisés des races soumises à la Turquie.

Tandis que le Kurde et l'Arabe étaient obligés de divorcer d'avec leur femme ou de marier leurs filles devant un mufti turc dont ils ne comprenaient pas la langue, l'Arménien le faisait en Arménien devant un prêtre de sa propre race. Tandis que le Kurde et l'Arabe envoyaient leurs fils à une école turque où on leur enseignait la langue turque, l'Arménien, lui, avait ses propres écoles où on lui apprenait à haïr l'opresseur étranger ; là où aux yeux du gouvernement Turc les Arabes et les Kurdes étaient considérés comme des membres inférieurs de la nation Turque, l'Arménien gardait sa nationalité intacte et avait même son assemblée nationale.

L'*Encyclopédia Britanica*, donne à ce sujet la description suivante sur l'état des Arméniens sous le joug Turc.

«Après la prise de Constantinople en 1453, Mohamed II organisa ses sujets Chrétiens en communauté ou *Millet* sous un chef ecclésiastique

auquel il octroya l'autorité absolue dans les affaires civiles et religieuses. Sous ce système l'Evêque Arménien de Brousse qui fut nommé patriarche de Constantinople par le Sultan devint le Chef civil et religieux de sa communauté et fut reconnu comme un membre officiel du Gouvernement Impérial avec le rang de Vézir. Il avait pour l'assister un conseil composé d'Evêques et d'autre clergé et était représenté dans chaque province par un Evêque. Cet impérium in impéria assura aux Arméniens une position bien définie aux yeux de la loi..... après le Hati Humayoune de Kulhané de 1839 les négociants et les artisans de la capitale se délivrèrent du contrôle clérical par une organisation approuvée pas le Sultan en 1862. Le Patriarche tout en restant le représentant officiel de la communauté perdit toute sa puissance qui passa entre les mains d'un conseil mixte composé de clergé et de laïques élu par une assemblée représentative de 140 membres. La communauté, dont les Catholiques et les Protestants étaient exclus fut bientôt surnommée la nation, les affaires domestiques devinrent les affaires nationales et l'assemblée représentative porta le nom d'assemblée nationale..... Quand Abdul Hamid monta au trône la condition des Arméniens était meilleure qu'elle n'avait jamais été sous les Osmanlis, mais avec la fin de la guerre de 1877-1878, la question Arménienne naquit. Dans le traité de San Stéfano la Turquie s'engageait à organiser des Réformes dans les provinces habitées par les Arméniens.»

Nous demandons la permission de donner ici une description de l'état du Kurde au moment où la Russie réclamait qu'on réforme les lois qui gouvernaient les Arméniens.

Traité par le gouvernement comme faisant partie de l'élément de l'Empire auquel l'Europe ne s'intéressait aucunement l'agriculteur Kurde dépendait uniquement du bon plaisir des fonctionnaires turcs, qui eux-mêmes obéissaient à un gouverneur général turc presque indépendant. La perception des dîmes étant mise aux enchères, il s'en suivit que les indigènes étant ou trop pauvres ou, dans le cas des Chefs de Tribus, trop fiers pour s'en emparer; la charge était achetée d'ordinaire par les Chrétiens arméniens ou Nestoriens et ceux-ci pour pouvoir ménager leurs corréligionnaires accablaient les paysans Kurdes. L'Arménien était exempt du service militaire en payant une somme infime mais l'élément

musulman de l'empire Ottoman ne pouvait l'obtenir qu'au prix de Lt.50 et encore seulement pendant la paix intérieure et extérieure ; car à la déclaration de guerre ou au premier trouble, l'homme qui peut-être avait racheté son service militaire trois jours avant était obligé de rejoindre son régiment sur le champ.

L'*Encyclopédie Française* en décrivant les mœurs Kurdes dit : «Les femmes y sont accablées de travail». Ceci est vrai non seulement de la paysanne Kurde mais aussi de la paysanne Turque. Tous les Européens qui ont voyagé en Asie Mineure ayant vu les femmes musulmanes labourant, bêchant, portant des poids énormes sur leurs épaules ont ressenti un sentiment de révolte contre des mœurs qui permettaient que les femmes fussent traitées en bêtes de somme ; et ont comparé plaisamment l'état de la femme chrétienne, arménienne ou grecque, à celui de la musulmane. Ceci cependant n'était pas, comme ils ont pu le penser, l'effet de la religion musulmane mais bien celui de la conscription qui, en Asie mineure, en enlevant l'homme, quelque fois pour quatorze ans (1), à ses travaux, obligeait la femme à le remplacer.

Nous ne donnons ici qu'un léger aperçu des oppressions dont souffraient les Kurdes et dont les Arméniens étaient exempts ; mais même ce peu suffira, nous le croyons du moins, les Arméniens bénéficiant d'un système national particulier, témoin la façon dont les musulmans étaient traités, n'avaient pas le droit de se plaindre de leur sort. Aussi ne le firent-ils qu'à l'instigation de la Russie, qui désirant s'emparer du Kurdistan crut le moment propice pour y faire naître la discorde.

N'espérant pas pouvoir agir sur le Kurde qu'elle savait ne supporter le joug Turc que par la crainte que lui inspirait le Russe, elle se posa en protectrice de l'Arménien et montra tant de zèle pour ses intérêts qu'elle finit par lui faire accroire qu'elle désirait sincèrement lui procurer une autonomie.

La Russie savait cependant fort bien que ceci était impossible, ses consuls avaient dû la prévenir que les Arméniens disséminés dans tout

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(1) Le Soldat envoyé dans les provinces éloignées, y était souvent oublié et terminait les deux périodes de Nizam et de Rédif sous les armes,

l'empire, n'avaient la majorité nulle part; que même divisés en nation orthodoxe les parias protestants et catholiques ne pouvaient s'accorder, que cette race vivant jusqu'à ce jour en bonne intelligence avec les musulmans et favorisée par le gouvernement souffrirait cruellement si elle se révoltait. N'importe, la Russie avait besoin d'un prétexte pour intervenir en Asie Mineure, l'Arménien n'était pour elle qu'un instrument dont le sort ne l'intéressait nullement une fois qu'il aurait servi au but qu'elle se proposait.

*L'Encyclopédia Britannica* dit : «qu'après la guerre de 1877-1878 les Consuls Russes en Turquie, encouragèrent la formation de Comités patriotiques Arméniens et qu'un projet fut formé pour créer un état séparé de l'Arménie Russe, Persane et Turque, qui serait sous la suprématie de la Russie et que ce projet était favorisé par Loris Mélikof, mais, en 1881, Alexandre II fut assassiné.»

Ceci fut, seïon l'auteur cité, la raison d'un changement de politique Russe, cependant selon nous il faudrait plutôt chercher cette raison dans l'attitude de l'Angleterre, qui montra qu'elle s'opposerait fermement à la formation de cet état.

La Russie en attisant le feu de la révolte Arménienne en Turquie, en avait laissé tomber, sans le vouloir, une étincelle chez elle et les Arméniens Russes virent avec regret leur rêve s'évanouir. Leurs lamentations bruyantes effrayèrent le gouvernement Russe qui, changeant de tactique, adopta une politique Anti-Arménienne. Les écoles furent fermées, l'usage de la langue Arménienne fut découragé, les biens des églises furent confisqués et elle essaya d'amener les Arméniens dans le giron de l'Eglise Russe. «Tout espoir d'autonomie sous la protection Russe ayant cessé, les Arméniens de Tiflis se tournèrent vers les Arméniens de Turquie. Ils avaient vu le succès qu'avaient obtenu les comités slaves en créant des troubles dans les Balkans et essayèrent de produire des troubles similaires en Asie Mineure (1).»

La Russie dit l'auteur, ne fit aucun effort sincère pour entraver l'action de ses sujets Arméniens, selon nous ce fut elle qui les y poussa. Il ajoute d'ailleurs qu'après 1884 la Russie empêcha fermement l'inter-

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(1) *Encyclopédia Britannica*.

vention de l'Angleterre en faveur des Arméniens Turcs. Nous avons déjà démontré qu'à moins d'accepter le projet Russe et de les former en un état séparé, il n'y avait guère de réformes arméniennes à préconiser et la Russie ne désirait point que ceci fut su par l'Angleterre.

Quand Echmiazin passa à la Russie, en 1828, le Catolicos réclama la juridiction spirituelle sur toute l'Eglise Arménienne; plus tard la Russie s'assura la soumission des Catholiques indépendants de Siss et obtint ainsi le pouvoir d'intervenir dans les affaires arméniennes du monde entier. En 1900 la Russie témoigna un nouvel intérêt en Arménie, obtint le droit d'y construire des chemins de fer et pressa la Porte d'y introduire les réformes demandées.

Le traité de Berlin désappointa les Arméniens Grégoriens qui avaient espéré que l'Arménie et la Cilicie seraient formées en une seule province autonome administrée par les chrétiens. Mais la formation de cette province était impossible, les grégoriens étaient disséminés dans tout l'Empire et excepté dans quelques petits districts ne formaient nulle part la majorité de la population. Ils n'étaient pas même liés entre eux par une communauté d'idées ou de sentiments. Les arméniens du Sud parlant préférablement le turc s'entendaient difficilement avec les Arméniens du Nord qui ne connaissaient que leur langue nationale et le montagnard ignorant de l'Est n'avait rien de commun avec le bourgeois de Constantinople et de Smyrne. Après le changement de tactique de la Russie et après que les puissances n'eurent point obtenu de réformes une partie des Arméniens dont plusieurs avaient été élevés en Europe et qui étaient imbus des doctrines nihilistes décidèrent de créer des troubles en Turquie, pareils à ceux qui avaient donné naissance à la Bulgarie. Des sociétés furent formées à Tiflis et en Europe et d'autres sociétés secrètes des Hindjakians, etc., furent instituées pour prendre des mesures plus révolutionnaires. «Une propagande active commença donc en Turquie, conduite par des émissaires qui essayaient en même temps d'introduire des armes et des explosifs dans le pays et qui représentaient les accidents ordinaires de la mauvaise administration du gouvernement Turc comme des atrocités (1).»

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(1) *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

Nous avons traduit fidèlement cet article. Jusqu'ici, en effet il ne nous était pas possible de mieux prouver ce que nous avançons, que par ces lignes où on peut suivre pas à pas les intrigues russes et la façon dont ceux-ci agissent sur l'esprit Arménien. Nous allons maintenant citer un autre témoignage.

Monsieur Edgar Granville, dans un article intitulé le *Tsarisme en Asie Mineure* et publié dans la *Revue politique internationale* en 1917 dans son numéro 26, dit :

« On a rarement voulu comprendre que le poison de l'Orient qui paralysa tous les efforts vers la renaissance Islamique et vers l'amélioration des rapports Turco-Chrétiens fut identique au poison que le Tsarisme inocula à la Russie, en la séparant moralement de l'Europe Occidentale. . . . . Sur le conseil du Comte Warantzoff Dachkoff, lieutenant général du Tsar au Caucase, ami intime de Nicolas II, le Gouvernement Russe fit machine arrière, rendit aux églises Arméniennes leurs biens confisqués, rouvrit les écoles et mit fin aux procès politiques et aux vexations multiples afin d'amadouer les Arméniens et de les gagner à la politique Tsarienne en Asie Mineure. Il s'agissait de mettre fin aux agitations séparatistes parmi les Arméniens du Caucase en faisant miroiter devant leurs yeux l'ancien programme d'un royaume de l'Ararat élargi en royaume Arménien par l'annexion d'une grande partie de l'Asie Mineure sous le sceptre du Tsar dont on invoqua le droit au titre de Tsar du pays Arménien, titre qui figure parmi les innombrables dénominations des Empereurs de toutes les Russies; Warantzoff Dachkoff secondé par des Conseillers Arméniens, s'y prit avec beaucoup d'habileté et réussit en peu d'années à créer de toutes pièces une action souterraine en Asie-Mineure. Autrefois on excitait les musulmans du Caucase contre les Arméniens, maintenant, ceux-ci devaient servir d'instrument de lutte contre la Turquie, le malheur des Arméniens vient de ce qu'ils s'y laissèrent entraîner. . . . . A partir du jour où l'entente Anglo-Russe de 1907 laissa le champ libre aux visées Russes, les agents Russes intensifièrent en Asie leur activité à double face. Il fallait d'une part créer le prétexte d'une prochaine intervention du Tsar, d'autre part faire croire à l'opinion internationale qui s'intéressait au sort des Arméniens, que ceux-ci désiraient sa protection.

Pour avoir un prétexte, il suffisait d'attiser l'antagonisme Kurdo-Arménienne.

Les consulats Russes, dans les six villayets dits arméniens furent pourvus d'armes et munitions, qu'on distribua parmi les révolutionnaires, sans oublier les Kurdes.

Nous citons les lignes suivantes d'une brochure publiée en 1915 sous le titre *la Géorgie et la guerre actuelle* et qui démontre clairement l'entente qui existait entre la Russie et les comités Arméniens :

«Quant au quatrième élément principal du Caucase, les Arméniens, il est un peu difficile d'en parler, en toute franchise, car la vérité que l'on se permet de dire sur eux ouvertement est toujours accueillie par leur presse et par l'opinion publique comme une manifestation d'arménophobie. Il est vrai qu'ils ont souffert énormément à travers toute leur histoire, sous la domination des étrangers, depuis qu'ils ont perdu leur indépendance politique. Il est vrai que le régime d'Abdul Hamid a été un fléau de Dieu pour ce peuple malheureux. Il est vrai qu'ils sont obligés quelquefois de jouer la double politique russophile et turcophile, étant partout parsemés, en Russie et en Turquie. Il est vrai, enfin, que le peuple Arménien, est un peuple travailleur, commerçant, intelligent sous beaucoup de rapports, de là nos sympathies et notre respect pour lui ;— mais cela n'est qu'un côté de la vérité, qui n'est pas du tout suffisant, lorsqu'il s'agit de considérer le rôle qu'un peuple joue dans la vie d'un grand pays, comme le Caucase, dans la décision de son sort, de son avenir. Dans ce cas il faut dire toute la vérité, et voilà son mauvais côté. Les Arméniens du Caucase, dont le nombre s'élève à peu près à un million d'individus, ne forment pas une population compacte sur un territoire bien défini. Ils sont éparpillés dans tout le Caucase.

Dans une province géorgienne de Djavakheti, la majorité de la population agricole est arménienne, grâce au gouvernement russe, qui a fondé ces colonies arméniennes en Géorgie au commencement du XIX<sup>me</sup> siècle pour les services que les Arméniens lui ont rendu pendant ses guerres contre la Turquie. Le reste des Arméniens est mélangé avec la population tatare, ne formant nulle part une majorité écrasante, même dans les provinces de leur ancienne patrie, comme, par exemple, dans le gouvernement d'Erivan, ou ils dépassent de très peu la popu-

lation musulmane. Partout ailleurs, dans le Caucase, les Arméniens forment une minorité en comparaison avec leurs voisins. Il est vrai que dans certaines villes, et même à Tiflis, les Arméniens sont très nombreux, mais leur rôle ressemble à celui des Juifs de la Pologne, de Varsovie, par exemple. Leur situation au Caucase, dont ils n'aiment pas en général à parler, ne leur permet pas d'aspirer à la formation d'un corps politique indépendant, même à l'autonomie territoriale, et c'est ce qui les rend envieux des autres peuples du Caucase, surtout des Géorgiens, qui sont en état de constituer un état indépendant. Les Arméniens sont, en outre, les détenteurs du capital marchand et usurier par lequel ils exploitent la population caucasienne d'une manière impitoyable partout où ils sont, dans les villages aussi bien que dans les villes. Les grands capitaux industriels du Caucase n'appartiennent pas exclusivement aux Arméniens. La grande majorité de ces capitaux constitue la propriété des Européens. L'Arménien des villes du Caucase c'est le type de marchand ou d'usurier, cela veut dire un fléau de Dieu surtout pour l'agriculteur qui est exploité et ruiné par lui systématiquement. Voilà la cause principale de la haine dont les Arméniens sont les objets au Caucase. Les sympathies que les Arméniens avaient toujours pour le gouvernement Russe les ont discrédités encore plus. Ne pouvant pas aspirer à l'autonomie territoriale à cause du manque d'un territoire peuplé par une population nationale compacte, les Arméniens se contentent d'un côté des petites concessions que les Russes leur accordent (ainsi par exemple, lorsque les Russes ont pris de force les biens de l'Eglise arménienne, en 1904, le gouvernement les leur a restitués après une protestation du peuple et du clergé arméniens), et de l'autre côté ils sont toujours contre les aspirations autonomes des autres peuples, surtout des Géorgiens, préférant le régime Russe, qui leur permet l'exploitation effrénée de la population au sein de laquelle ils se sont introduits comme usuriers et marchands, au régime libre d'un Caucase indépendant qui mettra fin à leur œuvre néfaste qui désagrège complètement chaque société où ils pénètrent. Leur cri dans l'Europe tout entière qu'ils sont des éléments civilisateurs du Caucase n'est qu'une invention, connue, d'ailleurs, par les Européens qui ont étudié si peu que ce soit le Caucase. Le marchand et l'usurier ne peuvent jamais

jouer un rôle civilisateur parmi un peuple dont la culture est infiniment supérieure à celle des Arméniens.

Les peuples du Caucase ont aussi leurs marchands et leurs usuriers, mais les premiers sont plus Européens, et le nombre des derniers est très faible. Quant aux travailleurs arméniens ceux des villes et de la campagne, leur état économique et leur culture sont infiniment inférieurs à celui, par exemple, des Géorgiens. Et quant à la culture nationale générale, peut-on jamais comparer, par exemple, la nouvelle littérature arménienne créée au XIX<sup>m</sup>e siècle dans un dialecte du Caucase à la nouvelle littérature géorgienne qui est le produit du développement organique de l'ancienne littérature? On ne peut pas parler du rôle civilisateur des Arméniens au Caucase comme on ne peut pas parler du rôle civilisateur des Juifs en Pologne. En outre, c'est une force que les Russes emploient pour paralyser le mouvement national du Caucase. L'alliance des Arméniens avec le gouvernement russe date de longtemps. Les Russes les ont toujours employés contre les Turcs, maintenant ils les emploient aussi contre les Géorgiens et contre les caucasiens. Pendant la révolution, en 1904-1905, les Arméniens n'ont pas participé au mouvement, quoiqu'ils annonçassent au monde entier qu'ils étaient les meneurs de la révolution tout entière. En même temps, ils voulaient être solidaires avec les Géorgiens, et leur solidarité se borna à la marche pompeuse de leurs bandes armées dans les rues de Tiflis et de Bakou. Les Russes ont provoqué un massacre arméno-tatare à Bakou, à Elisabethpol, à Tiflis même, et, *il est vrai les Arméniens se sont distingués dans cette lutte fratricide. Ils ont l'habitude d'appeler révolution semblables massacres*, mais ces choses-là n'ont rien à faire avec une révolution, et, à Tiflis, c'est grâce à l'intervention des révolutionnaires géorgiens que le massacre a dû cesser. Et après, lorsque tous les partis révolutionnaires géorgiens avaient à décider si l'on devait continuer l'action révolutionnaire contre le gouvernement, le parti arménien a trahi les partis réunis en déclarant que, en Russie, il n'y avait pas de champ d'action pour lui. Et c'était un parti qui se disait partout socialiste—en Géorgie, en Russie, en Europe même—qui marchandait sur les principes avec les partis socialistes russe et autres pendant l'élaboration du programme commun. Heureusement tous ces partis ont compris finalement que

tout le socialisme arménien n'était qu'un jeu, pas très sympathique, et personne ne reconnaît plus actuellement ce parti arménien (Dachnakzoutune) comme socialiste. Ils ont cessé eux-mêmes de l'intituler ainsi. Bref, par leur état économique spécial au Caucase, par leur égoïsme national qui ne leur permet jamais de reconnaître les droits politiques des autres, par leur alliance avec l'Impérialisme Russe au Caucase, les Arméniens sont devenus antipathiques aux Caucasiens. Dans cette guerre ils les ont trahi encore une fois, mais après la libération du Caucase, ils resteront toujours là, malgré leur trahison, pour jouer leur rôle dans l'organisation politique du pays. »

La Russie était en effet si sûre d'obtenir le prétexte désiré, qu'elle osa attirer l'attention de l'Europe sur les troubles qui, disait-elle, étaient sur le point d'éclater en Kurdistan. Le Gouvernement Russe présenta le 25 Juin 1913 un aide mémoire aux gouvernements d'Allemagne, d'Autriche-Hongrie et d'Italie dans lequel il disait : « Les dernières nouvelles ne font que confirmer l'impression qu'on peut s'attendre prochainement à des excès regrettables de la part des Kurdes. »

Il n'a point en effet, dépendu de la Russie, que les excès regrettables qu'elle annonçait ainsi n'eurent lieu.

En 1895 le gouvernement du Sultan Abdul Hamid, qui jusqu'à ce jour avait empêché les Arméniens de quitter le pays leur accorda la permission d'émigrer. Heureux de pouvoir enfin rejoindre leurs compatriotes en Russie, de pouvoir ainsi échapper au joug Ottoman *et goûter enfin de la clémence Russe*, ils partirent en masse et s'établirent à Bakou, Tiflis et d'autres villes qu'ils considéraient faire partie de l'Ancienne Arménie, mais la Russie ne vit point d'un bon œil cette invasion d'un peuple à qui elle avait inoculé l'esprit de la révolte ; aussi pour y mettre un terme, non seulement elle les traita avec une sévérité rigoureuse, mais sûre de son impunité en face de l'Europe, elle les fit massacrer en masse par les indigènes. Martyrisés en Russie, craignant de retourner en Turquie dont le Gouvernement d'ailleurs les en décourageait, les émigrés arméniens se disséminèrent en Europe et dès que la constitution Turque fut déclarée retournèrent avec précipitation à leur ancien foyer. Cependant les agriculteurs Arméniens avaient vendu une partie de leur terrain aux Kurdes et le reste ayant été abandonné pen-

dant une période au dessus de trois ans était devenu de par la loi turque le bien de l'état qui l'avait revendu aux Kurdes.

La Russie vit là une nouvelle occasion pour alimenter la discorde entre Kurdes et Arméniens et se posant audacieusement, de nouveau, comme protectrice des intérêts arméniens elle ne rougit pas de réclamer ce qu'elle appelait les terres usurpées.

Le 26 Novembre 1912, Monsieur de Giers, l'Ambassadeur Russe à Constantinople, dans une dépêche à Monsieur Sazonoff dit (1) que la question agraire devient de plus en plus aiguë; la plus grande partie des terrains ont été usurpées par les Kurdes et conclut en disant: «Vu l'état d'Anarchie où se trouve la Turquie il faut compter avec l'éventualité que les réformes n'apporteront pas l'apaisement attendu et se préparer à la nécessité de l'entrée de nos troupes dans ces régions.»

Monsieur de Giers savait pertinemment que ces terrains avaient été achetés par des Kurdes, puisque au mois d'Avril 1913 le Consul Russe de Bitlis faisait accroire au Cheikh Mohamed Amine, que ces terres achetées par les Kurdes depuis 1885, allaient être arrachées d'entre leurs mains par la Sublime-Porte pour être remises aux arméniens, qui, disait-il, en se plaignant à l'Angleterre avaient obtenu que celle-ci intervienne en leur faveur.

Que ceci ne produisit pas de troubles fut dû surtout à la Porte, qui, avertie des démarches Russes, prit la précaution de concentrer un fort contingent de gendarmerie à Bitlis et arrêta tous ceux qui étaient impliqués dans l'affaire excepté le Cheikh Mohamed Emine qui se réfugia au Consulat de Russie (2).

En attendant, le Consul Russe était si sûr du succès de ses manœuvres que, dans une dépêche à Monsieur de Giers datée du premier Avril, il annonçait déjà que les Kurdes massacraient les Arméniens, tandis que le pays gardait sa tranquillité. Au mois de Juin de la même année, la Russie essaya d'obliger la Porte à accepter les réformes qu'elle préconisait et qui n'étaient autre chose que de séparer les six villayets de Kurdistan et d'en faire une seule province autonome sous un gouverneur général européen. Une des clauses de la réforme proposée

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(1) *Livre Orange Russe.*

(2) Il y eut même une interpellation au parlement Anglais à ce sujet.

étant qu'on rendrait aux Arméniens les terrains soi-disant usurpés par les Kurdes, elle était assurée que le nouveau projet susciterait les troubles désirés et lui donnerait ainsi le prétexte voulu pour annexer simplement le Kurdistan.

La Porte cependant refusa d'accepter ces réformes et la Russie voyant que les Puissances ne semblaient pas disposées à l'y forcer, essaya de nouveau de susciter les désordres qu'elle avait annoncé à grands renforts de trompette. En Juillet 1913 l'agent provocateur russe, un Kurde, refit son apparition à Van, mais les Kurdes avertis enfin de ce qui se tramait contre eux le reçurent si mal, qu'il fut obligé de repartir sans avoir pu pénétrer plus avant dans le pays.

Devant cet échec la Russie trouva bon de s'accorder avec les puissances centrales sur un projet que celles-ci pourraient accepter, d'ailleurs elle savait fort bien que tant que la question ne serait point réglée selon les droits de l'équité c'est-à-dire en donnant aux arméniens des terrains gouvernementaux en compensation de ceux vendus aux Kurdes, la discorde était toujours prête à éclater.

Elle consentit donc à l'envoi de deux inspecteurs généraux avec pleins pouvoirs.

Ceux-ci, ignorant la langue Kurde, accompagnés par des interprètes Arméniens et surtout imbus de l'idée qu'ils étaient envoyés par l'Europe en croisade pour délivrer les chrétiens des griffes d'une nation fanatique et sauvage, ne pouvaient trouver d'autre solution que de chasser les Kurdes de leurs terrains et les donner aux arméniens. L'effet qu'une telle injustice pourrait avoir sur l'esprit des musulmans ne fut point compris par eux, puisqu'ils ignoraient que ces terres étaient payées et qu'ils croyaient, en agissant ainsi, faire acte de justice.

Un membre de notre comité alla les visiter durant leur séjour à Constantinople, désirant leur donner quelques visées sur le Kurdistan, mais ce fut en vain. Ils lui répondirent qu'ils avaient une caisse de livres sur le pays, qu'ils étudieraient en route et quoique notre collègue leur fit observer que les auteurs des livres européens sur le Kurdistan, ne connaissant pas la langue du pays, n'y faisant que de courts séjours, ne pouvaient avoir que de faibles aperçus sur les problèmes du pays, il ne put faire aucune impression sur leurs idées fixes.

La Russie était donc sur le point de toucher au but si longuement et si patiemment poursuivi, quand la guerre universelle éclata et accorda un léger répit à la nation Kurde. Il n'y a donc rien d'étonnant à ce que les Kurdes se joignirent aux Turcs pour combattre contre le pays qui les avait si longtemps persécuté et qui, à force de fausses accusations, avait réussi à leur acquérir l'aversion du monde entier.

Nous allons tâcher de démêler quelque peu le vrai et le faux de ces accusations.

Tout le monde s'accorde à dire qu'en 1877-1878, au moment où la Russie insérait dans le traité de San-Stéphano, à l'article 16, la clause que la Sublime Porte s'engageait à assurer la sécurité des Arméniens contre les Kurdes, ces derniers vivaient ensemble en bonne intelligence et des relations continuèrent à subsister jusqu'à ce qu'en 1893-1894 comme le dit l'*Encyclopédia Britannica* que nous avons cité plus haut, décidèrent d'arriver à leur but en suscitant des troubles comme ceux qui avaient donné naissance aux Etats Balkaniques.

Mais ils ne prirent point en considération que si ces troubles avaient réussi dans les Balkans c'est surtout dû à l'existence d'une majorité écrasante des nationalités révoltées dans ces pays et que le même système appliqué par les arméniens n'était qu'une utopie dans un pays où une infime minorité commettait la folie de se révolter contre une écrasante majorité.

Le même article dit que les Arméniens organisèrent des attaques contre les individus, écrivirent des lettres menaçantes, etc.

Nous ajouterons que les Arméniens du Caucase, c'est-à-dire les sujets Russes, attaquèrent Tassoun et Talori au printemps de 1893 et égorgèrent des centaines de Kurdes. Ce ne fut d'ailleurs qu'à ce moment là que les Kurdes prirent connaissance des désirs Arméniens. Est-il étonnant que ce peuple, se voyant ainsi trahi par ceux qu'il considérait comme ses frères d'infortune riposta en en égorgeant à son tour.

Entre temps le gouverneur Général de Van, Bahri Pacha, fut attaqué à Trébizonde par des Arméniens, quand, destitué à cause des troubles il retournait à Constantinople. Le nouveau Vali Aali Bey

n'eut point un meilleur sort et succomba sous les coups des comités Arméniens avant d'arriver à son poste. Le vali qui le remplaça vint avec la ferme décision de défendre sa vie et s'entoura de troupes. Dans ce qui s'ensuivit à Van les Kurdes ne sont plus mentionnés dans le récit des témoins.

A Diarbékir, le 31 Octobre 1895, les Arméniens attaquèrent les habitants Kurdes dans la mosquée et en fusillèrent une quarantaine ; les Kurdes ripostèrent et les arméniens proclamèrent que les Kurdes les avaient massacrés sans justification aucune et ils furent crus comme toujours. Les explications de la Sublime Porte furent reçues avec soupçons et les Kurdes furent condamnés à la réprobation universelle. Cependant quand les soldats voulurent pénétrer à Mardine pour massacrer les Arméniens ce fut Derviche Aga, un Kurde et chef des Dachi qui vint défendre les portes de la ville, sauva les Arméniens et reçut pour ce fait la légion d'honneur Française. Les Arméniens du village de Geulli furent sauvés par un Kurde, Gazi Aga, chef des Gourses et ce fut un autre Kurde, le descendant des princes de Bitlis et le chef des Hazrou Seifedin Pacha, plus tard assassiné par l'union et progrès, qui recueillit chez lui 300 familles arméniennes.

Enfin nous le soutenons en face du monde entier, les Kurdes n'ont jamais massacré les arméniens ; ils n'ont fait que se défendre à main armée contre les attaques arméniennes.

La grande *Encyclopédie Française* en décrivant les mœurs des Kurdes dit entre autre que le Kurde ne tue point sans nécessité, nous ajoutons que même chez les auteurs les plus partiaux (à moins d'être russes) les mentions de Kurdes, dans des exercices d'atrocités, sont rares et semblent placées par acquit de conscience.

D'ailleurs les massacres arméniens ont été exagérés tellement qu'il est presque impossible maintenant de mettre les faits au point.

Au sujet du prétendu antagonisme Kurdo-Arménien, nous dirons que dans tous les pays étrangers, un arménien désirant une aide quelconque, le réclame premièrement d'un Kurde s'il en trouve, les magasins arméniens surtout sont fréquentés par les Kurdes et les Turcs et dans toutes les réunions européennes ou le Kurde et l'Arménien se rencontrent on peut voir dans leurs relations une intimité étroite, une

communauté amicale qui seules suffiraient pour prouver que les atrocités Kurdes sont de pure invention.

Nous avons essayé d'exposer clairement dans cette brochure les réclamations Kurdes et les raisons sur lesquelles ils les appuient. Celles-ci sont, en résumé ; premièrement la priorité de possession ; deuxièmement la prééminence de nationalité. Nous avons essayé aussi de prouver que les troubles qui ont désolé notre malheureux pays sont dûs non pas aux Kurdes mais aux intrigues de la Russie, qui pour arriver à ses propres fins n'a pas craint d'allumer la discorde entre deux nations vivant ensemble fraternellement depuis des siècles. Nous espérons que nous pourrons plaider notre cause devant la conférence de la paix, car notre situation toujours précaire ne l'a jamais été plus qu'à ce moment où les puissances vont enfin régler les questions en suspens.

Nous n'ignorons pas les préjugés nourris contre nous, les calomnies infâmes qui ont éveillé un sentiment d'horreur dans tous les cœurs, à notre égard ne nous sont pas inconnus et nous savons aussi que le temps qui nous est octroyé est trop court pour les réfuter toutes ; cependant nous comptons sur le droit que toute nation possède à la vie et nous disons qu'on ne peut pas l'anihiler d'un coup de plume sans y réfléchir longuement. Les mêmes puissances qui flétrirent l'asservissement de la Pologne, qui secondèrent à la naissance de la Grèce, de la Serbie, du Monténégro, après la signature de la Sainte Alliance, qui applaudirent à la nouvelle république Yougo-Slave vont-elles tenter d'étouffer la nationalité Kurde.

Si, à la table de la Conférence où, au dire du Président Wilson, l'impartialité va régner en maîtresse on donne le patrimoine Kurde aux Arméniens, comment espérer de l'Avenir ? Comment devant cette flagrante injustice, les nations musulmanes peuvent-elles s'attendre à une ère plus libérale ? Comment croire que le temps des croisades est passé ?

Ne verront-elles pas plutôt en ceci une preuve que l'Europe a toujours deux balances, une pour ceux de sa propre foi et la seconde pour les hommes qui osent adorer à un autre autel.

Si c'est vraiment ainsi et si l'Europe est encore inspirée par le fanatisme religieux qu'elle donne donc sans hésiter le Kurdistan aux arméniens, car c'est l'arrêt de mort de cinq millions de musulmans qu'elle aura signé.

Nous, les Kurdes, nous inspirant de la parole du président Wilson que *le droit est une chose plus précieuse que la paix*, nous avons pesé avec sang froid les conséquences qui s'ensuivraient de la part de l'Europe si nous refusions d'accepter ce décret et nous avons bien vu que dans une lutte aussi inégale nous ne pouvons espérer vaincre. Malgré cela nous avons juré de défendre notre patrie bien aimée, à l'instar de nos glorieux ancêtres, jusqu'à la mort du dernier Kurde, de tuer de nos mains nos femmes et nos enfants pour les délivrer de la servitude et de laisser à la postérité le devoir de juger si nous méritons le sort auquel nous ont voué la calomnie arménienne et les armes ténébreuses des intrigues politiques.

Nous adressons donc un suprême appel aux nations Européennes pour qu'elles empêchent cette catastrophe. Nous lui demandons de nous accorder un répit, de nous faire donner notre indépendance et de voir si nous nous en montrons digne ; de ne point nous condamner parce que courbés sous le joug nous n'avons pu encore montrer ce dont nous sommes capables. Qu'on nous voie à l'œuvre et si après un délai convenable on trouve que nous sommes rebelles à tout progrès, alors et seulement alors on pourra nous condamner avec quelque semblant de justice.

Nous conjurons aussi les hommes d'état européens, qui sont en position de savoir que nous n'avons rien avancé ici, qui ne soit basé sur la vérité, de dire si les documents entre leurs mains n'assertent pas la vérité de nos accusations et si les Kurdes sont vraiment aussi coupables qu'on a voulu les dépeindre. Mais qu'ils se souviennent avant de répondre que ce sont eux qui sont responsables devant l'histoire de ce qui arrivera et qu'ils décident après si, pour des intérêts politiques passagers, ils sont prêts à condamner une race entière à l'annihilation complète.



6166/  
Code, Cypher  
or clear? -U M.1917

# TELEGRAM.

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR  
EGYPT  
29 MAY 1919  
No 8166/33.

*MS*

From Political  
Baghdad  
Despatched on 27.5.19 6.30 p.m.

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.  
Received (date) 28.5.19 6.45 p.m.

No. 5971

Dated: 27.5.19

My telegram May <sup>(6166/32)</sup> 25th. Kurdistan.

HALABJA is in hands of hostile Kurds and telegram from SENNA indicates increasing unrest in Persia and Kurdistan spread by Sheikh MAHMUD'S Agents otherwise no unfavourable developments and MOSUL division and other parts of Kurdistan reported quiet.

Letters received to-day from Sheikh Mahmud, though couched in a bold boastful pan-Islamic strain indicate that he has little support outside towns and that he is beginning to be alarmed at possible results of movement of which he is sole originator.

Addressed India Office repeated Simla, Teheran, Constantinople, Cairo and Aleppo for Noel.

*Paraphrases to  
C.P.O.  
Arab Bureau  
G.S. 1"*

Code, Cypher  
or clear? CYPHER "M"17.

# TELEGRAM.

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
29 MAY 1919  
8166/34

From POLITICAL,

BAGHDAD.

Despatched 22nd May, 3. pm

To

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT

Cairo.

Received 29th May, 9.15 am

No. 5738

Dated: 22nd. May, 1919.

Serious disorders are reported to have broken out at Suleimaniyeh where Kurdish tribes are said to have risen against (? Kurdish) ~~British troops~~ (group indec.) levies with (? uncertain) result. We have about 400 Kurdish levies there and 8 British officers (? but no) regular troops. I am proceeding to Kirkuk this evening by air and will go at daybreak to Suleimaniyeh to investigate.

Addressed to India Office, repeated to Cairo and Simla and Teheran and Aleppo for ~~Neel~~ Major Noel. Ker-manshah (? and) Senna informed.

Paraphrases to C.P.O.  
Arab Bureau  
✓ G.S. "1"

816  
ode, Cypher  
or clear?

Indian Code. **TELEGRAM.**

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
30 MA 1919  
8166/35.

From Political.,  
Baghdad.

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT

Despatched May 29th. 10. pm  
(Date and time)

Received May 30th 3. am  
(Date and time) Cairo.

No. 6062.

Dated: May 29th.

KURDISTAN.

No change in the situation.

Sent to the same <sup>d</sup>addresses as my telegram of May 27th.

*L. Dalmazy (HMF)*

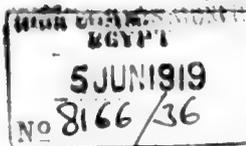
*Sir M Chestham*

*MS ✓*

*30.V. ✓*  
*30.V.19 ✓*  
*copies*  
*20/5/19*

Code cypher  
or clear? M.1917.

TELEGRAM



From Political,  
Baghdad.,

Despatched (Date and time) June 4th.8.15 pm

C. Dalmy (to H.E.)

W.S.

~~W.S.~~

To

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Received (Date and time) June 5th.8.35 a

No. 6290.

Dated: June 4th.

PRIORITY.

My telegram of May 11th. NOEL writes from MARDIN May 25th that he has finished his report on DIARBEEKIR and will be in Aleppo on June 15th. Printed copies of his reports have been posted to all concerned. They are of the greatest interest and should be excellent material on which to base (?later) decisions as to policy. He suggests that he be deputed to continue his enquiries at SAIRT BITLIS and ERZEROUM with the object of collecting information as to :-

- (1). Present relative proportion of various races produced by the War.
- (2). Present (?economic condition) of the country and opening for trade with Mesopotamia.
- (3). Outrages perpetrated by Mohammedans by Armenians.
- (4). Feeling of Kurds in regard to Kurdish national aspirations.
- (5). Developments likely to ensue as a consequence of any attempt to found an Armenian State and effect it is likely to have in Central Kurdistan.
- (6). Attitude of Kurds towards our administration in S.E. Kurdistan and to JELU Repatriation.
- (7). Possibility of repatriation of large numbers of

Mohammedan Refugees (?at) Mosul Mardin and Diarbekir. I concur and subject to your confirmation and concurrence of High Commissioners at C'ple and Cairo am instructing him accordingly. Addressed India Office. repeated to Cairo Tehran C'ple Simla and Aleppo for NOEL.

Code Cypher C  
Clear?

# TELEGRAM.

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
6 JUN 1919  
No 8166/57

*L. D. ...*  
*KN*

From Foreign Office.

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched (Date and time) 5.35 p.m. 5th. June.

Received (Date and time) 1.20 a.m. 6th. June.

No. 692

Dated: 5th. June, 1919.

Priority clear the line.

Following sent by Secretary of State for India to Civil Commissioner Bagdad begins.

Your telegram No. 5353 May 12th., Kurdistan.

You are authorized to assume charge of Kurdistanish affairs on conditions indicated in last paragraph of your telegram and should act in close consultation not merely communication with His Majesty's High Commissioner at Constantinople and should take no important step without his concurrence. General Officer Commanding in Egypt should be kept informed.

With regard to proposals submitted in second paragraph of your telegram we (?) attach special importance to qualification that assurances should be given only "so far as His Majesty's Government are concerned".

As regards amnesty Foreign Office think it inadvisable in view of general uncertainty as to future status of region affected to go beyond assurance that no vindictive policy will be pursued.

See my telegram of May 12th. Foreign Office would have preferred this vaguer formula even in case

4

**TELEGRAM.**

(2)

From \_\_\_\_\_

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched (Date and time) \_\_\_\_\_

Received (Date and time) \_\_\_\_\_

No.

Dated:

Kurds within mosul vilayet but if explained that explicit assurances have already been given to latter they may of course stand. Plea of Turkish instigation can of course only be accepted in respect of past events. His second proposed assurance should be limited to freedom from unrestricted Armenian domination. Subject to above remarks proposals in your second paragraph are approved.

I shall be glad to have your views as soon as possible as to limits of area affected see my telegram of May 21st. In this connection do you still favour exclusion of Diarbehir and Urfa from Irak (?state) ?

Question of inviting BADR Khan brothers or other Kurdistan Notables from outside to visit Kurdistan is left to your decision in consultation with High Commissioner Constantinople.

Addressed Baghdad repeated Viceroy.

G.M.A. (G.P.O.)  
-----

Following is paraphrase of Foreign Office Telegram No. 692 of June 5th to High Commissioner for Egypt.

**PRIORITY CLEAR THE LINE.**

Secretary of State for India has sent following telegram to Civil Commissioner Baghdad, (repeated to Viceroy India) in reply to Baghdad telegram No. 5353 May 12th Kurdistan.

On conditions indicated in last paragraph of your telegram you are authorized to assume charge of Kurdish Affairs; close consultation, not merely communication, should be maintained with His Majesty's High Commissioner at Constantinople and no important step should be taken by you without his concurrence, you should also keep G.O.C. Egypt informed.

Special importance is attached by us to the qualifications that assurances should be given only "so far as H.M.'s Government are concerned;" this refers to proposals submitted in second paragraph of your telegram.

Foreign Office consider, as regards amnesty, that in view of general uncertainty as to future status of region affected, it is inadvisable to do more than give an assurance that H.M.'s Government will adopt no vindictive policy.

Please refer to my telegram of May 12th; this vaguer formula would have been preferred by Foreign Office even in case of Kurds within Mosul vilayet, but if explained that explicit assurances have been given to latter they may of course be allowed to stand. Only of course in respect of

past events can plea of Turkish instigation be accepted. As regards his second proposed assurance this should be limited to freedom from unrestricted Armenian domination. Proposals in your second paragraph are approved subject to above remarks.

Please inform me as soon as possible of your views as to limits of area affected, see my telegram of May 21st. In this connection are you still in favour of exclusion from Irak state of Urfa and Diarbehir.

I leave it to your decision in consultation with H.M.'s High Commissioner for Constantinople whether Badr Khan brothers or other Kurdistan notables from outside should be invited to visit Kurdistan.

Code, Cypher  
or clear? R

8166

# TELEGRAM.

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
9 JUN 1919  
NO 8166/38

L. J. (M. W. E.)  
RS  
Copy to P.O. ✓

From Political

Baghdad

Despatched (Date) 7.6.19 10.45 p.m.

To High Commissioner for Egypt  
Cairo.

Received (Date) 9.6.19 9.30 a.m.

No. 6409

Dated: 7.6.19

NOEL wires from MARDIN May 28th begins.

Deputation from Armenians at Diarbekir arrived here today to warn me that massacre of the Armenians is threatening. They attribute it to news of the occupation of Smyrna by Greeks. WALI represented to be friendly but too weak (gr omitted) affective action. I am inclined to think that it is a cry of WOLF but have nothing much to go upon. Ends.

Addressed to India sent to Foreign Office, sent to Constantinople, Cairo and Teheran.

Code, Cypher  
of clear? M/17.

**TELEGRAM.**

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
10 JUN 1919  
NO 8766/39.

*K.B. ✓*

From POLITICAL,

BAGHDAD.

Despatched 9th June, 8.10 pm

To

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT

Cairo.

Received 10th June, 9.48 am.

No. 6505

Dated: 9th. June, 1919.

My telegram of June 7th. Kurdistan. Noel telegraphs June 5th. from DIARBKIR:

"Turks on June 4th. broke up a political meeting of Kurdish Nationalists, making several arrests.

Organization in question represents all shades of opinion including on one hand ignorant old fanatics who are more anti-European than anti-Turk and believe that Kurdistan can stand on its own legs within a mandate, and on the other hand are far more thoughtful individuals who would welcome British administration of the country if it developed on national lines and could be secured thereby.

There is a considerable body of Christian opinion which believes some modus vivendi could be found between Kurds and Christians if Turkish influence was removed.

Addressed India Office, repeated Cairo, Teheran and Constantinople.

*Parham to. PSI ✓  
C.P.O. ✓  
Cable Bureau ✓  
2*

Code Cypher  
of year? R

# TELEGRAM.



*Copies*  
*C.P.O.*  
*Amir Khan*

*Y.P.*

From Political

Baghdad

To

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT

Cairo.

