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THE  
British Betrayal  
OF THE  
Assyrians

by  
YUSUF MALEK

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TO SECURE BOOKS APPLY TO  
THE ASSYRIAN NATIONAL LEAGUE OF AMERICA  
(*Affiliated with the Assyrian National Federation*)

1758 NORTH PARK AVENUE, CHICAGO, ILL.

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Many books, pamphlets and articles have been written on the Assyrian Question in Iraq, but no one's understanding can be complete until he has read this most remarkable book written by an Assyro-Chaldean. He has thrown much light on numerous points which were so far unknown to the public. It should be on the shelf of every student of history and politics. Here is given the very essence of the modern political history of Great Britain.

Gift to my  
sister Sammie

+ Family  
B. B. Herley

1/10/36

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THE BRITISH BETRAYAL  
OF THE ASSYRIANS



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The  
BRITISH BETRAYAL  
OF THE  
ASSYRIANS

BY  
YUSUF MALEK

Formerly of the Iraqi Civil Service  
June 1917—September 6, 1930

Author of "*Les Consequences Tragiques du  
Mandat en Iraq, 1932*"

With Introduction By  
WILLIAM A. WIGRAM, D.D.

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HIS BEATITUDE THE LATE MAR BENYAMIN SHIMUN XIX  
*Catholicos Patriarch of the East*

Cowardly assassinated by Simko in Persia in 1918

"Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine."—*Shelley*





THE CONVENT, WAS. HISTORICAL SURVEY, XVI  
*Cardinal's Palace of the Holy*

*I take no pride to abandon my people. (p. 121)*





HIS BEQUEST TO THE LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
*Catholic & Protestant*

Complacently accepted by Council in February 1918

"There went to school, and when light did dawn 'S. M. P. C."





HIS BEATITUDE MAR ESHAI SHIMUN XXI  
*Catholicos Patriarch of the East*

"I take no bribe to abandon my people". p. 121



*Dedicated to the Assyrian People  
in commemoration of the  
Assyrians who suffered martyrdom  
at the hands of the Iraqi Government  
Y. M.*







THE AUTHOR

Thou shouldst never cease to be



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The atrocities deliberately perpetrated by the forces of Faisal, the puppet king on a shaky throne, led by their ill-bred officers against the Assyrians in Iraq during August, 1933, the month that should mark a black spot in British history, have necessarily accelerated the publication—as an urgent necessity—of a part of a comprehensive book on the Iraqi minorities which I have in view.

The British Government has betrayed, and has certainly proved herself unworthy of, the trust that other Eastern peoples have placed in her. She received many warnings as to the precarious position of the Iraq minorities in an emancipated Iraq, but it continued to ignore the appeals made to it and set aside the apprehensions felt even by the members of the Permanent Mandates Commission.

Though unfortunately the Assyrian men, women, and children, who, in defence of their very honor, have been most brutally massacred with the usual Arab savagery, are lamentably and irretrievably lost, yet it is not too late to save the remnant if only as a monument to British perfidy and injustice.. This is not impossible. It is incumbent upon the leaders who, rightly or wrongly, placed their "implicit trust" in the British Government and British liberal, to mend their ways.

I am not cognizant of the circumstances that led the Assyrian leaders at the time to be swayed by the British policy but the blood of our martyrs who have fallen victims to the "implicit trust" and that villainous policy, is loudly crying to save those who are in the lion's mouth. The Assyrian people who have been sorely tried for the last nineteen years (1915-1933) and have encountered many

## ii BRITISH BETRAYAL OF THE ASSYRIANS

bitter tribulations, want and need a stable and honest policy that can offer it a real, permanent peace and security, which, in the last sixteen years (1918-1933) of trial, has been definitely proved impossible under the British domination.

In April, 1933, I attempted to return to Iraq and had to see Sir Harold Satow, the British Consul-General of Beyrouth. He was kind enough to advise me to do so, but, at the same time, he communicated with the Iraqi Consul-General of Beyrouth, Kamil al Gailani, to say that it would be in the interests of Iraq if I were allowed to return when the Iraq Government could place me under strict police surveillance. I subsequently approached the Iraqi Consul in writing on the 15th of April and he, after having communicated with Baghdad, sent me a letter No. 622/4/12 dated 22-5-33, the translation of which I append herewith:

"The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has, in letter No. 3711, dated 3rd May, 1933, informed me that the Iraq Government cannot accede to the requests embodied in your application, but it can confirm that no legal action will be taken against you for your past prejudicial activities against the interests of Iraq."

This sounds very nice; but what about "illegal actions" so common in Iraq? The requests embodied in my application to which the Iraqi Consul makes reference, and to which the Iraqi Government could not accede, included a request for my personal safety and liberty while in Iraq. Upon further inquiry, the Consul on the 8th of June, 1933, informed me that he could give me no particulars other than those contained in his letter No. 622/4/12, dated the 22nd of May, 1933, which meant nothing to me because of its vagueness and ambiguity. Sir Satow's recommendation, presumably made *bona fide*, was that I be permitted to return to Iraq with the understanding that I was to be placed under "strict police



surveillance." I discovered this from the Iraq Consul himself who was kind enough to furnish me with copies of his correspondence with Baghdad.

I have quoted this minor case to illustrate the value of the League of Nations paper guarantees in Iraq for "the full protection of life and property of the Iraq minorities", and to show how impossible it is for the members of the Iraq minorities, Chaldeans and others included, to approach the League of Nations and report the daily violations of the paper guarantees by the Iraq Government, however grave and acute such violations may be, without exposing themselves to reprisals.

The pronounced policy of the Iraq Government clearly aims at the destruction and extinction of the Assyrian race by merging it forcibly in the body politic of Iraq.

In the face of the recent atrocities (and more are probably to follow) committed against the Assyrian men, women, and children, against all laws of civilization in Iraq, and particularly in the Mosul Liwa, by the armed forces of the Iraq Government for which preparations were being made some months previously, England remained a mere observer, and her "moral responsibility" undertaken at Geneva through the medium of Sir Francis Humphrys, her accredited representative, proved, as we constantly maintained in writing and otherwise, not to be worth the paper upon which it was recorded. In his last days, Sir Francis will have something on his conscience. We were betrayed by England on every possible occasion, and were finally handed over to a so-called Arab Government, without adequate or reasonable safeguards for our safety.

Our grievances and claims have been deliberately misrepresented as I informed, (through the kind favour of Mr. George Naqqash, the brilliant Lebanese writer) Mr.

Rennie Smith of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, London from beginning to end, and it is the firm belief of many as well as mine, that more misrepresentations will follow hence there is the absolute necessity for the present work.

As an Assyro-Chaldean by nationality, and one of the indigenous inhabitants from the heart of Mosul, with thirteen years of continuous experience of the Iraqi government and the British officials, I claim the right of being able to state our side of the case. Living in exile for the last twenty-nine months (April 1931-August 1933) with no possible access to my documents, I regret that I shall not be able to produce a comprehensive book as I originally desired. But my memory has not failed me and will not, I hope, do so now. I hope that the present work will serve to give the readers, and particularly those interested in the Assyrians, a general idea as to the recent events leading up to the barbarous acts committed by the regular armed forces of the Iraq Government against the peaceful Assyrian civil population.

Chapter I has been written by the Assyrian National League of America. Chapter V has been written by Col F. Cunliffe-Owen. Chapters VII and second half of Chapter X have been written by Dr. David B. Perley. The indexing is also his work. Chapter XIII has been contributed by Col J. J. McCarthy. I am indebted to them all for their valuable services.

For permission to re-publish Lt.-Col. A. T. Wilson's excellent *Crisis in Iraq* (Ch.XIX), originally published in the *Nineteenth Century & After Review* of October, 1933. I am indebted to the author and to the publishers, *Constable & Company, Limited*, 10-12 Orange Street, London, W.C.2.

For the reading of the galley proof, I am indebted to Mrs. D. B. Perley of New Jersey and Mr. George K. Eshaya of Illinois. For the reading of the page proof I





JOSEPH J. DURNA, LL.B.

*President, Assyrian National Federation  
(October 27, 1935—)*

Attorney for a number of corporations, including the Fidelity-Phoenix Fire Insurance Co.; the Continental Insurance Co.; First American Fire Insurance Co.; American Eagle Fire Insurance Co.; Niagara Fire Insurance Co. and The Prudential Insurance Co. of America



am again indebted to the former. For the excellent illustrations, I am indebted to Mr. George Mardinly and to Mr. Lutfi Dartley, more especially to Mr. Charles S Dartley, all of the State of New Jersey, U.S.A.

It is a pleasing duty to express my sincere thanks to Hon. Nicholas O. Beery, the ex-Police Court Judge and Prosecutor of the Pleas of Passaic County in New Jersey, for his generous assistance rendered in reading and correcting every page of proof as it came from the compositor, and for his counsel with regard to matters of general presentation. My thanks are due also to the generous scholars, such as Max Zucker, Esquire, Rabbi and Lawyer, Judge Joseph A. Furrey, Joseph J. Durna, an attorney of New Jersey, and Prof. E. J. James, B.D., Ph.D., of Chicago, who have improved the book by their suggestions and painstaking criticism.

It is gratifying to acknowledge my supreme obligation to the Assyrian National League of America and to the Assyrian National Federation\* in America. The latter is composed of the Assyrian National Union, Inc., of Massachusetts, the Assyrian National Association of Connecticut, the Christian Aid Society of Philadelphia, Pa., the West New York Branch of New Jersey, the Newark Branch of New Jersey. Had it not been for their zealous co-operation, the present work would not have been possible.

Special thanks are due to the Assyrian National Association, Inc., of Yonkers, New York, the Nineveh Association of Greater Boston in Massachusetts, the

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\*—In the Annual Convention of the Federation held in Yonkers, New York, on the 26th and the 27th of October, 1935, the National League of America was declared affiliated with the Assyrian National Federation. The National Association of Yonkers, whose membership was for some time held in abeyance, was also so affiliated. The convention resulted in the election of Joseph J. Durna, LL.B., as its third president, succeeding David B. Perley.

Assyrian-American Benevolent Association of Los Angeles, California; the Assyrian National School Association of America, Inc., and the Assyrian Young People's Association of Yonkers, New York, for the courtesy and assistance extended to this work, which I commenced writing during the last week of August, 1933, in Cyprus, and completed in November of the same year in Geneva, with the ardent hope that it may meet the crying need, at this critical moment, for a new and true way in the presentation of the Assyrian Problem.

Geneva,

November, 1933.

## INTRODUCTION

It is with great pleasure that I can commend Yusuf Malek's history of his own people to all English readers.

There is no type of mankind that has had a history more interesting, and few more lengthy, than the Assyrian nationality to which he belongs. Reaching back as they do through the ages to the days when Chaldea and Assyria were producing the dawn of civilization in the lands where civilization had one of its very earliest beginnings, they have seen the rise and departure of the Persian Empire in its earlier form, have seen the struggle between Parthia and Rome, and finally found in Christianity the religion that they could take to themselves, in the days when the later empire of Persia was beginning a development that lasted till Islam spread a new faith and a new culture over all the near and central east.

Perhaps it was the strange parallelism between the myths of the old faith of Chaldea, and the theology of Christendom, that enabled the people to take the new faith of the West so thoroughly to their hearts.

For that faith they have suffered, and in it they have found the expression of their national life under the various rulers of Islam. Meantime, they have given at least the undeniable proof that one reproach of Christians under the rule of Islam is not justified, and that given any reasonable opportunity, they can show as much bravery and dash in fight as any professor of the faith of Islam.

As a Church, they have an interest for all students of Christian antiquity that is unique, for there is no other community in which can be found the customs of the earliest centuries of Christianity stereotyped and fossilized



as it were, so as to preserve them for those, who, in a later age seek to hark back to their origins and to "look unto the rock whence they have been hewn," a model of what the faith they profess was in its earliest and most primitive ages.

Readers will find here description and history of every one of these aspects of the people written out by one of themselves, with a knowledge and sympathy that no foreigner, no matter what his experience, can really hope to attain.

The work appears at a moment when the fortunes of the people seem to be at their very darkest, and may serve to attract to those who have suffered more severely and more undeservedly than almost any other nation in the war, some of the sympathy and help that is their just due.

*W. A. Wigram, D.D.*

Wells, Somerset.

November, 1933.

## DRAMATIS PERSONNAE IN PRODITIONE

The Iraqi cabinet of assassigators which approved indiscriminately of the massacre of the Assyrians following the proclamation of Jihad—a Holy War:

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Rashid 'Ali al Gailani..... | <i>Prime Minister.</i>                           |
| Hikmat Sulaiman.....        | <i>Minister of Interior.</i>                     |
| Yasin al Hashini.....       | <i>Minister of Finance.</i>                      |
| Nuri al Sa'id.....          | <i>Minister of Foreign Affairs.</i>              |
| Muhammad Zaki .....         | <i>Minister of Justice.</i>                      |
| Jalal Baban.....            | <i>Minister of Defence.</i>                      |
| Rustam Haidar .....         | <i>Minister of Communications<br/>and Works.</i> |
| Sayyid 'Adbul Mahdi.....    | <i>Minister of Education.</i>                    |

The following is a list of British Officials through whose instrumentality and indifference the massacre was made possible:

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Sir Francis Humphrys.....   | <i>His Britannic Majesty's Am-<br/>bassador in Baghdad (the<br/>germ of the whole tragedy).</i>                                 |
| Capt. V. Holt.....          | <i>Oriental Secretary to the<br/>British Embassy in Baghdad.</i>  |
| Sir Kenehan Cornwallis..... | <i>Advisor, Minister of the In-<br/>terior; Chief Administrative<br/>Inspector and private coun-<br/>sellor to King Faisal.</i> |
| Major C. J. Edmonds.....    | <i>First Assistant Advisor to<br/>Sir Kenehan Cornwallis.</i>   |
| Major W. C. F. A. Wilson... | <i>Administrative Inspector in<br/>Mosul.</i>   |
| Colonel R. S. Stafford..... | <i>Administrative Inspector in<br/>Mosul.</i>   |
| Major Douglas B. Thomson.   | <i>The English expert for the<br/>Settlement of the Assyrians.</i>  |

*"O, it is excellent  
To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous  
To use it like a giant."*

*—From Shakespeare's  
Measure for Measure, II,2.*

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## FIRST BOOK

### CIRCUMSTANCES PRIOR TO THE FINAL BETRAYAL

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FIRST BOOK

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CIRCUMSTANCES PRIOR TO THE  
FINAL BETRAYAL

*“Observe thyself as thy greatest  
enemy would do, so that thou be  
thy greatest friend.”*

—Jeremy Taylor.





# ASSYRIAN NATIONAL LEAGUE OF AMERICA

## *Officers and the Executive Committee*

Seated left to right: George K. Eshaya (Sec'y), Mano Oshana (Chairman, Executive Committee), Envia D. Hormis (President), Cyrus Alexander (Vice-Pres.), Bodakh M. Peters (Treas.), Simon Jacobs (Ass't Treas.)  
 Standing left to right: Joseph M. Moses, K. N. Lazar, S. Daniel, S. Khanco, Ejmaya K. Oshana — members of the Executive Committee



## CHAPTER I.

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ASSYRIAN NATION AND "CHURCH OF THE EAST"\*

### THE ASSYRIAN NATION PART I

The origin of the Assyrians as a people or even as a nation is shrouded in the mists of the past, but when they first appear on the stage of history, in the middle of the third millennium B.C., we find them already a strong city Kingdom—although vassal to Babylonia—organized around the first capital, Ashur, located on the left banks of the Tigris, in the upper Mesopotamia. The Assyrians are of Semitic race; they took their name from the name of their god, Assur, or, as some historians assert, from their first Capital. However, although forming a very powerful vassal of the Babylonian Empire, the Assyrians played a passive part in the affairs of Western Asia until the decline of the Babylon in the middle of the eighteenth century (1740 B.C.) when Assyria went its own way as an independent Kingdom. From that time on, until the destruction of Nineveh, in 606, the Assyrian Empire remained, with varying degrees of fortune, the supreme power in the Orient.

During this one thousand years Assyria remained above all else a military state with a strong will and a deliberate policy. She expanded in all directions, welding together smaller states into one more or less compacted well-organized empire, on an entirely different basis from that of its predecessors, the Babylonian and Egyptian Empires.

From 1740 B.C. until 1300 B.C., Assyria was a mere

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\*By The Assyrian National League of America (Chicago)



Kingdom, a rival of Babylon, reserving her power for future possibilities, defensive as well as offensive. Beginning with Shalmaneser I, about 1300 B.C., the city Kingdom began to expand into an Empire, conquering and consolidating smaller states around it. Campaign after campaign was conducted by Shalmaneser against the declining empire of the Hittites, until even Capodocia was reached, where several Assyrian military colonies were settled. The Armenians and the Kurdish tribes in the north and northeast were also attacked by Shalmaneser. Nor did Syria escape the effect of this triumphant reigns of the power of Assyria. Shalmaneser's successor turned his attention to Babylon which he added to his dominions, thus making Assyria the mistress of the oriental world. Under Tiglath-Pileser I, the frontier of Assyria was further extended westward as far as the Mediterranean Sea, and the mighty Egypt presented the Assyrian conqueror with a present—a crocodile.

During the eighth and ninth centuries the Assyrian emperors did not merely expand their territories, but inspired the Hebrew prophets with a new idea of God, that is, Jehovah, a tribal God of Israel becomes a universal God, even more powerful than the Assyrian Monarchs, whose rods they were, according to Amos and Isaiah. Israel had become a vassal to Shalmaneser III, and Judah could not remain very much longer unaffected by the Assyrian Empire. The Syro-Phoenician maritime commercial cities, and the trade routes connecting them with India by the way of the Persian Gulf, were a prize worth contending for, and Shalmaneser made these serve his Empire.

The death of Shalmaneser III was followed by a short interval of military inactivity. That Monarch and his predecessors had inaugurated an entirely new imperial policy, unknown in the ancient world before them. To render the trade routes between the Mediterranean Sea



and the Persian Gulf absolutely safe, the territory through which these routes passed could not be left to chance, the precarious loyalty of the vassal states. "The experience of centuries had shown that such control could not be secured unless the country were systematically conquered, occupied and guarded by the Assyrians". In other words, the whole territory from the Great Sea to Tigris, should become an integral part of Assyria. The process led to the direct annexation and government of the subdued peoples. This policy of systematic conquest and subjugation resulted perforce in the assimilation of conquered peoples.

With the accession of Tiglath-Pileser III to the throne in 745 B.C., a new drive began for the empire of Ashur. The reign of the Monarch inaugurated what may be called the "Golden Age" of the second Assyrian Empire, which lasted until the destruction of the State. Politically there came upon the throne of Assyria, in rapid succession, beginning with Tiglath-Pileser III., a long line of rulers of magnitude. Only one other throne, that of the Ottoman Turks, can claim a similar line of first rate conquerors and administrators.

Under these rulers Assyria not only recovered all the lost grounds, but also new provinces, greater glory, and prestige were added, besides winning back territory and political strength which was lost after the death of Shalmaneser III. The policy of consolidating provincial administration, and the process of assimilation of subject-peoples were continued more systematically than before.

Tiglath-Pileser III was the first King of Assyria to make Babylon an Assyrian province. His further conquests carried the Assyrian arms farther than those of his predecessor. To the east, the shores of the Caspian Sea were reached, and Media was organized with a province. In the west, his conquests penetrated Asia Minor

and covered the entire eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea until they reached Egypt.

But Tiglath-Pileser was not merely a conqueror. His achievements as a ruler and an administrator were equally remarkable, and one might venture to say, revolutionary, resembling in some respects those of Julius Caesar. His first act was to reorganize the army upon a new foundation. This he did by creating a powerful standing army in which lay the strength of the Assyrian Empire. It was also a national army, recruited from a nation and not from a congeries of loosely connected vassal states, city kingdoms, and tribal districts. In other words, Assyria resembled a modern state not merely in its military organization, but in its political and social structure—a compact state, not unlike the Ottoman or Russian Empires.

But the army was simply a means to a greater end. The Assyrian Monarchs never planned vast conquests, like those of Alexander the Great. The policy of assimilation to which the empire had been committed, could not be adjusted to meet the exigencies of such rapid and vast accumulations of new people. Tiglath-Pileser III, did not add very much to what his predecessors had claimed, nor did his great successors except Esarhaddon who added Egypt to the fortune of his fathers. The authorities tell us that every campaign fought by the second Assyrian Empire, that is, from the accession of Tiglath-Pileser III to the fall of Nineveh, 606 B.C., was a defensive project. The Emperors were engaged in a political effort unprecedented in the ancient Orient. It was their nation's supreme contribution to civilization—the creation of a new political concept to which the Persian and Roman Empires fell heir.

To make Assyria a modern State, two methods were invoked by Tiglath-Pileser. These methods had been used by his predecessors, but on a smaller scale. The

Egyptian, Babylonian, and Hittite Empires had conquered many people, but no attempts were made to reduce the subject-people into a centralized State. The conquered territories remained vassal States which merely recognized the suzerainty of their overlords and paid them an annual tribute. The Assyrians departed from this in two ways: (a) they detached the conquered people from their old loyalties—religious, traditional, racial and territorial, by a well calculated, but reprehensible, system of deportation. The best example was the captivity of the Ten Tribes of Israel. Its object was to create a uniform population and to lessen the possibilities of revolt. (b) The other factor evolved by Tiglath-Pileser was that of centralization. It is possible to maintain that the wholesale deportation of the conquered people was a consequence of this policy. Competent historians assure us that it was the first time in history that the idea of centralization was introduced into politics. When a new territory was conquered, it became an integral part of the Assyrian Empire. All its former political and even religious organs were destroyed. In the place of these, a new system was imposed, and in the place of the former ruler—in most cases a king—an Assyrian provincial governor was appointed by the king and was directly responsible to him. The Assyrian Monarchs were careful to secure “men of such energy, intelligence and efficiency for important provincial governorships, that the characteristic evils of eastern officialdom, lethargy and incompetence were almost unknown”<sup>1</sup>. These governors administered their provinces according to the king’s will. Assyrian jurisprudence, courts and language were substituted for those of the conquered people for all administrative purposes. Assyrian coins, weights and measures, as well as commercial practice, were established. These advantages of

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<sup>1</sup>—Cambridge Ancient History III, 54.



## 6 BRITISH BETRAYAL OF THE ASSYRIANS

Assyrian civilization were spread from one end of the Empire to the other and made uniform. Commercial and military roads were constructed to facilitate travel and movement of armies. The Assyrian domination of the Western Asia was not merely military, but cultural as well—Assyria was a civilizing factor. It was for this reason that the Assyrian provinces enjoyed a protracted period of peace, rare in the history of the East at that time; and not until the coming of Rome did Western Asia enjoy a uniform legal practice under which the trader and the poor found safety and protection. In other words, what Rome did for the Mediterranean world, Assyria did for the Western Asia.

Such was the work of Tiglath-Pileser III, the greatest of Assyrian Monarch. The four greatest Monarchs who followed him are Sargon II, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal who consolidated and carried out his policies and measures. Their task was primarily that of holding firmly to the territory already acquired and of spreading the Babylonian culture throughout their Empire. Therefore, their wars were largely defensive in character, and even in purpose, preserving and cementing the Assyrian Empire as firmly as would seem humanly possible. The Assyrian State, unlike the Roman Empire, was surrounded in all directions by States and nations of might equal to its own.

The Assyrian Monarchs were as truly great patrons of learning and culture as they were statesmen. The Tiglath-Pileser III, erected a vast and magnificent palace at his new capital, Kalah, with a row of colonnades at its entrance. Other public and private buildings must have been equally magnificent to harmonize with the royal palace, and many other great men of the empire must have imitated their master in the beautification of their own palaces. As the Assyrian Monarchs were in-



curably religious, they built magnificent temples to their national gods. Other cities of the empire must have certainly followed the example of the capital in this, as in many other respects.

Sargon II, the next great Assyrian Monarch, was, like his predecessor, not only a great conqueror and statesman but a great builder; for he also founded a new capital with a palace of equal magnificence with that of Tiglath-Pileser III. Similar impetus must have been given to the development of culture throughout the empire. Sargon went a step further than his predecessor by arousing a tremendous growth of interest in the study of the past history of Assyria. By naming himself Sargon II, he wished to create a strong sentiment for the antiquities or traditions of his people. This fact is illustrated by Sargon's ordering and directing the edition of various texts which concerned adventures of Sargon of Agade (3800, B.C.) It would not be stretching the evidence too far in saying that Sargon was the first enlightened Monarch of Western Asia, who set a new example for his successors in the promotion of learning and culture. As Sidney Smith says, "Sargon was not only a great King but an enlightened man, and in him is to be found the same taste for artistic and literary effort that distinguished his successors" <sup>1</sup>.

Sennacherib, Sargon's son and successor to his throne, surpassed all his predecessors in his zeal for the restoration of old and building of new cities. He transferred his residence to Nineveh which he made the capital of the Assyrian Empire. He reconstructed, beautified, and enlarged the city, and in its center erected several vast public buildings, among which was his palace, an edifice of great architectural magnificence, and remarkable for base reliefs upon its walls and the great

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<sup>1</sup>—Cambridge Ancient History III, page 60.

stone colossi which adorned its gateways. This Monarch's passion for building resulted in such a vast number of projects that their enumeration would be tedious. In literature and fine art the reign of Sennacherib marked an epoch equal to any reached in ancient Orient. All in all, Sennacherib was as able a monarch as his father in the battlefield and surpassed him in his interest in art and literature.

Esarhaddon's reign is essentially a period of political developments, defense and expansion of the Empire, and its administration. Cultural side of the Empire was left to his son's reign, Ashurbanipal III, the Grand Monarch of Assyria. His interest in development and spread of learning surpassed those of his grandfather. Ashurbanipal was himself a learned Monarch, and his fondness for learning led to his collection of two magnificent libraries at Nineveh. His interest in art was as personal as that of his grandfather and the Assyrian art reached its perfection during his reign. "The Age of Ashurbanipal marks a definite stage in the history of culture, and the modern term (the Age of Ashurbanipal) befittingly links that king's name with his time, as it connects the glories of Imperial Rome with the name of Augustus"<sup>1</sup>.

The Assyrian civilization—specifically culture and learning—was based upon that of the Babylonians, a kindred people. In this respect the Assyrians did not create a culture of their own, but neither did the Romans. However, the Assyrians served civilization in their own way, a contribution which the historians of the Ancient East compare to that of the Romans; that is "accepting in its entirety the civilization of a kindred people (the Babylonians) they (the Assyrians) maintained it and spread it in a manner the original creators were entirely incapable

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1—Cambridge Ancient History III, pp. 60 and 88.

of, at a time when a failure to do so would have considerably affected the course of history”<sup>2</sup>.

Ashurbanipal was the last great Monarch of Assyria. The Empire, even during his lifetime had begun to decline, and even to disintegrate. Fourteen years after his death (626 B.C.) the Assyrian Empire was extinct, and the proud and arrogant Nineveh became a heap of smoldering ashes. Assyria, as a political entity, disappeared from the face of the earth—a most unique phenomenon in history.

## PART II.

### ASSYRIA FROM 600 B.C. TO DATE

Nineveh was destroyed in 606 B.C. Its fall was brought about by corrupt officials who turned traitors in divulging the military secrets of their government to the Medes, thus causing the defeat and eventual downfall of that great empire.

Hardly anything has been recorded in the ancient histories concerning this nation after Nineveh was destroyed. What happened to those people? Where did they go? According to the recorded history of King Oögar IX, an Assyrian, the remnants of this empire were under the Roman mandate. King Oögar himself was ruling in Adasa or the modern city of Orhie during the time of Christ. In the previously mentioned city twenty-nine Assyrian kings ruled, fourteen of which were from the house of Oögar and fifteen from the House of Mano<sup>1</sup>.

Perhaps many students of ancient history will challenge the claim that Oörhae was an Assyrian city, but this truth is proven by ancient historians in that, when the Assyrians conquered and subdued a nation, it was their custom to transfer their newly subdued subjects into

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<sup>1</sup>—Doctrine of Mar Addai.

<sup>2</sup>—Cambridge Ancient History III, pp. 101-2.



Assyria proper and rehabilitate their newly acquired territories by their own nationals. Such must have been the case with the city of Oörhae, for even Mar Addai—one of the Twelve Disciples, refers to Oörhae as being inhabited by the Assyrians<sup>2</sup>.

This little Assyrian Kingdom endured until 336 A.D. In the middle of the fourth century, the Romans and the Persians began one of their wars, and during this campaign Oörhae was taken by the Persians. The Assyrians were dispersed throughout Asia Minor. Some went into Syria, some remained under the Persian rule and others took refuge in the Mountains of Kurdistan<sup>1</sup>. In these mountains they lived and enjoyed a home-rule until 1915. When the world conflict of 1914 broke out, these Assyrians, threw their lot with that of the Allies. They were forced to flee from their mountain homes—north of Nineveh, the Assyrian capital,—to Persia where they maintained themselves until 1918 when they were again uprooted. This time in accordance with the British promises (see Chap. IV.) they retreated to Mesopotamia to remain under British protection. During these misfortunes the Assyrians lost not only their homes and property, but practically two-thirds of their number. What happened to them from the time they found refuge with the British, the reader will find fully and authentically recorded in the pages of this book.

## THE ASSYRIAN "CHURCH OF THE EAST"

### EMBRACEMENT AND EXTENSION OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE ORIENT

It was in the second year after the Ascension of Christ that Christianity showed its first signs in Mesopotamia. At about this time, Thomas, one of the twelve,

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1—The Assyrian Tragedy. Annemasse February 1934.

2—Doctrine of Mar Addai.



had begun the preaching and teaching of the gospel and the new religion, which was prophetically destined to embrace all of Beth-Nahreen later.

Thomas continued with his apostolic mission until 45 A.D., that is to say, twelve years after the Ascension, and then proceeded to India to commence his pioneering activities in Christian teaching there. In the meantime, Simon, called Peter, had succeeded Thomas as the apostle to Mesopotamia. It was during his tenure of apostolic mission that the first Christian church was founded in Babylon thus establishing the Eastern Apostate. Completing his task in Mesopotamia, Peter returned to Rome. (Peter I, Chap. 5: 13-14)

In the year 45 A.D., Addai, or better known as Thaddeus, one of the twelve, succeeded Simon as the apostle to Mesopotamia. Addai went to Oörhae or Adessa in fulfillment of a promise which Jesus had made to King Oögar, while on earth. Historical documents point out that this promise was involved in direct correspondence between Jesus and King Oögar. On October 15, 31 A.D., during the reign of Tiberius, the Roman Governor of Jerusalem, King Oögar had dispatched three of his most trusted men to invite Jesus to come for a visit and to cure him of his malady. Marhaht, Shamshagrüm and Hannan the artist, the three men that King Oögar had sent as emissaries of good-will to Jesus, had set out on their journey. Arriving in the border city of Beth-Gobrin, they went to the house of Cebinus, the son of Astragius, their governor, and remained there twenty-five days. Cebinus, realizing the importance of their mission, gave them a letter of introduction to the Roman Magistrate in Jerusalem requesting him to extend these men all necessary courtesies. Resuming their journey, on the way they met many divers people from sundry countries. Joining this anxious and faithful crowd of pilgrims they

continued their journey to Jerusalem. Arriving in the city, they met Jesus and were amazed at his beauty. Upon speaking to him, they were overwhelmed with admiration for his wisdom and knowledge. As emissaries of King Oögar, they remained with Jesus for ten days. During their stay, Hannan, the artist, painted a portrait of Jesus, and wrote in form of a diary everything that He had spoken and of all that had taken place during their stay. On their return to Oörhae, in reverence and admiration, they related to King Oögar what they had seen and heard, also mentioning the promise that Jesus had made of sending one of his disciples to him to cure his malady. The journey of Addai to Oörhae or Adessa was in fulfillment of that promise, and on his arrival King Oögar extended him a cordial welcome and gave him assurance of every possible assistance with which to carry on his work. With the King's aid Addai taught the new doctrine of Jesus, founded churches and established great theological seminaries throughout the country. It was the great impetus of Christian teaching that placed Adessa among the foremost centers of learning of the time<sup>1</sup>.

From the year 48 A.D. until 87 A.D., Agai and Mari, his disciples, carried on the work of their master. They founded strong apostates and extended Christianity to the eastern and southern portions of Mesopotamia. They performed miracles, such as raising the dead, causing the blind to see, etc. They chose spirited missionaries from among their true Assyrian converts which later carried the name of Christ with a fiery zeal into the pagan and Jewish elements of their time and converted millions of souls to Christianity. How did these men carry on their work? Under what conditions

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1—Bar-Sam-Mannie—Part IV.

"Gregoriu", known also as "Bar-Evraye."

and handicaps were they performing their duties? History well records their heroic deeds in the name of the Cross. Many were burned at stake, others were mutilated in the most horrible manners, and many others were placed under most diabolic and cruel punishments unknown to man. The amputation of arms and legs and the dismemberment of other parts of the body were common penalties imposed upon them because of their belief and teaching. In spite of this scourge of human wrath evidenced against them, they strove on sincerely believing in their mission. For Christ and his teaching they were willing to sacrifice their lives. They were imbued with a spirit of zeal and altruism and were eager to acquaint others with the new philosophy of eternal life. The following names are prominently engraved in the annals of Christian history for their valor and heroism in fighting to carry on the name of Christ to the world.

|   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| St. Thomas, “One of the Twelve”.....                          | 35 A.D.—45 A.D.   |
| St. Addai (Thaddeus).....                                     | 33 A.D.—45 A.D.   |
| Agai and Mari, “Two of the Seventy”....                       | 45 A.D.—48 A.D.   |
| Ambrius, related to Mary, the Virgin.....                     | 82 A.D.—98 A.D.   |
| Oraham I “of Kashckar”.....                                   | 98 A.D.—120 A.D.  |
| Jacob I, related to Joseph the “Nagara”<br>(Carpenter). ..... | 120 A.D.—138 A.D. |

In the third century the Eastern Apostate made tremendous strides in development of education, theology, and philosophy. From the institutions of learning, founded by this apostate emerged men of eminence in the various fields of knowledge, who went into the world of their time and propagated their learning to the advantage of mankind. Their influence was so great in its purpose that its beneficial effects are manifest even today. Such names as those of Mar Ephraim the Great (born 303 A.D.-died 373 A.D.), Khamis “Bar Khardakhe,” Odishoo “Bar Ninvahya,” the Metropolitan of Souva and Mar Narsay “Khanara D’rookha” (born 437 A.D.-died 502



A.D.), stand out as gigantic monuments in the theology and philosophy. Although their work and their teachings are written in Aramaic, yet translations of their works in different languages afford the interested reader an easy access to acquaint himself with these men. It would be futile on any one's part to attempt to evaluate the importance and influence of their work, but it can be earnestly and truthfully said, the acquaintance of one's self with these would be a satisfying and soothing medium for minds inclined toward theological and philosophical studies.

During the age of these mental giants, great institutions of learning were in existence. From the universities of Nseban, Antioch, Salak-Thispun and Alexandria (Egypt) was poured a new life into the veins of the humanity. India and China and parts of Africa were emblazoned with the name and teaching of Christ. The champions of this cause had acquired the appearance of beggars and wanderers and as such they pioneered into the darkest parts of the world suffering untold hardships, abuses and persecutions. Their mission was to enlighten the world by a new life and toward that goal they proceeded unheeding of obstacles that stood in their way. History well records the results of their efforts and deeds. Even today magnificent monuments in China, India, and Egypt stand as mute evidence of their glorious work.

The fall of the Eastern Apostate had its initial step in that direction long before the church had attained its full growth and expansion. As it has been previously mentioned that all of this missionary work was carried on in hostile territory, one can easily see the antagonistic forces continually working for its destruction. The forces that once were peacefully subdued by its influence had suddenly risen against it, causing its gradual decline to the weakened state of today.



As the Patriarchate was the center of gravity of the whole Eastern Church, we can easily realize that any forces directed toward endangering its peace and security would have destructive and deleterious effects upon the whole frame-work of the church. This was exactly what happened. All of the major persecutions against the Christians were aimed directly at the Patriarchate. For centuries it was driven from one place to another, and finally forced to seek refuge in the secluded mountains of Kurdistan, and by this time it was so badly weakened, that the entire frame-work of the church had collapsed. Greatly reduced in both material and spiritual forces, the Church was unable to resist further the continuous onslaughts of antagonistic forces against it, and as a result it gave way to almost submission, thus losing its prestige and domination, and for many years to follow forcing complete extension.

In 779 A.D., the Patriarchate was driven from Salak-Thispun to Baghdad. In 1257 A.D. under Mar Makekha Shimun II, the Patriarchate was moved to Arbel. It is noteworthy, at this point, to mention that from 1265 A.D. on, the Patriarchate was inherited and carried on by the same family from which the present Mar Eshai Shimun XXI, Catholicos Patriarchate of the East, has directly descended.

In 1320 Patriarchate was forced to leave Arbel and take refuge in Alkoosh. In 1480 the Patriarchate was driven out of Alkoosh and moved to Marakha. In 1590 it was moved to Khosrawa (Salamis). In 1592 the Patriarchate moved to Qudchanis where it became permanently established until 1915. It must be borne in mind that the flight of the Patriarchate from one locality to another was brought about by extreme pressure by the enemies of Christianity. During the period of these different flights millions of Assyrian Christians were

brutally massacred by the blood-thirsty Caliphates that came into power. Millions of others were converted to Mohammedanism by force. Church, monasteries, libraries and institutions of learning were completely destroyed. Cities were looted and burned down. The unfortunate victims of these persecutions could not escape the wrath of Islam. It was, "forsake Christ and follow Mohammed."

As the scope of this book only permits this extremely abridged history of the church, we, nevertheless, feel confident that we have laid the foundation for the interested reader to do further research work on the amazing epic of this people. The rise and fall of the Eastern Apostate form a harmonious contrast. It brings out the elemental qualities of a race that is rarely displayed in other peoples. Great zeal, courage, and devotion to principle enabled this nation to withstand the indescribable persecutions and massacres of the blood-thirsty Mohammedans and Tartar barbarians. History clearly cites the butchering campaigns conducted by Genghis-Khan, Tamerlane, Omar, Abdul Bakhir, and now the Arabs of Iraq with the sanction of the British Government, against the Assyrian Christians.

## CHAPTER II.

### FAISAL AL HUSAIN

Faisal al Husain of the Hijaz, whose father had taken up British arms against the Turks during the world conflict, (not inspired by any so-called Arab nationalism or Arab national aspirations, for there were none but simply because the "British gold," which means everything to an Arab, supplied by Lawrence of Arabia from an ever open purse, was too great a thing to be set aside) took an indirect part in the massacre of the Assyrians.

It should be remembered that Jamal<sup>1</sup> had previously refused Faisal's request for a post of Qaimaqamship, as the Turks, with a very long experience of Arabs, knew that Faisal was not competent for such a position but the English who saw fit to give Faisal a tidbit, crowned him King of Iraq.

While Husain and his retinue, including his son, Faisal, had every thing to gain and nothing to lose by taking up arms against their rulers, the Turks, with their heads filled with hopes for "personal bright future," the Assyrians in their homeland, Hakkiari, under their lion-hearted national leader, Mar Benyamin<sup>2</sup> Shimun, Patriarch, together with the valliant Assyrian leaders, decided to side with the Allies, first with Christian Russia, and next with the British, in the hope that they might secure after the victory, a self-government for the Assyrians. This was promised them by the Russian officers, a promise that was subsequently confirmed by one Captain Gracey of the British Intelligence Service, who had paid them a special visit for the purpose. Captain

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1—Turkish Commander, better known in Syria as assassin.

2—Assassinated by SIMKO. 1918.



## 18 BRITISH BETRAYAL OF THE ASSYRIANS

Gracey<sup>1</sup> took the trouble to travel from Tiflis to Urmia to strengthen the national promises already made to the Assyrians.

Details of losses of life and property sustained by the Assyrian nation as a result of her action, have been fully recorded by various European, American and Assyrian historians, and it would betray the object of this work if I were to attempt the repetition of what has already been adequately dealt with elsewhere. It suffices to say that we lost our all, and more than one half of our numbers perished in our battles and subsequent withdrawals from Turkey to Persia and then to Iraq, only to suffer terribly at the hands of a pernicious Arab Government, the gutted child of England.

Sir John Simon, the British Foreign Minister, in a speech before the Council of the League of Nations in 1932, dealing with the entrance of the Assyrians into the World War attempted to throw the onus on the Russian Government, and added by saying that we were housed and fed in the British camp at Baqubah for a considerable time. If Sir John Simon wanted to create the impression that we were housed and fed for the simple reason that humanity demanded this or because of our "black eyes", his government, the real cause for the recent atrocities, for having supported unconsciously Iraq at the League, without adequate safeguards for the protection of the Iraq minorities, (including the Assyrians, Britain's ally during and after the War) would not have remained a mere observer at a time when women and children were being trodden down by Arab horses and massacred by the forces of Faisal.

British memory must have been very short. We did not side with the allies thus losing our fertile country and

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1—Capt. Geo. F. Gracey, D.S.O. Overseas Delegate, The Save the Children Fund, Armenian Refugees Association, now in London, 1933.



all that we possessed to be merely "housed and fed" for about a year. It appears from Sir John Simon's speech that British responsibility ended with the breaking up of the refugees' camp at Baqubah. If that were so, the British authorities should have adopted a straightforward policy and informed the Assyrians there and then to place no reliance upon them. If that had been done, the Assyrians, who extricated themselves from more difficult positions in the past, could have saved themselves, and, without a shadow of doubt, avoided the recent calamity that has befallen them.

Whether Russia or England were responsible for our unselfish entry into the war, the fact remains that England did acknowledge the valuable services we rendered to the Allied cause during the War as it will be seen from an extract of a letter No. S. O./1128 dated 31st May, 1924, from Sir Henry Dobbs, the ex-British High Commissioner of Iraq, to *Lady Surma*, the aunt of the *Mar Shimun*, Patriarch, a letter which I have reproduced in *Mar Eshai's* article on page 48. *Lady Surma*<sup>1</sup> was, in the absence of *Mar Eshai Shimun*, administering the temporal affairs of the Assyrians.