Despatched 9.6.19 9.50 a.m.

Received 10.6.19 5.5 a.m.

No. 6435

Dated: 9.6.19

Major NOEL wires from Diarbekir June 3rd begins.

Reached Diarbekir June 2nd after stopping a day with MAHMUD Bey son of IBRAHIM Pasha of the MILLI. The young Kurdish party here is very active and has been contemplating a coup de main for some time with a view to turning out Turkish Government and ploclaiming Kurdish independence. They have been however deterred from taking action owing <sup>local</sup> to Turks having won over two of the principal Notables who are influential among the surrounding tribes and sychronize-  
(?ing) here with similar action at Erzeroum Van and Bitlis which is difficult to achieve owing to bad communications.

Position of Turks is by no means secure. They have mounted guns on the Citadel to overawe town arrested leader of the ~~K~~urdish Party and confiscated Kurdish Press. They are keeping a very close watch on me and are trying to keep me as official guest and to prevent Kurds having free access to me. Correct attitude of Young Kurdish Party is open friendship to H.M.G. but to what extent this friendliness is dicteted by pure expediency I am not yet inclined to state.

MAHMUD Bey son of IBRAHIM Pasha controls whole of MULLI confederacy. Turks have been making great efforts to

Code Cypher  
or year? \_\_\_\_\_

## TELEGRAM.

2.

From \_\_\_\_\_

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched \_\_\_\_\_ (Date and time).

Received \_\_\_\_\_ (Date and time)

No.

Dated:

to win him over but without much tangible result; on the other hand Young Kurds are not sure of him. He gave me the impression of a man who did not know his own mind but was if doubtful inclined to accept British protection with a good deal of misgiving.

On my way here I encountered a caravan of twelve mules with drivers and (?who were) on the way to MAHMUD Bey. Loads were hidden in long grass as soon as our party were in sight. Ends.

Addressed India Office sent to Constantinople  
Cairo and Teheran.

SECRET

PARAPHRASE

POL/573

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
11 JUN 1919  
NO 8166/41

From ; GENERAL BAGHDAD

To ; Addressed TROOPERS Repeated C.G.S. SIRLA. RETAXANUM.

FORNIGH SIRLA. EGYPTORGE. and HICOM CONSTANTINOPLE.

X.7088. 4th desp. 1105 9-6-19. recd. 0959. 10-6-19.

Northern and Central Kurdistan quiet.

Southern Kurdistan situation. Concentration of troops and collection of supplies continues, gorges between CHEBCHERAL and KERKOUR fortified road being prepared for wheels. Further reports received of defection of Sheikh MAHMUD Followers Prisoners in ~~NUMBER~~ NUMBER believed seen by aerial reconnaissance on June 8th Feeling ? improved and safer.

Distributed by G.P.O. G.H.Q. to :-

G.P.O.  
Residency ✓  
B.G.C.S.  
ARBUR  
D.C.P.O. Damascus  
File  
Ciphers

*(Handwritten)*  
C.D. (H.A.F.)  
Kut ✓

Code Cypher  
or clear? R

# TELEGRAM.

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
14 JUN 1919  
NO 8166/42

From Political

Baghdad

Despatched 13.6.19 7.45 p.m.

To

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT

Cairo.

Received 14.6.19 11.5. a.m.

No. 6666

Dated: 13.6.19

Clear The Line

Kurdistan. Reference your telegram of June 5th and your telegram of May 21st which latter was only repeated to me by Government of India on June 10th, I find it must reply to theirs. Two. The ETHNOGRAPHICAL Map of Eastern Kurdistan in Asia as issued by the War Office No. 29 Zero 1 published by Royal Geographical Society shows what areas are ~~under the~~ predominantly Kunds, and it is remarkably accurate. This map illustrates forcibly the difficulties problem.

Three. The Turco- Persian Frontier must presumably form the eastern limits of the area to be recognized as predominance of Kurdish potency for economic and for strategical reasons and in order to secure to IRAQ state advantage of a mountaineous track, well wooded capable of great development, it is desirable to include SULAIMANIYEH RANILIA, and KEUI SANJAK within limits of Mesopotamian Administration.

ERBIL is an integral part of MOSUL ASYAYAT and when I visited the Town by air on June 6th leading inhabitants were unanimous in their expressions of dismay at the mere prospect of being included in Kurdistan. ERBIL (moreover) is on one of the recognized railway ALIAPMENTS to MOSUL ASYAYAT, and like AQRA should be excluded from Kurdistan.  
DOHUK

Code, Cypher  
or clear?

# TELEGRAM.

2.

From \_\_\_\_\_

To

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date and time)

Received \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date and time)

No.

Dated:

DOHUK ZAKHO must also be regarded as within Mesopotamia, but no amalgamation of Diarkebir.

Four. The southern boundary therefore might run south west from Khandildagh to ~~NONLEVE~~ a point eleven--festy three 11431/1,000,000, and thence to inter section latitude 37 and longitude 44, and thence to inter section latitude 37 and longitude 43. I am inclined to think that southern boundary of area predominantly Kurdish should run a little north of JEZIREH IBN OMAR, North of NISIBIN, south of MARDIN, north of RAS EL AIN, (?orto) latitude 37 to BEREJIK up the Euphrates and then following the boundary of the vilayets of KHARPUT (MAMURET UL AZIZ) Bitlis, Van thus excluding ERZINJAN and Erzerum.

Six. Within this area which includes Diarkebir Vilayet are large tracks shown on the map as predominantly Armenian. I understand that (gr undec.) from Major NOEL and from other sources that Armenians in these areas are in a very small minority and I regard it as impracticable to attempt to place them in a position superior or independent there. Left to themselves they would probably have no difficulty in maintaining their position under European auspices and might enjoy a species of (gr indec.). For the rest perhaps the United States of America might be prepared to guarantee them a likelihood of fair treatment and prospects of national development in Erzerum and Trebizond Vilayets and

Code, Cypher  
or clear?

# TELEGRAM.

3

From \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched (Date and time) \_\_\_\_\_

Received (Date and time) \_\_\_\_\_

No.

Dated:

and which could be garrisoned and administered comparatively easily and should not be much for Armenians to tackle.

Seven. Kurdistan is split up into two groups the pro-Kurdish Party who under suitable management might be Pro-British and the pro-Turkish Party who are fanatically inclined anti-christian and anti-foreign. Either Party could obtain effective control of the country with some (extradition) support and we have to choose between them. If (gr. indec.) Turkish authority is reestablished in Armenia and Kurdistan the idea of Kurdish and Armenian States fall to the ground.

Eight. Numerous and virile as (gr. indec.) are and strong as the national feeling is they are so scattered and geographically so split up by mountain ranges that it is inconceivable to me that they can be united except under a strong foreign administration with its centre at Bitles or Van and Trend of Mahometan feeling in Middle East owing partly to current Greek and Italian action is at present admittedly somewhat unfavourable to acceptance of the tutelage of Christian Powers, but is more likely to accept British guidance than that of any other Power. On the spot cannot (3grs indec.) longer be confined to collecting information and conveying vague assurances to one side or the other. It is from a view necessary that a decision regarding

Code, Cypher  
or clear?

# TELEGRAM.

4.

From \_\_\_\_\_

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched \_\_\_\_\_ (Date and time)

Received \_\_\_\_\_ (Date and time)

No.

Dated:

regarding policy should be reached and instructions issued.

Nine. The foregoing proposals may be briefly summarized as follows.

Trebizond and Erzeroum Vilayets to, a single Armenian State under predominantly American auspices the remaining Vilayet to coherian of a Kurdish State under presumably British(?auspices).

MOSPORTS Baghdad and Basrah and the Vilayets to (gr Indec)) an Arab State likewise under British auspices the only alternative I see to this scheme is the re-establishment of Turkish Authority ~~under~~ over all Vilayets under some form of European supervision .

Ten. I need hardly say that I view the prospects of the extension of our commitments to Kurdistan with no little apprehension and should preferably see American or even Turks in charge, but the question no doubt will be considered by H.B.M. in all its bearings before a decision is made.

Eleven. I propose to visit Aleppo about June 20th to meet Major NOEL and after my meeting shall be in a position to make more specific proposals if desired.

Twelve. I am well aware that the foregoing proposals constitute a considerable extension of proposals in previous telegraphic correspondence in that they involve a recognition of principle of a Kurdish State within British sphere of guidance

Code, Cypher  
or clear?

# TELEGRAM.

5.

From \_\_\_\_\_

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date and time)

Received \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date and time)

No.

Dated:

guidance by British Agent, with alternative of a re-constituted Turkish Empire, and I submit various (gr.indec) ~~diffidently~~ considered by H.M.G.

Addressed India Office, repeated to Cairo, Constantinople, Teheran, (?Hedjaz), by post to Foreign Simla, Copy to G.O.C. Baghdad who has seen before return.

8466

No.

244

(80644/M.E.44)

M. H. W. (S)

HIGH COMMISSION  
EGYPT  
15 JUN 1919  
No 8166/43

14/6 ✓

C.A.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to His Majesty's Representative at *Cairo* and transmits herewith copy of the under-mentioned paper.

Foreign Office,

4 June, 1919.

Reference to previous despatch :

To the Secretary of State, No. , of

Description of Enclosure.

Name and Date.	Subject
Mr. Balfour 821.	Kurdistan

Cony.

P. 821.

10-365/1/1/0837.

(80644).

British Delegation.

Paris.

27th May 1919.

My Lord,

Cherif Pacha, who is the representative of the Kurds in Paris, called on my 19th on Sir Louis Mallet to emphasise the demands of the Kurds for the recognition of their independence. He was informed that, in any case, it would be quite impossible to include the Persian Kurds, to which he more or less assented (see in this connection telegram No. 5754 of May 12th from His Majesty's Political Officer at Bagdad). Cherif Pacha realised also that the Kurdish settlement would have to be based on a federative system, but he stated that he would like such a settlement placed under the general supervision of the British.

Sir L. Mallet said that this must depend on the allocation of the mandate and that, upon this subject he was unable to give Cherif Pacha any definite assurance, for which the latter pressed.

Cherif Pacha repeated what he had often said before that no settlement which placed the Kurds under the Armenians or in an Armenian state could possibly be accepted. It would merely be the signal for massacres. Incidentally he wished Sir L. Mallet to represent to me the disastrous effects which the complete dismemberment of Turkey could not fail to have on the chances of peace in the Near East. The Kurds did not especially love the Turks but would be solidly against any policy which seemed to be directed against Islam. The Committee of Union and Progress were very active all over Turkey and would take advantage of the unrest, which recent announcements would cause, to stir up trouble throughout the East. He was convinced that the best policy for His Majesty's Government would be to maintain a Turkish State within restricted limits and to control it.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

The Right Honourable,

The Earl Curzon of Kedleston, K.G., P.C.,

&c. &c. &c.

Code, Cypher  
or clear? M 17.

# TELEGRAM.

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
18 JUN 1919  
NO 8166/44

*Robert & C.P.O.  
and P.M.  
✓ P.G.I.  
as*

*L.D. (for file) My  
K.S. ✓*

From Political

Baghdad

Despatched 17.6.19 7.20 p.m.

To

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Received 18.6.19 10.55 a.m.

No. 6810

Dated: 17.6.19

?

NOEL Telegrams June 9th, Begins.

A substantial measure has been done to Christians in Diarbekir in (gr indec.) of restoration of persons and property. This is not the case in the district. Small percentage of refugees in Diarbekir dare return and majority of these as make venture only do so in partnership with Moslems. In some villages Moslems have squatted and claim possession in others Christians are in the position of bond (gr. indec.) to local AGHAS. Local government is scarcely strong enough to obtain justice for Christians. Complete justice in town and district could be obtained by exposed (?outgoing) of European Commission. Whether they would eventually require backing of European troops is difficult to say. Perhaps not if Kurdish national aspirations were satisfied. Ends.

Addressed India Office repeated Constantinople,  
Cairo copy to India by post.

Code, Cipher  
or clear? M 17.

# TELEGRAM.

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
18 JUN 1919  
No 9166/45.

*Copies to  
C.P.O.  
B.S.I.  
V.C.S.*

*L. D. (for H.E.)  
K.O.S.*

From POLITICAL  
BAGHDAD

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched (Date and time) June 17th 7 5pm

Received (Date and time) June 18th 8 10am

No.6811

Dated: June 17th.

NOEL telegraphs June 10th, begins:-

There has been a fight between Government troops and Kurds under ALI BATTI five miles west of Midiat, result indecisive. Fight took place owing to ALI BATTI's pretensions to set himself up as Governor. Most (3 grps. und.) Kurds between here and Jezira are out of hand and Kellek traffic is at a standstill in consequence.

Addressed to Constantinople, repeated to Cairo.

Code, Cypher  
or clear? M 17.

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
18 JUN 1919  
No 8166/46

**TELEGRAM.**

*Copy to C.P.O. Arab Press (EST)*

From Political

Baghdad

Despatched 17.6.19 7.25 p.m.

*(? 8/6/19) U.S. ✓*

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Received 18.6.19 11.25 a.m.

No. 6826

Dated: 17.6.19

87 NREL telegraphs from Diarbekir June 8th Begins.  
87 June 7th 1111. In case my reports to date have not made it clear I would now draw special attention to the success which enemy propaganda directed against H.M.G. has had with the bulk of the uneducated opinion in this country. Stories of British tyranny and exactions at Mosul and partiality for Christians and enmity to Islam as in every (?hemisphere).

Mohametan members of my staff are being continually reproached and in some cases even intimidated for serving enemies of Islam. After the experiences of my winter tour in East Kurdistan I cannot help feeling that the present feeling is unnatural and probably ephemeral but it gives rise to a situation which is favourable (?to) regrettable incidents which might prejudice possibility of starting with a clean slate. Ends.

Addressed Secretary of State for India repeated  
Cairo, Constantinople, Tehran copy by post to India.

Code, Cypher  
or clear? M/17

# TELEGRAM.

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
18 JUN 1919  
No 866/47

From BAGDAD

Despatched (Date and time) June 17 - 8.50 a.m.

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT

Cairo.

Received (Date and time) 17 - 11.30 p.m.

No. 6763.

Dated: June 17th.

Major NOEL telegraphs June 14th from Diarbekir.

Begins:-

"Kurdish Leaders here and in the adjacent parts of Kurdistan feel acutely that while Armenians national claims are receiving full publicity in Europe Kurds case is comparatively a closed book. They are moreover restless at the thought that decisions vitally affecting their future are being arrived at in Paris while they (?sit) idly here. All this give rise to a natural desire to make some local demonstration which will bring Kurdistan question into lime light and confront peace conference with a fait accompli. They would seem to have gained to a certain extent we are ready, we sympathise with Kurdish national movement and they have consulted me in regard to taking overt action against Turkish Government. I have of course strongly dissuaded them from such a course and have pointed out to them that the present situation and position of Christians is already sufficiently disquieting without their wanting to complicate it further by destroying the last vestige of organised authority." Ends.

Addressed Secretary of State for India; repeated Cairo, Constantinople; copy by post to India.

Code, Cypher  
or clear?

M 1917

*Handwritten:* From Treasury  
Chief to C.P.O.

**TELEGRAM**

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
20 JUN 1919  
NO 8166/48

*Handwritten:* U.S.I.  
9

*Handwritten:* (L.D.) (A.M.S.)

From Political, Baghdad.

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT

Cairo.

Despatched (Date and time) 17.6.19. 10.10  
p.m.

Received (Date and time) 2.45 a.m. 19.6.19

No. 6819

Dated:

Noel telegraphs from Diarbekir, June 9th:

Following dated Kharput, June 9th received from  
American missionary Riggs:

"I beg to report to you certain facts regarding  
anti-Christian agitation which has produced pan-  
Germanism here during the past few weeks. Firstly  
as far as I could judge the agitation was entirely  
artificial and not at all the result of any further(?)  
local sentiment to news of decisions of Peace  
Conference. Secondly, the agitation has been  
conducted by a few individuals whose attitude has been  
consistently hostile to Armenians. Tone of  
pronouncements was against the Armenians rather than  
anti-foreign. Many of these men have reason to  
fear the coming of any decent government on account  
of their previous connection with Armenian atrocities  
thirdly, although this agitation has resulted in  
many sporadic cases of murder and assault against  
Armenians it has not had any considerable success  
in turning people against British occupation.  
Fourthly, there seems to be no actual intention

Code, Cypher  
or clear? \_\_\_\_\_

# TELEGRAM.

From \_\_\_\_\_

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched (Date and time) \_\_\_\_\_

Received (Date and time) \_\_\_\_\_

No.

Dated:

(2)

on the part of anyone to oppose foreign intervention by force. But it is the opinion of many intelligent men that if this agitation is allowed to continue and occupation is long delayed popular feeling may reach such a pitch that the approach of foreign troops might be the signal for the outbreak of serious violence against the remaining Armenians.

"It is the earnest desire of men of all races here that means be taken instantly to check a tendency which threatens so much evil. Whether ~~it~~ those means are immediate arrival of new (Vali?) or of occupation of Allied troops the (? initiative of their evil) comes from outside the present Turkish government!" (ends)

You will note above agrees in some particulars with the tenour of my reports to date. The only (? circumstance) I would make is that tendency referred to could probably be checked by announcement .....(groups indecipherable) ~~the~~ national aspirations and free as such from the ~~tyranny of Armenians~~

Code, Cypher  
or clear? \_\_\_\_\_

# TELEGRAM.

From \_\_\_\_\_

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT

Cairo.

Despatched (Date and time) \_\_\_\_\_

Received (Date and time) \_\_\_\_\_

No.

Dated:

(3)

bugbear of Armenian domination, but this would of course entail the risk of Turks turning sour, with the possibility of disastrous results for Christians. (ends)

Addressed to India Office. Sent to Cairo, Constantinople. Posted to India

816

SECRET

PARAPHRASE

From : POLICY. G.H.Q.

To : LIAISON ALEPPO.

POL/820. 19-6-19. desp. 2330.

HIGH COMMISSION
21 JUN 1919
266/49

As follows from Foreign Office for NOFL :-

Paraphrase as per telegram No. 19713 from CURZON  
to CLAYTON of 14-6-19.

Distributed by C.P.O. G.H.Q. to :-

- C.P.O. (2).
- Residency —
- B.G.G.S.
- G.S.I.
- D.C.P.O. KUS
- ARBUR
- File
- Ciphers

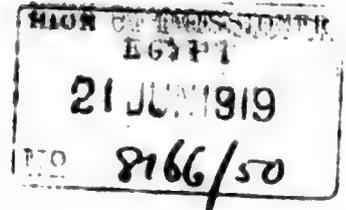
**SECRET**

**PARAPHRASE**

**From : POLICY. G.H.Q.**

**To : LIAISON ALEPPO.**

**POL/621. 19-6-19. desp. 1000.**  
-----



**As follows from Foreign Office for NOEL :-**

**Paraphrase as per telegram No. 19613 from CURZON to  
CLAYTON. 13-6-19.**  
-----

**Distributed by C.P.O. G.H.Q. to :-**

**C.P.O. (2).  
Residency —  
B.G.G.S.  
G.S.I.  
D.C.P.O. KUS.  
ARBUR  
File  
Ciphers**

A large, stylized handwritten mark, possibly a signature or initials, consisting of several overlapping loops and lines.

No. 252

(79991/m.E.44)

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
22 JUN 1919  
NO. 8166/51.

KB ✓

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to His Majesty's Representative at Cairo and transmits herewith copy of the under-mentioned paper.

Foreign Office,

June 6, 1919.

Reference to previous despatch :

To the Secretary of State, No. , of  
From

Description of Enclosure.

Name and Date.	Subject
<p>Gen. Chenif Pasha to Mr. Balfour. May 20. (transm. by Mr. Balfour May 26)</p>	<p>Future of Kurdistan Royal Family Refers to S. I. Sa... Mrs. B... ✓ C. P. O.</p>

ad

Copie.  
(79991)

20, Avenue de Messine Vill<sup>e</sup>  
Telegram 93-21.

Paris le 20 Mai, 1919.

Excellence,

J'ai l'honneur de soumettre, ci-inclus,  
à Votre Excellence le résumé de notre conversation  
de l'autre jour, afin qu'elle puisse s'énoncer dans  
ce sens auprès de S.E. Monsieur Balfour.

Veillez agréer, Excellence, avec mes  
vifs remerciements anticipés, l'assurance de ma très  
haute considération.

(signé) CHERIF.

À son Excellence

Sir Louis Mallet

Ambassadeur, etc., etc., etc.

Copie.  
(79991)  
(10564)

La question du choix d'un chef pour le Kurdistan est des plus épineuse à cause des rivalités séculaires qui existent entre les différentes tribus que forme la population kurde vivant encore à l'état féodal et sous des chefs ignorants.

Si on laissait ce choix à la sanction du peuple, il en résulterait des confusions à la suite des multiples candidatures qui seraient présentées par toutes les très nombreuses tribus actuellement d'antagonisme encore plus grand parmi elles sans obtenir de résultat satisfaisant.

Chaque tribu considère son propre chef comme supérieur à ceux des autres, et par conséquent, elles ne voudraient pas se soumettre à l'autorité d'un autre chef dont l'influence proviendrait d'une autre tribu.

En outre, un chef civilisé, ayant une culture européenne et appartenant à la race kurde, donnerait une sécurité pour l'impartialité de son administration aux autres éléments qui seraient englobés forcément dans le Kurdistan.

Si, dans les contrées allouées au Kurdistan il se trouve des agglomérations suffisantes d'autres allogènes, il leur sera accordé un statut particulier, conforme à leurs traditions nationales.

Il serait donc prudent d'envoyer directement au  
Kurdistan

Kurdistan un chef appartenant à la race kurde, jouissant de la confiance de la puissance assistante, ayant un passé politique connu et des idées modernes, ayant occupé une situation prépondérante et surtout étant resté en dehors des rivalités et des intrigues locales.

Celui-ci inspirerait confiance au peuple pour l'impartialité de son administration, le respect pour son autorité qui lui viendrait d'ailleurs de la puissance et du prestige de l'Angleterre.

Il ne serait pas non plus sans importance que le chef, dont la tâche serait au début fort difficile, ait des connaissances politiques, administratives, voire même militaires suffisantes pour pouvoir la mener à bon fin, en conformant sa politique à celle de la Grande-Bretagne en Orient.

Il serait sage de conserver le prestige des chefs des anciennes grandes familles kurdes, en les réunissant dans un Conseil fédératif, présidé par l'émir que le Gouvernement de S.M. Britannique désignerait pour servir de trait-d'union entre le Gouvernement assistant et eux.

Ce chef serait entouré de ses conseillers anglais, civils et militaires, et de ses ministres.

Il serait en outre secondé: 1<sup>o</sup> par un Sénat - dont les membres seraient nommés, la moitié par l'émir, parmi les chefs des tribus influentes, et l'autre moitié élue au deuxième degré - 2<sup>o</sup> par la Chambre des Députés - dont les membres seraient élus au deuxième degré --; et 3<sup>o</sup> par un Conseil d'Etat pour la préparation des lois.

Dans

Dans l'ardent désir de préserver sa race du danger de l'anarchie qui l'entraînerait à sa ruine complète, le Général Chérif Pacha se sacrifierait volontiers pour assumer la lourde responsabilité d'une pareille tâche pendant le temps nécessaire à l'organisation de l'Etat Kurde, si le Gouvernement de S.M. Britannique voulait bien l'honorer de Sa Haute confiance qu'il croit mériter amplement par son inébranlable attachement à sa politique, ainsi qu'il appert de ses écrits des dix dernières années.

Sur l'invitation de L'Ambassade de S. M. Britannique, le Général Chérif Pacha s'est rendu à Marseille en Juin 1918 pour se rencontrer avec Sir Percy Cox, afin de s'entretenir avec lui au sujet des affaires kurdes.

Plus tard, Sir Mark Sykes a tâté le terrain auprès de la Sous-Direction d'Abie au Ministère des Affaires Etrangères pour savoir si le Gouvernement Français verrait d'un bon oeil la candidature du Général Chérif Pacha comme Emir du Kurdistan. La réponse a été affirmative ainsi que la déclaré plus tard M. Gout au Général Chérif Pacha.

Si le Gouvernement de S.M. Britannique pouvait trouver un autre chef réunissant les conditions requises, le Général Chérif Pacha ne serait pas mécontent d'être dispensé de s'astreindre à ce sacrifice qui serait très grand pour lui.

Il ne s'y hasarderait que s'il était encouragé dés maintenant, ne fût-ce que verbalement.

PRIORITY.

X7142  
CIVIL COMMISSIONER  
22 JUN 1919  
8166/52

From : GENERAL, BAGHDAD.

To : EGYPTFORCE,

Desp II40 22-6-19 Recd I610 22-6-19

X7142 22. *Year 191945.*

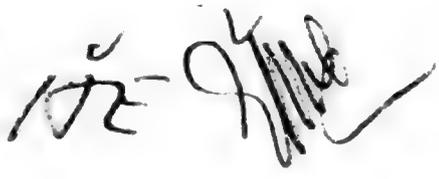
---

Proceeding by air on June 24th to Nablus <sup>x</sup> ? to see  
Noel returning June 25th. Colonel A.T.Wilson. Civil  
Commissioner.

---

Copies to Residency.  
C.P.O.  
B.G.G.S.  
Arab Bureau.  
B.G.I.

x *Correct Code presumably TERABLUS*

*(2) Palestine base.*  

Arabic Bureau

Passed to you. )

have read these reports,

3/7

French  
Col

CHIMP POLITICAL OFFICER	
G. H. Q.	
E. E. F.	
No.	.....
Date	.....

See

Copy 4  
9-19.

Return to  
Residency

KFB

see

6/7/19

Arab Bureau  
Cairo

CHIEF POLITICAL OFFICER
G. H. Q.
E. E. F.
No. ....
Date .....

Attached passed to you  
Please kindly return to Residency  
Alexandria when read.



*J. J. Add.*  
Care  
for CRO

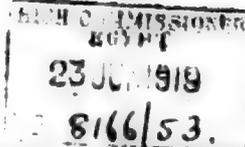
C.P.O. S.M.A.  
Arab Bureau

For your personal please.  
With C.P.O kindly pass the  
reports to Arab Bureau, when  
read, the latter returning them  
here.

Omîweedj  
Major

The Residence  
Alexandria.

28.6.19.



No. 15759  
Office of the Civil Commissioner  
Baghdad.

*K.W.*  
Dated 21st May, 1919.

To :-

- (1) The Under Secretary of State for India,  
London, E.N.I. ( 3 copies)
- (2) The Secretary to the Government of India  
in the Foreign & Political Department,  
Simla.
- ✓ (3) High Commissioner, Cairo.
- (4) P.O., Mosul.
- (5) Major E.W.C. Noel, C.I.E. c/o Desert -  
Corps, Aleppo via Cairo.

Memorandum.

A copy of the undermentioned correspondence is  
forwarded with compliments for information.

*Erskine* Lt.-Col., I.A.  
AG. Civil Commissioner  
in Mesopotamia.

Copy to :-

C.I.E., G. H. O. without enclosure.

' I(a)/2612 May 19th. Report of Agent '

*C.P.O.*

*Copy to  
To see*

No. I(a)/ 2612

General Head Quarters.

Mes. Ex. Force.

19th May, 1919.

Copy of Agent's report from Misibin, dated 31st April, 1919 ( Received under M.S.O. Mosul No. I.M/469 dated 12th May, 1919).

---

1. The Sheriff of Mecca continues to send letters and propaganda to all the Arab Sheikhs. Such a letter was brought to the Sheikh of the Tai by two Arabs of -- Samarra. The letter was signed by Mussain ibn Ali, and exhorted the chief to resist the English and not to obey them in any case.

2. The Shammar, and other tribes near Turkish - country, are receiving arms and ammunition from unknown sources. It is generally believed that these arms come from the Sheriff.

3. Ali Naif Bey, the son of Mustapha Pasha of Jezire, visited the Sheikh of the Tai, and the two of them made a speech to the tribesman in favour of resistance to the English.

4. One of the sons of Ibrahim Pasha, late chief of the Illi, has been touring his own and neighbouring -- tribes, and, with the Koran in his hand, has been accepting oaths of resistance to the English.

5. About 15-4-19 a meeting of notables was held at Misibin to discuss the advisability of removing all Christian witnesses of past misdeeds. The gentlemen -- present were Yedur Bey, Hajji Ibrahim Bey, Sheikh Mus Chelebi, Sulaiman Effendi, Shekir Effendi, Rafik Effendi, Abdul Ghani Effendi, Suad Effendi, Abdul Rezaq Effendi,

Abdul Aziz Chelebi and one other. At the meeting -- Sulaiman, Shekir, and Rafik Effendis made very strong protests against any further massacres and pointed out that by so doing all previous crimes would merely be repeated without any benefit to any body. As a result of this meeting the danger of massacre or oppression has been removed for Christians in Nisibin.

6. On the 26th April news arrived that the -- Anaizah were crossing the Khabur in order to attack the Shammar. This force was mounted on camels ( two men to each beast) and horses. The crossing of the Khabur -- occupied three days. As soon as the news arrived Sheikh Muhammad of the Tai removed his men to the neighbour -- hood of Nisibin. The Shammar also got ready for hostilities and Sheikh Muhammad of the Tai joined their -- forces. Within three days these two tribes had 3000 -- armed men some 20 kilometres west of Nisibin awaiting the advance of the Anaizah. A part of this force was dismounted.

The Shammar asked Ali Batti to afford shelter for their cattle in the hills, and Sheikh Muhammad of the -- Tai asked the same of Sheikh Hammo. Both were refused.

Up to the present the Shammar have not been --- attacked by the Anaizah ( 31-4-19). Never has such a thing happened before. Although the Shammar and the -- Anaizah have been enemies for centuries, yet they have never come to blows just outside the suburbs of Nisibin. It is believed locally that the Anaizah have been egged on by the English, to whom the Shammar and Tai are hostile. It is even reported that the English have furnished the Anaizah with machine guns.

The Shammar and Tai Sheikhs have given orders to their men, that in the event of any English being present with the Anaisah forces, they must retire without fighting as it will not do to come to blows with the English yet.

7. Account of the journey from Mosul to Misibin.

Up to the present the Sinjar route has always been kept open by the Vezedis and the Tai. On my arrival at Sinjar I found that the Shammar were barring the road to Misibin. The Vezidis would not move and I had to -- wait 8 days before guides found a road left open. I had to leave in the night with 4 armed men and travel for 12 hours. In the morning I arrived at the Tai who were encamped 20 kilometres from Misibin. By them we were taken for Turkish Mohammedan merchants. We were told that Sheikh Muhammad of the Tai intended to resist an English Government and that he strongly supported the return of the Turkish regime.

At present Sheikh Muhammad of the Tai charges 45 piastres for allowing the passage of a donkey through his territory, and 6 mejidihs for that of a camel. He can raise about 1000 men all told.

8. Headquarters 13th Army Corps are still at  
Diarbekr.

5th Division are still at Ward  
15th Regiment is at Diarbekr.  
14th Regiment is at Izzet Pasha  
Station.

Two battalions of 24th Regiment arrived at Misibin on the 30th April with two machine guns only and 15 -- mules carrying S.A.A. This move is in consequence of the tribal disturbances between the Shammar and the Anaisah.

No battalion in the 13th Army Corps is more than 100 strong in riflemen.

Six guns are reported at Diarbekr and six at Mardin. There is a force of Cavalry at Diarbekr.

At Mardin the Kurdish Committee now only exists in name. Meetings do not now take place. The members found that they could not agree on a settled policy. This does not mean to say that they have not caused a great deal of unrest among the tribes. No large -- confederation has however been formed, and the only result has been to raise a spirit of ambition in the heart of every independent chief.

There is no news of any alliance between a Kurdish tribe and an Arab tribe.

No fresh massacres have taken place recently near Misibin or Mardin.

-----  
Copy to :-

The Civil Commissioner.

The Deputy Commissioner of Police.

For information.

SD/

Captain.

For Chief of the General Staff, Mes. Ex.  
Force.

Code, Cypher

or clear? W 17

# TELEGRAM.

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
25 JUN 1919  
No 8166/54

*Ld 8 for H2  
no-fugy K.B. 500  
25/6/19*

From Political

Baghdad

To

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT

Cairo.

Despatched (Date and time) 25.6.19

Received (Date and time) 25.6.19.

No. GA 725

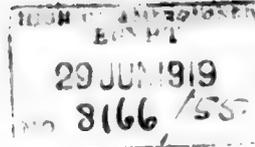
Dated: 25.6.191

Am deputing Major Noel to visit Constant-  
inople on my behalf to discuss Kurdish affairs He will  
return via Cairo and will report to High Commissioner  
before returning to Aleppo.

Addressed India Office Repeated Cairo  
Constantinople Baghdad Teheran

*[Handwritten signature]*

M.17. Copy: original is 722/52



Noel

26.6.19

28.6.19

98

26.6.19

Reference to General Staff Tiflis report of April 25th on Armenia State vide Appendix to A. show that those approximate populations of six vilayets (grs.undec.) Judging by gross inaccuracy of figures given for Diarbekir villayet figures for other vilayets which presumably emanated from Armenian sources should be accepted with greatest reserve. As result of extended tour access to Turkish records and meetings with heads of various Christian communities I estimate pre-war and present populatione of Diarbekir Villayet as follows; Kurds pre-war 750,000 present 600,000.

Armenians	120,000	-----	20,000
Syrians	70,000	-----	20,000
Chaldeans	11,000	----	3,000
Turks.	3,000	----	2,500.
Miscellaneous (Tozidis, Circassians and Greeks )	10,000	-----	8,000.

Seventy five per cent of Armenian population is found in North half of the Vilayet but this does not alter the fact that even before the war there was in all districts an overwhelming preponderance of Kurds.

Addressed to Baghdad repeated to Cairo and Constantinople.

H. B. ✓  
806  
17/19

RECEIVED  
1 JUL 1919  
8166/56

## Diary of Major E. Noel on Special Duty.

I left Mosul for Nisibin on April 7th.

*April 8th.*

I passed a party of three Moslems and four Christians, returning from the Sherif's army disgusted at not having received any pay for five months. They complained that the Arab officers could fill their pockets by exactions from the villagers, but that they, the men, did not come in for a share of these pickings.

I met considerable parties of demobilised Turkish soldiers, many of whom had been prisoners of war in Russia. They spoke well of the treatment they had received at the hands of the Bolsheviks.

*April 10th.*

I stopped a night with the Jahaish Arabs, who were encamped several miles from the nearest water and were drinking a greenish yellow slime consisting chiefly of cattle urine. They say that at this time of the year it is only necessary to water their animals once every three days.

*April 11th.*

I stopped the night with Naif Beg, son of Mustapha Pasha of the Miran. The Miran, who are nomadic, belong to the Jezire Qaza, which is part of the Diarbekir vilayet, but which the P.O., Mosul, now thinks should be transferred to the Mosul vilayet. Naif Beg, who is the paramount chief, struck me as a sensible type of individual. He is very apprehensive as to possible retributory action that may be taken against him on account of the part he took in massacring nine hundred Christians at Faishkhabur, and points out that he was only carrying out the orders he received from the Turkish Government. He seems to have his tribe well in hand, and will, I think, come into line and give no trouble provided the terms we offer him are not too onerous. I pressed him to go into Mosul and promised him a safe conduct.

The Miran have remained down in the plains for the last three years owing to the war, but this year they want to move up to their summer quarters near Van. They cross the Tigris at Jezire at the end of May, and it is therefore important that our occupation of Jezire should take place before that date. They are on bad terms with the Shernakh Kurds with whom they always come to blows when migrating through their country.

*April 12th.*

After leaving the Miran I entered the limits of the Nisibin Qaza. The Kurdish tribes in this area are a very rough lot with strongly developed predatory instincts. The Turks and the Kurdish national party have been successful in their propaganda with them, and have thoroughly frightened them as to the horrible measures of retribution which the British mean to take on account of the massacres of Christians. The success of their propaganda depends solely on this factor of fear and for this reason can be considered as ephemeral. The tribes, unlike those of Sulaimaniah, have little or no developed national instincts, and would be quite ready to accept any form of administration provided that it was backed by a show of force and that a general amnesty was proclaimed. As matters stand at present there is a possibility of the present feeling reaching a focus which would express itself in armed opposition. In the case of one tribe with whom I had to pass the night, the chief, on our arrival, openly announced that he was prepared to resist to the last the advent of the British, but his resolution considerably wavered when it was explained to him that "British" and "Armenian" were not exactly synonymous terms. He had, however, been so worked upon by the Kurdish Mufti at Jezire, that his attitude was distinctly truculent and we passed a somewhat anxious night in consequence.

*April 13th.*

I passed a Turkish officer on his way to Jezire to release his family and a Nisibini merchant retiring to Mosul for safety. There seems to be a growing feeling of uneasiness owing to the departure of Turkish troops, and the local Government's consequent failing grasp of the tribal situation.

The Kurdish tribes, especially the confederation under Ali Batti, who live in the hills to the north of the road, are becoming emboldened and the roads are generally unsafe. The insecurity has been further increased by the withdrawal of the Turkish gendarmerie posts, of which only one now remains, that at Dugir (18 miles from Nisibin).

There are half a dozen German motor lorries stranded at Dugir in charge of a Turkish officer and a few men. He hopes to get some of the lorries back to Diarbekir as soon as petrol, which is said to be on its way, arrives. None of the men of this post have received any pay or rations for five months, but their discipline seems as good as ever.

Telegraphic and telephonic communication is maintained by the Turks between Dugir and Nisibin, the extension of this double line to Uqnah (the first Telegraph Office in British Occupied Territory, 37 miles from Mosul) is very little damaged and communication could easily be re-established (*vide separate Report attached*).

At Dugir there is the last railway station constructed by the Germans on the railway alignment. The buildings are temporary, and are in charge of a few gendarmes.

April 14th.

I passed Turkish railhead at Nimitli, eight miles from Nisibin. The temporary station buildings and store sheds are in charge of a party of seven gendarmes. The German aerodrome was situated here.

I reached Nisibin in the forenoon and called on the Qaimmaqam and other officials who gave me a most friendly and cordial reception.

April 15th.

An endless round of calls and lavish hospitality at the hands of the local officials and notables. Trains arrive here and return to Tel Abiadh three or four times a month. There are two locomotives in running order, one out of order and 50 to 60 waggons here. The track to Ras el Ain is not ballasted and owing to neglect is in a bad way. Trains run at night at ten kilometres an hour and during daylight at 25. The Arabs are continually cutting the wires, but so far have not interfered with the permanent way.

There were large quantities of stores at railhead, but little is now left. A good deal was looted and a further quantity was removed to Diarbekir on lorries at the end of March. These lorries had long been lying idle for want of petrol, but a consignment was obtained from the German sawmills on the Euphrates near Birejik.

The balance of the stores still remaining were removed by Capt. Wyllie, R.E., of the railway administration, who arrived here by train from Aleppo about the 5th of April and returned on the following day.

There are about 400 demobilized Turkish soldiers at Mardin and 200 at Raselain, whom it is hoped to despatch by train on the 18th of April. This will complete the Turkish demobilization in this area.

Political.

Up to within a week or two ago the general feeling in the town was inclined to favour a British occupation and administration. Of late, however, rumours have been coming through from Mosul of the adoption of a policy of retaliation against Moslems for the massacres of Christians. The result has been that feeling is at present on the whole against us and interested persons have had a good deal of success in frightening the tribes with the bogey of a pro-Armenian and vengeance-breathing Britisher. The agitation is, however, an artificial one, and it would only require a proclamation of a general amnesty in regard to murders and massacres carried out by Kurds at the instigation of or by the direct orders of the Turks, and a formal declaration that we shall only insist on restitution of immovable property, for the present agitation to subside and the population of this area to accept our administration meekly and willingly. If it is inconvenient to make this declaration in so many words, it would be sufficient if I were authorized to inform people verbally to this effect.

Any attempt to adopt a policy of retaliation will only foster religious and racial hatred, put Moslems against us *en bloc* and involve us in serious military responsibility. It will moreover imperil the lives of many Christians who are at present at the mercy of the tribes and beyond the range of our assistance. From every point of view I cannot too strongly urge a policy of conciliation and compromise.

The movement in favour of Kurdish Independence rest on no natural foundation. Without the bogey of retaliation and the dread of a pro-Armenian policy the Kurdish nationalistic propaganda would never have achieved the present measure of success. The Kurdish tribes of this area have become debased and spoilt by long contact with Arabs, and they do not now possess those national instincts and characteristics which distinguish the tribes round Sulaimaniyah and Rowanduz. They have adopted Arab customs, Arab dress, and to some extent the Arabic language. All their correspondence is conducted in Arabic as opposed to the Kurds, east of Mosul, who employ Persian and in some cases Kurdish itself. The tribes in this area do not even mind being confounded with Arabs, whereas in other parts of Kurdistan there is a distinct antipathy to everything Arabic, as is well illustrated by such household Kurdish proverbs as the following :—

*Na baizhin bo arab murhabba aw darina sar dangi abba.*

Don't unduly encourage an Arab or he will come and commit a nastiness on the skirt of your cloak ;

or again—

*Arab waku maish hendi kish dakan har taina paish.*

The Arab is like a fly ; the more you shoo him away the more insistent he becomes.

April 16th.

A telegram has been received by notables of Nisibin from Shaikh Abdul Qadir at Constantinople, who is one of the leading figures in the movement in favour of an independent Kurdistan under Turkish suzerainty, urging the importance of not injuring the nationalist cause by letting Kurds kill Christians. A further telegram was received from the Kurdish chief, Amin Ali, the son of Badr Khan Beg, saying that he had been appointed Vali of Diarbekir by the Turkish Government and that he hoped to leave shortly to take up his duties.

Nisibin, 17th April, 1919.

E. NOEL, MAJOR,  
On Special Duty.

## Note on Strength of Tribes in Nisibin Qaza.

Name of Tribe.		No. of families.	No. of villages.	No. of sowers.	Total number of rifles (Modern).	Paramount Chiefs.	REMARKS.
Kurd.	Alian ...	1,000	60	50	300	(a) Shaik Mohomed-i-Maran (b) Esmail-i-Hafse Barahat.	(a) Owns allegiance of 20 villages in the plain—(b)'s followers lived in hills N. of Jezire Nisibin road. The tribe is situated 30 miles off Nisibin. Thirty of the sixty villages are deserted.
	Sarhan ...	1,500	30	40	500	*Ali Batti ...	These tribes form a robber confederation under Ali Batti, a typical brigand. They live in hills N.E. of Nisibin in the nahya known as Habak.
	Solkan ...						
	Hawairki ...						
Chomar ...	2,000	30	50	200	Ahmad Yussif ...	Quiet and obedient.	
Arab.	Aznaour ...	300	6	20	200	*Hama Ahmed Mché ...	Situated a few miles N. of Nisibin along valley of Gargar. Have guarded German railway settlement, and always treated Christians well. Their chief is believed to be mildly anglophile. At enmity with Ali Batti.
	Dakshuri ...						
	Tamini ...	3,000	35	600	1,500	Shaik Mohomed ...	South of Nisibin. Turbulent and more than a match for any Kurdish tribe. Twelve sub-sections.
Sedentary Kurds who have lost their tribal organization.		2,000	40	...	100	Each village has a Mukhtar	No cohesion. There would scarcely seem to be a possibility of concerted action. These Kurds inhabit villages round Nisibin and are sometimes known as the Pinar Ali Kurds.

\* These two chiefs, who are at enmity with each other, are the most influential. The other tribes follow their lead.

Rifles are Turkish Mauser "Kuelu'h Chapli."  
300 rounds of ammunition available per rifle.

The figures in column 4 represent the number of men who would normally turn out. In case of grave popular excitement these figures might be increased by 50 per cent. The excess would be armed with old pattern rifles.

Nisibin,  
17th April, 1919.

E. NOEL, MAJOR,  
On Special duty.

## Positions of Christians in Qaza of Nisibin.

According to the responsible heads of the Christian community, there is at present no real danger of a massacre of Christians, but the position is unstable and with the further departures of troops and the consequent weakening of local Government may change for the worse. There certainly exists a fanatical party who would like to see a further massacre, but they can do nothing in face of the moderate party and the helpful attitude of the Turkish Government.

There is no doubt that according to Turkish standards an honest attempt has been made to better the lot of the Christians. From April 1st to the 15th two hundred of the two hundred and fifty Christians who have been in position of slaves with local Moslems have been released by order of the Qaimmaqam. In the case of a young girl who did not wish to leave the Moslem family with whom she was living, the Qaimmaqam brought all the pressure he could to bear on her to return, and finally the Christians themselves agreed willy-nilly to the reasonableness of her remaining where she was. There are no doubt other cases of individuals who have adopted Islam, but they are not many.

But with the Turkish character what it is, there can be no full reparation until a competent staff of European inspectors is appointed to superintend and enquire into the various cases as they arise. Whether they could enforce impartial justice without a backing of European troops is difficult to say. Their task would be much simplified and its execution expedited if that backing were present.

At present in Nisibin itself there are some fifty Christians who are virtually slaves in Moslem households. The majority are at liberty to leave forthwith if they had anywhere to go, but a residue remains who are the property of people too wealthy and influential for the Turkish Qaimmaqam to coerce. It is only the pressure that could be brought to bear by a foreign representative that could affect their release.

Apart from the question of the release of individuals there is also the far more knotty problem of the restitution of stolen property. So far nothing has been given back and there is very little chance of anything being done in this direction if the Turks are left to themselves. I consider it would be highly expedient and politic for us to confine ourselves strictly to demands for restitution of immovable property. The sooner we issue a proclamation to this effect the better. I have consulted the more enlightened and responsible heads of the Moslem community on this subject and the adoption of the policy recommended would meet with their acquiescence and agree with their sense of justice, whereas any attempt at retaliation or recovery of immovable property would foster racial and religious enmity, range the whole of Moslem opinion against us, and involve responsibilities of a serious military nature.

The general position as regards Christians in this Qaza may be summarised as follows :

In Nisibin itself of the 120 Christian houses existing before the war, ten remain. There are in addition about sixty families of Christian refugees from other parts of Turkey.

In the whole area of a pre-war population of 1,500 Christian families about four hundred remain, of whom one hundred and fifty occupy a group of seven villages to the north of Nisibin, and the remaining 250 are at present scattered among the surrounding tribes, where their position is little better than slaves.

Of the tribes in the Nisibin Qaza, the Tai Arabs under Shaikh Mohomed (3,000 families) and the Dakshuri and Tamiki Kurds under Hamu Ahmad Mehé, have consistently protected and befriended the Christians, and it is chiefly due to their influence that the fanatical party is kept in check.

There are not many Armenian refugees in this Qaza, but the plight of such as there are is worse than that of the Syrians, owing to the absence of any organization which could befriend them or put them in touch with their relations.

The Jews have not suffered in any way.

*Nisibin, 15th April.*

E. NOEL, MAJOR,  
*On Special Duty.*

## Report on the Economic Condition of the Qaza of Nisibin.

Area 2,200 square miles. Population 50,000 or 23 per square mile.

Of the total area of 2,200 square miles, 1,800 are arable.

Present area under cultivation, 50,000 acres.

This Qaza is a rich one with great possibilities of agricultural development.

Water is plentiful and extensive irrigation could be carried out with small initial outlay. The soil is fertile and gives a return of 20 to 30 to 1 in a good year. It only requires a stable form of Government to attract cultivators from the poor lands on the hill sides to the alluvial plain which is at present but little cultivated owing to the presence of a lawless nomad population and the fear of Shammar raids. A good example is the fact that only ten tons of cotton are normally harvested owing to the fact that camels show a great partiality to this crop. If the Arabs, however, could be kept in hand, the cotton crop would go up to 200 tons.

Owing to the war the population has been reduced by 30 to 40 per cent. and the general productivity by 45 per cent. In spite however of these figures, this Qaza may be considered to be in a relatively flourishing and prosperous condition. An exceptionally good harvest was obtained last year, with the result that with famine conditions and prices in adjacent districts, large sums were realized and the cultivators this year were enabled to sow the maximum of seed per plough, viz., 1,500 to 2,000 kilos. There is, moreover, the prospect of excellent crops this year. No distress exists and no relief work is anywhere needed.

The coming harvest is estimated at approximately 27,000 tons of wheat and 18,000 tons of barley.

### Irrigated Crops.

About 40 villages (of a total of 120 inhabited and 120 deserted) have water for summer crops.

The following returns are expected :—

Millet.....	600 tons
Rice.....	200 "
Cotton.....	10 "
Kunji.....	20 "
Tobacco.....	15 "

### Population.

The population is semi-nomadic. That is to say, the more well-to-do of the tribesmen (about 60 per cent.) camp out over the plains in the spring, while their henchmen who live in the villages till the soil. Each tribe has a certain number of villages belonging to it, and when the summer sets in the nomad sections pitch their tents in the vicinity of their tribal villages. It is the villagers who have suffered from the war owing to the requisitioning of their plough cattle, conscription and forced requisitions of grain. The nomads have scarcely been hit at all; in fact there are some who maintain that they have on the whole profited. Of the 240 villages existing before the war 120 are now deserted, but in many cases their inhabitants have merely moved to other villages situated at a distance from routes followed by troops.

By far the strongest tribal organization is that of the Tai Arabs who number 2,500 to 3,000 families, and own 35 villages. They all owe allegiance to one chief and are more than a match for any one or even a combination of the Kurdish tribes. They are the only Arab tribe permanently settled in this Qaza. The vanguards of the Shammar visit the southern edge of the district in the spring.

The Kurdish Tribes number 6,500 families, and are composed of three main groups, who have preserved their tribal character and who own allegiance to a recognized chief.

The remaining 2,500 families have lost their tribal organization and have become cultivators pure and simple.

There is a group of seven Christian villages situated to the North of Nisibin in the nahya of Habak.

### Plough Cattle.

Before the war there were said to be 3,500 pair of plough cattle, mules, and oxen in about equal proportions, but this figure has now been reduced to 1,500.

A pair of plough oxen cost 20 to 30 Liras, a pair of mules 60 to 100.

### Livestock.

It is notoriously difficult to form a correct estimate of the number of livestock. The Turks collected a tax on 40,000 sheep, but perhaps another 20,000 if not more evaded the impost. This would give a total figure of 60,000 which is probably correct to within 50 per cent.

There are no *Crown Properties* in this Qaza.

### Prices.

Wheat.....	Rs. 150 per ton.
Barley.....	Rs. 75.
Meat.....	Re. 1 per kilo.
Ghee.....	Rs. 1/8 per do.
Sheep.....	Rs. 30 to Rs. 10 each.

Turkish Lira (gold) 7 new medjidiehs, 9 old medjidiehs.

New medjidieh, 27 piastres.

Old medjidieh, 20 piastres.

Turkish Lira note, 30 piastres.

*Hygiene.*

Nisibin was noted for its unhealthy climate in summer and prevalence of malaria. Since the beginning of the war the Turks have forbidden the cultivation of rice in the vicinity of the town with very very beneficial results as regards hygiene.

*Government Buildings.*

The German hospital buildings are being used. They consist of four detached well-built stone bungalows containing altogether about 15 rooms (15' x 15').

The German railway administration settlement is situated three miles north of the town on the hills about three hundred feet above the plain. The site is a very pretty one overlooking the well-wooded valley of the Gurgar Chai. The buildings are first class and would afford excellent peace accommodation for a battalion of British infantry. The main block of buildings has a plinth area of 12,000 square feet.

There are also extensive railway sheds and stores at the station.

*Nisibin, April 17.*

**E. NOEL, MAJOR,**

*On Special Duty.*

## Report on Mosul-Nisibin Telegraph Line.

A well insulated double wire on Iron standards follows the motor road the whole way. It is of the same type and construction throughout.

From Uqnah to Mosul (37 miles) Telegraphic communication already exists. From Uqnah to Nisibin, the following repairs are required :—

	Miles.	Bays of wire. 80 yds. each.	Insulators.	Poles.
Uqnah to Awenat ... ..	15	10	11	5
Awenat to Tel Ismail ... ..	16	27	24	7
Tel Ismail to Demir Kapu ... ..	23	Line not examined but damage may be taken to be approximately in same proportion as that on other sections.		
Demir Kapu to Dugir ... ..	20	2	6	2
Dugir to Nisibin ... ..	18	Line is being maintained by Turks.		
Totals ... ..		39	41	14

Sufficient material is available from (1) branch lines to Telegraph offices at Awenat, Tel Ismail and Demir Kapu. (2) From railway telegraph line which lies never more than two miles distant.

The railway telegraph line (double wire on iron standards) runs from Nisibin to Uqnah, and appears to be little damaged.

## Diary of Major Noel on Special Duty.

*April 17th.*

Visited the German Railway Settlement on the hills three miles north of Nisibin.

Excellent accommodation for a battalion of British Infantry exists. The buildings which are of the bungalow type are situated about 250 feet above the plain on low hills overlooking the valley of the Jaghjagha, which at this point is well wooded with dense fruit gardens.

The water supply is from the river by a steam pump and a five inch pipe to a cistern whence the water is filtered.

After the departure of the Germans the buildings were occupied for a time by Turkish troops and some damage was done, but at present there is a guard of gendarmes and a few men of the Kurdish Chief, Hama Agha Mehe.

The train which left yesterday for Ras el Ain only made 20 kilometres in 5 hours owing to the grass which had grown up on the track and which prevented the wheels from gripping the rails.

*April 18th.*

I learnt to-day that the Turks, presumably with a view to insuring themselves against a possible British occupation, are trying to realise as much of this year's revenues as possible by farming them out ahead. I have not been able to ascertain what proportion of the revenues has thus so far been hypothecated.

*April 19th.*

Left to-day for Mardin with an escort of 12 gendarmes. The roads to the west of Mardin are almost as unsafe as those to the east.

Nearly all the Kurdish tribes who live along the foothills of the northern Jezire have been paying tribute to the Shammar for the last 50 years or more. This tribute is really nothing more than blackmail to allow them to tend their flocks and cultivate their lands with a medium of security from the Arab nomads. Its amount varies in different localities, but on an average may be put at roughly a piastre a sheep and two medjidiehs a plough.

The following table shews to whom the tribes from west to east pay tribute:—

Yezidis of Jebal Sinjar	to	Mishel and Farhan.
Miran	to	Dokish and Gharbi.
Jibur (Arab)	to	Asi.
Alian	to	Kurdi Samit.
Aznaor	to	Mishel.
Dakhori	to	Ali Abdur Rezak.
Kiki	to	Mara Amr.
Milli	to	Mohomed ibn Abdul Karim.

The Tai Arabs are the only tribe who do not pay tribute.

I stopped the night at the village of Amuda occupied by Dakhori Kurds. Their two Chiefs, Farhah Agha and Shukri Agha, were encamped quite close, so I rode over to see them and found the Shammar Chief, Ali Abdur Razak, with them collecting his tribute. He is an unpleasant, harsh old man, very anti-British and pro-Sherif, and he went out of his way to make himself rude and objectionable. After shouting at me for some time he got up and walked out of the tent, muttering that all these British want exterminating like the Armenians.

There is no doubt that a systematic and extensive hostile propaganda has been at work for some time amongst the tribes. It is noticeable that the same type of lies has been spread over a large area, such for example that Colonel Leachman is really an Armenian, that we levy crushing taxes, that the system of tribal administration set up in the Sulaimaniyah and Rowanduz districts is merely a ruse to facilitate our peaceful penetration into the country, and that once that penetration has been effected the position we have accorded the tribal leaders will be taken away from them. It would not, however, seem that this propaganda has been the work of Turkish officials, at all events not that of the present lot, who are not C.U.P. men, but emanated from Moslems who dread a European administration and an impartial inquiry into the claims of Christians. They apparently hope to influence the decision of the Peace Conference by exciting local feeling in favour of a continuance of Turkish rule.

*April 20th.*

Reached Mardin, and called immediately on the new Mutassarif Zaki Bey who has just arrived from Constantinople. He is anglophile and opposed to the C.U.P. He seems very ready to oblige and assist in every way and certainly seems honestly desirous of doing what he can to redress the wrongs of the Christians.

I also called on Col. Kan An, commanding the 5th Division of the 6th Army, whom I found similarly obliging and civil.

*April 21st.*

The heads of the American Mission were deported during the war on a charge of encouraging Armenian revolutionaries. Only two lady workers were left and they have remained here uninterrupted. Quite lately the advance party of four from the American Relief Commission for the

Near East arrived here from Constantinople and are lodging in the Mission quarters. The personnel of the Mission (three ladies) are co-operating with the Relief Commission and, I understand, have received instructions to subordinate their mission work to that of relief.

It would seem to me that the attitude and views of the members of the Mission and Relief Commission are essentially sound, and that if we should take over the administration of the country we would not find ourselves in any way hampered politically by their presence at Mardin.

They agree to the expediency and wisdom of a policy of a clean slate, frankly acknowledge that the system of unrestricted doles adopted by the Mission in the past resulted chiefly in pauperizing the people, and are prepared to reverse that policy now, and combine reconstruction with relief. Further they hold no brief for the Armenian, and are fully aware of his defects, and the fact that he to a great extent is responsible for the troubles he has experienced.

*April 22nd.*

I have called on the heads of the various Christian committees :—Jacobite, Roman Catholic, Syrian and Chaldean. The Armenians have no religious head here.

#### JACOBITES.

The patriarch Elias struck me as an oily prelate full of guile and cunning. He is shortly proceeding to Constantinople, and it is commonly reported that he has been brought over to declare for a continuance of Ottoman rule at Mardin. It is certainly a fact that the Jacobites have suffered far less than the other Christian communities and that they have somehow or other succeeded in accommodating themselves to the idiosyncrasies of Turkish rule. Part of their liturgy is read in Turkish and they insert prayers for the Sultan and the Turkish Government.

#### ROMAN CATHOLIC SYRIANS.

The Roman Catholic Bishop, Gabriel Taponi, is a clever priest of the Jesuit type. In the event of British administration he will prove a difficult factor as he is ambitious and is convinced that he can use a British administration here to further the temporal power of his church at the expense of the Moslem interests.

#### CHALDEANS.

The Chaldean Bishop Israil strikes me at first sight as a benevolent and sensible old gentleman. It is generally noticeable that the Chaldeans get on better than other Christian Sects with Moslems.

*April 23rd.*

The most difficult of the immediate questions is that of the return of Christian children from Moslem homes to their rightful guardians. In many cases, either from fear or genuine attachment, they refuse to return and claim that they have turned Mohamedan. Nevertheless, the parent or guardian has certainly a right to claim his children or wards, and there would seem to be no other course but to force the Moslem families to give them up. Such action may perhaps be possible in the towns, but in the villages it is a different matter. There are many cases at present where Christian children are being ransomed from Kurdish families, since an appeal to the Turkish Authorities would merely result in the child being done away with.

#### NOTE ON TRIBAL SITUATION IN MARDIN AREA.

As a result of hostile propaganda already referred to, the notion of armed resistance to British occupation is one which is familiar to the tribal leaders. A visible result of this propaganda is the avidity with which the tribesmen are buying up arms. So far the chief safeguard against any general tribal outbreak has been the inter-tribal jealousies and enmities. Of late, however, efforts have been made by Moslem notables to settle tribal differences and bring about tribal unity.

On the whole I am inclined to believe, at present, that a British occupation would not be attended by any real danger of tribal opposition, but on other hand the present position might easily change for the worse at any moment and lead to a situation which would demand our taking military measures to meet a tribal combination which might put up to 3,000 rifles into the field.

## Christian Massacres of 1915 in Diarbekir Vilayat.

The account here set forth is from material obtained during a short visit to Mardin. The opinions expressed reflect the merely local point of view, and are, therefore, likely to be distorted in many particulars, especially as regards the general political situation which led to the massacres.

Very soon after Turkey's entry into the war, signs were forthcoming that the future for the Christian was full of presage. The earliest cause for disquietude was supplied by the German Official, who from the beginning adopted a hostile attitude towards Christians, as being friends of the Entente, and put forward suggestions to the Turks calculated to turn his thoughts to massacre as a legal method of warfare. As early as December, 1914, a German in Mardin had given out that the Reichstag approved of a massacre of Armenians as a legitimate measure in view of their proved treachery.

The first tangible presage of the storm was a cryptic agency telegram "The people themselves must deal with traitors".

Who were the traitors referred to?

Among the Christians at Mardin it was at first thought that the allusion referred to the Armenian soldiery who were said to have deserted *en masse* to the Russians on the Caucasus front. No apprehension seemed to exist in the minds of the Mardinis that their town would be accused of disloyalty. Had not two mutassarifs, Shafiq Bey and Hilmi Bey, vouched to Constantinople for its loyalty? Not more than 2 per cent. of its Armenian citizens were members of the great Armenian organization, the Dashnaksaksio. The Roman Catholic Bishop, the spiritual head of the Armenian community, had from the pulpit warned his flock against joining secret societies.

Whether, in point of fact, proofs of active Armenian disloyalty were discovered at Mardin is difficult to state. The Turkish officials of '14 and '15 have disappeared. The records are not at present available, and the evidence of Christians is biased. The latter maintain that no secret supplies of arms and ammunition were disclosed as a result of the frequent house to house searches carried out by the Turks.

But even if Armenian treason could be proved to the hilt, there could scarcely be any contention, even on the part of the Turks, that the other Christian communities, Jacobite, Chaldean and Syrian, were parties thereto.

The people were not left long in doubt as to whom the word "traitor" referred to. Orders were received from Constantinople to disarm any Christian soldiers and gendarmes. Officers were told to dismiss their Christian servants and in future to allow no Christian to have any access to them. In January, 1915, all Christians were dismissed from Government employ. In February and March, Turkish officials, including even deputies, visited the tribes under the guise of purchasing transport animals, and openly preached the doctrine of death to the infidel. This was followed in April and May, by a more sinister measure—the formation of a Moslem militia recruited from men from 50 to 60 years of age not already called to the colours. They were armed with a rifle and sword and wore a red badge on the arm.

These successive events pointed to the existence of a policy previously decided on and worked out in all its details. It is said in fact that in December, 1914, a Secret Commission was formed with Talaat at its head and Rashid Bey, the Vali of Diarbekir, as one of its principal members. The Commission's instruction had to be obeyed implicitly on the pain of dismissal from Government service, or possibly a severer form of punishment. It is this which explains why two Mutassarifs were removed from Mardin in quick succession.

Openly the policy adopted was to:—

1. Deport suspects.
2. Put to forced labour anybody found in possession of arms.
3. Put to death anybody convicted of treason.

In practice, however, the secret procedure laid down was to arrange for the massacre of all three of the above classes under the following circumstances:—

A convoy of deportees was collected and told to prepare to start for an unknown destination in a few hours. After proceeding one or more stages under an escort of the local militia already referred to, they found themselves surrounded by local Kurds. The officer in charge of the convoy then read out a sentence of death purporting to have been signed by the Sultan, and the intended victims were offered their lives at the price of apostasy. On a refusal, which would seem to have occurred in the majority of cases, the convoy was split up into parties of a hundred to points where wells were available or deep trenches had previously been dug. They were then made to undress and this was followed by a general carnage in which the local Kurds participated. The rifle was not much used: the sword and Kurdish dagger being preferred. In many cases the victims were hacked about without receiving the *coup de grace*.

Such would appear to have been the procedure officially laid down and more or less adhered to in the case of the first few massacres in June. The following variations, however, soon crept in. The local officials before despatching a convoy squeezed their victims as much as possible with a

\* An Armenian store of arms was discovered at Diarbekir in May, and this seem to have provided the tar with which to brush all and sundry.

hope of a reprieve.\* On the day of the departure by means of effusive promises of safe conduct and even a show of courtesy, the victims were induced to load themselves with jewels and ornaments which were removed from them on leaving the town. The formality of reading the death sentence disappears, as before reaching the local Golgotha swarms of Kurds have collected and an impromptu carnage commences in which the militia escort participates. The women are stripped and raped. Some of the younger ones are spared to adorn Moslem harems, or be sold as slaves. The instructions to cover up the traces of their deeds are disregarded. The bodies are left naked on the plains—a curious detail—the men on their stomachs, the women on their backs.

It is difficult to understand the mentality or follow the logic of the authors of these standing instructions. One can only conjecture that they were actuated by the following considerations, childish as some of them may seem. They hoped to give a stimulus to the jihah by whetting the peoples' taste for blood, and they calculated that once having started the ball rolling in the manner indicated, the infection would spread and the Mahomedan population would carry on the massacre automatically until the Christian population entirely ceased to exist. It would moreover seem that the Turks wished to give a veneer of legality to the opening massacres hoping to throw the responsibility for its continuance on the tribes' religious frenzy and national feelings excited by Armenian perfidy. It has also been suggested that by conducting the massacres in lonely spots far from the towns some time would elapse before the news of them would spread and the other Armenians awaiting their turn would not disperse to the country side or be driven into active opposition. Further that the tidings would take the maximum of time to reach the outside world and America in particular.

The outstanding feature, which is free from all element of conjecture, is that the massacres were scientifically organised from Constantinople, and the local ignorant Moslem was only used as a tool. It is not he who should be punished, but the Turk in high places, and again the local Turk who acted as his willing agent, and who filled his pockets in the process.

The following is a list of the principal massacres in the Vilayet of Diarbekir; it also includes some that took place in adjoining districts.

It will be noted that the total of victims is made up as follows :—

Jacobites	...	...	...	...	96,000
Armenian (Gregorian)	...	...	...	...	45,000
Protestant	...	...	...	...	1,200
Armenian R.C.	...	...	...	...	6,000
Syrian R.C.	...	...	...	...	2,000
Chaldean	...	...	...	...	7,000
				Total	157,000

#### JUNE.

Date.	Locality.	Victims.	REMARKS.
1	Palu	1,200	Soldiers who had been working on chaussee for last 7 months.
1	Avinsh	200	Villagers.
1	Diarbekir	1,060	Carried out on banks of Tigris: included all leading men of town.
2	Bekhaire	100	Villagers.
9	Sairt	...	Whole Christian population including Chaldean Archbishop.
10	Kellek	2,000	Eight hours from Mardin. Whole village exterminated.
11	Bafarva	600	Seven hours from Mardin. Whole village exterminated.
11	Chaikhane	405	Six hours from Mardin. First convoy split up into small parties, stripped naked and hacked to pieces.
11	Bitlis	1	Armenian Catholic Bishop, Mgr. Jacques Topuzian.
12	Karput	1	Armenian R. C. Bishop, Mgr. Etienne Israilian.
12	Maisartie	80	Six hours from Mardin. Villagers.
14	Dara	30	Eight hours from Mardin.
15	Chaikane	75	Second convoy from Mardin. When one-third were massacred a reprieve arrived from Constantinople.
16	Mansourieh	95	Half an hour from Mardin. Villagers.
17	Banabili	70	Three hours from Mardin. Villagers.
19	Kalaat Mara	60	One hour from Mardin. Villagers.
20	Between Diarbekir and Mardin	12,000	Armenian exiles from Northern Armenia to Mesopotamia.
20	Malatta	1	Armenian R.C. Bishop, Mg. Michel Kaciadu.
25	Ibrahimie	4,000	Nine hours from Mardin. Villagers.

#### JULY.

Date.	Locality.	Victims.	REMARKS.
1	Tel Erman	1,500	Whole village wiped out. 4 hours from Mardin.
3	Gullieh	3,200	One hour from Mardin. Mutassarif watched and applauded from balcony of the Konak.
11	Dara	7,000	Exiles from Erxerour on their way to Ras el Ain.
13	Dara	500	Well-to-do women of Diarbekir. They were stripped and raped before being massacred.
14	Mardin	3	Inconvenient witnesses of a secret liquor Still run by the police.

\* Mamdouk Bey, the Commissioner of Police at Mardin, is said to have made L.T. 50,000 in this manner. He is now at Diarbekir conducting a vigorous anti-British propaganda under the guise of a Kurdish national movement. He should certainly be brought to book.

JULY—*concl'd.*

Date.	Locality.	Victims.	REMARKS.
17	Abdul Isam	250	Seven hours from Mardin. Chiefly women from well-to-do families in Mardin, also a priest aged 90.
19	Midiyat	7,000	Villagers and a party of seventy of chief men of Mardin.
20	Sor	650	Whole of Christian population.
24	Sor	290	Women exiles from Sairt. They were set on by local tribes and stoned to death.
26	Tel Afar	300	On Nisibin—Mosul Road. Armenian exiles from Mardin.
27	Mardin	2	Two young girls of good family taken by force to a Moslem Harem. Their bodies were found a few days later in the city drain.

## AUGUST.

8	Jezire	15 Villages.	Estimates population 15,000.
10	Kikie	390	Convoy of 500 women and children from Mardin to Ras el Ain. Women stripped naked.
11	Derike	100	10 hours from Mardin. Villagers.
16	Nisibin	800	Whole Christian population.
20	Jezire	6,000	Whole Christian population including two Chaldean Bishops.
21	Urfa	465	Soldiers.
22	Mardin	500	Jacobite women from Sor massacred on outskirts of the town.
23	Salakh	300	Four hours from Mardin. Women and children exiled from Mardin to Ras el Ain, escort participated.
24	Mardin	12	Armenian soldiers working on road.

## SEPTEMBER.

		Victims.	
10	Between Diarbekir and Mardin	8,000	Convoy of 12,000 women and children exiled from Kharput and Erzerum.
14	Nisibin	4,000	Remainder of above convoy.
15	Mardin and Harrin	126	Women and children exiled from Mardin to Mosul.
16	Diarbekir	1	R.C. Archbishop of Diarbekir, aged 67.
19	Urfa	25,000	Practically whole of Christian population.

## OCTOBER.

30	Near Diarbekir	1,000	Two parties of Armenian soldiers. One of six hundred, the other of four.
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MARDIN,  
April 25th, 1919.

• (Sd). E. NOEL, MAJOR,  
On Special Duty, Diarbekir Vilayet.

# Road Report—Nisibin to Marbin.

April 1919.

## EPITOME.

The road followed lies from mile 2 to mile 24, a few miles to the south of the main road and telegraph line. It is a fair motor track the whole way, impassable for motors for some days after rains up to mile 20. It would cut up badly in summer, but in the spring is said to be a better road than the main road.

Distances are given in time. Pace estimated at 39 mph., riding without caravan.

**Supplies.**—From numerous villages. Plentiful for small parties at all times, and sufficient for a brigade in normal year. Three days' notice would, however, be required.

**Water.**—From wells at each village. Sufficient for three hundred to one thousand men according to the village.

Total.	Intermediate.	Description.
0'00	0'00	Leave Nisibin, general direction 280 deg., by a metalled road. Cross river by a stone bridge. Metalling ceases. Culverts in disrepair. Double wire on wooden poles.
25	25	Pass Jewish Cemetery and Mausoleum on the left.
50	25	Dry watercourse. Stony bottom.
55	5	Leave main road and take track to the left (240 deg.).
1'05	10	Track divides. Take that to the right (270).
1'15	10	Large village of Kharab Kurdi. 2,000 yards to the right.
1'25	10	Village of Hodo. 20 houses Shaikha Kurds.
1'50	25	Dry water course. Stony bottom.
2'00	10	Water course. Stony bottom. Water pools in April, a week after rain.
2'15	5	Village of Sada. 40 houses of Pinar Ali Kurds.
2'45	30	Road changes direction to 300 deg.
2'50	5	Village of Olchai (?). 400 yards to the left. Thirty houses of Mirsini Kurds.
3'25	35	Village of Hasi (25 houses) of Dakhori Kurds, Nisibin.
4'15	50	Village of Amuda. 200 houses of Dakhori Kurds, one house of Christians. Chief of Dakhori, Farhan Agha, lives here. Stupid and unintelligent. General direction 295.
5'15	1'00	Cross railway and pass village of Tuki (5 houses).
5'20	5	Small stream. Motors should take crossing carefully as bottom is muddy.
5'30	10	Track divides. Follow the left (bearing 315 degrees).
5'55	25	Village of Gurguri. Twenty houses Kalanderin Kurds, whose headmen are Ahmad Agha and Mohomed Agha. Forward bearing 330.
6'50	55	Join main road and telegraph line. From this point road is stony.
7'50	40	Cross stony water course. Water in pools in April.
7'35	5	Village of Tel Hurin at foot of high mound. From this point metalled chausse exists. In bad repair to foot of hills.
8'25	50	Reach foot of hills and cross dry nullah by well-built stone bridge of three arches. Ascend by well graded metalled road in good repair, except for a few short stretches.
9'25	1'00	Reach Nisibin.

B.G.G.S.

DESERT MTD. CORPS.

ALEPPO,

April 3rd.

The following observations apply, as the result of first-hand knowledge, to the present situation in the Nisibin and Mardin areas, but there is every reason to believe that they apply in principle to all areas where Christian massacres took place.

After the conclusion of the armistice feeling was on the whole pro-British. That is to say that the bulk of the population looked forward to the proverbial British justice and the security and material benefits which a British occupation and administration would give.

There were, however, certain elements who for their own ends wished to turn this feeling against us. They were :—

- (1) C.U.P. men who from motives of revenge wished to queer our pitch.
- (2) Local Moslems who had profited by the massacres and were afraid of being punished and made to disgorge if we took over the country.
- (3) Sheriff's agents who are working to promote a pro-Sheriff feeling.
- (4) Certain Kurdish grandees and adventurers in Constantinople who wish to make themselves the rulers of an autonomous Kurdistan under Turkish suzerainty.

The efforts of class (4) met with no real success in the Mardin and Nisibin areas, but it is generally reported that their activities have borne fruit at Diarbekir and Jezire.

All the above classes (of which (2) is perhaps the most important) have been trying to create, by agitation and propaganda, a state of feeling favourable to their own cause, hoping thereby to influence the decision of the Peace Conference.

The various parties, although no great love is lost between them, are for the moment united in looking on the British as the common enemy. They are each trying to turn feeling against us and as a means to this end are frightening the tribes with the bogey of a pro-Armenian British administration, bent on punishing all and sundry implicated in the massacres of Christians, and placing Armenians in positions of authority over Kurds.

In this propaganda they have already obtained a considerable measure of success. They have been able to point to the recent arrests of Moslems at Mosul and Aleppo. The people, and especially the tribes, have been thoroughly frightened and a feeling hostile to us thereby aroused.

The tribes have been accustomed to the idea of armed opposition and are purchasing arms and ammunition. Although I do not think that at present there is any chance of concerted opposition there is a danger that if we do nothing to counteract the present hostile propaganda, some incident may arise which may bring the latent forces of opposition to a head.

The measure of counter propaganda which I would suggest would be a proclamation in the following form :-

" Pending the decision of the Peace Conference the British expeditionary forces are occupying certain areas of the Ottoman Empire. This occupation is being carried out solely in the interests of law and order, and to support the existing form of Civil administration, and not with any hostile or punitive intention against the tribesmen or people of those areas for acts committed by them during the war. It is, therefore, incumbent on all to remain law-abiding citizens and submit implicitly to the authority of the present form of civil Government (which the British troops are supporting). As long as they fulfil this condition they are guaranteed a safe conduct in the areas occupied by the British Forces."

(Sd.) E. NOEL, MAJOR,  
On Special Duty, Diarbekir Vilayat.

SECRET

PARAPHRASE

POL/701.



From : CHIEF EGYPTFORCE.  
To : GENERAL BAGHDAD.

E.A.2561. 28-6-19. desp. 1725.  
-----

Reference Political Baghdad's 7128 of 26th inst to Policy G.H.Q.

Any intimation we have received re relations with Kurds have only been received in telegrams from Wilson and Noel by B.O. of India Office I have as yet been informed of nothing. I propose, in view of this, to instruct Bell to work in that area which was originally laid down as constituting my sphere of influence but I have instructed him to work in closest cooperation with Major Noel or any other of your officers with whom contact may be established by him.

-----  
Distributed by G.P.O. G.H.Q. to :- C.P.O.(2).  
Residency  
B.G.G.S.  
A.C.P.O., KUS.  
File  
Ciphers

*hd Dalhousie*  
*K.B.*  
*200*  
*8/17/19*

PRIORITY  
\*\*\*\*\*

Paraphrase

SECRET

I.9549/S.

From:- GENERAL, BAGHDAD,

To:- EGYPTORGE, TROOPERS & CAIRO.



X.7198.

5/7/1919

Desp. 1680, 8th  
Recd. 0680, 8th

Just returned from South Kurdistan.

Owing to smash up and capture of SHEIKH MAHMUD and other leaders at BAZIYAN PASS the situation there very satisfactory. Mountain columns are now visiting three difficult ~~mountain~~ valleys. Propose leave Brigade with Mountain Artillery (Brigade) and Cavalry to support civil power for next two or three months and withdraw remainder of force.

After that it may be necessary to leave on BAZIYAN PASS, which is a suitable site, a small mixed force.

DERA GHAZI KHAN also recently assisted Persian levies with two aeroplanes to disperse Kurdish gatherings in hills east of border. To improve access to important centres, I am carrying out sufficient road making.

Majority of portion of people want law and order and if we can control the Sheikhs and reduce their armed following, Southern Kurdistan should remain strong and prosper.

Situation will be rendered easy to handle by the KIFRI KERKOUK line.

Circulated by "I", G.H.Q. to:-

Residency -  
B.G.G.S.  
B.G.I.  
C.F.O.  
I.A., Mount Carmel  
Ciphers  
File

Residency

KB  
262  
8/7/19  
Owi ✓

No. 300

Copy to P.O.

own

(93113/M.E.44)

Ld. Dalmeny for H2

K.B.

14/7/19

14 JUL 1919
8166/59.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to His Majesty's Representative at Cairo and transmits herewith copy of the under-mentioned paper.

Foreign Office,

July, 1919

Reference to previous despatch:

To the Secretary of State, No. , of

Description of Enclosure.

Name and Date.	Subject.
To The Treasury India office June 28.	Future employment of Major Noel.

No. 87495/M.E./44.

Foreign Office

June 28th, 1919.

Sir:-

I am directed by Earl Curzon of Kedleston to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No.P.3067 of the 11th June on the subject of the future employment of Major E.W.C.Noel C.I.E.

Lord Curzon ventures to point out that the proposed journey is likely to be dangerous in the present circumstances. Apart from the risk to the life of a valuable officer, the prestige of His Majesty's Government would, in Lord Curzon's opinion, suffer if Major Noel were to come to any harm in a district where it would not appear feasible for reparation to be exacted.

His Lordship presumes that necessary instructions will be given to Major Noel to preserve an attitude of strict impartiality, and to refrain in the future, as he appears to have done in the past, from giving any undertakings other than that the Allied Powers have no intention of pursuing a vindictive policy, or of disregarding the legitimate aspirations/

The Under Secretary of State,

India Office.

aspirations of any local section or community.

Subject to the above considerations, Lord Curzon concurs in Mr. Secretary Montagu's proposal to confirm Colonel Wilson's proceedings in the matter.

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient

humble Servant,

*C. Deluday*  
*K.S.*  
*2/12*

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
E. P. T.  
17 JUL 1919  
8166/60

No. 19987 <sup>7/17/19</sup> 59/39.   
Ag. Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia.  
Dated, the 4th July 1919.

To

(1) The Secretary to the Government of India  
in the Foreign and Political Department,  
S I I D A.

✓ (2) The High Commissioner,  
C A I R O.

ENCLOSURE.

A copy of the undernoted correspondence  
is forwarded with compliments for information.

*N. B. Tully*  
*Capt J. W.*  
Lt.-Colonel, I.A.

Ag. Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia.

Copy to:-

- C.G.S., G.H.Q.
- P.O. Mosul
- A.P.O. Rowanduz.

Telegram No. 38, dated 1-7-19 from  
High Commissioner Constantinople  
Telegram 7453, dated 3-7-19, to  
High Commissioner, Constantinople.

*CAJ* *C.P.O.V*  
*ISTV*

Telegram P.

From - High Commissioner, Constantinople.

To - Political Baghdad, (reported Foreign Office,  
London, under No. 1372).

No. 38.

Dated 1st July 1919, recd. 2-7-19.

Please see your telegram of 22nd May 1919,  
-----  
My 15389, May 25th. : No. 5760. A summary has been  
-----  
telegraphed by Foreign Office of a Memorandum submitted  
by American delegation in Paris. It deals with the  
attempts to create a Kurdish majority in Van and the  
~~Armenian~~  
~~Armenian~~ districts.

We understand from the P.O. that you believe  
-----  
My 16710, June 5th. : this report to be true and  
-----  
consider that the matter could be best handled from  
Constantinople through the Turkish Government.

I shall be grateful for definite proposals  
as to the line of action you would suggest. You are,  
of course, aware that the Turkish Government have no  
real sympathy with Armenian national aspirations. They  
would probably even go so far as to sympathise with  
any movement inimical to those aspirations.

It is however, the C.U.P. which control the  
movement and not the Turkish Government. The latter's  
influence over the C.U.P. and local chiefs does not  
extend to distant places. I am exerting myself to  
direct and keep the peace in this region until the  
Peace Conference finally decide the future of the country.

I think you will agree that to get the  
Turkish Government to quell these numerous disturbances  
in Kurdistan by force of arms could be neither

beneficial

beneficial or good policy. The only course which seems feasible apart from using our influence with the Government is to offer suggestions regarding particular local officers by name. Thus I could demand the dismissal of the Wali of Van whom I mentioned in <sup>my</sup> telegram No. 36 of June 16th to which by 18004/31/57, June 17th. : I am in your reply. It would however, be a far more difficult matter to replace these men as I have no since the occupation of Smyrna met a single intelligent Turk of any value whose private opinions are not strongly Nationalist. I am further hampered by considerations affecting local chiefs. The Armenian delegates have submitted a list of names of the agitators, a copy of which has reached me much mutilated, which includes the names of Siko and Sheikh Tahir - both men not easily to be coerced from this end, but who have recently evinced a friendly spirit towards you. You yourself have ruled out the name of Shaikh Abdul Kadir and we might persuade him to use his influence on our behalf in the Van district if we could convince him that we do not propose to make the Armenians the dominating factor in Kurdistan and provided also that he and Tahir could be fitted in together. However, whatever else is done I presume you have convinced the Kurds within your sphere of influence that the Peace Conference is not likely to approve of any further decrease in the Armenian population by massacres and terrorization (as were effected under the ~~Turk~~ regime of the deputy) in districts

like

like Van which are the/ natural dwelling places  
of the Armenians and hence the Armenians have <sup>been</sup>  
got rid of during the war.

High Commissioner, Constantinople.

Telegram. *Phy*

From - Political, Baghdad.

To - High Commissioner, Constantinople,  
repeated India Office London and Minister  
Tehran - copy Government of India by post.)

No. 7433.

Dated 3-7-19.

Please refer to your telegram No. 1372 of  
1st instant addressed to me and repeated to Foreign  
Office London.

The matter should I would suggest be  
discussed by you with Major Noel who by this time  
has no doubt arrived in Constantinople.

With a view to improving the situation in  
Central Kurdistan I make the following specific  
proposals, subject to his comments:

1. The removal from Heri, Diza and Bashkala  
of the Turkish garrisons. Propaganda of an  
anti-Armenian and anti-British nature, from these  
centres are being actively circulated and it is  
difficult for Sinko, Saiyid Taha, and other useful  
local elements to commit themselves entirely to us  
until these garrisons are removed.

2. In Van, Bitlis, etc. persons belonging  
to Abdul Qadir's group though they are not  
definitely hostile to the Turkish Government might  
be appointed as Governors. They might or the  
present

present be made use of under a new regime and in their own interests they would no doubt treat Christian minorities well. The good treatment of Christians should be made a condition of their appointment.

In their respective areas, <sup>Shackh</sup> Taha and Simko have expressed their willingness to protect and repatriate the Christians and act actively with us but at the moment it appears they expect as their price what we are not in a position to offer i.e. a free hand in the Urmiyah district.

Political, Baghdad.

---

Code Cypher, CYPHER.  
clear?

# TELEGRAM.

MISSIONER  
18 JUL 1919  
No 8166/61.

K.A.  
Ld D. A. J. 18/7/19

From POLITICAL

BAGHDAD.

Despatched 11.50 am 17.7.19.

To

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT

Ramleh

Received 12.38 am 18.7.19.

No. 7993

17th. July, 1919.

(? India Office) telegraph July 12th begins:-

Your telegram of June 4th. 6290.

? and ?

Noel's journey or your proposals are approved, but Foreign Office pointed out the danger of the journey and the impossibility of exacting reparation in case of mishap. Noel should be instructed ~~accordingly~~ to avoid undue risk and to modify programme if necessary with this object; also to maintain strictly impartial attitude and to give no undertakings other than those already sanctioned. Ends. Will you kindly inform Major Noel accordingly, and arrange for necessary instructions to be sent to the Walis of Erzerum, Bitlis, Van and Diarbekir.

Addressed to Constantinople, sent to Cairo, Teheran and Simla.

✓  
D.P.H.  
19/7/19  
②

59H.

copy

C.P.C. (2)  
C.S.I.

Following is paraphrase of Telegram No.7993, of July 17, from Political, Baghdad, to High Commissioner, Constantinople, repeated to Cairo, Teheran and Simla.

---

On July 12th India Office telegraphed with reference to Baghdad Telegram No.6290 of June 4th as follows:-

We approve your proposals for (and) Noel's journey, but danger of journey and impossibility of obtaining reparation in case of misadventure have been pointed out by Foreign Office. Instructions should be given to Noel that undue risk would be avoided and his programme modified if necessary with this object, also that strictly impartial attitude should be maintained and with the exception of those already sanctioned no undertaking should be given. End of message.

Please inform Major Noel and arrange for despatch of necessary instructions to the Pashas of Diarbekir, Van, Bitlis, and Erzerum.

Code, Cypher  
or clear? R

**TELEGRAM.**

15810  
25 JUL 1919  
No 8166/62

*Ed. Dalrymple*  
*14B.*  
*Copy to g. H. G.*  
*25/7/19*

From POLITICAL  
BAGHDAD

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched (Date and time) 21.7.19. 8.30 p.m.

Received (Date and time) 24.7.19. 5.40 pm

No. 8167

Dated: 21.7.19.

See General Baghdad's telegram X 7240 July 18 reporting the murder of two political officers one British sergeant and two Indian telegraphists at AMADIA inexcusable event of July 14th.

1. I visited MOSUL yesterday to confer with G.O.C. Mosul and Political Officer on political aspect of the occurrence.

2. It is clear that outbreak was not connected with the personalities of the two murdered officers. Captain WILLEY had only just arrived there and was an experienced and capable officer. Captain (? Macdonald) who was in charge of the gendarmes was a zealous and efficient officer who was always regarded as being very popular with his men with whom he was on excellent terms. Both officers had returned that afternoon after a week's tour in the RAIKAN district to the east of AMADIA and had telegraphed that afternoon to MOSUL that everything was quiet.

3. The outbreak as far as can be  
/ascertained

Code, Cypher  
or clear? \_\_\_\_\_

## TELEGRAM.

From \_\_\_\_\_

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched (Date and time) \_\_\_\_\_

Received (Date and time) \_\_\_\_\_

No.

Dated:

(2)

ascertained has a definite anti-Christian as well as anti-government origin. Numbers of Christians in the neighbourhood have been murdered and many Christian villages have been pillaged.

4. A detachment of troops was originally sent to AMADIA to facilitate repatriation of Christians now at BA.....BA (?) by restoring order in district. It had a useful effect in both directions but was withdrawn with my concurrence last month as its position was unsatisfactory from a military point of view.

5. It seems fairly clear that these officers were killed by local gendarmes at the instigation of local people and that primarily all the leading MOHAMMADANS notables are ~~concerned~~ (? more or less) concerned. It is too soon yet to estimate probable effect of the event on Kurdish communities in other portions of MOSUL vilayet but there is every probability that unless drastic punitive measures are undertaken

/similar

Code, Cypher  
or clear? \_\_\_\_\_

## TELEGRAM.

From \_\_\_\_\_

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched (Date and time): \_\_\_\_\_

Received (Date and time) \_\_\_\_\_

No.

Dated:

(3)

similar outbreaks will occur elsewhere.

6. The Kurds in this area have been treated with great forbearance and generosity during my eight months. Christians and Kurds alike have been given considerable advances in cash and in kind to enable them to REHABILITATE themselves. The leading MOHAMMADANS have been AMNESTIED for their past misdeeds and every attempt made to patch up a reconciliation between them and the Christians but your Kurd is notoriously treacherous and this is the latest example of his national propensity.

Addressed to India Office. Repeated to Simla Cairo Constantinople Teheran. Copy to General Baghdad who has seen before despatch.



Note by Major H. G. Noel, C. I. E., on special  
Duty on Baghdad Telegram No. 6666 of  
June 15th, 1919.

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Two alternatives are suggested,

- (1) Recognition of the principle of a  
Kurdish State within British sphere  
guided by British Agent.
- (2) Reconstituted Turkish Empire.

The objections to the second alternative would seem to outweigh any advantages that may be urged in its favour.

A current fallacy, fostered by the Turks, is that there is a considerable Turkish population in the Wilayats of Diarbekr, Van and Bitlis. In point of fact there is not a single Turkish village in these areas, the only Turks being a few officials and shopkeepers in the towns.

The task of bolstering up and trying to infuse fresh life into a moribund and inherently unhealthy form of administration over an entirely alien population, which does not desire the continuance of that Administration, is a thankless one. The unsatisfactoriness of the results to be obtained must react unfavourably on the power which accepts the responsibility.

The Turkish pan-Islamic party would have ample opportunity of stirring up unrest in the adjacent Kurdish areas which it is intended to include in the Iraq State as well as in Persian Kurdistan.

It is certain that the British advisers could not remain neutral. If we insisted on a large measure of decentralisation, we should be at logger heads with the Turks, whose temperament is absolutely foreign to decentralisation. If on the other hand we supported a Turkish bureaucracy, we should have all the best Kurds against us.