Had the present outrageous and ferocious acts carried out against the Assyrian civil population by the Iraq Government forces—dreadfully hostile to all non-Arabs—been executed in lands under the jurisdiction of Soviet Russia, the latter would not have remained indifferent as England has. The Russians, it must be admitted, maintained their loyalty and faithfulness to the Assyrians even after the Great Russian Revolution when more than six hundred of their officers and men remained with the Assyrians to share their difficulties and tribulations after the Great Russian debacle.

It may be seen from the foregoing that while Faisal

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1—In exile in Cyprus. November, 1933.

and his retinue, now ministers and deputies in Iraq with an unrestrained power, were actually after theft and booty the Assyrian national leaders, who sacrificed their all, had one, and only one object in view, the observance of their national entity, their faith and traditions.

I hope that the king of the Iraqis and the defender of the "sacred unity" and the Emperor of Iraq (for southern Kurdistan is alleged to be an Iraq colony), will excuse the clarity of this tone which I feel fully justified in using, bearing in mind the scandalous attacks made against my dear countrymen, the Assyrians, during the last six months, while His Majesty remained bootless and tongue-tied.

In this attitude of mine, which will displease many of those who only see with Arab eyes, I have for the first time been guided by the Prophet's saying:

*"Al 'ain bil 'ain wal sin bil sin."  
"Eye for eye and tooth for tooth."*

Of the Amir Ghazi<sup>1</sup>, the next master of Kurdistan, I shall say nothing, as he is a pigeon for his Kurdish military instructors. I, however, venture to add that the views of the Kurdish nationalists in Iraq can be summed up in a few words, and I can find no better words than those of Hamdi beg Baban<sup>2</sup>, of the famous Kurdish Baban family, which he made public property in 1929<sup>3</sup>. These were:

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1—He succeeded his father on the throne of Iraq in 1933. King Ghazi is an adult, twenty-three years of age. He is unintelligent and failed his many instructors, for he has no aptitude for learning. He is no more than a ball in the hands and at the mercy of his Iraqi extremist ministers. Being a Sunni, he is hated by the great Shi'a community. His unpopularity among the people of Iraq is due to his fondness for wine and women and once unsupported by the British, his fate would be as that of Ahmad Shah. Ghazi himself loathes life in Iraq, and it is not improbable that his Republican rivals may easily dethrone him one of these days.

2—Now in Baghdad, November 1933.

3—Le Pelerin 31-3-1929.

*"It is better for the Kurds to become the  
fur of a lion than be the tail of a monkey."*

The remarks of Hamdi beg, which he pronounced on a former occasion long before 1929, antagonized Miss Bell, the late oriental secretary to the High Commissioner in Iraq, but were she alive now to see Kurdish villages devastated by British aerial and land troops in order to enforce a policy of slavery upon the Kurds, to satisfy "Sidi Faisal," I doubt if she would still blame the Kurds if they made overtures to the Turks, implied in Hamdi's words.

# CHAPTER III. THE INHABITANTS OF IRAQ AND THE IRAQ UNITY

Because of the "Teachings of Islam," an accurate census of the population of Iraq has not been possible. Nevertheless, a census was taken by the British civil administration after the occupation of the country and afterwards by mandated Iraq, which reckoned the population at approximately 3,000,000 persons distributed as follows:

|             |           |   |
|-------------|-----------|---|
| SUNNA. .... | 500,000   | Hereditary foes of the Shi'a.                                       |
| SHI'A ..... | 1,300,000 | Oppressed by the ruling class, the Sunna.                           |
| KURDS. .... | 800,000   | Continuously fighting the Arabs for political and no other reasons. |
| NON-MOSLEM  |           | Supposed to be the proteges of the                                  |
| MINORITIES  | 400,000   | League of Nations. These are:                                       |
|             |           | Assyrians   |
|             |           | Chaldeans   |
|             |           | Jacobites   |
|             |           | Yazidis   |
|             |           | Syrian Catholics  |
|             |           | Jews  |
|             |           | Bahais  |
|             |           | Armenians   |
|             |           | Sabeans   |
|             |           | Shabak  |

## *The Sunna*

By Sunna, I only refer to the ruling class who have the reigns of the government in their hands. The great majority of the Sunna themselves are not contented with the present state of affairs, and look upon Faisal and his successors as aliens to the Iraq and, therefore, refugees. Faisal is also looked upon as an "agent provocateur" of the British and this has aggravated the hatred against him. The Sunna of all classes and professions realize that most of the revenues extracted from them by coercive measures find their way into Faisal and his ministers' pockets, and the latter, who, during the occupation had no trousers to wear, are now owners of large tracts of lands, properties of first-class, palaces and cars, owners of a considerable number of irrigation pumps, etc. It is a well known fact that the monthly pay of a



minister (though large) is insufficient to meet one night's demand of the green table<sup>1</sup>!

How and from what source is the money coming? And how have they accumulated their present wealth? Could it have been by other than theft and corruption? The helpless (*fallah*) knows more things than I do. The ruling class, most of whom are opportunists, realize that the present régime is not of long duration, and the opportunity of "wealth-accumulation" may not be of a recurring character, hence the wisdom of the policy of extracting as much and as quickly as possible.

Faisal's<sup>2</sup> position is precarious. He lies between two evils. The British, who bombed him on to the Iraq throne, want him to carry out their policy; the opposition party—if such it can be called—who hate everything British, but who have the power in their hand, want him to break his ties of friendship with England. If the British Government thinks that Faisal is the right man to protect the minorities, I am afraid that view is totally wrong. When King Faisal visited Geneva in 1930, to look out ostensibly for means to facilitate the entrance of Iraq into the League of Nations, Sir Eric Drummond, then Secretary-General to the League advised him to go back to Iraq and look after the minorities. Faisal could not have given the world a better proof of his ability to "look after" them than the eventful months proved that followed Sir Eric's advice.

### *The Shi'a*

The Shi'a form the largest Moslem community in Iraq with deep religious variations with the Sunna. The districts they inhabit have been totally neglected though they played a very important role in the Arab Insurrection of 1920, and, although all the brunt of the battles fell

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1—Gambling.

2—Died in Berne (Switzerland) on 8/9/33.

on their shoulders, they derived little or no benefit from their enormous sacrifices. King Faisal, the Sunni king, found no favour among the Shi'a when the formalities preceding the coronation were in process, but, through corruption, threats, and sweet promises, he was placed upon the throne of Iraq.

The Shi'a rightly feel that they have been very badly treated by the ruling class and they did not hesitate to say so in their<sup>1</sup> application to the League of Nations in which they asked for a remedy. They also asked that an inquiry commission be sent to Iraq to go into their grievances and remove the oppression to which they were being subjected by the "savages brought from the desert"—the exact term they used in their application. A Shi'a newspaper in Saida published their protest to the League and they did not fail to forward a copy to the Persian Shi'a government. During my many interviews with His Excellency Mir 'Ali Khan Zahir, the Persian Consul-General, Beyrouth, I gathered that he—though far from Iraq—was fully aware of his kinsmen's difficulties and no doubt the Persian Government would not tolerate with indifference the persecution of the Great Shi'a community, and it may have been for this reason that the Persian Government has hesitated in signing the various treaties—still outstanding—with the Iraq Government.

In order to force the Government of Teheran to sign these treaties, the Arab officials have recently devoted much of their time and energy to disturb the conditions on the Perso-Iraq<sup>2</sup> frontier and these methods have, fortunately for Persia, not remained a secret to the Persian press and Government.

Most of the townsmen in the Holy cities of Iraq are of Persian origin and they rightly claim allegiance

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1—Al 'Urfan, Saida, 1932.

2—A Persian general was recently killed.

to the Persian Government. Moreover, the Teheran Shi'a government cannot leave the Holy shrines to the mercy of the ruling class who may, at any moment, violate the traditions and religious customs that the Shi'a have upheld from time immemorial.

Books and pamphlets of highly malicious and dangerous nature were published some three months ago by Sunnis against the Shi'a affecting their religious beliefs, and the latter retaliated by adopting similar methods. One Sunni and one Shi'a newspaper were suppressed a few weeks ago in Baghdad, but the Sunni newspaper re-appeared a month later.

Ever since the coronation of Faisal, there has been no Shi'a prime minister. They have, however, had one Minister of Education whom the Shi'a themselves call a nonentity, politically. He cannot be otherwise with a striking majority of Sunnis in the Council of Ministers.

Though the Shi'a contribute largely to the Iraqi budget, the lines of communications in their districts—essential to the marketing of their produce—are neglected and suffered to deteriorate. They have no adequate medical or educational facilities, and though they form the majority of the Iraqi population as compared to the Sunna, the number of the Shi'a deputies in parliament is much less than that of the Sunna.

In 1933, the two rival sects were represented as follows:

|                 | Number of Population | Number of Deputies |
|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Shi'a . . . . . | 1,300,000            | 28                 |
| Sunna . . . . . | 500,000              | 36                 |

Conciliatory measures of very short duration have been the policy of the successive Sunni governments, but a clash between the two communities is only a matter of time. The Shi'a have not, and will not, forget their enormous casualties of killed and wounded in Kadhimain,



above Baghdad, in 1926, by their Sunni foes. On that occasion as "Ashura"<sup>1</sup>, there were over eighty thousand Shi's (most of whom were women and children) in the shrine of Kadhimain and Ja'far al 'Askari's<sup>2</sup>. Definite orders to the Iraq army stationed at the military barracks in Baghdad were that the army should cross from the left bank of the river Tigris and push on to Kadhimain and kill off the whole of the Shi'a during their religious procession when a Sunni Arab officer, Muhyiddin, had fomented the trouble. I was, at that time, present with Captain R. E. Alderman, C. I. E.; O. B. E. in the Mudir Nahiyah's office at A'dhamiyah to watch the situation and report developments to higher authorities. The Iraq army arrived but Captain Alderman issued orders to Captain Butler, the English police officer, to cut off the A'dhamiyah—Kadhimain bridge, the only ferry that links Kadhimain with Baghdad at that point of the river, and so thousands of the Shi'a lives were saved. But who can guarantee that this will not recur?

It is not a wonder then if the Iraq army commits acts of barbarism against the Assyrian peaceful civil population who, after all, were a handful of "unbelievers".

The relations between the Shi'a and the Sunna do not appear to have escaped the notice of the members of the Permanent Mandates Commission who have thoroughly studied (though unfortunately they were unable to bring their recommendations home) the proposal of the British Government for the premature emancipation of Iraq, and they were reluctant to do so as the minutes of the twenty-first session of the Permanent Mandates Commission (page 98) held at Geneva from October 26th to November 13th, 1931, indicate for a reference to this important of the Shi'a was made in the following sense.

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1—Shi'adom Good Friday.

2—Now Iraqi Minister in London.



"M. Palacios noted that the King and Prime Minister were Sunnis. He asked whether the Shi's had free access to parliament and what was the political effect of the antagonism between the two sects. The Commission had dwelt with the question at previous sessions."

Sir Francis Humphrys representing the Mandatory Power replied: "that the cabinet always included one Shi'a and that there were several Shi'a members of Parliament. In Iraq, the two sects were fairly evenly divided."

Reading Sir Francis' statement with the protest of the Shi'a and bearing in mind the ill-feeling and discontent which is prevailing, Sir Francis does not appear to be a good judge, and it is feared that history will repeat itself as it did in Palestine. In this connection the remarks of M. Orts, the Belgian member of the Mandates Commission are worth while recording. He said: "Admittedly, it had always been the rule of the Commission to place confidence in the Mandatory Powers; but Mandatory Powers might be mistaken, particularly as regarded the public spirit prevailing in the territories under their mandate. In Palestine, for instance, the Mandatory Power had been completely misled as to the feelings of the population. Four weeks before the 1929 massacres it was still declaring, through the accredited representative, that the country was quite calm and that it would be able to maintain order, if necessary. The Commission was aware how events had belied that assurance. The Commission could only assume direct responsibility with regard to the actual situation in Iraq, if it possessed other means of investigation—for instance, if it were able to study the situation on the spot."

I will now attempt to make extracts from the protest<sup>1</sup> of the Shi'a and will leave the reader to draw his own conclusions.

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1—Original in Arabic translated by the author.

“Ten years have elapsed since the formation of the Iraq Government. The administration is in the hands of certain individuals who share the power between themselves by the occasional changing of hands, thus distributing the government resources and revenues to their friends and companions. Whereas we who, in the eyes of the foreign powers represent the majority, are deprived, alas, of even a morsel of bread in a country on whose soil we live, and where our fathers and forefathers lived free and respected. All this is the result of those individuals’ encroachment upon us, forcibly taking our lands and settling in our midst the savages of the desert, with a view of merging us into their group, obliging us to bow to their will and commands so as to dispose of us at their whims and interests. They are the same people who intrigued against the Turkish Government, excited the hatred of the army of occupation, and they are still knocking at all doors in order to foster hatred and enmity. All this they are able to do as the power is in their hands. No Shiite head of department or man of influence is to be found in any of the overcrowded government departments, whether executive or administrative. They, on the other hand, are enjoying the resources of the government whilst we are suffering under miserable oppression, and are disgusted with this unfortunate existence never experienced under the former governments.

“This gang<sup>1</sup> of individuals, by deceiving the British Government, have succeeded in laying their hands on our Awqaf<sup>2</sup>, lands, trade and even our cemeteries. Our lives have thus become threatened; our properties forced from us; our existence is in danger; and the districts inhabited by the Shiite majority are completely neglected in every respect, whether from the point of view of education,

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1—King Faisal and his Ministers are implied.

2—Religious legacies bequeathed for charitable purposes.

health or public works. On the other hand, the districts inhabited by a majority of their creed are in constant progress of improvement as regards public works, education, agriculture, trade, etc. The cost of such improvement is obtained from our labours, the 'sweat of our brow', our resources and the taxes collected from us by their government.

"A comparison in the number of schools in the North and those in the South where the majority is Shiite will at once reveal a conspicuous and wide difference. This equally applies to agriculture, trade, health and public works. Our demands whether for grants of agricultural lands or in other respects are completely ignored, but such grants are unhesitatingly made to their class of effendis and officials so as to have an unshakable hold on us for election purposes, thus assuring themselves of a majority in the Chamber of Deputies, whereas—as is well known to everybody—not a single Shiite has been elected to represent any of the northern districts ever since the formation of the Chamber. On the other hand, our *liwas* only produce one or two Shiite deputies for each liwa, and such cases are of constant occurrence.

"The cabinet which is usually composed of seven ministers includes only one Shiite minister of no importance and he may be better termed as 'political attache' with no influence whatsoever. Ever since the formation of this government not one Shiite minister has ever been appointed to a ministry of importance such as Interior, but they have given us—thanks to God—the Ministry of Education and here again the person chosen is a stop gap, as he is a nonentity. This is what we have gained from the kindness of the Iraq government whose majority we form.

"The oppression we have and are still undergoing at their hands, such as unjustifiable imprisonment and exile,



the outraging of all that we hold sacred, the ill-treatment publicly of our notables and chiefs without rhyme or reason, the imposing of heavy fines under various pretenses, the collection of heavy taxes and the employment of different methods for our impoverishment and insults, compel us to call a blessing on the past. In order to veil these high crimes from the Iraqi public and to enable them to safely execute their plans and play their different roles on the stage of their ministries and departments, they throw the blame on the shoulders of the British.

“At every stage they enact harsh laws which no other tyrannical government has ever enacted, and this is to deprive us of our freedom and rights. They have gone so far as to dare to deport our Ulama (learned men) and they have adopted a policy of creating dissensions by pursuing the maxim ‘divide and rule’, thus creating differences, antagonism and hatred between our tribal chiefs. This they are achieving through their policy of land distribution by depriving the rightful owners of their lands.

“The despotism experienced by our children at the hands of their teachers, the sowing of the seeds of dissension and the exciting of our communal sentiments, all tend to indicate to us that a plot is on foot for the extermination and the crushing of our community. A detailed analysis of their past actions, such as the murder of innocent souls in the incidents at the Holy cities of Kerbela, Kadhimain and Najaf would require volumes to record, and such actions are incompatible with justice and conscience.

“The number of Shiites in government service does not exceed the number of fingers of one hand, and even these employees are, moreover, tied down and threatened. They have no stable or high positions, despite their intel-



ligence and capability which would merit them to handle senior government posts, but unfortunately, they are treated as if they are not of this country and do not possess the right of holding government appointments.

“As the result of the above treatment which we did not experience even in the dark ages, in spite of the fact that we are living in a period known as the century of light, we feel that our fate is neither more nor less than that of the milch cow which gives its milk to others.

“As for them, they have free access to the treasury funds most of which are realized from our toils as we have already stated above. Such funds are spent on their pleasures and their numerous travels from which the country has derived no benefit. In addition to their acts of oppression, had the sums extracted from excessive taxation with which this community is burdened and which they lavish on their pleasures, been spent for the relief of the miserable ones of this community, the evil would have been less.

“The leading members of this gang draw enormous salaries such as the leaders of the richest and most advanced countries do not receive, in addition to the numerous embezzlements of government funds which they always manage to hide between them. They have passed a Pension Law securing for them eternal rights, without any advantage to the Shiite community. The Pension allotments absorb one-third of the State receipts, such allotments being distributed among themselves so that each of them has become rich and happy.

“Now that things have reached their climax, the case of Iraq having come within the scope of the League of Nations, and our case becoming of vital importance touching as it does our interests, trade, livelihood and future, it is not possible for us to be patient or bear it in silence”.

Copies of the above protest were sent to:

The League of Nations, Geneva.  
 The British Foreign Office.  
 The Chairman, Chamber of Deputies, Teheran.  
 The Foreign Office of the Turkish Republic, Angora.  
 The British High Commissioner at Baghdad.  
 The Chairman, House of Commons, London.  
 The Near East, London.  
 Al 'Urfan<sup>1</sup> Saida, Lebanon.  
 Shafaq Sarkh, Teheran.  
 Many of the magazines.  
 To other civilized countries.  
 The American Consul-General, Baghdad.  
 The Turkish Consul-General, Baghdad.  
 The Persian Consul-General, Baghdad.

1—Al 'Urfan which is a Shiite magazine gave wide circulation to the protest from which I obtained a copy. If some copies of the protest did not reach their destination, it would be due to postal censorship.

### *The Kurds*

The Kurdish proverb says:-

*"Ni Hushtar Haiwan Ni Arab Insan."*

"Neither the camel is an animal  
 Nor is the Arab a human being."

The Kurds who inhabit the three northern liwas of artificial Iraq, viz Sulaimaniyah (the centre of Kurdish nationalism), Arbil and Kirkuk Liwas on the Turkish and Persian borders, together with about 80,000 Kurds in the Mosul Liwa, and about a similar number in the Diyalah and Kut Liwas, number some eight hundred thousand. In Sulaimaniyah, for instance, Count Telski's Commission found only one Arab shopkeeper. The Kurds have revolted several times with the sole object of recovering their national rights officially acknowledged (but unfortunately denied) in a proclamation issued by both the British and Arab Governments. The Kurds, though Moslems, are not Arabs. This is the last thing they want to be. The difference between the two is like that between the angel and the devil. The Kurd far from being fanatic is tolerant if left alone. The Kurds enjoyed a wide measure of autonomy long before the Arab dreamt of any self-government. Their villages have been devastated by constant aerial bombardment and time-delayed-bombs have been used

against them. Tons of explosives were poured over them by the British planes in order to support the despised authority of Faisal and his government.

Since the war, the Kurds, especially those in southern Iraq, have been very friendly to the non-Moslems, but the malicious policy planned in Baghdad and supplied by the Arab provincial officials of setting them against the non-Moslems was the sole cause for certain incidents that have occurred between the two friendly elements. The report issued by the British Colonial Office on the progress of Iraq for the years 1920-1931 (p. 277) admits that Baghdad was the root of all such regrettable incidents.

Hafsa Khanim, the wife of Qadir Agha who is the brother of Sheik Mahmud Barzanji, the famous Kurdish revolutionist, informed me in 1930 when Sheik Mahmud was in revolt, (only to be suppressed by British aeroplanes and British diplomacy) that a time will come "when the lousy Arab Government is no longer supported by the British and then we shall see whether or not the Arab can put his foot in Kurdistan". I believe her.

The last Kurdish revolt led by Sheik Ahmad of Barzan was again suppressed by the British on the 22nd of June 1932. The last words of Sheik Ahmad to Captain V. Holt, the oriental secretary to the British High Commissioner for Iraq, who had gone up to persuade the Sheik to accept "bright personal concessions" and lay down his arms, were:

"It is more honourable for me to surrender to my open enemy, the Turk, rather than to an hypocrite friend<sup>1</sup> or to be a slave<sup>2</sup>." Sheik Ahmad is at the moment of writing in Mosul and he is being made to sign declaration of loyalty (sic) to his Majesty King Faisal in support of the Iraq sacred unity.

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1—The British Government is implied.

2—Faisal is implied.



Some of the Kurds are being given injections of morphine to 'keep silent', but I am sure that Faisal and his Government know that Kurdistan is a bitter pill to swallow, and that the valiant sons of Kurdistan who have already shed no little of their blood will know how and when to throw off from their shoulders the yoke of the Arabs. I am also sure of the Kurdish ability and patriotism to do so successfully, but again everything depends on the British who had so many engagements with the Kurds for the simple reason of upholding the impossible authority of Faisal. The Kurds want no more and no less than their natural rights, and it is to be seen how much longer the British Air Force can persist in bombing the Kurds who have been made the victims of a crooked-policy which is doomed to failure.

The attitude of the Kurds vis-a-vis the King of Iraq, and the alleged Iraqi unity, can be summed up as follows and as was recorded in the British report on the administration of Iraq for period October, 1920—March, 1922.

"A scheme for the division of Iraq into 10 liwas, 35 Qadhas and 85 Nahiyahs, closely following the lines of the former Turkish organization, was passed on December 12th, and received my approval with certain reservations regarding the Kurdish districts, which the Council, unmindful of restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Sevres, had treated on the same basis as the rest of Iraq. . . ."

Dealing with the electoral law, the report states:

"Neither did it contain any recognition of the safeguards to which under the Treaty of Sevres the Kurdish communities of Iraq were entitled. . . In accordance with the policy agreed upon at the Cairo Conference, shortly after my return I proceeded to ascertain the wishes of the Kurdish districts, which lay within the area of the British Mandate, with regard to inclusion in the Iraq State, and on May 6th a communication on the subject was circulated



by the advisers in the Mosul, Kirkuk and Sulaimaniyah divisions. I pointed out that from such information as had reached me it would appear that opinion in the Kurdish districts was divided between fear lest their interests should Baghdad and a desire to maintain the Iraq economic and industrial ties which it would be inconvenient to sever. . . The Sulaimaniyah liwa decided not to take part in the election of a King for Iraq. . . In Kurkuk, while the candidature of the Amir was rejected, there was no consensus of opinion as to an alternative. The Kurdish section asked for a Kurdish Government. Ultimately a petition was presented to me asking that the division might be given a year's grace before coming to a decision. . . In the presence of representatives of all local communities and of deputations from every liwa of Iraq, except Sulaimaniyah and Kirkuk, I proclaimed H. H. the Amir Faisal to have been duly elected King of Iraq and announced his recognition as by His Britannic Majesty's Government. On the Kurdish side, the Kemalists have had troubles of their own. In January they were forced to take action, attended with no great success, for the subjection of the Hawerki, and in October they attacked Shernakh with a considerable force, partly composed of tribes at feud with 'Abdul Rahman Agha, Sheik of Shernakh, who has been practically independent since the armistice. He has been at pains to cultivate friendly relations with the British authorities and on the arrival of the Amir Faisal, he, with other Kurdish leaders, expressed to the latter their willingness to accept him as King and to form part of Iraq State *under conditions of local autonomy.*"

"Sulaimaniyah division rejected almost unanimously, any form of inclusion under the Iraq Government."

It is clear from the foregoing that the Kurds did not participate in the election of the King and that they showed a determined desire not to be included in Iraq.

It cannot therefore be claimed that Faisal or his heirs after him are the legal masters of Kurdistan. Kurdistan is Kurdistan and her ruler must be a Kurd not an Arab. Faisal was forced upon them, thanks to the British bayonets.

The attitude of the Kurds has not changed and will not change. They are discontented and they have demonstrated this discontent on every possible occasion.

Through malicious propaganda carried out in Europe by their enemies, the Arabs included, the Kurd has been wrongly pictured as an unenlightened and backward person. This is totally wrong. It has been proved in practice time and again, that the Kurd will not betray his friend, as an Arab does, or murder his captives in battle. While the British were mercilessly bombing the Kurds in 1932, Sheik Ahmad captured certain British officers. He treated them well and at the request of the British High Commissioner who had sanctioned aerial bombardment to prepare Iraq for entry into the League of Nations, the wounded British prisoners were permitted by the Kurdish leader to be taken to Baghdad. An Arab would not have done this. Read the chapter dealing with Arab barbarism in Iraq. It is an established historical fact that the Arabs of Iraq who took no part in the world conflict were always on the winning side. Once with the Turks, next with the British. They had no object but loot. Turkish and English disabled prisoners of war were killed most treacherously by Arabs and were looted. Graves containing Turkish and English dead were unearthed and the dead were dispossessed of any valuable articles that were found upon them. Arabs actually killed Turks, of their own religion, cut their bellies, in search of gold liras which they thought the Turkish soldiers had swallowed. The word "Khayin Arab" (Treacherous Arab) became universal throughout the Turkish Empire.

This is the type of Arab to whom England has seen fit to grant independence—not only independence but full power to extend his tyrannical rule to the Kurds, Assyrians, and the other minorities.

This is the Arab and that is the Kurd. The reader can judge for himself and compare between the two, if comparison is at all admissible.

The Arab newspapers of Iraq have recently stated that “The Kurds are scorpions and that they must be crushed under the heels of the Arab shoes.” There must be some superhuman power that is preventing the Kurds from overthrowing the Arab yoke. The coming months must be eventful.

Kurds and Assyrians have been living in harmony in the Mosul Wilayet for years, and they could still live peacefully together, had it not been for the evil seed sown by the Arab Ministers and alleged politicians to cause friction and dissension between the two friendly elements. The Kurds have already informed the League of Nations, no doubt in vain, that spiteful propaganda was being conducted by Arabs and that if they were given their autonomous Kurdistan, to which they are legally entitled, and which was officially promised them, and if the Assyrians were given a similar regime to which they are entitled in Assyria, the Arab propaganda would not find a fertile field in either autonomous Kurdistan or autonomous Assyria. So long as this is not done, Kurdistan cannot be free from the harmful Arab propaganda due, no doubt, to the presence of Arab officials in Kurdistan.

In the 1930 rising of Sheik Mahmud Barzanji, Arabs, employed on the repairing of roads in Kurdistan by the Public Works Department under Mr. Herford, were withdrawn and replaced by Assyrians as the Kurds were attacking the Arabs so employed but never molested the Assyrians.

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## 38 BRITISH BETRAYAL OF THE ASSYRIANS

Ever since 1919, there has been perpetual trouble in Kurdistan. Further serious trouble is neither unlikely nor unforeseen so long as the political rights of the Kurds are denied.

The Mandatory Power in Iraq has been guilty of bombing Kurdish women and children. The purpose of this book is not to deal at length with the Kurdish problem. I will merely attempt to give in some detail the tragic consequences of one of the recent operations undertaken by the British Air Force, and that is why, I presume, Sir Henry Dobbs has made his statement, reproduced elsewhere.

My thanks are due to a Kurdish officer for supplying the following sad information as he happened to be in the operations' zone

Statement<sup>1</sup> showing Kurdish villages destroyed during the operations against Sheik Ahmad of Barzan during the period November, 1931 to June, 1932:

| <i>DISTRICT BAROJ</i> |                           |                            |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Names of Villages     | Original Number of Houses | Number of Houses Destroyed |
| Barzan                | 80                        | 35                         |
| Havnadaka             | 35                        | 17                         |
| Bibana                | 25                        | 14                         |
| Hasnana               | 30                        | 18                         |
| Hasneka               | 22                        | 10                         |
| Hastan                | 19                        | 7                          |
| Resha                 | 28                        | 19                         |
| Serishma              | 37                        | 20                         |
| Shehan                | 28                        | 16                         |
| Awista                | 24                        | 12                         |
| Bediar                | 18                        | 8                          |
| Bekhshash             | 17                        | 7                          |
| Be-yi                 | 37                        | 30                         |
| Kani-Bot              | 48                        | 35                         |
| Shingal               | 37                        | 17                         |
|                       | <hr/> 485                 | <hr/> 265                  |

<sup>1</sup>—Reached me on 19/7/1932.



## Note :

All the population, peaceful and otherwise, migrated. So far only 10% have returned. Tobacco, crops, orchards were completely destroyed.

*DISTRICT MIZURI*

| Names of Villages | Original Number of | Number of Houses |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
|                   | Houses             | Destroyed        |
| Dodamar           | 8                  | 8                |
| Sararkar          | 18                 | 18               |
| Girkamah          | 23                 | 15               |
| Sararkiar         | 27                 | 20               |
| Mergazar          | 21                 | 14               |
| Shirwan-Mazin     | 80                 | 45               |
| Lati              | 12                 | 7                |
| Kilkamu           | 28                 | 16               |
| Ghamada           | 25                 | 25               |
| Hupa              | 28                 | 28               |
| Zaiti             | 37                 | 16               |
| Dukan-dara        | 19                 | 9                |
| Laira             | 22                 | 7                |
| Adelbey           | 21                 | 8                |
| Stopi             | 18                 | 7                |
| Salki             | 32                 | 14               |
| Gozi              | 38                 | 21               |
| Banan             | 41                 | 19               |
| Arghosh           | 85                 | 38               |
| Shiwa             | 51                 | 14               |
| Sailor            | 17                 | 8                |
| Ravina            | 36                 | 20               |
| Tavi              | 18                 | 8                |
|                   | <hr/> 705          | <hr/> 385        |

## Note :

Only 15% of the population have returned to their homes. Remarks: Reference cultivation as for Baroj district.

*DISTRICT SHIRWAN*

| Names of Villages | Original Number of | Number of Houses |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
|                   | Houses             | Destroyed        |
| Berdaria          | 32                 | 26               |
| Chama             | 16                 | 9                |
| Beyshok           | 38                 | 30               |
| Kanilinch         | 27                 | 20               |
| Hairazok          | 39                 | 14               |

# 40 BRITISH BETRAYAL OF THE ASSYRIANS

| Names of Villages | Original Number of<br>Houses | Number of Houses<br>Destroyed |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Berisia           | 41                           | 37                            |
| Mamula            | 23                           | 9                             |
| Mamishik          | 21                           | 18                            |
| Waji              | 28                           | 28                            |
| Karok             | 15                           | 5                             |
| Bedad             | 32                           | 3                             |
| Piran             | 80                           | 15                            |
| Masanah           | 18                           | 8                             |
| Kolana            | 16                           | 6                             |
| Sirukam           | 25                           | 11                            |
| Marana            | 17                           | 8                             |
| Zarara            | 19                           | 16                            |
| Bari              | 21                           | 21                            |
| Rizan             | 37                           | 37                            |
| Korana            | 42                           | 37                            |
| Ishokor           | 30                           | 12                            |
| Korik             | 21                           | 8                             |
| Baidarok          | 42                           | 19                            |
| Kaniaperi         | 28                           | 14                            |
| Kalatok           | 35                           | 8                             |
| Kondah-Shkawat    | 16                           | 4                             |
| Jajok             | 45                           | 45                            |
| Benibia           | 28                           | 28                            |
| Korik             | 24                           | 24                            |
| Gavratu           | 42                           | 42                            |
| Bastiria          | 28                           | 12                            |
| Lashkiria         | 26                           | 19                            |
| Upper Merga Zor   | 45                           | 45                            |
| Lower Merga Zor   | 32                           | 32                            |
| Bawa              | 19                           | 9                             |
| Hoshkan           | 21                           | 8                             |
| Kardin            | 24                           | 8                             |
| Lelok             | 25                           | 7                             |
| Khalan            | 26                           | 4                             |
| Khara             | 21                           | 5                             |
| Maxneh            | 27                           | 4                             |
|                   | <hr/> 1192                   | <hr/> 715                     |

Note :

20% of the population have returned to their homes. Remarks: Reference cultivation as for Baroj and Mizuri districts.

## TOTAL BY DISTRICTS

| Districts | Number of Villages | Total Number of Houses | Number of Houses Destroyed |
|-----------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Baroj     | 15                 | 485                    | 265                        |
| Mizuri    | 23                 | 705                    | 385                        |
| Shirwan   | 41                 | 1192                   | 715                        |
|           | <hr/> 79           | <hr/> 2382             | <hr/> 1365                 |

The following interesting article by M. Gabriel Khabbaz in his well advertised newspaper L'Orient published on 20-7-32 should not pass the notice of those in Downing Street who are responsible for thousands of innocent lives.

## LES FAITS DU JOUR

## I. "La trahison de l'Europe"

Le Bilan que nous avons aujourd'hui sous les yeux peut enfin nous permettre de nous faire une idée—(tout au moins approximative)—de la façon dont une Angleterre, gardienne et championne d'un certain nombre de siècles de civilisation occidentale, entend assurer la protection des minorités confiées à sa tutelle.

Il y avait, dans la région Kurde de Barzane, avant le passage des escadrilles de la *Royal Air Force*, 2382 habitations réparties sur les trois districts suivants:

## AVANT

|                |       |
|----------------|-------|
| Baroj .....    | 485   |
| Mizuri .....   | 705   |
| Schirwan ..... | 1192  |
|                | <hr/> |
| Total .....    | 2382  |

Les gracieux aviateurs de Sa Majesté ayant passé par là, il reste aujourd'hui ceci:

## APRES

|                |       |
|----------------|-------|
| Baroj .....    | 220   |
| Mizuri .....   | 320   |
| Schirwan ..... | 477   |
|                | <hr/> |
| Total .....    | 1017  |

*Nombre total des habitations détruites par les formations aériennes de combat de la Puissance protectrice:*

$$2.382 - 1017 = 1.365.$$

Or c'est ce qui s'appelle, paraît-il, une "opération de police". Pour avoir eu l'impertinence de revendiquer une autonomie qui leur avait été solennellement reconnue par la S.D.N., les vaillantes populations Kurdes viennent d'être soumises à ces représailles. Plus de 60% des maisons sont aujourd'hui détruites. Tout ce qui était culture a été saccagé; les récoltes de céréales, de fruits, de tabacs, incendiées. La grande majorité de la population s'est vu obligée de désert ses foyers en ruines et ses fermes dévastées. Enfin une dépêche d'Ankara nous apprenait, hier soir, que l'héroïque Cheikh Ahmed, qui fut l'âme de cette farouche et magnifique résistance, avait passé la frontière et, plutôt que de se livrer aux Anglais, s'était spontanément rendu aux Turcs.

A vrai dire, et toute ironie mise de côté, les Anglais n'ont pas lieu d'être particulièrement fiers d'un tel résultat. Pour la première fois dans l'histoire des relations anglo-kurdes, on voit les Kurdes rejeter les propositions britanniques. Et de quel ton! Et en quels termes:

*"Je préfère cent fois me rendre aux Turcs, déclare le Cheikh Ahmed au Capitaine Holt, plutôt que de me livrer aux esclaves des Anglais ou à vos Agents hypocrites".*

Voilà donc à quoi aura abouti la trahison de l'Europe. Si les Anglais se figurent d'ailleurs qu'ils ont définitivement mâté le mouvement insurrectionnel, notre avis est qu'ils nourrissent une bien dangereuse illusion. Cette rébellion Kurde est une sorte de rébellion spirituelle, tenace, latente, et qui ne prendra, fin que le jour où auront été réalisés les engagements contractés par l'Angleterre vis-à-vis des minorités, *au nom et par délégation de la Société des Nations*.

Au reste, si les choses devaient continuer de la sorte, il se pourrait fort bien que la question même de Mossoul vint à être de nouveau posée. Trop d'intérêts internationaux y sont engagés et la sécurité du Canal pétrolier y est étroitement liée. On sait que les Turcs n'ont pas encore, de ce côté-là, renoncé à tout espoir: c'est en 1925 seulement que la région de Mossoul a été arbitrairement rattachée à l'Irak, *sous la réserve de la sauvegarde des autonomies locales, Kurdes et assyro-chaldéennes*.

Non seulement l'Angleterre n'a pas fait honneur à sa parole.



Mais elle est en train de massacrer ceux qui se sont permis de la lui rappeler.

Au nom del l'Ordre, de la Sécurité et "de la Conscience Universelle".

La Conscience Universelle a vraiment bon dos.

For reasons of policy the British authorities have been assuring the League of Nations that all is well in the Kurdish districts. The following copy of a circular (and this is only one of many) should show where the truth lies.

### **From the District of Dohuk.**

To ALL KURDS. (through the Kurdish agents of the northern districts)

Pay attention. Open your eyes and have a look around yourselves. The British have just concluded a treaty with Iraq in which the Kurdish rights have not been taken into consideration. In two years time, the British Mandate will be lifted and subsequently Iraq will become free upon its entry into the League of Nations. The Kurds will remain broken-hearted under the Arabs. It would, therefore, be shameful to us if we do not claim our rights as the people of Sulaimaniyah have been doing. Our brethren, men and women, in Sulaimaniyah, are doing their utmost in the interests of their cause. They have succeeded in inviting the notice of the League of Nations and His Excellency the High Commissioner to their cries. If we do not join Sulaimaniyah, our status would no doubt become worse and our rights would be entirely lost.

We, the undersigned, have been appointed by the tribes of Sindi, Guli, Birwari, Doski and by all other people of the Northern districts to put this Bayannama (Notification) on their behalf before the world and claim the rights of the Kurds. Our wishes are the same as those of Sulaimaniyah and we differ on no point at all.

We too, like the liwa of Sulaïmaniyah, want the establishment of an independent Kurdish State<sup>1</sup> in accordance with the resolutions of the League of Nations.

(Signed) Sheik Nuri Brifkani.  
 Sheik Giyath ud Din.  
 Sheik Raqib Surchi.  
 Adib effendi, Rais Baladiyah of Amadiyah.  
 Tirkhan Haji Rashid beg Birwari.  
 Sheik Shahab, Ziber.

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<sup>1</sup>—They mean an autonomous Kurdistan which was recommended by Count Telekib Commission.

Copies of the above were sent to: The League of Nations, the High Commissioner, (Baghdad) the Prime Minister of the Arabs, The British Parliament, and the people of liwa of Sulaimaniyah.

Copies are also on the files of the Special Service Officer and Administrative Inspector, Mosul. The circular is dated 9/8/30 which was translated by Muhammad Sa'id effendi, the Kurdish translator of the Mosul liwa.

In conclusion, I find it my duty for the purpose of history, if for nothing else, to assure the noble Kurdish Nation that the Assyrian levies had at no time the desire or option to operate in Kurdistan. The Assyrian chiefs, particularly their paramount leader, *the Mar Shimun*, Patriarch, did their best to maintain friendly relations with their traditional neighbours and if they await the day of reckoning, their target should be the British and Iraqi troops. In proof of this statement, I append below copies of correspondence which should not be disadvantageous to the Kurds.

Code telegram dated 24/10/30 sent on behalf of Iraq minorities from Mosul to London.

*"Trouble Sulaimania. Arab army moved up to stop Air Force and levies to co-operate despite strong protest Mar Shimun directed High Commissioner 11.9.30. See copy Lambeth stop. Christians terrified trouble villages future relations Kurds. Chaldeo-Assyrians in danger stop Please approach Foreign Office intervene urgent." Ends.*

Lambeth Palace,  
S. E. I.

25th October, 1930

*Private.*

Dear . . .

The Archbishop of Canterbury directs me to thank you for the important communication which you have sent him this morning.

The Archbishop will try and get some chance of communicating with Lord Passfield. He fully realises the grounds for anxiety about the position of the Assyrians.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) M. G. Haigh.

Downing Street,

3rd November, 1930.

Sir,

I am directed by Lord Passfield to refer to your letter of the 24th of October in which you protest against the alleged intention of the High Commissioner for Iraq to employ the Assyrian levies in connection with "the rising that has occurred in the Sulaimaniyah District."

2. In the first place, so far as His Lordship is aware, there has been no "rising" in the Sulaimaniyah District or elsewhere in Iraq. Certain precautionary troop movements are, however, now in progress, directed against the possibility of an incursion into Iraq territory by Shaikh Mahmud who has lately been showing activity. The Assyrian levies are not involved in these movements, and consequently, your apprehensions on their account are devoid of foundation.

3. Equally unfounded are your statements that Kurdish leaders have been imprisoned "on account of their action in presenting a petition to the League of Nations" and that "it is the deliberate policy of the Iraq Government to incite the Kurds against the Assyrians." The Kurdish leaders in question were arrested because they were, on good grounds, believed to have been responsible for the rising which took place in Sulaimaniyah town on the occasion of the primary elections. Their arrest was carried out on the instructions of a British official<sup>1</sup> and after full consideration of the evidence available.

4. Your statement that the Assyrian levies should not be "exposed to the risk of further deaths in battle" and your request that they should not be used "in hostilities not of their own making" only require to be set out in this form to supply their own answer. Clearly soldiers who are engaged for general service cannot be exclusively employed in operations in which there is no danger of life or for the suppression of disturbances which they or their kinsfolk have themselves provoked.

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<sup>1</sup>—Captain C. H. Gowan, M.B.E; M.C. who was acting Mutasarrif on the illegal withdrawal of Colonel Tawfig Wahh Beg.



5. Lord Passfield has received a copy of the petition addressed to the Acting High Commissioner for Iraq through the Assyrian Patriarch, to which you refer, and I am to enclose for your information a copy of the reply which Sir R. Brooke-Popham has returned to this communication.

6. Finally, Lord Passfield observes that the statements made and the fears expressed in your present letter appear to be as devoid of foundation as the majority of the reports on the subject of the Christian minorities in Iraq which you have lately seen fit to communicate to the press. In His Lordship's opinion, the dissemination of these misleading reports can only serve to excite religious animosities, to estrange the Iraq Government, and to unsettle the Assyrians themselves, whose hope of future welfare depends on their becoming merged in the body politic of Iraq, being accepted as loyal subjects of King Faisal and living in peace with their neighbours. His Lordship can imagine no greater disservice to the communities whose welfare you claim to have at heart, than to encourage them in agitation against the government of the country in which they have to live.