I consider that the other alternatives, viz. the recognition of a Kurdish State within the British sphere is the better alternative.

I presume that the use of the term "strong foreign administration" in para. 8 contemplates a sufficient backing of foreign troops. If not, I think, the policy of autonomous groups is the only possible one although I should look upon this with the greatest misgiving. Presuming occupation troops will be available I think it would be best to divide the country into tribal and non-tribal areas. The tribal appointments to be made in accordance with family claims, while the administrators for the non-tribal areas would be made by selection and later on by a combination of nomination and qualifying test. I feel sure that a good proportion of the present tribal chiefs and the majority of the Young Kurds would send their sons to England to be trained as administrators. The difficulty would be to keep going till those men began to be available.

Presuming that the chief object of the proposal is to enlist Kurdish good-will so as to ensure a peaceful border to the Iraq State, it would seem to me that the point in the proposals which is likely to give trouble is the inclusion in Iraq of four areas which are entirely Kurdish and at the same time extraordinarily fertile and productive. I refer to Sulaimaniyah with its valuable tobacco - Erbil, Misbin and Harran, three of the four finest wheat growing districts in the Ottoman dominions. On the other hand poor areas such as Tor, Abidin with a considerable non-Kurdish population (i.e. Syrian, Jacobites and Chaldeans) it is proposed to leave to Kurdistan.

Moreover as soon as a stable Government is set up, the mountain hinterland will be drained of its population to populate the submontane tracts we propose to take over and that in spite of whatever measure of

success the Kurdish State may achieve.

With a view to enlisting Kurdish good-will I consider it of the utmost importance that we should do something to meet Kurdish objections on this point. I would suggest the grant of assurances that if after certain term of years, the development and progress of Kurdish State justifies it, we will give the inhabitants of these areas the opportunity of deciding whether they desire union with the Kurdish State.

Aleppo,

E.W.C. Hoel, Major.

June 24th.

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HR ✓

K.B. ✓

EAU

Mr. Agg. ✓ see

EGYPT COMMISSIONER

31 JUL 1919

8166/64

## Diary of Major E. Noel on Special Duty in Diarbekir Vilayat.

May 22nd.

Avineh to Mardin. The road for the first four miles lies up the valley of the Shaikhan. The long spinneys of poplars, the banks of briar and dog roses, the sage and rush by the edge of the brook, might make the Shaikhan valley fit in with any English landscape.

The stream, I am told, used to abound with fish, but since the advent of the Baghdad Railway Company, dynamite has been so plentiful that the fish in most streams have been almost exterminated.

This country is still fairly well off for game. Moufflon, it is true, are now rare, owing to the number of small bore rifles and ammunition in the country, but hare and hill partridge (the Indian chikor) are fairly common. The Kurd is very fond of catching partridges with a call bird, which is a very dull and uninteresting affair. The male bird is tied up in a bush which is surrounded with a number of horse-hair nooses pegged into the ground. The sportsman lies up in a brushwood shelter about 30 yards away. The call of the decoy is taken up at a long distance, and half an hour or more elapses before the quarry finally arrives at the bush and puts his foot into one of the nooses. If four or five birds are caught it is considered a good day's sport.

The Kurd is also fond of coursing, and half-a-dozen greyhounds is a necessary appenage to a full-blown agha. Every Kurd considers himself a fancier of greyhounds, in fact a common Kurdish expression equivalent to "What every schoolboy knows" is "Everybody knows the points of a greyhound." Wolf-hounds, known by the appropriate name of wolf-throttlers, "Gurg Khaniqin," are also kept.

In winter the pockets and wooded ravines of the Tor Abdin plateau provide excellent woodcock shooting.

May 23rd at Mardin.

We are having an unusually cool May. The temperature at night is as low as 52 degrees, and during the day does not go above 70 degrees.

Caravans of goods are coming into Mardin regularly. The route is through the Jabal Sinjar, and then across to Nisibin through the Tai country. The Tai and the Shammar Araba are making a handsome thing by the tolls they levy on caravans.

The rates in force are as follows:—

Traveller	One lira.
Camel load	Six medjidiehs.
Mule load	Five medjidiehs.
Donkey load	Two and-a-half medjidiehs.

The Tai share of these tolls is said to have come to L.T. 200 last month.

A good deal of tobacco is leaving for Mosul and Dair az Zor. There is reason to believe that a great part of it is being smuggled.

May 26th.

Left Mardin for Diarbekir via Derek. The road follows the Deceauville line which the Germans built from Mardin to Badina Tupraghi (27 kilometres) to bring down wood fuel for the railway. It was intended to continue the line to Diarbekir from Badina. The oak forests that once existed around Badina have now disappeared, which is a cause of a good deal of resentment against the Germans.

The contractor has about a 1,000 tons of wood on hand for which he was to receive eight medjidiehs a metric ton at railhead, but which the Turkish military authorities say they do not now require. It might be worth while bringing this fact to the notice of the Control Board of the Baghdad Railway at Aleppo, as this fuel, so the contractor informs me, is for sale.

The Masidagh Kurds of this area say that their numbers have been reduced by 30 to 40 per cent. by the war, but that those who remain are relatively better off than formerly. Wealthy townsmen have in many cases acquired the land of those who have disappeared. The following are the rents charged:—

- Owner supplies plough cattle and seed. Owner takes two-thirds produce, tenant one-third.
- Owner supplies plough cattle and half seed. Owner and tenant share produce.
- Tenant supplies plough cattle and seed. Owner takes one-fifth.

In all cases these divisions are made after deduction of Government share.

May 27th.

Badina to Derek. As one gets away from Badina oak trees begin to make their appearance, till finally something as nearly approaching a forest, as is to be found in this country, is encountered. The trees here have a girth of 30 to 40 inches and are about 20 yards apart. The district is known as the Mazi Dagh (the oakgall mountains), the tribes inhabiting it the Chia Mazi. Before the war their chief income was derived from the collection and sale of oakgalls for export to Aleppo, where they are used for tanning. A family in a good year will collect as much as 600 kilos of oakgalls. During the war this trade came to a standstill, and the tribes suffered a good deal in consequence. They also attribute the decrease in their population to the fact that the Aghawat of Derek covet their lands, and are always egging on the Government and the surrounding tribes to go for them.

The following statistics were obtained as the result of individual inquiries in various villages that lay near the road:—

Village.	HOUSES.		PLOUGHS.	
	Before war.	At present.	Before war.	At present.
Korchia	3	3	3	2
Kasrik	75	32	40	16
Mahlabi	25	17	20	11
Kharok	70	15	20	6
Total	173	67	83	35

Four hours from Badina the road reaches the crest of the plateau overlooking the Northern Jezire plains, and descends by a difficult stony track down a rocky ravine to Derek, a small town of 300 houses with good water and extensive gardens.

May 28th.

At Derek I found as Qaimmaqam a Laz, named Masoud Beg, who was Qaimmaqam at Rowanduz at the time of the armistice, and whom I had to turn out and send to Mosul for repatriation. I experienced some difficulty in getting him to leave Rowanduz without having to use force, and in consequence was quite prepared for some show of resentment on his part, at this our second meeting under very different circumstances. Contrary, however, to my expectations, he turns out to be very friendly.

At this moment there appears to be a wave of friendliness towards Great Britain on the part of the great majority of Turkish officials. They seem to think we are prepared to let them down lightly, and that we, of all the Entente nations, are the most sympathetic to their interests. The American is looked upon as the champion of the Armenian, a notion to which colour is lent by the presence of the numerous American missions; while the attitude of the French to Moslem interests is well known to all. Quite recently at Mardin telegraphic instructions were received from Constantinople to form local branches of a society known as, "Friends of the English," and while at Sor I was waited upon by a local deputation which wished to express its gratitude to me, as a British official, for the action of the British Government in turning the Greeks out of Smyrna. As I am completely out of touch with the outside world the only thing to do on such occasions is to wear a sphinx-like smile.

As the result of conversations with the merchants of this place, and other enquiries, I have ascertained that in all parts of the district the Christians, with a view to keeping the lucrative trade with Aleppo to themselves, have been trying with a good deal of success to so frighten their Mahomedan competitors with stories of arrests of Moslems at Aleppo by the British, as to deter them from risking the journey. With a view to counteracting this impression, I have volunteered to issue safe conducts to any merchant wishing to visit Aleppo.

While paying a call at a house of one of the local notables, a Shammar Arab, one of Asi's men, who was here buying hawks, came in. He said that the Sheriff's agents were now with Asi, and had completely won him over to their cause, and that the Shammar would not accept British rule at any price and in fact were determined to drive them out of Mosul. A curious fact was that the name of the Sheriff was coupled with that of the Turks, and the general tone of the man's conversation was fanatical. As he presumably was inspired by what he had heard from the Sheriff's agents, one naturally asks oneself whether there exists already some collusion between Arab and Turk on a pan-Islamic basis, and some understanding to unite against the foreigner. In this same connection I would mention that there are at present in the Diarbekir Vilayat two Arabs, one Seyid Ahmad, son of Seyid Khalaf, who is the brother of the Naqib of Samarra, and the other a certain Seyid Mahdi of Samarra, who are conducting a rigorous anti-British propaganda

on pan-Islamic lines, and give out that they represent a widespread Arab movement in favour of Arab autonomy under Turkish protection. They have sent several telegrams to Constantinople in this sense.

When the Shammar Arab had finished his tirade against the British, a somewhat awkward pause ensued, which was relieved by a Kurdish merchant saying:—

“ We the Kurds do not mind what the Government is, as long as it is a just one.”

From the experiences I have had during the last two months along the Kurdo-Arab border line, it would seem that the Arab has a much more pan-Islamic orientation than the Kurd. Islam looms much larger on the Arab's horizon than any question of nationality. Whereas, with the Kurd, the national question will, I feel sure, eclipse all others. It may not perhaps do so at present, because the consciousness of national existence and aspirations is not properly roused, but that this consciousness will be aroused is a fact which impresses itself upon me more and more.

It follows from the above that the Kurd will be much easier to administer than the Arab, provided he feels that the development of his country on national lines is being properly provided for. The Kurd, moreover, is very receptive, and a great outlet for superfluous energy will be found in the development of the arts and crafts which will follow the introduction of a modern method of administration.\*

In the neighbourhood of Derek there are, I am told, the remains of ancient Kahrizes. At present the construction of the Kahriz is almost a lost art in this country. The country round Derek, in fact all along the edge of the Northern Jesire, where the long spurs and slopes run down from the mountain into the plain, lends itself to the construction of Kahrizes. It is also suitable for the building of dams to hold up spring and winter floods. The hill torrents which are met every few miles are often unfordable in the winter and spring, but are dry by the end of June. Irrigation works of this nature are very profitable in this country, where the Government's water rights amount to two-fifths to three-fifths of the crop.

May 29th.

To-day's march lay over the bare uninteresting Jesire plain, which at this time is already beginning to wear its usual parched and dried up appearance, except for a strip of verdure along the watercourses which descend in considerable numbers from the Karajah Dagh. They still hold a small volume of water which, however, is rapidly dwindling and is doomed to disappear entirely by the end of June.

In the vicinity of Derek, the cultivators complain of lack of rain, and poor crops in consequence, but as the Milli country is entered, rain would seem to have been sufficient. The yield in a good year is said to be about 15 to 1, which does not compare favourably with 25 to 1 at Nisibin.

Arbata, 12 miles from Derek, is the first village in the Milli country. The Kurds here stated that they had deserted their village during the war to avoid conscription, and that they had only returned this year to cultivate.

The following statistics gleaned from villages on or near the route will show the extent of the war's ravages in this area:—

Village.	Population.	HOUSES.		PLOUGHS.	
		Before war.	Now.	Before war.	Now.
Dina	Not-tribal Kurds of Derek.	35	22	35	22
Kharar	Ditto	20	10	20	10
Mukhat	Ditto	30	16	30	16
Arbata	Milli	27	12	27	12
Karakuzi	Do.	15	10	15	8
Mazik	Do.	18	11	18	11
		145	81	145	79

The striking feature of these statistics is the high proportion of ploughs to houses, *viz.*, a plough per family. In most districts three ploughs to four houses is the highest proportion that will be met with.

As regards herds it would appear that the war has resulted in a very great decrease. The figures in regard to two villages were as follows:—

SHEEP.

Village.	Before war.	Now.
Kharar	3,000	250
Arbata	3,500	300

\* It is well known that on the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's field and refinery in S. W. Persia, the best mechanics are Kurds. In fact, many Kurds have risen to positions of considerable responsibility.

The decrease in livestock seems everywhere universal and is apparently due to:—

- (1) Extensive forced requisitioning by the Turks.
- (2) Sale or slaughter of sheep for food during famine of 1917-1918.

We halted to drink coffee at the camp of some Yezidi tribesmen who extended to us a particularly warm and friendly welcome. Sir Mark Sykes speaks of the Yezidis in a very disparaging manner (*vide* p. 333 et sequitur, *The Caliph's Last Heritage*), which is difficult to understand, as such as I have encountered to date have seemed to me peculiarly affable, courteous and pleased to meet one. Sykes was, however, describing the Yezidi in his own country, and it may well be that long residence among other peoples has a beneficial effect upon him.

*May 31st.*

*At the camp of the sons of Ibrahim Pasha of the Milli.*

The impression I have gained here is a disappointing one. When Mark Sykes visited Ibrahim Pasha in 1906, he speaks of his wonderfully accurate knowledge of the affairs of Europe, of the consistent and liberal policy he had adopted, of how during his five days' sojourn, affairs were continually being carried on in the great tent. Horsemen with messages, letters and despatches were continually coming and going on all kinds of business which the Pasha transacted with extraordinary celerity, never seeming to have to pause to think, and always appearing certain of his mind.

The picture which now presents itself, even making due allowance for the effects of the war, is a lifeless and listless one. The Pasha's son has surrounded himself with a swarm of Arab retainers, and one might easily think oneself to be in any ordinary Bedouin encampment. One scarcely hears a word of Kurdish, and instead of the open, frank and blunt atmosphere of the Kurd, one sees nothing but dirty, swarthy Arabs with greasy black curls coiling over their necks, and dressed in a motley collection of yellow silk and soiled white nightgowns. They seem to have nothing to do all day but sit round a camel dung fire.

Mahmud Bey himself struck me as being of an unformed character, without any strong or distinctive traits. For all this he is a factor of considerable importance as he has inherited a good deal of his father's influence, if not his masterful qualities. Living in the surroundings described, he is becoming more and more Arabised, nevertheless he has no pro-Sheriff leanings, in fact he professes considerable apprehension of Arab encroachments on his domain.

The recent movement of the Anazeh (*vide* Diary entry of May 11th) was, so Mahmud Bey thinks, directed more against the Milli than the Shammar. It has resulted in a rapprochement between the Milli, Shammar and Tai. Mahmud Bey thinks that we were the instigators of the Anazeh, saying that they could not have crossed the river at Deir ez Zor without our compliance.

The Turks have been making great efforts to influence Mahmud Bey in their favour, but without much tangible result except that the propaganda of the Kurdish nationalist at Diarbekir has not had the success they expected. He has been approached by the Sherifian agents and quite lately was visited by Capt. Wooley from Aleppo. He also let drop the fact that he is in communication with Shaikh Abdul Qadir at Constantinople. It will thus be seen that Mahmud Bey is in a position of being courted from all sides by Turk, Arab, Kurd and British. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at if he obtains a somewhat distorted view of his own importance. The impression I gained was of a man who did not know his own mind, but who had certain proclivities toward a British form of administration although seasoned with a deal of misgiving. On the other hand, I think it very probable that Kurdish, Arab and Turkish emissaries have all formed a similar estimate of Mahmud Bey's attitude towards their respective interests.

One thing that must be put to Mahmud Bey's credit is that he gave an asylum to Armenians during the 1915 massacres. In this he was following the tradition of his family which has always been noted for its tolerance. In fact, the word Milli denotes a collection of millats or creeds, and the Kurds in the Milli confederation include Shias, Pagans, Pantheists, Zazas and Orthodox Moslems.

*June 1st, 2nd and 3rd.*

*From the camp of Mahmud Bey to Diarbekir over the Karajah Dagh.*

The Karajah Dagh rises to a height of 6,000 feet, and the road crosses the range at about 4,500 feet.

The ascent is by a long glacis, well wooded in places, leading to an undulating plateau well supplied with springs of good water flowing through small alps. Many good sites for a hill station or sanitarium could be found.

The Karajah Dagh affords summer pasturage to the Milli, but only a small proportion of the tribesmen avail themselves of it. At this time of the year but a few tents of the Chuvan and Mahali sections of the Milli were met. On the first day we stopped for lunch at the tent of one of the headmen of the Chuvan, a certain Aziz Agha. Tribal disputes and claims were being heard. I was much amused at the case of a querulous old man, some of whose sheep had been stolen and who had to pay three medjidiehs to a witness to give evidence for him. He had won his case all right, but the thief turned out to be bankrupt, so he was now claiming the return of his fee of three medjidiehs to the witness.

We stopped one night at an encampment of Mahalis who are Zaza Kurds. They were not so ignorant as extraordinarily naive. One of the first questions I was asked was how much money I had brought as a present for the Wali of Diarbekir. This was followed by one of them announcing that our penetration into their country was not for their good, and that they could not let me proceed to Diarbekir.

"But surely," I hastened to reassure them, "You must know that the Inglis are nearly all Ashirat\* and that they dislike the townspeople and their Fasad† as much as you do! Under these circumstances there is no harm to you, in fact much good from our coming."

It was curious with what avidity they altered their attitude, and fell over each other in saying—

"Oh, of course, if that's the case, we are the last people to want to interfere with you."

I mention this incident to illustrate the credulity in some matters of the tribesmen, and how susceptible a subject he is to propaganda, especially of a personal nature.

The chief of this section, one Abdul Karim, related to me the following story regarding the origin of his tribe, the Mahali:—

"Fourteen generations ago, when one of my great-grandfathers, Shawali, was alive, we were known as the Mitowri, and lived near Erzerum in the district known as Jabakchur. One day a Turkish Officer with a party of soldiers came to collect the sheep tax, and in the evening he told the chief of the tribe to send his daughter to his tent that night."

"My ancestor Shawali, to whom the girl was betrothed, then came to the chief and said, 'Leave this matter to me: I know how to defend our honour.' Now Shawali was a young man with no hair yet on his face. He dressed himself up as a girl, and told his chief to send word to the Turk, that his wishes would be complied with, but that he should send his soldiers away so that they should not be witnesses of his shame. To this the officer agreed, and when the soldiers had been sent away, Shawali went to the tent of the Turk and slew him. That same night the tribe loaded up their animals and made tracks for their present quarters."

It is not often that the Kurd is able to recount any tradition or story regarding his former history.

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\* Tribesmen.

† Mischief making.

## Political Situation at Diarbekir, and some notes on Local Notables.

As in most towns of the East, the notables of Diarbekir can, with certain exceptions, be classed as corrupt and degenerate intriguers. They oppress their tenants, devour men's property, and are always ready to go into partnership with a corrupt Turkish official to swindle the Government.

With these characteristics it is not surprising that many of them were active supporters of the C.U.P., to which, of course, they were attached solely by claims of self-interest.

With the eclipse of the C.U.P., and face to face with the possibility of a disappearance of the Turkish Government, these men joined the Kurdish National Party. At first they were doubtless put up to do so by the Turks with the bait of Kurdish autonomy under Turkish protection, which promised even more favourable opportunities than of yore for dirty work of all kinds. Since then, however, the tantalizing "Prinsep Wilson" of everybody doing what he likes, has slowly dawned on their horizon with all its alluring possibilities, and the erstwhile Turko-Kurds are now convinced that if they shout loud enough, President Wilson will hear and allow them to mismanage Diarbekir by themselves, and continue to fatten on the Christian property they stole during the massacres, without even having to share the spoils with the Turk.

To do justice, however, to the Kurdish Club, one must acknowledge that it contains some members who are actuated by a genuine desire to work for the welfare of Kurdistan as a whole. The best of them are, I think, Kiamil Bey Khyali Zade and Showket, son of Ismail of the Zaza family. Among others are Ihsan Bey, Dr. Fund Bey, and Akram Bey. The latter is energetic and has studied in Switzerland, but he is perhaps handicapped by belonging to the Jemil Pasha family, who were so identified in the execution of the 1915 massacres, and profited so materially thereby.

This party, which might be called the Kurdish moderates, would, I think, welcome a British protection and administration, provided the development of their country on national lines was assured.

The Ittilaf party, which is composed chiefly of Government officials, has succeeded in winning over two influential townspeople, viz., Niaz Bey and Naqib ul Ashraf Bakr Bey. Their presence on the side of the Government takes a good deal of wind out of the sails of the Kurdish Club. The latter during its early history was fairly subservient to Government, but of late it has been showing a more and more independent spirit, and resulted in the Government regarding it with increasing disfavour, and finally deciding to liquidate it altogether, which was done on June 4th.

The events which led up to this occurrence are not without interest in that they give a typical example of the many undercurrents of intrigue which are flowing here, and the methods which the Turks are having recourse to.

When the news of the occupation of Smyrna was received, the Turks were not slow to turn it to their own uses. News was spread of a massacre of Mohamedans by Greeks. The British were represented as having brought the Greeks in. The Kurds were invited to apply the analogy of Smyrna to Diarbekir. The English would come first and occupy the town, which would be but a prelude to the arrival of Armenian troops.

All these measures had their natural effect. A good deal of fanaticism was aroused among the common herd. The old reactionary and corrupt townsmen, who were now so-called members of the Kurdish Club and who dreaded an inquiry into their misdeeds of 1915, hoped for another massacre, which would destroy the last remaining witnesses of their dirty past and would effectually confuse the issues.

By this time the Christians were thoroughly frightened. A deputation was sent off in hot haste to me at Mardin to ask for British intervention. The Government also began to have its qualms. Its propaganda had slightly miscarried. Feeling was to have been worked up against the British, not against the Christians. The inopportunities of another massacre was fully realised. However, a neat way out of the difficulty suggested itself. The Kurdish Club was to be made the scapegoat, which could be done with a show of justice owing to the activities of its fanatical and corrupt members. Under the guise of protecting Christians, an inconvenient organisation opposed to Turkish sovereignty could be got rid of.

The Christians were accordingly told that it was the Kurds, egged on by the Kurdish Club, who thirsted for their blood. After their experiences of the last few years they are always ready to believe the worst, and it was only natural that they should have given full credence to this new presage of disaster. From words the Government proceeded to deeds. Guns were mounted on the citadel to overawe the town, the military were called out, the leaders of the Kurdish Club were arrested, and finally the Club itself was closed.

The Government had saved the situation—the situation of its own creation!

## Route Report, Derek to Veranshehr.

See Route 116A of Handbook of Mesopotamia, Vol. 4.

On sheet 24 of Maunsell's map a road possible for carts is shown connecting Derek and Veranshehr. As a matter of fact, the track is a rough one, very trying for mules owing to rocks and boulders. The crossings of the numerous watercourses are all difficult.

Near Derek the track winds over low stony ridges and then passes over a plain, where belts of good loam free from stones alternate with boulder-strewn country very trying for pack animals.

### Supplies.

Are plentiful. Grazing good. Fuel nil, except at Derek. Water plentiful to middle of June from numerous watercourses flowing from Karaja Dagh. All villages have small springs. No wells.

### Population.

Non-tribal Kurdish near Derek (as far as Kharar). Mixed Arab and Kurd of the Milli onwards.

### Pace.

Caravan time estimated at  $2\frac{7}{8}$  miles per hour.

		On leaving the town the track crosses the gardens along the valley and ascends gently round the ridge running down to the plain (general bearing 235 degs.).
25	25	The track now bends to the right (general bearing 256 degs.) and leaves the hills.
40	15	Pass a small stream. The country now becomes very stony.
1.45	1.05	Village of Bairukh, (60 houses sedentary Kurds), one mile to the right.
2.00	15	Pass several irrigation cuts.
2.20	20	Village of Kharar (10 houses, non-tribal Kurds). Village belongs to Seyid Agha and Zulfikar Beg, rich notables of Derek.
2.30	10	Cross a stream which dries up at end of June, and enter belt of good loam free from stones. Good grazing. Track continues on right bank of stream (bearing 225 degs.).
2.50	20	Village of Mukhat (16 houses, non-tribal Kurds), property of Haji Rashid Agha of Derek. Track continues on bearing of 215 degs. and becomes stony.
3.30	40	Prominent mound with a single tree on top is passed one mile to the right, and then cross a stony ridge (general direction 240 degs.) to a mound. Enter Milli country.
4.35	1.05	Cross stream which dries up by end of June. Village of Arbata (12 houses, Milli Kurds) to north of mound. Headman, Mahmud Agha. Water from spring. Enter belt of loam free from stones. General direction 257 degs.
5.35	1.00	Track turns left (245 degs.).
5.50	15	Cross big nullah with water till end of June. Bottom covered with boulders, and somewhat difficult.
6.20	30	Small rivulet with muddy bottom.
6.58	38	Deep nullah: bed stony and difficult.
7.05	7	Mound and village of Karakusi (eight houses of Milli). Zaptieh post. From this point, Derek, which is visible, bears 65 degs. Continue on bearing of 255 degs.
7.50	45	Stream, dry by end of June. Village of Masik (18 houses, Milli), half a mile to the left.
8.20	30	Large mound of Tel Tatarich.

From this point the author left the Veranshehr road to visit the sons of Ibrahim Pasha.

According to Handbook of Mesopotamia, Vol. 4, Route 116a, it is  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles from this point to Veranshehr.

# Memorandum.

*Diarbekir, June 10th, 1919.*

TO—POLITICAL, BAGHDAD.

FROM—MAJOR E. NOEL, C.I.E.

I herewith forward reports on the present condition of the various Christian communities in the Muttessarifiqs of Severek, Diarbekir, and Arghanna Maaden, of the Diarbekir Vilayat.

It will be noted that the totals of pre-war population are considerably in excess of those given in our official handbooks. This excess is to be explained by:

- (1) The fact that since those statistics were compiled, the limits of the Diarbekir Vilayat have been extended to include the Qazas of Weran Shahr and Bishairi: and
- (2) Our statistics would seem to have been taken from the work of M. Cuinet, published in 1892, and no allowance made for subsequent increase. Moreover, M. Cuinet obtained his information from Turkish sources, which are notoriously unreliable.

It will be noted that altogether, owing to the massacres and the war, the Christian population has been reduced from 151,820 to 18,959, *i.e.*, 132,861 have disappeared (87½ per cent. of the total population), and that there are 12,981 widows and orphans in a more or less destitute condition.

As regards the present condition of Christians in these areas, detailed information will be found in the annexed reports. To summarise this information, I herewith quote from my telegram No. 85, of June 9th, to the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad:

“ A substantial measure of justice has been done to Christians in Diarbekir in the way of restoration of persons and property. This, however, is not the case in the district. Small percentage of refugees in Diarbekir dare to return, and majority of those as make the venture only do so in partnership with Moslems. In some villages Moslems have squatted and claim possession; in others Christians are in position of bondsmen to local Aghas. Local Government is scarcely strong enough to obtain justice for Christians. Complete justice in town and district could be obtained by the presence of a strong European Commission. Whether they would eventually require a backing of European troops is difficult to say. Perhaps not, if Kurdish national aspirations were satisfied.”

E. NOEL, MAJOR.

STATISTICS OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN DIARBEKIR AND DISTRICT.

	DIARBEKIR					DISTRICT.						
	PRE-WAR.		PRESENT			PRE-WAR.			PRESENT.			
	Houses.	Population.	Houses.	Population.	Widows and Orphans.	Villages.	Houses.	Population.	Villages.	Houses.	Population.	Widows and Orphans.
Armenian ... ..	2,150	27,500	320	2,200	2,200	166	15,825	116,040	—	280	11,853	10,000
Syrian Jacobite ... ..	400	2,500	300	1,600	400	—	—	?	—	—	—	—
Syrian Catholic ... ..	65	330	—	274	75	—	—	?	—	—	—	—
Chaldean ... ..	300	2,100	200	1,072	221	9	150	900	—	30	160	—
Greek ... ..	59	450	—	300	65	3	?	2,000	1	—	1,500	20
<b>Total</b> ... ..	<b>2,974</b>	<b>32,880</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>5,446</b>	<b>2,961</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>15,975</b>	<b>118,940</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>13,513</b>	<b>10,020</b>

## Gregorian Armenians.

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### *Numbers.*

#### *Diarbekir Town.*

Pre-war 2,000 houses, 5,000 families, comprising 25,000 souls.

Now 300 houses, 250 families.

There are in Diarbekir 2,200 widows and orphans.

#### *District.*

A detailed list is appended. The totals give—

Pre-war 162 villages, 15,575 houses, population 114,040.

Now 280 houses, population 11,853, which includes approximately 10,000 widows and orphans more or less destitute.

### *Restitution of Property.*

#### *Diarbekir Town.*

A measure of substantial justice has been done, but the Turks find many excuses to delay and put off restitution of certain houses on various protests, the most common being connected with secession. Gardens have not yet been restored.

#### *District.*

Position represented as being most unsatisfactory. No security for life or property. Armenian survivors in position of slaves with Moslems.

### *Political.*

The Armenians think that another massacre would take place here if it was not for the presence of the Turkish troops. (This fear is, I think, exaggerated, and is chiefly due to occurrence of March massacre at Aleppo).

They are naturally opposed to Kurdish national aspirations, but agree that the Kurd, if not incited, would live peaceably with Christians.

## Diarbekir Sanjak.

QAZA.	PRE-WAR.			PRESENT.			
	Villages.	Houses.	Population.	Villages.	Houses.	Population.	
Diarbekir District...	25	700	5,500	—	—	4,200	Chiefly widows and orphans.
Lidjé Town ...	—	1,200	10,000	—	100	400	Chiefly women and orphans.
District ...	15	600	6,000	—	Nil.	—	
Silvan Town ...	—	600	4,200	—	150	500	Do. do.
District ...	38	3,500	30,000	Few	?	3,000	Very scattered.
Bishairi district ...	45	1,500	18,000	?	?	1,800	Very scattered and chiefly women and orphans.
Derek Town ...	—		Nil.	—		Nil.	
District ...	?	?	540	—		Nil.	

## Arghanna Maaden Sanjak.

Arghanna Maaden— Town.	—	275	1,500	—	?	75	Women and orphans.
District ...	?	200	1,800	—	Nil.	10	Men living in the ruins.
Arghanna Town ...	—	800	7,000	—	—	150	Widows and orphans.
District ...	—	Nil.	—	—	Nil.	—	
Palé Town ...	—	800	6,000	—	?	300	Widows and orphans.
District ...	37	2,500	2,000	—	—	500	Chiefly widows and orphans.
Chermük Town ...	—	250	2,500	—	—	3	Men. Widows and orphans.
District ...	2	2,000	15,000	—	—	200	

## Severek Sanjak.

Severek Town ...	—	500	3,000	—	30	100	Of original from other places. Chiefly widows and orphans.
District ...	—	Nil.	—	—	Nil.	500	
Veiran Shahr Town ...	—	150	1,000	—	—	15	Women and orphans.
District ...	—	Nil.	—	—	Nil.	—	
<b>TOTAL ...</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>15,575</b>	<b>114,040</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>11,853</b>	

## Armenian Catholics in Diarbekir Town.

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(Information supplied by Joseph Amerkania, Priest in charge of Armenian Catholics).

Before the war there were 350 families living in 150 houses. There are now 62 families, 150 orphans, and 60 widows. Twenty houses have been returned. Of the remaining 130 houses many are in ruins, but there are several which the local Government refuses to give up on the pretext that there are no heirs living.

A large number of Cult objects from the Church are in the possession of rich Mahomedans of the town.

There are many children and women in positions of slaves with local Mahomedans, both in Diarbekir and the district.

Armenian Catholics profess to be very apprehensive of fresh outrages on Christians.

Government represented to be well disposed but impotent. Greatly fear Kurdish Committee.

### *In Diarbekir District.*

Following villages, Chinkush (120 houses), Arghanna (50 houses), Bashnik (20 houses) and Korik (60 houses) were exclusively inhabited by Armenian Catholics. They were wiped out, and the villages are now occupied by Moslems. No trace of former inhabitants known.

## Note on position of Syrian Jacobites.

*Compiled from information supplied by Mitran Abdul Nuf.*

In Diarbekir itself the Syrian Jacobites were scarcely molested. Of all the Christian communities they know how best to get on with the Turks, and when the massacres were ordered they were officially excluded. In the districts, however, the Government very soon lost control of the passions they had loose (if they ever wanted to keep them in control), with the result that the Jacobites suffered there as much as anybody else.

### *Diarbekir Statistics of Population.*

Pre-war: 400 houses, 2,500 souls.

Present figures: 300 houses, 1,600\* souls.

There are 200 orphans and 200 widows more or less destitute.

### *Women and Children in Servitude with Moslems.*

*Nil.*

No complaints *re.* non-restoration of stolen property.

### *Political.*

The Syrian Jacobite, it is stated on good authority, has been won over by the Turk to declare for a continuance of Ottoman rule in the Diarbekir Vilayat. It is certainly a fact that recently in Mardin and Diarbekir, prayers were offered in the Church for the Sultan and the Ottoman Government, and a pious wish expressed that their benign rule might continue. The Patriarch Elias has recently left for Constantinople.

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\* This figure is, I think, too low, *i.e.*, informant has exaggerated losses.

## Syrian Jacobites.

	Pre-war Figures.			Present Figures.			Widows.	Orphans.	
	Villages.	Houses.	Population.	Villages.	Houses.	Population.			
Diarbekir District.	25	600	4,000	12	100	650	200	200	
Diarbekir Town ...	—	400	2,500		300	1,600			
Weranshahr Town.		130	700		30 to 35	160			
Weranshahr District.	5	80	350	Nothing left.					
Silvan Town ...		60 to 70	400		4	22	?	?	
Silvan District ...	15	350	2,100						As far as known nothing left, but there may be a few refugees who have returned.
Lidje District ...	16	420	2,100		?	?			Massacre took place, but fate of survivors unknown.
Severek Town ...		150	700		1	6	100		30 women and children in servitude with Moslems.
Severek District...	15	500	3,000						Believed to be massacred, but no details available.
Derek Town ...		20 to 25	80 to 100		1	8			
Bishairi District...	32	750	3,120	Nil.					Nothing remains except a few women and children in Moslem homes.

## Syrian Catholics at Diarbekir.

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*Compiled from information supplied by Kasbulos, their Priest.*

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In Diarbekir before war there were 330 souls living in 65 houses. There are now 274 souls occupying 53 houses. (30 widows and 45 orphans).

All their property is said to have been returned.

No Cult objects were taken.

One girl known to be still with Moslems in Diarbekir.

Cannot say how many are with Moslems in district.

There have been a few cases of Moslems voluntarily giving up Christian children.

Syrian Catholics profess to live in constant fear of a fresh massacre. Fear the Turk, and consider the Kurd to be a simple person susceptible to good influences. If his evil genius, the Turk, was removed, they think they would get on peaceably together.

There were no Syrian Catholics in district, except a few families at Severek, which are now believed to have disappeared.

## Chaldeans.

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*Note compiled from information supplied by their Bishop,  
Monseigneur Sulaiman.*

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The Chaldeans are all of the Roman Catholic faith.

### *Numbers.*

#### *Diarbekir Town.*

Pre-war: 300 houses, 2,100 inhabitants.

Now: 200 houses, 1,072 inhabitants, which includes 121 orphans and 100 widows, more or less destitute.

#### *Diarbekir District.*

Pre-war: 2 villages, 35 houses, 170 inhabitants.

Now: 30 houses, 85 inhabitants.

#### *Silvan District.*

Pre-war: 7 villages, 115 houses, 731 inhabitants.

Now: 75 survivors in position of bondsmen to Moslem landowners.

### *Restitution of Property.*

In Diarbekir itself all property returned.

In Silvan, Moslems have squatted on land, and former Christian proprietors are their farm labourers.

### *Restitution of Women and Children.*

In Diarbekir town all have been restored.

In Diarbekir district there are 6 children in Moslem households.

In Silvan the 70 survivors are the bondsmen of Moslem landowners.

### *Political.*

The Chaldeans are, if anything, opposed to Kurdish national aspirations. They are relatively satisfied with present Turkish officials in Diarbekir, and praise Ittilaf party as opposed to Kurdish nationalist party. They, however, agree that the Kurd, if not incited, would live peaceably with the Christian population.

## Greek Orthodox.

*From information supplied by Wafil Kevekchi.*

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### *Statistics.*

Before the war there were 257 Orthodox Greeks in Diarbekir occupying 29 houses, of whom there now remain 176 (93 women and 83 men), the balance having been massacred. There are about 50 widows and children among the survivors.

### *Return of Property and Slaves.*

Houses and property have in most cases been given back. In one of two cases, as well as in those where heirs are not forthcoming, houses and gardens have not been returned. There are one or two women and children still with Mohamedans in Diarbekir.

### *Political.*

The Kurds are represented to be desirous of a fresh massacre, but are held in check by Wali, Djoudel Bey, the G.O.C., Khalil Bey Arkan Harb, and Ettilaf party. Kurdish Club said to be neutral to Christian interests. Kurds themselves would not molest Christians unless egged on by Turks and town notables.

### *District (Silvan).*

In the villages of Bakhos and Killisa in the Kaza of Silvan, there were 583 Greeks (Orthodox) before the war, of whom 63 males and 95 females now remain. These survivors are in the position of complete dependence to the local Kurdish Beglar, who have appropriated the village to themselves. There are some 20 women and children in Moslem households.

### *Arghanna Maaden.*

The two hundred families of Greek Orthodox were not interfered with, although the Armenians were massacred wholesale. This is attributed to action of local Muttesarif.

### *Conscription Figures.*

The Greeks at Maaden supplied 47 men, of whom six have so far returned.

The community at Diarbekir and Silvan supplied 50, of whom three have so far returned.

### *Present Attitude of Christians.*

Position at Diarbekir fairly satisfactory as long as present Wali and G.O.C. remain.

At Silvan no security whatsoever, and no redress from despotism of local Kurdish Beglar.

Arghanna Maaden. No definite information, but believed to be satisfactory.

## Greek Catholics in Diarbekir.

### *Information supplied by Acolyte Bazil.*

Before the war there were 30 houses and 30 families. Twelve were massacred, but 18 managed to hold on, being connected by business interests with Moslems.

There are ten widows and five orphans.

Turks have restored buildings except in a few cases when a claimant owned two, only one being given back and the other retained for accommodation of Moslem refugees.

A certain amount of property has been returned, but there are many gardens which on one pretext or another (the most common being absence of heirs) have not been restored.

Only knows of one case of children being kept by Moslems.

Considers there is an always present danger of further massacre.

Shares view of Syrian Catholic priest Kasbulos *re* Kurds and their susceptibility to good influences.

#### *Supplies.*

Taking this district as a whole, it produces but little surplus to its own needs. The southern plain villages feed the hill districts: However, without unduly raising prices, about 400 tons of wheat and barley, in proportion of two to one, might be available.

#### *Production.*

Wheat	...	...	...	...	6,000 tons.
Barley	...	...	...	...	3,000 ..
Millet	...	...	...	...	2,000 ..
Gram	...	...	...	...	1,000 ..
Rice	...	...	...	...	?

#### *General Conditions.*

The destructive effects of the war have operated very unevenly. The poorer hill tribes have suffered the most, whereas the plain villages, especially those owned by influential townspeople, are relatively more prosperous, although the population has been reduced owing to conscription. Not more than 5 per cent. of conscripts have returned. On the whole, it may be said that the productivity and population have been reduced by about 35 per cent.

#### *Prospects for this Year.*

A fair harvest, but not so good as at Mardin and Wairanshahr, may be expected. This is due to the fact that rains failed in March.

#### *Livestock.*

Reduced to about 25 per cent. of pre-war figures. The number of sheep and goats is estimated at 15 to 25 thousand.

#### *Revenues.*

The revenue demand this year, assuming wheat to be £12 a ton, should be approximately:—

				£
Land Revenue	...	...	...	15,000
Sheep Tax	...	...	...	800
<b>Total</b>	...	...	...	<u>15,800</u>

#### *Crown Properties.*

Nil.

#### *Land Tenure.*

Water is all Tapu.

#### *Prices.*

Wheat	...	...	78 medjidiehs a metric ton.
Barley	...	...	45 medjidiehs a metric ton.

#### *Currency.*

Lira	= 7½ medjidiehs.
Turkish Lira Note	= 33 piastres silver.
Nickel	= 37 piastres to a medjidieh.
Medjidieh	= 20 piastres silver.

**POPULATION.**

The population is exclusively Kurdish. The Christians of Derek are to all intents and purposes wiped out. The following is a list of the Tribes :—

Name of tribe.	No. of villages.	No. of families	No. of modern rites.	Location.	Names of headman.	REMARKS.
Metini ...	28	500	50 (?)	In hills west of Diarbekir-Derek road.	Haji Buzagha, Ahmed Agha, Abdul Karim, Agha Ali Dahi.	There are another five villages in the Diarbekir Qaza. The tribes take their lead from the Milli.
Mahali ..	15	400	50	In hills between Chir Maji and Garaja Dagh.	Each village its own Mukhtar.	The Metini are chiefly herdsmen and they lead a semi-nomadic existence. Zaza Kurds of the Milli confederacy who emigrated from Erzerum district 14 generations ago. They cultivate a good deal of rice irrigated from streams from the Karaja Dagh; about half of them move up in summer to the Eastern slopes of the Karaja Dagh, these three villages under Diarbekir.
Chia Mazi ...	8	240	20	On Chia Mazi Mountains to E. of Derek.	Each village its own Mukhtar.	Soil stony and poor—subsist chiefly by keeping sheep and collecting oakgalls; have suffered much from war. On bad terms with surrounding tribes. Reputed as robbers.
Dasht i Grou, subsections are Dombula and Shamrik.	30	900	100	North of Mardin-Derek road.	Darwish Beg, Mahmud Beg, but in reality each village its own Mukhtar.	The soil of this district is fertile. Sedentary. Loosely connected with the Milli confederation.
Surikan Alias Bari ...	11	450	50	On plain south of Derek.	Mukhtars ...	Sedentary Kurds who have lost most of their tribal organisation. Claimed by Mahmud Beg as part of the Milli confederacy.
Lul ...	8	250	40	On plain south of Mazi Dagh.	Mukhtars ...	Sedentary Kurds; there are an additional 14 villages in Mardin Qaza.
Atrapshahr ...	25	800	70	In vicinity of Derek to the south.	Mukhtars ...	Sedentary Kurds. Villages belong mostly to Derek notables.
Derek ...	1	400	20			
	126	3,940				

NOTE.—Turkish records show 159 villages in the Qaza, the figure arrived at here may be somewhat low, but there are certainly some deserted.

Christian population in Derek none, in district	Pre-war Figures.		Present Figures.
	Armenians (a)	Syrians (b)	Chaldeans
	...	1,200	N.L.
	...	400	60
	...	100	2 (?)

(a) In proportion of 45 per cent. Gregorian, 45 per cent. Catholic, 10 per cent. Protestant.

(b) In proportion of 45 per cent. Jacobite, 45 per cent. Catholic, 10 per cent. Protestant.

## Report on existing aerodromes and possible sites for same in Diarbekir Vilayat.

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### *Nisibin.*

Plenty of suitable ground to north of station. German aerodrome was at Nimitli, railhead of Baghdad Railway, 9 miles east of Nisibin.

### *Mardin.*

German aerodrome was south of railway station, which is situated at foot of hills one hour's ride from Mardin.

### *Midiat.*

There is flat ground to west of town, but it would be difficult to find a space of the necessary dimensions which had no cultivation on it.

### *Sor.*

No ground suitable.

### *Between Mardin and Derek.*

Half-a-mile west of station of Chinareh on Deceauville railway, 11 miles from Mardin, there is flat ground, which is, however, rocky, and would require a lot of work to put it right.

### *Derek.*

It would be necessary to select a site on the plain three miles or more to the south.

### *Diarbekir.*

Turkish aerodrome situated half-a-mile from town on both sides of main road to Kharput.

## Notes on Kurdish Etiquette.

On arriving at a village or encampment, one can usually take it for granted that one is a welcome guest, and without further ado enter the tent or the house of the headman. An Englishman may safely give the usual Mahomedan salutation of "Salaam aleikum," to which the host replies with the customary "Aleikum es Salaam." In Kurdistan Christians and Jews instead of "Salaam aleikum" say "Good morning" or "Good afternoon"—in Kurdish "Subaita bekhair" and "Aiwareta bekhair," to which the host replies "Qowi be khair salamat."

The host then invites the guest to be seated, using the formula "Karam beka."

When seated, look towards the various people in order of precedence, raise the right-hand level with the face, and say "Marhabba," the reply to which is "Marhabba mizhta minata" (I am much obliged to you).

On wishing to take one's leave, say to the host "Be khatir awa," or for an important personage "Be kimmata awa." The host replies using one of the following three formulas:—

- (1) Be khair hati (Persian "Khosh Omadid.")
- (2) Sar sara hati.
- (3) Sara chaw hati.

A more elaborate and ceremonious dialogue on parting is as follows:—

*Guest.*—"Im a min beda az bechim."

With your permission I will be off.

*Host.*—"Av ru suba nacha."

Don't go to-day or even to-morrow.

*Guest.*—"Isha min gelleka az gellek mamnun zhe ta."

I am most awfully obliged to you, but I really am very busy.

*Host.*—"Istaghfar ul Illah. Min che kirria tu zhe min minate dagirri."

God forbid. What have I done that you should be obliged to me?

*Guest.*—"Be khatir awa."

Good-bye.

*Host.*—"Be khair hati."

Your coming was auspicious.

If one's host has entertained to a considerable extent and one wants to express one's thanks warmly, use the following formula:—

"Az zhe wa gellek mamnun bum. Hawa gellek ajiat haisha."

I am very much indebted to you. I am afraid I have put you to great inconvenience.

If paid a visit welcome one's guest with "Be khair hati." "Sar sara hati" and "Sara chaw hati" are used for very big personages or by inferiors to superiors.

The guest replies "Khude zhe ta razi bit. Az gellek zhe ta mamnunam." (May God bless you. I am much obliged to you).

### General Notes.

A request should be prefaced with "Karam beka" (have the goodness to). For "Thank you" use "Tashakur dakam." In most cases, however, it is sufficient to raise the hand in token of recognition. The response to "Tashakur dakam" is "Be khair hati." Educated Kurds, however, often say "Istaghfar ul Illah."

If camping near a village, when visiting the headman on arrival no invitation to dinner will be made, as it is taken for granted that one is a guest. If one leaves one's host to retire to one's tent, one should not return to the host's tent or house without being asked.

Note that the senior by precedence takes the initiative in all matters of ceremonial and greeting, etc.

### A few don't's.

Don't use the left hand when eating.

Don't fondle a dog.

Don't sit down with one's feet in the direction of one's host. It is better to sit cross-legged if one can—if, however, this is inconvenient, apologise by some such expression as "Please excuse my Farangi habits."

## Report of the Qaza of Derek.

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*Population*—25,000.

*Area*—1,000 square miles.

*Population per square mile*—25.

*Agriculture*—(Wheat and barley).

This Qaza may be considered as consisting of three belts, which, placed in order of fertility, are:—(1) Jezire plain, (2) foothills and upland valleys and plains, (3) hill country.

*Jezire Plain*—30 villages (approximately).

The soil of the plain is fertile, and gives a return of 20 to 25 to 1. About 1,800 kilos are sown per plough.

*Foothills and Upland Valleys and Plains*—60 villages.

About 1,000 kilos of grain sown per plough. Average yield 12 to 1.

*Hill country*—40 villages.

Very little cultivation. About 500 kilos sown per plough, and yield about 6 to 1. Inhabitants subsist chiefly on their flocks and on the collection of oakgalls.

*Irrigated Crops.*

Rice, cotton, tobacco and peas.

A number of villages of classes 2 and 3 cultivate rice, which is renowned for its good quality.

There is little or no irrigation on the plains. There is, however, considerable scope for the extension of irrigation by: (1) Holding up surface water from the hills and (2) construction of Kahrises. The country would seem to be particularly favourable for works of this nature.

*Forests.*

A good deal of the oak forests on the east side of the Qaza was cut down for firewood for the Baghdad Railway. It is estimated that about 20,000 tons were supplied. Another 100,000 tons are available. The price paid the contractor was 8 medjidiehs a ton at railhead which was situated in the forest.

The forests also supply oakgalls. It is calculated that a family can collect in a good year 600 kilos, and that the total yearly production averages 200 tons.

There are three kinds of oakgalls, known locally as Mazi, Hantuf and Shakaki. The relative proportions in which they are collected are 80 per cent., 10 per cent. and 10 per cent. respectively.

*Fruit.*

The hill villages and many of those of class 2 cultivate the vine. The estimated yearly production of raisins and grape syrup is put at 1,000 tons.

The Chancery,  
The Residency.  
-----

CHIEF POLITICAL OFFICER	
G. H. O.	
E. E. F. COMMISSIONER	
No. <i>CPO 100</i>	EXPT
Date	2 AUG 1919
8166/65.	

I should be much obliged if you would let me have a copy of a telegram which I believe was received from the Foreign Office delimitating Colonel A.T. Wilson's political control in Kurdistan.

*K. B.*  
*SAH*  
*2/8/19*

*W.A. St. John*  
Lieut-Col.,  
D.C.P.O.

m G.H.Q., E.E.F.  
Cairo.  
31-7-19.

\* ? 8166/37

5166/66

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
" #AUG 1919  
5166/66

# Precis of Affairs

in

## SOUTHERN KURDISTAN

during

# The Great War.

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OFFICE OF CIVIL COMMISSIONER, MES. EX. FORCE.

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BAGHDAD:  
PRINTED AT GOVERNMENT PRESS.  
1919.

## Preface.

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The following pages are an attempt to review our dealings with the Kurds during the war and to summarise the difficulties of the present situation in Kurdistan. They are compiled from official documents, but it is recognised that it is impossible at the present time to view events with a true historical perspective. The information as to present political tendencies is of necessity confused and a certain amount of it will probably be found to be incorrect. It is hoped, however, that on the whole this work contains an accurate summary of the situation in Kurdistan as it presents itself at the time of writing (June, 1919).

E. J. R.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE KURDS PREVIOUS TO OUR FIRST CONTACT WITH THEM.

To arrive at a just understanding of affairs in Kurdistan during the war and of our policy in dealing with the Kurds it is necessary first to examine their history just previous to the outbreak of war in relation to Turkish rule.

On the whole Turkish policy with regard to the Kurds has vacillated between extreme highhandedness and weak efforts at conciliation. Since the reformation of the constitution disorder had tended to increase owing to the overbearing attitude of the Committee of Union and Progress on the one hand and the awakening of vague national yearnings on the other, while a feeling of dissatisfaction with the established order of things had been created throughout practically all the subject races of the Ottoman Empire.

Ottoman military strength in the Baghdad Wilayat was ludicrously insufficient, while the disorders across the Persian frontier brought about by the revolt of Salar-al-Daulah added to the difficulties while it excited the cupidity of the Turks.

The most important tribes along the Kurdish frontier, south of the Lesser Zab, are the Hamawand and Jaf, the former sedentary in the Sulaimaniyah district, the latter nomadic ranging up the right bank of the Diyalah and extending from Kifri into Merivan, within the borders of Persia. In addition to these the Bajlan are an important tribe, half Turkish and half Persian, the Turkish sections being under the influence of Mustapha Pasha of Khaniqin, who was the most important political factor in that district.

In Sulaimaniyah, the Qarah Daghli family is the most important and it largely controls the tribes of the district. At an early stage of the constitutional regime the Ottoman Government succeeded in raising the bitter hostility of the Hamawand by its impolitic action with regard to Shaikh Said Qara Daghli. The latter was a notorious and turbulent tyrant, but he had, as is not unusual in Kurdistan, a far-reaching reputation for holiness, and after his murder under suspicious circumstances in exile in Mosul in January, 1909, the Hamawand rose as a man to take vengeance for his death. Half-hearted efforts to cope with them only resulted in their retirement across the Persian frontier whence they continued to raid and loot caravans. In July, 1910, Nazim Pasha, then Wali of Baghdad, patched up an agreement with them, but his policy, based on weakness, was abandoned on his recall in the spring of the following year, and by the autumn the Hamawand were as turbulent as ever. In spite of feeble efforts to conciliate the tribes by enrolling certain of them in frontier companies on the lines of the old Hamadiyah, the Hamawand remained substantially in rebellion till the outbreak of war.

At the end of 1910, an attempt was made to extract a heavy tribute from the Jaf, for they had paid practically nothing into the Turkish coffers since the institution of the constitutional regime. Mahmud Pasha, who still retained a show of authority over this tribe, was called into Mosul and retained there for a year. This policy proved quite ineffective and was shortly reversed and he was allowed to return to his home. Further negotiations with the tribe were even less fruitful of success and no headway was made up to the outbreak of war.

Between Mustapha Pasha Bajlan and the Ottoman Government there was continuous friction. Under the old regime he remained for many years as an exile in Constantinople and has always been regarded with suspicion by the Turks on account of his pro-British leanings. In 1912 he was detained for a period in Baghdad as a political suspect.

From the commencement of the war, these Kurdish tribes suffered considerably, as, being unable to migrate, they could not escape from the impositions of the Turkish Government, while their religious leaders, to whom they cling with extraordinary tenacity, were subjected to much humiliation and extortion. At the beginning of the war, before the Jihad campaign became discredited, the Turks drew from them bodies of irregular horse. A contingent of these fought against us at Shu'aibah, but after serving well they were scurvily treated by the Turks. They then returned to their homes and from that date forward the Kurds have scarcely provided a single horseman against us. The failure of the Turks to be able to take advantage of this large recruiting ground against us was largely due to the action of the religious leaders who consistently refused to take up a Jihad against us and who openly proclaimed the war to be one of self-aggrandisement on the part of the Turks who, they affirmed, were the hereditary enemies of the Kurds.

From the above it is apparent that with a reasonable policy towards the Kurds on our part on first gaining contact with them there was every chance of ourselves and the Russians being able to win them over to our side and thus obtain a most important support, both military and political. How this opportunity was wasted by the impolitic behaviour of our Allies, the following lines will show.

Previous to the war the Kurds undoubtedly regarded the Russians with a considerable amount of suspicion, but Ottoman misrule was doing every thing possible to drive them into the arms of Russia. Thus, chiefs in the Mosul area, of whom the most important was probably the Shaikh of Berzan, were in the end compelled 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 Turks the reforms they desired were prepared to ask for Russian aid.

After the outbreak of hostilities, as the Russian armies drew near, these sentiments underwent a considerable change. Wherever the Russian armies went there followed murder, rapine, and famine. This culminated in the complete destruction in 1915-16 of Rowanduz, and the surrounding districts by the Russians and the mixed following of Christian levies which followed in their train, while in Persian Kurdistan action by the Russians were hardly less drastic. In 1916 a Russian reconnaissance pushed as far south as Khaniqin and for two hours looted the town, but the retreat of our Allies saved the situation and when, after the capture of Baghdad in March, 1917, it was generally accepted that we should take over and administer all the Baghdad Vilayat up to the old Turkish frontier, great satisfaction was felt.

A general feeling had sprung up amongst the Kurds that an opportunity had now arisen for asserting themselves as a race and the idea of Kurdish autonomy which had arisen with the advent of the constitutional regime revived and was fostered by the terms of our proclamation to the Arabs of Baghdad which showed an attitude towards national aspirations differing totally from that of the Turks.

Up till this period the civil administration had little need to interest themselves in Kurdish affairs. It had been recognised indeed as early as 1914 that an eventual advance to Baghdad or even to Mosul might finally bring us into contact with the Kurds, but so remote did this contingency appear that in December, 1914, when General Sharif Pasha offered his services to the force, in spite of his being a man of standing and a bitter opponent of the new regime in Turkey, it was found necessary to refuse his offer, for even were there a possibility of an advance to Baghdad at this period, there could be no chance of an extension of the movement beyond, and such Kurdish communities which might be met with between Amarah and Baghdad were utterly insignificant.

## CHAPTER II.

### RUSSIAN DEALINGS WITH THE KURDS AND OUR FIRST CONTACT WITH THEM, 1917.

With our occupation of Baghdad, followed by our advance up the Diyalah, problems connected with Kurdistan assumed a new and vital interest for us, not only in connection with the wants of the immediate military situation, but owing to the increasing certainty that the Kurds would not only be neighbours during the period of the war, but some of them permanent subjects after it. The importance of securing their support and trust at this juncture could, therefore, scarcely be overestimated.

On our advance up the Diyalah and the Turkish retreat to the west of that river, the Kurds of Kifri district evacuated the country occupied by the Ottoman forces and refused to furnish them with supplies, in the belief that we would shortly occupy the whole region up to Khaniqin. From the moment of our arrival in Baghdad and especially early in April when we effected a junction with the Russians then at Qasr-i-Shirin, the Chief Political Officer urged, subject to military considerations, the necessity of our occupying Khaniqin in order to maintain our interests and influence with the Kurdish tribes who were already well disposed to us. Such a course, however, involved at the moment, a dissemination of force incompatible with military security, and it was not therefore possible to do more than urge Mustapha Pasha Bajlan to do his best to keep order in the town and district of Khaniqin in our interests.

Meanwhile, in March, the General Officer Commanding, Force "D," had proposed to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that, in view of the pending approach of the Russians, the line of demarcation between our respective spheres should run from Badrah through Mendali and Qizil Robot along the line of the Jabal Hamrin to Shuraimiyah on the Tigris. This proposal was not accepted by H.M.G.'s Government since it did not accord with existing frontiers or with the agreements previously reached by the British, French and Russian Governments. They agreed that military spheres must be dictated solely by military considerations, but laid down that such military spheres were to bear no relations to spheres of political influence which had already been defined by agreement between the three Powers, and that the administration of all territory occupied by either force to the south

of a line which included all the country south of the Lesser Zab and west of the frontier should accordingly be placed in the hands of the Chief Political Officer, Force "D." This decision was not, however, communicated to the Chief Political Officer until May 16th, by which time the Russians had been for more than a month in Khaniqin and had by their want of care for the future and the lack of discipline of their troops to a large extent alienated Kurdish sympathy from themselves and their Allies.

They occupied the town in April and, whatever may have been the suspicions entertained by the Kurds, they refrained from opposition on realising that the Russians came as the Allies and with the consent of the British. In a few days, however, news was received that their treatment of the inhabitants was causing terror and consternation. Mustapha Pasha begged that a British Political Officer might be appointed to safeguard the interests of the inhabitants. His representations were placed before the Army Commander, but it was feared that the appointment of a British official might lead to serious friction with the Russians owing to inherent differences in our treatment of the natives of the country. Letters and representations continued to be received from the Bajlan, Jaf, Sharafbani and Talabani tribes as well as from the notables of Qizil Robat, all declaring that the behaviour of the Russians was causing the most bitter resentment and was calculated to depopulate the country and drive the inhabitants in terror to the districts occupied by the Turks. In the last days of April, Mustapha Pasha himself came into Baghdad to lay the case before the British authorities.

He stated that the Russian regime had been even harsher than that of the Turks. In Persian territory the inhabitants had not been so heavily molested, but the Turkish Kurds were being treated as enemies and all classes were being looted alike. He himself, in spite of the friendly attitude he had always adopted towards the British, had been threatened with the whip, robbed of clothing, horses and foodstuffs and had even had his watch and chain removed from his person in his own house. Four of his own followers whom he had sent with Russian cavalry to bring in men for the protection of the town were stripped by the Russians and their horses taken. He further mentioned the following facts which were fully substantiated by independent evidence:—

(1) On their arrival the Russians paid about half value in silver krans for goods requisitioned. This soon ceased and they paid about a third of its value for bread, but in notes at their own rate. Notes to the value of Roubles 1,000 had been changed in the town by force. The people were made to pay silver at the rate of krans 3.25, the market value of the notes being krans 1.5.

(2) The country side had been denuded of flocks and herds of which a great part had been driven across the frontier. All the crops round Khaniqin had been cut and destroyed and no payment given. The Russians continued to demand food although they had made it impossible for the people to provide it.

(3) As a result wheaten bread was almost unobtainable and all but the wealthiest classes were destitute.

(4) No passenger outside the town even though he bore a pass from an officer was safe from being robbed by the Cossacks.

(5) Food exposed for sale was seized and officers went from house to house demanding more or making householders entertain them. Widows with children were not exempt from these exactions. Sometimes a five-rouble note was tendered in payment, but if it could not be exchanged no payment at all was given.

(6) The cultivation of orchards which are the principal wealth of the town ceased as the Russians had stopped some of the irrigation cuts and refused to allow the inhabitants to work on the trees.

(7) The inhabitants of the country had in considerable numbers taken refuge with the Turks at Kiiri.

(8) The Sallahiyah tribes who had at first refused to supply food to the Turks were now producing supplies in order to be allowed to remain in the district, the news from Khaniqin and Qizil Robat having become so alarming that the proximity of the Turks had now become the lesser evil.

(9) Some 400 men under the Sardar Muhi, a rebel Persian leader, had fled with Ali Akbar Khan, chief of the Sinjabi, into the Bamu mountain, about 50 miles north of Khaniqin, intending to surrender to us, but far from doing this, reports of the excesses of the Russians led him to contemplate active operations against us.

In short, Russian methods and excesses had proved a valuable asset to the Turks. We were ourselves rapidly losing prestige with a race who had always been friendly to us, while the Russian position in Southern Kurdistan was rapidly becoming untenable with the possibility of the country being thrown open to the enemy as far as Qizil Robat and Mandali.

Mustapha Pasha represented that the Kurds realised the necessity for the presence of the Russians, but they begged us to urge them to cease from their looting and violence and to behave in a manner befitting a civilised army of occupation. They expressed their willingness to endeavour to feed the Russian forces provided that requisitioning was systemised and placed under a responsible head. To meet food requirements it was necessary that agriculture should proceed without hindrance, while they asked that a responsible British officer should take over the civil administration of the district, and that a small detachment of British troops should accompany him. In return they promised to preserve order in Khaniqin and Qizil Robot and on the road between the two towns, to reassure the tribes on the Turkish flank, and to raise from them such levies as we might require. They would also bring in supplies from Mandali and Qizil Robot.

The fact was that the Russians knowing of the upheaval at home were thoroughly out of hand as regards discipline, they realised that their occupation of Khaniqin was merely temporary while they had no stake whatever in the eventual welfare of the country.

Taking these facts into consideration the Chief Political Officer pressed strongly for the despatch of a political officer to Khaniqin. It was, however, considered by the military authorities inadvisable that such a step should be taken without the assent of the Russian authorities, and when this was refused the matter had perforce to drop.

The situation, therefore, remained unchanged and petitions and complaints continued to pour in from the Kurdish chiefs and merchants of Khaniqin. Mustapha Pasha took up his abode as the guest of the British Government at Baghdad, his family, escorted by a section of his tribe, fled to the Baghechah mountains to the south of the town, while his house was occupied by the Russians. He asked permission to bring his women folk into Shahraban with a tribal escort under a guarantee, but the request was refused by the Russians on the ground that the tribesmen who were to form the escort had committed outrages on the roads in the Qasr-i-Shirin district and that Mustapha himself was known to have taken part in action against the Russians (presumably in 1916) and to have commanded the Turkish Frontier Battalion.

Further information was received that Khaniqin had been picked clean and that most of the loot had been carried across the frontier. Two women were killed on this occasion and nine men, two of whom were Moslems and the remainder Jews, the latter, it was said, for their inability to change rouble notes. In the middle of May, the General Officer Commanding the Russian Forces made arrangements for the safeguarding of the road between Qizil Robot and Kermanshah, but these arrangements were quite inadequate and the country beyond Qizil Robot remained much disturbed.

By the end of May the position was that the tribes of Southern Kurdistan who were in our political sphere and should have been completely under our sway had been thoroughly disappointed and disgusted by the treatment which they had received and instead of, as at first, being ready to prey upon the retreating Turks and hiding their stores of grain from them, they now considered the Turk as the lesser evil and found it better to seek relief from Russian truculence by allowing the Turks to have access to their secret stores of grain. The Turks were neither strong enough to impoverish them completely nor were they desirous of completely destroying a highly-fertile area which might at any moment again come under their sway. The Russians as passing visitors were quite indifferent to the future and destroyed with indifference what they could not carry away. But though the Kurds naturally resented this treatment and ranged themselves against them signs were still not wanting that they would rally to us if they were given tangible evidence that we could support them. The value of Kurdish support must always be of great importance to us, and at the period under reference this importance was enhanced by both considerations of the military situation and of supply, for not only did the Salahiyah tribes represent a fighting force of some 1,500 horse and 1,000 foot well armed and so placed that they masked the road to Persia, but they occupy one of the richest agricultural areas in the country within easy reach of Baghdad.

At the end of June, the Russians evacuated Khaniqin and retired into Persia, and the Turks promptly re-occupied the country down to and including the Jabal Hamrin. They held the outlets of the great canals of the Diyalah system, the Mahrut, the Khorasan and the Khalis, on which the irrigation of the highly-cultivated area towards Ba'qubah depends, and were able to interrupt the flow of water. They also obtained access to the valuable food-supplies of the Ruz and Mandali. We occupied Balad Ruz in July and Mandali at the end of September by which date also we had secured command of the Diyalah canals. The occupation of part of the Jabal Hamrin in October further strengthened our position.

The ravaging of Khaniqin begun by the Russians had been completed by the Turks and distress became acute. At the end of August when the Ottoman troops evacuated Khaniqin, some of the inhabitants returned from the mountains and began to cultivate the areas north of Khaniqin and sow maize

there. The smaller tribes south of Kifri began to emigrate towards Mandali, Badrah, the Qara Dagh and Shaikhan. They had hidden their grain-stocks in the low hills and found themselves compelled either to reveal them or starve while their horsemen had joined the Daud Shaikh Hamid. The Daudi and Talabani who are closely allied were strong enough to keep open their grain stores without fear of the Turks.

We got into touch with Shaikh Hamid and the other chiefs towards the end of September and learned from them that they had been able to resist all the Turkish demands for supplies and would continue to do so as long as there was any hope of our being able to come to their aid. All their flocks had been sent north towards the Zab so as to be out of reach of the Turks. The latter had responded by meting out very harsh treatment to the people of Qizil Robat and Khaniqin, several leading men including a member of a distinguished family of Sulaimaniyah having been executed.

It will be seen from the preceding paragraphs that the problems which had to be faced were of great difficulty, for, although the Kurds cordially disliked the Turks and were apparently ready to throw in their lot with us, we were precluded by the military aspects of the situation from taking advantage of this, while our Allies, the Russians, in addition to their usual lack of sympathy for the inhabitants of the country were at this time without discipline and without any interest in the future of the country which might have made it worth their while to take steps to secure the goodwill of the inhabitants.

### CHAPTER III.

#### RELATIONS UP TO THE ARMISTICE.

The defeat of the Turks by General Allenby at Gaza in autumn and the consequent abandonment of the projected Turko-German offensive in Mesopotamia greatly strengthened our military position in this country. It no longer remained necessary to keep the force closely concentrated in order to meet a possible Turkish advance, and as a consequence it became possible to pay more attention to the improvement of the political situation on our northern border. Moreover, German and Turkish intrigues in Persia began to assume serious proportions and compelled the higher command to be prepared for eventual action in that direction. Khaniqin was consequently occupied in December and a British political officer was despatched there to take over the control of tribal affairs.

As a result of the successive Russian and Turkish occupations food supplies were very short and of the population only about one-third remained. Our arrival was however hailed with relief, and the people almost at once began to return. There was at this period a great deal of distress, while owing to our being unable to guarantee a permanent occupation it was not found possible to give the desired amount of assistance to cultivation, lest the crops should afterwards fall into the hands of the Turks. Meanwhile, the tribes living to the north and north-east of the town were still in a turbulent condition and, raiding the roads, made the entry of supplies difficult.

The good effects of our occupation were, however, not long in making themselves felt. As confidence was restored foodstuffs began to enter the town more freely, while our representative was able to effect a considerable reduction in the supplies reaching the Turks from the neighbourhood of the Diyalah Valley to the north and west of the town.

The Sinjabis, however, encouraged by skilful German agents and German propaganda, remained obdurate and eventually it became necessary to undertake operations against them. These were carried out with the help of considerable numbers of auxiliaries from other tribes and were completely successful. The tribe was reduced to a state of complete impotence and their influential chief Ali Akbar Khan was compelled to flee from the neighbourhood.

Early in May, 1918, our troops advanced and occupied Kifri, Tus, and Kirkuk and to each of these places Political Officers were despatched. Our advent was everywhere hailed with delight by the inhabitants, and promises of assistance were at once received from the majority of the tribal chiefs. Not only did our advance have a good effect on the areas actually occupied, but our forward situation at Kirkuk compelled the Turks to evacuate the Sulaimaniyah area, and allowed the inhabitants of that very important Kurdish district to indulge in hopes for their immediate freedom from Turkish rule.

Letters were at once received from the Hamawand expressing delight at our arrival in their neighbourhood and offering us every form of assistance, while in Sulaimaniyah a meeting of all the notables of the district was held to decide on the future policy of the Kurds. At this meeting it was decided to set up a provisional Kurdish Government with Shaikh Mahmoud

at its head, while it was determined to adopt a policy of complete friendliness to the British. Letters were received from Shaikh Mahmoud as head of this Government claiming to represent the views of all the Kurds in the district and even beyond the frontier as far as Sennah, offering either to hand over the reins of Government to us or to carry on as our representative under our protection. He wrote that the people of Kurdistan were delighted with our successes, that Kurdistan was now freed from despotism and hoped to be allowed to prosper under our rule as Iraq had done. The Kurds, moreover, expressed themselves as completely confident that having arrived at last we would not leave them in the lurch by abandoning them to the Turk.

Unfortunately circumstances prevented us from taking advantage to the full of the excellent political outlook, and we were compelled by considerations quite apart from the local situation to adopt a policy completely opposed to our local interests and in spite of their protests temporarily to abandon the Sulaimaniyah Kurds to our enemies.

The situation in the Caucasus brought about by the breakup of Russia had long been giving the Imperial Government grave cause for anxiety, and a mission under General Dunsterville had in early spring been despatched via Kermanshah and Hamadan to that region. It now became necessary to follow this up with military support. The authorities in this country were very averse to increasing our commitments on the Persian line, but the necessities of the situation were held to outweigh local considerations. In consequence so heavy a strain was placed on the transport of the force that it became impossible to make proper provision for the requirements of our forces in Persia, and at the same time to hold all our advanced positions in Mesopotamia. Kirkuk had, therefore, perforce to be abandoned, in spite of the many and grave political disadvantages of a retirement particularly with regard to our relations with those Kurds who had shown themselves friendly to us and who would in consequence be in danger of retaliation on the return of the Turks.

As soon as possible after the decision to abandon Kirkuk was made final it was communicated to the Kurdish tribes in order that they should be so far as possible prepared for our retirement. It was pointed out to them that although we proposed leaving Kirkuk for the hot weather we would soon return, and that at Kifri and Tuz we were near enough to give them a measure of support. Shaikh Mahmoud was appointed our representative at Sulaimaniyah and a proclamation to that effect was drawn up ready for despatch, but the re-appearance of comparatively strong Turkish forces at Sulaimaniyah prevented our issuing it, lest it should endanger him with the Turk.

The Turks on their re-occupation of Sulaimaniyah at once put the town under martial law and proceeded to exact retribution from those who had befriended us, while Shaikh Mahmoud was made prisoner and carried to Kirkuk. Here, however, he was not badly treated, but was shortly set free and allowed to return to Sulaimaniyah.

The Turks at this time were able to make great political capital out of the German successes and the Allied retirements on the Western front. The Turkish commander, too, adopted a conciliatory attitude towards the tribes which bore good fruit and did much to reconcile them temporarily to the Turk. All this coupled with the distrust engendered by our evacuation of Kirkuk and apparent desertion of our friends, turned the political scales for the time being against us.

Attempts were made by us to raise a corps of levies from the Kurds to the north-west of Khaniqin with a view to occupying Halebja and harassing the Turks towards Sulaimaniyah, but this scheme failed owing to the uneasiness produced by our evacuation of Kirkuk.

During the summer the Turks were advertising with a great flourish of trumpets an offensive against our forces in Persia, and they actually defeated and drove out the Armenians, Assyrians and Nestorians from the Urmia district. Our attempts at affording assistance to these with ammunition and rifles were too late, for, by the time our mission was able to get in touch with them, they were already beaten and their retreat had turned into a rout. During their retirement from Urmia to Hamadan they were severely harassed by the Kurds, and not without reason, for, during their retirement, they had wherever possible looted the tribal country through which they passed and committed all kinds of excesses.

Their retirement was shortly followed by a Turkish advance on the Mianeh, Bijar and Sennah lines and the Turks openly boasted that they were going to drive the English out of Persia. Our position was for the time by no means an easy one in Persia, for we had an enormously long and vulnerable line of communication towards the flank of which the Turk was advancing, while in Persian Kurdistan through which lay two of his possible routes we were only represented by two weak columns at Sennah and Bijar. All this tended to increase the uneasiness of the Kurdish tribes and helped to deter them from openly assisting us. The Turks at this time were able to raise a certain number of Kurdish cavalry to serve against us in Northern Persia, while certain small tribes, such as the Merivan, were constrained to throw in their

lot with them. The Avroman, however, remained consistently hostile to the Turks and the latter were compelled to undertake operations against them, without however obtaining any decisive results.

At this period the situation in Northern Persia was distinctly favourable to the Turks, and had they started a resolute offensive there is little doubt that they could have achieved a certain measure of success. Supply difficulties, however, and the want of initiative of their commanders delayed matters until the opportunity had vanished, for before long the complete destruction of their armies in Palestine compelled them to hurry off every available man to protect vital points nearer home.

With the news of the changed situation in the Western front, the decisive victory in Palestine and the consequent reduction of the Turkish armies throughout the east, the attitude of the Kurds naturally improved towards us, while the resumption of our advance both on the Tigris and the Kirkuk line at once put us in a dominant position with regard to Southern Kurdistan.

The overwhelming victories of General Allenby in Palestine had at once relieved the pressure against our forces in Persia and the moment became ripe for an offensive against the Turkish forces opposing us in Mesopotamia. The general plan of the operations consisted of an advance in strength up the Tigris towards Mosul while a smaller column moved forward from Kifri with a view to operating towards Altun Keupri and preventing any forces in that direction from joining in the defence against the main force on the Tigris. On October 25th, the northern force entered Kirkuk, while by the following day the Turkish forces on the Tigris were surrounded by a wide turning movement and were cut off from their line of retreat and from Turkish headquarters in Mosul. During the following few days the Turks made efforts to break out from the encircling net, but by the 30th October their situation had obviously become hopeless and the whole forces on the Tigris line surrendered. In the meantime the column from Kifri had advanced in spite of being opposed by superior forces and had driven their opponents across the Lesser Zab at Altun Keupri, the Turks retiring towards Erbil. On the 1st of November, the news of the Armistice was received, a force was pushed on to occupy and preserve order in Mosul and by the 10th of November the whole of the Mosul Vilayat was clear of Turkish troops.

As soon as it became clear that our position completely dominated the situation in Southern Kurdistan, political arrangements were made to obtain control over the Kurds and to obtain a measure of law and order in Kurdistan. Troops could not be made available for this purpose owing to supply difficulties, and it was recognised that the organisation of Kurdistan would have to be undertaken by purely political means.

For this purpose Major Noel was entrusted with a mission to Sulaimaniyah at which place he arrived in the middle of November and was, as the representative of the victorious British, accorded a Royal reception. Before dealing with the instructions given him it is necessary briefly to review the general aspirations of the Kurds and various movements reacting on them.

#### -CHAPTER IV.

##### KURDISH NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS IT.

We have already referred to the fact that so long ago as the constitution of the new regime in Turkey, a movement in favour of national autonomy had been gradually rising amongst the Kurds. Our treatment of the Arabs and our proclamations to them promising them at least a generous share in the government of their country all tended to induce the more educated Kurds to adopt a national trend of thought, while the complete destruction of Turkish rule made it appear as though the opportunity for asserting these ideas had now arrived.

External forces were not wanting too to encourage these hopes. The recognition of the King of Hejaz and the exalted treatment he received from the British Government undoubtedly encouraged amongst the educated the hope that we were prepared at least to give the Kurds a separate nationality under our auspices, while various societies were formed at points outside Kurdistan and by Kurds who had long been resident in more enlightened countries with a view to fostering a national feeling.

So long ago as July, 1918, certain Kurdish chiefs in Persian Kurdistan were discussing questions of an Independent Kurdistan under British auspices and the Mukri, an important tribe in the Sauj Bulak district, suggested this to H.B.M.'s Consul at Kermanshah when on a tour near Sakiz, and

pointed out that with Kurdistan in the hands of the Kurds and freed from the weak and partial government of the Persians in Azerbaijan, the difficult Armenian question could be settled amicably with the good offices of the British Government.

The views of General Sharif Pasha given at an interview with Sir Percy Cox in June, 1918, may be fairly taken as representing the opinion of the more educated and enlightened, though Europeanised, members of the Kurdish community previous to the period when it was obvious that Germany and her allies were doomed to complete defeat. Although he had been absent from Kurdistan since boyhood and hence was not in a position to give advice on purely local affairs, he was at the same time deeply interested in the future of Southern Kurdistan. He had, it will be remembered, previously offered his services to the force with a view to assisting in our future relations with the Kurds, but his offer had been refused on the grounds of the remoteness at the time of the chance of our coming in contact with any important part of the Kurdish community. Now, however, the situation had completely changed. We had been in occupation of Baghdad for more than a year and at the time were holding Kirkuk, so that we were bound to be deeply concerned in problems connected with Kurdistan. He considered that it was of the first importance that we should take constructive steps to rally the Kurds as a whole, and to this end it was important that we should make an announcement of our intended policy with regard to them. At the time he only pretended to discuss affairs of Southern Kurdistan, with which alone he was connected by his ties of birth.

What he considered feasible, and what he hoped, was that we should give the Kurds of Southern Kurdistan guarantees of autonomy under our protective aegis. Enlightened Kurds fully realised that under no Government could this be achieved so well as under Great Britain, and of necessity they must look to us for a long time to come for assistance with personnel to control the administration. In short his idea was that we should pursue a policy in regard to the Kurds precisely analogous to that which we had announced our intention of following in the case of the Arabs of Mesopotamia while he suggested Mosul as being undoubtedly the most suitable centre for such an administration.

He went on to urge the importance of making good now and coming to the Peace Conference with a *fait accompli* in the shape of a working administration. It would, in his opinion, be folly to let matters drift or leave them indeterminate until the Peace Conference. Both in the case of Mesopotamia proper and of Southern Kurdistan we ought to be able to say at the Peace Conference: "Here we are in occupation of these regions; we have all along announced that we had no intention of making annexations, but during our occupation we have been constructing an effective administration which is clearly to the benefit of and in the interests of the local nationalities and in these interests it is very necessary that we should remain in control."

In October, 1918, a further communication from him was received pointing out that the situation had now very considerably changed owing to the fostering by the Turks of the hatred between the Armenians and Kurds. The task now was to reconcile the two races, the Mahomedans in a large majority and the Armenians in a strong minority, both having an equal right to inhabit the same country. For the purpose of establishing a basis of reconciliation he considered a committee should be set up in London and he suggested its immediate formation under the auspices of the British Government first in Mesopotamia and afterwards in Kurdistan.

It was obvious, however, that Sharif Pasha was not in sufficiently close touch with problems connected with Kurdistan as a whole for his opinion to be accorded very much weight; for he was a native of Southern Kurdistan far removed from any direct interest in the Armenian question and even from Southern Kurdistan he had been absent from boyhood.

At the same time the fact that the Armenian question was the most difficult and involved of the many problems affecting our future relations with Kurdistan, was fully realised and every effort was made to start with a policy which would make as easy as possible, the final reconciliation of the conflicting interests of the Kurds and the Armenians. It was clearly understood too, that there lay faults on both sides in the past, though perhaps the greater stress had so far been laid on the misdoings of the Kurds. It was felt, however, that the only way of arriving at a final pacification of the hatred, artificially fostered, no doubt to a certain extent as it was by the Turks, lay in regarding the Kurds, with the Armenians, as being definite nationalities each having equal moral rights to fair and sympathetic treatment in the future.

The general feeling in Europe appeared to be in favour of establishing an Armenian State in the northern regions where lay the home of the greater bulk of the Armenian people. In order to make the foundation of such a State possible it naturally followed that some way must first be found of controlling the Kurds to such an extent that they would not resist its formation.

and the consequent measures which would have to be undertaken to separate out the Armenian and Kurdish communities, for obviously no permanent peace could be expected where Kurdish and Armenian communities remained mixed with each other.

As the Kurds were numerically the stronger party it was obviously necessary first of all to obtain a sufficient control over them. There were two ways in which this could be done, either by occupying the country with a sufficient military force to overcome any opposition which might be offered or by obtaining by political means, such influence with them that they could finally be got to assent to the repatriation of the Armenians and even to assist in it. Military occupation of the country was quite out of the question for, even after the defeat of the Turks, supply and other difficulties combined to make it impossible even to occupy with a garrison a point so near at hand and so important politically to us as Sulaimaniyah. The alternative of adopting purely political methods had, therefore, to be adopted, and it was realised that the best means to that end was the exploiting of the perfectly legitimate feeling of Kurdish nationality which had long been making itself evident amongst the Southern Kurdish tribes with whom we had so far been in contact.

## CHAPTER V.

### MAJOR NOEL'S MISSION TO SULAIMANIYAH AND SOUTHERN KURDISTAN.

The instructions given to Major Noel in his mission to Sulaimaniyah were therefore as follows:—

"You have been appointed Political Officer, Kirkuk Division, with effect from November 1st. The Kirkuk division extends from the Lesser Zab to the Diyalah and north-east to the Turco-Persian frontier. It forms part of the Mosul Vilayat, the ultimate disposal of which is under the consideration of H.M.'s Government.

For the present it must be considered as falling within the sphere of military occupation and administration of this force, and you should proceed on this assumption in your dealings with local chiefs, bearing in mind that it is improbable that the military authorities will see their way to detach troops permanently to Sulaimaniyah or to other places east of our present line. It should be your object to arrange with local chiefs for the restoration and maintenance of order in areas outside the limits of our military occupation, for the exclusion and surrender of enemy agents and for the supply of commodities needed by our troops. You are authorised to incur such expenditure as may be necessary to this end, subject to previous authority where practicable in cases of large sums and on the understanding, which should be made clear to the chiefs, that any arrangements you may make are of necessity provisional and subject to reconsideration at any time. You are authorised to appoint Shaikh Mahmoud as our representative in Sulaimaniyah should you consider this expedient and to make other appointments of this nature at Chamchamal, Halebja, etc., at your discretion.

It should be explained to the tribal chiefs with whom you enter into relations that there is no intention of imposing upon them an administration foreign to their habits and desires. Tribal leaders will be encouraged to form a confederation for the settlement of their public affairs under the guidance of the British Political officers. They will be called upon to continue to pay the taxes legally due from them under Turkish law, modified as may be found necessary for purpose connected with the maintenance of order and the development of their country."

On Major Noel's arrival at Sulaimaniyah he at once proceeded to give effect to these instructions and to introduce into the country a temporary system of government which would be acceptable to the people and satisfy their aspirations for a Kurdish administration. Shaikh Mahmoud was appointed Governor of the district and for each of the minor sub-divisions, Kurdish officials were appointed to work under the guidance of the British political officers. At the same time wherever possible Turkish and Arab officials were at once removed and replaced by natives of Kurdistan, while the Turkish officers and troops in the town were evacuated to Baghdad. The system adopted was practically a feudal one, making each chief responsible for the correct government of his own tribe and recognising the tribal chief as a duly appointed Government official, the whole being controlled and advised by British officers.

One of the first necessities was to deal with the want and famine in the country, for under the Turkish regime a large part of the town had fallen into ruin, trade had been for a long time at a complete standstill, while the surrounding country was impoverished and famine-stricken to the last degree. Arrangements were at once made to import foodstuffs, seed grain and articles

of merchandise, not only to cope with the immediate danger of famine, but sufficient to allow to a certain extent the immediate revival of trade. At the same time the religious wants of the peoples were not neglected, arrangements were made for the repair of the principal mosques at Government expense, while a grant was made to allow the carrying out of religious observances.

While coping with famine and encouraging a revival of trade, however, the extension of our influence and the establishment of law and order over the surrounding tribes was not neglected and it soon became clear that our suggestion of "Kurdistan for the Kurds" under British protection was achieving great popularity, and shortly all the neighbouring tribes had shown evident signs of their wish to join the Kurdish confederation.

On December 1st, the Civil Commissioner paid a visit to Sulaimaniyah and there held a meeting which was attended by about 60 of the leading chiefs of southern Kurdistan including representatives of Kurdish tribes domiciled in Persia, at Sennah, Sakiz and Avroman. He had several long conversations with Shaikh Mahmoud and explained the political situation so far as it concerned them to the assembled chiefs. He found that the national movement was strong in Kurdistan. The Kurds had suffered alike from Russian and Turkish methods and, while there was an absolute unanimity amongst them as to their firm intention to resist to the last any attempt on the part of the European Powers to allow the Turks to return, there was a general recognition of the need of British protection if they were to prosper in the future. There was, however, hesitation on the part of some of the chiefs as to the wisdom of placing Kurdistan under effective British administration, while others claimed that Kurdistan must be separated from Iraq and be run direct from London which in their eyes had now replaced Constantinople.

After some discussion a document was drawn up to the effect that:—

H. B. M.'s Government having announced that their intention in the war was the liberation of the Eastern peoples from Turkish oppression and the grant of assistance to them in the establishment of their independence, the chiefs, as the representatives of the people of Kurdistan, have asked H. B. M.'s Government to accept them also under British protection and to attach them to Iraq so that they might not be deprived of the benefits of that association, and they requested the Civil Commissioner of Mesopotamia to send them a representative with the necessary assistance to enable the Kurdish people under British auspices to progress peacefully on civilised lines. If H. B. M.'s Government extended its assistance and protection to them they undertook to accept H. B. M.'s orders and advice.

In return the Civil Commissioner signed a document stating that any Kurdish tribe from the Greater Zab to the Diyalah (other than those in Persian Territory) who of their own free will accepted the leadership of Shaikh Mahmoud, would be allowed to do so, and that the latter would have our moral support in controlling the above areas on behalf of the British Government whose orders he undertook to obey. The tribes and townspeople in the Kifri and Kirkuk divisions were not willing to come under Shaikh Mahmoud and the latter agreed not to insist on their inclusion.

It was explained to the representatives of Kurdish tribes in Persia that our public engagements precluded us from agreeing to their inclusion in the South Kurdistan confederacy under British protection and that they must remain loyal Persian subjects, keeping, of course, on friendly terms with the confederation. They accepted the position cheerfully and, on the whole, with relief.

Shaikh Mahmoud further asked for British officers for all Government departments including officers for Kurdish levies, stipulating only that the subordinate staff should wherever possible be Kurdish and not Arab.

## CHAPTER VI.

### KURDISH AFFAIRS IN MOSUL AND THE ARMENIAN QUESTION.

Meanwhile in the Mosul division the work of organisation and the introduction of law and order were proceeding apace under the able and energetic leadership of Col. Leachman. At first he suffered some embarrassment from the knowledge that Mosul might finally fall within the French sphere of influence, but, on the realisation of the close community of interests between Mosul and Baghdad, and the apparent readiness of our Allies in consequence to abandon their claims in this region, it became possible to adopt the same administrative system as was already in force in the Baghdad Vilayat.

As soon, therefore, as the central part of the district had been organised officers were despatched to Akra and Zakho to get into touch with Kurdish tribes on that frontier. Here, however, dealings with the Kurds were much more difficult than in the southern districts near Sulaimaniyah.

In the last-named place the Kurds had no direct interest in the Armenian question. Armenia and even Urmiah are remote in the extreme, while the local Christian community is small and only exists in the larger towns. The only difficulties to be feared, therefore, were those arising from the ordinary dislike of the Kurds for law and order and from the personal ambitions of the Kurdish leaders. In Mosul area on the other hand there are large Christian communities in the towns as well as numerous Christian villages on and across the Kurdish border, while Armenia and the partially Christian regions in the neighbourhood of Bitlis, Van and even Urmiah are in comparatively close touch with Mosul and the districts on the Mosul border. The Kurds here, therefore, have a much greater and more direct interest in the Armenian question. Moreover, just beyond the frontier the country was still in occupation by the Turks, some of whose officials were only too ready to spread anti-Christian propaganda amongst the credulous Kurds and to afford a base and a background for all kinds of Anti-British intrigue. Furthermore, while in Sulaimaniyah it was possible to introduce an administration of a purely Kurdish type and to utilise only Kurdish officials for this purpose, in Mosul the mixed nature of the population made necessary the employment of a large number of Arabs. Malcontents were not wanting to play upon the Kurdish national feeling by pointing out that the Kurds were being subjected to a hateful Arab administration.

At this period too French propaganda in Mosul was giving rise to some uneasiness. It took two forms. In the first place it pointed out to the Christians that, whereas in the eyes of the British all religions were equal, the French had always had the reputation of supporting a Christian supremacy even if the Christians were in a minority, that in the event of the French taking over the country the leadership by the Christian community was assured and that hence it behoved them to ask for French protection. Secondly, it bruited abroad amongst the Moslems that the French were shortly coming and that British rule was only a temporary measure rendered necessary by the needs of the moment and only intended to tide over the time until the French would arrive.