7. A copy of this letter is being communicated to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant.

(Signed) J. E. W. Flood.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE ASSYRIANS

The traditional Temporal leader and the Spiritual Head of the Church of the East, *Mar Eshai Shimun XXI*, Catholicos Patriarch, deals to a certain extent, and in general terms, with the part the Assyrians played in the war and after. He illustrates in no uncertain terms, not only the illimitable ungratefulness of the British government, but also its treachery and how, as it will be seen under the relevant chapter, that Government gave the fanatic, blood-thirsty Arab of Iraq, a sword with unlimited and unmerited power to slaughter any Christian who would not embrace Muhammadanism. Thus Britain has, to her everlasting shame, betrayed the Assyrians, and the other Eastern Christian people, in the greatest measure possible.

Americans and Europeans might not believe this, but this has actually occurred in Mosul in the north of Iraq during August, 1933. The British aerial authorities were good enough, for purposes of curiosity, to photograph from the air some of the horrible scenes of manslaughter that had taken place. But they were—so they say—unable to stop the massacre as that would have been derogatory to the Arab name and the Iraqi sovereignty!

The statement of *Mar Eshai Shimun* follows:

*"It must have been predestinated by the British Government that the Assyrian Race, with its glorious past, should have no place in the world to live in peace and to prosper like any other people. The British representatives in Iraq have verbally and in writing acknowledged on more than one occasion, the valuable services we rendered during the war to Allied cause as a whole and particularly to the British during and after the war with unparalleled cost to my people in life and property. It would suffice, as an*

*urgent necessity, to quote Sir Henry Dobbs' words conveyed in a memorandum dated 31st of May, 1924, addressed to Lady Surma D'Beit Mar Shimun for the information of the Assyrians.*

*'His Britannic Majesty's Government have given the most careful consideration for sometime to the question of safeguarding the interests of the Assyrian people, keeping in view both the services which they rendered to the Allied cause during the war and their future relations with the Iraq State.'*

*"It must be borne in mind that the fate of the Mosul Wilayet and its rich oil fields was still hanging in the balance and the co-operation of the Assyrians, which was forthcoming on definite undertakings, as essential in assigning the Wilayet to Iraq. It was, as Sir Henry will recollect, the atrocities committed against the Christians in the Goyan and the Assyrian case in particular, that weakened the Turkish claim, but if they knew that those atrocities with more ferocity would be repeated in Iraq, which was until nine months ago under British tutelage, we would have certainly supported the Turkish claim as all the other inhabitants of the Wilayet would have done unconditionally.*

*"More important than Sir Henry's letter of appreciation quoted above, is his letter<sup>1</sup> to Sir Kenehan Cornwallis, Adviser Ministry of Interior, Baghdad, which has just been brought to my notice in which he stated that 'The Yazidis, the allies of the Assyrians, should be satisfied by appointing a Christian Qaimagam in Sinjar to be a sign to the Assyrians that we have no deep designs in placing the Assyrians under Kurdish or Arab domination'.*

*"Certain unprincipled politicians, who are morally responsible for the present tragic fate of the Assyrians, in order to throw a thick mask on their misleading reports, are mis-representing the Assyrian just cause to such an*

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1—Reproduced in full at the end of this chapter.



*extent as to convey the impression that as we were in the wrong with the Turks so we are wrong in the present case with the Arabs. But I am glad to observe that there are many personalities among the noble English public, who are not influenced or misled by such reports, that are being published, most of which are devoid of foundation, and to note that such personalities are supporting right against might.*

*“Through follies of Turkish junior officials—mainly not of Turkish origin—my predecessor Mar Benyamin Shimun, Patriarch, and the Assyrian leaders communicated an ultimatum to the Government of the Sultan to stop the massacres and aggressions committed against the Assyrians of Gawar and Albaq districts by Kurdish tribesmen who were instigated by the said officials, and having received no satisfaction—due probably to Turkish pre-occupation in other theatres of war—an armed conflict was unavoidable. Mar Benyamin was, however, informed by the Turkish government that his brother, Hormizd, a student in Stamboul would be executed if the Assyrians rose and joined the Allied Powers. Mar Benyamin replied that he was prepared to sacrifice his one brother rather than sacrifice the whole nation.*

*“Russian support, though small, was forthcoming and it was gratifying to note that the Assyrians who fought fifteen important battles on Turkish soil against overwhelming regular and irregular forces, with a minimum loss of life, testified once more to merit the name of their great ancestors.*

*“Various historians of different nationalities who paid us visits, and at times lasting ones in the mountains of Hakkari have dwelt at length on the Assyrian autonomous regime which we then enjoyed. The Assyrians under their own system of many centuries were, for all intents and purposes, the masters of their internal affairs.*

*“On our arrival in Persia, in the province of Azerbaijan, namely, Urmia and Salmas, where we were able to join the Russians, an Assyrian regular force was formed when again the Assyrian gallantry was displayed by their re-occupation of their ancestral home which they would have totally and permanently occupied had it not been for the Great Russian Revolution that resulted in disaster to the Assyrian national cause. From our past experience of Christian Russian and of the Russians, an Assyrian self-government would have been attained under Russia, if under no other protection. Subsequent to the Russian withdrawal, we were attacked by Turkish, Persian and Kurdish forces, but we maintained our positions intact for one year and gained many victories. Our ammunition was exhausted, and unless urgent help was forthcoming, it was impossible to stand any longer in the face of fully equipped forces.*

*“In Persia, the British Military Advisers tried to get in touch with my people in vain. Captain Geo. F. Gracey<sup>1</sup> who was in Tiflis, paid my people a visit and confirmed in no uncertain terms the promises made by Russian officers and promised British help and support. Finally, the Assyrians were visited by flying officer Pennington, only to confirm on behalf of the British Government Captain Gracey’s undertakings and to beg the Assyrians to hold on to their positions until arms and ammunition reached them. This the Assyrians carried out faithfully and successfully with the arms that the Russians had left behind but not without further sacrifices by my people as they were cut off from the outside world.*

*“From Persia we withdrew to Baqubah, near Baghdad (the latter place now a centre for anti-Assyrian intrigues) which was in British hands. Here many people were very well treated by the British Government. An Assyrian force*

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<sup>1</sup>—Overseas Delegates, The Save the Children Fund, Armenian Refugees Association.





THE ASSYRIAN LEVY OFFICERS  
in Mesopotamia, 1918-1932

Including *Dawid D'Beth Mar Shuman*, Commander-in-Chief of the Levies seated in the centre. On his left, seated, is *Agha Ezarya*; second on his right is the late Captain *Israel Pethyu*, a valiant officer who died in Baghdad in 1925 while in the service of the British





*was raised under the British in 1918, after which arose the question of the future of the Assyrians.*

*"A repatriation scheme was put in operation and the Assyrians concentrated in the Mindan camp in the Liwa of Mosul in preparation for an onward move to re-occupy their homeland in Turkey. British officers accompanied the Assyrians, but partly due to the Arab insurrection of 1920 and partly to defective organization, the scheme fell out and the Mindan camp was closed down in the Summer of 1920. Another attempt was made chiefly by lower and upper Tiylaris and Tkhuma to re-occupy Hakkari, which they did, but were turned out two years after in the Summer of 1923 as the Assyrian young men were for the great part in the employ of the British and there were not sufficient men to defend the place. Some of those who left the Mindan camp were distributed in the ruined unhealthy regions in Dohuk and Aqra districts only to suffer from severe disease. Had there been a genuine desire to settle the Assyrians, they would have by now been a prosperous people. Captain Foweraker, in spite of many difficulties put in his way, did good work to effect a satisfactory settlement, but unfortunately, all his labours were undone by Iraqi officials.*

*"Due to the troubled conditions in Kurdistan, the British Military and Civil authorities engaged the Assyrians in continuous battles which otherwise would have been conducted by the British troops. After the successful conclusion of the battles, which was naturally to arouse ill-feeling against the Assyrians, it was only fair on the part of those who utilized the services of the Assyrians to protect them against any further attacks or settle them in such a manner as to be able to defend themselves. Appreciation in words of services rendered is but a cold conciliation and expression of bare sympathies are still colder.*



*"The Assyrians were engaged in the following battles:*

*(a) One Assyrian battalion co-operated with the British forces in the districts of Dohuk, Zakho, Aqra and Amadiyah in 1919 and 1920.*

*(b) Suppression of the Kurdish rising of Aqra and Surchi, and Zibari tribes in 1920.*

*(c) Defeating Kurdish rebel tribes of Aqra and Arbil-Batas areas in 1922.*

*(d) In 1923, Assyrian irregular forces operated and recaptured Amadiyah.*

*(e) Assyrian irregular forces supported by two Assyrian companies engaged against the Sheik of Barzan in 1923, during which engagement a Malik (Tribal chief) and 18 Assyrians were killed.*

*(f) Capture of Rowanduz and environs from the Turkish and Kurdish forces by three Assyrian battalions and one pack battery in 1923.*

*(g) Operations on a large scale at different intervals against the brave Kurdish leader, Sheik Mahmud of Sulaimaniyah, and his tribesmen during 1924-28.*

*"In addition to the above, various other minor operations were undertaken to control the turbulent northern Iraq as the British troops were withdrawn in 1921 and the burden had to fall on the Assyrian loyal troops. The Assyrian police, whose services I have not mentioned, also played an important role in defending the northern frontiers of Iraq.*

*"It will, therefore, be seen, that the Assyrian people have been sorely tried and have remained refugees and homeless for the last 18 years after which they were deserted to be massacred in August, 1933.*

*"The reasons leading up to the recent atrocities and outrageous acts committed against the Assyrian civil population, have been partly recognized and reported to the League of Nations, whom I am furnishing with more particulars, which, under the terrible conditions my people and myself have been labouring, was an impossibility. The Iraq Government, the military and civil forces, under whose orders the latter were acting, is primarily and*

*wholly responsible for the recent atrocities. The Iraq Government will deny any killing of Assyrian non-combatants, but the Assyrian widows and orphans, devastated villages, the ruins that can be seen, and the innocent blood crying high, are the best testimony that I can produce in support of my statement. The Kurds, upon whose shoulders the Iraq government will try to throw the responsibility for the heart-breaking events, are not responsible. It is true that certain Kurds, instigated and armed by the Iraq government, did commit theft, but they did not participate in the wholesale massacres. On the contrary, I have evidence to show that certain Kurdish chiefs and Aghas actually protected the isolated Assyrians whose fate would have otherwise been similar to that of their brethren.*

*“The attitude of the Iraq government towards the Assyrians has been inimical throughout, and it became a real danger as soon as the Iraq government was let loose after its admission into the League of Nations. We have definite cases of grave miscarriage of justice and of intolerance on the part of the Iraq government to show that such was the attitude.*

*“The presence of Major Thomson, appointed by the Iraq government as settlement expert in an ADVISORY CAPACITY, was the best excuse for the Iraq government to fall on the Assyrians. The Iraq government viewed the settlement scheme with suspicion and various pretexts were found to render Thomson’s scheme futile. Finally, on the 10th and 11th of July, 1933, two meetings were held in the office of Mutasarrif of Mosul when the Iraq government’s policy for a heterogeneous settlement that would have undoubtedly led to the complete destruction of the Assyrians, was explained. At these meetings, the Mutasarrif and the other officials, in order to make the Assyrians more desperate than what they were, said that those who disapprove his government’s policy should leave the*



country immediately. He further said that Persia would disperse them, and that Turkey would not accept them. Under the intolerable conditions to which the Assyrians were deliberately driven, they had no alternative but to migrate to Syria. Certain Assyrian representative leaders, with some hundreds of their men, left Mosul quite peacefully and in good order carrying their arms which they had legally acquired for self-protection, if occasion demanded it. The first group reached a point on the Syro-Iraq frontier where they despatched a letter to the Iraq government to say that 'they had emigrated in accordance with the declared policy of the government; that they had no intention of fighting whatsoever; and that they request the government not to molest their families and relatives who wished to join them.' Had the Iraq government honestly kept up the terms of its announcement made at Mosul and had they not harassed the groups that were following the first batches, I am sure that not one single drop of innocent blood would have been shed. Due to hatred and fanaticism, and in order to demonstrate their military power before the discontented Kurds of the whole Wilayet and before the Shi'a who were on the brink of war with the Sunnis, the Iraq government saw the moment opportune to massacre the Assyrians. Only four weeks previously, the Iraqi Prime Minister had declared in parliament that The Assyrians were a peaceful people and that he had yet to learn of any aggression by them on the villages in their vicinity.

"For the last five months, extensive anti-Assyrian propaganda passed unchecked. The silence of the government meant encouragement to those who were after the Assyrian blood for many years past. Revolutionary speeches against the Assyrians were made in parliament just four weeks before the 'massacre', and had the British government moved then, the Assyrian women and children



would not have been made widows and orphans. I protested to the Iraq government, sending copies of my protest to the Foreign Diplomats. The anti-Assyrian campaign became more furious.

"In May, I was removed under false pretenses to Baghdad where I was treated with contempt. Definite requests for my freedom were made by my Assyrian people, but the requests were ignored. The Assyrians began to feel uneasy about the whole situation.

"Finally, the Iraq government enacted an emergency law on the 15th of August, 1933, which resulted in my deportation from Iraq on the 18th of August, 1933. The legality of such a law that renders thousands of other members of the Iraq minorities under the mercy (if such a term can be used) of the Iraq government, is a matter for the civilized world to decide.

"I left Iraq on the strict understanding that I would be free to place the case of my people before the world and I was promised by the Air-Vice-Marshal that as soon as I left, he would, together with other British officers, leave immediately for the zone of massacre to establish at Dohuk a refugee camp that would accommodate the orphans, children and panic-stricken Assyrians. He went as far as Mosul and I am informed that the Iraq government prevented him from going any farther as I presume the Iraqi officials were either still busy in the massacre or were removing the signs of their barbarous acts. A large number of women and children have been killed by rifle, and revolver shots. Hundreds of noncombatants have been assassinated. Over a thousand Assyrian women and children have been brought to Mosul and are being terrorized. Pressure is being brought to bear upon them to say that the Kurds, and not the Iraq army, committed the atrocities. No one knows what is happening to the other Assyrians who have escaped the massacre. Assyrian priests were

*persecuted and tortured. Pregnant women were bayoneted. We have a complete list of the people thus tortured and the denial of the Iraq government is yet to be judged by the civilized world.*

*"The whole matter is now in the hands of the League of Nations. We had formerly warned the League that we did not feel secure until effective measures had been taken that would ensure our safety. The warning was not taken seriously. The British opposition was too strong with the lamentable results now known to the whole world.*

*"No plans for the future have been formulated, but we insist that a permanent, satisfactory solution should be sought that would ensure us permanent safety to live as a free people and not like serfs. We naturally also insist that those responsible should reap what they have sown.*

*"I now appeal most earnestly to the civilized world for a fair judgment, particularly to the British public, in whose impartiality and high sense of justice the Assyrians have not lost faith. The British public, when aware of the true facts, will not tolerate with indifference the persecution of the Oldest Christian People in the world who have been faithful and loyal to Our Lord throughout many ages of persecution. The British public opinion can bring influence to bear on the British Government to redeem the many pledges and promises made to the Assyrians but which, alas, were broken time after another."*

If I am not accused of inquisitiveness, I should like to offer a few observations on the above statement, as I feel that the Assyrians were not fully aware of what was going on behind the scenes when even they were so loyally serving the interests of the British Empire. The aims behind the British games would have had remained obscure to me, had I not been a Government Official and so had the op-



portunity of seeing what others could not see. I know that I will be accused of disloyalty, but I firmly believe that all means are legal when one's nation is at stake.

His Britannic Majesty's Government promise conveyed in Sir Henry Dobbs' memorandum, *to safeguard the interests of the Assyrians*; has been fulfilled in that the channels of blood of Assyrian women, and children have flown side by side with the pipe lines that carry oil from Mosul to the port of Haifa.

Again, Sir Henry's note to Sir Kenehan Cornwallis that "*if they have it in their heads that we are initiating a final move for putting them under the Arabs, they may run amok*" requires some explanation. That note was written subsequent to the meeting held between the *Mar Shimun's* father and Sir Henry Dobbs when the former protested against the military expedition that was being sent against Sheik Daud-I-Daud, the Yazidi chief. As the future of the Jabal Sinjar, the home of the Yazidis, was not yet defined, Sir Henry Dobbs advised the Ministry of the Interior, (Baghdad) that before embarking upon the contemplated operations, the French authorities in Syria should be informed in order to take the wind out of the sails of the Yazidis who otherwise would open the door to the French, enabling them to take a public attitude. In that case, Sir Henry added, 'we should have been in a much worse position'. Sir Henry concluded by saying that "we must take no action that would arouse the feelings of the Christians in Mosul as their sympathies are for the French and we know that Paulus (a member on the Commission of the League of Nations) has definite ideas of handing the Mosul Wilayet to the French".

The Assyrians and the other Iraqi minorities must certainly be the allies of the Yazidis against the tyrannical power of the Iraqi Government. It was not long ago when



the Yazidis under their paramount leader, Hamo Shero of Jabal Sinjar, gave shelter to more than two thousand Christian refugees who were escaping the 1915 massacres in Turkey. Rev. Yusuf Tufankchi, the present delegate of the Chaldean Patriarch, (Beyrouth) was one of those refugees. Hamo Shero, though offered ten pounds for every Christian he would surrender to the old Turk to be slaughtered, did not only refuse the offer, but also fought the Turkish punitive expeditions sent against him. It is clear that when the Yazidis, who are believed to be "Abadat ul Shaitan" (devil worshippers) protected, at considerable sacrifice to them, the refugee Christians, the English Government whose king is "said to be the Defender of the Christian Faith" surrendered the Christians to the ravenous Arab of Iraq, the heir of the Old Turk, to be assassinated on refusal of forced conversion to Mohammedanism.

It is true that at the Baqubah Refugee Camp, the British authorities treated the Assyrians well but that was because they were in need of their services in the stormy years that were to follow. The British were in hostile Arab country and had wide experience of Arab treachery during the days of the war and knew that they could not have found more loyal people than the Assyrians to maintain a balance of power in the country.

As regards Captain Foweraker's settlement scheme, though a certain number of the Assyrians were settled, yet the settlement scheme was known as the "Z-Plan"; that was, to plant the Assyrians amidst the Kurds to be used against the latter if and when they rose in the face of the Iraq Government. It is quite evident, therefore, that all the British plans were not for the good of the Assyrians and that their gradual extermination was only a matter of time.

*Confidential.*

Secretariat of H. E. the High  
Commissioner for Iraq.

Baghdad, 17th April, 1925.

D. O. No. S. O. 875

My dear Lloyd,

His excellency has asked me to send you the enclosed note, a copy of which has also gone to Cornwallis.

Your sincerely,

(Signed) B. H. Bourdillon

H. I. Lloyd Esq. O.B.E;M.C.

Administrative Inspector, Mosul.

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Note by His Excellency, the High Commissioner

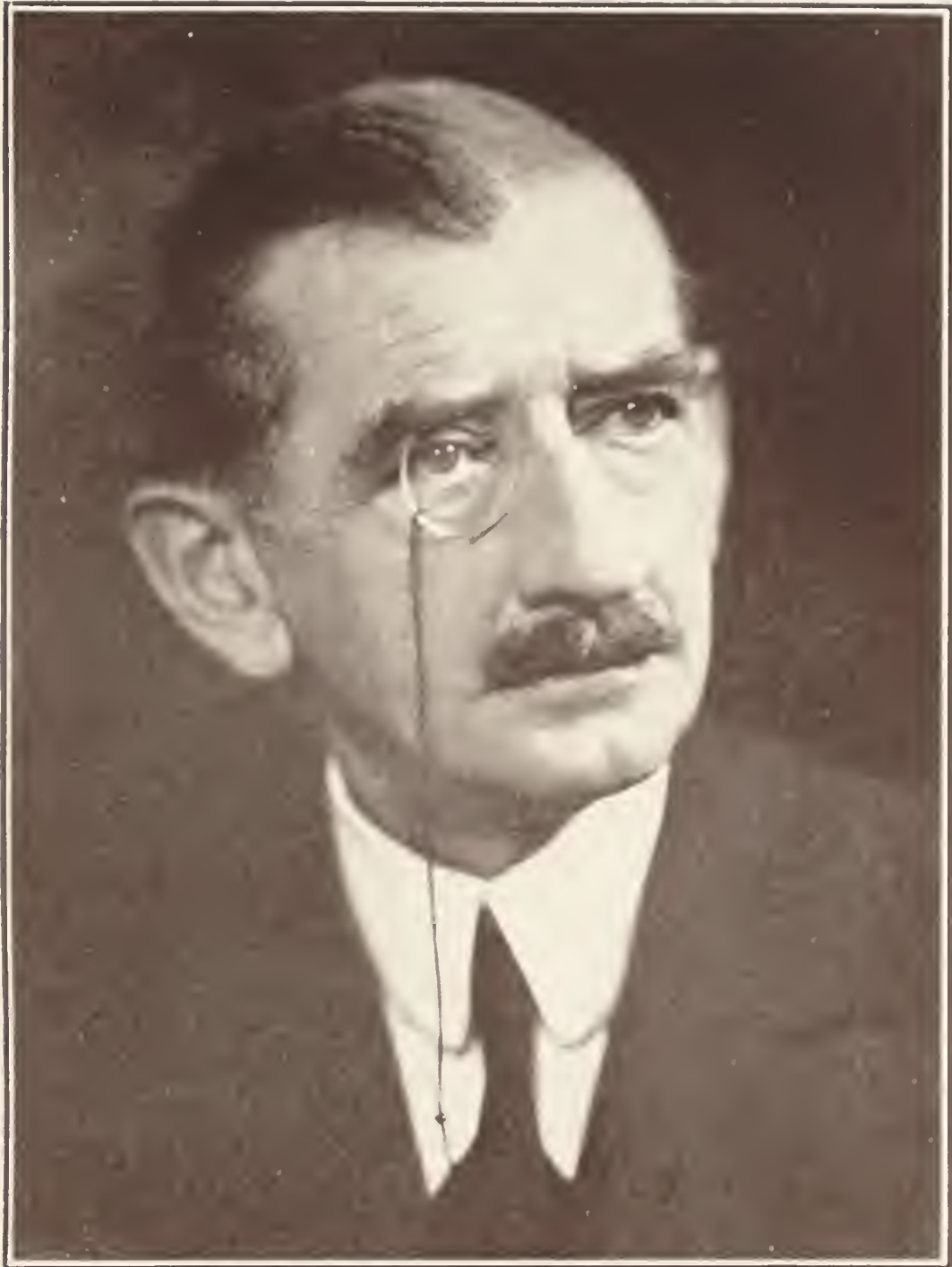
"I learn that David Mar Shimun, father of the Patriarch, is greatly agitated by our attack on Daud-I-Daud and our conflict with the Yazidis generally. The Assyrians look upon the Yazidis as their allies against Islam, and they consider that this move to bring the Yazidis into order is the beginning of a final move to put the Christians and Yazidis definitely under the Arabs and Kurds. I have no doubt that it was this feeling which brought pressure to bear on the Air Officer Commanding (through the levies) while I was away on leave and made him refuse at the beginning of September to move against Daud-I-Daud, when Mr. Davidson and Mr. Lloyd wished to do so. It means that the tendencies of the Assyrians and Mosul Christians to look to the French will be intensified by an operation against the Yazidis, and I have little doubt that the Yazidis will try to get the French to interfere. It was for this reason that I insisted that the French should be notified, as, if they agree in the beginning, the wind will be taken out of the Yazidis sails. We should have been in a worse position if the French had begun protesting violently later and taking up a public attitude of protecting the Yazidis.

"But I think we may have to look out for squalls in the Assyrian direction as a consequence of this Yazidis business. The Assyrians are very sore and desperate over the Turkish occupation of Hakkari; the Assyrian refugee flock-owners are in conflict with the Kurdish flock-owners of Amadia, Dohuk, and Aqra because there is not enough grazing for the extra Assyrian flocks, and, if they have it in their heads that we are initiating a final move for put-

ting them under the Arabs they may run amok. I am going to speak to Mr. Cornwallis about a Christian Qaimaqam for Sinjar, as the present one being appointed Mutasarrif gives an opportunity for putting in a Christian, and this will be some sort of sign that we have no deep designs for suppressing the Non-Moslems in the Mosul Wilayet. We don't want any overt Christian movement towards the French just at the moment when the Frontier-Commission is about to present its final report, and we know Paulus at least already has definite ideas for suggesting that Mosul should be made over to the French.

"A very careful watch will have to be kept at Mosul to prevent any outbreak between the Moslems and Assyrians during, or immediately after, the Id. I don't know what we can do any more than a Christian Qaimaqam at Sinjar to reassure the Assyrians; but it would be useful if Mr. Lloyd could keep in very close and friendly touch with Lady Surma and talk quite frankly with her as to the circumstances which have forced us into conflict with the Yazidis."





COLONEL F. CUNLIFFE-OWEN, C.M.G.

*Commander Greek Order of Redeemer*  
*Commander Serbian Order of White Eagle*

"These gallant Assyrians fought their way through the  
hordes of their enemies. . ." pp. 61-62



## CHAPTER V.

### THE ASSYRIANS IN BAQUBAH AND AT MINDAN

The following concise outline of facts has been contributed by Colonel F. Cunliffe-Owen, C.M.G., Commander of the Greek Order of the Redeemer, Commander of the Serbian Order of the White Eagle, who, as Commandant of the Assyrian Refugee Camp at Baqubah, is able to furnish an entirely unbiased opinion on the Assyrians whom he commanded for three years. (The footnotes are mine.)

The monument overlooking the Diyalah River to which Colonel Cunliffe-Owen refers in his opening paragraph was destroyed by the Arabs soon after the evacuation of the Baqubah camp. One cannot be surprised at this in view of the fact that the Arabs even went so far as to desecrate by exhumation the graves of the fallen British, Assyrians, and Turkish, who perished in Iraq.

There seems to be the erroneous impression that Assyrians are difficult to get on with except under British control. This may be contradicted by the fact that the Assyrians are tolerated and liked in Syria and in the United States of America, and in Brazil, where they are happy and law-abiding citizens. They were welcomed also in Turkey for the last two thousand years, and were able to preserve their Church and People as a racial entity, until they were used by the British authorities as a military force.

“Upon a bluff overlooking the Diyalah river, there stood a lasting monument recording the gratitude of the Assyrian people for the shelter accorded them by the British authorities after their terrible experiences at the hands of Turks, Persians, Kurds and Germans<sup>1</sup> during the Great War. These gallant Assyrians fought their way

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<sup>1</sup>—And finally more vigorously by the British.



through the hordes of their enemies and to the number of 40,000 souls found a refuge in the vast refugee camp at Baqubah on the site of which stood the monument to which I have alluded.

"It fell to my lot to be in charge of this camp and to control the destinies and movement of the Assyrians for the succeeding three years.

"During this period my one thought was to get them back by some means or other to lands which they had inhabited for centuries or as near to these lands as practicable. And what is more that they should go back as a united people to keep up their ancient traditions and in which case they would be joined by others who were dispersed in various localities.

"Unfortunately, as I will relate, circumstances did not permit me to achieve my object then—and now—their chance seems gone and future frittered away to whomsoever the fault may be due. In my opinion for such as it is worth, the fault lies neither with the Assyrians nor with the Iraqi government, but it lies with those British authorities on the spot when the mandate was handed over and who failed to appreciate the fact that under no circumstances would these Assyrians "mix" with a control other than British.

"To go back to the Baqubah camp. The British authorities at that time behaved most generously and large sums were paid from public funds for the upkeep of the Assyrians and their fellow-refugees, the Armenians. When I arrived at the camp in May, 1919, I was instructed to reduce the expenditure, the first economy being that I myself combined the offices of Commandant and chief-staff officer, positions hitherto held by two officers of high rank. However, I set to in other directions, and by the Autumn found that the large British supervising personnel could be replaced in most cases by Assyrians themselves and that the latter were perfectly competent to take charge of their own camp sections and to fill other responsible posts. Industries were also started which not only found work for the refugees but likewise made a profit to be set against the camp expenditures. Thus by the end of 1919, the cost had been reduced by a third to a half and the community was thriving. Even at that date, two battalions of soldiers (one of which did good work on the frontier) had been organized and recruits had been found for other services in the occupied territory. That was the time of the greatest hope for the future; the women and large numbers of children were happy and the health of the camp, owing to the adherence by the people to the rules laid down, showed far better results than any concentration camp in South

Africa during the Boer war. But things had to get moving towards the ultimate aim of all, namely, repatriation and it was to this end that during the winter of 1919-20, we strove to initiate a scheme. By agreement with the Kurds and Persians (the Turks didn't count at that time), a project was evolved which would permit the Assyrians to go back to the vicinity of their own country—not an easy project but feasible and one which received approval at Baghdad. This scheme would be carried out entirely by the Assyrians themselves with help in the way of material and subject to certain control, and by the Spring of 1920, all was ready and a great preliminary movement began in the early Summer to the neighbourhood of Mosul.

“But, alas, what happened? At this moment came the rumblings of the Arab insurrection of that year, posts up the line and elsewhere were attacked and general unrest commenced. Our convoys had to be stopped, but as it turned out this insurrection gave a chance to the Assyrians to render signal service to their benefactors, the British.

“The insurrection spread and eventually broke forth on the Baqubah side. All troops had to be withdrawn for the protection of Baghdad and our Assyrians were left out in the wild in their vast undefended camp open to attack on all sides. More than this, a large number of the able-bodied men were at stages on their way to the repatriation movement and they had their rifles with them. Left at Baqubah were all the women and children and a limited number of old single loading rifles with but ten rounds apiece. For a week or ten days, the camp was attacked at close range by rifle fire and also by machine-guns which the Arabs had taken from a British and Indian column. But nothing daunted the Assyrian tribesmen as likewise their women, and I must not also forget a tribute to the Armenians. People were shot in the hospital and women as they were bringing up food for their men, but just as matters were becoming indeed grave, a party managed to fight their way through the Arabs and rescue a supply of much needed ammunition of which we had news. With this the tables were turned, the Assyrians could not be restrained, they scoured the country side, and as a matter of fact materially helped to relieve the tension in Baghdad itself. Not only this, but parties on their way to repatriation helped at different spots on the line to repel Arab attacks and to their behaviour the military authorities paid glowing tributes.

"Nevertheless, naturally our repatriation movement suffered ; time was wasted, the season advanced and although the movement eventually proceeded, it was late October before the necessary preparations were completed. Even so we pushed on, but too late ; it is true that then the Assyrians got a bit out of hand and there were complaints from local authorities, but in many cases, these same local authorities were the very ones who had originally supported the enterprise. However, this may be, the people had to settle down for the Winter around Mosul in readiness for fresh measures in the Spring of 1921.

"The able-bodied men were then eagerly sought after to fill up the levy cadres and their value in this connection has been expatiated upon times without number by their British officers. The families were provisionally located in country north and east of Mosul and their future seemed then to have a reasonable outlook, if not to their liking as much as the scheme which failed.

"But the years for any permanent settlement as a united community have now been frittered away, and with the withdrawal of British control, possibly now gone for ever. Yet there is surely country within the confines of the mighty British Empire, which could serve to accommodate them if we would take the responsibility and not leave them to the mercy of the League of Nations, well meaning it is true, but necessarily swayed by a multitude of conflicting interests. This business is a British job.'



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE CHALDEANS

The Chaldeans are of the same stock and family as the Assyrians, and their language is one. Like the Assyrians, they have preserved their mother-tongue. In the 16th century, the Roman Catholic Missions, which were at work in Syria, extended their missionary work to Basrah to the south of Iraq and then to the north, in the Mosul regions. To avoid the oppression of their rulers, the Chaldeans were forced by circumstances to seek the then powerful protection of Rome. Until a century ago, Rome was able to win over a considerable number of so-called Chaldeans. The Assyrian highlanders and the Chaldean plainsmen have constantly exchanged places, and the great war found them once more in one region, as before, to the north of Mosul.

During the recent years, there have been many cases of inter-marriage between the two family branches, for, with the exception of minor religious beliefs, there is no difference whatsoever between them. Their traditions, customs, and usages are one. Theologically, the difference is of no importance, but the only apparent difference is that the Assyrians, highlanders as they are, were able to maintain their fighting characteristics, in the inaccessible fastness of Kurdistan, which the Chaldeans were unable to do in the plains.

The term, "Chaldean", was originally given to the members of the Church of the East, who lived in Iraq, first, for their geographical situation, and second, for the historical surroundings. There still exists, in possession of *Mar Eshai Shimun*, Patriarch of the Assyrians, a historical seal dating centuries back, used by his predecessors

in sealing all the documents that emanated from the Patriarchal See. The seal which I have seen has the following inscription:

*"Humble Shimun, Patriarch of the East, by  
Grace serving the See of Thaddeus (Addai)."*

The Patriarch of the Chaldeans, known as the Patriarch of Babylon, is Mar Emmanuel Toma of Alqosh. Approaching his eighties, Mar Emmanuel is "*hors de combat*". In Iraq, he has a following of some 80,000. Mar Emmanuel and his Chaldean community had many privileges under the Turks which the Iraq Government abrogated gradually as soon as Faisal was made king of Iraq. The Chaldeans have time and again been publicly warned that if they raised their voice, or if they asked for any privileges, they would share the fate of the Armenians in the past. That is to say, they would be massacred. An Arab newspaper in Baghdad described Mar Emmanuel some three months ago as a hypocrite, and as is usual, no action was taken against the writer.

It would not surprise me to hear, at some future date, that Mar Emmanuel had been forced to go to Geneva to defend the "good Iraqis" or that *madhabatas* had been extricated from him in support of the "benevolent Iraq Government". Through corruption and threats, the Iraq Government has extricated such *madhabatas* in the past, and these were placed before the League of Nations by Sir Francis Humphrys. It is a pity that the League of Nations should be so openly deceived (if such is the case), by forged *madhabatas* and declarations. The least that I can say about them, is that they comprise a tissue of lies and fabrications. Such *madhabatas* are usually prepared by the Iraq Government and put up to the person concerned for signature. The man required to sign finds himself between two evils. If he refuses, he is accused of being a traitor



to Iraq; if he signs, he is bound to betray his community.

If the reasons leading up to the deportation of *Mar Eshai Shimun*, to Cyrus, are carefully studied by a disinterested person, it will be clearly seen that his "refusal to sign such ludicrous documents" was one of the prominent factors that prompted such an arbitrary action on the part of Rashid 'Ali's-cabinet. The Ministers in that cabinet are ex-Turkish junior officials of the old Turkish type, and their administration cannot be other than tainted. It was this reason that forced the Commission of Af Wirsén, Teleki, and Paulus, to record on pages 85 and 88 of their report, C.400 M.147. 1925 XII ("Question of the frontier between Turkey and Iraq") the following statement:

"The internal situation in the State of Iraq, however, seems unstable. Serious difficulties are being encountered owing to the tension between Sunnites and Shiites. It should be noted that the Shiites are in a majority in the two Wilayets of Baghdad and Basrah. The relations between Kurds and Arabs are also uncertain; at the time of the Commission's visit, the Government had not yet ventured to set up an Iraq administration in the liwa of Sulaimaniyah, which was still ruled by British officials. The Commission formed the impression that the mandate, in the shape of the existing treaty, must be maintained for something like a generation in order to allow of the consolidation and development of the new State. In the opinion of many persons whom we consulted, the very existence of the State might be imperilled if the guidance and protection afforded by the League of Nations mandate were withdrawn<sup>1</sup> after a few years. It is clear, therefore, that the economic and other advantages which the Wilayet of Mosul as a whole would derive from union with Iraq would be exchanged for very serious political difficulties if the mandate should expire before Iraq could be regarded as ripe for self-government without League support. In that case, it would certainly be better for the Wilayet of Mosul to be placed under Turkish sovereignty, since the internal and external political situation of Turkey is incomparably more stable than would be the case with Iraq if the latter country were left to itself. Many of the partisans of Iraq state that if the mandatory

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<sup>1</sup>—Withdrawn fifteen years before its legal term.



regime were shortly to come to an end they would rather be restored to Turkey. Notwithstanding the good intentions of the statesmen of Iraq, whose political experience is necessarily small, it is to be feared that serious difficulties may arise out of the differences which in some cases exist in regard to political ideas between the Shiites of the South and the Sunnites of the North, the racial differences between Arabs and Kurds, and the necessity of keeping the turbulent tribes under control. These difficulties might be fatal to the very existence of the State if it were left without support and guidance. For the sake of the development and prosperity of the country, the commission feels that it should remain under the League of Nations mandate for about twenty-five years."

The conclusion reached by the Commission in regard to the chronic differences between the Sunnites and the Shiites has been substantiated by recent events that followed. The Shi'a are at present bitterly complaining of the Sunna Government, and they are capable of overthrowing, at any moment the present depraved regime which has been instituted for the advantage of a few individuals, opportunists as they are, the old friends of Faisal.

The Kurds are dissatisfied more than ever before and will certainly be a serious danger to the artificial Iraq unity forced upon them by the British aeroplanes. If Iraq became engaged at any future date with any of the neighboring countries on the Perso-Iraq frontiers, the Kurds would only be too glad to throw in their lot with the enemies of the Iraq. They prefer, as Hamdi Beg said, to be "the fur of the lion than be the tail of a monkey" as they are now, thanks to the time-delayed bombs used against them by the British as recently as 1932.

Faisal's visits to Angora and Teheran are of no avail. The aims lying behind these visits, planned by his masters, cannot remain equivocal to Mustafa Kamal Pasha and Riza Khan Pehlevi. To "pull the wool over the eyes" of the Turkish President and the Persian Monarch, better men than Faisal and his Suite should be thrown in the field.

But are there many who would intrigue against the Turks and the Persians?

The Commission's recommendation—that the Iraq should remain for another generation or twenty-five years under the mandate—was not made without valid reasons. The members of the Commission who studied the question on the scene were well aware that if the present ex-Turkish officials took the reins of the Government in their hands, chaos and anarchy would be inevitable, and the inhabitants of the Mosul Wilayet—who are geographically outside the kingdom of Iraq and on whose views and wishes the fate of the Mosul Wilayet rested—would, consequently suffer as a result of the mal-administration and mis-government that was bound to follow. The Kurds and the Assyrians have already suffered, and I can see much more in stock for the other minorities.

The reader should not gather the impression from the foregoing that the minorities favoured the British mandate in the shape it was being applied. The methods adopted by that mandate were a farce. The obligations imposed by the League of Nations' Covenant upon the Mandatory Power in so far as they affected the rights of the Minorities were gravely abused, and the minorities—particularly the inhabitants of the Mosul Wilayet—were denied all the rights and privileges to which they were entitled. If the French example in Syria were applied in Iraq, the Kurds would not have been mercilessly punished by the British forces, nor would the Assyrians have suffered during the last fourteen years to be finally massacred by a most barbaric Arab Government—everlasting disgrace to Britain.

The Kurds in Iraq have risen not less than six times in the face of both the British Mandatory Power and the Iraq Government, while in Syria, there has only been insurrection of the Druze (now satisfied) under the French.

That insurrection, it must be admitted, was engineered from the other side, of the Syrian frontier.

If point twelve of the American President's fourteen point—those of President Wilson—was honestly fulfilled by the British in Iraq, as by the French in Syria, the past, and present troubles would have been avoided, and future uprisings averted. President Wilson's point referred to the non-Turkish territories of the Ottoman Empire and provided for their autonomous development in accordance with the free will of the peoples concerned. Mr. Lloyd George, the great English statesman, made statements from which it might be inferred that very liberal treatment would be accorded in the matter of self-governments to the territories referred to by President Wilson in point twelve. The most important of these statements was the Anglo-French declaration made on the 8th of November, 1918. The following is the text of the declaration:

“In order to give effect to these intentions, France and Great Britain are agreed to encourage and assist the establishment of indigenous governments and administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia, which have already in fact been liberated by the Allies, and in countries whose liberation they are endeavouring to effect, and to recognize the latter as soon as they shall be effectively established. Far from wishing to impose any particular institution on these lands, they have no other care but to assure by their support and effective aid the normal working of the governments and administrations, which they shall have adopted of their free will. To ensure impartial and equal justice, to facilitate economic development by evoking and encouraging indigenous initiative, to foster the spread of education and to put an end to the divisions too long exploited by Turkish policy—such is the role which the two allied Governments assume in the liberated territories.”

The Covenant of the League of Nations accepted the above principle of “establishment of National Governments and Administrations drawing their authority from the initiative and free choice of indigenous populations”, and



while we observe in Syria various indigenous administrations which have been set up according to the free choice of the inhabitants concerned, we find in Iraq a totally different machinery against the will of the inhabitants. The British Government has been endeavoring in vain, for the last fourteen years, to unite many dissimilar elements and merge them in the body politic of Iraq, and in the Iraq unity, a nonenclature invented by the British which has been a complete failure. Neither the Kurds nor the other Minorities, or, rather, the indigenous inhabitants of the Mosul Wilayet, are Arabs in any way, and to attempt to merge them in the despised Iraqi unity by corruption and coercive measures, can bring nothing but resistance by force of arms as has already been the case. The composite word 'Iraqi Unity' was invented by a British High Commissioner in Iraq in 1928 when certain national demands of the Kurds were referred to him by the Iraq Government and who in response, said that the Kurdish demands if entertained, would impair the Iraqi unity and the so-called Iraqi Arab miniature politicians, or rather agitators, have been using this as a parrot would, ever since that date not realizing that this 'English invention' is to aggravate the existing enmity between the two Races.

Nuri al Sa'id, formerly a junior Turkish official, and now Iraqi Foreign Minister, informed the Kurds, when the latter saw him regarding their national demands referred to above, that "the Iraq Government would not object to the setting up of a pure Kurdish Administration as this is the only way to insure the very existence of Iraq, but the objections against such an administration come from the English side. If you can persuade the English to waive their objections, we will only be too willing to admit the Kurdish national claims to which you are entitled."