This naturally gave rise to a feeling of insecurity throughout the Moslem community. Any feeling of impending change in the government of a country is bound to give rise to uneasiness on the part of the subject, while he is moreover doubtful of how far it is wise to commit himself to the acceptance of a government which may at any moment be withdrawn to make room for another and presumably a hostile one. From his experience and tradition every Oriental rightly believes that no two nations can be genuinely friendly to each other except in so far as the situation at the moment demands. French methods and the universal French attitude towards Islam now appeared as a real and imminent danger to the Moslems who imagined themselves on the verge of being subjected to an unnatural and hated Christian domination in spite of their being in a strong majority. All this tended to increase the uneasiness of the tribes, gave a handle to pro-Turkish and Pan-Islamic intrigue and generally tended to make the tribes doubtful of the attitude which they should adopt towards us.

Of all the questions connected with Kurdistan, that of the Armenians and other Christians is by far the most difficult of solution. Here we are faced with the problem of two definite nationalities, each having equal rights to live in the same tract of country, each opposed to the other by religion, training and tradition, and each suffering from recent wounds still sore, unhealed and inflamed by the methods of the Turks during and previous to the war.

From the point of view of the Armenian, the Kurd is a brutal murderer, who has for years been the instrument of Turkish massacre and oppression. From the point of view of the Kurd, the Armenian is a double-faced liar of superior cunning, far inferior in the military qualities which alone he holds in respect, but who now, judging by the reception accorded to Armenian claims in Europe, is about to be given on religious grounds far more sympathetic treatment than the Kurd, and who, the latter fears, may be placed in a ruling capacity over a large part of the Kurdish community.

The Kurd feels that he is inarticulate and incapable of taking part in a contest of wits or of words, while on religious grounds he fears that in a world of victorious Christianity he cannot expect to receive either sympathy or justice.

This fear is accentuated by Armenian boasting and by unrestrained and ignorant talk in Europe of grandiose schemes for an Armenian state in the future, a state which the Kurd feels can only be founded at his expense and by the subjugation of a large part of Kurdistan to the Armenian. He feels too that he has got at least an equal right to have his nationality recognised, for his numbers are greater, and as a race he is more virile. Moreover, he is deeply afraid that reparation and punishment for past crimes will be demanded from him and he feels that, although he was the immediate instrument of these crimes, yet the greater blame should be laid at the door of the Turk who used him for his own ends in dealing with the Armenian question in the past and without whose sinister influence Kurds and Armenians would have lived, if not happily, at least comparatively peacefully together.

He hears, moreover, that we have 50,000 Christians in Iraq waiting to be returned through Kurdistan to their homes, and wild rumours are current of the way the menfolk amongst these have been trained and armed, not only with rifles, which he also possesses and with which he can cope, but with artillery and machine-guns. He remembers too the destruction wrought by these same Christians when they followed the Russian armies into Kurdistan during the war, and he very naturally doubts to a certain extent our good faith and much more our ability to restrain them from like action on their return.

Feeling as he does on these points, realising that he is outclassed in the more civilised methods of argument and persuasion, and encouraged as he is by Turkish and Pan-Islamic intrigue, it is not to be wondered at if he should be ready to assert his claims in the one way in which he feels he has an advantage—by force of arms.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SHAIKH MAHMOUD AND SOUTHERN KURDISTAN.

In Sulaimaniyah by the end of December doubts were beginning to arise as to the wisdom of allowing the power of Shaikh Mahmoud to increase to too great an extent. His past record in Turkish times was not one to inspire confidence. He had been continuously in revolt against Turkish rule, and at the same time in certain quarters it was whispered that under the Turks the people in Sulaimaniyah had suffered even more from the tyranny of their own chiefs and the Saiyids than they had from the Turkish officials.

But apart from any questions of the previous records of the family the question with which we were now faced was one of practical politics. The influence of Shaikh Mahmoud undoubtedly existed and it was now perhaps even stronger than of old. Without the full measure of co-operation and assistance which he was then giving us, it would have been necessary to bring in a strong garrison which at the time was out of the question. From the political point of view, too, it was of great importance that we should maintain order in the area and at the same time should avoid the appearance of using force for this purpose.

We were charged with the foundation of an independent Southern Kurdistan under British auspices, but owing to the backward and undeveloped state of the country, the lack of communications and the dissensions of the tribes, we were forced to work from several bases and to endeavour to form as it were oases of order and unity, reserving to a later date the task of co-ordination with a view to eventual amalgamation. It was manifestly impossible to treat such oases except as integral parts of our general administration in Mesopotamia, and moreover, for reasons of future administration, it was obviously necessary to encourage the local Kurd to look exclusively to Mesopotamia for inspiration and guidance. It was recognised, however, that the prospect of any connection with an Arab state was likely to prove distasteful to a considerable section of the ardent nationalists as well as the mountain tribesmen. It was only a few of the more enlightened members of the community who had the necessary perspective to see that connection with Baghdad was the most solid guarantee for material progress and development which alone was the true foundation for autonomy.

Under these circumstances we were forced to disappoint the expectations of many, and we were faced by the none too easy task of persuading the leaders of the people as a whole, to accept the prospects of a long period of tutelage and probation. Above all it was necessary to prevent at all costs an outbreak of anarchy or opposition even at the expense of extending our favour and support to individuals whose ideas were not altogether in consonance with British ideas of equity and justice.

It was hard to tell how far a national movement for independence existed and how far it was an artificial product of the personal ambitions of the Kurdish leaders who doubtless saw in Kurdish autonomy an unequalled opportunity of furthering their own advancement. At the same time in Sulaimaniyah such a movement was undoubtedly strong and had to be kept in check by continual reminders that H.B.M.'s Government, if it accepted the responsibility for Kurdistan, did so only on the strict understanding that the people and those whom they chose as their leaders, would conform to the regulations and principles requisite for the maintenance of order, the administration of justice and the assurance of progress and development. To many independence merely meant independence of all restraint and law and the freedom to indulge in unrestricted rapine and licence.

On the other hand a connection with Baghdad was dictated by the inexorable logic of geography and was further a matter of everyday convenience if not of necessity. There was no reason why it should interfere with the development of the country on national lines.

It was explained to the people that the personnel of the administration was to be as far as possible Kurdish; Kurdish levies were to be organised under Kurdish officers, while the Kurdish tongue was to be the official language of Government. Laws would be modified to conform with local custom and usage and the system of revenue collection and taxation devised to meet the needs of the people. In the case of the tribes, custom and law as existing would be respected and the recognised chiefs would be allowed to carry on the tribal administration of their clansmen as heretofore.

As regards finance the country would have its own provincial budget and the taxes collected would be devoted to the administration and development of the country, but a contribution would be paid towards the expenses of the parent administration at Baghdad. On the other hand the association with Mesopotamia would assure material advantages of great importance for education, public works, agriculture and communications would all derive their main inspiration and impetus from Baghdad.

Shaikh Mahmoud we had already recognised in so far as he was recognised by the people. There was no intention of forcing his rule on reluctant elements. He was himself as regards intellect and breadth of views a mere child, but a child possessed of considerable cunning and undoubtedly obsessed with an overweening ambition. Unfortunately, moreover, he was surrounded by a class of busybodies who filled his head with extravagant and silly notions leading him to style himself ruler of all Kurdistan and encouraging him to mingle in affairs far beyond the border of the sphere allotted to him.

Yet with all his faults he was at the time a considerable political asset. In Southern Kurdistan, for one who opposed his appointment there were four others who welcomed it and this is a low proportion of dissentients in a country where family ties and internecine feuds play so large a part.

To what extent the allegiance paid to him was but mere lip service was hard to say. In certain cases, particularly with the tribes more remote from Sulaimaniyah, it was probably a catch vote gained as a result of the support we were showing him, but the salient factor remained that Shaikh Mahmoud was a power in the land and as such his appointment was a distinct asset in our dealings with the bulk of the tribes. But at the same time steps had to be taken to prevent his influence spreading to regions where it was unnecessary or objectionable and where it offered a possible menace to peace in the future. Furthermore, there was a definite party even in Sulaimaniyah itself, who preferred a direct British administration which, on the whole, could not fail to be more attractive to the merchant and trading classes than any system of indirect control based on Kurdish leadership.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CENTRAL KURDISTAN AND AZERBAIJAN.

Towards the end of December, Major Noel left Sulaimaniyah and toured the districts to the west and north as far as Rowanduz introducing the Sulaimaniyah system of government as he went, and political officers were posted to Koi Sanjak, Rania and Rowanduz. At each of these places order was rapidly restored and the tribes quickly brought under our influence. They all expressed their readiness to accept Shaikh Mahmoud as British representative in Kurdistan, and were apparently ready and eager to join the Kurdish confederacy.

The district was found to be in a fearful state of starvation at Rowanduz, for successive waves of advancing Russians and Turks had reduced the country to abject desolation, while in the town itself out of an original total of some 2,000 houses only 60 remained standing. In the surrounding districts too cultivation had for the last two years been completely stopped while the population had been reduced by about 75 per cent. of its pre-war figure. So severe was the famine that in some districts the inhabitants were living entirely on herbs and the few acorns which were left and had been constrained to devour cats and dogs and even in some cases human flesh.

Steps were at once taken to deal with the famine, importations of grain from Erbil were arranged, poor relief started while future agriculture was encouraged and a measure of law and order secured.

The question of bringing the country north of Rowanduz under effective administration was found to be one of great difficulty, for although the tribes and the population are small, they are well armed and rent by bitter and continuous blood feuds, while the nature of the country being mountainous and rugged in the extreme quite precludes the possibility of effective military action against offenders, for to send gendarmes into such a country even in considerable force is merely to offer a bait to the tribes and to run grave risk of a rebuff to which there is no effective reply. At the same time

the tribes owing to the prestige of the British showed themselves willing peacefully to comply with our ideas, to avoid highway robbery and looting and generally to behave better than might be expected considering the remoteness of any effective force.

In this district too difficulties were increased by the fact that it marches with the area of the Turkish occupation in the north-west, while to the north-east is the Persian frontier of Azerbaijan, which province was in a state of complete chaos.

In Urmiah, and, indeed, throughout all Azerbaijan, the situation with regard to Persian rule was one which could not fail to arouse grave misgivings while serious disorders there were almost certain to be reflected in the areas which were nominally under our control. So great was the confusion existing there, however, that it was difficult in the extreme to arrive at a definite conclusion as to what was actually occurring. There seemed to be little doubt, however, that two main factors were reacting on the situation, firstly, a feeling of intense hostility to the return of the Assyrians and Armenians, fostered by some kind of Pan-Islamic movement centered on Tabriz, and probably stirred to a certain extent by Persian officials, and secondly, an intense dislike by the Kurds of the emasculated Persian rule which was weak in the extreme and quite incapable of producing any form of law and order.

In February a meeting was held by the majority of the more important chiefs on the Persian side of the border at which the question of a revolt against Persian authority was discussed. It is believed that at this meeting it was decided that such a revolt should take place, but it was first of all necessary to wait and see what the attitude of the Powers was towards the Persian Kurds and the repatriation of the Armenians. But whatever the decision actually arrived at there is no doubt that the state of the Kurds in Azerbaijan is such that a revolt against their Persian rulers is almost certain in the future unless Urmiah is taken under some form of European control.

## CHAPTER IX.

### UNREST AMONGST THE KURDS ON THE MOSUL BORDER.

In the meantime in the north-west corner of the Mosul Vilayat pro-Turkish and anti-Christian propaganda began to meet with considerable success, the position of the Christian villages between Zakho and Jezireh-ibn-Omar became one of considerable danger, while in some cases anti-Christian disturbances actually took place. On March 17th, letters were intercepted from Abdul Rahman Agha, chief of the Shernakh Kurds, north-east of Jezireh-ibn-Omar, urging the expulsion of foreigners and stating that the movement had the support and recognisance of the Turkish Government whose efforts were being seconded by individuals and committees in Constantinople, Cairo and apparently Paris working for an independent Kurdish State. Turkish officers at the same time visited Shemsedinan with Turkish propaganda, but were coldly received, while one of them penetrated within the Mosul Vilayat for the same object.

The local centres of the evil were undoubtedly Jezireh-ibn-Omar and Shernakh, both of which have been noted for anti-Christian feeling in the past and which were conveniently placed for any movement supported by the Turks. The actual instruments were the Goyan, an unruly and turbulent tribe situated for the most part just outside our administrative border to the north of Zakho.

During the first week of April, Captain Pearson, Assistant Political Officer, Zakho, proceeded on a visit to this tribe to restore order and to make arrangements for the safety of the Christian villages in the future. While on this visit and actually in the company of certain of the Goyan chiefs he was treacherously ambushed on the march under circumstances which left little doubt as to the complicity of some of his companions.

The need for firm action against the offenders was at once apparent. When the original anti-Christian disturbances took place military action had been asked for, as it was recognised that in dealing with uncivilised mountain tribes trouble of this nature unless nipped in the bud is extremely liable to spread. Aeroplanes were, however, at the time not available while it was held that difficulties of communication precluded military action.

Now, however, with the murder of a British political officer, the need for drastic action was increased beyond measure. During the latter part of the Turkish regime, the Turks had not failed in the case of assaults on their officials to take the most drastic measures. Under our rule this was the first case which had occurred and the tribes naturally looked upon it as a test of the vigour and strength of our government and as a measure of the extent to which we could be defied with impunity.

It was suggested, therefore, that military measures should at once be undertaken in the shape of an expedition against the Goyan coupled with the immediate occupation of Jesireh-ibn-Omar. The latter movement would have attacked the root of the evil at the last-named place and at Shernakh, would have turned the worst of the ranges protecting the Goyan country and finally have isolated that tribe from support.

The Goyan, however, were situated outside the administrative border of the Mosul Vilayat and this, coupled with the difficulty of the country and the lack of supplies, was held to outweigh the political necessity and preclude the possibility of military action. It had been suggested that as the country to the north of our administrative border was in the area of Turkish occupation, the Turks might be called upon to take action against the offenders and to arrange for the maintenance of order across the border in the future. It was felt, however, that as the troubles on the frontier were largely due to Turkish intrigue intervention by them could hardly be expected to be either whole-hearted or effective. It might, indeed, be distinctly dangerous, for not only were the Turks in sympathy with the anti-British movement, but the mere fact that we called upon them to act in the case of an offence against us would demonstrate to the tribes, our military weakness in the district and our inability to protect our own interests in the mountains of the frontier. At the same time it was obviously undesirable to give our assent to anything giving the appearance of supporting the re-establishment of Turkish supremacy in a district which we might wish shortly to bring under the control of the British Government.

It was decided, therefore, to veto the proposal for Turkish action in the neighbourhood and, in the meantime, aeroplanes having become available, a bombing raid was arranged for by way of reprisals. This, however, was ineffective owing to bad weather and the difficulties of the country and the results of our inaction soon made themselves evident in the spread of unrest, the attack on a gendarme post and the ambushing of a military convoy, while not only the Goyan, but other tribes in the neighbourhood began to assume a defiant attitude.

We were forced, therefore, to continue bombing raids on a larger scale. These were more successful, a number of direct hits were obtained on implicated villages, and it was reported that heavy casualties had been inflicted. The good results of this were soon evident and the attitude of the tribes underwent considerable improvement.

## CHAPTER X.

### SHAIKH MAHMOUD AND THE RISING IN SULAIMANIYAH, MAY AND JUNE, 1919.

It was now becoming increasingly evident in Southern Kurdistan that Shaikh Mahmoud's power represented a menace to the future-peace of the country. He was not satisfied with the sphere allotted to him but by continuous intrigue strove to obtain a position and a following far beyond anything which was intended or desirable. He was not content to attend to his duties as governor of Southern Kurdistan, but made continuous endeavours to obtain a hold over and bring under his sway tribes as remote as Erbil and other parts of the Mosul Division. He was known too to be in communication with the anti-foreign centre at Shernakh.

At the same time, as order increased and as the benefits of a sound administration grew more obvious, the tribes became increasingly dissatisfied with his rule. It was soon apparent, too, that a great many of those who had accepted him in the first instance had done so, not from any liking or desire for his rule, but from fear of his power and because his propaganda had led them to understand that the British were ready to insist on his Governorship even by force if necessary.

It was recognised, moreover, that too much power in the hands of a man of his character, while it actually menaced the future peace of the country was bound to lead to injustice and the oppression of the people. So soon, therefore, as it became obvious that only a certain section of the community really wanted him as ruler, steps were taken to restrict his authority to that portion of the community and to prevent his retaining an oppressive power over tribes who neither supported nor desired his rule. Amongst others the important Jaf tribe were removed altogether from under him and an Assistant Political Officer was posted to Halejba to deal with them direct.

As soon as it became obvious that we had no intention of forcing unwilling elements to remain under his rule, his influence began to decline rapidly, and, in spite of the fact that wherever possible he had put his own supporters into all important posts and of his feverish intrigues to increase his authority, it became evident that, except in the immediate neighbourhood of Sulaimaniyah itself, he was rapidly sinking into a position of comparative innocuousness.

In Sulaimaniyah, however, the situation was somewhat different. Here for many years his family had reigned practically supreme, while, since his appointment as Governor, he had consistently, by appointing his own friends to the more important and remunerative posts, done all in his power to bolster up his personal ambitions at the expense of good government and justice to the people. Even here, however, his influence was obviously on the wane.

The situation could not fail, however, to give rise to some anxiety for it was recognised that his personal ambitions were such that they might impel him to the most foolish measures to prevent the final decline of his power, while at the same time there was no doubt that he was aware of what had been occurring amongst the Goyan and was in communication with the centre of disaffection at Shernakh. At the same time no reasonable force was available to combat disorder on a large scale, for the Kurdish levies, although led by British officers, were still few in number, while it was known that many of their Kurdish officers supported the Shaikh to whose influence indeed many of them owed their appointments.

It was hoped, however, that nothing untoward would occur and that, by gradually strengthening the administration and by eliminating undesirable elements, his power would be gradually reduced till he slowly sank into a position where he would be powerless for evil and that thus a state of political security would be attained.

At the present time it is difficult to obtain accurate evidence of the events which followed. It appears, however, that the Shaikh, feeling his power departing from him, prepared a *coup d'etat* as a last desperate resort to regain the position which he felt he had lost. On the 22nd of May, therefore, he organised a rising in which he drew his chief support from Kurds on the Persian side of the frontier, notably from the Avroman and Merivan tribes situated respectively about 40 miles south-east and east of Sulaimaniyah. He obtained assistance too from the districts immediately to the north and north-east of the town and also from the armed riff-raff of Sulaimaniyah itself.

The outbreak was sudden and quite unexpected. The small force of levies on the spot were quickly defeated and dispersed and the political and military officers were confined to their houses, but do not appear to have been maltreated in any way. One motor driver was, however, killed. Shaikh Mahmoud at once assumed entire control of affairs, appointed his own Qaimmaqam, seized all Government records and the treasury, while telegraphic communication with Kirkuk was immediately cut. At the same time a convoy proceeding from Kifri to Sulaimaniyah with treasure, rifles and horses was captured by his adherents and, doubtless, provided a welcome accession to his strength.

Simultaneously with the movement against Sulaimaniyah matters became critical at Halebja. On May 25th, the Assistant Political Officer reported that his gendarmes were deserting and on the 26th Shaikh Mahmoud's men took possession of the town, while an aeroplane which flew over was fired on. Both townsmen and tribes were, however, in a state of indecision and, taking advantage of this with some adroitness, the Assistant Political Officer and his staff were enabled with some difficulty to withdraw to Khaniqin.

It was at once obvious that military action on a fairly large scale was essential and concentration was at once ordered. So difficult, however, were the problems connected with supply and with the safeguarding of the lines of communication that up to the present no movement in strength forward of Chamchamal has been possible. In spite, however, of this long delay, of a rather severe reverse inflicted on a reconnaissance and of the cutting up by the tribesmen of a motor convoy, all of which were doubtless magnified by rumour into severe defeats, the movement has shown little signs of spreading although, of course, there was some excitement at first amongst the Kurdish tribes. At the present time it is reported that Shaikh Mahmoud's following has considerably diminished since the outbreak occurred, and that a number of the tribesmen who assisted him in the first instance have returned to Persia.

Offers of assistance against him have been received from several Kurdish sources, the most important of these being from the powerful Jaf and Pizdher tribes. Events, therefore, have so far gone to show that the decline in Shaikh Mahmoud's power is a very real one, for there is little doubt that on these tribes he was relying for his chief support, and they might well have been expected after the considerable apparent success which he achieved in the beginning to have definitely thrown in their lot with him.

## CHAPTER XI.

### POLITICAL SITUATION IN KURDISTAN, JUNE, 1919.

It is difficult to arrive at a just estimation of the political situation in Northern and Central Kurdistan at this period, for conflicting rumours, opposing propaganda and general unrest and disorder have all served to obscure the truth and to prevent the true feelings of the Kurds from coming to light.

In order to formulate a policy for the disposal of this area at the Peace Conference and to arrange some suitable form of government for the country in the future it was absolutely necessary that the British Government should be placed in the possession of first-hand information gathered on the spot. With the object, therefore, of raising the veil and discovering the true situation, with the concurrence of the General Officer Commanding our forces in Egypt, Major Noel was despatched early in April to Nisibin to get in touch with the trend of Kurdish opinion there. The following resumé of the political situation is founded on his reports coupled with such information as is available from other sources.

There are two parties amongst the Kurds. Firstly, a definitely pro-Turkish party, which is on the whole fanatical, anti-British and supported by pan-Islamic elements. There is probably no genuine liking for the Turks on the part of the Kurds as a whole, but various factors have combined to drive them into the arms of the Turks.

Secondly, there is a pan-Kurdish party whose aim is complete Kurdish independence. This party is not definitely anti-British, and with sympathetic handling could, for the most part, doubtless, be won over to the British cause. It is, however, at present alienated from us by the same causes which have led a large number of Kurds to range themselves on the side of the Turks.

At the conclusion of the armistice the general feeling in Northern Kurdistan was undoubtedly pro-British. There were, however, various elements working against us, not from the same motives and with the same ends in view, but whose combined efforts amounted to the same thing, a turning of popular opinion against us and increasing opposition to the idea of British rule or British guidance of any kind.

The promoters of the anti-British movement were many and varied. First of all there were the supporters of the Committee of Union and Progress who, though beaten in the field, still nursed a revengeful spirit and were ready to adopt any means to increase our difficulties and to prevent the spread of our influence. Again there were the Moslems and Kurds who had taken part in, and profited by, Christian massacres in the past and who now feared that if we took over the country we would compel them to disgorge their plunder and exact reparation for their past misdeeds. The Sharif's agents, too, were working in Northern Kurdistan and were, by playing on the religious feelings of the Moslems, seeking the aggrandisement of their master. Moreover, there was a strong class of Kurdish grandees in Constantinople and elsewhere who saw in an autonomous Kurdistan, either independent or under a weak Turkish rule, a fertile field for the exploitation of their own interest and who recognised that under a fair and equitable British administration their chances of personal profit would be reduced and not allowed to interfere with the welfare and progress of the people.

The chief weapon in the hands of the anti-British element was the fear, general throughout Kurdistan, of our eventual championship of the Armenian cause against the Kurds and of our supporting the establishment of an Armenian supremacy over a large part of Kurdistan. Moreover, the vast majority of the Kurds have guilty consciences and fear that, in any scheme involving punishment for outrages in the past, they will not be held free from blame while naturally they object to the surrender of their ill-gotten gains.

If the fear of reprisals, of restitution of stolen goods and of Armenian supremacy over any important part of the Kurdish community were removed there is little doubt that a large part of the pan-Kurdish and even of the pro-Turkish party would be ready to range themselves definitely on our side, for many of the more thinking population recognise that under British tutelage alone has Kurdistan any chance of eventual peace and progress on national lines. The Kurds' past experiences of official promises have, however, made them deeply suspicious, and there would now undoubtedly be difficulty in persuading them of the genuineness of a promise of amnesty.

One of the difficulties threatening the peaceful settlement of Kurdistan is the delay in the final decision of the Peace Conference and the impossibility therefore, for the present, of our making a definite pronouncement as to our policy in the country. The Kurd is quick-tempered, impatient and incapable of controlling himself. He takes thought for to-day and not for to-morrow, while slowness in adopting a definite policy he is apt to regard as the hesitation born of weakness. Moreover, while we have no fixed and definite policy our opponents have no cause for delay and can work immediately and wholeheartedly for the end they have in view, the stirring of anti-Christian feeling and the production of as strong an opposition as possible to any form of Christian domination. At the same time current Greek and Italian action in the middle east has raised a spirit unfavourable to the acceptance of the tutelage of a Christian power.

It had long been held in Iraq that no punishment was to be exacted and no reparation demanded for misdoings under Turkish rule and at Turkish instigation. It was decided, therefore, to extend this amnesty to the Kurds

within our sphere with regard to their past dealings with the Christians and an announcement to that effect was consequently made throughout the Kurdish districts of the Mosul Vilayat. This promised the complete wiping out of offences in the past and, subject to the restitution in clearly proved cases of persons and immovable property, that there would be no forced return of stolen goods. To set the minds of the Kurds North and West of this area at ease and to let them draw their own conclusions as to our future policy in the event of our taking over the administration, Major Noel was authorised to announce that such was our policy in the Mosul Vilayat. It is to be hoped that this announcement will go far towards removing the fears entertained by these northern Kurds of a vindictive policy on our part in the future.

The question of the future policy to be adopted towards Kurdistan is one of the greatest difficulty and requires the most careful consideration, nor can definite steps be taken with regard to its formulation until the extent of the mandates given to individual nations at the Peace Conference are known and particularly until some settled policy has been adopted towards Armenia, for with Armenia the future of the country is closely bound up. It must be recognised too that failure to deal adequately now with the Kurdish question will leave a permanent sore threatening for ever the peace of the middle east.

The Kurds, although up to recently little has been known of them in Europe, are a virile and strongly marked race, much more so than any other in these parts. Their numbers are considerable, while they are warlike and well armed. Although as a whole given to blood feuds and robbery there is a strong element among them desirous of settling down to the more wholesome pursuits of agriculture and reproduction. Given a sound policy towards them now there are hopes that they may gradually turn into a decent and law-abiding community. If, however, an unsound policy is adopted from the start there is little hope that they will ever be induced to abandon their present life of rapine and bloodshed and they will remain a permanent menace both to each other and to their neighbour.

We must look upon them as a nation with national though undeveloped feelings, for although they are riven by inter-tribal disputes they still take a great pride in their common Kurdish origin. The fact that they have retained their national individuality and customs unimpaired through the centuries points to the vigour of their national existence. Their country, too, or a large part of it, is not devoid of agricultural and mineral wealth. They should, therefore, have a future before them as a nation.

Although they are a nation, however, they are a nation without leaders, widely scattered, and at present incapable of self-government. There is practically no education in the country and their tribal chiefs are for the most part mere rustics with no outlook and little influence beyond the confines of their own tribes. The few who have settled abroad and acquired a foreign polish and a wider outlook have to a great extent forfeited their influence in their own country.

To leave Kurdistan to run itself in the absence of leaders and community of thought is to leave it split up into a hundred warring tribes with no hope of peace in the future and a menace to all its neighbours. The only hope for the future appears to be some form of foreign rule or guidance, and the problem is to find some system which will ensure a measure of law, order and progress and which will at the same time, by being in accordance with the national aspirations, be acceptable to the majority of the people.

It would probably be possible to re-establish Turkish rule over the country, but there is little doubt that such a rule would be unpopular with nearly all the Kurds except such as see in a weak rule an opportunity for unrestricted license or who regard it as the one hope of escape from the Armenian danger. Moreover, a Kurdistan under Turkish rule could not fail to be a hotbed of intrigue and lawlessness, for the Turks are probably only less incapable of governing than are the Kurds themselves. At the same time by re-establishing Kurdistan under Turkish rule we at once abandon all hope of a permanent and peaceful settlement of the Armenian question.

Some form of British rule seems on the whole to afford the best chance of a settled and prosperous country in the future. There is little doubt that, apart from the misgivings aroused by the Armenian menace, the British are on the whole popular. There are two ways in which British rule could be established. Firstly, by a forcible occupation of the country in sufficient strength to overcome all opposition and to leave no doubt in the minds of the people that we intend to be obeyed, and to take the country under direct administration. This would at once alienate the sympathies of the Kurdish leaders and a large number of the people and would necessitate the continuous employment of a force in the country greater than anything we are likely to have available for the purpose. At the same time this would directly contravene the principles on which peace is being inaugurated.

The other alternative is to establish an autonomous state under British protection and guidance closely controlled by us through the natural Kurdish leaders. This seems to be both feasible and in accordance with justice and the aspirations of the people while it would render possible the ultimate settlement of the Armenian question.

## CHAPTER XII.

## SUGGESTED KURDISH AUTONOMOUS STATE.

While the limitations imposed on the boundaries of an autonomous Kurdish State by the future of Armenia and the remnants of Turkey are yet unknown, it is difficult to discuss concrete proposals for its foundation and constitution.

There is apparently no Kurd of sufficient standing amongst his countrymen to be accepted on his own account as the head of a united Kurdish State embracing the whole of Kurdistan. There are, however, several who with British backing would be capable of acting as ruler of a limited area. The best policy for the present would appear to be to set up each of these as the ruler of a small State, give him a British adviser and a certain amount of financial assistance in the beginning and use his influence for the establishment of law and order. All these little states would be under a central administration which would for the present be British with possibly a Kurdish figurehead. Doubtless as the scheme developed it would be possible to satisfy Kurdish aspirations still more by forming a national council for the direction of Kurdish affairs or adopting some similar measure giving the Kurds a greater share in ruling their own country.

Any policy which we adopt, however, must be founded on the intentions held in Europe with regard to the future of both Turkey and Armenia, and until these are made known it is impossible to do more than gather information and to oppose hostile propaganda. Given, however, rational limits to the future Armenian State and reasonable bounds to European sympathy for Armenian claims, there is reason to hope that a Kurdish confederation founded on these lines will lead to a peaceful settlement of Kurdish affairs in the future.

While we cannot at present arrive at definite conclusions as to the future boundaries of such a State, it is obviously important to adhere as closely as possible to ethnographical considerations and to include in the Kurdish State, as much as possible of the area in which the purely Kurdish element predominates. There are other considerations, however, which preclude the exact adherence to the ethnographical boundary.

In the first place there is the question of the Persian Kurds. These fall into two well-defined groups, the Kurds of the province of Persian Kurdistan and the more northern section in Azerbaijan. The former with a few unimportant exceptions appear to be on the whole fairly well satisfied with Persian rule and would probably if given the choice elect to remain under Persia in preference to joining a Kurdish State.

The feeling amongst the Kurds of Azerbaijan is, however, very different. Here Persian rule, weak and emasculated, is extremely unpopular with the Kurds who would welcome any opportunity not only of joining a Kurdish confederacy, but of coming under any strong but just foreign Government. They have the sense to recognise that although without foreign tutelage they have neither the training or the power of combination necessary to maintain order and rule themselves, order is essential to their future progress, and for the present can only be maintained under a strong foreign government or at least foreign leading. They argue that the other small nations of the world have been given the chance of self-determining their own future. Why should not they also be given that opportunity and why should they be compelled to remain subordinate to the Persian whom they detest and who are no more capable of ruling well and justly than they are themselves? It is useless to state that pledges given by the Powers to Persia preclude the possibility of our accepting the Kurdish plea for being brought under any other form of government. The Kurds reply with truth that they are the people most concerned and they have neither been consulted nor have they been a party to any such promises. There is little doubt that they will in the future endeavour to assert these opinions by force of arms, and even now they are in a state of partial rebellion. We are, however, debarred for the present from considering the Persian Kurds as a possible part of a Kurdish confederacy.

With regard to the tracts immediately adjoining the northern borders of Iraq and within the borders of the Turkish Vilayats of Baghdad and Mosul, it is necessary to take into consideration the question of the security of the British-protected Arab State. To do this we must find a well defined and practical frontier. The Arabs and Kurds on the borderland being largely nomad and inter-mixed, it is impossible to adopt a purely ethnographical frontier, nor is it altogether necessary, for a large number of the Kurds on the southern borders of Kurdistan have always looked towards Baghdad and Mosul for trade and government, and their interests are more closely bound up with the south than with the hilly country to the north. The submontane tracts of Sulaimaniyah, Koi Sanjak, Erbil and the corresponding belt to the west of the Greater Zab are capable of considerable development under a good government and through Erbil district lies one of the future railway routes to Mosul while it constitutes one of the most important granaries of northern Iraq. To the north of this belt lies a high, rugged and barrier-like range penetrated only in a few places by tracks leading over difficult

passes or through wild and precipitous gorges, which effectually shuts off Iraq from the wild and mountainous country to the north. This range would appear to be the most natural frontier line separating Kurdistan from Iraq. Sulaimaniyah, Rania, Koi Sanjak, Erbil, Akra, Dohuk and Zakho must then be considered to lie, not within Kurdistan, but in Iraq.

On the evidence so far available it would appear that the continuation of the boundary westward, being drawn to include in Kurdistan these regions where the Kurdish elements predominate, would run a little north of Jezireh-ibn-Omar, north of Nisibin, south of Mardin, north of Ras-al-Ain, along latitude 37 to Biridjik, thence north up the Euphrates and finally bending eastward and following the boundaries of the Vilayats of Kharput (Mamuret-ul-Azis), Bitlis and Van, thus excluding Erzinjan and Erzerum, to the Persian frontier.

Within this area, which includes the Diarbekr Vilayat are large tracts where the Armenian element is generally supposed to predominate, but in which from the evidence now available it would appear that they are in reality in a small minority. From their small numbers it would appear to be impracticable to place them in a position of superiority or even of independence and left to themselves they would probably under European auspices have no difficulty in maintaining their position, while they might if necessary enjoy a species of extra-territoriality.

This would leave the Vilayats of Erzerum and Trebizond for the rest of the Armenians and there perhaps the United States of America might be prepared to guarantee them a livelihood, fair treatment and prospects of development. This district could be garrisoned and administered comparatively easily and could well be left in the hands of America.

It is recognised that a settlement on these lines would increase to an alarming extent our commitments in the middle east, but only by treating the Kurdish and Armenian question in a bold and broad spirit can the eventual peace and prosperity of this region be assured.

E. J. B.

PRIORITY.

SECRET

PARA HRASE

POL 891

HIGH COMMISSION  
16 JUL 1968  
8166/68

*Be 9/5*

From :- POLNOR., ALEPPO.

To :- POLICY., G.H.Q.

Despd. 12-8-19 Recd. 2230 12-8-19.

---

PN/C/2 12th in reply to POL 837

Concur entirely with NOEL's criticisms.  
Constantinople's instructions are only likely to keep alive  
bitterness between Christian and Moslems.  
Consider immediate and drastic punishment be given in salient  
cases after which atrocity questions be discouraged.  
Please see para. 6 of my ? 10 July 8th.

Cipher Note. Repeat of last para has been asked for.

---

Copies to :- C.P.O.(2)  
Residency—  
C.G.S.  
G.S.I.  
File  
Ciphers.

PRIORITY.

Bl. SS.

16AU 1919  
8166/69.

SECRET

PARAPHRASE

POL 898

From : POLNOR., ALEPPO.

To : POLICY., G.H.Q.

Despd. 22-30 13-8-19 Recd. 0430 14-8-19

FN /G/2 15th Repetition as requested begins :-

In reply to POL 897 Entirely concur with NOELS criticism  
Instructions of Constantinople only likely to keep  
bitterness between Moslems and Christians alive.  
Consider immediate drastic punishment be given in salient  
cases after which atrocity questions be discouraged .  
Please see my report number 1 of July 8th. paragraph 6.

Copies to :- C.P.O.(2)  
Residency -  
C.G.S.  
G.S.I.  
File  
Ciphers



8166  
SECRET.

PRIORITY.  
PARAPHRASE.



From :- GENERAL BAGHDAD.

To :- EGYFFORCE. Reptd. H.C.  
CONSTANTINOPLE.

Despd. 1100. 15-8-19.  
Recd. 1900. 15-8-19.

X.7343 Cipher 15th.

---

SOUTHERN KURDISTAN.

Civil station in ROWANDUZI evacuated as too inaccessible to protect.

CENTRAL KURDISTAN Operations.

Operations uneventful for several days after August 1st., then AMADIA was surprised and captured some of murderers and certain hostile notables. Enemy was cleared from hills north of AMADIA - ? -, with loss but isolate company suffered severe losses. This may be much exaggerated by Kurds. Order being restored and Christians protected in districts occupied. Turkish CUP influence undoubtedly responsible for hostility of tribes. Another cause of unrest is apprehension of subjection to R.M.S.

---

Copies to :- Residency. —  
B.G.G.S.  
B.G.I.  
C.P.O.  
I.A. Carmel  
Cipher Office.  
File.

8166

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
16 AUG 1919  
8166/67.

B.G.S.S.,  
B.G.I.,  
The Chancery - Residency,  
D.C.F.A., Northern Area.

No. CPO 248  
Date

I attach 2 Copy of booklet entitled "Precis of  
Affairs in Southern Kurdistan during the Great War".

Five copies in all have been received from the  
office of the Civil Commissioner at Baghdad.

In the event of your having received copies of this  
booklet from other sources I shall be glad if you will  
return the attached to this office.

Captain.,

for Colonel., s/ C.P.O.

G.H.Q., E.E.F.,  
Cairo.  
12-8-19.

\* Copies received.

Copy returned with thanks.

JS 16/8.1919.



No. 21321  
59/31

Office of the Civil Commissioner,  
Baghdad the 15th July 1919.

To

- (1) The Secretary to the Government of India in the  
Foreign and Political Department, Simla.  
✓(2) High Commissioner, Cairo.

Memorandum.

A copy of the \*undernoted correspondence is  
forwarded with compliments for information, reference  
my 1987 of July 4th.

*Phillips* <sup>*Majr*</sup>  
Lieut.-Col., I.A.,  
Acting Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia.

Copy to:-

C.G.S., G.H.Q.  
P.O. Mosul.  
A.P.O. Rowanduz.

*Copied ✓*  
*CPD ✓*

\*Telegram from Calthorpe Constantinople to Foreign Office  
London repeated Political Baghdad no.43 dated 13-7-1919.

*Arthur Wood ✓*

Telegram P.

From Calthorpe Constantinople.

To Foreign Office, London, repeated Political Baghdad.

no. 43.

Dated 13th and received 14th July 1919.

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Reference telegram No. 7433 from Baghdad.

The Civil Commissioner at Baghdad assumes that the Kurds here are not definitely hostile to the Turks whereas the breach between the two is already too wide to bridge. The appointment of one of these Kurds as Wali at Bitlis or Van would not be willingly agreed to by the Turkish Government. Assuming however that the Turkish Government could be forced by us to appoint one of our nominees, these could scarcely find any modus vivendi with the Turkish Chauvinistic Military party, as long as they still hold out some hope as at present of recognition of the National claims of Kurds by the Allies, result would probably be an open rupture which would be disastrous for the Christians. Therefore I think it would be best to wait for the results of Major Noel's mission.

-----

A.R.

SECRET

PARAPHRASE

POL 897

From : POLNOR., ALEPPO.

To : POLICY., G.H.Q.

*Bl. G.S. MND*

20 AUG 1919  
8166/73

Despd. 17-8-19 0900 Recd. 18-8-19 18-45

---

P.N.C.3 Referring to POL 899

At time Neal sent his l10 of Aug. and I was away from Aleppo and have not met him since.

Since my arrival here have reviewed (the) several cases including those arrested by French at Adana and in some cases advised release with or without bail.

Military authorities carried out arrests on advice of political or intelligence. Presume instructions quoted sanctioned by High Comm.

Will report more fully after I have seen Neal, expect to meet him shortly.

---

Copies to :- C.P.O.(2)  
Residency ✓  
C.G.S.  
G.S.I.  
File  
Ciphers

2166  
Code, Cypher  
or other

Cypher

**TELEGRAM.**

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
21 AUG 1919  
8166/74

Sent by Gen. Wavell  
to C.P.O. K.B. ✓  
22/14) General Wavell } for HQ.  
E.O.V.

From Noel, Aleppo

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched 20.8.19. 3.p.m.

Received 20.8.19. 9.p.m.

No. 117

Dated: 20.8.19.

Last January Intelligence Officer at Aleppo received instructions to arrest persons accused of committing atrocities. A number of Kurds from areas East of Euphrates who happened to be in Aleppo, were imprisoned on Armenian allegations and in majority of cases are still in prison awaiting trial. This Policy has had deplorable effect on Moslem Opinion and in promoting instead of allaying religious and racial enmity.

People arrested are very small FRY and represent but a fraction of those we should have to arrest if policy was carried to its logical conclusion.

Now that H.M. Government have decided that a vindictive policy to Kurds shall not be <sup>adopted</sup> included and a proclamation in accordance with this decision has been issued it follows that

- (1). Above quoted instructions to Intelligence Officer should be cancelled.
- (2). Prisoners accused of committing atrocities should be released except in cases of officials who issued orders for massacres on their own authority.

Addressed Baghdad repeated Cairo, Constantinople.

8166  
Code, Cypher  
or clear? Cypher

**TELEGRAM.**

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
22/8/19  
8166/75

*KREGAN*

From Political

Baghdad

Despatched (Date and time) 21.8.19. 8.20 pm

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT

Cairo.

Received (Date and time) 22.8.19. 8.47 am

No. 9744

Dated: 21.8.19.

I have repeated Major NOEL'S  
telegrams of Aug 1st and Aug 20th to London  
with my support.

Addressed Cairo and Constantinople.

*Chancery.*  
*D.H.*  
*27/8/19*  
*Paraphrase to C.P.O.*

*amb*  
*23.8.19*

8166/75

G.H.Q. (C.P.O.)

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT

25 AUG 1919

W.H. 8166/75

Following is paraphrase of Telegram No 9744, August 21, from Political, Baghdad, to High Commissioner for Egypt and to High Commissioner, Constantinople.

Major Noel's telegrams of August 1st and August 20th have been repeated to London and supported by me.

SECRET

PARAPHRASE

TOL 925

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
23 AUG 1919  
8166/76

From : EGYPTORCE.

To : add. TROOPERS reptd GENERAL., BAGHDAD.

No. E.A. 2627 Cipher 21-8-19 Despd. 1440 21-8-19

---

In reference to your 80357

The situation is not satisfactory. Apparently Wilson is responsible for the policy of whole of an undefined Kurdistan which presumably is roughly the yellow area in map GS.GS. 2901 and includes a considerable portion of the area for which I am responsible, militarily. A political officer from Wilson's staff works in a portion of Kurdistan within my area, by arrangement with G.O.C., Baghdad, but this is not a satisfactory arrangement. I consider that H.B.M's Govts policy regarding Kurdistan should be communicated to the me and should be carried out in the area I control by Political Officers directly responsible to me.

---

Copies to :- C.P.O.(2)  
Residency -  
C.O.S.  
G.S.I.  
File  
Ciphers.

*K.B.*  
*General Wavel*  
*Edw*

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
27 AUG 1919  
8166/77

SECRET

PAR. PHRASE.

From : POLICY., C.H.Q.

To : POLNOR., ALEPPO.

No. POL 953      25-8-19      Despd. 2115

As follows for Noel from C.G.S.

Reference your telegram No. 117 dated August 20th to Baghdad.

Understand clearly please that you have nothing whatever to do with policy in this area and on such matters you are not to wire to Baghdad. Any representations which you may wish to make as regards policy to Kurds in this area will be made through D.C.P.O. at Aleppo to C.P.O.

Copies to :- C.P.O.(2)  
Residency  
C.G.S.  
G.S., O.E.T.A.  
G.S.I.  
File  
Ciphers.

*General Hasell*  
*K.R.*  
*S.P.*

SECRET

PARAPHRASE

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY  
27  
8166/78

From : CHIEF., EGYPTFORCE.

To : G.O.C., BAGHDAD reptd. TROOPERS ., LONDON.

{ Pr. 966.  
No. E.A. 2637 25-8-19 Despd. 1945 25-8-19  
-----

Reference telegram No. 117 dated August 20th to Baghdad from NOEL. It was arranged (see your 2849 of 12th March) that while in my area NOEL would be under me. He has been informed that he has nothing to do with policy in this area and is not to wire on such matters direct to Baghdad. The cases were already under investigation to which he refers.

*General B. A. Well*  
*KB*  
*EMV*

-----  
Copies to :- C.F.O.(2)  
Residency  
C.G.S.  
G.S., O.E.T.A.  
G.S.I.  
File  
Ciphers.

pp please ✓

Residency  
Ramleh  
-----

HIGH COMMISSIONER	
G. H. Q. 28 AUG 1919	
E. E. F. <del>OFF</del>	
No.	C.P.O. 323

*W. J. ...*  
8166/78

Reference telegram E.A. 2637 of 25-8-19, please note that this wire was circulated by C.P.O. under number POL 966; owing to a typist's error this latter number does not appear on the copies sent to you; to avoid any confusion arising, will you please rectify this.

*General Bavelle*  
*M. K. B.*  
*E. W.*

*Rogers*  
Lieut.  
for D.C.P.O.

G.H.Q. E.E.F.  
CAIRO  
27-8-19

Copy to:- G.S. O.E.T.A.

GAC

*W. J.*

SECRET

PARAPHRASE

POL (

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
 1959  
 28 AUG 1919  
 8166/79.

From : HIGH COMMISSIONER., CONSTANTINOPLE.

To : CHIEF., EGYFFORCE.

Despd. 1355 24-8-19 Recd. 1150 25-8-19

Telegram 110 August 2nd from Major NOEL conveys an erroneous impression.

The limit of our action here has been exacting arrest of a comparatively small number of Turks whose guilt on account of massacre etc. is very great and beyond doubt and in causing a number of incompetent or obstructive officials to be dismissed

I am of opinion that feebleness with advantage may further as regards the former category of whom only a few are under detention

of great pressure of other business and difficulty of making arrangements for their safe keeping pending any decision to Peace Conference.

That unwise arrests should have been made inter-alia Aleppo districts is deplorable but it is a matter which in no way concerns this High Commission and doubtless Major NOEL'S representations will serve as a warning to the O.E.T.A. against similar errors in the future.

Here we have always passed over the insignificant malafactors and I concur with NOEL in considering this policy wise.

Sent to Chief EGYFFORCE, Cairo and Political Baghdad. Addressed Foreign Office.

Copies to C.P.O.(2)

Residency

C.G.S.

G.S.I.

G.S., O.E.T.A.

File

Ciphers.

Cipher Note.

Ref attached un-numbered, we have asked E.T.C. for corrected copy of this wire, which may enable us to fill in the groups in query.

Ciphers.

*General Maxwell*  
*H B*  
*SW*

SECRET

PARAPHRASE.

POL 978 MISSIONER

From : POLNOR., ALEPPO.

To : POLICY., G.H.Q.

Despd. 28-8-19 1715 Cipher Recd. 28-8-19 2130

---

P.N/O/4 28th.

In reply to POL 953.

At present I am not in touch with MOEL. Expect to meet him about the 19th September near Kharput? when your telegram No. 953 will be handed to him.

---

Copies to :- C.P.O. (2)  
Residency.  
C.G.S.  
G.S., O.E.T.A.  
G.S.I.  
File  
Ciphers.

*Gen. Wavell*  
*W.A.*  
*E.M.*

THE RESIDENCY,  
CAIRO.

3rd July 1919.

Copies of Major Noel's Diary  
distributed as follows :-

C.P.O.	20	copies
G.S.I., G.H.Q.,	10	"
Arab Bureau.	5	"

*[Signature]*  
Lord Dalhousie, 10/11/19.

K.B. ✓

W-Greg. ✓

Balance in Press.

866

No. 435 ~~Commercial~~

(118152/M.E. 44A)

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
25 SEP 1919  
8166/81

THE Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments  
to His Majesty's Representative at *Cairo*  
and transmits herewith copy of the under-mentioned paper.

Foreign Office,  
*Aug. 22.*, 1919.

*K.B. ✓*  
*2010*

Reference to previous despatch :

To the Secretary of State, No. \_\_\_\_\_, Commercial, of \_\_\_\_\_  
From \_\_\_\_\_

The attached  
diary May 22 - June  
6<sup>th</sup> has already  
been received from  
another source.  
*omit.*

Description of Enclosure.

Name and Date.	Subject.
<i>Copy of Major Maels diary. April 25 to June 3.</i>	<i>Kurdistan</i>

*Transmitted to F.O. Aug 10.  
Aug. 19*

## Diary of Major E. Noel on Special Duty in Diarbekir Vilayat.

May 22nd.

Avineh to Mardin. The road for the first four miles lies up the valley of the Shaikhan. The long spinneys of poplars, the banks of briar and dog roses, the sage and rush by the edge of the brook, might make the Shaikhan valley fit in with any English landscape.

The stream, I am told, used to abound with fish, but since the advent of the Baghdad Railway Company, dynamite has been so plentiful that the fish in most streams have been almost exterminated.

This country is still fairly well off for game. Mouflon, it is true, are now rare, owing to the number of small bore rifles and ammunition in the country, but hare and hill partridge (the Indian chikor) are fairly common. The Kurd is very fond of catching partridges with a call bird, which is a very dull and uninteresting affair. The male bird is tied up in a bush which is surrounded with a number of horse-hair nooses pegged into the ground. The sportsman lies up in a brushwood shelter about 30 yards away. The call of the decoy is taken up at a long distance, and half an hour or more elapses before the quarry finally arrives at the bush and puts his foot into one of the nooses. If four or five birds are caught it is considered a good day's sport.

The Kurd is also fond of coursing, and half-a-dozen greyhounds is a necessary appenage to a full-blown agha. Every Kurd considers himself a fancier of greyhounds, in fact a common Kurdish expression equivalent to "What every schoolboy knows" is "Everybody knows the points of a greyhound." Wolf-hounds, known by the appropriate name of wolf-throttlers, "Gurg Khaniqin," are also kept.

In winter the pockets and wooded ravines of the Tor Abdin plateau provide excellent woodcock shooting.

May 23rd at Mardin.

We are having an unusually cool May. The temperature at night is as low as 52 degrees, and during the day does not go above 70 degrees.

Caravans of goods are coming into Mardin regularly. The route is through the Jabal Sinjar, and then across to Nisibin through the Tai country. The Tai and the Shammar Arabs are making a handsome thing by the tolls they levy on caravans.

The rates in force are as follows:—

Traveller	One lira.
Camel load	Six medjidiehs.
Mule load	Five medjidiehs.
Donkey load	Two and-a-half medjidiehs.

The Tai share of these tolls is said to have come to L.T. 200 last month.

A good deal of tobacco is leaving for Mosul and Dair az Zor. There is reason to believe that a great part of it is being smuggled.

May 26th.

Left Mardin for Diarbekir *via* Derek. The road follows the Deceauville line which the Germans built from Mardin to Badina Tapraghi (27 kilometres) to bring down wood fuel for the railway. It was intended to continue the line to Diarbekir from Badina. The oak forests that once existed around Badina have now disappeared, which is a cause of a good deal of resentment against the Germans.

The contractor has about a 1,000 tons of wood on hand for which he was to receive eight medjidiehs a metric ton at railhead, but which the Turkish military authorities say they do not now require. It might be worth while bringing this fact to the notice of the Control Board of the Baghdad Railway at Aleppo, as this fuel, so the contractor informs me, is for sale.

The Masidagh Kurds of this area say that their numbers have been reduced by 30 to 40 per cent. by the war, but that those who remain are relatively better off than formerly. Wealthy townsmen have in many cases acquired the land of those who have disappeared. The following are the rents charged:—

Owner supplies plough cattle and seed. Owner takes two-thirds produce, tenant one-third.

Owner supplies plough cattle and half seed. Owner and tenant share produce.

Tenant supplies plough cattle and seed. Owner takes one-fifth.

In all cases these divisions are made after deduction of Government share.

*May 27th.*

**Badina to Derek.** As one gets away from Badina oak trees begin to make their appearance, till finally something as nearly approaching a forest, as is to be found in this country, is encountered. The trees here have a girth of 30 to 40 inches and are about 20 yards apart. The district is known as the Mazi Dagh (the oakgall mountains), the tribes inhabiting it the Chia Mazi. Before the war their chief income was derived from the collection and sale of oakgalls for export to Aleppo, where they are used for tanning. A family in a good year will collect as much as 600 kilos of oakgalls. During the war this trade came to a standstill, and the tribes suffered a good deal in consequence. They also attribute the decrease in their population to the fact that the Aghawat of Derek covet their lands, and are always egging on the Government and the surrounding tribes to go for them.

The following statistics were obtained as the result of individual inquiries in various villages that lay near the road:—

Village.	HOUSES.		PLOUGHS.	
	Before war.	At present.	Before war.	At present.
Korchia	3	3	3	2
Kasrik	75	32	40	16
Mahlabi	25	17	20	11
Kharok	70	15	20	6
Total	173	67	83	35

Four hours from Badina the road reaches the crest of the plateau overlooking the Northern Jezire plains, and descends by a difficult stony track down a rocky ravine to Derek, a small town of 300 houses with good water and extensive gardens.

*May 28th.*

At Derek I found as Qaimmaqam a Laz, named Masoud Beg, who was Qaimmaqam at Rowanduz at the time of the armistice, and whom I had to turn out and send to Mosul for repatriation. I experienced some difficulty in getting him to leave Rowanduz without having to use force, and in consequence was quite prepared for some show of resentment on his part, at this our second meeting under very different circumstances. Contrary, however, to my expectations, he turns out to be very friendly.

At this moment there appears to be a wave of friendliness towards Great Britain on the part of the great majority of Turkish officials. They seem to think we are prepared to let them down lightly, and that we, of all the Entente nations, are the most sympathetic to their interests. The American is looked upon as the champion of the Armenian, a notion to which colour is lent by the presence of the numerous American missions; while the attitude of the French to Moslem interests is well known to all. Quite recently at Mardin telegraphic instructions were received from Constantinople to form local branches of a society known as, "Friends of the English," and while at Sor I was waited upon by a local deputation which wished to express its gratitude to me, as a British official, for the action of the British Government in turning the Greeks out of Smyrna. As I am completely out of touch with the outside world the only thing to do on such occasions is to wear a sphinx-like smile.

As the result of conversations with the merchants of this place, and other enquiries, I have ascertained that in all parts of the district the Christians, with a view to keeping the lucrative trade with Aleppo to themselves, have been trying with a good deal of success to so frighten their Mahomedan competitors with stories of arrests of Moslems at Aleppo by the British, as to deter them from risking the journey. With a view to counteracting this impression, I have volunteered to issue safe conducts to any merchant wishing to visit Aleppo.

While paying a call at a house of one of the local notables, a Shammar Arab, one of Asi's men, who was here buying hawks, came in. He said that the Sheriff's agents were now with Asi, and had completely won him over to their cause, and that the Shammar would not accept British rule at any price and in fact were determined to drive them out of Mosul. A curious fact was that the name of the Sheriff was coupled with that of the Turks, and the general tone of the man's conversation was fanatical. As he presumably was inspired by what he had heard from the Sheriff's agents, one naturally asks oneself whether there exists already some collusion between Arab and Turk on a pan-Islamic basis, and some understanding to unite against the foreigner. In this same connection I would mention that there are at present in the Diarbekir Vilayat two Arabs, one Seyid Ahmad, son of Seyid Khalaf, who is the brother of the Naqib of Samarra, and the other a certain Seyid Mahdi of Samarra, who are conducting a rigorous anti-British propaganda

on pan-Islamic lines, and give out that they represent a widespread Arab movement in favour of Arab autonomy under Turkish protection. They have sent several telegrams to Constantinople in this sense.

When the Shammar Arab had finished his tirade against the British, a somewhat awkward pause ensued, which was relieved by a Kurdish merchant saying:—

“ We the Kurds do not mind what the Government is, as long as it is a just one.”

From the experiences I have had during the last two months along the Kurdo-Arab border line, it would seem that the Arab has a much more pan-Islamic orientation than the Kurd. Islam looms much larger on the Arab's horizon than any question of nationality. Whereas, with the Kurd, the national question will, I feel sure, eclipse all others. It may not perhaps do so at present, because the consciousness of national existence and aspirations is not properly roused, but that this consciousness will be aroused is a fact which impresses itself upon me more and more.

It follows from the above that the Kurd will be much easier to administer than the Arab, provided he feels that the development of his country on national lines is being properly provided for. The Kurd, moreover, is very receptive, and a great outlet for superfluous energy will be found in the development of the arts and crafts which will follow the introduction of a modern method of administration.\*

In the neighbourhood of Derek there are, I am told, the remains of ancient Kahrizes. At present the construction of the Kabriz is almost a lost art in this country. The country round Derek, in fact all along the edge of the Northern Jezire, where the long spurs and slopes run down from the mountain into the plain, lends itself to the construction of Kahrizes. It is also suitable for the building of dams to hold up spring and winter floods. The hill torrents which are met every few miles are often unfordable in the winter and spring, but are dry by the end of June. Irrigation works of this nature are very profitable in this country, where the Government's water rights amount to two-fifths to three-fifths of the crop.

May 29th.

To-day's march lay over the bare uninteresting Jezire plain, which at this time is already beginning to wear its usual parched and dried up appearance, except for a strip of verdure along the watercourses which descend in considerable numbers from the Karajah Dagh. They still hold a small volume of water which, however, is rapidly dwindling and is doomed to disappear entirely by the end of June.

In the vicinity of Derek, the cultivators complain of lack of rain, and poor crops in consequence, but as the Milli country is entered, rain would seem to have been sufficient. The yield in a good year is said to be about 15 to 1, which does not compare favourably with 25 to 1 at Nisibin.

Arbeta, 12 miles from Derek, is the first village in the Milli country. The Kurds here stated that they had deserted their village during the war to avoid conscription, and that they had only returned this year to cultivate.

The following statistics gleaned from villages on or near the route will show the extent of the war's ravages in this area:—

Village.	Population.		HOUSES.		PLOUGHS.	
			Before war.	Now.	Before war.	Now.
Dina	Not-tribal	Kurds of	35	22	35	22
	Derek.					
Kharar	Ditto		20	10	20	10
Mukhat	Ditto		30	16	30	16
Arbata	Milli		27	12	27	12
Karakuzi	Do.		15	10	15	8
Mazik	Do.		18	11	18	11
			145	81	145	79

The striking feature of these statistics is the high proportion of ploughs to houses, viz., a plough per family. In most districts three ploughs to four houses is the highest proportion that will be met with.

As regards herds it would appear that the war has resulted in a very great decrease. The figures in regard to two villages were as follows:—

Village.	SHEEP.	
	Before war.	Now.
Kharar	3,000	250
Arbata	3,500	300

\* It is well known that on the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's field and refinery in S. W. Persia, the best mechanics are Kurds. In fact, many Kurds have risen to positions of considerable responsibility.

The decrease in livestock seems everywhere universal and is apparently due to:—

- (1) Extensive forced requisitioning by the Turks.
- (2) Sale or slaughter of sheep for food during famine of 1917-1918.

We halted to drink coffee at the camp of some Yezidi tribesmen who extended to us a particularly warm and friendly welcome. Sir Mark Sykes speaks of the Yezidis in a very disparaging manner (*vide* p. 333 et sequitur. The Caliph's Last Heritage), which is difficult to understand, as such as I have encountered to date have seemed to me peculiarly affable, courteous and pleased to meet one. Sykes was, however, describing the Yezidi in his own country, and it may well be that long residence among other peoples has a beneficial effect upon him.

May 31st.

*At the camp of the sons of Ibrahim Pasha of the Milli.*

The impression I have gained here is a disappointing one. When Mark Sykes visited Ibrahim Pasha in 1906, he speaks of his wonderfully accurate knowledge of the affairs of Europe, of the consistent and liberal policy he had adopted, of how during his five days' sojourn, affairs were continually being carried on in the great tent. Horsemen with messages, letters and despatches were continually coming and going on all kinds of business which the Pasha transacted with extraordinary celerity, never seeming to have to pause to think, and always appearing certain of his mind.

The picture which now presents itself, even making due allowance for the effects of the war, is a lifeless and listless one. The Pasha's son has surrounded himself with a swarm of Arab retainers, and one might easily think oneself to be in any ordinary Bedouin encampment. One scarcely hears a word of Kurdish, and instead of the open, frank and blunt atmosphere of the Kurd, one sees nothing but dirty, swarthy Arabs with greasy black curls coiling over their necks, and dressed in a motley collection of yellow silk and soiled white nightgowns. They seem to have nothing to do all day but sit round a camel dung fire.

Mahmud Bey himself struck me as being of an unformed character, without any strong or distinctive traits. For all this he is a factor of considerable importance as he has inherited a good deal of his father's influence, if not his masterful qualities. Living in the surroundings described, he is becoming more and more Arabicised, nevertheless he has no pro-Sheriff leanings, in fact he professes considerable apprehension of Arab encroachments on his domain.

The recent movement of the Anazeh (*vide* Diary entry of May 11th) was, so Mahmud Bey thinks, directed more against the Milli than the Shammar. It has resulted in a rapprochement between the Milli, Shammar and Tai. Mahmud Bey thinks that we were the instigators of the Anazeh, saying that they could not have crossed the river at Deir ez Zor without our compliance.

The Turks have been making great efforts to influence Mahmud Bey in their favour, but without much tangible result except that the propaganda of the Kurdish nationalist at Diarbekir has not had the success they expected. He has been approached by the Sherifian agents and quite lately was visited by Capt. Wooley from Aleppo. He also let drop the fact that he is in communication with Shaikh Abdul Qadir at Constantinople. It will thus be seen that Mahmud Bey is in a position of being courted from all sides by Turk, Arab, Kurd and British. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at if he obtains a somewhat distorted view of his own importance. The impression I gained was of a man who did not know his own mind, but who had certain proclivities toward a British form of administration although seasoned with a deal of misgiving. On the other hand, I think it very probable that Kurdish, Arab and Turkish emissaries have all formed a similar estimate of Mahmud Bey's attitude towards their respective interests.

One thing that must be put to Mahmud Bey's credit is that he gave an asylum to Armenians during the 1915 massacres. In this he was following the tradition of his family which has always been noted for its tolerance. In fact, the word Milli denotes a collection of millats or creeds, and the Kurds in the Milli confederation include Shias, Pagans, Pantheists, Zazas and Orthodox Moslems.

June 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

*From the camp of Mahmud Bey to Diarbekir over the Karajah Dagh.*

The Karajah Dagh rises to a height of 6,000 feet, and the road crosses the range at about 4,500 feet.

The ascent is by a long glacis, well wooded in places, leading to an undulating plateau well supplied with springs of good water flowing through small alps. Many good sites for a hill station or sanitarium could be found.

The Karajah Dagh affords summer pasturage to the Milli, but only a small proportion of the tribesmen avail themselves of it. At this time of the year but a few tents of the Chuvan and Mahali sections of the Milli were met. On the first day we stopped for lunch at the tent of one of the headmen of the Chuvan, a certain Aziz Agha. Tribal disputes and claims were being heard. I was much amused at the case of a querulous old man, some of whose sheep had been stolen and who had to pay three medjidiehs to a witness to give evidence for him. He had won his case all right, but the thief turned out to be bankrupt, so he was now claiming the return of his fee of three medjidiehs to the witness.

We stopped one night at an encampment of Mahalis who are Zaza Kurds. They were not so ignorant as extraordinarily naive. One of the first questions I was asked was how much money I had brought as a present for the Wali of Diarbekir. This was followed by one of them announcing that our penetration into their country was not for their good, and that they could not let me proceed to Diarbekir.

"But surely," I hastened to reassure them, "You must know that the Inglis are nearly all Ashirat\* and that they dislike the townspeople and their Fasad† as much as you do? Under these circumstances there is no harm to you, in fact much good from our coming."

It was curious with what avidity they altered their attitude, and fell over each other in saying—

"Oh, of course, if that's the case, we are the last people to want to interfere with you."

I mention this incident to illustrate the credulity in some matters of the tribesmen, and how susceptible a subject he is to propaganda, especially of a personal nature.

The chief of this section, one Abdul Karim, related to me the following story regarding the origin of his tribe, the Mahali:—

"Fourteen generations ago, when one of my great-grandfathers, Shawali, was alive, we were known as the Mitowri, and lived near Erzerum in the district known as Jabakchur. One day a Turkish Officer with a party of soldiers came to collect the sheep tax, and in the evening he told the chief of the tribe to send his daughter to his tent that night."

"My ancestor Shawali, to whom the girl was betrothed, then came to the chief and said, 'Leave this matter to me: I know how to defend our honour.' Now Shawali was a young man with no hair yet on his face. He dressed himself up as a girl, and told his chief to send word to the Turk, that his wishes would be complied with, but that he should send his soldiers away so that they should not be witnesses of his shame. To this the officer agreed, and when the soldiers had been sent away, Shawali went to the tent of the Turk and slew him. That same night the tribe loaded up their animals and made tracks for their present quarters."

It is not often that the Kurd is able to recount any tradition or story regarding his former history.

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\* Tribesmen.

† Mischief making.

## Political Situation at Diarbekir, and some notes on Local Notables.

As in most towns of the East, the notables of Diarbekir can, with certain exceptions, be classed as corrupt and degenerate intriguers. They oppress their tenants, devour men's property, and are always ready to go into partnership with a corrupt Turkish official to swindle the Government.

With these characteristics it is not surprising that many of them were active supporters of the C.U.P., to which, of course, they were attached solely by claims of self-interest.

With the eclipse of the C.U.P., and face to face with the possibility of a disappearance of the Turkish Government, these men joined the Kurdish National Party. At first they were doubtless put up to do so by the Turks with the bait of Kurdish autonomy under Turkish protection, which promised even more favourable opportunities than of yore for dirty work of all kinds. Since then, however, the tantalizing "Prinseep Wilson" of everybody doing what he likes, has slowly dawned on their horizon with all its alluring possibilities, and the erstwhile Turko-Kurds are now convinced that if they shout loud enough, President Wilson will hear and allow them to mismanage Diarbekir by themselves, and continue to fatten on the Christian property they stole during the massacres, without even having to share the spoils with the Turk.

To do justice, however, to the Kurdish Club, one must acknowledge that it contains some members who are actuated by a genuine desire to work for the welfare of Kurdistan as a whole. The best of them are, I think, Kiamil Bey Khyali Zade and Showket, son of Ismail of the Zaza family. Among others are Ihsan Bey, Dr. Fuad Bey, and Akram Bey. The latter is energetic and has studied in Switzerland, but he is perhaps handicapped by belonging to the Jemil Pasha family, who were so identified in the execution of the 1915 massacres, and profited so materially thereby.

This party, which might be called the Kurdish moderates, would, I think, welcome a British protection and administration, provided the development of their country on national lines was assured.

The Ittilaf party, which is composed chiefly of Government officials, has succeeded in winning over two influential townspeople, *viz.*, Niasi Bey and Naqib ul Ashraf Bakr Bey. Their presence on the side of the Government takes a good deal of wind out of the sails of the Kurdish Club. The latter during its early history was fairly subservient to Government, but of late it has been showing a more and more independent spirit, and resulted in the Government regarding it with increasing disfavour, and finally deciding to liquidate it altogether, which was done on June 4th.

The events which led up to this occurrence are not without interest in that they give a typical example of the many undercurrents of intrigue which are flowing here, and the methods which the Turks are having recourse to.

When the news of the occupation of Smyrna was received, the Turks were not slow to turn it to their own uses. News was spread of a massacre of Mohamedans by Greeks. The British were represented as having brought the Greeks in. The Kurds were invited to apply the analogy of Smyrna to Diarbekir. The English would come first and occupy the town, which would be but a prelude to the arrival of Armenian troops.

All these measures had their natural effect. A good deal of fanaticism was aroused among the common herd. The old reactionary and corrupt townsmen, who were now so-called members of the Kurdish Club and who dreaded an inquiry into their misdeeds of 1915, hoped for another massacre, which would destroy the last remaining witnesses of their dirty past and would effectually confuse the issues.

By this time the Christians were thoroughly frightened. A deputation was sent off in hot haste to me at Mardin to ask for British intervention. The Government also began to have its qualms. Its propaganda had slightly miscarried. Feeling was to have been worked up against the British, not against the Christians. The inopportuneness of another massacre was fully realised. However, a neat way out of the difficulty suggested itself. The Kurdish Club was to be made the scapegoat, which could be done with a show of justice owing to the activities of its fanatical and corrupt members. Under the guise of protecting Christians, an inconvenient organisation opposed to Turkish sovereignty could be got rid of.

The Christians were accordingly told that it was the Kurds, egged on by the Kurdish Club, who thirsted for their blood. After their experiences of the last few years they are always ready to believe the worst, and it was only natural that they should have given full credence to this new presage of disaster. From words the Government proceeded to deeds. Guns were mounted on the citadel to overawe the town, the military were called out, the leaders of the Kurdish Club were arrested, and finally the Club itself was closed.

The Government had saved the situation—the situation of its own creation!

## Route Report, Derek to Veranshehr.

See Route 116A of Handbook of Mesopotamia, Vol. 4.

On sheet 24 of Maunsell's map a road possible for carts is shown connecting Derek and Veranshehr. As a matter of fact, the track is a rough one, very trying for mules owing to rocks and boulders. The crossings of the numerous watercourses are all difficult.

Near Derek the track winds over low stony ridges and then passes over a plain, where belts of good loam free from stones alternate with boulder-strewn country very trying for pack animals.

### Supplies.

Are plentiful. Grazing good. Fuel nil, except at Derek. Water plentiful to middle of June from numerous watercourses flowing from Karaja Dagh. All villages have small springs. No wells.

### Population.

Non-tribal Kurdish near Derek (as far as Kharar). Mixed Arab and Kurd of the Milli onwards.

### Pace.

Caravan time estimated at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles per hour.

		On leaving the town the track crosses the gardens along the valley and ascends gently round the ridge running down to the plain (general bearing 235 degs.).
25	25	The track now bends to the right (general bearing 255 degs.) and leaves the hills.
40	15	Pass a small stream. The country now becomes very stony.
1.45	1.05	Village of Bairukh. (60 houses sedentary Kurds), one mile to the right.
2.00	15	Pass several irrigation cuts.
2.20	20	Village of Kharar (10 houses, non-tribal Kurds). Village belongs to Seyid Agha and Zulfikar Beg, rich notables of Derek.
2.30	10	Cross a stream which dries up at end of June, and enter belt of good loam free from stones. Good grazing. Track continues on right bank of stream (bearing 225 degs.).
2.50	20	Village of Mukhat (16 houses, non-tribal Kurds), property of Haji Rashid Agha of Derek. Track continues on bearing of 215 degs. and becomes stony.
3.30	40	Prominent mound with a single tree on top is passed one mile to the right, and then cross a stony ridge (general direction 240 degs.) to a mound. Enter Milli country.
4.35	1.05	Cross stream which dries up by end of June. Village of Arbata (12 houses, Milli Kurds) to north of mound. Headman, Mahmud Agha. Water from spring. Enter belt of loam free from stones. General direction 257 degs.
5.35	1.00	Track turns left (245 degs.).
5.50	15	Cross big nullah with water till end of June. Bottom covered with boulders, and somewhat difficult.
6.20	30	Small rivulet with muddy bottom.
6.58	38	Deep nullah: bed stony and difficult.
7.05	7	Mound and village of Karakuzi (eight houses of Milli). Zaptieh post. From this point, Derek, which is visible, bears 65 degs. Continue on bearing of 255 degs.
7.50	45	Stream, dry by end of June. Village of Mazik (18 houses, Milli), half a mile to the left.
8.20	30	Large mound of Tel Tatarich.

From this point the author left the Veranshehr road to visit the sons of Ibrahim Pasha.

According to Handbook of Mesopotamia, Vol. 4, Route 116a, it is 6 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles from this point to Veranshehr.

# Memorandum.

*Diarbekir, June 10th, 1919.*

TO—POLITICAL, BAGHDAD.  
FROM—MAJOR E. NOEL, C.I.E.

I herewith forward reports on the present condition of the various Christian communities in the Muttessarifiqs of Severeke, Diarbekir, and Arghanna Maaden, of the Diarbekir Vilayat.

It will be noted that the totals of pre-war population are considerably in excess of those given in our official handbooks. This excess is to be explained by:

- (1) The fact that since those statistics were compiled, the limits of the Diarbekir Vilayat have been extended to include the Qazas of Weran Shahr and Bishairi: and
- (2) Our statistics would seem to have been taken from the work of M. Cuinet, published in 1892, and no allowance made for subsequent increase. Moreover, M. Cuinet obtained his information from Turkish sources, which are notoriously unreliable.

It will be noted that altogether, owing to the massacres and the war, the Christian population has been reduced from 151,820 to 18,959, *i.e.*, 132,861 have disappeared (87½ per cent. of the total population), and that there are 12,981 widows and orphans in a more or less destitute condition.

As regards the present condition of Christians in these areas, detailed information will be found in the annexed reports. To summarise this information, I herewith quote from my telegram No. 85, of June 9th, to the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad:

“A substantial measure of justice has been done to Christians in Diarbekir in the way of restoration of persons and property. This, however, is not the case in the district. Small percentage of refugees in Diarbekir dare to return, and majority of those who make the venture only do so in partnership with Moslems. In some villages Moslems have squatted and claim possession; in others Christians are in position of bondsmen to local Aghas. Local Government is scarcely strong enough to obtain justice for Christians. Complete justice in town and district could be obtained by the presence of a strong European Commission. Whether they would eventually require a backing of European troops is difficult to say. Perhaps not, if Kurdish national aspirations were satisfied.”

E. NOEL, MAJOR.

STATISTICS OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN DIARBEKIR AND DISTRICT.

	DIARBEKIR					DISTRICT						
	PRE-WAR.		PRESENT			PRE-WAR.			PRESENT.			
	Houses.	Population.	Houses.	Population.	Widows and Orphans.	Villages.	Houses.	Population.	Villages.	Houses.	Population.	Widows and Orphans.
Armenian ... ..	2,150	27,500	320	2,200	2,200	166	15,825	116,040	—	280	11,853	10,000
Syrian Jacobite ... ..	400	2,500	300	1,600	400	—	—	?	—	—	—	—
Syrian Catholic ... ..	65	330	—	274	75	—	—	?	—	—	—	—
Chaldean ... ..	300	2,100	200	1,072	221	9	150	900	—	30	160	—
Greek ... ..	59	450	—	300	65	3	?	2,000	1	—	1,500	20
<b>Total</b> ... ..	<b>2,974</b>	<b>32,880</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>5,446</b>	<b>2,961</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>15,975</b>	<b>118,940</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>13,513</b>	<b>10,020</b>

## Gregorian Armenians.

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### *Numbers.*

#### *Diarbekir Town.*

Pre-war 2,000 houses, 5,000 families, comprising 25,000 souls.

Now 300 houses, 250 families.

There are in Diarbekir 2,200 widows and orphans.

#### *District.*

A detailed list is appended. The totals give—

Pre-war 162 villages, 15,575 houses, population 114,040.

Now 280 houses, population 11,853, which includes approximately 10,000 widows and orphans more or less destitute.

### *Restitution of Property.*

#### *Diarbekir Town.*

A measure of substantial justice has been done, but the Turks find many excuses to delay and put off restitution of certain houses on various protests, the most common being connected with secession. Gardens have not yet been restored.

#### *District.*

Position represented as being most unsatisfactory. No security for life or property. Armenian survivors in position of slaves with Moslems.

#### *Political.*

The Armenians think that another massacre would take place here if it was not for the presence of the Turkish troops. (This fear is, I think, exaggerated, and is chiefly due to occurrence of March massacre at Aleppo).

They are naturally opposed to Kurdish national aspirations, but agree that the Kurd, if not incited, would live peaceably with Christians.

## Diarbekir Sanjak.

QAZA.	PRE-WAR.			PRESENT.			
	Villages.	Houses.	Population.	Villages.	Houses.	Population.	
Diarbekir District...	25	700	5,500	—	—	4,200	Chiefly widows and orphans.
Lidjé Town ...	—	1,200	10,000	—	100	400	Chiefly women and orphans.
District ...	15	600	6,000	—	Nil.	—	
Silvan Town ...	—	600	4,200	—	150	500	Do. do.
District ...	38	3,500	30,000	Few	?	3,000	Very scattered.
Bishairi district ...	45	1,500	18,000	?	?	1,800	Very scattered and chiefly women and orphans.
Derek Town ...	—	—	Nil.	—	—	Nil.	
District ...	?	?	540	—	—	Nil.	

## Arghanna Maaden Sanjak.

Arghanna Maaden— Town.	—	275	1,500	—	?	75	Women and orphans.
District ...	?	200	1,800	—	Nil.	10	Men living in the ruins.
Arghanna Town ...	—	800	7,000	—	—	150	Widows and orphans.
District ...	—	Nil.	—	—	Nil.	—	
Palū Town ...	—	800	6,000	—	?	300	Widows and orphans.
District ...	37	2,500	2,000	—	—	500	Chiefly widows and orphans.
Chermūk Town ...	—	250	2,500	—	—	3	Men.
District ...	2	2,000	15,000	—	—	? 100	Widows and orphans.
						200	Do. do.

## Severek Sanjak.

Severek Town ...	—	500	3,000	—	30	100	Of original from other places. Chiefly widows and orphans.
District ...	—	Nil.	—	—	Nil.	500	
Veiran Shahr Town ...	—	150	1,000	—	—	15	Women and orphans.
District ...	—	Nil.	—	—	Nil.	—	
<b>TOTAL ...</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>15,575</b>	<b>114,040</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>11,853</b>	

## Armenian Catholics in Diarbekir Town.

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(Information supplied by Joseph Amerkania, Priest in charge of Armenian Catholics).

Before the war there were 350 families living in 150 houses. There are now 62 families, 150 orphans, and 60 widows. Twenty houses have been returned. Of the remaining 130 houses many are in ruins, but there are several which the local Government refuses to give up on the pretext that there are no heirs living.

A large number of Cult objects from the Church are in the possession of rich Mahomedans of the town.

There are many children and women in positions of slaves with local Mahomedans, both in Diarbekir and the district.

Armenian Catholics profess to be very apprehensive of fresh outrages on Christians.

Government represented to be well disposed but impotent. Greatly fear Kurdish Committee.

### *In Diarbekir District.*

Following villages, Chinkush (120 houses), Arghanna (50 houses), Bashnik (20 houses) and Korik (60 houses) were exclusively inhabited by Armenian Catholics. They were wiped out, and the villages are now occupied by Moslems. No trace of former inhabitants known.

## Note on position of Syrian Jacobites.

*Compiled from information supplied by Mitran Abdul Nuf.*

In Diarbekir itself the Syrian Jacobites were scarcely molested. Of all the Christian communities they know how best to get on with the Turks, and when the massacres were ordered they were officially excluded. In the districts, however, the Government very soon lost control of the passions they had loose (if they ever wanted to keep them in control), with the result that the Jacobites suffered there as much as anybody else.

### *Diarbekir Statistics of Population.*

Pre-war: 400 houses, 2,500 souls.

Present figures: 300 houses, 1,600\* souls.

There are 200 orphans and 200 widows more or less destitute.

### *Women and Children in Servitude with Moslems.*

*Nil.*

No complaints *re* non-restoration of stolen property.

### *Political.*

The Syrian Jacobite, it is stated on good authority, has been won over by the Turk to declare for a continuance of Ottoman rule in the Diarbekir Vilayat. It is certainly a fact that recently in Mardin and Diarbekir, prayers were offered in the Church for the Sultan and the Ottoman Government, and a pious wish expressed that their benign rule might continue. The Patriarch Elias has recently left for Constantinople.

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\* This figure is, I think, too low, *i.e.*, informant has exaggerated losses.

## Syrian Jacobites.

	Pro-war Figures.			Present Figures.			Widows.	Orphans.	
	Villages.	Houses.	Population.	Villages.	Houses.	Population.			
Diarbekir District.	25	600	4,000	12	100	650	200	200	
Diarbekir Town...	—	400	2,500		300	1,600			
Weranshahr Town.		130	700		30 to 35	160			
Weranshahr District.	5	80	350	Nothing left.					
Silvan Town ...		60 to 70	400		4	22	?	?	
Silvan District ...	15	350	2,100						As far as known nothing left, but there may be a few refugees who have returned.
Lidje District ...	16	420	2,100		?	?			Massacre took place, but fate of survivors unknown.
Severek Town ...		150	700		1	6	100		30 women and children in servitude with Moslems.
Severek District...	15	500	3,000						Believed to be massacred, but no details available.
Derek Town ...		20 to 25	80 to 100		1	8			
Bishairi District...	32	750	3,120	Nil.					Nothing remains except a few women and children in Moslem homes.

## Syrian Catholics at Diarbekir.

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*Compiled from information supplied by Kasbulos, their Priest.*

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In Diarbekir before war there were 330 souls living in 65 houses. There are now 274 souls occupying 53 houses. (30 widows and 45 orphans).

All their property is said to have been returned.

No Cult objects were taken.

One girl known to be still with Moslems in Diarbekir.

Cannot say how many are with Moslems in district.

There have been a few cases of Moslems voluntarily giving up Christian children.

Syrian Catholics profess to live in constant fear of a fresh massacre. Fear the Turk, and consider the Kurd to be a simple person susceptible to good influences. If his evil genius, the Turk, was removed, they think they would get on peaceably together.

There were no Syrian Catholics in district, except a few families at Severek, which are now believed to have disappeared.

## Chaldeans.

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*Note compiled from information supplied by their Bishop,  
Monseigneur Sulaiman.*

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The Chaldeans are all of the Roman Catholic faith.

### *Numbers.*

#### *Diarbekir Town.*

Pre-war: 300 houses, 2,100 inhabitants.

Now: 200 houses, 1,072 inhabitants, which includes 121 orphans and 100 widows, more or less destitute.

#### *Diarbekir District.*

Pre-war: 2 villages, 35 houses, 170 inhabitants.

Now: 30 houses, 85 inhabitants.

#### *Silvan District.*

Pre-war: 7 villages, 115 houses, 731 inhabitants.

Now: 75 survivors in position of bondsmen to Moslem landowners.

### *Restitution of Property.*

In Diarbekir itself all property returned.

In Silvan, Moslems have squatted on land, and former Christian proprietors are their farm labourers.

### *Restitution of Women and Children.*

In Diarbekir town all have been restored.

In Diarbekir district there are 6 children in Moslem households.

In Silvan the 70 survivors are the bondsmen of Moslem landowners.

### *Political.*

The Chaldeans are, if anything, opposed to Kurdish national aspirations. They are relatively satisfied with present Turkish officials in Diarbekir, and praise Ittilaf party as opposed to Kurdish nationalist party. They, however, agree that the Kurd, if not incited, would live peaceably with the Christian population.

## Greek Orthodox.

*From information supplied by Wafil Kevekchi.*

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### *Statistics.*

Before the war there were 257 Orthodox Greeks in Diarbekir occupying 29 houses, of whom there now remain 176 (93 women and 83 men), the balance having been massacred. There are about 50 widows and children among the survivors.

### *Return of Property and Slaves.*

Houses and property have in most cases been given back. In one of two cases, as well as in those where heirs are not forthcoming, houses and gardens have not been returned. There are one or two women and children still with Mohamedans in Diarbekir.

### *Political.*

The Kurds are represented to be desirous of a fresh massacre, but are held in check by Wali, Djoudel Bey, the G.O.C., Khalil Bey Arkan Harb, and Ittilaf party. Kurdish Club said to be neutral to Christian interests. Kurds themselves would not molest Christians unless egged on by Turks and town notables.

### *District (Silvan).*

In the villages of Bakhos and Killisa in the Kaza of Silvan, there were 583 Greeks (Orthodox) before the war, of whom 63 males and 95 females now remain. These survivors are in the position of complete dependence to the local Kurdish Beglar, who have appropriated the village to themselves. There are some 20 women and children in Moslem households.

### *Arghanna Maaden.*

The two hundred families of Greek Orthodox were not interfered with, although the Armenians were massacred wholesale. This is attributed to action of local Muttesarif.

### *Conscription Figures.*

The Greeks at Maaden supplied 47 men, of whom six have so far returned.

The community at Diarbekir and Silvan supplied 50, of whom three have so far returned.

### *Present Attitude of Christians.*

Position at Diarbekir fairly satisfactory as long as present Wali and G.O.C. remain.

At Silvan no security whatsoever, and no redress from despotism of local Kurdish Beglar.

Arghanna Maaden. No definite information, but believed to be satisfactory.

## Greek Catholics in Diarbekir.

### *Information supplied by Acolyte Bazil.*

Before the war there were 30 houses and 30 families. Twelve were massacred, but 18 managed to hold on, being connected by business interests with Moslems.

There are ten widows and five orphans.

Turks have restored buildings except in a few cases when a claimant owned two, only one being given back and the other retained for accommodation of Moslem refugees.

A certain amount of property has been returned, but there are many gardens which on one pretext or another (the most common being absence of heirs) have not been restored.

Only knows of one case of children being kept by Moslems.

Considers there is an always present danger of further massacre.

Shares view of Syrian Catholic priest Kasbulos *re* Kurds and their susceptibility to good influences.

#### *Supplies.*

Taking this district as a whole, it produces but little surplus to its own needs. The southern plain villages feed the hill districts. However, without unduly raising prices, about 400 tons of wheat and barley, in proportion of two to one, might be available.

#### *Production.*

Wheat	...	...	...	...	6,000 tons.
Barley	...	...	...	...	3,000 ..
Millet	...	...	...	...	2,000 ..
Gram	...	...	...	...	1,000 ..
Rice	...	...	...	...	?

#### *General Conditions.*

The destructive effects of the war have operated very unevenly. The poorer hill tribes have suffered the most, whereas the plain villages, especially those owned by influential townspeople, are relatively more prosperous, although the population has been reduced owing to conscription. Not more than 5 per cent. of conscripts have returned. On the whole, it may be said that the productivity and population have been reduced by about 35 per cent.

#### *Prospects for this Year.*

A fair harvest, but not so good as at Mardin and Wairanshahr, may be expected. This is due to the fact that rains failed in March.

#### *Livestock.*

Reduced to about 25 per cent. of pre-war figures. The number of sheep and goats is estimated at 15 to 25 thousand.

#### *Revenues.*

The revenue demand this year, assuming wheat to be £12 a ton, should be approximately:—

				£
Land Revenue	...	...	...	15,000
Sheep Tax	...	...	...	800
			Total	15,800

#### *Crown Properties.*

Nil.

#### *Land Tenure.*

Water is all Tapu.

#### *Prices.*

Wheat	...	...	78 medjidiehs a metric ton.
Barley	...	...	45 medjidiehs a metric ton.

#### *Currency.*

Lira	= 7½ medjidiehs.
Turkish Lira Note	= 33 piastres silver.
Nickel	= 37 piastres to a medjidieh.
Medjidieh	= 20 piastres silver.

**POPULATION.**

The population is exclusively Kurdish. The Christians of Derek are to all intents and purposes wiped out. The following is a list of the Tribes :—

Name of tribe.	No. of villages.	No. of families	No. of modern rifles.	Location.	Names of headman.	REMARKS.
Metni ... ..	28	500	50 (2)	In hills west of Diar-bekir-Derek road.	Haji Buzagha, Ahmed Agha, Abdul Karim, Agha Ali Dali.	There are another five villages in the Diarbekir Qaza. The tribes take their lead from the Milli. The Metni are chiefly herdsmen and they lead a semi-nomadic existence.
Mahali ... ..	15	400	50	In hills between Chir Maji and Garaja Dagh.	Each village its own Mukhtar.	Zaza Kurds of the Milli confederacy who emigrated from Erzerum district 14 generations ago. They cultivate a good deal of rice irrigated from streams from the Karaja Dagh; about half of them move up in summer to the Eastern slopes of the Karaja Dagh, these three villages under Diarbekir.
Chia Mazi ... ..	8	240	20	On Chia Mazi Mountains to E. of Derek.	Each village its own Mukhtar.	Soil stony and poor—abstain chiefly by keeping sheep and collecting oakgalls; have suffered much from war. On bad terms with surrounding tribes. Reputed as robbers.
Dasht i Grouz. sub-sections are Dombula and Shamrik.	30	900	100	North of Mardin-Derek road.	Darwish Beg, Mahmud Beg, but in reality each village its own Mukhtar.	The soil of this district is fertile. Sedentary. Loosely connected with the Milli confederation.
Sorkan Abas Bari ...	11	450	50	On plain south of Derek.	Mukhtars ... ..	Sedentary Kurds who have lost most of their tribal organisation. Claimed by Mahmud Beg as part of the Milli confederacy.
Lait ... ..	8	250	40	On plain south of Mazi Dagh.	Mukhtars ... ..	Sedentary Kurds; there are an additional 14 villages in Mardin Qaza.
Atrapshahr ... ..	25	800	70	In vicinity of Derek to the south.	Mukhtars ... ..	Sedentary Kurds. Villages belong mostly to Derek notables.
Derek ... ..	1	400	20			
	126	3,940				

20

NOTE.—Turkish records show 159 villages in the Qaza, the figure arrived at here may be somewhat low, but there are certainly some deserted.

Christian population in Derek none, in district	Pre-war Figures.		Present Figures.
	Armenians (a)	Syrians (b)	Chaldeans
	1,200	400	Nil
	...	100	60
			2 (2)

(a) In proportion of 45 per cent. Gregorian, 45 per cent. Catholic, 10 per cent. Protestant. (b) In proportion of 45 per cent. Jacobite, 45 per cent. Catholic, 10 per cent. Protestant.

## Report on existing aerodromes and possible sites for same in Diarbekir Vilayat.

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### *Nisibin.*

Plenty of suitable ground to north of station. German aerodrome was at Nimitli, railhead of Baghdad Railway, 9 miles east of Nisibin.

### *Mardin.*

German aerodrome was south of railway station, which is situated at foot of hills one hour's ride from Mardin.