It is now time to revert to the Chaldeans. The

Chaldean Patriarch thinks it better to lose a few Chaldeans by Arab bullets and Arab knives every month than lose all the Chaldeans at one time. Both these, no doubt, mean gradual extermination. The Patriarch's position is a very difficult one. When I last met him in Mosul with Captain Matthew Cope of the Royal Navy, the Patriarch's words were these :

"I agree that we are being ill-treated and that we were better off under the Turkish rule than we are now under the Arabs. I know that we shall be persecuted after the lifting of the mandate, but, if we press our claims and privileges which I have already raised in writing and in person to Lord Curzon in London, can we trust Britain to support us? The best instance I can quote is the Assyrian question. You know what valuable service they rendered to Britain and are still rendering. *Has the result been other than betrayal?* He concluded by saying: "If we press for our political rights without effective and honest support, '*Lak Payish Nasha Minnan Ittayin al Guda*—There shall not be left of the house of Abahb one single man child'."

Some of the demands made by Mar Emmanuel to Lord Curzon will be seen in the following letter :

96 Victoria Street  
Londres, le 6 Mars. 1920

Excellence,

Je viens, par ces modestes lignes, exprimer a votre Excellence les sentiments de ma profonde reconnaissance, pour L'audience que vous avez daigne faire a mes demarches au sujet de la ruine de mes 6 dioceses mentionnes dans mon repport du 24 Fevrier.

Je quite Londres Lundi, le 8 courant, pour Rome et puis pour L'orient, portant un doux souvenir de votre grand et noble patrie. Je profite de l'occasion, pour attirer la bienveillance attention de Votre Excellence sur les lignes suivantes :

Veuillez savoir, Excellence, que nous, Chaldeans Catholiques, nous tenons la premiere place, le premier rang, en Mesopotamie, en Chaldee et an Iraq; ces trois contrees sont habitees, preque exclusive-

ment, par nous. Au Kurdistan et en Perse nous avons aussi la majorite parmi les elements Chretiens.

Depuis des siecles, nous avons notre hierarchie complete approuvee, non seulement par le St. Siege, mais, meme par le Gouvernement Ottoman. Nous avons nos privileges, nous conservons notre langue Nationale, nos oeuvres, nos ecoles; nous vivons de notre commerce, de notre industrie et de notre propre culture. Nous habitons les villes et les villages dans ces contrees mentionnees ci-haut. En un mot, nous constituons une Nation, une Communaute a part, depuis des siecles, independants de toute autre Communaute existante dans L'Empire-Ottoman; temoins, nos firmans livres par les Sultans Ottomans.

Cela etant, j'espere que le Gouvernement-Britannique qui occupe actuellement nos pays, daignere prendre en consideration nos privileges-nationaux comme par le passe et d'avance mille et mille remerciements.

En attendant, je forme des voeus bien ardents pour le bonheur et la prosperite de Votre Gouvernement, et je vous prie, d'agreer l'expression de ma tres haute consideration.

Signed, Patriarche Chaldeen de Babylon.

A Son Excellence Lord Curzon

Ministre des Affaires-étrangères de la Grande Bretagne, Londres.

The above letter requires some explanation. Mar Emmanuel has at no time ceased to ask that the interests of his community be safeguarded, but his requests have always been sent to deaf ears. He has kept the Holy See fully informed of different events at different states, and Mgr. Berre, to my personal knowledge, when he was sent as Papal Delegate to Mosul, supported the claims of the Chaldeans originally made by Mar Emmanuel, especially when the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of June 30, 1930 was being considered. Mgr. Berre's written representations were forwarded by Major Wilson, Administrative Inspector of Mosul, to Sir Kenchan Cornwallis, Advisor, Ministry of Interior, (Baghdad,) who, being pro-Faisal at all costs, ignored all such representations for "he could not reach a disagreement with his Arab Minister" on matters affecting the interests of the Minorities as that would ad-



versely affect the British interests which would be covered by the new Treaty and endanger Sir Kenehan's position and popularity with his Arab friends and employers.

But when Mar Emmanuel's help was needed by these same advisers—for instance, against the Turks, when General Laidoner of Estonia was sent out by the League of Nations to enquire into the atrocities in the Goyan area, where some 3,000 Christians, mostly Chaldeans, were slaughtered—Sir Kenehan and his British provincial officials did not hesitate to ask for his help. The British officials, in fact, notably Messrs. Lloyd and Jardine, paid Mar Emmanuel and others from the secret service funds the heavy cost of the long telegrams which were at the time sent to the League of Nations against the Turks with the approval of the British officials. What result has there been? Aerial bombardment of the very people, the Kurds included, who had helped—at a grave risk to themselves and their communities—the British and Iraqi Governments in their difficulty! This help was mainly responsible for the loss of the Mosul Wilayet by the Turks.

Mar Emmanuel trusts neither the British (The British Consul, Mosul, classified him in 1910 as "Unprincipled"), nor the Arabs of Iraq and his policy—seldom successful—has been to make the best of a bad job. At a time when individual murders of Chaldeans by Arabs were of frequent occurrence, when Chaldean villages, like Sinat and others, were being raided every now and then, when the Christian faith was being publicly abused, Mar Emmanuel was forced to give Faisal a momentous reception in Dair Mar Oraha in 1931, in the vicinity of which most brutal murders of Chaldeans had taken place not long before. Would it then, surprise the League of Nations or Rome if Mar Emmanuel were made, together with his bishops, to sign documents to the effect that "Sidi Faisal's

Government is very tolerant (as Sir Francis said), that the Iraq Government was a benevolent Government, that they want the Iraqi unity unimpaired, and that those who say otherwise are alarmists?" It will not be long when Rome will be mourning the Chaldeans of Iraq. The position of Mar Emmanuel to-day (and that of his successors) is exactly as that of Mgr. Jubrail Tappuni, the Syrian Catholic Patriarch, when a Bishop in Mardin. The latter was in the middle of the Armenian massacres of 1915, and he was compelled to sign a declaration in favour of the then ruling power (See *Kitab al Qusara fi nakabat ul Nasara*) to say that "all was well and the reported massacres of the Armenians were devoid of foundation". If the declaration of Mgr. Tappuni can be believed, there will be little room to doubt that of Mar Emmanuel! His Beatitude, the Patriarch of the Maronites, was also forced by Jamal al Saffah, "Assassin" during the world war, to declare that the Lebanese were quite contented at a time when thousands of his folk, as a result of Jamal's blockade, were rapidly perishing of famine.

The Arabs of Iraq, the real heirs of that barbarous regime, are capable of extracting such "all's well" declarations on the point of revolvers under the very noses of the British officials. Among the Turks, one can find a great many gentlemen, *but, among the Arabs, it would not be an easy task to find a real one.* This is the author's experience with the Arabs.

The position of the Chaldean bishops is difficult to explain. Bishop Francis (Chaldean) of Aradin (Amadiyah) is also being compelled to devote much of his time to drafting unbiased reports to say that all is well. It was not long ago when Bishop Francis wrote to high Catholic dignitaries to say that "all was not well and that the lives of his folks were exposed to real danger every moment". As the nominee for the Chaldean Patriarchate, the Iraq

Government will find a faithful friend in Mar Francis, for he is being taught how to sign forged documents. Early this year (1933) Mar Francis informed Mr. Ishu De Kelaita (one of the Assyrian leaders now on the Syro-Iraqi frontier of whom I shall have occasion to speak hereafter), that "it is impossible for any Christian to live and prosper under the Iraq Government. It is better for all those who can leave the country to do so as early as possible". The reader should judge for himself the truth between the "official denials" and these "private conversations".

Bishops Jirjis Dallal (Syrian Catholic) and Stephen (Chaldean) are in no better boats. If they do not flatter and coax the "tolerant Iraqi Government" and the Arab officials, they will suffer terribly at the hands of a pernicious Arab Government as has been the case with their co-religionists, the Assyrians. The policy of the Iraqi Government, especially that of Yasin al Hashimi, (at times Prime Minister and now Minister of Finance)—the great Iraqi demagogue—is to eliminate all Christians and Jews from even the minor positions they hold in the Government service to make room for his "idle" relatives and the relatives of his friends. Efficiency in Iraq is out of the essence. Relatives come first. The slightest excuse is sufficient to put any Christian or Jew out of the door. Those going on pension are replaced by Arabs; those passing away are likewise replaced by the Minister's relatives and proteges, however incompetent they might be. The Chaldeans are to suffer most—and they are already suffering—for they have held many minor positions since the days of the occupation. Promotion, however well merited, is hard to obtain. Cases have recently occurred where inexperienced Arabs have been employed in certain governmental departments in preference to competent Christian officials with fifteen years' experience in the same



departments where the newly-appointed Arabs were given priority. A very competent Christian official holding the post of a Qaimaquan was due for promotion. Mr. Jardine, Administrative Inspector of Mosul, in a special six-monthly secret report to the higher authorities in Baghdad wrote highly of this official and said, "He is fit for promotion to the post of Mutasarrif, but his Christianity is, of course, against him". This report, it should be noted, was written while the British mandate still obtained in Iraq. Mr. Jardine, with his long experience of the Arab high authorities in Baghdad, knew from past experience that the "benevolent government" would not like to see a Christian holding a high government position, however competent he might be. This typical example should show an impartial reader in what manner the British have safeguarded the interests of the Minorities who had trusted them.

As I said elsewhere, any *excuse*—normally created by Arab superiors against the Non-Arabs—can put the helpless Non-Arab out of the door. On the other hand, army Arab officials, from governors down, have, to my knowledge, been repeatedly charged with proved misappropriations of government and public funds, yet they have never lost their jobs as there is always an "honest minister" or "personage" to protect them.

The Chaldean educational institutions which were of the best quality under the Turks, and which Mar Emmanuel commanded in his letter to Lord Curzon, have been forcibly taken away from them by the Iraq Government, and the Chaldean graduates from the Government secondary schools are rapidly forgetting their religion and are becoming good spirited Moslems. If these schools, which were independent under the Turks and furnished with adequate grants-in-aid from the general revenues, refuse to accept the government educational programme, which aims

at the destruction of Christianity, grants-in-aid are disallowed, and, even if they were self-supporting and gave better education than that in the government schools, the doors of living in the face of such graduates is shut. This is one of the main reasons that compelled the Chaldean Patriarch to surrender his schools to the government, as a result of Sati' as Lasri's (then Director General of Education) representations to the Patriarch of Babylon. Mgr. Beaupin<sup>1</sup> who was furnished with a detailed report by a Catholic clergyman, who is an authority on this subject, would perhaps be in a better position to enlighten the Holy See on this important matter.

The National schools and language are no longer extant. Second hand furniture from Moslem schools is what the Christian schools use and dismissal of Christian teachers would follow if they protest. Despite this partiality, our friends, the Britons, wish us to be merged in the body politic of Iraq.

Major Wilson, the Administrative Inspector of Mosul, submitted various complaints against an Arab area education officer in Mosul, who was "exceedingly dangerous and hostile to Kurdish and Christian youth". Mr. Smith, the English Inspector General of Education replied regretting his inability to replace this man as "he had no better men in stock".

Acts of sodomy by force have been committed on Chaldean boys by education and administrative officials. Complaints were made by the parents of the boys to the Chaldean Patriarchate at Mosul, who, in turn, reported the cases to Government and no action—though the cases were proved—was taken to punish the culprits. As the high officials are usually involved and as they are in league with one another, no action could have been taken, and the

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1—Mgr. E. Beaupin, 4 Rue des Fosses St. Jacques Paris IV of the Cornite des Amities Catholiques Francais a l'etranger.

religious chiefs or the parents concerned could only pursue their complaints to a limited extent, as beyond that, they are bound to expose themselves to future reprisals. Some of these heinous cases were reported to Major Wilson by Mr. Goodall, the English teacher at Mosul, but Wilson could do no more than report these cases. The position remained unchanged. These are the morals taught to Christian youth in the Arab Government schools, and there is no doubt that Christian teachings, now moribund, will within a very short time, be but an old page in history!

Every possible obstacle is placed deliberately in the way of Christians. In 1928, for instance, Bishop Petros Aziz of Zakho, applied for permission to open a two-class school for girls in Zakho. The school was to be administered by Iraqi nuns. Constant representations for three years by Mar Emmanuel in Baghdad and in Mosul by Bishop Yusuf Ghanima met with refusal. The Arab Mutasarrif justified his refusal by writing officially to Baghdad to say that "as the nuns were brought up in French atmosphere, there was the fear of pro-French propaganda being spread in that district". I do not think the French need the services of two Iraqi nuns for propaganda purposes. The ill-treatment meted out to the non-Arabs by the Arab officials is in itself sufficient propaganda against them. This was, of course, a pretext to hinder the educational work of the missions and to force the Christian girls to go to the government schools to be taught the morals taught to the boys.

In several large Christian villages, a considerable number of boys and girls are debarred from even the primary schools, as there is not sufficient accommodation for them. There are villages where 400 boys are packed up in no more than three rooms though such villages contribute largely to the general revenues. In one village alone, there are over 150 boys who have been refused admission as there is no room for them. Such schools, in



addition to inadequate accomodation, have no complete number of classes (normally six) to enable the graduates to go to secondary schools on completion of the primary. And the time is approaching when the Arabs will have an education far superior to that of non-Arabs, as all possible facilities are afforded to the former. The aim of the Iraq Government—to close, automatically, the door of opportunity to Christians, Jews, and others, to prevent them from earning their living conveniently like the Arabs—will have been achieved.

In the Kurdish districts, the lot of the Kurds (who are non-Arabs) is not to be envied. In Baghdad liwa, for instance, where the majority of the population is Arab, not less than twenty percent is allotted to the educational budget from the general revenues, while in Sulaimaniyah, though the rich oil is removed from a sister Kurdish liwa, the percentage toward Kurdish education is not more than one. The Iraq Government, in order to throw dust in the eyes of the Kurds, appointed an area education officer who alleges to be of Kurdish origin from the village of Barzan, the fallahin of Sheik Qadir Agha, the brother of Sheik Mahmud. This painted Kurd is, for all intents and purposes, an Arab, not a Kurd, and he is certainly the pet of Ja'far al 'Askari (now Iraqi Minister in London) who also attempted in vain, during 1930, to be a Kurd when he visited Sulaimaniyah with Major Hubert Young. He aimed to calm the excited Kurdish nationalists, subsequent to the horrors committed by the Iraq army in September, 1930, against the Kurdish civil population. On that occasion, not less than one hundred innocent Kurds, including women, were killed by the Iraq army, so notorious for acts of savagery.

In Arab villages, whose population is considerably smaller than that of non-Arab villages, more than one complete primary school is in operation. In the secondary

schools, the teaching of the Koran is compulsory. It is customary for any helpless non-Arab wishing to enter a school to study to bring a certificate from the Committee of Elders *Haiat ul Ikhtiyariyyah* of the community to whom he belongs testifying to his inability to pay the school fees. Many cases have occurred when non-Arab pupils have produced such certificates, duly signed by the recognized Committees of Elders, which were refused in order to minimize the number of educated non-Arabs thus opening up a bright future for the Arabs. On the other hand, Arab pupils in possession of such certificates, but whose validity is always open to question, have been accepted *en bloc*. The immediate effect—but with far-reaching effects in the future of such a policy—has been to reduce the former “Christian majority” in the secondary school in Mosul, for instance, to a “minority”. When the school in consideration of the Christian majority was closed on Sunday afternoon as well as on all Fridays, the Sunday holiday was abolished and Friday was considered as the official holiday.

Does or does not Sir Francis know these facts? I presume not, for Qasr Kadhim Pasha is too far inland to see these things!

In 1929, some posts in the Ministry of Education fell vacant. Eight Arab she-teachers and thirty-seven Christian she-teachers went for examination. Thirty-six out of the thirty-seven Christian teachers passed the examination successfully and all eight of the Arab teachers failed. The latter, the unsuccessful ones, were at once offered positions, and the Christian teachers were told “there were no vacancies for them”.

If Sir Francis doubts this statement, the writer begs to draw his attention to the many official reports written at the time by Major Wilson. It was the unfortunate lot of the author to participate in those reports. Moreover,

the sister of the gentleman (Syrian Catholic) who occupies the room adjacent to that of Major Wilson was one of the successful Christian women teachers who was told to go away. Despite this partiality and apparent fanaticism on the part of the Iraq Government as a whole, Sir Francis had the courage to declare before the Permanent Mandates Commission that Iraq was a "benevolent" government.

The Chaldean cultivator is constantly at the mercy of his Arab official and Arab estimator, and this, the economic oppression, the most ferocious weapon in the hands of the benevolent Arab, has reduced the Chaldean cultivator to the status of a serf. It has been officially recorded by administrative inspectors in Iraq and confirmed by Mr. Longrigg, then Inspector-General of Revenues, that Arab administrative officials, who are also administrators of revenues, believe that excessive illegal taxation to show excesses in revenue demands over collections made by their predecessors merit promotion. It was also recorded that the Arab officials do not understand the revenue laws enacted by the central authorities in Baghdad, yet they are expected to enforce them in the remote provinces. This state of affairs has always resulted in economic oppression of the non-Arab cultivators who cannot secure justice on appeal to higher authorities. Such cultivators can only find some relief by bribery, a common practice in the revenue administration of Iraq, a fact which was admitted by the government newspapers early this year. Certain measures have been taken "on paper" to minimize the universal practice of bribery and corruption, but these are of no avail and do not offer a solution as the minor officials take their example from their superiors who are extremely fond of this practice. The wealth of the latter, collected within a very short period is too conspicuous to require further details. It suffices to say that the head of the revenue administration at present, to whom the Iraqi nation (ex-



cluding Kurds, of course,) is looking for deliverance from the "British Yoke" is the most gutted child of all, as he has very rapidly become, by means known to those who know, the owner of some thirty-five irrigation pumps on the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers. These statistics were prepared four years ago in the Baghdad liwa and the number of these pumps must have since increased.

Manslaughter in Iraq is a common thing. Eighty percent of the acts of homicide against Christians, Jews, and others by Arab goblins pass unquestioned. In many cases, the Arab officials share the booty with the criminals. If culprits are brought to justice at all, they escape with very light punishment. At the doors of the law courts, especially in Baghdad, one may always find Arabs ready to give evidence, for or against, in any criminal or civil case covered by the criminal or civil codes on payment of a sum of money to be agreed upon, irrespective of the merits of the case. But no Kurd or non-Moslem is ever seen at those doors.

The following murder cases are only a very small percentage of actual murders committed. If I were to give a complete list, I should have to devote a special volume which the scope of the present book does not permit. In 1930, four Chaldeans from the Christian villages of Talkaif and Alqosh went to Amadiyah to import foodstuffs into their respective villages. While returning home, they were met by Arab marauders. The Christians being unarmed, each pair was tied up with a rope facing each other and were shot dead, the murderers using one bullet for both as the Arabs maintain that "infidels" deserve no more than one round. The police, in the customary manner, made half-hearted investigations and reported that this was the work of Turkish bandits. The place where the murders were committed is ninety kilometers from the nearest Turkish frontier. Even if the tale of the police were to be

believed, the police branch of the Iraqi administration is to be severely condemned, for how could Turkish bandits cross a track of one hundred-eighty meters, drive eleven fully-loaded animals which were looted from the Christians, without being observed by the Iraqi police posts? There is no doubt that the crime was committed by Arab brigands on Iraqi soil. Again, if the story of the police is to be accepted, they must have participated in the sharing of the loot with the Turkish bandits as they usually do.

In cases where non-Arabs are the victims, the responsibility for such hideous acts is always thrown on the shoulders of the Kemalists to compel the relatives of the victims to give up all hopes of justice, for such cases are dealt with once every six months. On the arrival of the police at the place where the above Christians were discovered, they observed at a distance of a few yards the corpse of a man whose flesh had been eaten by beasts. By his headdress, he was identified to be an Assyrian.

Another Chaldean, named Hormiz Sha'yuta, was killed under similar brutal circumstances, and no action was taken to bring the criminals to justice.

As the question of the emancipation of Iraq was at this time on the tapis, and as the minorities were apprehensive for the future and had already applied to the League of Nations, the Iraq Government took steps—to threaten the members of the Minorities with reprisals if they insisted on their applications to the League. The Qaimaqam of the district concerned compelled the relatives of the persons killed to send to the central authorities the following telegram<sup>1</sup>:

“The gigantic efforts (sic) of Our Gracious Government (sic) in tracing the bodies of our four innocent relatives with their animals, compel us to express our

<sup>1</sup>—Al Iraq of 1/7/31.—Sada al 'Ald of 1-7-31.

thanks, by the medium of the press, to the Government especially to Makki Beg al Sharbatti, and Majid Beg, the Qaimaqams of Dohuk and Amadiyah respectively."

Such telegrams, false as they are, are usually drafted by the Qaimaqams themselves, and the persons concerned are ordered to append their signatures or seals thereon. They do so through sheer fear. To what "gigantic efforts" the telegram makes reference, I am at a loss to understand. The dead bodies were discovered by their relatives and not by the police. The Permanent Mandates Commission was at the time interested in the fate of the minorities, and such telegrams were necessary to serve the Iraqi case.

Based on information received from the Catholic religious authorities of Mosul, "The Universe" of London published on the 5th of September, 1930, the following information:

"In the district of Zakho alone, the Chaldean Catholic villages were raided twenty-two times within a period of three years. Eighteen Christians were killed; eight others were mutilated, and more than eighteen hundred sheep were carried off.

"In 1929, the village (Sinat) was again raided and three Christians, Yusuf Pattu, Jusuf Gardi, and Yonan Daud were killed. In January, 1930, another raid was made, and two Christian shepherds, 'Abbu Toma (15 years old) and Yusuf Mikha (12 years old) were killed and 200 sheep were carried away. The marauders, on their way back, met another Christian shepherd, Ibrahim Shammu, who was brutally killed." Six months ago, this same village was raided for the twenty-fifth time and some 500 sheep were taken away.

This is not the only Catholic village that is exposed to such raids. The Iraq Government takes no preventive measures, for its undoubted aim is the gradual extermination of these unfortunate people. On the other hand, when



Rashid 'Ali's house was raided by Arabs in the dark of night soon after he became Prime Minister, the malefactors were brought to justice within twenty-four hours. Rustam Haider (a Non-Iraqi refugee parasite, but in the care of his Master, the King,) was also robbed by an Arab a few months ago, and the culprit was immediately apprehended.

It is these Chaldeans that the Iraq Government has been falsely announcing as satisfied and contented. Can the readers, when aware of the actual facts, believe such farcical tales?

During the second week of May, 1933, Musa Goriyyi Magdasi, Matti Chuna, and Stephen Shammun Tata, three Chaldean Catholics of the town of Alqosh were brutally murdered by the Hadidyyin Arabs of Basifni village east of 'Ain Sifni in the Shaikhan Qadha in the Mosul Liwa. As these unfortunate people were overtaken by darkness before reaching their homes, they put up for the night with hosts who, after offering them coffee, cut their throats at nine o'clock the same night just as they were retiring. They were killed with daggers and choppers. Their bodies were carried far. Only by miracle did Stephen Shammun survive to tell the tragic fate of his two companions. The crime cannot be classified "ordinary", for it did not have theft as its motive.

As in former cases, murderers of Christians have escaped with impunity. There is no likelihood of punishing the present murderers. They may be tried under Tribal Criminal and Civil Disputes Regulation, but the door for corruption under that regulation is so wide that a gift of fifty pounds should be able to declare the innocence of the culprits.

Two pregnant Catholic women set out to cut wood from a forest in the neighbourhood of Zakho. They were attacked, ravished, and bayoneted by two Iraqi soldiers.

Chaldean men in the vicinity who witnessed this act of extreme barbarism dared not intervene but reported the matter to the police. The case was sent to the courts, but, due to a demonstration at the door of the court on the day of the trial by Iraqi soldiers, the judge acquitted the criminals who were carried by their brother-soldiers in great triumph. This case is probably out of mind now, but would Wilson take the trouble to examine the archives of 1925?

This is the deplorable state in which the miserable Chaldeans find themselves at the actual moment of writing, and as long as they remain under the thumb of their Romish masters, they shall never be able to get rid of the Arab bondage. Despite their acute sufferings, Mgr. Drapier conferred upon Muzahim al Pachachi a Popish medal in the year of 1931 when that same Minister was harassing the Christian minorities in the North.

I am not advocating protestantism. The Chaldean clergy feels the sufferings of their Chaldean folks for which they are unable to find a remedy unless and until they administer their own affairs in a manner that could ensure them freedom of action.

Just as Mgr. Drapier was beseeching Rome for a medal for the Iraqi Minister, a high Chaldean dignitary was despatching to Europe the following report:

Mosul, September 23, 1930

#### POSITION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN IRAQ

##### *Effect of the Recent Educational Policy of the Iraq Government*

"It is well known that before the War, the Christian youth of Mosul was far the best educated, whereas the young Moslems (except for a small number who received instruction in the Christian schools) lived in a state of almost complete ignorance of different languages and of the sciences. In order to satisfy oneself of the truth of this statement, it is only necessary to question any man more than thirty years old. It will soon be seen that all those

who to-day hold any position of distinction in society owe it to the careful education which they received in the Christian schools.

At that period, the Christians (missionaries and native communities) were the only people who had flourishing and prosperous schools. These were directed by religious and ecclesiastics, who were men of some scientific standing and proved devotion. The Moslems only had Mulla schools, where the reading of the Koran was taught, and one or two elementary government schools where Turkish was the principal subject. Youthful Moslems, who were anxious to receive instructions, attended Christian schools, and particularly those of the Dominican fathers, who had at that time more than five hundred pupils. The Chaldean school of Chamoun-el-Safa and the Syrian school of Tahra, not to mention other schools of the Chaldean, Syrian and Jacobite quarters of the town for boys and girls, all of which were in a prosperous condition each had between three and four hundred boys, and established a great reputation. To-day one can practically say that the Christians have no schools of their own either at Mosul or in the neighbourhood. Throughout Iraq the situation is much the same. The Department of Education has acquired possession of all of them.

Five or six months ago, the Dominican missionaries recovered their school, which comprised barely one hundred fifty pupils. The Sisters of the Presentation have also a private school which contains about a hundred girls. The American Protestant Missionaries are trying, with more or less success, to reorganize their schools for boys and girls, which had only just begun before the War, and were at that time not attended by very many. The Nestorians, who have come as refugees to Mosul since the War have started some schools, thanks to the assistance of several Anglican and American missionaries. The native Dominican Tertiaries conduct elementary schools for girls in the bigger Chaldean and Syrian villages (Tel Kaif, Quaragosh, Batnai, Telescope, and Alkosh). This shows how free Christian education has been reduced in Iraq. Baghdad and Basra are subject to much the same regime. Apart from these districts, the Patriarchal Chaldean diocese (more than 60,000 souls); the Syrian Archdiocese of Mosul (15,000); the Chaldean diocese of Kirkuk (10,000); the Chaldean diocese of Acra (6,000); the Chaldean diocese of Amadia (more than 15,000); the Chaldean diocese of Zahko and Dohuk (nearly 20,000) and the three Nestorian dioceses scattered about the Liwa of Mosul (more than 25,000) have only so-called national schools, which all depend officially upon the Department of Education and are nearly all



directed by laymen trained at the Normal School at Baghdad, and even in some cases by Moslems.

How was this state of affairs brought about? It can be accounted for as follows: Owing to the War, the European missionaries had to leave and their schools were naturally dispersed. On the arrival of the British, the other schools belonging to the Christian communities were in a desperate condition, and the ecclesiastical authorities who were in charge of them had no longer the resources necessary to keep them up. On the other hand, the government brought about by the British occupation wished to reorganize education and to reform the schools which had gone out of existence all over the country; but they lacked almost entirely teaching personnel. The British officers had the wisdom to see that the only way of reorganizing the schools was to call upon the devotion of the Catholic clergy, which comprised a large number of instructed priests who had practical experience of teaching. The officer in charge of public education, therefore, began negotiations with the Patriarch and the bishops and concluded with them an agreement according to which the Government undertook to be responsible for the expenses of the schools which existed already, or might be brought into being, on condition that the ecclesiastical authorities granted the use of the premises and furnished them with the clergy necessary for the management and teaching staff of the schools. Of necessity, the ecclesiastical authorities accepted this offer, for want of a better arrangement, and signed a contract which, among other articles, assured them of the direction of the schools and obliged the officials of the Public Education Authority to make no change in the teaching personnel or in the programme of studies, without the previous consent of the ecclesiastical authorities. Copies of this contract can be obtained from the Chaldean Patriarchate or the Syrian Archbishop's house.

It must be said that, on the whole, the ecclesiastical authorities were pleased with this arrangement, so long as the Government of occupation lasted. The British officials who followed one another at the Department of Education showed themselves, as a whole, respectful of the provisions of the contract. The priests remained in charge of the schools, and the teaching of religion and of the liturgical language was given in the normal course, as before the War.

As soon as the Arab Government was set up, the situation changed. The Ministry of Education, despite the protests of the ecclesiastical authority, took no account of the clauses of this contract, and behaved as if it was the absolute master of the schools. The Ministry no longer consulted the ecclesiastical authority on the changes which it introduced in the school programme, con-

sidered the priests who were headmasters or teachers, as simple employees, and transferred or dismissed them at will. According to a systematic plan, the Ministry, little by little, removed the direction of the schools from the clergy in order to entrust it to laymen. Actually all the schools (whose premises remained the property of the churches) have laymen as headmasters (Christians or Moslems) trained in the Normal School at Baghdad, and all infected with atheism, and, in some cases, even with immorality. For the sake of appearances, the old headmasters have been maintained, but they have been reduced to the position of teachers of religion, a function which they have to fulfill under the orders, and at the mercy of young laymen who used to be their subordinates, and who are, undoubtedly, inferior to them in knowledge and in experience. For instance, in Chaldean school of Chamoun-el-Safa, which had for twenty-five years as its headmaster, Father J. Namo, the founder and organizer of the school and the trainer of good, honest, Christian citizens, has been handed over, these three years past, to the direction of a man of Kirkuk, Chukry Effendi by name, who hardly knows any Arabic, while the eminent clergyman has been relegated to the village of Telescofe as teacher of the Catechism, a post which he was obliged to accept in order not to die of hunger.

In the same way, the Syrian School of Tahra has passed from the direction of Father Rahmani, licentiate of philosophy and a doctor of theology of the University of Beyrouth, into the hands of Jamil Effendi, a former seminarist of Beyrouth, who left the seminary before he had finished his studies, and who was an ordinary teacher under the former headmaster (Father Rahmani).

Another instance: Quite recently, the last priest who remained as head of a school at Mosul, the Syrian School of Mar-Touma, was reduced to the rank of a simple teacher of catechism. His name is Father G. Andella, an eminent and virtuous man known throughout the town. He had been headmaster of the school for fifteen years. In his place a young product of the Normal School has been appointed, whose morals, to say the least, are suspected.

At Kirkuk it is a Moslem who has been appointed headmaster of the Chaldean school, on the pretext that the former headmaster did not know Turkish, though there are at least twenty Chaldean priests who know Turkish very well.

The result of this process is that the Christian schools in Iraq now exist in name only. The pupils are no longer under the healthy influence of the priest; the religious teaching is officially reduced to a few lessons. The liturgical language is nominally taught, but already it is difficult in the villages to find children

who can understand Chaldean and so take part in the services. The lay teachers trained in Baghdad fill the children's heads with pan-Arab propaganda and weaken in them the feeling of their own nationality. The history books and other readers which are placed in their hands, like the songs which are learned, are all constructed for this same end, to the great detriment of historical truth, and to the contempt of true patriotism.

If this same process continue for a few years longer, all that will remain is a young generation which does not believe in God, which has no respect for Christian traditions and whose one enthusiasm is the Arab cause.

Signed .....

To complete this chapter, I can do no better than to quote a report written by an English expert on the educational system in Iraq which an opportune hand has placed at my disposal to use it in any way I deem fit, but I must suppress the name of the writer for obvious reasons.

*Highly confidential and for personal information only.*

*Note on the present state of education in Iraq.*

"This note contains nothing that I have not written or said before. Some of it has been repeated until to me, at any rate, it has become stale, but I welcome any opportunity of stating what seems to me the truth, and I welcome it the more as people in my position have very few opportunities of speaking the truth with any hope of publicity.

"1. Although I realize that I can help best by pointing out the remediable defects in the present educational system of Iraq, I do not propose to limit myself to defects for which I can suggest a remedy, nor even to those for which others may be able to suggest a remedy, though I cannot. And there are some, and these probably the most serious of all, which seem to be almost irremediable.

"2. There are difficulties common to all branches of the administration of Iraq. These arise from more or less permanent factors, and not at all appreciated by those who do not know the country, nor sufficiently by those who do.

"3. One of the chief factors seems to me to be the smallness of the governing class. I do not suppose that there is in all history another example of a State with a representative government of a modern type, in which the only people who count are



two or three hundred at the most. It is, in fact, a close oligarchy, but without the administrative experience, the education and the tradition of public service, without which, as far as I can remember, oligarchies have never governed successfully. This, in fact, is an oligarchy made up mostly of unscrupulous adventures without the rudiments of true patriotism, whose object is to make what they can as quickly as they can, out of the richest of all sources of supply, namely the State. One result of the smallness of numbers is that everyone knows everyone. Every question is a personal question from the beginning, and is never considered on its merits. This fact is so well known that it does not need illustrating. If the material were not so poor, the effects of the system would not be so unfortunate. But as it is, the constant reshuffling of posts among a limited number of more or less incompetent and corrupt placeholders, paralyzes any kind of good government.

"4. Another factor is the complete absence of any true patriotism. This is not surprising considering the past history of the country. But it means that the foundation of all representative government—the recognition by the individual that the good of the community as a whole is identical with his own private good—does not exist here even in the most rudimentary form. The mentality of the cultivator who refused to destroy a swarm of locusts for fear they might be intending to eat his neighbour's crop is the mentality of all but a dozen people in the country.

"5. There is another factor which I think has a profound effect on the whole mental outlook of educated Moslems. I only know two educated Moslems who are not complete free-thinkers in matters of religion. On the other hand, the dead weight of uneducated public opinion is still very strong and demands conformity with orthodox religion, up to a point. As far as I can judge, an educated Moslem may be as lax as he pleases in his conduct, provided that he does not stand up and publicly disavow his religion. Such easy conditions seem to put a premium on mental dishonesty. This may be only a phase, but while it lasts I do not see how it can fail to produce a state of what Plato called "the lie in the soul" which makes truthful and straight forward dealings very difficult.

"6. I cannot pass over the subject of the vernacular press, because I think this has produced a crop of conditions which in the early days of the mandate were probably not foreseen. I have often pointed out the danger of an uncensored press on the small section of the literates of this country. I have generally been met by the arguments (1) that the literates are so few that

they do not matter; (2) that no one is likely to believe such and such a statement. The first argument is not worth much because everyone admits that the vast majority of the country does not count in politics at all. The fact remains that the rising generation have had no current literature to read except the malicious lies of the daily press. The second argument I think overlooks the fear that the object of propaganda is not so much to convince people of a certain number of specific facts, as to induce a state of mind. This is done by constant harping on facts, true or false, with a view to producing a general impression. The success of this movement between early Spring and the Autumn of 1929 was in my opinion very marked. It was impossible in the Autumn to discuss any administrative question with an Iraqi minister or even with a subordinate official without feeling conscious of a suspicion and distrust arising like a cloud of poison gas. For myself, I know that the advice I give is now largely discounted as being the advice of a foreigner, and therefore deliberately malignant in intent. I cannot say that the atmosphere has become worse than it was eight months ago, but it is no better. The effect of the intensive campaign of propaganda still remains, and in the absence of any counter-propaganda would take years to obliterate. Though I am aware that I have the weight of experienced opinion against me, I still believe that in the end it will be admitted that we have made a mistake, or rather failed in our duty as mandatory power, in allowing almost absolute freedom of the daily press among people who have not experience to judge between truth and falsehood. If Milton had lived in Baghdad in 1929 he would have suppressed the *Areopagitica*.

"7. This country has been decked out in a few years with all the trimmings of modern civilization, while remaining essentially uncivilized. Those who think that a savage is civilized by being dressed in a tail coat will judge of the civilization of Iraq by the appearance of New Street. But though I cannot prove it, I feel certain that this rapid progress in the mechanism of civilization, as opposed to the moral side, has had a disturbing influence especially on the youth, and accounts partly for the glaring contrast between the general ignorance and the general conceit of the literate part of the population.

"8. It would be possible to continue this analysis of unfavourable factors to any length. Each of them contributes more or less, and some of them in an increasing degree, to the difficulty of conducting any branch of the administration satisfactorily. Education has also suffered in my opinion from being handed over

prematurely to Iraqi management. Since 1922 there has been an Iraqi Director-General, and the British inspectorate, besides being reduced in number from four to two, have had their powers curtailed since 1922 to inspection and advice. Neither of these powers have been strong enough to counteract the effect of the various forces outlined above. This result was foreseen and foretold in 1921, but '*Dis aliter visum*'.

"9. To analyze the educational situation more in detail, I would begin by saying that it has always seemed to me that the difficulty of the educational problem has never been sufficiently realized. In 1921 I said in effect that circumstances had forced us to impose on this country a constitution unsuitable to it, and that it became the duty of education to try to bridge the gap between a very backward country and a very modern form of government. This was to be done by combating illiteracy through the spread of elementary education, and combining this with the higher education, with a view to government-employment of a carefully selected few. I also suggested that every pupil on leaving a primary or elementary school, unless he were one of the selected few, should be given a compulsory year at a vocational school, so as to counteract the bias towards clerical employment which in the East is the inevitable result of literacy. But it would have needed more power than the power of advice to carry this through.

"Instead of that, what we have now is a net-work of elementary (four year schools) and primary schools (six year schools) all over the country. In nearly every Liwa headquarters we have an intermediate school (giving the first three years of the full secondary school) and in Baghdad, Mosul and Basrah full secondary schools (giving a five year course). The numbers of schools of each kind are given in the annual reports, and I need not repeat them. In the whole country there is no vocational training given in the elementary or primary or secondary schools. Although the scientific section in the last two years of the secondary course is more popular than the literary section, it cannot be called in any sense vocational. In fact the output of government schools is distinctly clerical, and this drift is encouraged by the schoolmasters themselves, by the public opinion of the country which regards any kind of work except sitting in a chair as derogatory to a person who can read and write, and above all by the parents themselves, who, notwithstanding their complaints against the system of education for its clerical bias, never ceases to urge their sons into taking up clerical work of some kind.



"10. Government schools are the avenue to government employment, but to no other career. Posts in banks and commercial houses are nearly always filled by boys from non-government schools, Jewish and Christian, which at any rate, give their pupils a fair acquaintance with one or two European languages, whereas the government schools teach only one European language, English, up to a very low standard. The effect of this is to emphasize the distinction between Moslem and non-Moslem. It is an undeniable fact that commerce is largely in the hands of non-Moslems. But instead of seeking to correct this by a policy of redistribution, the government shows every sign of going to the opposite extreme—that is to say, of restricting all government employment to those who have passed the government primary and secondary examination, (by the Law of Public Service), and at the same time making it almost impossible for any one except a pupil at a government school i.e. a Moslem, to succeed in these two examinations.

"It is interesting to compare what has happened in Egypt. There it was the common complaint that all commerce was in the hands of the foreigners. The reason was that the government school syllabus did not equip boys for a general career. In Iraq the complaint soon will be, and for exactly the same reason, that all commerce, is in the hands of Jews and Christians. The proper course for the government to take would be to revise its primary and secondary syllabus so as to fit boys for life in general, not merely life in a government office. By this means it would be impossible for Moslem boys from Jewish and Christian schools to go into government service. Instead, the government has decided to bar all but secondary school graduates from the intermediate and higher grades of government service, and no doubt intends to follow this up by legislation forcing the banks and commercial houses to accept a minimum proportion of government school graduates. Of course it is desirable for the sake of national stability, that careers should not be a matter of creed and race. Moslems will have to go into commerce. But in order that this may be done with as little dislocation and loss of industrial efficiency as possible, the government should take steps to broaden its course of training, instead of relying on force majeure (see Mr. F. O. Mann's recent report on Egyptian Education).

"11. This leads on the subject of the primary syllabus and the secondary syllabus. The primary syllabus is, I think, comparatively unobjectionable. For the first four years it is the same as the elementary syllabus, but it adds a fifth and sixth year, in which English is taught, in addition to the other subjects con-

tinued from the elementary period. If English is taught at all, no doubt it should be begun earlier; but this question, which presents some difficulties as a purely educational one, is now infinitely complicated by the introduction of political propaganda.

"12. The secondary syllabus (now a five year course) is incredibly bad. In the final examination in order to obtain a certificate each pupil has to pass in eleven different subjects. This dissipation of energy, is combined with a most pretentious syllabus, which goes into great detail for each subject. To cover the ground laid down in the syllabus for one subject, e.g., history, up to anything like a reasonable secondary standard would require the whole time allotted to all the subjects in the curriculum. It is worth while to illustrate this with reference to the history syllabus. This begins with prehistoric times, and goes down to post-war movements. It embraces every country in the world except India, which is not mentioned, (for political reasons) and China. It is divided into topics, and I have calculated that if the ground is to be covered, 15 minutes only can be given by the teacher in class to each topic (such topics being e.g. "the results of the Renaissance," "a brief history of England up to the Tudors," "results of the French revolution," "the industrial revolution and the change in economic conditions in the 19th century and socialism"). It must be remembered that practically no private reading is done by the pupils in this or in any other subject. The teachers, of course, cannot cover all the ground, and it is necessary for a teacher to "assist" every committee that sets the examination papers, in order to guarantee that only questions are set to which the pupils know the answer. This applies to all subjects besides history. The result, of course, is the worst form of cramming by the teachers, and the acquisition by the pupils of a number of disconnected facts, which stay in their heads just long enough to be cast up undigested and uncorrelated in the form of answers to questions, and then are immediately forgotten. The general effect on the pupils is conceit, superficiality, and ignorance. The educational value must be almost nil: nothing solid can remain after the disconnected fragments have been lost.

"Only two languages are studied, Arabic and English (French having been introduced a year ago as a voluntary subject taught outside school hours but now dropped again). At the end of the secondary course the best boys can hardly write a sentence of idiomatic or even of grammatical English. Arabic in the whole primary and secondary course takes up more hours than any other subject, and yet at the end of the time very few boys can



write correct literary Arabic at all. Arabic literature as such is not touched, except for purposes of syntactical and grammatical study.

"Unfortunately, as most of the secondary graduates who desire higher education go on to the American University of Beirut, the deadly effects of this course of study are the less apparent, since at Beirut the American system is followed by offering a number of disconnected subjects for a degree. Those who wish to enter European Universities direct from Iraq schools practically have to begin again from the beginning. Fortunately Iraqi boys, though naturally very poor linguists, are intelligent and quick.

"All attempts to improve this syllabus have foundered on the rock of the general ignorance and conceit. The fact that eleven subjects are required for success in the Iraq secondary examination and only four for entrance into Oxford, and five for London, is regarded and quoted as a proof of the much higher standard of education in Iraq. This self-satisfaction, pandered to by such Iraqis as ought to know better, has been lately reinforced by the propaganda argument, that any advice given by an Englishman must be malignant.

"13. The institutions for training of teachers are the things, which, next to the secondary schools, appeal most to the pride of the average intelligent Iraqi. There are now three of these. The Higher Training College, giving a two year course to secondary school graduates with a view to the teaching profession, must be one of the most expensive teaching institutions of its kind in the world. Each pupil costs about £170 a year, although there is no afternoon work, and there is three and a half months vacation in the year. Some of the staff of the Higher Training College are probably better qualified than any other Iraqis for the work they have to do.

"The Elementary and Primary Training Colleges were formerly combined but have now been separated, on the principle of the man who had a large hole in his door for the cat, and a small one for the kitten. The division into two separate colleges satisfies the Iraqi love of subdivision, and also for creating institutions "ad hoc" to meet every need, real or imaginary, as it arises. The differentiation between primary and elementary schools is one of degree and not of kind. The programme is practically the same for the first four years and any elementary school may become a primary school by the addition of two extra classes. There seems, therefore, no adequate reason for giving elementary school



teachers a different course of training from primary school teachers and in a separate institution. And in fact the differentiation may lead to serious future embarrassment.

"14. The training college system in Iraq embodies all the latest pedagogical ideas from America, which the pupils (until 1929 graduates of primary schools) imbibed for four years, and then were launched as teachers. They could probably draw a diagram showing what happens in the brain of a child when it is confronted with (a) a wasp, (b) a banana, but they could not always tell which was the verb in a sentence and which the noun. Until a year ago pupils were accepted without any adequate scrutiny of character and fitness, and with no education above that of a primary school. They were herded together under barrack conditions (six square feet per person in the dormitories) without adequate exercise and moral supervision, and pauperized by a system which not only taught, housed, clothed, and fed them at the expense of the state, but also gave them pocket money in addition. Some six hundred teachers were produced by this system, and were either appointed to new schools or replaced so-called untrained teachers who had not had the advantage of four years at the Training College. Meanwhile graduates of intermediate and secondary schools were being debarred from the career of teaching and allowed to drift into low grade clerical posts. For years all my attempts to get this system altered have failed. I have constantly put my views before the highest powers in the land, and they have also been expressed in my annual reports for 1927, 1928 and 1929. But ignorance, prejudice, self-interest and suspicion have all been against me, though the only argument (it can hardly be called a reason) ever advanced against changing the system is that boys who leave primary schools have a right to a higher education, that is to say, a vested interest in the right to enter the Training College and relieve their fathers of all further responsibility for their maintenance. But in the Autumn of 1929 a great advance was made, and it was agreed that in future only graduates of intermediate and secondary schools would be accepted in the Primary Training College, the Elementary Training College being reserved for graduates of primary schools. The next reform needed is the abolition of Elementary Training Colleges, and the shortening of the course in the Primary Training College to one year. There is no reason why we should not for the last three years have been getting better teachers at much less cost than we have been paying for inferior ones.

"There is no reasonable doubt that the standard of teaching in primary and elementary schools has suffered seriously from the short-comings of our trained teachers. The excessive emphasis laid on the mechanical side of a teacher's training, as though teaching were a pure science and not an art, the fact that boys have been enticed into the teaching profession at the age of fourteen or fifteen by the prospect of free maintenance for four years and a guaranteed salary afterwards, and the laxity of the moral supervision at the Training College, have resulted in flooding the country with half-baked teachers who have no sense of teaching as a vocation, and no real interest in anything but their salaries. This is the kind of charge which might be brought against the teaching body of many countries. But in Iraq there was more leeway to make up. The old teaching tradition, which is being taught is a purely passive process, still persists, the spoken word of the teacher is everything. If anything, this has been strengthened by the excessive conceit of the newly trained teachers. Their moral influence on their pupils is nil: they are among the worst political intriguers in the country, and in cases of trouble, can never be relied on to support the authority of the government or even the discipline of the school. This is a disappointing result after so much money has been spent on the training of teachers.

"15. I feel sure that considering the actual condition of this country the educational programme has been too ambitious. But unfortunately, the country has to pose as an up-to-date country, and appearances must be kept up. The facade, it must be admitted, is fairly impressive, but it is the business of some people to live behind the facade. It is a perpetual struggle to get true standards of value substituted for false standards, and I have felt that as far as education goes in the last two years it has been a losing struggle. All kinds of extraneous causes have contributed to my defeat, and yet I cannot feel that I have deserved to lose. "A man may be in as just possession of truth as of a city, and yet be forced to surrender."

"16. I ought not to omit some discussion of the moral state of the younger generation, although, as they nearly all get full marks for conduct in their schools, such discussion might be considered superfluous.

"It may be reckoned that something like 40-50 thousand boys have been or are now in government schools. Most of these are better educated in the subjects of fashionable education than their fathers. Parental discipline, which is, if not weak, at any rate, spasmodic in this country, has received a still further

setback. and the discipline of the schools has done nothing to replace it. It is most regrettable that in a country where passions are strong and even primeval, no corporal punishment is allowed except in primary and elementary schools, and then is limited to six blows on the hand. Other forms of punishment cannot be regarded as substitutes, as they are revocable and involve the element of time. Actually their infliction is, in many cases, merely nominal without even the intention to enforce them. It is interesting that at the very time I was pressing for more effective corporal punishment and being told that Iraqi schoolboys were of too sensitive a nature to be exposed to anything so brutal as corporal punishment, a pupil and an ex-pupil of a government primary school murdered a young married woman who was their relation and was living with them. The murder was committed while she was walking with her baby. There was no motive for the murder except anger aroused by a rather bitter tongue.

"It would not be reasonable to except the schools to be free from what is sometimes called the prevailing vice of the country. It is like an endemic disease, and has its ups and downs. A year ago it was certainly increased by a large importation of bicycles. A free ride at the expense of a senior person furnished the bribe and the opportunity. Again, the first visit of an Egyptian dramatic company sixteen months ago lead to a demand for ready cash on the part of the school-boys, and one way of raising this cash was by hiring out their persons according to a regular tariff. I risk mentioning these things partly because I have reason to know that they are true, partly to emphasize the fact that in this country where the effective numbers are so small our insignificant cause can have quick and wide effects. It is hardly necessary to add that having been accustomed to read every day until the end of 1929 (when steps were taken to control the anti-British campaign) the most fantastic lies invented by journalists to the discredit of the British, every schoolboy is virulently anti-British and believes that every Englishman is a liar and a tyrant, and that the only reason why this world is not a paradise is the existence of the British Empire.

"17. In the inspectorate and in the higher teaching posts we have a certain number of intelligent and capable men, but their influence is largely neutralized by the great number of "place-men." Moreover in the present state of opinion it would be very dangerous for these people to be known to share any of my views. I cannot protect them from the persecution they would inevitably suffer.



"The practice of allowing influential people to hold several posts at once and draw pay from them all has grown in the last two years in Education—it is all the more difficult to stop because it is not confined to Iraqis. There are rules against it, but as those who have to administer the rules are the worst offenders, the rules remain a dead letter. Everyone knows who breaks them and to what extent, and everyone thinks that there is no harm done. It may not be a practice confined to this country, though it is a practice much too common, to suppress, on grounds of economy, a post occupied by an uninfluential person, and then in its place to create two new posts and give them to influential and usually less competent persons. No one here is interested in making economies which only effect the state.

"18. In the post of Director-General we had from 1922, up to the Summer of 1927, Saaty Beg al Hisri, the only man in the country who combined administrative experience with a knowledge of and in fact a passion for education. He did much for efficiency, though I consider that on broader questions of policy several of his views were wrong. He resigned in 1927 because he was never adequately supported by the government. Since then we have lost his efficiency and energy, while his views especially his wrong views (see paragraphs 5, 12, 13 and 14) are more firmly rooted than ever. This is because his immediate successor, having no interest in education and no particular views on it, drew all his views from his predecessors, who since his retirement has been free to use his leisure, and has used it most effectively, to disseminate propaganda in favour of all his prejudices. As an Iraqi said to me recently, "You change your gramophone sometimes in the Ministry of Education, but you always have Saaty Beg's records". Unfortunately I can see little sign of any tendency, in appointing officials to higher posts in government service, to take into due account either their efficiency in their old posts, or their fitness for the new posts.

"19. I have written this note with the intention of pointing out defects which do not meet the eye of the outside observer. I admit that there is one promising thing about our present system and that is the increase in the number and efficiency of girls' schools. The chief, perhaps the one hope, for this country's moral advancement seems to me to lie in the emancipation of women. The Baghdad Girls' School is probably the best of all the schools in Iraq, but its future is endangered by the appointment of an American-trained Syrian to the post of principal.

"It is also fortunate that some of our yearly expenditures has been on buildings. About one-third of all the schools in the country are now housed in buildings built and intended for schools. This means a great deal in a country where the ordinary house is generally unsanitary and has very small rooms.

"20. I have sometimes been told that for a person in my position it is useless to point out things that are wrong unless I can point out the way of putting them right. In this report I have tried to show that some of the causes of the unsatisfactory state of education are so deep-rooted that it would require a moral or social revolution to alter them. For those causes which might be called accidental, I have suggested what ought to be done. If I had known how to get it done, I should not have wasted my time as much as I have done these seven years. I am quite convinced of one thing and that is that it is useless to discuss educational reforms with the heads of the state. They always agree with you that it is the agreement of politeness not of conviction. Anyhow in this country the spoken word is worth nothing.

"Force is the only thing that will carry through some of the necessary reforms, and I fear that the time for applying that force has passed. One of two things will probably happen in education: either the present system will collapse of its own weight, and they will have to build it up again, or when I am out of the way and the element of personal jealousy is removed, they may adopt as their own some of my suggestions and carry them out. In that case to cover themselves they will probably say that they had long been trying to secure these reforms but that the malignant influence of the British has prevented them. This sort of thing has happened before. But if either of my forecasts is correct it almost follows that the British Government should from this moment (or perhaps from March 1, 1931) abandon education altogether to the control of the Iraqis. This is the direct and logical sequel to the action taken in 1921. The present measure of control does not guarantee the proper standard of administration and brings no credit either to the British government or to the British official who is regarded as responsible for education.

"I may be allowed to anticipate comment on this note by a quotation from T. Hobbes: "Either I alone am mad, or they are all mad. Other conclusion there is none unless a man should say that we are all mad together."

(Signed) .....

30th August, 1930.



DAVID BARSUM PERLEY, J.S.D.

*President, Assyrian National Federation*  
*(June, 1934—October, 1935)*

*Vice-president (October, 1935—)*

“ . . . the Jacobite Church is my Church,  
and I take filial pride in the acknowledg-  
ment thereof.” p. 126





## CHAPTER VII

### THE JACOBITES\*

The Assyrians, although representing but one single nation as the direct heirs of the ancient Assyrian Empire as indicated in chapter I, are now doctrinally divided, *inter se*, into five principal ecclesiastically designated religious sects with their corresponding hierarchies and distinct church governments, namely, Nestorian,<sup>1</sup> Jacobite,<sup>2</sup> Chaldean (see the preceding chapter), Maronite and Syrian Catholic. These formal divisions had their origin in the Fifth Century of the Christian Era. No one can coherently understand the Assyrians as a whole until he can distinguish that which is religion or church from that which is nation—a matter which is particularly difficult for the Oriental people to understand; for in the East, by force of circumstances beyond their control, religion has been made, from time immemorial, virtually into a criterion of nationality. One thing is sure, however, that distinction exists. Common observation will indicate that the authorities speak of either the Jacobite People or the Jacobite Church—there is no such thing as the Jacobite nation. The issues that are raised by these several sects are purely theological, having reference in the main, to Christology, and not to nationalism. It is a truth that some of them have different answers to the questions,

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1—The term **Nestorian**, which is the creation of the Anglican missionaries, is not accurate as applied to the **Church of the East**, for that Church was established long before the appearance of Nestorius. So that the term **Nestorians** or the **Nestorian Church** is used here only for convenience. See p. 10 of *The Assyrian Tragedy*.

2—The term, **Jacobite Church** is similarly a misnomer as applied to the **Old Eastern Church**. That term is also adopted here merely for convenience.

"How many persons are there in Christ?", yet all of them are the Friends of the Cross of Christ. If, in any sense, this chapter has succeeded in helping the reader to see and to feel, in this pressing moment, what the writer sees and feels in the origin—be it religious, national or otherwise—of the Jacobite People, and if it has succeeded in indicating the injustices done to their nation, it will have fulfilled its mission. Who, then, are the Jacobites?

The Jacobite People are an offshoot of the Eastern Monophysites. They are the representatives of the Syrian element in *the Church of Antioch*, the earliest of the Gentile Churches. The name *Jacobites* occurs first in the anathemas or in the synodal decrees of the Council of Nicaea, 787 A.D. It was invented by hostile Greeks for these "Syrian Monophysites" as founded by, or rather restored by, Jacob Baradeus, who was born toward the close of the fifth century and was ordained its bishop in 541 A.D.

These Monophysites often call themselves *The Orthodox*, like the Greeks and the Russians. Their Church is sometimes known as the *Jacobite Syrian Church*, which is a truly Oriental sect with no Western connection. It may be of interest to notice here, in passing, that foreign missions have hopelessly failed, in their attempt to Christianize the Christian Assyrians, to make any serious impression on the main body of the Church. Both Roman and Protestant missions have had no instinctive regard for historic continuity, and have looked with little reverence on customs made venerable by ancient use. They have approached with threatening their independence or with disparaging the primitive traditions of a Communion older than themselves and have forgotten to notice that they are patriotic to the core. At any rate, these "nominal Christians", venerate pictures and make the sign of the Cross symbolic of the fact that Our Lord died on the Cross for



our salvation. They pay infinite honor to Virgin Mary and revere her as the Mother of God. They impose upon themselves excessive fasts, as solemn rites, in honor of divers saints—there are five annual lents<sup>3</sup>. The principal teaching of their Church include the seven Holy Sacraments, viz.: the Holy Baptism, the Holy Orders, the Holy Matrimony, the Aurecular Confession, the Holy Chrism, otherwise known as the *Mooran*; the Holy Eucharist<sup>4</sup> otherwise known as the *Kurbana*, and the Holy Unction. Their most sacred ceremony is the Mass<sup>5</sup> which they celebrate with great ritualistic splendor on every Sunday and other Holy-days—there is no secret Mass. Every thing in the Jacobite Church centers about the adorable sacrifice of this ceremony. It is for the celebration of the Mass that the altar is erected and the clergymen consecrated. The Mass is regarded as the most solemn public act of worship because it is the Last Supper over again with the additional significance of Calvary. So that, to be present with the

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- 3—(a) The Lent of Adventide for 24 days from December the 14th.  
 (b) The Lent of the Ninevates for 3 days from Monday in the 3d week before Lent.  
 (c) The long Lent for 48 days including the Holy-week.  
 (d) The Lent of the Holy Apostles for 13 days from June the 29th.  
 (e) The Lent of Our Blessed Virgin Mary for 14 days from August 14th.  
 In addition to these fasting seasons, they fast on every Wednesday and Friday except those of the Whitsuntide season.
- 4—Only a hypostatic union of the Word with the Word is asserted in the Eucharist, not the identity of the Sacred Elements with the Body and Blood of Christ.
- 5—The Jacobites cling to their liturgical language, Syriac, with almost pathetic devotion but adopt the vernacular freely in sermons and popular services. Any attempt to tamper with the national language is considered an attack on the nationality itself. Unfortunately however, the national language with the Jacobites as a practical matter is a saddening spectacle. Arabic is the language in common use all through Syria as far as Aleppo, from Mardin to Mosul, and again in Sert. **Turani**, a corruption of the classical Syriac, is spoken chiefly in Jebel Tur, while in the neighborhood of Urfa, Diarbakir, and Harpoot, lingual streams of Kurdish, Armenian and Turkish meet and a fine Babel is the result each contending for supremacy. But everywhere the more educated use the Syriac or Aramaic characters for writing the local language, a combination known as *Garshuni*. This chaotic condition of the mother tongue among the Jacobites is caused solely by reason of their heterogeneous settlement.  
 The reader should refer to the very full account of the services of the Church of the East (Nestorian), which are very similar, given by Maclean & Browne, pp. 212-242.

proper motive and conduct is all that is necessary. Piety will suggest further devotion—it will establish faith, kindle hope, regulate and quicken the virtue of Christian charity. Monks are very common among the Jacobites but there are no nuns.

The Jacobite Church rejects the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) and accepts those of the Second Council of Ephesus (431 A.D.). Its pronounced doctrine concerning Christology, as propounded by a Monk, by the name of Euthyches, Abbot of Constantinople, almost the contemporary of Nestorius who was the Patriarch of Constantinople in 429 A.D., is that while the latter held there were two distinct persons in Christ—human and divine—although closely and inseparable joined, the former held that Christ had but one composite nature which is divine. The Redeemer, held Euthyches, possessed but one nature composed of two. The divine nature of Christ has absorbed the human so that the two have become one, like a piece of glass, which although made of sand, is only glass now, no longer sand. God is in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, being co-equal and co-eternal. There are three known persons but one God. Christ is the second person in Trinity who was incarnated for the salvation of mankind. He is the Only Begotten Son of God, “the Only-Begotten, the Begotten from the Father before all the worlds, Light of light, Very God of Very God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father by whom all things were made<sup>6</sup>”. His is a truly divine nature; he is the true God. Consequently, and by way of logical analogy, Euthyches accepted the Divine Maternity of the Virgin Mary. This ideology was condemned by the Councils of Constantinople in 381 A.D. and 553 A.D., and of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. Nevertheless, it found an outlet in Beth-Nahreen and came to stay as the Jacobite Syrian Church, and the so-called

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6—From the Apostle's Creed of the Jacobite Church.

Jacobite People is that part of the nation of Assyrians that professes the faith prescribed by the Jacobite Church fathers as a denomination.<sup>7</sup>

The Jacobites have thinly scattered in an ecclesiastical organization over Syria proper and in other localities in the former dismembered Ottoman Empire and also in South India. Their situation has been very critical because they were not settled as a compact self-governing enclave; and because while the most of the other sects received recognition from the Sublime Porte, they were without it. Through the interposition of a foreign power this disability was removed in 1882. Before the World War they numbered about 40,000 families or about 250,000 souls. This number has been continuously dwindled owing to vast secession to Rome and massacres by the Turks. Their centers in the Near and Middle East have been Diarbakir, with six villages, Mardin; Mosul with five villages; Baghdad, Aleppo, Harpoot with fifteen villages; Damascus with four villages and the District of Gawar, Urfa with fifty villages, and Jebel Tur with about one hundred and fifty villages.

The Jacobites have many monasteries, and their clergy are constituted on the model of a perfect hierarchy. They glory in an apostolical succession from St. Peter as the first Bishop of Antioch and exhibit what they hold to be an unbroken series of more than one hundred eighty-five bishops of that See from his day to the present. The supreme head of the Church is the Patriarch "of Antioch and All the East." Upon his election he assumes the name

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7—See Etheridge's **Syrian Churches**.

It is apparent that the Assyrians have three chief National Churches, namely, Nestorian, Jacobite and Catholic. The latter comprehends the Chaldean, Maronite and the Syrian Catholic Churches. See the preceding chapter on the Chaldeans.

In the case of the so-called Jacobites and the Nestorians, when all is said and done, it will be seen that their theological rivalry of the past rested only on the misunderstanding of technical terms, and such-like differences can be cleared away by mutual understanding.



*Ignatius, the Martyr*, which title was first assumed in 1293 A.D. by Bar Wahib. The full title of the Patriarch is, "His Holiness Moran Mar Ignatius———, Exalted Patriarch of the Apostolic See of Antioch, and all of the Jacobite Churches of Syria and in the East." It is of great interest to notice that although he takes his title from Antioch, he never resides there<sup>8</sup>—his seat, *the kursi*, is not fixed. It is often in a convent. It has sometimes been in Diarbakir, although Mardin has been for a long time the Patriarchial See with their Schools of Theology in the noble Monastery, *Deir-el-Za'aferan*.<sup>9</sup> The present Patriarch, His Holiness, Mar Ignatius Aphrem I., is believed to have his *Kursi* in Homs, Syria. Under the Patriarch is the Maphrian,\* which literally means "fructifier", who is primate of the East and has lived in Mosul since 1087. He is sometimes known as "Catholicos of the East." He ordains bishops and generally succeeds the Patriarch upon vacancy caused by death. The office of Maphrian is now in abeyance, and the Patriarchate is an elective<sup>10</sup> office by and from among the bishops and all the bishops are present at the consecration of the Patriarch. There is one instance even

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8—Antioch is the merely nominal seat of the Patriarchate since Paul the Black. No Patriarch has lived there except Elias who lived there in 711 A.D., and later Athanasius VIII. In the Summer of 1246 A.D., during the occupation of Antioch by the Franks, the Patriarch Ignatius David also resided there but for a short period of time.

9—The Monastery of Barsum near Malatia, which was built in the tenth century by John Sarighta, was the seat of the Patriarchs. (1167-1200 A.D.). It was restored by Michael I. Later Dionysius IV left Malatia and settled in Amida in order to be out of Greek territory. Michael I in turn went to Deir-el-Za'aferan. This monastery had been restored by his predecessor, John the Great, (1125-1165) who was one of the most distinguished heads of this Church, and was again enlarged and beautified by Ignatius XI in 1484 A.D. Deir-el-Za'aferan had been first restored by Ananias, Bishop of Mardin, about 705; but having fallen into ruin was again restored by John, who says that he was ignorant of the saint Evgen to whom it was dedicated by Ananias.

Mr. H. C. Luke states in his book on p. 113: "In the Spring of 1924, the Patriarch, Mar Ignatius Elias III, was expelled from his monastery, which was turned into a Turkish barrack."

\*—The name Maphrian is derived by BAR HEBRAEUS from the root *Apbran*, fruitfulness, and means "Father of fathers".

10—Hereditary episcopate is prevalent among those in the Church of the East now erroneously called the Nestorian Church, but the Old Syrian or Eastern (Jacobite) Church has always strongly repudiated it. See Neale's *Patriarchate of Antioch*.

of a layman, Dionysius I., in 818 A.D., being chosen Patriarch, and receiving all the preliminary priestly orders.<sup>11</sup> The bishops may depose the Patriarch for heresy as was done in the case of Paul the Black, in 574 A.D. He may also be deposed by the unanimous vote of the whole people. Besides these two, the Jacobites have eight metropolitans and three bishops, (prior to the World War). Each has a diocese<sup>12</sup> except two that are called, *temeloyo*, i.e. universal, without any regular dioceses. The bishops are divided into two classes, those chosen from among the monks, who are called *Mutrans*, and those chosen from parish priests who have lost their wives, and have so become eligible for the Episcopacy. These are called *Askof* (Episcopi). The *Askof* ranks a little below the *Mutrans*, and is eligible neither for the Metropolitan nor for Patriarchal dignity. Of the priestly order there are

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11—On the subject of the customs and institutions of the Jacobites, see O. H. Parry's *Six Months in a Syrian Monastery*, 1895. Bishop Parry visited the East in 1892 at the invitation and on behalf of the Jacobite Patriarchate Education Society in order to inspect the elementary schools already established by the Patriarch of Antioch, Mar Ignatius Peter III., with the help of friends in England, and to report generally on the prospects of effectually promoting education in the churches under the Patriarch's jurisdiction. The result of the visit was this monument. The term "Syrian" is used interchangeably with the "Assyrian", who is a member of the Jacobite Church. Says he on p. 314: "This name is adopted as that by which the people are spoken of by themselves and their neighbours in the East. It distinguishes them (1) from the Greeks of Palestine by the word of Syrian, (2) from the Latin proselytes by the word old, (3) from the Assyrians or East Syrians" (meaning the Nestorians) "by the same words. No theory is propounded or maintained by this use of this title; nor has any consideration weighed but that of custom and convenience."

See also Dr. W. A. Wigram's *The Separation of the Monophysites*, (London, 1923); and A. A. Luce's *Monophysitism, Past and Present*, (London, 1920)

See also Ch. VIII of H. C. Luke's *Mosul and Its Minorities*, London, 1925.

On the customs and institutions of the Nestorians, Dr. Wigram's *The Assyrians and Their Neighbours*, (London, 1929), is classical. See also Badger's *Nestorians and Their Rituals*, and Cutt's *Christians Under the Crescent*.

12—These dioceses are one in Urfa, one in Diarbakir or Harpoot, one at Jerusalem, one at Mardin, three in Jebel Tur, one in Mosul, and another in the Convent of Mar Mattai in the same district.

three divisions: The monks,<sup>13</sup> the priests (the only class that is not celebrate), and the charepiscopi. The Deacons are the last order. In the services of the church, the deacon has a part almost as indispensable as the priest. The exhortations and the psalms are said by him; he prepares the holy bread, swings the censer, and gives the holy elements from the priest's hand to the people.

The Jacobite Church has produced in the past many men remarkable for the profoundness of their views, their teachings, and their writings. No less than one hundred and fifty archbishops and bishops can be counted in the different ages of the sect. Among these, some of the most eminent are John, bishop of Asia; Thomas of Harkel, who revised in the 7th century the Philoxenian translation of the New Testament; Jacob of Edessa; the Patriarch Dionysius I., in the 9th century, author of a Syriac chronicle; John, bishop of Dara; Moses Bar-Kipha, who wrote a treatise on Paradise; Dionysius Bar-Salibi, bishop of Amid, in the 12th century, author of commentaries on the Bible and other theological works; Jacob, bishop of Tagrit; Gregorius Abulfaragius; Jacob of Sarug; Isaac of Ephesus; Mar Efrem Syrus; Efraim of Nisibis (378 A.D.), the "sweet singer"; and Bar-Hebraeus in the 13th century, who was the greatest and noblest man of the Eastern Church—"His death was mourned alike by Jacobites and Nestorians, by Greeks and Armenians, all of whom forgot the disputes which were agitating at that time the Eastern Church, and gathered at his grave to mingle their tears for the loss of a truly virtuous and great man."

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13—The Monks are higher in the hierarchy than the priests. As from them the Bishops are chosen, their lives are spent in the monasteries rather than in the towns, and are given up to the study of God's word, and the practice of self-denial. In the Autumn they are sent by the Patriarch to collect tithes throughout the villages, and report on the state of the Patriarchal property.



To make the picture of any one of these sects complete, we must discuss briefly its national aspect, for in the East, religion plays a more important part than does race in the demarcation of national cleavages; so also sectarianism within any one religion—especially so in the past. In all these groups the Church was the foremost aspect of nationality. It virtually was the nation. The intolerant ardor of what seemed to be their religious conviction was always really national pride and national loyalty under the guise of theology. Their strong national feeling, painted in deep religious colors, was the natural consequence of their political circumstances and not of any conscious misdemeanor. To get the real import of this thought one must get into the depths of history. There he will find the real source of these ups-and-downs in their national psychology. The Assyrians have been deeply marked by a long era of subjugation and disunion. For centuries various nations have lived here side by side and have carried on bitter opposition against each other. The Levant had never had one homogeneous population speaking one language. From the beginning of Christianity, nationality here has been a question not of the soil, but of a community held together by its language, striving for supremacy with other communities. Rome, and then Constantinople, was always a foreign tyranny to them. Crushed in politics, they expressed their hatred for the Government by the only available weapon that of taking up an anti-imperial form of religion. Such an attitude has exactly characterized these groups ever since. Then too, under the Turk, the only possible separate organization was an ecclesiastic one. The Turk, under the doctrine of *'divide and rule'* even intensified this confusion. Sultan Mohammad II instituted in 1453 a simple and convenient way of organizing the subject Christians by taking their religion as a basis. The Porte recognized each sect as an artificial

nation (*millet*), so that each of these sects became a Christian-millet, and internal antagonism the supreme law, with disastrous consequences to the nation. The Jacobites became the *Suryani Kadim Melleti* and they were *the only* Assyrians. Blood had nothing to do with it. A Jacobite who was converted by a Greek automatically lost his nationality. The Western idea of separating politics from religion was unknown in the East. The *millet* was what mattered, and that was a religious body. Such are the circumstances that explain the fact of the intense conservatism of each of these sects. Proud of their own possessions handed down from their fathers, they guard with the most zealous care their apostolic heritage, and cling fanatically to their rites even to the smallest custom, because it is by these that the *millet* is held together. The turning point in the life of these sects has now come to stay, however. The national life of the Assyrians of today is based on an ideal of creative understanding. Freedom of conscience in the matter of religious worship and true loyalty to the nation are held to be matters not in conflict with one another, for religion is personal, rather than institutional; ethical, rather than patriotic. No one group of people can be said to have monopoly of the ultimate truth of religion. Ecclesiastical individualism, therefore, can no longer result in mutual integration but in the mutual strengthening and co-working of all of these Churches and the nation whose integral parts they are. So strong is this current of feeling, so strong amongst the young as well as the old that those old marks of antipathy and suspicion *inter se*, they have sworn to themselves, are to be effaced forever. They refuse to believe that the past must be incessantly renewed and that history will never cease repeating itself. Such is the revolt of the new generation against the narrow provincialism of the past that has united us all, regardless of creed, under the banner of our *Ethnarch, Mar*

*Eshai Shimun* XXI, our hero, both spiritual and secular, in our struggle for survival. Over a period of about a decade, the spirit of the political activities of this youth of seven-and-twenty, who commenced his career in the field of battle, has been characterized by a sane desire to establish a homeland where liberty might reign supreme. Self-appointed reformers of international morality have, however, falsely accused him of self-seeking<sup>14</sup>, despite the fact that the Arabs of Iraq offered him wealth if only he would approve their scheme for the settlement of the Assyrians. He opposed it, for the reason that the contrary would have meant national disaster. There were rights and principles, he proclaimed and confessed them, and that even at the expense of becoming an exile. The invincible *Mar Shimun* was not willing that there should be any people without a country where they can live in peace. (And what an unpardonable crime this must be! The natural and inalienable rights are only for the Englishmen, and sometimes for their protégés.) Such reformers refuse to believe in the self-evident truth that the controversy between *the Mar Shimun* and Iraq is primarily a reflex of antagonism between Islamism and Christianity. They have carried much harmful propaganda in the press with the primary object of distorting public opinion and distracting attention from the main issue, thus eventually obscuring the realities of the situation. That he is a Nestorian, "representative of only one sect", is not the whole truth. One's religious faith is a matter of his own concern and as such it is relatively unimportant to the world. More, Nestorianism is only a religious designation. For religious purposes the Assyrians are many, but for national purposes they are one. The most fundamental and inescapable fact about the *Mar Shimun* is that he is an Assyrian first and a

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14—Near East and India. October 19, 1933, p. 855. Ernest Main's *Iraq from Mandate to Independence*, (London, 1935), p. 155.



Nestorian afterwards. No longer will any Judas be able to divide a united entity with a kiss. We have likened the five principal religious divisions of the nation to the five fingers on the one hand. We have learned, at the expense of centuries of national tragedy, that the fingers are all related, that they exist for mutual assistance, and that to act against one another is contrary to the very nature of the hand itself. We shall close our fingers into a related whole, called the *fist*, and bind them with the binding power of the thumb, and smite the world without bruising ourselves, and,

"Beat down yon betting mountain  
And raise yon jutting cape,  
A world is on the anvil:  
Now smite it into shape.

Whence come this iron music  
Whose sound is heard afar?  
The hammers of the world's smiths  
Are beating out a star."

Such is the realism and indestructibility of our idealism. Col.-Lt. R. S. Stafford is deluding himself into the belief that the nation of the Assyrians is no longer.<sup>15</sup> To that end he wrote his book, as if a nation could be annihilated by a stroke of the pen! He seems to be alarmed at the massacre of the disarmed Assyrian women and children, committed by the Arabs of Iraq in 1933, in his presence while an Administrative Inspector in Iraq. I do not blame him; but if he honestly believes that such incidents can wipe out the nation of the Jacobites, he is sadly mistaken. Apparently he has not read history. Furthermore, the very existence of this people, of the precept to "Seek first the Kingdom of God," through centuries of persecution bears eloquent testimony to the fact that the soul of

<sup>15</sup>—*The Tragedy of the Assyrians*, London: 1935, p. 213.

Stafford's second motivating object in his book is to exonerate the British of responsibility.





PROF. ASHUR S. YUSUF OF HARPOOT

"His life was gentle ; and the elements  
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world, This was a man !"

—*Shakespeare*, in "Julius Caesar"



Assyria is spiritual through and through and not material. You can not destroy that which is spiritual; it is co-existent with eternity.

As I read over these pages, there springs to my mind the memory of Saint Mary's Monastery in Harpoot, then under the jurisdiction of His Grace, the Archbishop Mar<sup>16</sup> Dionysius Abdul'nur. Whilst I write this, it is ten-and-nine years ago, and yet at this moment, I see, as if it were but yesterday, the expression of the object on which I used to fix my childhood gaze. It was the picture of a loving lady hanging over the stained-glass on the left side of the Holy Altar. The whole countenance was so radiant with divine tranquillity that I used to bow down a thousand times and cross myself whenever I besought God's help and forgiveness, to have Her intercede for me, as my patron saint. I am reminded at this moment of the massacres of the Christians in Turkey in the Fall of 1914 when Moslem fanaticism so suddenly and so critically separated us from my father forever, Barsum (Keshish).<sup>17</sup> On one of these evenings, memorable to myself, I went to the church, bowed down before the Mother of God with all the usual manifestations of filial wailings and sorrow, crossed myself quickly and prayed, hoping that Her glorious company of angels might still bring my father back to us. It was here

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16—The title MAR, prefixed to the names of all Bishops, as well as the Saints, means "My Lord", which is strictly an Episcopal title.

17—He was deported and massacred in points unknown together with Prof. Ashur and other Assyrians from the same city.

Prof. Ashur S. Yusuf was born in Harpoot in 1858. He received his formal education in Central Turkey College and taught in the schools of Harpoot, Amasia, Smyrna, Antiocha, etc. For some years, and up to the time of his deportation, he was on the teaching staff of Euphrates College. He received a high degree from the Turkish Bureau of Education. He was a poet, a publisher, a teacher and a foremost Assyrian patriot. He originated and edited the monthly periodical, **the Murshid D'Assyrian**, in Harpoot at a time when publicity was almost unknown in that vicinity. This periodical was in being for about six years and came to a premature termination with the life of its illustrious Editor.

where I learned my first lessons in faith and in hope; and as my prayer in this church was my solace when in sorrow, prayers in other churches must bring consolation to those that mourn. There is no church where man cannot lift his eyes to heaven above; no place is too small to contain the crowd of intrinsic virtues. That evening, at the conclusion of my prayer I recall, while tears filled my eyes, I went up to the picture, crossed myself, kissed it, then gently walked out. In that atmosphere I could not help raising my eyes from the earth to the sky and feeling the true majesty of God. Truly, there was discipline more strict than can be imagined in the West. Here was emotional stabilization, relief from selfishness, the discipline of loyalty, the opportunity for ideal devotion, and the cultivation of moral and spiritual idealism. Many years of persecution, because of the faith of our fathers, has strengthened the intellectual and sentimental love of each Assyrian sect for its respective church. We have been obliged to pay the price of being such avowed followers of the Prince of Peace and have given a signal illustration of what it means to take up one's cross and follow Him, and that for many centuries. We are exceedingly proud of our race because of our glorious historic origin. That the greatest Christian Empire should permit such organized persecution, murder and maltreatment and forced conversion (which is still going on at this very moment) in Iraq of "one of the finest races in the Middle East," in the phraseology of Col. Wilson, is truly a lamentable event! As a nation we loathe the thought of being under the jurisdiction of a Moslem government. For this very reason, the Hill-Assyrians participated on the side of the Allies<sup>18</sup> during the World War. Great Britain accepted and organized them, and used them

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18—The reader should refer to Dr. Wigram's **Our Smallest Ally**, London, 1920.

against the Turks freely with the solemn promises of giving them redress and autonomy consistent with their institutions. By virtue of such *repeated* pledges,<sup>19</sup> the armies of the *Mar Shimun* rendered invaluable services both to the British and the Allies. They were subsequently driven from their homes to Western Persia which is now known as Iraq. In breach of her pledges to the Assyrians, Great Britain delivered up her friends to their enemies by raising the Arabs of Iraq to the throne, (a nation so murderous that, only after a short period of nine months of independence, an English officer was forced to exclaim,<sup>20</sup> "I saw and heard many horrible things in the Great War, but what I saw in Simel is beyond human imagination"); in the meanwhile she put aside the problem of the Assyrians for a subsequent settlement. That *settlement* is yet to come.

All this happened after the 11th day of November, 1918, which marked the end of political troubles for England, and after her exploitation of the oil-mines in Mosul. But where is the 11th day of November, 1918, for the Assyrians? Are not the Assyrians still in the trenches? And "Where are the British now"—their ally?

"Battle and toil survived, is this the end  
Of all your high endeavor? Shall the stock  
That death and desert braved be made a mock  
Of gazing crowds, nor in the crowd a friend?"

Little wonder, then, that such acts on the part of the British have been regarded by many Britons themselves as acts of betrayal, nay, even as individual acts of

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19—*The Assyrians and the Arabs*, by Sir Arnold Wilson, M.P., in the *Spectator* of August 25, 1933, p. 243.

20—See Chapter XIX p. 290.



treason against humanity. The Bishop of Ripon is conscious of it when he declares:

*"But so lately as last August another blow fell on the good name and prestige of Great Britain . . . I refer to the massacre of Assyrian Christians at Simel and elsewhere in Iraq . . . But I say, with a full sense of responsibility, that one could hardly conceive a situation more calculated to damage this country at the bar of world opinion as a betrayer of its friends. As such we have been held up to scorn in the Press of other nations."*

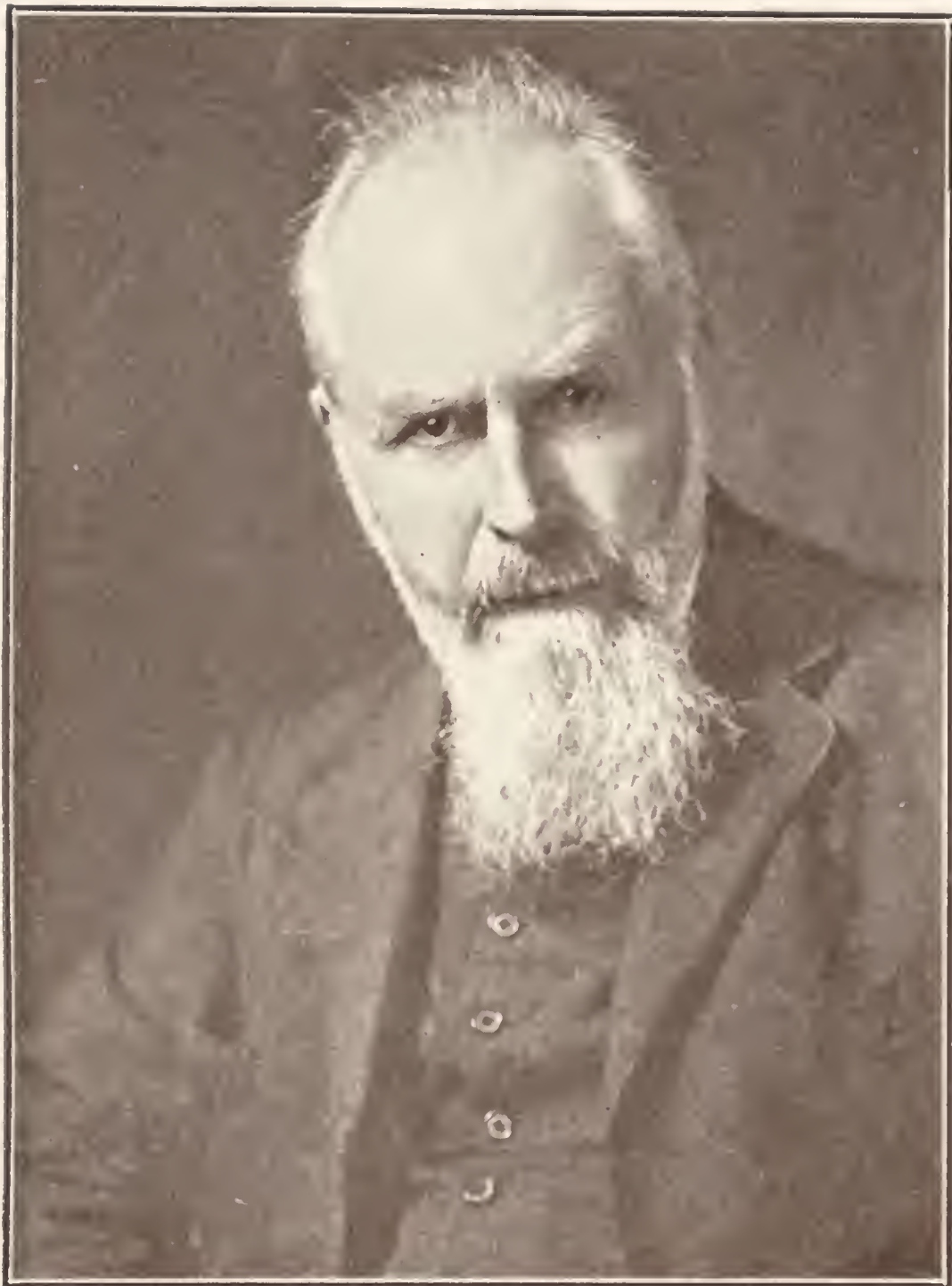
The admission of a British officer is enlightening: *"I never felt such shame in my life as when I had to explain our breach of faith to my Assyrian soldiers."*

As late as July the 15th of this year, Lord Hugh Cecil admitted the moral obligation of Great Britain to the Assyrians when he stated that the Assyrians are in danger and distress because the British unwisely and prematurely discharged themselves from the old obligation of a mandatory power. The principal cause of their distress, he declared, was that they were Great Britain's allies during the Great War. He therefore considers there is a moral obligation on Great Britain to provide "the funds to transfer as many of the Assyrians as may wish to leave Iraq to new homes provided by the French in Syria."