### *Midiat.*

There is flat ground to west of town, but it would be difficult to find a space of the necessary dimensions which had no cultivation on it.

### *Sor.*

No ground suitable.

### *Between Mardin and Derek.*

Half-a-mile west of station of Chinareh on Deceauville railway, 11 miles from Mardin, there is flat ground, which is, however, rocky, and would require a lot of work to put it right.

### *Derek.*

It would be necessary to select a site on the plain three miles or more to the south.

### *Diarbekir.*

Turkish aerodrome situated half-a-mile from town on both sides of main road to Kharput.

## Notes on Kurdish Etiquette.

On arriving at a village or encampment, one can usually take it for granted that one is a welcome guest, and without further ado enter the tent or the house of the headman. An Englishman may safely give the usual Mahomedan salutation of "Salaam aleikum," to which the host replies with the customary "Aleikum es Salaam." In Kurdistan Christians and Jews instead of "Salaam aleikum" say "Good morning" or "Good afternoon"—in Kurdish "Subaita bekhair" and "Aiwareta bekhair," to which the host replies "Qowi be khair salamat."

The host then invites the guest to be seated, using the formula "Karam beka."

When seated, look towards the various people in order of precedence, raise the right-hand level with the face, and say "Marhabba," the reply to which is "Marhabba mizhta minata" (I am much obliged to you).

On wishing to take one's leave, say to the host "Be khatir awa," or for an important personage "Be kimmat awa." The host replies using one of the following three formulas:—

- (1) Be khair hati (Persian "Khosh Omadid.")
- (2) Sar sara hati.
- (3) Sara chaw hati.

A more elaborate and ceremonious dialogue on parting is as follows:—

*Guest.*—"Izn a min beda az bechim."

With your permission I will be off.

*Host.*—"Av ru suba nacha."

Don't go to-day or even to-morrow.

*Guest.*—"Isha min gelleka az gellek mamnun zhe ta."

I am most awfully obliged to you, but I really am very busy.

*Host.*—"Istaghfar ul Illah. Min che kirria tu zhe min minate dagirri."

God forbid. What have I done that you should be obliged to me?

*Guest.*—"Be khatir awa."

Good-bye.

*Host.*—"Be khair hati."

Your coming was auspicious.

If one's host has entertained to a considerable extent and one wants to express one's thanks warmly, use the following formula:—

"Az zhe wa gellek mamnun bum. Hawa gellek ajiat haisha."

I am very much indebted to you. I am afraid I have put you to great inconvenience.

If paid a visit welcome one's guest with "Be khair hati." "Sar sara hati" and "Sara chaw hati" are used for very big personages or by inferiors to superiors.

The guest replies "Khude zhe ta razi bit. Az gellek zhe ta mamnunam." (May God bless you. I am much obliged to you).

### General Notes.

A request should be prefaced with "Karam beka" (have the goodness to). For "Thank you" use "Tashakur dakam." In most cases, however, it is sufficient to raise the hand in token of recognition. The response to "Tashakur dakam" is "Be khair hati." Educated Kurds, however, often say "Istaghfar ul Illah."

If camping near a village, when visiting the headman on arrival no invitation to dinner will be made, as it is taken for granted that one is a guest. If one leaves one's host to retire to one's tent, one should not return to the host's tent or house without being asked.

Note that the senior by precedence takes the initiative in all matters of ceremonial and greeting, etc.

### A few don't's.

Don't use the left hand when eating.

Don't fondle a dog.

Don't sit down with one's feet in the direction of one's host. It is better to sit cross-legged if one can—if, however, this is inconvenient, apologise by some such expression as "Please excuse my Farangi habits."

# Report of the Qaza of Derek.

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*Population*—25,000.

*Area*—1,000 square miles.

*Population per square mile*—25.

*Agriculture*—(Wheat and barley).

This Qaza may be considered as consisting of three belts, which, placed in order of fertility, are:—(1) Jezire plain, (2) foothills and upland valleys and plains, (3) hill country.

*Jezire Plain*—30 villages (approximately).

The soil of the plain is fertile, and gives a return of 20 to 25 to 1. About 1,800 kilos are sown per plough.

*Foothills and Upland Valleys and Plains*—60 villages.

About 1,000 kilos of grain sown per plough. Average yield 12 to 1.

*Hill country*—40 villages.

Very little cultivation. About 500 kilos sown per plough, and yield about 6 to 1. Inhabitants subsist chiefly on their flocks and on the collection of oakgalls.

*Irrigated Crops.*

Rice, cotton, tobacco and peas.

A number of villages of classes 2 and 3 cultivate rice, which is renowned for its good quality.

There is little or no irrigation on the plains. There is, however, considerable scope for the extension of irrigation by: (1) Holding up surface water from the hills and (2) construction of Kahrizes. The country would seem to be particularly favourable for works of this nature.

*Forests.*

A good deal of the oak forests on the east side of the Qaza was cut down for firewood for the Baghdad Railway. It is estimated that about 20,000 tons were supplied. Another 100,000 tons are available. The price paid the contractor was 8 medjidiehs a ton at railhead which was situated in the forest.

The forests also supply oakgalls. It is calculated that a family can collect in a good year 600 kilos, and that the total yearly production averages 200 tons.

There are three kinds of oakgalls, known locally as Mazi, Hantuf and Shakaki. The relative proportions in which they are collected are 80 per cent., 10 per cent. and 10 per cent. respectively.

*Fruit.*

The hill villages and many of those of class 2 cultivate the vine. The estimated yearly production of raisins and grape syrup is put at 1,000 tons.

SECRET

PARAPHRASE

POL 1018. 5.0.1919

From :- CURZON, LONDON.

To :- POLICY, EGYPTFORCE.

Despt. 1053. 4/9/19. recd. 0900. 5/9/19.

8/66/82

27703 3rd.

Following sent to 1451 Constantinople.

Cherif Pasha notifies his election as head of future Kurdish states and suggests dispatch of Mixed Commission comprising his own and British representatives ---? predominant Kurdish Areas and asks H.M.G. to embark on a system of subsidies to Kurd Chiefs presumably to be distributed through himself. He adds complaints of Armenians.

Cherif is considered by H.M.G. as entirely unfitted for this role owing to his age and long residence in Paris. Beyond his word and alleged arrival of Emissary from Kurdistan, there is nothing to support his claim.

Please wire your views.

This telegram is being repeated to Baghdad by India Office.

Copies to :- C.P.O.(2)  
Residency ✓  
C.G.S.  
B.G.G.S.  
G.S.I.  
File.  
Ciphers.

omit  
E.H.V.

JSB.

SECRET

WAROFFICRE.

PALMIRA.

POL 1058.

From:- TROOPERS, LONDON.

To :- add. EGYPT repeated BAGHDAD.

Despt. 2150 6/9/19.

Recd. 1600 8/9/19.

1058 Cipher N 12 Sept 6th.

India Office? on Sept 3rd sent the following to Baghdad.

Begin.

Your telegram August 23rd.

H.M.Government will await the arrival of G.O.C. Egypt, who is about to come to London, before deciding question of political spheres.

Lt Col Bell will proceed on his tour and should meet and discuss with NOEL reporting to G.O.C. Egypt as NOEL reports to you each repeating to the others Superior End s.

On arrival F.H. Allenby will be informed accordingly.

Copies to :- C.P.O.(S).  
Residency ✓  
C.G.S.  
G.S.I.  
G.S., O.K.T.A.  
File.  
Ciphers.

*on TL*  
*EHV*

J.B.

SECRET.

PARAPHRASE.

From:- EGYPTFORCE. CAIRO.

To :- TROOPERS. LONDON.

No. E.A. 2680 cipher.

12.S.19.

Desp:1545.

My E.A. 2627 of 21st August.

My views on proposal re KURDISTAN are as follows in

(i) BAGHDAD'S No. 6086 of 13.6.19.

(ii) Noel's Scheme.

To ignore ethnological boundaries as proposed by BAGHDAD would probably lead to trouble. Views of NOKL and High Commissioner BAGHDAD, I am in general agreement with. The inclusion of Southern KURDISTAN States in MESOPOTAMIA would, I consider, mean friction with KURDS, and might create Frontier country necessitating permanent Military expense. Recommend therefore, as envisaged by NOKL, that they be included in a KURDISH ARMENIAN PROVISIONAL State. In any case consider KURDS should be freed from fear of ARMENIAN domination and that recognition of KURDS Nationality should be urged. This fear might drive them into arms of G.U.P. whereas if they are satisfied, they might prove strong bulwark against a JEHAD. The ARMENIAN position will be strengthened if they consent to combine with ARMENIANS. To satisfy ARMENIAN extremists, might necessitate considerable Military expenses for all Powers concerned, and will satisfy no one else in ASIA MINOR.

Copies to:- O.(a) O.(b)  
C.G.S., B.G.G.S.  
C.P.O.(2)  
Residency —  
G.S.I.  
File G.S. 1568/3.  
G.S. Cables.  
W.D.  
C.O.



Major Tweedy ✓

~~Mr. S. M. (Ketchum)~~

HIGH COMMISSIONER

SECRET

PARAPHRASE

POL 1107 8/66/85

Mr. Hope Vere  
on return.

From : NOEL., URFA.

To : PROXOME CAIRO (add. BAGHDAD reptd CAIRO CONSTANTINOPLE)

Despd. 7 19-9-19 Recd. 1900 20 9-19

134 19th

Vali of Harput who has arrived Malatia on Sept. 9th informed me that Turkish reinforcements were on their way to effect arrest of himself and Kurdish members of my mission. I left town on 10th on his advice to take refuge with RESHWAN Kurds. My party was surrounded 2 miles from town by Turkish cavalry who demanded surrender of Kurds. On showing fight Turks withdrew.

On same day Vali and Mutesarrif escaped with one or two other officials opposed to C.U.P. and joined me in hills to south of town where Vali produced telegraph (to) IRADIKH from Sultan to raise tribes and march against Sivas. Kurds collected but first insisted on marching against Malatia but Vali would not agree to this as he feared that Kurdish movement in a purely Kurdish country like Malatia would develop into a National one which would probably prove out of hand.

Threat against aimless town aimless attitude of C.U.P. and Armenians to activities of my mission and not to Vali's action. Mustafa Kemal ordered my arrest on 9th and on same day a circular telegram violently anti British in tone was issued by JONDET Bey G.O.C., 15th Corps. Colonel Bell arrived from MARASH on Sept. 12th and negotiated with C.U.P. organisation that had taken over reins of government for a safe conduct for me to visit him in town.

We agreed that in face of open opposition of Government it would be impossible to continue my tour, I therefore left next day and on 18th arrived at URFA two days after VALI.

That Kurds, who represent 80% of population, are against C.U.P. there is no doubt but war has given them a great respect for power of government and they back any unity and cohesion and will not move for a Turk.

Tribes I met said emphatic that if a Kurd was appointed Vali they would obey his orders. They are friendly to H.M. Government and a British occupation would be welcomed by them.

Presence of my mission which naturally led to thought that formation of a Kurdish state would be seriously discussed at Peace Conference led to most violent feeling amongst towns of Turks who although in a minority yet with help of C.U.P. organisation represent the only voice in towns.

Turks it was said would rather be under Armenians than Kurds.

- Copies to :-
- C.P.O. (3)
  - Residency ✓
  - C.G.S. (2)
  - B.G.O.S. (2)
  - C.S.I.
  - G.S., O.B.T.A.
  - File
  - Ciphers.

8166  
Code, Cypher  
or clear? Cypher

**TELEGRAM.**

HIGH COMMISSIONER

OMT ✓

8166/86.

Paraphrase G.S.D.  
C.P.O.

From Political  
Bagdad

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched (Date and time) 29.9.19. 2.55 pm

Received (Date and time) 1.10.19. 4.40

No. 11543

Dated: 29.9.19.

My telegram of Sept 20th of which (8166/85)  
(gr undec)

Noel telegraphs Sept 23rd from  
Aleppo (Begins) (CHANGE CYPHER

Mission of Kurdish chiefs was undoubtedly  
producing the effect we desired amongst the tribes.  
In the western districts of Kurdistan the Badr Khans  
are not much more than a name but at the same time  
a name which commands respect and influence. Judging  
by our meetings with refugees from eastern Kurdistan  
it would seem that family can still command fidelity  
and service in ~~Bohtan~~ Bohtan, at all events among  
the people. Amongst the tribal chiefs however  
there may be some who would oppose the return of  
Badr Khans for fear it would lessen their own import-  
ance.

If the Mustafa Kemal situation becomes  
serious we could make good use of the Badr Khans  
and certain other Kurds by moving the Turkish Govern-  
ment to appoint them as Valis and Mutessarifs in  
Kurdish districts. (ENDS)

He now telegraphs on Sept 27th (BEGINS)

From what

Code, Cypher  
or clear? \_\_\_\_\_

## TELEGRAM.

(2)

From \_\_\_\_\_

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched (Date and time) \_\_\_\_\_

Received (Date and time) \_\_\_\_\_

No.

Dated:

From what I have seen of the Badr Khans and their influence in Kurdistan I would recommend that Emin Ali Badr Khan be appointed Vali of Diarbekir and General Hamdi Pasha as G.O.C. 10th Corps. If appointments can be worked it is essential that Turkish Government afford usual privilege of nominating higher functionaries of government at Diarbekir, such as chief of police etc. It would also be desirable that a Kurd who should preferably not be a Badr Khan be appointed Mutassarif of Mardin. Selection could best be made from Constantinople in consultation with emissary of Ali.

Military and C.U.P. organisation will (? evidently) attempt to resist advance of Kurds by force of arms but if Emin Ali travels via Aleppo and <sup>Van</sup> Vananshehr Kuei (gr undec) Mahmud Bey of Mush and other Kurdish chiefs it is possible that C.U.P. opposition would break down. From an intercepted letter of C.G.S. 13th Corps. it would appear that townspeople are anti-Turk and have refused to send a delegate to Erzeroum Congress.

Emin Ali should be ~~provided~~ provided

Code, Cypher  
or clear? \_\_\_\_\_

## TELEGRAM.

(3)

From \_\_\_\_\_

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched (Date and time) \_\_\_\_\_

Received (Date and time) \_\_\_\_\_

No.

Dated:

with a (gr undec) firearms and should not be accompanied by a British officer.

His failure to establish himself will not involve us in any (? fresh) responsibility and yet will tend to weaken attempt of Turks to win over Kurds on pan-Islamic grounds. (ENDS)

I support Major Noel's views which appear to be consistent with our policy and to be based upon a sound appreciation of the position and I recommend that action be taken thereupon. Am however unable to express the opinion as to whether position at Constantinople is such as to enable us to insist on (gr undec) to make these appointments. Major Noel will proceed to Constantinople shortly and can explain matters in greater detail to High Commissioner.

Addressed to India Office repeated to Constantinople and Cairo. Copy by mail to India.

CHIEF  
 C. I.  
 C.P.O. 279. HIGH COMMISSION  
 No.  
 8166/87

The Chancery,  
 The Residency,  
 RAMLEH.

-----

Attached correspondence is forwarded reference  
 your 8166/75 of 25th August, 1919, in case you wish to  
 reply to No. 9744 of 21st August from Baghdad.

*Correspondence may be retained.*

G.H.Q. E.E.F.,  
 CAIRO.  
 2nd Oct. 1919.

*[Signature]* Captain,  
 for C.P.O.

*EPH*  
*4/10/19*

MD

*am C.P.O for enclosures.*

*4.0.19*

HIGH COMMISSION

500 1119  
~~8166/88~~

8166/

October 4th, 1919.

G.H.M. (C.P.O.)

Your No C.P.O.279, October 2nd.

Correspondence referring to our No 8166/75  
was not enclosed. Please send it on.

The Chancery,  
The Residency,  
Ramleh,  
Egypt.

-----

CHIEF CONSULAR OFFICER	HIGH COMMISSIONER
G. H. Q.	Egypt
C. P. O. 279	9001/919
No.	8166/89

(8166/88) With reference to your 8166 dated  
4.10.19. It is regretted that correspondence referred to  
(8166/87) in our C.P.O.279 dated 2.10.19 was not attached - the same  
is enclosed herewith.

*om. l*  
*SHV*

*Agul Bract*  
Captain,  
for C.P.O.

G.H.Q. E.E.F.,  
CAIRO.  
7.10.19.

WD

25 A

A/C.P.O.  
G.H.Q.  
-----

Reference your C.P.O.279 of 27th August,1919

I interviewed at CONSTANTINOPLE the Military Attaché on the subject of your above letter.

His view is that the statement made by Major Noel that "the result of this policy is that any Armenian who bears a grudge against a Mohamedan can obtain his arrest by making a deposition to a control or Intelligence Officer" is not correct.

He (The Military Attaché) states that the accusation form is sent to Constantinople to the High Commissioner, and that the latter only orders the arrest of really important offenders.

He (the Military Attaché) states that these forms were issued from Constantinople by the High Commissioner to his Relief Officers. Copies were, he believes, sent to Cairo and Baghdad for information only, but on this point he is not quite sure.

He states that the High Commissioner's Office at Constantinople know nothing about the case of Vassilik, which occurred outside the territory for which the High Commissioner at Constantinople is responsible.

The view of the High Commissioner's Office at Constantinople is that no modification of policy appears desirable, as the accusation forms only apply within the Turkish territory administered by the High Commissioner, Constantinople. As the forms in question in no wise apply to Turkish territory which is administered by the M.E.F., or E.E.F., (and it has never been suggested that they should so apply) the Civil Commissioner of the M.E.F., and the High Commissioner of the E.E.F., need not apply these forms to the Turkish territories administered by them, unless they so desire.

R.A., G.H.Q.  
23rd Sept.1919

(Signed) H.SIMPSON BAIKIE  
Brigadier-General, R.A.  
G...H. Q.

21 A

C.F.C. 279.

Subject:- "ACCUSATION FORMS"

Memorandum for Brig. General Simpson Baikie, C.B. etc.

1. The following telegram was received on August 2nd, from Major Noel Political Officer of the M.E.F. on visit to Aleppo. Begins:-

The following passage occurs in instructions issued at Constantinople to relief officers:-

"It is not feasible at present to look into cases of insignificant malefactors but names should be recorded and information collated on the lines laid down on accusation forms "A" which may be distributed to priests etc., through safe channels.

The result of this policy is that any Armenian who bears a grudge against a Mohamedan can obtain his arrest by making a deposition to a Control or Intelligence officer. Many such cases have occurred in Aleppo and the adjoining districts. At the end of June I obtained the release of 5 Diarbekirs who had been imprisoned here for month(s). The evidence against them was of the flimsiest description and since the date of their arrest no steps have been taken to examine their cases or collect additional evidence.

At the beginning of July a Greek doctor travelling with 2 Mohamedan boys of 14 and 17 were arrested by French in Cilicia on Armenian evidence. After being roughly treated by the Armenian Gendarmerie they were handed over to our Intelligence officer ADANA and sent back to Aleppo without any warrant for charge or papers of any sort. They have been lingering in divisional jail here for 20 days and were released only yesterday.

The boy of 14 is son of a prominent and enlightened Kurdish Chief who has given me great assistance and was, at my suggestion sending his son to Europe to be educated. Greek doctor is son of VASSILAK who is judge at Mosul. He is a man who is universally respected in Diarbekir vilayet.

The anti-British and anti-Christian movement in Kurdistan has been largely brought about by our allowing ourselves to be made tool of Armenian vindictiveness and religious fanaticism. Moreover, hasty arrests on insufficient evidence and subsequent release only bring our administration into contempt. In accordance with His Majesty's Government's instructions I have assured Kurds that no vindictive policy will be pursued but grant of these assurances is doing harm instead of good so long as present policy of arresting reputed insignificant malefactors is pursued.

The system of Accusation Forms is the best way of promoting and fostering religious and racial hatred.

I submit that it is now essential that activities of local Intelligence officers be brought into line with policy which is laid down by His Majesty's Government. ends.

2. The Intelligence officer at ADANA and the Political officer Northern Area (M.E.F.) when asked for reports for the former replied "No Greek named VASSILAK was sent to Aleppo by me etc. Name unknown this officer".

*[Handwritten signature]*

D.C.P.O. Northern Area replied confirming Noel's wire of Aug. 2nd., "Entirely concur with Noel's criticisms" He had not yet had opportunity of enquiring into the VASSILAK case in particular, on which he will report after seeing Noel; but he confirms the main fact viz: arrests made on insufficient evidence supplied on Accusation Forms. He wires on 13.8.19. :-

"Since my arrival here have reviewed (the) several cases including those arrested by French at ADANA and in some cases advised release with or without bail. Military Authorities carried out arrests on advice of Political or Intelligence. Presume instructions quoted sanctioned by High Coma.

-----

It is suggested that you kindly take this matter up with the High Commissioner, Constantinople with a view to the elucidation of the facts, and, if agreed and considered desirable, a modification of policy on the lines suggested in Major Noel's telegram.

Attached is a copy of a report by the G.O.C. 5th Cavalry Division on the subject.

*- also a ref for  
Constantinople to Major Noel's wire.*

*S.P.H.*  
Colonel,  
A/C.P.O.

G.H.Q., E.F.F.

CAIRO. 27/8/19.

SECRET

PARAPHRASE

POL ( 959

20 A

From : HIGH COMMISSIONER., CONSTANTINOPLE.

To : CHIEF., EGYPFORCE.

Despd. 1355 24-8-19 Recd. 1150 25-8-19

-----  
Telegram 110 August 2nd from Major NOEL conveys an erroneous impression.

The limit of our action here has been exacting arrest of a comparatively small number of Turks whose guilt on account of massacre etc. is very great and beyond doubt and in causing a number of incompetent or obstructive officials to be dismissed

I am of opinion that feebleness with advantage may       ?

further as regards the former category of whom

only a few are under detention       ?       ?

of great pressure of other business and difficulty of making arrangements for their safe keeping pending any decision to Peace Conference.

That unwise arrests should have been made inter-alia Aleppo districts is deplorable but it is a matter which in no way concerns this High Commission and doubtless Major NOEL'S representations will serve as a warning to the O.E.T.A. against similar errors in the future.

Here we have always passed over the insignificant malefactors and I concur with NOEL in considering this policy wise.

Sent to Chief EGYPFORCE, Cairo and Political Baghdad.  
Addressed Foreign Office.

-----  
Copies to C.P.O.(2) ✓  
Residency  
C.G.S.  
G.S.I.  
G.S., O.E.T.A.  
File  
Ciphers.

Cipher Note.

Ref attached un-numbered, we have asked E.T.C. for corrected copy of this wire, which may enable us to fill in the groups in query.

-----  
Ciphers.

COPY.

To: D.A.G., G.H.Q.

No.G.715

17A

1. Reference your wire No.AB 2186 of 12th inst. I submit the following report:- No 110 g mg -7A
2. I attach a copy of Major NOEL's wire which I have subdivided into paragraphs, as regards this letter:-
3. Reference para 2. Nothing was known of this by 5th Cavalry Division, nor by Advantell, Aleppo. If these instructions are being carried out, the feeling between Christians and Moslems is sure to be embittered.
4. Reference para 4.  
Four of these men:- DJIZREZI HAJI ALI  
SEVERKLI KALIL SERRI  
ABDUL WAHIB  
HALVADJI ZADE SABRI.  
were released on 27.6.19 at Major Noel's request. They were arrested on 1.2.19 by Advantell, Aleppo. Evidence was collected and a copy of the evidence forwarded to G.S.I., G.H.Q. on 15.6.19 in accordance with instructions contained in I.B.314 of 23.2.19 from G.S.I., G.H.Q. to Advantell, Aleppo.
5. No further action has so far been taken by G.H.Q. G.H.Q. were asked by 5th Cavalry Division on 28.6.19 to take action regarding certain men and reminder sent on 7th August. No reply received to date.
6. Further evidence was in the mean time collected but not forwarded to G.H.Q. as these men were released. Advantell, Aleppo, have their evidence in their office.
7. Statement by Major Noel that no further evidence has been collected is incorrect.
8. Reference Major Noel's remarks that the evidence was of the flimsiest character, a copy of the evidence is with G.S.I. G.H.Q. and papers can be consulted to see if there was any justification for detaining these men.
9. The 5th man Captain ALI RIZA of KIRISHDKI escaped to Constantinople and was not arrested with the others. He was arrested in Constantinople on 19.6.19 and sent back to ALEPPO on 14.7.19. He is in process of being released on bail. It was considered advisable to release him because his four companions had already been released, although further evidence had been collected against him.
10. Reference paras 5.6. and 7.  
The persons mentioned were arrested by the French authorities in O.E.T.A.North. They were handed over to the Intelligence Officer at ADANA who sent them to A.P.M.ALEPPO on 9.7.19. Investigations were made, and as nothing could be found against them, Advantell, ALEPPO wired Advantell ADANA on 17.7.19 as follows:-  
"Statement refers five persons handed over to you by

French authorities being questioned state they have no charge against these five persons except that some of their papers are incriminating. They wish the case investigated by ALEPPO as DIARBEKR not in OETA North. State they consider the men very dangerous and should be watched."

11. On 17.7.19 Advantell, ALEPPO also wired to G.S.I., G.H.Q. as follows:-

"Five men arrested (giving names) by French authorities ADANA - Sent through Advantell here are they wanted by you".

G.S.I., G.H.Q. replied 18.7.19 "Nothing known of these men here".

No further information having been obtained from French authorities (OETA North)

12. On 24.7.19 Advantell, ALEPPO informed D.C.P.O. Northern Area of the facts of the case adding "I have gone through personal papers and found nothing incriminating amongst them. If you concur I suggest that they should be released". A copy of above was sent to 5th Cavalry Division, D.C.P.O. Northern Area replied on 25.7.19 "concur, I think they should be made to give guarantee in writing that they will abstain from politics, then later on, if they were found to be mixing up in political affairs, they can be definitely charged".

On 26.7.19 Advantell wrote to 5th Cavalry Division as follows:-

"If you agree, the five persons concerned now with A.P.M. ALEPPO be sent to this office for release. I concur with D.C.P.O. Northern Area they should sign guarantees, I can have that done at this office. I have gone through personal papers and can find nothing incriminating."

On 29.7.19, 5th Cavalry Division replied Reference above correspondence, release the 5 men mentioned. A.P.M. to inform all concerned when they have been handed over for release.

The men concerned were released on 31.7.19.

13. Reference para 6. It is suggested that Major NOEL should send in a list of people to whom he has given safe conducts; otherwise it is quite impossible to know who has given assistance to our Political Officers or who are responsible persons. Authorities here would then be in a position to take immediate action, and prevent such mistakes arising; though in this case, original arrest was made by the French authorities in O.E.T.A. North. Presumably these persons were travelling with Major Noel's permission but without any documents from him.
14. Reference para 9. No general amnesty was announced in this area by the E.E.F. A Proclamation was prepared for issue but was suppressed by orders of G.H.Q. Does this amnesty refer to Kurds only.
15. Reference para 10. I fully agree with Major Noel's statement and suggest the suppression of these forms. As far as I know, these forms are in use in M.E.F. only, at any rate, I have never seen one here.

16. Reference para 11. The only policy that has been pursued is that contained in G.S.I., G.H.Q. No.LB.314 of 23.2.19. This has not been cancelled as far as I am aware and I do not consider that local Intelligence Officers are to blame for carrying orders they have received from higher authority. Major Noel belongs to the Mesopotamian Force, and the policy pursued there is quite different from that pursued by the E.E.F. He is very naturally disturbed, because he has given his word that no harm will come to these people if they travel through territory controlled by the British, But when an amnesty is granted in one region and not in another and no lists of names sent to formations concerned, it is not surprising that mistakes of this nature have occurred, and will continue to do so until a general policy for both areas is made known.
17. I am not in the least aware what Major Noel's position is in the E.E.F. area, presumably he is a political officer of M.E.F. and appears to hold or to have arrogated to himself a roving commission in E.E.F. I am at all times only too glad to help political officers in any way, but this is difficult to do when I do not know their status or responsibilities.

(Signed)

C.GREGORY.

Brigadier-General  
Commanding 5th Cavalry Division

H.Q.5th Cavalry Division.  
13th August, 1919

Copy to: NORTH FORCE  
Advantell, Central.

8166

Code, Cypher or clear? Cypher.

# TELEGRAM.

HIGH COMMISSIONER EGYPT 21 NOV 1919 No: 8166/90.
---

*OMT ✓*

*EMV*

*Senby HCV ✓*

From Political

Bagdad

To  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR EGYPT  
Cairo.

Despatched (Date and time) 20/11/19.  
10.25 p.m.

Received (Date and time) 21/11/19.  
8.10 a.m.

No. 13999

Dated: 20/11/19.

My telegram of Nov. 6th\* 13338.

There is no indication that troubles in Mosul area are spreading, and it is increasingly clear that Turkish intrigues directed from ERZEROUH and VAN, rather than Kurdish Nationalism, is the cause of the present effervescence.

Addressed India Office repeated to Cairo.

Copy by post to India.

\* Not received here.

*Peraphum to C.P.O.*

8166

HIGH COMMISSIONER  
EGYPT  
25 NOV. 1919.  
No: 8166/91.

No. 605

(147294 / )  
M.E. 44 A

THE Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments  
to His Majesty's Representative at *Cairo*  
and transmits herewith copy of the under-mentioned paper.

Foreign Office,

*Nov. 6*, 1919.

*O.M.T. ✓*

*C.P. ✓*  
*SSI ✓*  
*CPOL ✓*

Reference to previous despatch:

To the Secretary of State, No. \_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_  
From \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Enclosure

Name and Date	Subject.
<i>3 letters from the India Office</i> <i>1/ P. 5095</i> <i>Sept. 11.</i>	
<i>2/ P. 5456</i> <i>Oct. 2.</i>	<i>Treatment of Kurds responsible</i>
<i>3/ P. 6297</i> <i>Oct. 30</i>	<i>for atrocities against Americans</i>

Copy.

P. 5095.

(128388).

*Caric*

INDIA OFFICE,

WHITEHALL,

LONDON, S.W.

11th September, 1919.

Sir,

In transmitting, to be laid before Earl Curzon of Kedleston copy of a telegram, No.9743 of August 21st. from the Acting Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia, I am directed by the Secretary of State for India to invite your attention to Colonel Wilson's telegram No.8677 dated August 3rd copy of which was forwarded to you under cover of my endorsement No.4623 dated 15th August 1919.

Upon these telegrams, in so far as they have reference to the spheres of control to be exercised respectively by the General Officer Commanding in Chief in Egypt and the Civil Commissioner Bagdad, Mr. Secretary Montagu does not propose to comment; but he is of opinion that the somewhat diverse interpretations revealed therein of His Majesty's Government's policy in respect of crimes committed by the Moslems of Kurdistan against Christians <sup>deserve(?)</sup> consideration. This policy was laid down in the Secretary of State's telegram of May 12th addressed to Bagdad, and communicated to you under cover of my endorsement No.2528 of June 7th. As regards the Mosul Vilayet approval was accorded to Colonel Wilson's sanction of Major Noel's proposal, of April 26th, that there should be a proclamation of general Amnesty in regard/

The Under Secretary of State,

Foreign Office.

regard to Kurds for all murders committed at the instigation of or on the direct orders of Turks, and a formal declaration that we should only insist on restitution of unmoveable property.

As regards the area outside the Mosul Vilayet, Major Noel was authorised to give private assurances so far as His Majesty's Government are concerned, that no vindictive policy would be pursued.

Colonel Wilson now asks that in view of this declaration; (1) instructions to arrest persons accused of committing atrocities, issued to the Military Intelligence Officer Aleppo, in January last, should be cancelled, and (2) that prisoners other than officials who issued orders for massacres on their own authority should be released. As regards the first of these requests, it appears from Bagdad telegram No.8677 of August 3rd that accusation forms have been prepared in Constantinople for distribution to relief officers and that depositions so made are held in Aleppo to justify the arrest of persons accused.

Major Noel has cited specific instances in which he believes hardship to have been occasioned. It is gathered from the telegram addressed by the General Officer Commanding, Egypt, (No.E.A.2637 of August 25th) to the General Officer Commanding, Mesopotamia that these individual cases are under investigation; but this telegram did not deal with the principle involved. From Admiral Webb's telegram No.1712 of August 24th it would appear that Constantinople and Bagdad are in accord as to the desirability of passing over insignificant malefactors, but no suggestion is made of withdrawing the accusation forms to which Major Noel objects.

The Civil Commissioner at Bagdad on the other hand appears to interpret the phrase "no vindictive policy" as

securing/

securing even in the area beyond the Mosul Vilayet a very generous amnesty.

Mr. Secretary Montagu is inclined to the view that arrests of Kurds on the mere depositions of Armenians, in a manner such as is described by Major Noel as occurring in the Aleppo area, may lead to results that are not compatible with His Majesty's Government's declared policy. At the same time he considers that Colonel Wilson may be reading into the telegram of 12th May a larger measure of amnesty than was intended.

The phrase 'no vindictive policy' would not appear necessarily to preclude either the punishment of such offenders as did not act under superior authority or the exaction of reasonable reparation even where official instigation can be proved. The terms of the amnesty, also are not free from ambiguity. Apparently dealing with murder cases only, it is interpreted as covering every description of crime; and whereas it excepted from punishment only those whose offences were committed at the order or instigation of Turks, the telegram under reference suggests that in Iraq it may be interpreted to protect all persons other than officials acting on their own authority. This interpretation would imply that every crime was at least instigated by the Turks. There appears therefore to be considerable diversity of opinion and Mr. Montagu would suggest for the consideration of Lord Curzon that the matter might with advantage be dealt with at an early date by the Inter-Departmental Committee with a view to the formulation, if possible, of a more definite and uniform policy.

I have, etc.,

(SD). L.D. Wakely.

122194 / 1919

(P 5095)

*From Political, Baghdad, 21st August 1919.*

*(Repeated to Government of India by post.)*

*(Received 25th, 7.30 a.m.)*

9743. My telegram of the 3rd August, No. 8677. Major Noel telegraphs, 20th August :--

"Last January, Intelligence Officer, ~~Russian Embassy~~, <sup>aleppo</sup> received instructions to arrest persons accused of committing atrocities. A number of Kurds from areas east of Euphrates, who happened to be in Aleppo area, were imprisoned on Armenians' allegations, and, in majority of cases, are still in prison awaiting trial. This policy has had deplorable effect on Moslem opinion and in promoting, instead of allaying, religious and racial enmity. Majority of arrests very small fry, and represent but a fraction of those we should have to arrest if policy was carried to its logical conclusion.

"Now that His Majesty's Government have decided that a vindictive policy to Kurdistan shall not be adopted, and a proclamation in accordance with this decision has been issued, it follows that :--

"(1) above-quoted instructions to Intelligence Officer should be cancelled ;

"(2) prisoners accused of committing atrocities should be released, except in cases of officials who issued orders for massacres on their own authority.

"Addressed Baghdad. Repeated to Cairo, Constantinople."

I entirely concur. Continuance of our present policy towards Mahomedaus in Kurdistan is, from every point of view, perilous.

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Copy.

1450.

(1457)

Reference to previous correspondence:

Letter to the India Office of the  
, from

INDIA OFFICE,

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT,

London, S.W.1.

October 2nd, 1919.

Sir,

I am directed by the Secretary of State for India to transmit to you, for the information of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs copy of the papers noted below, on the subject of Assurance to Kurds.

I am, etc.,

(Sd): T. W. HOLDERNESS.

The Under-Secretary of State,

FOREIGN OFFICE.

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Date of enclosure.

Description.

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10/8.

Bagdad 2463.

Copy also sent to:-

D.M.I.

Copy.

No. 24163  
13/38.

Office of the Civil Commissioner,  
Baghdad, the 10th August 1919.

To:-

1. The Under-Secretary of State for India,  
London, S.W.1. (3 copies).
2. The Secretary to the Government of India  
in the Foreign and Political Department, Simla.
3. The High Commissioner, Constantinople.
4. G.H.Q., E.E.F., Cairo.

Memorandum.

x

A copy of the undernoted correspondence is forwarded  
with complimentd for information.

(Sd): G.B. GILLAN, Major.

for

Lt-Col. I.A.  
Acting Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia.

Copy to:-

C.G.S., G.H.Q., Baghdad.

F.O. Mosul.

Major E.W.C. Noel, C.I.E., D.S.O., (2 copies).

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x Note on assurances given to Kurds.

NOTE ON ASSURANCE GIVEN TO KURDS.

Major Noel telegraphed from Nisibin on the 24th April stating that rumours had recently reached Nisibin of the adoption of a policy of retaliation against Moslems for the massacres of Christians, with the result that feeling was at present on the whole against us, and that interesting persons had had a good deal of success in frightening tribes with the bogey of pro-Armenian and vengeance breeding Britisher. The agitation was, however, artificial, and a proclamation of general amnesty in regard to murders and massacres carried out by Kurds at instigation of, or on direct orders of Turks, and a formal declaration that we should only insist on restitution of immovable property would cause the present agitation to subside. If it was inconvenient to make this declaration in so many words it would be sufficient if he could be authorised to inform people verbally to this effect.

This suggestion was forwarded to Egypt force Cairo in this Office telegram 4793 of April 24th, repeated to India Office, Simla, Tehran, and Constantinople.

With the concurrence of the General Office Commanding Egyptian Expeditionary Force at Cairo, who showed him the telegram during his visit there, the Civil Commissioner replied through the Residency at Cairo on the 4th May (Cairo No. 543 M, repeated Foreign Office 713, and to Tehran and Simla) authorising Lt. Colonel Howell, who was Officiating Civil Commissioner at Baghdad, subject to the concurrence of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Mesopotamia, to announce a general amnesty on the lines proposed by Major Noel of Kurds in districts within the Mosul Wilayat. Lt. Colonel Howell was directed to

inform/

inform Major Noel that this had been done. Kurds in the districts outside the Mosul Wilayat would no doubt draw their own conclusions.

In a subsequent telegram Cairo 544 M, the Civil Commissioner authorized Major Noel to make any verbal communication he thought necessary in conformity with the above. These assurances were authorized in the case of Mesopotamia by the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (O/1862/50 of May 6th) with the proviso that the amnesty would not renounce the return of abducted persons or stolen property.

On May 12th on his return to Baghdad, the Civil Commissioner made a formal reference on the subject to the India Office (5353 of May 12th) in which he recommended that we should adopt the third course proposed in the telegram of May 1st from Constantinople and give full assurances regarding amnesty and freedom from Armenian domination in areas predominantly Kurdish as far as His Majesty's Government were concerned without however committing ourselves to acceptances of a mandate for the Kurdish Areas beyond the Mosul Wilayat till we could see how affairs were moving.

On the 5th June the India Office replied in the following terms.

"Reference proposals made in the sixth paragraph of  
"your telegram under discussion, we attach special impor-  
"tance to qualification that assurances should only be  
"given so far as His Majesty's Government are concerned.  
"As regards amnesty, in view of general uncertainty as to  
"the future of the status of the regions affected the  
"Foreign Office think it inadvisable to go beyond assurance  
"that"

"that no vindictive policy will be pursued. (See my  
"telegram dated 12th May. They would have preferred this  
vague EQUIVOCATORY formula even in the case of the Kurds  
"within the Mosul Wilayat but if more explicit assurances  
"have already been communicated to the latter they may of  
"course stand.

"In respect of past events only of course, can plea of  
"Turkish instigation be accepted. Second proposed assurance should  
"be limited to freedom from unrestricted Armenian domination.

"Subject to the above remarks the proposals in  
"paragraph six of your telegram under reference are approved."

Previous to the receipt of the above orders grave  
disturbances broke out at Sulaimaniyah and threatened to extend  
to the whole of the Kurdish border. By a fortunate co-incidence  
Raiyd Taha of Rowanduz and Shamedinan was present at Baghdad  
and after lengthy conversation was given a letter in Persian  
to the following effect under date May 22nd.

"I have been authorised by His Majesty's Government  
to assure you personally that His Majesty's Government have no  
intention of adopting a vindictive policy towards Kurds in  
regard to acts committed during the war but are prepared to grant  
them a general amnesty.

This will not prevent the representatives of the  
British Government from using their friendly endeavours  
to make peace between Armenians and Kurds in regard to their  
personal affairs, and they will also use their best endeavours  
to settle between the two parties questions relating to land in a  
friendly manner without resort to armed intervention.

His Majesty's Government wish me to assure you, that

the/

the interests of the Kurds are by no means being lost eight

of at the Peace Conference



policy towards Kurds in respect of acts committed during the War and is prepared to grant them a general amnesty.

It is necessary that the two races occupying the same area should leave their wrongs in the hand of Government, should relinquish private grudges and recriminations and prepare to live together in mutual toleration and good will.

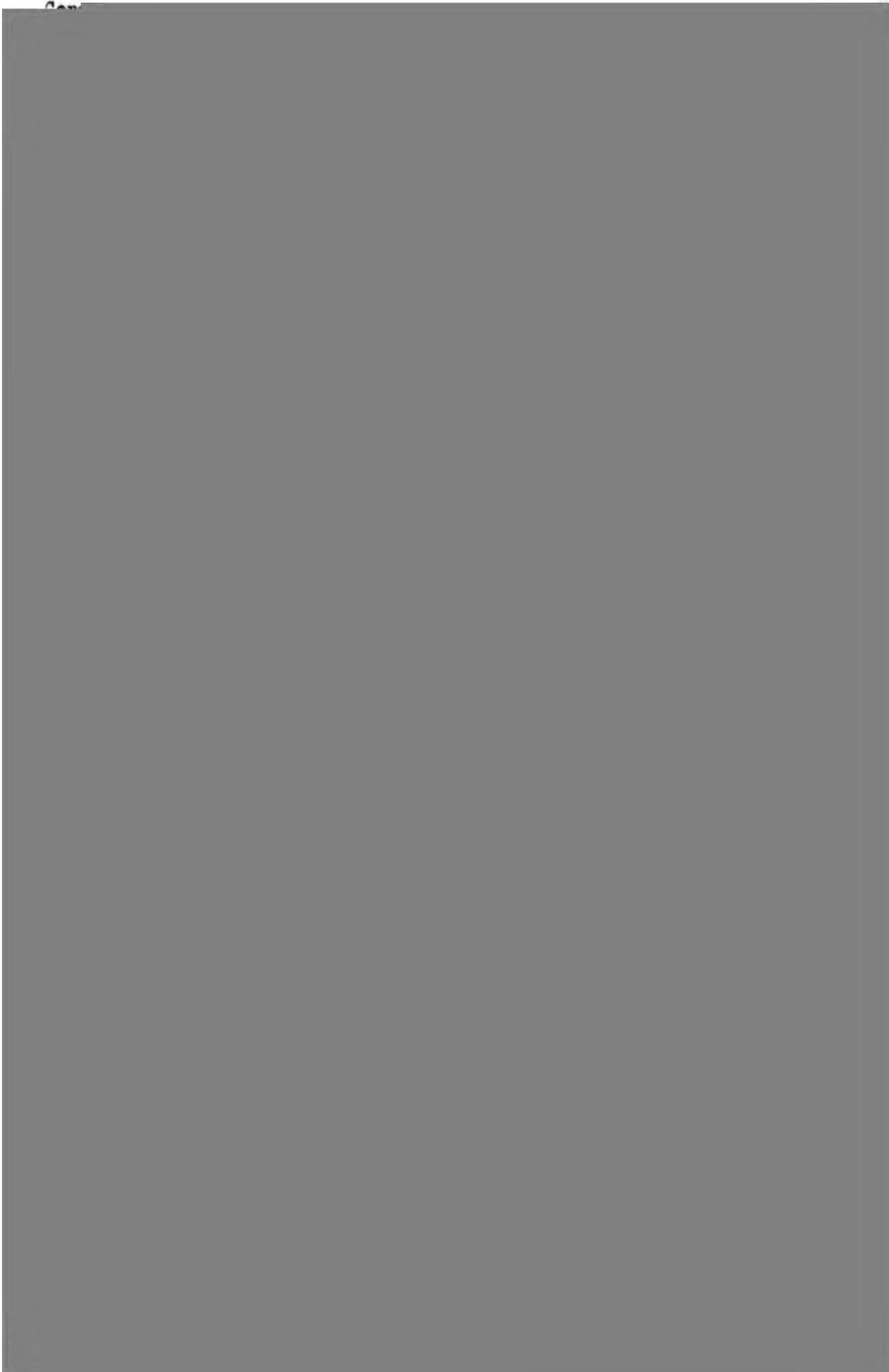
The British Authorities desire only this and will severely and impartially punish any such unjust acts or false accusations as tend to perpetuate hostility or promote unrest."

Major Noel reports that this notification had a good effect wherever it was made known and in particular has enabled him to enter into practical relations with Kurdish leaders such as the sons of Badr Khan.

It appears desirable from all local points of view that a communique on the lines of this notification should be widely issued both by Egyptian Expeditionary Force and by the High Commissioner, Constantinople, and by the Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia.

Sd. A.T.W.

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FOR SUBSEQUENT PAPERS SEE PART II

*Small boxes*