*"We have seemed by the abandonment of the Assyrians and Kurds to sacrifice our very honour,"* has proclaimed Sir Henry C. Dobbs, the former High Commissioner.

The British policy with regard to the Assyrians has been regarded by Dr. W. A. Wigram as a stain on the national shield of Britain. This great humanitarian has impressed me so deeply that I cannot refrain from quoting *in toto* his excellent summary<sup>21</sup> of the entire situation:

21—**The Case for the Assyrians**, delivered before the Royal Central Asian Society on October 23, 1933. Lord Lloyd in the Chair.  
Re-produced by kind permission of the author from the Royal Central Asian Society Journal, Vol. 21, January, 1934, pp. 38-41.



THE REV. CANON WILLIAM A. WIGRAM, D.D.

“Can it be said that we have ‘played the game’ by those to whom we gave promises and who served us because they trusted those promises?” p. 122





"All men know that there has been lately rather serious trouble within the new state of 'Iraq in which the nation of the Assyrians has been involved. The sufferers feel that they have a special claim to our interest in the matter, and it is worth putting out the facts that show in what that claim consists.

"To begin with, this nation was our ally in the war. There was no formal treaty made with them by us, but when they and the Russians were both fighting the Turk in the north and we in the south of the same strategic field, we sent up officers to them—Captain G. F. Gracey was one—to arrange a joint plan of action with them, a plan that they followed to their loss. This they rightly took as constituting an alliance, and when as a result of their acting on it they were later driven from their homes down to Western Persia and what is now called Iraq, we received them, organized them, and promised them a return to their country. The promise was made with the authority of our then generals in the land and by the staff officer who received the people, Colonel J. J. McCarthy. This was in the October of 1918.

"Such return was quite feasible at the time, for the Turk was then 'down and out' and willing to receive any order that we gave him with positive reverence. The Assyrians were of course eager to go, and the political authority in 'Iraq was willing to send them, both then and for months after.

"Unfortunately the home Government intervened. In the making of the armistice with Turkey this small ally had been forgotten, and some sort of understanding made that we were not to advance beyond a certain line—a line that we crossed when our own convenience was concerned, however.

"Hence orders were sent from home that the question of the Assyrian settlement must wait for the conclusion of formal peace with Turkey. They were put in refugee camps—at very heavy cost—and told to be patient. Meantime the men entered our service as soldiers and served us right well.

"It took four years for our Government to make that peace with Turkey, and a dismal and disastrous hash it was when it was made. The long delay was fatal and the blunder colossal, and has been the cause of many other tragedies besides this Assyrian one; but the blunder was ours and no fault of our small ally's. Even when the peace was made at last, the question of the frontier between Turkey and the new state of 'Iraq—in which was included the settlement of these Assyrians—was still left open and referred for decision to the League of Nations. That body sent out a

commission for the purpose and gave a ruling that its members now admit to have been a huge wrong.\* It gave the province of Hakkari (the Assyrian home) to Turkey and left the Assyrians in 'Iraq, where they did not wish to be and the Arabs did not want to have them. It did give, however, a definite promise to the Assyrians to the effect that they were to be settled as a homogeneous whole in their new home, where they should have their old rights—viz., local autonomy, their own officials, and the right to pay tribute, not taxes, through the Patriarch of the Church, who was also their tribal chief.†

"The promise was foolish, very hard to fulfill, and very annoying to the new state of 'Iraq. But are the Assyrians to be blamed for saying: 'Well, you have taken our country from us and given us this in exchange. It is a poor substitute, but we must accept it. Now we expect you to keep your promise and settle us as you yourselves say we ought to be settled.' The province of Mosul was assigned to 'Iraq on these terms and accepted by that country, subject to a 'mandate' to Great Britain to administer the whole for a period of twenty years, dating from 1923.

"When it came, however, to implementing the promise of the League to the Assyrians, administrators said at once: 'We cannot possibly put them in an autonomous area by themselves; we must put them where we can.' This was not the promise made, and good judges say the promise might have been kept without difficulty. *'I never felt such shame in my life,'* said one gallant officer to the writer, *'as when I had to explain our breach of faith to my Assyrian soldiers.'* Perhaps the Assyrians ought to have been good children and said: 'You cannot give us what you promised, or what the League has said we ought to have instead. Well, we shall be very grateful for anything that you choose to give.' Unhappily, brave men who have been bitterly wronged are not always reasonable, and they insisted on wanting what the League had said they had a right to. They would not be scattered tenants at will—which means slaves—among men who were their enemies of old and doubly their enemies now because they had served us. For the fact of the service is not denied even by their enemies. Every British officer who has served in the 'Assyrian Levy' swears they are the equal of any troops in Asia. The

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\*—Admission made personally to me at Geneva.

†—Wirsén Teleki Report: *Turko-Irak Frontier* (C. 400, M. 147, 1925, VII., 90).



Kurkha battalions from India frankly admitted them as their own equals. The Air Marshal demanded 'either British troops or the Assyrian Levy' for the ground guard of his establishments in 'Iraq. By the admission of the then High Commissioner, it was the Assyrian force that saved the swamping of our rule in the Arab revolt of 1920 (Sir A. Wilson, *Mesopotamia*, p. 291), and they who (as the C.O. in the field, Colonel Cameron, declares) rolled back the Turkish invasion of 'Iraq in 1922-23, at a time when the 'Iraqi troops were utterly unfit to take the field themselves.

"But this very fact caused the 'Iraqi to hate them—Christians who had now proved themselves to be as good as any true believers and who served the English. Of course, attempts were made to settle them, and some 15,000 out of 40,000 were given homes—of a sort, and a precious poor sort. If any Kurd liked to put in a claim for any land Assyrians could not have it.

"They were not contented, however, and, being tribesmen, tried to present their grievances through their youthful Patriarch-Chief, Mar Shimun. Hence he was accused of fomenting trouble in the desire for temporal power, of disloyalty, and of caring only for his own family and kin. It is worth noting that the accusations are self-contradictory. Actually his demands amounted to this, far less than what the League had said was his due: 'All must obey the law, but surely the ignorant who do not know Arabic may be permitted to use the mediation of their own Patriarch with the Government. That is our tradition and we think it ought to be respected. That is allowed to any Arab sheikh, and the claim will pass automatically as education grows.' It is worth noting that the Authorities who blamed the young man for 'trying for temporal power' also made a habit of applying to him to 'use his influence with the Assyrian Levy and keep it loyal' when that necessary body began to partake the general discontent; and the man who was accused of 'caring only for his own family' was offered a most liberal endowment for it by the Government of 'Iraq if he would be 'reasonable'—and refused it. *'I take no bribe to abandon my people.'*

"The question was still open and uneasy when in 1932 (fifteen years before date) the 'Mandate was closed' and 'Iraq declared independent. The Assyrians protested, warning the High Commissioner that their massacre would follow British withdrawal. The High Commissioner could not deny the danger, seeing that in his own tenure of office he had had to put a stopper on two such schemes; nevertheless, he assured the Patriarch that the influence of



the British Ambassador—a post he was to fill himself—would suffice to avert any danger, and at Geneva, Sir Francis Humphrys proposed the admission of 'Iraq to the League as an independent power, declaring that never had he known such tolerant and civilized Moslems, and that in any case the moral responsibility for any mishap would be upon Great Britain. Thus we left the problem, which we had promised to settle and which had proved too hard for us, in the hands of the raw administrators of a new Moslem state.

"They got to work in their own fashion. The *Mar Shimun* was invited to Baghdad to discuss the matter—and arrested on arrival. Subsequently he was deported, without trial by an *ex post facto* law to Cyprus. Other leaders of the people were also interned, and those left gathered together and told, 'Here are the Government terms; accept them or go.'

"Many elected to go, repudiating all idea of rebellion, and asking that the womenfolk might follow them. These men were deliberately goaded into an act of disorder, and—though our Foreign Office has made every effort to hide it—it has now to be admitted that a hideous massacre followed, and that these "tolerant" people sent round the word for a 'holy war' against these Christians.

"Can it be said that we have 'played the game' by those to whom we gave promises and who served us because they trusted those promises? We have left them to the revenge of those who hated them because they served us, and the official whose blunders brought the disaster about has himself had to own that the moral responsibility is on us.

"The matter has gone to the League of Nations, and they have declared that now a home must be found for these Assyrians outside 'Iraq. Even the 'Iraqi authorities agree in that, but a place has to be found. *That point is under discussion now, and surely it is 'up to us' to see that those whom we have betrayed do have a suitable home found for them even if we do have to pay down money to secure it.*"

Far be it from the Assyrians even to contemplate that the British public had a hand in these acts of betrayal. Such a thought, if ever in being, must be banished forever. It is the politicians and the officials who seem to have pre-ordained that the Assyrians can not have an autonomous existence in a small portion of a country that is theirs;

that they are not entitled to maintain the *statu quo* of the pre-war days (eminently satisfactory to the Assyrians); that they must be delivered to the tender mercies of the Moslem Arabs unconditionally; and that they must be deprived of their leaders who have been deported to Cyprus and held as virtual prisoners in defiance of the Fundamental Laws and League guarantees<sup>22</sup>; thus saying by implication:

“Come let us destroy them, so that they be not a nation. And let (their name) be remembered no more.”

At the moment of writing, when France is relieving Britain of her inconvenient responsibilities, there is a suggestion in the House of Commons the practical effect of which is to transplant the Assyrians in Transjordan, to act as a buffer between Amir Abdulla al Husain (brother of Faisal) and King 'Abdul 'Aziz al Sa'ud—the two hereditary foes. What is it? Is there any Assyrian who will repose further trust in the British? Is his memory so weak as to have already forgotten what the “four squadrons of the British Air Force” did only in the first part of August, 1933? Has not the spark of patriotism in every Assyrian heart burst into the flame of holy indignation? Will the betrayers of trust still dwell in the temple of our national life? Are there any traitors among us who still refuse to listen to the cries of the blood of the slain: “'T is time to part”? Has not the color of the moral and spiritual ethics in the British politics been made obvious yet?

Some of the officials, above alluded to, who are directly responsible for Britain's policies with reference to the Assyrians, have been named at the beginning of the book on page ix. There are others, however that deserve a slight allusion in this connection. Our finger of accusation points, in the first place, at the Editor of the “Near East and

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22—See Chapter XIX, p. 301.

India" who has raised aloft a noise of false propaganda and befouled the air with raucous counsel which has rendered his paper the butcher's cleaving axe to crucify an entire nation<sup>23</sup>—a nation that laid the foundation of a glorious civilization centuries before his ancestors emerged from barbarism. He has been consistently, by his greedy treachery, perverting the temple of Christ into a brothel of blood, by his perennial cry, *crucify them! crucify them!* More than once has he sold his Christ and betrayed the brothers of Christ. Cruel man, who with heart of stone and corroded conscience, can not see the all-admirable in the person of *the Saint and the Hero of the ages*, His Beatitude the *Mar Shimun*. Instead, he has glorified murderers and tricksters until the virtues<sup>24</sup> of "Frankness" and "Courage" have been completely denuded of all of their moral and spiritual values. How could the band of Assyrians have been the "initial aggressors" on the Tigris bank when, operating in a hostile country as they were, they must have been anxious about the safety of their defenseless families which were left behind in the midst of the Arabs? The logic of the situation proves beyond all cavil that they could have had no possible war like intention. Notwithstanding this, which party was the "original aggressor" is a matter of the least importance. The important thing, for the moment,

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23—He is the promoter of an idea now that these Assyrian have no claim to be heirs of the great Assyrian empire of the past!

"Near East and India", May 9, 1935, p. 565

24—**Assyrians and the League**, Near East and India, October, 1933, p. 874. It appears that Yasin Pasha, the Iraqi Minister of Finance had continually denied the fact of the massacre, but that he was finally compelled to admit the same before the Council of the League of Nations on October 14, 1933. The aforementioned Editor states that the Iraqi Government deplored these excesses, whereupon he congratulates the Iraqi Minister upon "his frank and courageous acknowledgment of the excesses and the expression of regret for their commission"; nevertheless he agrees with the Minister that the Assyrians were the initial aggressors.

Curious, is it not, to notice that in his review of Stafford's book in the Near East and India of January 31, 1935, this Editor declares?

"The important question as to who fired the first shot on the Tigris bank is still unsolved, and will, no doubt, remain insoluble."



is the undisputed fact that a conflict has taken place between these two forces in the Northern part of Iraq in the first part of August, 1933. That conflict has raised an issue of fact. The Iraqi defenders from without assert that the Assyrians were the "original aggressors"; the Assyrians make no assertion whatsoever but simply interpose a demurrer—they are satisfied to have the matter submitted to a judicial determination. The Editor of "Near East and India" and his coterie can not permit this, lest justice, truth, and reason prevail. Nothing smells worse than the aroma that is seething through the international air since this Editor entered this field of the dispute. Who is this Editor? Why does he not announce his majesty himself to the world? What is the sanctity in the invocation of anonymity?

The courteous readers should refer to Chapter X for those who practice falsehood under saintly guise, such as, Rev. R. C. Cumberland and Rev. John Van Ess.

The Assyrians certainly have a warlike history, but they have fought for only what they have held to be their birth-right and to protect themselves. Here, if responsibility attaches to any at all, it attaches to the instinct of self-preservation. Beyond that, they are mightier than the mightiest in the matter of respecting law and order and in the practice of the common virtues of personal and domestic life. Had there been an atom of truth in the statement of the newspaper reporter<sup>25</sup> that they are "raiders and looters by inclination and by tradition, and determined opponents of any regime of law and order . . .", the Russian and the British officers would not, time and again, have expressed their preference for Assyrian soldiers. The book proves its author to be Diehard in regard to Iraq. The major portion of it is com-

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25—Ernest Main's *Iraq from Mandate to Independence*, (London, 1935) p. 132.

posed of chapters that contain repetition of fraudulent and misinterpreted facts, in ways most diabolical, which is alien to the genius of true journalism and which excites contempt. Mr. Main cannot pervert truth and expect to have an art-work of permanent value. This is by the dictionary. Unfortunately there is one fact which he cannot apparently conceal—the fact of the massacre. He fears that the American public will raise their voice of protest against the barbarism of Iraq. His fear is palpably justified. America is a nation of glorious protests—the first protest of magnitude took place on the eve of the Fourth of July, 1776, which translated kings into dust.

I now find myself in the midst of a new civilization—thousands of miles away from the church of my birth. And yet, as this old-fashioned Oriental recalls its rituals, he is captivated anew by their irresistible charm, vividness, force and virtue. The whir and bang and din and clang and clatter of the machine have not in any degree diminished his love for it. He still finds fascination in the imagination of the pictures therein. The picture of the Holy Virgin is, to him, simply a motive in spirit. His soul craves to find Her and the Son and the Saints and the Angels in the curves of certain lines and in the loveliness and subtilities of certain colors. They are occasions and counsellors leading on to other more glorious scenes and spheres. Only on the wings of such suggestions can one, in his flight, pass from the hydra to the angel, from matter to the soul, from stones to God, and find

Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

Yes, the Jacobite Church is my church and I take filial pride in the acknowledgment thereof.

To state the whole in a different figure of speech: *Jacobites are Jacobites only by virtue of their religious faith; they are Assyrians by virtue of their nationality. As such they resent any injustice that is directed against any part of their national composition, for—*

“No distance breaks the tie of blood;  
Brothers are brothers evermore.”

We must now turn our attention to the Yazidis.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE YAZIDIS

The Yazidis are known as the devil-worshippers.\* In Iraq, they are estimated at some 40,000 and inhabit the two districts of Shaikhan and Sinjar in the Mosul Liwa. They are probably of Kurdish origin. They speak Kurdish but they are not Moslems. They form an entirely distinct element of the population of Iraq. They are a united organism and are almost the only settled population in the Western desert. They regard Islam as a sacrilegious religion. The Yazidis themselves maintain that they are different from all the other races in the world and of more ancient origin. According to their legend, they are descended from Adam alone, whereas all other men are descended from Adam and Eve.

From the remotest times, the Yazidis have lived in complete isolation. According to their belief, a man can never become a Yazidi—he can only be born one. They do not attempt to make conversions, and there is accordingly no infiltration of foreign blood. Inter-marriage with the followers of other faith is impossible. Their religious casts are the Sheiks, the Pirs, the Faqirs, the Qawwals, the Avans and the servants of the tomb of Sheik 'Adi, in the district of Shaikhan Qadha. The Amir (Prince) is the only man entitled to several wives and can choose them without restriction.

The religion of the Yazidis is a curious confusion of all kinds of elements. Nobody has yet succeeded in penetrating all its secrets. It borrows from the Persians the conception of good and evil principles and also the

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\*See C. H. Gordon's *Satan Worshippers in Kurdistan*, in the "Asia", October, 1935, pp. 626—630

belief in the transmigration of souls. They practice circumcision, which may have been borrowed from Judaism or Islam, or probably—as Wigram thinks—from an older source common to both. The Yazidis venerate Jesus Christ and the Sign of the Cross. On the walls of the Temple there is seen the sun, the moon and the stars, and beside the great doorway an immense image of a black serpent. The Yazidis also worship fire, and here there is some connection with the Zoroastrian religion.

The Yazidis believe in a Supreme being “the Most High”, whom they call “Yasdan”, and this probably is the derivation of their name. The Supreme Being, however, is far too high for direct worship. He is in the Heavens and takes no heed of the Earth. From him have issued seven great spirits, the first and greatest of whom is “Malik Taus,” who is no other than the Devil. The second is “Malik’Isa,” Jesus. Malik Taus is worshipped in the form of a bronze peacock. He is carried by the Qawwal (the fourth caste) from village to village and is worshipped by the Yazidis. The Yazidis took refuge in the mountain of Sinjar after Timur’s invasion.

The Yazidis are forbidden to utter, or even to hear, the name of Satan or the syllables of that name; nor may they wear blue. These peculiarities and the secret practices of their religion have led to many difficulties in connection with their military service. In Russia (Caucasus) where there are still Yazidis, they were, at one period, exempt from military service. In Moslem countries, this was not so. They were regarded as a Moslem sect and as such they were frequently persecuted by the Moslem clergy and religious communities.

In earlier times, the Yazidis were numerous. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they were decimated by struggles with the Arabs and Turks and by great massacres which ensued. The map showing the extent of the

former Yazidi territory was greater than what it is now. That map is in manuscript entitled "Armenia Major, based upon Armenian Authors," and drawn up by the Academie Francaise in 1765.

Mineralogists, sent to Jabal Sinjar by the Iraqi authorities when the Syro-Iraqi frontier was still unsettled, have reported the existence of various kinds of minerals still unexploited in considerable quantities. The Jabal was also reported to contain oil and iron.

The Yazidis refused to take part in the election of Faisal as king of Iraq, for they knew from past experience of the Arabs what that would mean to them. But Sir Kenehan Cornwallis paid them a special visit and persuaded them to do so promising them at the same time very liberal treatment under British auspices. They were promised that no Arab officials would be posted to their districts; that their agricultural lands would not be encroached upon; and that their religion would be safeguarded. Lt.-Colonel Nadler<sup>1</sup>, the then British Divisional Adviser, Mosul, in a private letter to the Christian Qaimaqam at Sinjar instructed the latter to assure the Yazidis of the indefinite continuance of the British mandate, if they voted for Faisal.

These were partly the methods adopted to bomb Amir Faisal on to the throne of Iraq.

Arab officials have been posted to the Yazidi districts. Encroachments upon their land by Arabs are of constant occurrence, and the British mandate has been removed long before its legal term and long before the Arabs in Iraq became half-civilized.

The Yazidis have petitioned the League of Nations and definitely stated that they would welcome an Assyrian enclave in the Mosul Liwa, and asked that their districts might be included in that enclave, as in this way alone

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<sup>1</sup>—Now in the Sudan Civil Service.



they can feel secure. They also stated that the huge amounts of revenue collected from them is being spent on improvements of the Arab districts in the south. When the enclave proposal was objected to by the ex-mandatory power, there was a keen desire—as now exists—on the part of the Yazidis to be included in Syrian territory under the French mandate. As the inimical attitude of the Iraq Government against the Yazidis is unchangeable, news of a serious clash between the two should not surprise me.

As usual, seeds of dissension between the various sections of the Yazidis are being sown, but these methods can only result in an armed conflict, which in my opinion is the only one remedy to check the evil activities of Faisal's Government.

Had the Mosul Wilayet remained under French domination, as was originally intended, the inhabitants of that part of the world would not have been subjected to so much misery.

The Moslem Aeqaf department recently claimed that the lands surrounding the shrine of Shaikh 'Adi in the Shaikhan Qadha were the property of the Moslems for the very simple reason that Sheik 'Adi was a Moslem pious from Damascus. This claim was put forward by the Awqaf department as soon as Yazidis petitioned the Government for Tapu deeds. Some 45 years ago, the Turks made similar attempts to illegally confiscate the lands with the result that there were many casualties on both sides and the Turks had to abandon their claim. Now comes another Moslem Government with fantastic claims. The Awqaf department did not press its claim for political reasons as the Syro-Iraq frontier was not decided at the time, but new attempts will be made by the Iraq Government to rob others of even their sacred places.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE JEWS AND OTHER MINORITIES

#### I. THE JEWS

The Jews of Iraq are of Semitic race. The language still in use in their synagogues and private correspondence is Hebrew but they all know Arabic. In Iraq, they are estimated at some 90,000 souls. They are found in almost every corner of Iraq but the majority inhabit the three principal towns, Basrah, Baghdad, and Mosul. In the Mosul Liwa, most of them, particularly those in Zakho, speak Syriac like any Assyrian or Chaldean. They command about eighty per cent of the Iraqi trade. On Saturday, for instance, the official holiday of the Jews, the Iraqi markets resemble a cemetery, for the majority of the shops and commercial houses run by the Jews as they are, are closed. The Jews are the best race for preserving strictly their official holiday as sacred, but I doubt whether they will be able to maintain this privilege owing to the new rules enforced by a fanatical Iraq Government.

The Jews are clever and laborious and one can hardly see an idle Jew, but it is a matter of great doubt if the Iraq Government will allow them to prosper and advance. Subjected to callous oppression like the other minorities, they heartily share the sentiments and sufferings of the other minorities. They keep aloof from all governmental controversies; yet they are never left alone. Almost every Iraqi high official owes money to the Jews, and repayment is hardly ever made. The Jews cannot refuse "to lend" as one day or other they will be dragged in business connected with the Government and if they had failed "to lend" or refused "to strike off" such loans, or rather "the bad debts", they will have to account for it there and then.

It was not long ago that King Faisal borrowed from the famous Jew railway contractor, Hayyim effendi Nathanail, a sum of three hundred thousand rupees which Faisal had earmarked for anti-French propaganda in Syria. This is, of course, not the first propaganda of its kind or the first allotment made under that heading. In 1920, just before Faisal was kicked out of Syria by General Gouraud, similar anti-French propaganda was conducted by Faisal and his present Iraqi Ministers. To be fair, I must admit that the source which supplied the necessary funds for that hostile propaganda is not quite as the present, though the aim is a joint one. During those days, when there was ample justification for General Gouraud's action (for signs of Faisal's despotic rule had become apparent), the propaganda was conducted with British money which was being supplied by the Arab Bureau whose headquarters was in Cairo under Colonel Gilbert Clayton, the Chief of the Arab Bureau, and later British High Commissioner in Iraq.

Hayyim effendi, I am sure, would be glad to strike off the debt against Faisal and be quite contented if no more demands for money are made to him. Hayyim effendi is the Iraq railway contractor and he was threatened with the cancellation of his contract if he refused to advance the money. Moreover, his refusal—even if he did not have the contract—would have meant an undoubted untimely death.

The Jews were the first to be terrified at the news of the lifting of the British mandate, but through fear of reprisals they refrained from appealing to the League of Nations or from taking an active part in the efforts made on behalf of the Iraq minorities from time to time.

Ever since the formation of the Iraqi Government in 1921, there has only been one Jew minister, Sir Sasun Hissqail, in the Iraqi cabinet and this was many years ago



for political reasons. All the Jews appointed by Sir Sasun in the Mintstry of Finance and other ministries or departments are being gradually weeded out though they are the best officials so far as finances and accounts are concerned.

As in the Turkish days, the Jews of Iraq can always be gotten into trouble to enable those in power to squeeze them for money. Zionism has been an effective weapon in the hands of the Arabs of Iraq to achieve this end. They are unfortunately being attacked in the press for their alleged pro-Zionism feelings though there has been no sign whatsoever of any public activity in that respect to justify these scandalous attacks, for they are clever enough to realize that the place to promote Zionism is Palestine and not Iraq.

But the ministers and officials want money. The Jews have the money and the idle Iraqis must share it with them. The latter (though not Reds) state that the Jews have obtained their money in Iraq and "it is our legal right to share it with them."

In 1924, on the arrival of the late Sir Alfred Mond with his party in Iraq, a wild anti-Zionism demonstration was set in motion in Baghdad. A mob of over twenty thousand Arabs crossed the Maude Bridge to Baghdad West to lay out Sir Alfred and his party. Passengers coming from Europe and other countries via Syria on that day were savagely treated. Some were injured, others insulted and were only released on finding that Sir Alfred was not amongst them. To rescue Sir Alfred and his party, Captain R. E. Alderman C.I.E.; O.B.E. Administrative-Inspector (Baghdad) was despatched with a number of empty cars to meet Sir Alfred at Khan Nuqtah at which place Sir Alfred and party were transferred to Alderman's convoy and brought into Baghdad under the cover of darkness via A'dhamiyah. What is of immediate interest is that the ring leader was promoted and ultimately given a

responsible position in the Iraqi Consular service. He was made Secretary to an Iraqi Consul-General to be discharged after embezzling considerable sums of money, governmental and private. "Discharged" means after a while he will be given a better position than that he held.

I know twenty-five Assyrians in Beyrouth who, during the tenure of this man had applied for passports to Iraq. As is customary, they paid the fees required in advance against formal receipts. The matter, when I left Beyrouth on the 25th of August, 1933, was alleged to have been under correspondence for the last eighteen months, but neither the passports were given them nor the money refunded though applied for, continuously.

There is a saying, universal in Iraq, that the tail of a dog was once deposited in a pipe for forty days for the purpose of having it straightened, but upon taking it out, it was found to be as twisted as ever. It appears that Sir Francis, though aware of that twisted tail, declared at Geneva that he was successful in his experiment and that it was quite safe for the minorities to be under the mercy and protection of that tail. I wonder if he would have left the British interests under the mercy of that tail had Geneva had the courage of asking him to do so!

The Iraq Government has in view the application of a conscription law. No sooner did the news for such a move reach the ears of the Jews than the passport departments in Iraq were inundated with applications from the Jews to leave Iraq and settle in Palestine, their National Home, the only place where they can live in peace in the future. Within two weeks, one passport center received over three hundred applications but they were held up as thousands of others would have followed suit. The Jews have every reason to be apprehensive if, and when, conscription is enforced, because they have hardly forgot-

ten the horrors of the Great War. During those black days, Turkish paper notes were equivalent to one-fifth of their original value and all the wealthy Jews without exception were ordered by the then authorities to accept paper notes at their face value in exchange for gold coinage. Refusal to do so meant death. They were forced to become soldiers, (though they had paid the legal blood money more than once which procedure exempted them from military service, and although they were tortured and exposed to intolerable treatment by various devilish means and although they had accepted considerable sums in paper notes and exchanged them for gold) were put in bags and thrown into the river alive; others were crucified in the godowns of the Mesopotamia Persia Corporation, Ltd. which was occupied by the Turks. The Iraqis who wish to enforce conscription are those same people of the war days and no doubt worse.

In point of fact, conscription to them means more money from these helpless people. One of the police inspectors who was responsible for those flagitious acts is now a commandant of police in Iraq and there are many others of his type.

If conscription is a real national move and if Yasin and others wish the co-operation of the Jews and the other minorities, the latter must first be permitted to exercise their full rights before the law without discrimination between an Arab and non-Arab or a Moslem and non-Moslem. But if Yasin wishes to have a strong army to order the British to leave Iraq bag and baggage, I think an alliance with the neighbors would be more effective.

During one of Amir Ghazi's visits to Mosul and at a dinner party, an influential Arab of Mosul asked Tahsin 'Ali, the Mutasarrif of Mosul, if he could have the village of Sindur in Dohuk which has been under the disposal of the Jews for many centuries. The Mutasarrif replied, "If



you really mean it, it is very easy to eject these Jews from the lands." This is the manner in which justice will be administered when His Royal Highness, Ghazi, succeeds his father on the throne.

The Syro-Palestinian Committee has been rather busy in Geneva publishing injudicious pamphlets in defense of the acts of extreme heinousness of their brother-Iraqis. For instance, their report for the period ending September, 1933, entitled, "La Nation Arabe", contains the most ridiculous and preposterous material that has ever appeared and I believe if they have no better common sense to produce better quality, there is no doubt that they are stupidly defeating their own end by these puerile publications. Despite their denial of the massacre of the Assyrians, the Iraqi delegation a few days later was made to admit that "excesses were committed." The Arab unity which this and the other Arab committees pretend to be serving is a droll, for two-small groups in a small town like Geneva have not been able to agree on one line of action as will be seen from the above. If this and the other Arab committees, the journey-men of Faisal, wish to serve the Arab cause, they would be well advised to ask their brother-Iraqis to respect the rights of the other races in Iraq so that their own may be respected by the Jews in Palestine.

But has the Arab history ever been constructive?

Cases of Jewish girls kidnaped by Arabs in Iraq and forcibly married have increased lately. Girls of under fifteen have been parted from their parents and the latter, together with the Rabbis, have not been given the chance of even speaking to such girls to see whether or not they accept Islam voluntarily. This privilege is a legal one but "on paper" only. The case of the girl Khatun is one of many examples. Islam is a scourge on these minorities.

On the other hand, any Moslem girl that may marry other than a Moslem, even of her own free will, is instantly

killed. The age of a girl forced to embrace Islam under the pretext of marriage is by law estimated by the administrative council of the district concerned or by the courts where the majority of the members is Moslem and the vote of a British judge (for normally he is a minority) does not help the victims.

In Iraq a Moslem finds it more easy to kill a Jew than to kill a chicken. Murderers as in the case of the other minorities are seldom punished. It is a crime to execute a Moslem for killing a Jew; the Jew is considered too mean an object to be equal to an Arab life. I regret that this is not the place to narrate case after case of manslaughter. One example should suffice.

On December 23rd, 1931, Ezra Daud Hayyim, a Jew from Baghdad, was stabbed to death by an Arab. The dispute arose out of a land case. The Arab who was the tenant of the Jew had refused to pay the rent for three successive years and the friendly requests of Ezra failed to produce any satisfactory result. He was obliged to take the case to the courts, and for taking the normal legal course he had to suffer death. The murderer was arrested and condemned to death by the courts but his papers had to go to His Majesty King Faisal to issue his royal decree sanctioning the death penalty. Just as the papers went up to the King, a very prominent Arab in the service of the Government intervened and told the king that the death sentence must not be confirmed as a Moslem must not be executed for having killed a "dog-Jew." The death sentence was commuted to imprisonment which means that the murdered will be released through further interventions that are bound to follow.

During the recent massacre of the Assyrians, the Jews generously subscribed financially to help the families of the so-termed Arab martyrs who were killed during the military operations against the Assyrians. Some of these

have volunteered to join the army and fight the Assyrians but none of course did so. What is behind this? Is their desire to fight the Assyrians genuine? Or is it through fear (the real cause) that they pretend to co-operate with their oppressors against the Assyrians? These Jews were forced to join the anti-Zionism demonstration against Sir Alfred Mond of which I have spoken in the earlier part of this chapter and this is another proof of the tyrannical rule existing in Iraq.

## II. OTHER MINORITIES

Time has not permitted me to deal with the grievances of the still smaller minority groups in Iraq, but the reader will have gathered that their lot is in no way better than that of the larger minority groups. The Bahais, for instance, have had their property illegally taken from them by Moslem (but by order of the law courts). Sir Francis Humphrys admitted the illegality of the action. The League of Nations, on four occasions, drew the attention of the mandatory power to the grave miscarriage of justice done to this unfortunate minority and despite the strong representations at Geneva, Sir Francis was unable to see that justice, for which Britain was once upon a time famous, is carried out.

I do not think the Moslems in India would have been antagonized if justice had been allowed, in this and other cases, to take its course!

The minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission on the Bahai minority (1930/32) are most interesting to read as they clearly show in what manner Great Britain has fulfilled her obligations in Iraq.



## CHAPTER X

### MISSIONARIES AND POLITICS

REV. R. C. CUMBERLAND

This missionary-politician is an American Presbyterian living at Dohuk (Mosul Liwa) whose work is to convert Moslem-Kurds into Christianity. He has no connection with the Assyrians despite the statement made by the Iraq Times on the second of May, 1933, in regard to an article<sup>1</sup> written by Mr. Cumberland, on the Assyrians. The Iraq Times stated that "Mr. Cumberland, has been living in Dohuk among the Nestorian Christians with whom he has been in intimate contact for nine years." The statement of the Iraq Times is totally wrong, but it was merely written "to pump" the unlucky Cumberland who had by now gone out of his way in dabbling in affairs of which he was absolutely ignorant. On the other hand, the Iraq Times by utilizing the poor services of Mr. Cumberland was serving its own purposes to gain the favour of the Iraq Government as it had declared on the day of its incorporation (it was formerly known as the Baghdad Times) with the Basrah Times, that its new policy would be to always support the policy of the Iraq Government in power. The Iraq Times is looked upon by the Arab newspapers as the mouth-piece of the British Embassy and for this reason it is certainly unpopular. It has attempted to gain popularity at the cost of the Assyrians and it could have found no more unprincipled man than Cumberland as will be seen from his contradictory reports written within a very short time.

Having no practical connection with the Assyrians, Cumberland knows as much about them as I do about

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1—World Dominion (a religious monthly), April, 1933.

astronomy. The Iraq Government, having discovered his weakness and ambitions, made a fool of him—an act which is harmful to the American name in that part of the world. For that he has to thank his friend Major Wilson.

Mr. Cumberland is known to me personally. My first contact with him was when he dashed into my office now and then complaining bitterly of the Arab officials' dishonestly and incapacity, for he was unable to obtain "title deeds" for the land he had purchased in Dohuk though he was legally entitled to such deeds, and he thought that without a bribe in some form or other, it would be impossible to obtain them. Major Wilson intervened to right the wrong but in vain.

Having devoted his time to local politics, thus neglecting his primary work, his position became awkward in 1933. His work with the Kurds has been a complete failure. During a period of some ten years, only one Kurd is reported to have been christianized and this, it should be made clear, was not due to Cumberland's missionary work. All that Mr. Cumberland did was that on hearing of the christianized-Kurd, he journeyed a distance of two days to visit the "new Christian" and speedily dotted down his name in his books, reporting his successful achievement to his Board. The truth was not such. The Kurd had already been a Christian for four years and this was solely due to his connection with the Assyrians.

When Mr. Cumberland was impartial, he wrote a statement in 1929-30 of which I give an extract hereunder:

"The cases of the tribes of Tkhuma and Tiyyari have been especially unfortunate: In 1921 and 1922, with British encouragements that were interpreted as promises of security, they returned to their ancestral homes, investing all they had or could borrow: in 1924 they were ejected by the Turks. It is not surprising that they feel that they have been seriously wronged, and that they are hesitant about making even an investment of effort in establishing themselves again on the strength of any promise of the government.

Even amongst those who are now in villages, one can sense the feeling that they consider themselves ready to run at a moment's notice; and the gloom of despair is in such a community as the eight or ten households have been living since 1924, in the caves above Alqossh and eking out a precarious existence by such menial labour as the established citizens of the community may choose to give them.

"The landlord is one focus of the settlement problem. Most of the desirable land is privately owned; and it will be a good many years, at best, before the Assyrians can become independent economically. It is not unnatural that the Assyrians do not find such a position in the community satisfactory. The Government has made rather generous offers of land owned by it, including the remission of taxes for a number of years and a cheap sale price to cultivators; but such offers have been accepted in only a few cases, partly because of lack of confidence in the promises of the Government and partly because a good many of the places offered are considered uninhabitable because of the unproductiveness of the land, the danger of malaria, or the fear of Kurdish neighbours. The future success of settlement on Government land will depend largely on the degree of success of the few groups that have had the hardihood to undertake it now.

"The second focus of the settlement problem is taxation. This year there are fields lying idle that were cultivated two years ago, simply because the cultivators say it is no use to a year's work and then have the Government eat the results. This is not especially an Assyrian problem, however; it applies to all of Kurdistan. But it is pertinent to the settlement problem in this: the Assyrians can hardly be expected to be keen to begin an undertaking of cultivation which old established settlers are not able to carry on.

"Another important element in the situation is the natural desire of the Assyrians to keep themselves near together. It is difficult to persuade a group of ten or twelve houses to establish themselves in a village far distant from other Assyrian villages. Clannishness accounts for a part of this; but in their minds security is the larger factor. No that they expect to enter into armed conflict with their neighbours—though the history of their relations with the Kurds does not encourage them to forget such a possibility—but that they fear being in a small minority in the social and economic and legal clashes that are the apparently inevitable course of human relations. They have enough difficulty, at best, to obtain anything even approaching justice in a Moslem country; and they tend to consider that their position in the community will



be stronger if they remain a compact group geographically, as well as racially, culturally and religiously.

"There are perhaps a thousand houses of the Assyrians still living in the Simel and Dohuk regions, though there has been a general movement toward the mountains. Malaria is still ravaging not only the Assyrians, but also the Kurds; and is quite prevalent in the mountain villages as in those of the plain. Government dispensaries, located in the center of each *Qaza*, afford some relief, by the distribution of quinine; and good work by the American Near East Relief was closed in September 1929; it was especially for the Assyrians.

"After the break-up of the camp at Mindan, the people were scattered rather promiscuously; it appears that to them the natural form of permanent settlement is on the basis of their tribal grouping.

"The levies do not have the pre-eminence that they formerly had, because the Arab army has greatly improved. I think, however, that most observers would still judge that the levies have a distinct margin of superiority. Their headquarters were moved from Mosul to Baghdad in November, 1928; they continue at a strength of about 4,000 men, which by the way, forms the backbone of the economic support of the whole Assyrian group in Iraq; there are comparatively few families that do not look to at least one member in the levies for financial aid. For some years, rumors have occasionally spread that the levies are to be disbanded "in the near future." I have no idea what will really happen, except that it is difficult to visualize the Iraq Government continuing the levies after 1932.

"It should be mentioned also that a large number of the Assyrians are enlisted in the police force, the most efficient branch of the Iraq Government."

Under instructions from the Iraq Government, the press bureau which is a branch of the Ministry of Interior, Baghdad, disallows the members of the Iraq minorities to have access to the press even in matters of self-defence. All favorable information relating to the minorities emanating from the West or the neighbouring countries is suppressed whilst anti-minority news is given full publicity, however false and fantastic such news may be.

The Iraqi laws, including the constitutional law, are reasonable but in Iraq, the law is "the minister" or "provincial official" who construes the clauses of the laws to meet their own malicious aims and personal ambitions. Cases do occur where two typical demands receive two different treatments. Mr. Cumberland's case is a typical one. This gentleman, who proved a failure in his "Kurdish Mission," attempted to proselytize the Assyrian who are by far more Christian than himself. Having also failed in this latter undertaking, he gave himself up to the Iraqi authorities with whose influence, he probably thought to Christianize the Christian Assyrians. He sold himself and his conscience to the same people of whom he was so bitterly complaining not long ago. He undertook to serve the Arab case by dabbling in affairs for which he was not destined.

Dr. Petros, son of Qasha Daniel, an Assyrian, sent an article in October, 1932, to the *World Dominion* exposing the true position of his suffering compatriots. Mr. Cumberland volunteered to reply in the same paper in April, 1933. The Iraq Government who hates everything non-Arab and who had not long ago prevented missionaries from dabbling in politics, sent Cumberland's article, duly translated, to the Iraqi newspapers for publication. This was published in *Al Iraqi* of 29/4/33; *Al Istiqlal* of 30/4/33; *Al Ahali* and *'Alam ul 'Arabi* of 1/5/33 and in the *Iraq Times* of 2/5/33. As the article was officially communicated to the newspapers its publication was unavoidable. On the other hand, a Chaldean priest (Rev. Paul Bedar), sent a reply to all the Iraqi newspapers in defence of the Assyrians but it was ignored. Rev. Paul Bedar had no alternative but to publish his views in the form of a pamphlet which the police confiscated, though its contents were not in any way in contravention of the laws. On June 28, 1933, however, Sa'id Chalbi al Haj Thabit



DR. PETROS OF THE BAZ

Who resigned his appointment from the Iraqi Health Service immediately upon the wholesale massacre of his next of kin in the Mosul Liwa



A GROUP OF BARWAR

"The path of duty was the way to glory."—*Tennyson*





whose name will appear elsewhere, in a speech in the Iraqi parliament, alluded to that pamphlet and asked the Prime Minister "If the Government had taken action against that criminal and whether the press in which the pamphlet was printed was or was not already confiscated?"

Article 12 of the Iraq constitutional law is worth while quoting. It is this:

*"Freedom of expression of opinion, liberty of publication, of meeting together, and of forming and joining associations is guaranteed to all Iraqi (sic) within such limits as may be prescribed by law."*

Article 4 of the guarantees taken from Iraq by the Council of the League of Nations and declared at Baghdad on May 30th, 1932, (official No. A.17.1932.VII) for the protection of the Iraq minorities quoted below is of no less interest:

*"All Iraqi nationals shall be equal before the law and shall enjoy the same civil and political rights without distinction as to race, language or religion."*

These two articles are very nice on paper, but their application lies in the hands of persons brought up in the corrupt atmosphere of 'Abdul Hamid II, the great assassin, and these are the same people who took part in the massacres of the Armenians whom Britain pretended to believe that they had altered their manners by replacing the fez by a Sidara<sup>1</sup>.

It is delirious to expect Iraqis to respect laws or honor pledges. This habit is unchangeable; it was brought up with them.

Whilst on the question of the freedom of the press, I must not forget the interesting case of Mr. William S. Kenneth. This far-sighted English writer, who was well aware that "All was not well in the north of Iraq" despite Sir Francis' assurances, wrote an article in September,

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<sup>1</sup>—New Iraqi head dress.

1932, in the Fortnightly Review just when Iraq was on the point of being bombed into the League of Nations, and prophesized certain things which turned out to be true within a period of less than a year of his prophesy. Other predictions await completion. The newspaper of 'Alam ul 'Arabi, administered by Salim Bazzun, attempted to translate Mr. Kenneth's article for the information of the public and actually published a part of it on September 17th, 1932. On the 18th of September, he was warned by the press bureau that "continuation of the translation would mean suppression of his newspaper" and he was obliged to give it up. The editor was sent for by the Royal Palace and censured. Bazzun was at the time in the Lebanon.

Soviet Russia is accused of some "horrible things." Would I be reprehensible if I accuse Iraq of many more "horrible things?"

I have no English version of Mr. Cumberland's article that has formed the subject of this chapter. The Arabic translation is unreliable and I should not like to run the risk of criticizing him on the basis of that translation. Nevertheless, my attitude is justified by his other reports before me. Captain Philip Mumford, formerly British Special Service officer in Iraq, made the following statement before the Royal Central Asian Society, journal Vol. XX. part III page 483, July, 1933:

"Those interested in the Assyrian question should not fail to read Dr. Petros' letter published in the World Dominion of October, 1932, and the reply thereto by Mr. Cumberland in the same paper of April, 1933, as they give the main points of both sides of controversy.

"Dr. Petros has six complaints, the most important being (a) that the Assyrian levies now being disbanded, the discharged soldiers have nowhere to go except to the malarial and generally unhealthy zones already occupied by their compatriots: (b) that owing to naturalization grievance, the Assyrians are debarred from work in government offices and the Iraq petroleum coy; and (c) that the



lands given to the Assyrian "refugee" are malarial and in other ways unsuited for a mountain dwelling race, insinuating that as a future no unlikely event. Mr. Cumberland, appears to be of the opinion that the plight of the Assyrians is not as is sometimes claimed, and further that many of their disabilities are the result of their own folly. The first of his replies to Dr. Petros' points are: (a) That notwithstanding certain action of the Assyrian officers last year by which they forfeited a good deal of the former dependence placed upon the reliability of the Assyrians, the levies are not being entirely disbanded, but made into a new force into which the Assyrians are being given the option to enlist. (b) He states that more Assyrians might be working in the Iraq Petroleum Company if properly qualified and that Iraqi citizenship is not an unreasonable qualification for such employment. (c) "The Assyrians are settled in the best part of the country as far as climate is concerned." But he goes on to criticize them for growing rice, with its corollary of malaria; for not troubling to drain swamps; and lastly accuses the ex-levy soldiers, who, as he states, have learned the elements of sanitation, for reverting to the "vile and unsanitary customs of their former life."

"Truth lies between extremes, but looking at the whole position from an unbiassed point of view, I cannot help feeling that the truth in this case lies nearer to Dr. Petros' complaint than Mr. Cumberland's explanations.

"To recapitulate the points already raised: Mr. Cumberland's statement that the Assyrians can now re-enlist in the new force is only partially correct. That force is about half the size of the disbanded Assyrian levies and is a mixed force of Arabs, Kurds, and Assyrians. Only a very small percentage of the old levy soldiers can therefore be re-engaged. Mr. Cumberland further asserts that the Assyrians in the levies received higher pay than is given to the Iraq army. This again is only partially true. The "other rank" received more than their corresponding position in the Iraq army, but the Assyrian officers received less than Iraq army officers.

"With regard to the question of naturalization and employment, whilst many Assyrians, owing to national prejudice, were slow to avail themselves of the opportunity offered, it is known to all British officers who have recently served in northern Iraq that, in actual fact, such naturalization was not freely given to those already in Government service, and many Assyrians have been refused naturalization with the only apparent motive of getting rid of them from the service.

"It is on the last point, however, that Mr. Cumberland appears to be most unjust to the Assyrian complaint, and begins by contradicting himself badly. Having stated, as already quoted that the Assyrians are settled "in the best part of country as far as climate is concerned," and continuing by stating that their hygienic conditions are "no worse than those of the Yazidis and Kurds", he seems to have forgotten that at the beginning of his article he has already said that "naturally the inhabitants of the country, mostly Kurds or Yazidis, had for generations been occupying the best village sites and tilling the best soil and grazing their "flocks in the best pastures."

"This, of course, is the great and insuperable difficulty that those who wished to solve the Assyrian question have always been up against. Anyone who has spent time in Iraq knows that the places in that country which are habitable, but have been left unoccupied for "generations" by the local inhabitants, are not particularly delactable or salubrious spots. He then accuses levy soldiers of degenerating in cleanliness when returning to their villages. Clean habits are partly a matter of environment and opportunity. To go no further than Baghdad itself, has Mr. Cumberland ever visited the Assyrian village outside the south gate? Placed near one of the rubbish dumps of the town and lying against a stagnant pool fed mainly from such sewers as Baghdad possesses, the writer doubts his own ability to maintain reasonable hygienic habits if put there for life.

"Lastly, Mr. Cumberland refutes the claim of the Assyrians to the description of "refugees." What else are they? Up to the present, some have unsuitable land; at least 15,000 have no land at all; they were driven from their country during the war, and many promises but no definite plans for either settlement or status, have been made to them, at least till last Autumn, or why a conference at Geneva about their future last October? Refugees they certainly remained until a few months ago, and what they are at the present moment I do not know.

"It cannot be denied that these people have rendered us good service during the past fifteen years, and, whilst not closing one's eyes to the immense difficulties of the situation, the little we have done for them in return will, in later years, not be of the brightest memories of British colonial policy."

Mr. Cumberland, on his way to Kurdish villages, always put up with the Assyrians, and the sudden change

of attitude is probably a reward for the Assyrian hospitality. During the massacre of the Assyrians, Dr. Petros was removed to Takrit in the Baghdad Liwa so that he might not witness and report the horrors committed by the Iraq army and Mr. Cumberland was being harassed by his "Arab honest friends" and had to be withdrawn to Baghdad.

Captain Philip Mumford in his lecture<sup>1</sup> before the Royal Central Asian Society dealing with Kurds, Assyrians and Iraq has made the following statements. In introducing him, the Chairman<sup>2</sup> referred to Captain Mumford as one who had been for seven years intelligence officer in Iraq, and was in a position to speak on this matter from personal knowledge.

"The Assyrians, numbering some 40,000, are in an alien country owing to their participation on the side of the Allies during the war. Half of their number are, or will be, homeless, whilst the remainder are scattered throughout the north, and their future safety is a matter of grave concern to all those who have interested themselves in their welfare.

"During the past ten years the Assyrians have served the British in the Iraq levies and have been under active service conditions on some fifteen occasions. They have served us well, but this service has increased their unpopularity in the country of their adoption. Failing further safeguards and some hope for the satisfactory settlement of the remaining 13,000 of his people, the Mar Shimun, their leaders, has threatened to take them out of Iraq and throw them upon French or other protection.

"The Kurds, as already stated, number some 500,000, and are concentrated in the mountainous areas in the north. They have always been hostile to the idea of being placed under an Arab Government, as, although Moslems, they are racially, linguistically, and temperamentally different from the Arabs.

"Are they and the other minorities satisfied with their prospects?

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1—Reproduced from the "Journal of the R.C.A.S.", Vol. xx, January, 1933.  
Only extracts have been quoted by me.

2—Lt.-Col. Sir Arnold Wilson in the chair,



"This question was answered quite definitely when the Anglo-Iraq Treaty was published in June, 1930, and they realized that British withdrawal was imminent. Petitions from all sources were received by the Mandatory Power and by the League of Nations, asking for further safeguards before the withdrawal of British officials.

"The decision of the League Council in 1926 which awarded the Mosul area to Iraq was based upon the rights of minorities.

"Without being unfair to the present Iraq Government, we must face the fact that it is comprised of men brought up under pre-war Turkish institutions, and that the Western ideas which we have brought them—and have tried to teach them—are scarcely skin deep and may fade as quickly as sunburn. These men have developed ardent nationalist ideas—Arab nationalism; they fear, and are hostile to, their minorities, and their methods of dealing with them do not coincide with the views and declared intentions of either the Mandatory Power or the Permanent Mandates Commission.

"What has happened during the past two years?

"As already mentioned, the Anglo-Iraq Treaty governing our relations with Iraq after that country became independent, was published in June, 1930, and resulted in petitions and future signs of unrest amongst the Kurds and others.

"The Kurds attempted, wisely or otherwise, to boycott the elections due that Summer.

"This agitation ended in a riot, when the Iraq army fired on a Kurdish crowd. Sheik Mahmud took this as an excuse for breaking out into open rebellion<sup>1</sup>. Mahmud asked for a limited form of autonomy under British protection and protested against direct rule from Baghdad under the Arabs.

"It was hoped that the Arab Government would be able to deal with the situation unaided, but it soon became obvious that, owing to the depth of Kurdish feeling and the inefficiency of the Arab army, this was out of the question.

"The Royal Air Force had to bear the main brunt of the operations, and the bombing of villages was unavoidable if the rebellion was to be crushed; even so, it was eight months before Mahmud surrendered.

"But more was to follow. There was another Kurdish chief powerful enough to cause the Iraq Government much uneasiness,

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<sup>1</sup>—Sheik Quadir Agha, the brother of Sheik Mahmmud, was amongst the leading Kurds who were illegally detained in Sulaimaniyah and conveyed to Kirkuk prison.

Sheik Ahmad of Barzan. . . . He was, however, attacked by the Iraq Government early last Winter. The attack was a failure.

"An Iraq army column was therefore sent against him last Spring. This also was a failure, and consequently the position had grown very serious, especially in view of the necessity for the Iraq Government to present a peaceful and satisfactory picture to the League of Nations in the coming Autumn.

"Once more the Royal Air Force had to come to the rescue, and intensive bombing was inaugurated in Ahmad's area, with the result that he was forced to leave Iraq and give himself up to the Turks last June.

"It will be seen, therefore, that operations against the Kurds during the past two years have been almost continuous, operations against Sheik Mahmud taking place from September, 1930, to April, 1931, and operations against Sheik Ahmad intermittently from November, 1931, to June, 1932, being intensive from April to June.

"The greatest credit is due to the Royal Air Force for the efforts which they made to carry out their unpleasant task as humanely as possible, but the question arises whether the bombing of villages, with its unavoidable loss of life to non-combatants, including women and children, is justified for internal disturbance on behalf of any foreign power.

"Remember, the chief crime of these Kurds was to ask for our protection, or at least the fulfillment of the promises made by our Government and the Permanent Mandates Commissions."

#### REV. JOHN VAN ESS\*

Rev. John Van Ess differs from Rev. R. C. Cumberland in that while the latter has exceedingly vitiated, muddled and extorted the facts about the Assyrian Problem, he has, nevertheless, showed himself to know facts—he has actually lived in the troubled area. But the former has shown himself to be amazingly ignorant of the basic facts of that Problem. He has lived in Basra during five régimes—the régime of old Sultan Abdul Hamid, the

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\*—By DAVID B. PERLEY.

régime of Enver Pasha, the World War, the British Mandate, and independent Iraq. Thus, he may be said to be well acquainted with that district (South) and its problems. Unfortunately, however, he is not so familiar with the problems in the northern part of Iraq, such as the Assyrian Problem, upon which he has ventured to comment in an article entitled, *The Heirs of the Ages*.<sup>1</sup>

Rev. Van Ess is now in the United States on a Sabbatical leave. Possibly the reading public can sympathize with him when it is realized that he must cultivate the friendship of the Moslem Arabs of Iraq (whose missionary work is bound to suffer were he to speak the truth) and this, even at the expense of developing a complex of instinctively seeking to live a life of pretense. (But that complex appears to be innate in him anyhow.) He pretends to love liberty and does everything in human power to defy and persecute the champions of freedom; he praises truth and in his secret heart most enjoys the friendship of cheats and murderers. "The Iraqis", states he at the outset of his article, "are my friends". In *The Heirs of the Ages* are many fallacies which render itself as unholy as the sermon<sup>2</sup> he preached in the First Reformed Church in Passaic, New Jersey, in February, 1935. A brief analysis of his article will betray its true character—

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1—*Asia*, June, 1935, pp. 312 et seq.

2—He told, in some detail, of an experience he had in Basra, Iraq. Most of the Arabs are poor—very poor. Some of them eat only once each day. He thought so much over the fact of his being "actually impotent" to come to their help that he became delirious. It seems that while in that state, a young Arab came to him just "like Christ" and he is convinced that never before did he have a more impressive picture of Christ. Rev. Van Ess went on to confess that he was sanest while in such state of delirium and it was in that moment of sanity that he suddenly came to the realization that he, in his lucidity, is behaving like a crazy man.

I wonder if it is too much to say that the responsibility for the misfortunes of the Assyrians in Iraq is to be placed, in a large measure, at the door of such men as Rev. R. C. Cumberland and Rev. John Van Ess! I wonder if it is too much to say that the delusions of grandeur and desire for personal power of such men are not the causes that are leading the noble idea of **mission** to catastrophe in the East!



The Assyrian refugees in Iraq are not 60,000 as he chooses to assume. They are only 40,000.

They are not of the "ancient Nestorian Christian faith" as he likes to convince himself. They are Assyrians by reason of nationality; by virtue of religion, they are members of the Assyrian "Church of the East".

Contrary to his assertion, they did not demand a national home. The Assyrians have a culture of their own whose spirit is inflexibly Christian through and through. In the credo of the Arabs, however, they are *infidels* and must, consequently, be hated by the *faithful*. The mass of the Assyrian people were conscious of the inevitable fact that such a culture could not flourish in an atmosphere in which brotherly love is denounced and suspicion exalted, and therefore, they resented being absorbed in the body of a race much inferior—militaristically and culturally—to their own. For this very reason, they demanded an Assyrian enclave within Iraq, the practical operation of which would be to effect a homogeneous settlement. Such an award had already been made to the Assyrians in 1925 by the League of Nations' Frontier Commission,<sup>3</sup> but, in violation of this declaration, both the English and the Arabs of Iraq undertook to impose on the Assyrians a heterogeneous settlement, if a settlement at all, which meant national destruction.

Contrary to Rev. Van Ess' allegation, no subsidies were asked for the Assyrian leaders. Incidentally, it may be proper to inquire here, Who are the "few Nestorian leaders," and what was their prestige that was "threatened and slipping away"?

It is also a gross untruth to say that £500,000 sterling was applied for and secured. The gospel-truth about the matter is that an application was made for 500,000 rupees only, and that for the construction of churches, schools

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<sup>3</sup>—Turko-Iraq Frontier, C.400, M.147, VII, p.90.

and dispensaries so sadly lacking in the Assyrian districts. That demand was perfectly in order as part compensation for all the Assyrians had lost in Turkey.

Contrary to his contention, almost psychoneurotic, the Assyrians were not "offered ample and fertile lands" by the Iraq government which he calls "generous and forbearing". Nothing could be more inherently false! In 1933, there were in Iraq 20,000 homeless Assyrians to whom no assignment of lands was made at all. The few Assyrians that held land were constantly evicted as they were merely tenants-at-will. These lands were "ample and fertile" in diseases only, as it will clearly be seen from the following extracts<sup>4</sup> of a disinterested witness:

"It is the worst fever area in all Iraq. . . For ten months I lived on the Plain" (i.e. of Mosul where many of the Hakkari highlanders, this "virile Christian race", were settled) "and saw its ravages among the civilian population and my own Assyrian soldiers. In many villages hundred per cent are suffering from fever, and in 1921, as many as twenty-five per cent died in three months. . . I submit that if the Assyrians are to be settled on the Plain, their extermination will be just as effective. . . and one of the oldest races in history would cease to exist."

Commencing, then, with such spurious and false premises, Rev. Van Ess proceeds to exonerate the Arabs of Iraq of responsibility. "If blame attaches to any one", writes he, "it attaches to the League of Nations." It is paradoxical, however, that no one, not even the King of Iraq, ever dared make that claim. Faisal knew that the Assyrian women and children were machine-gunned by his own military forces, and when the news of the massacre reached him, he suddenly fell ill and resolved to return home "in a coffin". Dr. Wolfgang von Weisl's description<sup>6</sup>

4—From a lecture delivered by Major A. W. D. Bentinck before the fellows of the Royal Central Asian Society in London on December 12, 1924. Reported in the Royal Central Asian Society Journal, vol. XII, Part II, 1925. Major Bentinck commanded a battalion of the Assyrians.

6—**The Late King Faisal**, in the *Neue Frie Presse*, Vienna Liberal Daily. Reprinted in *The Living Age*, November, 1933, pp. 226-228. **Persons and Personages**.

is a realistic expression of the situation in the language which follows:

"The Christian Assyrians, to whom King Faisal, the British Government, and the League of Nations had promised, in a peace treaty signed with Turkey in 1925, territorial autonomy, freedom from taxation, and other fine things,—promises that were not kept,—were sinking into greater and greater misery.

"This little nation, the oldest Christian sect in the world, had fought bravely on the side of England against the Turks and Persians, with the result that both the Turks and Persians took vengeance on it when the World War ended. Twenty thousand of a total population of a hundred thousand fled to Iraq to be under English protection. About fourteen thousand remained in Persia, but kept trying to rejoin their co-religionists in Iraq, who seemed doomed to extinction, since the hard-hearted nationalists of Iraq had not allowed them to form a single community, but had divided them into villages of not more than a hundred families each, and established them on barren soil where malaria was rampant. When the Persian tribes of Assyrian Christians attempted to cross the Irakian border a few weeks ago and unite with their brothers, this served as a signal for a program of the Christians in Iraq. Hundreds of men, women, and children were killed.

"This was too much even for the League of Nations, which had made Turkey surrender important territory north of Mosul and given it to Iraq with the understanding that it was to be a home for the Assyrian Christians. But this program gave many of Faisal's opponents a welcome opportunity to dampen the sympathies that had been aroused in Europe for this modern, friendly, elegant ruler. The King understood this danger and decided to dispatch his best diplomat, that is to say, himself. He hastened to Switzerland to undo the harm that Kurdish murderers had done, and now he is returning from this journey in a coffin. . . ."

At the conclusion of his sermon that Sunday morning in Passaic, Rev. Van Ess made an admission to the writer personally that "the massacre was a bad business", although he notoriously lacked the moral courage to mention the same in *The Heirs of the Ages*. What is this "lamentable consequences" you speak of, my dear Dr.



Van Ess? What your noble motive in suppressing the expression *massacre* in your article? Such an action is unworthy of any body's scholarship—not to mention theological erudition—for it betrays the temper, not of the scientific investigator and student, but of the dogmatist and irresponsible fanatic. Flagrant omissions are just as unmoral as unsupported assertions, gratuitous assumptions and fallacious points.

It is now safe to say that, in view of all this, Rev. Van Ess' conclusion that if the Iraq government's case were better known, the sympathy, which has been excited for the Assyrians in Europe and America, would be discovered to be not so well founded—I say this conclusion of his is a fraud perpetrated by one theorethically a messenger<sup>7</sup> of the gospel of brotherhood and peace upon the reading public, more especially, upon the people who support him at home. The Iraq government did use all the available means to make its case known, but decidedly failed for the simple reason that no one whose life is guided by the Rule of Reason and Humanity will ever tolerate the barbarous massacres conducted by its regular troops.

A further analysis of *The Heirs of the Ages* would seem inconsequential. I am satisfied to conclude that my careful study of it, as well as the informal discussion and street talk of my friends in America, worthy of that sacred name, reflect a positive confidence in my irrevocable conviction that the grotesque propaganda evidenced therein against the peaceful Christian population of the *Mar Shimun* is not a course which any one with a regard for humanity and truth would care to contemplate. No one with a knowledge of the landmarks of the arduous struggle

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7—Query. Would it not have been more consistent with his calling if he had written on the number of the Moslems he has converted into Christianity? He is invited to do so at his convenience. It is my thought that his mission is definitely directed to the Moslems.

of the first settlers of the New England colonies for independence and the formation of the Constitution can make sham of the genuine business in which the *Mar Shimun* is engaged.

The responsibility of the League is another matter. If it be true that nations pursue their life under the regime of the struggle for existence in which only the strong preserve their life and the weak go to the wall—if this premordial struggle for existence should still hold sway, unmitigated by any mediatorial agency, then the League as an instrument of justice is utterly useless and unnecessary. The motivating object of the League was to settle international affairs in accordance with natural justice and equity. With great anxiety, then, shall we tarry to see if the ideal foundation of “common order, common justice, and common peace,” on which President Wilson built it, has become a mere preaching force. It will not be surprising if upon final investigation Iraq is found to be savage and, therefore, unfit for membership in the family of nations.

## CHAPTER XI

# THE ASSYRIAN LEVIES AND THE KIRKUK INCIDENT

### I. THE ASSYRIAN LEVIES

The Assyrian levy was a military force raised by His Britannic Majesty's Government in Iraq under British officers to maintain British authority over a wide turbulent area, which otherwise would have meant many British lives and much money.

The Assyrians freely gave their lives in maintaining that authority on the strict understanding that the promises made by the British for an Assyrian National Home<sup>1</sup> would be honored. Insurrection after insurrection and rising after rising were suppressed with the help of the gallant Assyrian troops. No British officer has served with the Assyrian levies who has not praised their discipline, honestly, fine characters and fighting qualities. Assyrian officers and men were totally aloof from all politics during their fifteen years service until June, 1932, when circumstances forced upon them by the many illusive promises of Sir Francis Humphrys to the Assyrian Patriarch compelled them to join hands in the Assyrian National movement. On that occasion, they notified their commanding officer that it was their duty to their families and relatives to leave the service to go and share their tribulations and so they gave him one month's notice in accordance with the terms of their service-contracts. They were, therefore, neither mutinous nor rebellious. If they were, the first thing they would have done was to shoot

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<sup>1</sup>—See end of this chapter.



down all their British officers, as the Arabs had done before, whose government, they knew, was delivering them to a bunch of cowards and thieves. They did not do so; they exercised their legal right.

The admission of Iraq to the League of Nations was imminent. The Kurds were in open revolt and the Assyrians were apprehensive of their future, once under complete Arab domination. The troubled waters had to be cleared for Iraq. Through extensive British bombing, the Kurdish revolt was suppressed and British troops were transported by air from Egypt to replace the Assyrians pending negotiations with the Assyrian Patriarch, the Assyrian leaders and the levy officers.

Why should British troops be imported into the country to guard the British aerodromes and British interests, until that time guarded by the Assyrians, when the Iraq army could have raised—as an ally of Britain—a sufficient number of troops from among the Arabs? The reply is perhaps very simple. On many occasions, the British Air Officers commanding, and the officers under their command expressed the view that the honesty and reliability of Arab troops is too dubious. The Air Vice-Marshal stated that he should either have British troops or Assyrian levies.

If the British authorities in Iraq—with all the power of the British Empire behind them—cannot trust their ally, Iraq; how could the Assyrians have trusted the Iraq Government to treat them with equity and justice? It was madness to think so. Could the results have been other than tragic?

Having made a mess of things and having very little experience with the Assyrians, (like Major Hubert Young who declared before the Permanent Mandates Commission in June, 1930, that though he had been in Iraq fourteen months, yet he had had no time to visit the Assyrians)

Sir Francis sought the help of *the Mar Shimun* to ease the minds of the troubled Assyrians.

*The Mar Shimun* agreed to do so, after consultation with the Assyrian leaders at Sar Amadiyah, on condition that the future interests of the Assyrians would be safeguarded after the lifting of the mandate.

Some letter written by Sir Francis to *the Mar Shimun* may be of interest.

"No. S.P. 841

The Residency,  
Baghdad, 18th June, 1932

I have received your letter of the 17th of June, together with two copies of the petition of the Assyrian leaders of the same date, one of which is addressed to me and the other to the Chairman of the Permanent Mandates Commission.

This petition puts forward a number of demands of far-reaching effect and great importance and raises issues which cannot be settled without a reference to the League of Nations. It therefore, is quite impossible for me to give an undertaking by the 28th of June that the demands made in the petition will be approved. The petition must be forwarded to the League for consideration; and as it is demanded that the claims put forward in it must be adopted by the Council of the League, no undertaking can be given concerning them without the League's authority. I am forwarding the Assyrian leader's petition at once to my Government for onward despatch to the League, and Your Beatitude may be assured that it will receive the earliest possible consideration.

In the meanwhile, your people have everything to lose from precipitate action and since, I have shown, it is quite impracticable to make a reply to the petition by the 28th of June, I urge you to advise the Assyrian levies to postpone the execution of their resolution to cease serving, until such time as a reply is received from the League.

If Your Beatitude does not so advise them, and if they persist in leaving the levies and joining the National movement, to which you made reference in the last paragraph of the petition, before an answer is given to you, I must warn Your Beatitude that the Assyrians will be regarded as having offered a grave discourtesy to the League, who will have been given no possible opportunity to reply before your ultimatum expires. Moreover, in such cir-

cumstances the Assyrians could not reasonably expect to obtain any future employment in the Government services.

I must ask you to send me an immediate answer by the hand of Captain Holt.

I remain

Your sincere friend,

*F. H. Humphrys.*

*Comments by the author.*

Promises made to the Assyrians in previous years were of far more reaching effect but they were broken. The statement that Sir Francis could give no assurance that the demands in the petition would be approved without the League's authority was merely a bluff to which the Assyrians were now accustomed. If Britain's attitude towards the Assyrians at the League was obstructive, the League's could not have been otherwise.

The demands enumerated in the Assyrian national petition could not have offended the League which had a certain responsibility towards the minorities. The Assyrians had seen sufficient by now of Sir Francis' "good faith" on former sessions of the League and were apt to look to Sir Francis' promises with grave suspicion.

No. S.O. 851

The Residency,  
Baghdad, 22nd June, 1932.

Beatitude,

I have received your letter of the 20th of June by the hand of Captain Holt. There occurs in this letter the following passages which I do not understand:

"At this morning's meeting it was unanimously agreed by the leaders that a final reply could not be given to Your Excellency's letter with regard to the question of postponement of the resolution of the Assyrian levies."

Captain Holt tells me that he pointed out to Your Beatitude that, if this was not in fact the final reply, he would stay in Sar Adamiyah until he obtained it. He tells me, however, that he was



informed by Your Beatitude that this was the last word of the leaders and that they refused to postpone the resignation of the Assyrian Levies unless I accepted all their demands, except that relating to Hakkari, by the 28th of June. I have already explained that it is not within my power to accept demands of this nature, which will have to be carefully considered by my Government in London and by the League of Nations at Geneva; nor is a representative of the Iraq Government empowered to accept them without the approval of the Iraq Government, since the demands involve alterations to the fundamental laws of Iraq in regard to minorities which can only be agreed to with the consent of the League of Nations.

I have informed Your Beatitude that I am unable to understand what the Assyrians have to gain by giving up their present service, which is worth nearly a lakh of rupees a month to them, and by disqualifying themselves for further service in the future. On the other hand, they have a great deal to lose by such short-sighted behaviour, which cannot fail to appear to the British Government and people as singularly ungrateful and inopportune.

I would finally point out that the fact that an earlier petition, which was submitted by the Assyrian leaders to the Permanent Mandates Commission last November to the effect that it would be no longer possible for the Assyrians to remain in Iraq after the termination of the British mandate, is still under the consideration of the League, makes it still more incomprehensible that the Assyrian leaders should expect a reply to an entirely new set of demands of the most complicated and far-reaching nature before the petition can even have been seen by the League. In giving an ultimatum, Your Beatitude cannot fail to realize that the Assyrian leaders are putting themselves in the wrong with the British Government and the League of Nations.

There is nothing more for me to say in this matter, except to express my deep regret at the unnecessary sufferings which the Assyrians seem determined to bring on themselves. I am making arrangements to take over the duties vacated by those Assyrians who desire to leave and to entrust them to British troops until other Iraqis have been recruited to replace them.

But the door is still open.

I remain  
Your sincere friend,  
F. H. Humphrys.

*Comments by the author.*

Is there in fact such a thing as Iraqi representative? If oil interests were involved, would the Iraqi representative have a real say in the matter? Would he not do what the creators of Sidi Faisal tell him to do? If matters were left to the discretion of the Iraqi representative, his first demand would be to see the last sight of Englishmen in Iraq. Do not the daily articles written in the Iraqi newspapers suffice to justify this view? Did not Nahi Shawkat, when Prime Minister, declare that the clauses of the Anglo-Iraq treaty of the 30th of June, 1930, would have been other than what they are now "if we had an army behind us"?

Does Sir Francis really believe that there are in Iraq such things as fundamental laws? What is their value? Does not Sir Francis believe that if the fate of the minorities was left in the hands of the League of Nations that the Assyrians would not have been massacred?

The levies, to my knowledge, were asked to continue serving for another period of six months. This would have given them some five and a half lakhs of rupees or some 42,000 pounds. Though the offer was attractive, it was flatly refused, for the Assyrian leaders, particularly the Assyrian officers, knew what they had at stake. They knew from past experience that this offer would not give their families and relatives permanent peace and security for which they had been clamouring ever since they arrived in Iraq.

Sir Francis was very anxious to settle the question of the Assyrian levies, for he was aware that the "benevolent" Iraq Government would look upon the existence of British troops in Iraq as preliminary sign of British military occupation of the country.

High Commissioner's Office, Baghdad,  
28th June, 1932

Beatitude,

In spite of everything that has occurred I am still prepared to offer following conditions for levy service:

On condition that you and the other leaders will give a solemn undertaking not again to interfere with the discipline of the Assyrian levies, and on condition that all ranks give undertakings to serve loyally and truly, levies will be maintained at present strength, until an answer is given by the League to the Assyrian petition of the 17th of June, or until the 15th of December, whichever is the earlier date. If, however, Levies have definitely decided that they do not wish to serve at Basra, one company must be reduced to allow for the formation of a company of other Iraqis to take over from the Assyrians at Basra.

On receipt of the answer from the League, arrangements will be made to retain such men as it may be desired to recruit for the formation of a company of other Iraqis to take over from the Assyrians at Basra.

On receipt of the answer from the League, arrangements will be made to retain such men as it may be desired to recruit for the forces to be formed under the Anglo-Iraq Treaty of 1930.

It is impossible for me to give you a reply in precise terms as to what demands in the Assyrian petition will and what will not be considered as reasonable and in conformity with the general policy of my Government and the League. I cannot at this stage commit myself further than to inform you that such questions as recognition of Patriarch, land settlement, representation in parliament, schools, dispensaries, retention of rifles, and conditions of service in the Iraq forces, are recognized by me reasonable subjects for consideration and that the earliest and most sympathetic attention to these matters will be pressed by me on the Iraqi Government and, through my Government, on the League of Nations.

You may be assured of the sincere good-will of the British Government and myself and of our desire to do all that is possible for the welfare of the Assyrian people. I cannot believe that you will deliberately reject my advice to give up hasty action and to await the decision of the League, so that these important issues may be discussed in a calm atmosphere.

I remain  
Your sincere friend,  
F. H. Humphrys.



*Comments by the author.*

None of the above trivial requests were supported by Sir Francis at Geneva. On the contrary, he was obstructive in every possible way though it was he who encouraged *the Mar Shimun* to proceed to Geneva and defend the case of the Assyrians. What little trust the Assyrians had in the words of Sir Francis was now completely lost.

Sir Francis assured the Assyrians of his and his Government's good-will. That is somewhat true, for the League of Nations recommended last year that an expert should be sent to Iraq to settle the homeless Assyrians with the result that the Assyrians were settled in graves, never to rise again. Can there be better sincere good-will than this?

The Residency,  
Baghdad,  
June 28th, 1932

*Personal:*

Beatitude,

I was very glad to receive your message this evening and as requested I am sending you a signed copy of my telegram of the 27th June.

You know that I shall do everything in my power to help you and your people at Geneva. I will even do my best to find a solution in regard to Hakkari though you will realize that this is an international question of great delicacy.

All I ask Your Beatitude and the Assyrian leaders is that they should assist me by maintaining the levies in loyal service and the people in a calm spirit until the decision of the League of Nations has been received.

I know that I can rely on your help in this.

With my kindest regards to Lady Surma and Your Beatitude. I was so sorry that I missed seeing her in Baghdad owing to my illness.

I remain  
Your sincere friend,  
Francis Humphrys.

*Comments by the author.*

As I have said elsewhere, Sir Francis has done his best for the Assyrians by deserting them to be treacherously massacred by the very same savages against whom Sir Francis was using the Assyrians as a weapon in his hand. His action in fact encouraged the massacre.

As regards Hakkari, the original home of the Assyrians in Turkey, the Turks will suspect, and ultimately reject, not without good reasons, any project put up by His Britannic Majesty's Government ostensibly for the welfare of the minorities. In conversation with Hasan Basri Beg, the Turkish Consul-General, Beyrouth, he made it quite clear that Mustafa Kamal's Government will not favour any such scheme especially if presented by people who were the actual cause for the present lamentable conditions of the Assyrians. He concluded by saying, "We sympathize with the Assyrians in their terrible plight as we know that it was solely due to foreign instigation that they took up arms against us in the Great War."

## II. THE KIRKUK INCIDENT

The people of Kirkuk are Turcomans and Kurds and are in no way Arabs. There the Arabs are unpopular. The reader will have observed in the earlier part of this book how the people of Kirkuk rejected the candidature of Amir Faisal to the throne of Iraq.

On the 14th of October, 1933, Yasin al Hashimi was called to the Council Table at Geneva to read his Government's defence<sup>1</sup> in regard to the Assyrian massacre. To partly justify the beastly acts of his government, of which he was one of the chief instigators, he brought up the Kirkuk incident and stated "that the riots in Mosul town

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<sup>1</sup>—Normally written by his British advisers.

in 1923, and the incident of Kirkuk in 1924, when two companies of the Assyrian levy had run amuck and killed fifty of the townspeople, including women and children, had left bitter memories."

It is common knowledge that an Arab will never say the truth unless carefully examined and cross-examined. Yasin and his colleagues are of that stock. I will not myself refute the tale of Yasin and the Iraqi delegation at Geneva, but will merely quote official statements recorded at the time which will, *prima facie*, show to an impartial observer how much reliance can be placed on statements made by Iraqi delegations.

Brigadier J. Gilbert Browne, C.M.G.; C.B.E.; D.S.O.; in his book, "The Iraq Levies," 1915-1932, page 34, makes the following statement as regards the Mosul incident:

" . . . . . The natural antipathy accentuated by different religions continued and it only required something to start trouble. This began in Mosul. In August, 1923, trouble occurred in the meat market, which spread, and one or two Assyrian children were killed. No one was brought to book for this, and the Assyrians much resented it, and talked of the Iraq Government not administering justice in their case against Moslems."

It was on Sunday morning when Assyrian women who had gone shopping were suddenly attacked by Arab butchers with their knives. Several women and men were wounded, in addition to the children killed, as reported by Brigadier Browne. One of the instigators of this beastly affair was an Arab Commandant of police, who was later promoted to the rank of Mutassarif. Except for fanaticism and hatred, there was no reason for that regrettable incident which was, as I said, engineered by well-known malefactors. The behaviour of the Assyrian levies was highly commendable as the following letter will indicate:



## 168 BRITISH BETRAYAL OF THE ASSYRIANS

Reference :

Air/523/159

*Secret.*

Air Headquarters,  
Iraq Command,  
14th July, 1924

To:—

Colonel-Commandant

Commanding, Iraq Levies, Mosul.

Reference your A.L./9361/D.I.C. of 9th July.

The Air Officer commanding has already communicated with H.E. the High Commissioner on this subject and asked that every endeavour should be made to apprehend and severely punish the offenders concerned.

The Air Officer commanding notes with great satisfaction the behaviour of the levies on this occasion and requests that his appreciation of their actions should be communicated to those concerned.

Sd. Air Commodore.

Chief Staff Officer.

Brigadier Browne goes on to narrate the Kirkuk incident as follows:

“In May, 1924, the 2nd Battalion Iraq levies was in Kirkuk, and their families with them. The Battalion was in the process of forming a camp at Chemchemal for the Sulaimani operations, and on May 4th only two companies and the Assyrian families remained in Kirkuk.

“Already there had been a certain amount of back-chat between the townspeople and the Assyrians, in which the former, seeing the greater part of the Battalion moving out, threatened to deal with the Assyrian women when they had gone. Matters were in fact very tense. Many people in the town were in sympathy with Sheik Mahmud.

“At 9:30 on May 4th there was a disturbance in the bazaar. An Assyrian soldier returned wounded, after a dispute over the price of an article in a shop.

“Rab Khamshi Baijo went with the Regimental police to clear the Assyrians from the bazaar.

"The remnant of the battalion was ordered on parade just as they were. Captain Growdon, the police officer, arrived at the levy camp, and he and Captain P. P. King, commanding one of the two companies left in Kirkuk, both went on to the parade.

"Just as they arrived, Rab Khamshi Baijo and the regimental police returned, bringing with them two more wounded men, and reporting that the bazaar was clear. The two wounded men said they had been knocked down from behind with heavy, or loaded, sticks, during a dispute. They also said people were calling out to them in the bazaar 'Now that half of you have gone to Chemchemical, we are not frightened of you'.

"Captains King and Growdon explained to the men on parade that there had been trouble in the bazaar, that it was out of bounds for the rest of the day. That the shopkeepers, who caused the trouble, would be arrested and tried, and that the battalion was on its best behaviour not to cause trouble. A police piquet was to be placed on the bridge. Other men then brought forward complaints. Growdon and King began to go into the complaints, and the parade was dismissed.

"On leaving the parade ground, the men had to pass by a Chai-Khana. Suddenly in answer to some remark by the people inside, a riot broke out.

"The men rushed the place, and broke chairs over the heads of the people in the Chai-Khana, (coffee shop). Then a small body armed with sticks made for the bridge to try and stop the men, and Sergeant Burgess of the police made for it in an arabana.

"The police piquet and the officers attempted to force the men back from the bridge, but some got over and were fired at from the other side. This scattered them and caused several casualties. The piquet of Assyrians on the west side of the bridge came under fire also. A number of the men ran back to their lines, and returned with rifles and S.A.A. and firing began in all directions.

"Captain King caught as many men as he could, took them into Kirkuk Fort, where their arms were taken from them, and they were put under guard, in the cavalry magazine.

"Meanwhile, one party had made their way across the bridge and captured a prominent building known as the house of Tooma, and took up their position on the roof. They could be seen here from the Kirkuk Fort, in which was Captain A. T. Miller, Administrative Inspector, (Kirkuk), with Captain King and Growdon.

"They wired off to the Colonel-Commandant, who was staying with the A.O.C. in Baghdad. He came over by aeroplane; the armoured cars were sent for; a message was dispatched to Lieut.-Colonel G.

C. M. Sorel-Cameron at Chemchemal; and a wire of what was going on to Baghdad.

"Captain O. M. Fry of the levies was on the aerodrome, and received a message to come up at once. He made his way under fire from the houses of Kirkuk, near the police station, over the bridge to the House of Tooma, and after some time collected various parties of Assyrians. He eventually got together some eighty of the Assyrians, including three officers, and got them back to the Fort, being fired at from the houses near the police station. Firing continued in the town. The levies had lost five and one civilian Arab employee. About one hundred Christian refugees had assembled in the Fort, and were kept there and rationed. The town was quiet by about 5 P. M.; and at this hour a platoon of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers arrived by aeroplane, and took over guards and patrolling.

"As the situation was most critical, and the feeling very bitter, the whole of the Assyrian Battalion was marched out of the town at once, families included, and camped at a place four miles away.

"The Battalion remained at Chemchemal for the present.

"The result of this affair was that a court-of-enquiry was held. After this three officers and twelve men were arrested, but after the trial, the three officers and two of the men were found not guilty, and nine, who were found guilty, were put into the Baghdad jail.

"The killing of all these civilians could not, of course, be let pass without severe penalty, but it was realized that the Assyrians had great cause of irritation, and being fired at, caused these very hot-headed people to act as they did."

It will be seen from the foregoing that the statement of Yasin, as explained to the Council, was far from the truth. He merely quoted the losses of one party not mentioning the casualties of the Assyrians who were not at fault. It was difficult to admit the truth. The Assyrians were attacked and it was quite natural that they would respond in self-defense. They were being attacked from the roofs in all directions and this compelled them to take a similar position in the house of Tooma. Yasin should be excused for not telling the truth, as he merely read before the Council (as Nuri al Sa'id did on former occasions) what Edmonds and Co. had drafted for him to read.



As soon as the news of the Kirkuk incident reached Baghdad, the Arab deputies and high Arab officials—the perpetrators of the present massacre—instigated the Arabs of Baghdad to attack the Assyrians in the Gailani camp, south of Baghdad. The arrangements made at that time were as those made in 1933; they only differed in one respect. In 1924, there was a general outcry to massacre the Armenians as well as those who had taken no part whatsoever in the politics of Iraq.

It would not be out of place to state that the Iraqis distrust each other and among them there are always intrigues and counter-intrigues. Ministers are officials and censor the mails of each other, the secrets of which they use against each other when out of jobs. Of their ungratefulness, there is much to say. Had it not been for the gallant stand made by the Kurds and the Assyrians, the Mosul oil would have been Turkish rather than Anglo-Iraqi property. These two warlike elements were promised that they would not be placed under Arab domination and so they supported the Iraqi case against Turkey. They were ultimately deceived.

On page 110 and again on page 117 of the British official report on Iraq Administration for the period of October, 1920 to March, 1922, the then British High Commissioner gives the following account of the services rendered by the Assyrians. The Iraq army which was still in its childhood, and when formed was no more than a junk, could not have guarded the dangerous frontiers of Iraq against the strong Turkish incursions.

“In justice to the Assyrians it must be added that during the first three months of this year, when the Turkish attack was always a possibility, they proved their strategic value on the Iraq frontier. In March, over 2,000 enlisted in the levies within three weeks. It is far from improbable that this instantaneous response on the part of a people whose qualities as fighting men are renowned was the main reason which induced the Kemalists to abandon their projected

attack. Led by British officers, they are a native force second to none. Their quickness in picking up discipline, and their mettle in battle has surprised and delighted all who have been concerned with them.

"Throughout the past year, rumors of an impending Kemalist attack on Iraq were persistent and after the conclusion of the Angora-Agreement caused serious anxiety. The fact that the headquarters of the 3rd Division were transferred to As'irt had, without doubt, grave significance; the garrison at Jazirat ibn 'Umar was strengthened and small posts placed among the frontier. It was at this moment that the rallying of the Assyrian refugees and their enlistment in great number in the levies, as has been recounted, proved of signal value and as this report closes, it is increasingly unlikely that the Kemalists can venture on an attack in force in the immediate future. But until the conclusion of peace between the Allies and Turkey finally stabilizes the situation, the threat from the north cannot be disregarded, while Turko-Bolshevist intrigue will continue to be a menace to the Iraq State."

What has Yasin to say about this?

Capt. Gracey, whose name has become familiar to the reader, has denied having made any promise to the Assyrians for self-government after a successful conclusion of the war. His promise was not, of course, made in writing, but it must be remembered that he was a British Intelligence Officer and it is quite natural to expect such a denial after a long lapse of some thirteen years, particularly when it became quite evident that his Government has, for reasons of policy, dishonored its many pledges to the Assyrians.

Capt. Gracey has stated that he had attended the famous conference at Urumia to settle certain internal differences amongst the Assyrians themselves. I fail to see how his intervention could have possibly been asked for when Nikitine was in a more favorable position to settle such trivial differences, if any.

I wonder if Gracey is in the service of the Foreign Office traveling under the cloak of ardent missionaries?

The Assyrians do know that Gracey's bare denial

is far from being true and in support of what they had heard, they have the following French and Russian statements which were voluntarily made in writing early in 1934.

Docteur Paul Caujole,  
3, rue Lemoine,

Boulogne,

Boulogne-sur Seine.

Dated 19th, January, 1934

(Seine)

To.....

"In reply to your letter of 18th January, 1934.<sup>1</sup>

I have precisely preserved, as a souvenir, the conference to which you allude without, of course, being able to state the date.

The Conference was held in Urumia in December, 1917 or early in January, 1918.

I was invited to the Conference in question and took part in it as did Mr. Nikitine, the Russian Vice-Consul in Urumia.

Captain Gracey who was acting under the orders of the Intelligence Service came specially for the purpose from Van, his headquarters, to encourage the Assyrians to organize their resistance of the Turks.

In the name of England, he undertook to furnish immediately funds necessary for the payment of the troops and non-commissioned officers. For the future, he promised the proclamation of the Independence of the Assyrian people.

Francaise du Caucase.

Sd. Paul Caujole,

Ex-Medecin-Chef de L'Ambulance

Basile Nikitine,

January 31st, 1934.

Ancien Consul,

29, rue George-Sand, Paris (16)

I certify that Captain Gracey, committed for Armenia and Kurdistan of the British Military Mission, attached to the General Staff of the Caucasian army, came from Van at the end of the

<sup>1</sup>—The Assyrian Tragedy, Annamasse, Feb. 1934. pp. 15-16.



year 1917 and held in Urumia a special meeting of the Assyrians and foreign representatives and invited the Assyrian People to take up arms. He solemnly promised them financial and political assistance of his Government, both during the war and after the final regulation of the peace.

Requested by Captain Gracey, I attended the meeting in my capacity as Russian Consul and together with the other foreign representatives. I declared that if the Assyrians took up arms against the enemies, they could count after the war on making them obtain their independence which they would have well merited.

SD. BASILE NIKITINE.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ASSYRIANS IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Human memory is so short, particularly when it pretends to be so, that I consider it absolutely necessary to take back the reader to the immediate past to enable him to form a correct idea of the atrocities perpetrated by Iraqi vandals six weeks ago. These acts of extreme vandalism were neither unforeseen nor unexpected.

The British High Commissioner in Iraq, who has a net of spies throughout the country, was in a position to know that these things were to happen. Reports sent to him by British provincial officials of the civil administration and the reports of the British service officers left no doubt that a massacre, unless stopped, would take place, once the predatory Arabs were left alone.

Was he not aware that Sheik 'Abdul Wahid al Haj Sukar, the influential Arab Sheik, in an interview with Sir Kenehan Cornwallis asked the latter (when Nuri Sa'id was in power and Yasin out of job), "if it were true that British responsibility would end when Iraq was admitted to the League of Nations, because if that were so, he had the intention of attacking the Iraqi capital with his tribesmen"? Sir Kenehan, according to Sir Percival Phillips in his article in the *Daily Mail* entitled, "Iraq on the Wrong Path," replied that "Our aeroplanes would tear you to pieces."

Where were those aeroplanes when the wombs of the Assyrian women were being cut to pieces? Were their duties and instructions merely confined to taking photographs from the air of those horrible scenes? If not, can I conclude by other than saying that the massacre operations were conducted with the full approval and

support of the British authorities? If English women were subjected to these acts of barbarism, would the British aeroplanes have satisfied themselves with taking photographs?

The British High Commissioner heard the statement of Ma'ruf al Risafi in the Iraq parliament to the effect that ninety-five percent of the Arab population of Iraq was illiterate. He also heard Naji Shawkat, the Arab Minister of Interior, on the 19th of March, 1932, say that "Iraq was still leading the life it led in the tenth century." While Iraqi Ministers and deputies were admitting their inability to rule and acknowledging their uncivil manners, Sir Francis was actively declaring before the Permanent Mandates Commission that "Iraq was fit to stand alone." Does Sir Francis, who was in the country for a few months only, know the Iraqis more than themselves?

Could not Sir Francis have obtained his "honours" without betraying the Assyrians?

Were not Yasin al Hashimi, Naji al Siwaidi and Ja'far Abu Timman, the supposed three prominent Iraqi politicians who telegraphed to the League of Nations late in 1930, rejecting their entrance into the League of Nations?

Does not Sir Francis think that the massacre could have been prevented if he had seriously warned Yasin, Nuri, Rustam Haidar, Rashid 'Ali and the other malefactors that their property, which they have collected by robbery and theft, would be forfeited if the anti-Assyrian propaganda was not stopped?

Does not Sir Francis know that this same gang, headed by Faisal, were, by treachery, the assassins of Tawfig beg al Khalidi, the Muhafidh of Baghdad near the Jama' al Sarai just as he was returning home? Were not officers of the Iraq army in disguise who assassinated Tawfig beg?



Was not this same gang of banditti, with the help of the then Minister of Interior, who assassinated the late Salman effendi, the Jew police inspector, one of the best officers the police department has ever had? Were the assassins apprehended? How could they have been, as they were, the highest officials in the country?

Is it not the universal belief—at least in the Arab official circles—that whoever kills the most Englishmen in Iraq, the quicker he will win promotion.

Was not the murderer of the late Colonel Leachman at Khan Nuqtah, between Baghdad and Fallujah, allowed to return to Iraq unconditionally in 1929? Were not his sheikship rights restored; his lands returned to him; and above all, was he not made a deputy? Was not the picture of Colonel Leachman, the distinguished British officer whose acquaintance the author had the honor to make at Kut, reproduced in Al Istiqlal side by side with that of his murderer and treated with contempt? Do the relatives of Colonel Leachman and his many English friends know this?

Is not Sir Francis aware that Jamil al Madfa'i (at times Mutasarrif, Minister of Interior and now President of the Chamber of Deputies), boasts of having killed British officers most brutally and ordered the mutilation of the bodies of those who can never rest in peace so long as their murderers enjoy the rights of mankind which they do not merit?

Does not Sir Francis know that a certain number of the Arab deputies are the nominees of Regima al Bombayliyyah, (assassinated in Baghdad early in 1934), the friend of Nuri Pasha in times of financial straits of the Pasha? Could he not ask Major Wilkins to verify?

I must stop *pro tem* to reproduce the Parliamentary Debates of the House of Lords for Wednesday, 17th

December, 1919, Vol. 38—No. 112, official report under the title of, "Turkish Rule in Armenia."

The italics here made for the easy reference of the reader before coming to the chapter dealing with the massacre of the Assyrians, are mine, as the phrases italicized correspond either partly or wholly (with slight difference of circumstances) with the arrangements made by the Iraqi knaves beforehand to massacre the Assyrians, as their former masters had done in the case of the Armenians.

### "TURKISH RULE IN ARMENIA"

"THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY rose to call attention to the sufferings of the Christian, refugees, Armenian, Nestorian, and Chaldean, *who are still prevented from returning to their homes* by the Turkish troops who are occupying the districts from which they were driven, and to the repeated declarations made by the Government that all Turkish rule should cease in Armenia and the other districts referred to; and to ask His Majesty's Government whether they can give any information as to the steps taken or proposed in relation thereto."

LORD HYLTON

"The most Rev. Primate said: My Lords, I do not think that any of your Lordships who have taken an interest in the question relating to which I have placed a notice on the Paper will take exception to public attention being called to the matter at this time. We have reached a stage in what may be called the resettlement of the world after war, when this matter, whether it be possible or not to handle it thoroughly, at present, is one of urgent and massive importance; and it is to be handled, it is well that it should be in the public recollection what has passed hitherto respecting it, and with what it is we really have to deal.

"Just three years have passed since a remarkable Blue-book was published in October, 1916—a Blue-book which I venture to say, if the war had not at that time absorbed everyone's attention and retained their attention for some time afterwards, would have had a position and a reputation unlike most of the books which appear under covers of that colour and in that form. It was the Blue-book giving the story of *the treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman*

*Empire* and containing a collection of documents relating to it. The treatment of Armenians, *Assyrians*, Chaldeans, and to some extent *Greeks* is handed in some measure at least in that book, and the book is one which to any one who desires to understand the whole question is not only essential for proper information but is interesting from cover to cover.

*"The appalling stories of wholesale massacre, of expulsion of great populations from their homes under conditions which could only be described as in most cases slowly-dragged-out massacre, are set before us in incident after incident, showing that what has happened on a scale so vast as is scarcely credible in our own time, or, indeed, in any time. Everyone who studies the subject at once begins to ask himself: are the outrages which are here described the misdeeds of lawless ruffians who are out of hand and incapable of knowing what mercy or humanity mean, or can they be the deliberate acts of a government itself? On that question very large issues would necessarily turn. Unhappily the Blue-book leaves the impartial reader in no doubt whatever as to the answer which must be given. The Book is no mere string of incident. It gives the coherent story of these years, introduced and supplemented by narratives of the past and summaries of what has happened in the present which enable us by the lucidity, the range, and the clear arrangement of the whole, to deal with that question without hesitation and to arrive at the conclusion which is, I think, inevitable. No one reading it but must be convinced, not, I will say, of the Turkish Government's complicity in these matters, but of its authorship, the authorship of these unspeakable outrages.*

*"At the very outset of the war a deliberate plan was adopted, it is perfectly clear, by the Turkish government for dealing with these long oppressed peoples, people in their various groups whose courage, whose loyalty to their Christian Faith and, in some cases whose industry and grit had enabled them to hold their own for centuries in face of oppression, and poverty, and misrule. The government decided upon a cold-blooded plan of a double character. It was first to be a plan of quite deliberate massacre on a large scale, and it was next to be a plan of so-called deportation from the occupied regions which, in very many cases, merely meant massacre in a deferred degree.*

*"Different regions were taken in order. The records which are here brought to light show that there were telegrams at the same time sent to the various parts of the Empire so that the massacre, if it was to be a massacre, should take place at the same time in different places. The deportations were carefully arranged*



by a plan which makes it utterly impossible to suppose that they were the acts of local governors, or local authorities, or that they emanated *from any other source than headquarters*, whether or not those headquarters had an identity different from that which belonged to the Turkish government.

"What took place is described in this book by *eye-witnesses*. Narrative after narrative gives it in detail. These are not for the most part the accounts of *victims who had survived*; they are *narratives by calm, competent, highly-skilled observers, familiar with the country, familiar with the people, and incapable of misrepresenting what they saw*. Americans, Germans—I will note Germans very markedly—and English observers as well. These *all support, with practical unanimity, the stories given by those victims who had survived, whose records, had they not been thus supported, might very unfairly have been judged as not likely to be correctly or temperately given*.

"The last thing I want to do is to go over in detail horrors of this kind. I would quote just two instances in order to give examples of the kind of things to which I refer. There was, first, *the policy of deportation that we speak of*. I have chosen out of an almost unlimited number of cases which one might choose, a statement by the principal of the American college who has gone into the whole matter with the most accurate observation and with statistical care, in regard to one particular deportation, and this in his summary of it—

"From the village of E——"

"The observer has not mentioned what village it was——"

"212 individuals set out——"

"Set out" means, of course, that they were driven from their homes with the express intention of their being taken somewhere to be settled, were driven for the most part into wild regions, over roads of such length and under such conditions of hardship that the survival *only of the strongest of them was possible*. All the young men before that time had in every single case been taken away, and the old men, the women, the children were the people who survived to be the victims of the deportation——.

"From the village of E 212 individuals set out, of whom 128 (60 per cent) reached Aleppo alive; 56 men and 11 women were killed on the road, 3 girls and 9 boys were sold or kidnaped, and 5 people were missing. From the same place another party of 696 people were deported; 321 (46 per cent) reach Aleppo; 206 men and 57 women were killed en route; 70 girls and young women and 19 boys were sold; 23 were missing. From the village

of D a party of 128 were deported, of whom 32 (25 per cent) reached Aleppo alive; 24 men and 12 women were killed en route; 29 girls and young women and 13 boys were sold; and 18 were missing."

"I have purposely taken not one of the many accounts which give the facts in detail, but a summary of that which the observer found to be the outcome. If we remember the phrase that "seventy girls and young men, and nineteen boys were sold," and if we look over the page to see what that means, we find how, as they passed each town, *the girls or young women were in most cases paraded* in front of the house of any Turkish buyer who chose to come and take them for purposes described in detail, so unutterably horrible—girls being constantly done to death by those who took them in this way—as make the record appalling to read. That I take it, is by no means an extreme case. There are many cases where the numbers were greater *and the survivors fewer*, but I have taken the one which was testified to by so competent and cool an observer, who is able to give us figures and not to talk in any general terms.

"So much for the deportation part. Let me give you one from among many that there are with regard to the massacres. The massacres were often en route. For example, great numbers of women and girls were placed on board dump barges on the Tigris and half an hour after leaving the bank they were thrown overboard, while soldiers had been placed in proper positions along the banks to prevent any of them reaching the shore. That kind of thing happened not in twenty, thirty, or fifty cases, but—I do not say in thousands—but certainly in many hundred of cases.

"This kind of thing is also described by a careful observer whose name is there——

"Every one of the Armenians, leaders as well as men, was killed fighting——"

"That is, the younger men——

"*and when the silence of death reigned over the ruins of churches and the rest, the Moslem rabble made a descent upon the women and children and drove them out of the town into large camps which had already been prepared for the peasant women and children. The ghastly scenes which followed may indeed sound incredible, yet these reports have been confirmed from Russian sources beyond all doubt.* The shortest method for disposing of the women and children concentrated in the various camps *was to burn them.* Fire was set to large wooden sheds in Alidjan, Megra-kom, Khaskegh, and other Armenian villages, and these absolutely helpless women and children were roasted to death. Many went

mad and threw their children away; *some knelt down and prayed amid the flames in which their bodies were burning; other shrieked and cried for help which came from nowhere. The executioners, who seem to have been unmoved by this unapparelled savagery, grasped infants by one leg and hurled them into the fire, calling out to the burning mothers "here are your lions."*

"That is the kind of description which occurs, not once or twice in this book. It is not some over-wrought account by an *excited observer*, but it is the record of really competent people telling what they saw take place, *not at one spot but at many*, over a region of that fertile country which is capable of better things."

#### THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

"There are not a few men and women in this country who are able to speak as eye-witnesses of many of these things. Some of Your Lordships know, and have had the privilege of making the acquaintance of, a lady in a high position among the Nestorians. Surma, the sister of *Mar Shimun*, the late Patriarch, who is now in this country as a sort of delegate from her people. She is able to speak with the fullest personal knowledge of details of happenings which she herself has witnessed. Her brother, the Patriarch, was massacred. She herself survived and the accounts she gives, with great calmness and perfect self-control, of things she has seen and what she knows to have happened to her sisters, cousins and other relatives and friends, women and girls particularly, are such as support to the full, one is only too sorry to say, the very worst accounts which appear in the printed record.

"What was the result, taking it in a large way numerically? I prefer here to take the statement of one of these careful statistical observers who has summarized for the Blue-book what were the results. I may be asked "Are you speaking of a few thousands, or how many thousand?" I will read the paragraph in which it is summarized—

"*There is no dispute as to what happened in 1915. The Armenian inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire were everywhere uprooted from their homes and deported to the most remote and unhealthy districts that the government could select for them. Some were murdered at the outset, some perished on the way, and some died after reaching their destination. The death-roll amounts to upwards of six hundred thousand; perhaps six hundred more are still alive in their places of exile; and the remaining six hundred*



thousand or so have either *been converted forcibly to Islam, gone into hiding in the mountains, or escaped beyond the Ottoman frontier. The Ottoman government cannot deny these facts, and they cannot justify them.*"

"I believe that the story of these years is really an outrage on civilization without historical parallel in the world. I do not believe that in the wildest barbarities recorded in history, including those of the days of Tamerlane, you would be able to exceed, if you could parallel, the accounts that are here given. And these can be, as I have said, undoubtedly traced, not to the outrageous conduct of undisciplined hordes, *but to the deliberate plan and scheme of a government with which you are supposed to have been on friendly terms and in alliance for many purposes.* After all the distractions which the war has brought into the mind of men all over the world in contemplating contemporary history, is it conceivable that we are going to allow these facts to be forgotten; or, if we do not allow them to be forgotten; that we are going to allow conditions to arise again during which their repetition can be possible?<sup>1</sup> That seems to me to be a question which ought to be, and must be, asked at once.

"Any person to whom one mentions the subject naturally asks, 'how do they explain, how do they account for this themselves? What answer do the Turks themselves give to a statement of that kind as to the wholesale character of these horrible things? To my mind hardly anything is more damning in its condemnation than the nature of the defence which is offered. There are three different branches of excuses given, which are summarized for us in this book. The first is *that these were rebellious people*, that they were not really loyal to Turkey's rule. We know that the Turkish rule over them had been for a great many years—and that it was necessary to exercise disciplinary action in order to reduce things to order. This is the way they put it——

*"It was the Ottoman government's duty to uphold public law and order. In war time measures of this kind assume an especially weighty and pressing character."*

"It is not that the thing is not true. As to the next explanation, the quotations I am going to give you would, if one could get away from the horribleness of the whole thing, really have an almost humorous character. The Turkish governor said——

"The sad events that have occurred in Armenia have prevented my sleeping well at night. We have been reproached for making no

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<sup>1</sup>—The British government has allowed worse things to happen in Iraq.

distinction between the innocent Armenians and the guilty; but that was utterly impossible, in view of the fact *that those who were innocent today might be guilty tomorrow.*" That is the second explanation. Is it possible to conceive, *when officials in high places give that as an explanation* of what has taken place, that we can regard the doings in any way except with horror?

"The third explanation is a deliberate statement that it was revenge executed upon Armenians and other Christians residents in Turkey for the fact that Armenians and other Christians were fighting against them in Russia at that time. Here is another quotation—

"Was it not human nature that *we should revenge ourselves on the Armenians at home for the injury we had received from their compatriots fighting against us at the front in the Russian ranks—men who had actually volunteered to fight against us in the enemy's cause?*"

"Therefore, those in their own country were subjects of the Turkish Empire and were allied to those who in another country were fighting against Turkey, were to be treated in the way here described. You will notice that every one of these excuses admits the facts. The facts, as far as I know, have never been challenged *except in vague generalities* asserting that they were gross exaggerations. The facts are patent; the authors of these misdeeds stand self-condemned as well as condemned by the opinion of every reasonable man.

"It is, of course, difficult to know how to deal with the question, and that is a matter which is not within my province or within my power to handle in any way at all. No one contends that it is a very easy matter to know what ought to happen next, and hardly any one contends that we should suppress the Turk in Asia Minor proper; that is in the peninsula west of a line running from Samsoon in the north to Alexandretta in the south. West of that line we admit that Asia Minor is a region under Turkish rule, and presumably it is to continue to prevail with whatever checks or supervision are practicable. No one suggests that they should be suppressed in this region. But east of that line the whole conditions are entirely different. That region has never historically belonged properly to Turkey; is not inhabited by the Turkish races, *nor are the Turks as numerous there as are other races.*

"When the Turkish arrangement of the provinces there was made, I understand that the Wilayets were so constructed and defined as purposely to make the elements contained in them *as heterogeneous as possible so as to prevent a great Christian popula-*



*tion growing up.* The result is that the races are very mixed; and they really have no claim to the Turkish character. They are of all kinds and sorts of races: a very large proportion of Christians, and many Muhammadans. Though strong things have been said as to the nature of the Kurds *many observers say that the Kurds and Armenians would get on fairly well together provided* there was some control of the whole country when the Kurds would commit the outrages which he is only too ready to perpetuate when encouraged by the Turk. This region could get on without Turkish rule with less difficulty than some people suppose.

“But whatever is the process for mending matters, the government and the Allies have declared their resolve quite clearly to prevent a repetition of these outrages.

“I do not think some of Your Lordships, and doubtless many people in the country, realize what a great deal we are doing at this moment for these Christian people. There is a great *camp outside Baghdad* into which the remnant of these refugees, Armenians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans, have been collected up to the number of 50,000, and we are paying for their upkeep and care at the rate of 1,000 pounds a day. It is worth knowing that this country is doing the work on this gigantic scale. We believe that for the moment we are doing what is best for these unhappy people.

“But what is to happen next?—that is the purport of my question. We have always believed firmly that as regards America, when the war was over and the active help which Americans gave us so strenuously during the war ceased to be necessary, we might rely on the same spirit to help us in these matters. It is no more our business in one sense than it is theirs, and we have a right to substantial aid from those who have shared our responsibilities in war and who we believe ought to share them now. *My fear is that the story of these horrors have been almost obliterated* from many minds by the incidents of the war, in which we had perhaps a more direct concern and that they will fade into the background and be forgotten. People will think that we ought to go on now in the way we are going and make the best of it. I do not believe the Government will think that, but I can imagine, and I know, that such an opinion is finding expression in many quarters now.

“It has been definitely promised that whatever flag it is which flies over these regions in the future, the actual control *must never again be in Turkish hands.* I will not trouble Your Lordships with quotations but I will give two from the Prime Minister himself. Speaking in December 20, 1917, in the House of Commons the Prime Minister said this—



“‘What will happen to Mesopotamia must be left to the Peace Congress when it meets; but there is one thing that will never happen; *it will never be restored to the blasting tyranny* of the Turk. At best he was a trustee of this far famed land on behalf of civilization. Ah! what a trustee. *He has been false to his trust*, and his trust, and his trusteeship must be given over to more *competent and more equitable hands* chosen by the Congress which will settle the affairs of the world. That same observation applies to Armenia, the land soaked with blood of innocents massacred by the people who were bound to protect them.’

Speaking a little later the Prime Minister said:

“‘Outside Europe we believe the same principles should be applied. While we do not challenge the maintenance of the Turkish Empire in the homelands of the Turkish race with its capital at Constantinople—the passage between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is being internationalized and neutralized—Arabia, Armenia, Mesopotamia. Syria, and Palestine are, in our judgment, entitled to a recognition of their separate national conditions. What the exact form of that recognition in each particular case should be need not be here discussed, beyond stating that it would be impossible to restore to their former sovereignty the territories to which I have just referred.’

“I ask now, what are we to understand as to their fulfillment? I do not believe I appeal to an unsympathetic tribunal. I apologize for having detained Your Lordships so long but the point raised in the question had to be made clear; it is one which deserves attention and must not pass from the memory of civilized people. It is a matter of vital importance to the honour of humanity and the good-faith and well-being of the world.”

*The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs* (Earl Curzon of Kedleston):

“My Lords, I do not want to stand between the House and my noble friend Lord Bryce, but I have an engagement which compels me to go away presently. *No one will dispute the extreme gravity and the poignant tragedy* of many of the incidents which the most Rev. Primate has placed before us. He has recapitulated from the Blue-book many of the most terrible incidents in the long career of bloodshed, atrocity, and crime which have disfigured what I hope *will be the dying days of the Turkish Empire in those parts of Asia to which he had alluded*. I need not dwell or even comment upon that narrative, which can leave *but one impression on the minds of those who are brought into contact with it*. What the House will be concerned to hear from me is what the government

is doing in the matter, and to know *what is the prospect that lies before the unhappy peoples of whose sufferings we have heard so much from the Rev. Primate.*

"I observe that in his speech the Archbishop moved rather rapidly from Assyrians to Armenians and then from Armenians to other Christian populations, treating them, as it is not unfair to do, as a great aggregate of suffering humanity placed under the cruel heel of the Ottoman Turk. In my reply I ask leave to distinguish rather sharply between them, because I think that Your Lordships will wish to know what is being done for each community in the geographical area in which it is at the present moment. The most Rev. Primate spoke a great deal about the Assyrians, variously known as Nestorians and Chaldeans. He spoke about the remarkable lady who has come from that race and from that country to England, and with whom I, among others, have had the privilege of conversing; and I may say, in passing, that a more remarkable specimen of womanhood, and a lady more competent to speak for the interesting community to which she belongs, it is quite impossible to imagine.

"The most Rev. Primate told us of the existence of this camp at Bakuba, in the vicinity of Baghdad, and spoke of the 50,000 or more refugees who have been there collected. Probably the number is in excess of what he says, and is nearer 53,000 than 50,000. They have been there from the month of September or October, 1918, and they consist partly of Assyrian Christians from the neighbourhood of Lake Urumia in Persia; partly—and this is the larger number—of Assyrians from the regions of Kurdistan; and partly also of Armenians, 12,000 in number, who are included in that total. There, as the Archbishop correctly pointed out, we have been maintaining them ourselves for over a year and a quarter. The cost, I think, has been even greater than the most Rev. Primate anticipated. It has amounted to 4 pounds per head per month, or an aggregate of over 200,000 pounds a month, which works out—I mentioned to Your Lordships that the total period already exceeded a year and a quarter—at 2,500,000 pounds in the year. *These unhappy people* in this country have been occupied in various forms of work—namely, military work, gendarmerie, road-making, camp duties, cultivation, and so on, but of course the important thing is to get them back. The difficulty about that is manifest. In the first place those who are Persians in origin and come from the neighbourhood of the Persian Lake cannot go back to a country access to which is at present closed, and where no sort of security exists, and for the time being the Lady to whom the most Rev.

Primate and myself have referred herself fully realizes that repatriation to the Persian homes of these Christians is not to be contemplated.

"Then there is a further difficulty. We have no right under the terms of the Armistice to repatriate these people to any place outside the Armistice area; in other words, we have no right, even if we had the force (and we have not the force), to take them back into the mountainous region of Kurdistan, and obviously it would be suicidal folly to send them out to be waylaid and murdered on the way. These people themselves are, of course, reluctant to move unless under conditions which give them reasonable security, and as Winter is now approaching I am afraid we cannot expect to do anything substantial until the Spring. Meanwhile the administration of this camp has been taken over by the Assyrians from the military authorities, and it is hoped that the expense will thereby be reduced to 3,000 pounds a day.

"Willing as we have been to pay, we have never quite been able to see why this expenditure, as indeed most of the expenditure of the war in the East, has fallen upon Great Britain alone. Therefore we have invited France, who is greatly interested in that part of the East, to bear her share of the burdens. Our policy is quite clear. It is to get the Persian Assyrians back to their country as soon as conditions admit it; and as regards the Assyrians who lived before and who are willing to live again in the areas which belong to the old Turkish Empire, *either to place them in an enclave adjacent to the territories under our control, so that they may be under our wing and within easy reach of our protection*, or, if we provide a home for them in their former home lands or further afield among the Kurdish peoples, *to try to make such arrangements for them as may secure their safe and decent existence*.

"Here let me say that what the most Rev. Primate said about the relations between the Kurds and the Armenians appears also to be true *about the relations between the Kurds and the Assyrian Christians*, because the Lady who has been referred to told me that she did not anticipate that difficulties would arise from that cause; but the fact is that these people when not stirred up by the Turks, or by local feuds, are quite capable of getting on with each other; indeed, *the Assyrians are in many ways necessary to the Kurds, for the purposes of cultivation and otherwise*. If you can arm a sufficient number of them to act as a sort of gendarmerie to themselves, I believe there is no reason why in the future those two communities *should not live side by side*. That is the object that we are keeping before ourselves, and I hope that when Winter is



over and Spring comes we may be able to take steps to move them back to their own homes. So much for the Assyrian Christians."

Lord Curzon goes on to deal with the question of the Armenians and on page 293 reverts to the declarations made by the Prime Minister as follows:

"The most Rev. Primate alluded to the different declarations that have been made at various times since we went into the country by responsible spokesmen of His Majesty's government. He quoted in particular two declarations made in the course of last year or the year before by the Prime Minister. *By those declarations we stand.* They have never been departed from there. They do not express the sentiments, the aspirations, or the functions of ourselves alone. They are shared by all our Allies. And my Lords, I hope that many months—I may even go further and say that I think that many weeks—will not now elapse before the Allied Powers in Conference are able seriously to come to a solution of the Turkish problem, too long delayed already, and bring it to a satisfactory conclusion."

VISCOUNT BRYCE

". . . That brings me to say a word about the Treaty itself. The first condition of any Treaty to be made with the Turks is that they shall entirely evacuate what is known as Armenia. I share the view which was expressed by the most Rev. Primate that there is no reason why *a Turkish Sultan* should not continue to reign in those parts of Asia Minor where there is a majority of the Moslem population. The Moslem population is in the large majority along the north coast of Asia Minor, and through most parts of the central plateau, and there a Sultan may remain, and if anybody likes—if he can obtain recognition from the Mohamadan world as Caliph—he may remain as Caliph also. But what I believe the public of this country will insist upon, and in fact, what public opinion must insist upon when it knows the facts and realizes those facts upon which the most Rev. Primate dwelt—the immense scale and the circumstances of horror which attended these massacres and which have shown once again how utterly unfit the Turk is to exercise powers *over persons of different faith and race*—is that there shall be no more Turkish rule in Armenia nor in those other regions, *Chaldean and Assyrian*, in which the massacres have been perpetrated. . . I need only remind Your Lordships that if you desire to have any other view of the conduct of the Turks

and the character of those massacres in addition to that which the Blue-book presents, to which the most Rev. Primate has referred, you will find it in the book of Mr. Morgenthau, the American Ambassador at Constantinople during the period of the massacres. He tells us himself that he constantly went to *Enver and Talaat*, who are the two chiefs of the Committee of Union and Progress and the persons chiefly responsible for planning and carrying out the massacres. He represented to them that the world would be outraged if those things continued, and he tried for the same purpose to enlist the sympathy of the German Ambassador, Wangenheim. He describes there how Talaat and Enver did not attempt to conceal the massacres, did not deny what their policy of extermination was. They did it all with a deliberate purpose; they were supported by the other members of the Committee of Union and Progress, and not a word was said amongst the Turks against these massacres."

LORD LAMINGTON: *And the Germans.*

"Viscount Bryce: *Yes, the Germans also knew; but I am speaking now of Turkish opinion. Not a word was said in Turkey, or by the Committee of Union and Progress, to depreciate the massacres; and the Germans, through Wangenheim, absolutely refused to interfere.*"

## CHAPTER XIII

### ASSYRIANS IN PERSIA AND MESOPOTAMIA, (1918 - 1919)

The following article is written by<sup>1</sup> Colonel J. J. McCarthy who headed the British Military Mission to the Assyrians during the Great War. Reading between the lines, the British betrayal of the Assyrians is self-evident. Coming from a disinterested Englishman as it does, the statement cannot be challenged. This statement of facts will dispel the British Government's statements, now so common, that it was not they who asked the Assyrians to fight the Turks. Whatever may be said, the Turks do know that the British official statement is devoid of foundation. (The footnotes are mine.)

"It was either before or shortly after leaving Baghdad en route for Persia General Dunsterville got in communication with the Assyrians at Lake Urmia with the idea of getting them to join force with us against the Turk. This they willingly agreed to do provided we sent British officers to lead them, as they did not at that stage trust the Russians they had with them.<sup>1</sup>

"It was decided to send a force of 75 British officers and N.C.O.'s to Lake Urmia and I was appointed to command this special mission.

"About this time Flying Officer Captain Pennington flew to Lake Urmia with despatches from our Headquarters at Hamadan. I did not see these despatches but I was well aware that they contained confirmation of what had already been written and to advise the Assyrians of our coming to join them. Seeing the aeroplane arrive and receiving the news that a British force was in Persia and on the way to join them, no doubt gave the Assyrians an exaggerated idea of our strength in Persia, and a false idea of their own security. Had they not depended so entirely on the assistance that they were to receive from us and had Agha Petros<sup>2</sup>

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1—See his letter in the Assyrian Tragedy, Annemasse, p. 14.

2—Died in France in 1933.



not taken practically the whole of his armed force to take over arms and ammunition sent on in advance by us, the Assyrians would have looked more to their own resources, and would not have depended so much on our help.

"They more than held their own in many engagements against the Turks; they had food and by nursing their ammunition they could have held out against any likely attack from the Turk, who was not exactly full of fight at that stage and very soon after went out of the War altogether. Even if the worst happened and they had been driven out of there by an overwhelming force, which was not at all likely at the time, they could have fallen back on their mountain stronghold and probably got in touch with British troops on the Mosul side; they were certainly not driven out by a superior force, but stampeded by false reports circulated by the enemy, and thinking that Agha Petros had deserted them at Urmia I am sure the stampede would never have taken place, but it must be remembered that we were a small force, living on the country and General Dunsterville had his hands full at the time preparing his landing at Baku. His officers were employed on various jobs and could not be recalled at the moment's notice. There were two groups of Persian levies which used up a considerable number of officers and N.C.O.'s, and our lines of communication extending from Baghdad to the Caspian Sea accounted for a great many more.

"We had to rely mostly on local contractors (thoroughly dishonest and unreliable) for our transport, so that the officers for the Special Mission I was to command were not available at a moment's notice, more especially as they had to be volunteers and specially selected.

When it was known that the whole nation was in retreat, I went at once with a portion of my force with the idea of turning back the fighting men and allowing the families to continue to Hamadan, and met them retreating on a wide front, the families on the main road, the men extended for miles on either side of the road covering the retreat. It was therefore quite impossible to get in touch at all with the bulk of the fighting men, being confined as I was to the main road.

"Apart from being harassed by the enemy every known disease seemed to attack these unfortunate people, and hundreds died from typhus, dysentery and small-pox, and others from exhaustion. It was a common thing to see children, still alive, abandoned on the roadside, the parents probably dead. Wherever they camped for

the night the ground next morning was littered with dead and dying. What these unfortunate people suffered few can realize. Some 10,000 were cut off by the Turks, and so far as I know have never been seen again.

"Eventually what was left of the Nation arrived at Hamadan. All those I met in the retreat had one idea, and one idea only, and that was they were going to Hamadan where they would join up with British force promised them and return at once, drive out the Turk and reoccupy their country.

"This is precisely what they all had in their minds."

"A few weeks later when I was raising the Assyrian Contingent, with the help of Lady Surma, the men all thought they were returning home at once. Not only did they themselves think so, but they were definitely told by me that they would be taken back under British officers and that I was to command them. Surely there cannot be any doubt, and I am sure that nobody holding any responsible post and on the spot at the time would dispute the fact that this is what was intended when the fighting men were formed into a contingent, placed in a separate camp outside Hamadan where they underwent strenuous training under British officers, and were fed, and to a certain extent clothed by us.

"I sent an officer to Teheran to buy back rifles and ammunition which had been sold in the bazaars by the Russian troops. All this was not done and these men were not being trained for the defence of Persia!

"Again when it was decided to march the contingent down to Mesopotamia the men were told by me that it was only to have them properly trained and equipped, and to be armed with all British rifles instead of the various pattern rifles they had, and which would have made it impossible to keep them supplied with ammunition, should they meet with armed resistance when returning to their homes or after they got there.

"It was never even suggested that they should be kept in Mesopotamia, and used for the defence of the country. They were, of course, eventually used for that purpose and greatly distinguished themselves in the fields on several occasions.

"I remained in command of the Assyrian Contingent at Baqubah for six months after the Armistice was signed, and during the whole of that time the men were kept in strenuous training. It was explained to them that the reason for their being trained as soldiers long after the War was over, was in order to make them more efficient, not only to escort their people back to their own country, but also to be better able to defend themselves when they got there.



This was the explanation given me at G.H.Q. at Baghdad. This they understood and never have any troops been more amenable to discipline than these Highlanders from Tiyyari and Tkhuma. The British officers who were seconded from various regiments for service with the contingent could not speak too highly of them.

"The presence of the Assyrians at Lake Urmia right up until they stampeded certainly helped to prevent enemy agents from going backwards and forwards across Persia to the East, and during the latter part of 1918 they were a great protection to General Dunsterville's lines of communication between Kermenshah and Hamadan, and had we been able to join them at Urmia with a stiffening of British officers and machine guns there is little doubt but that we should have been able to hold Baku against the Turk. In view of the fact that recent amendments to the British Arms Regulations legalized the retention by the Assyrians of their British Army Pattern Rifles, and also, as it was added that neither His Majesty's Government, nor that of Iraq would object to their going to Syria, or elsewhere if their hosts acceded to their desires and defrayed expenses, and the fact that the French Government did allow them to remain and feed and lodged them it is difficult to see what offense they committed that they should be declared *Rebels* and deprived of the rifles to which they were legally entitled.

"As Doctor Wigram points out in his book "Cradle of Mankind" life is hard in the Hakkiari Mountains; all cultivation is on terraces which are subject to constant danger of destruction by floods and avalanches. It therefore does seem that the only object the Turk had for acquiring this country was to deny it to the rightful owners. They cannot possibly have any other use for it.

"It has been suggested that an arrangement should be made to settle the Assyrians as a whole in Syria, but I understand that while the French government is prepared to receive a certain number of them they cannot accommodate the whole nation, or what is left of it! To divide the people in this way<sup>1</sup> would be most unsatisfactory and it is extremely unlikely that *Mar Shimun* and his people would agree to it. Nor would it add to British prestige in the East if we allow the French Government to relieve us of our responsibility and settle this question for us. Whatever happens they should be settled as a homogeneous unit, and not, as suggested by the Iraq Government, interspersed among their enemies, or in Syria. If it should prove impossible to effect a homogeneous settlement the Mandates Commission hoped that Turkey might be induced

1—The author entirely agrees with this view.



to give them back their home in Southern Hakkari district of which they had been deprived by an "error" in the League Council's decision of 1925, and this would appear to be the right solution to the problem. England should face the position and bring pressure to bear on the Turks, or even compensate them to give back Hakkari to the rightful owners, or alternatively to settle the Assyrians as a homogeneous unit, under their Patriarch, in Kurdistan, if it was thought that they would bury the hatchet and live peacefully with the Kurds.

"Loyalty to the British Government caused these people to be driven out of their house and an error in the League Council's decision of 1925 deprived them of the right to ever return. The Mandates Commission of 1931-1932 having admitted that these people have a special claim upon the League. It seems impossible that the British Government will allow the matter to stand where it is at present, but will doubtless make every endeavour to have their country restored to them as promised in 1918.

(Signed) J. J. McCarthy Lt. Col.

Late Commandant Assyrian Contingent

Devonshire Club, St. James Street,

17th November, 1933."

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE ASSYRIANS BEFORE THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS IN 1932

All written representations of the Assyrians in Iraq to the League of Nations having failed to produce a reasonable solution of the Assyrian problem, due to the persistent obstructive attitude of His Britannic Majesty's Government at Geneva, and in view of the verbal and written encouragement of Sir Francis Humphrys to the *Mar Shimun* that:

"You know that I shall do everything in my power to help you and your people at Geneva. All I ask Your Beatitude and the Assyrian leaders is that they should assist me by maintaining the levies in loyal service and the people in a calm spirit until the decision of the League of Nations has been received. (Sir Francis' letter of June 18, 1932)."

The *Mar Shimun*, at the specific request of all the Assyrian leaders, decided to travel to Geneva at the people's expense to place the Assyrian case—seriously misrepresented in the past—before the League in person and moreover to ascertain whether or not the last promise of Sir Francis would not be broken as on former occasions. There was no necessity for such a test; the immediate past spoke for itself.

During his visit to Mosul in 1931, Sir Francis promised the Assyrians all conceivable support at Geneva if they left matters in his hands. The Assyrians—though by now tired of these empty promises — placed their confidence in the word of Great Britain's representative and awaited patiently for his return from Geneva or for

the news that the press agencies might convey to them. They were utterly surprised to discover in the minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission for June, 1931, which were broadcast in Iraq, a most venomous and vengeful attack on the *Mar Shimun* by the same man who promised support—a discourteous and unheeding attack—that left no doubt in the minds of the Assyrians that a grave danger was confronting them.

The purpose of Sir Francis' unjustified attack was to undermine the prestige of the *Mar Shimun* among the Assyrians, following which the collapse of the Assyrian organization would be a matter of months. This policy meant the extinction of the Assyrians as a Race. Sir Francis' plan was a complete failure. The Assyrians, far from being affected by Sir Francis' virulent attack, became more attached to the *Mar Shimun* about whom their aspirations centered and with whom they were prepared to die—rather than shoulder the Arab yoke.

Nuri's overtures to the *Mar Shimun* at Geneva to persuade him to withdraw his complaints against Iraq met with persistent refusal. Sir Francis was reminded of his promises made in "good faith", but his replies, as usual, were intolerably vague and evasive.

The Assyrian case went up before the Council of the League of Nations in accordance with the official procedure and here again difficulties emanating from behind the scenes intervened.

Extracts from the discussions that took place should be of interest to the reader and I am of the opinion that they have a direct bearing on the massacre that followed. These will be found at the end of this chapter.



I do not share the view of those who say that the League of Nations is partly responsible for the horrors that have taken place. The members of the Council of the League and particularly the Permanent Mandates Commission admitted that they had no direct means to insure the safety of the Iraq minorities unless someone with plenary power was on the spot. They knew that they were dealing with a very backward and fanatical State, and that according to its teachings all means are lawful to reduce the non-Moslem to the status of bondage. They were aware that it was the duty of Great Britain, rather than theirs, to protect the minorities—or at least those of Iraq—and it was its repeated assurances to do so that influenced their action in abandoning the minorities. The League is a visionary body which cannot be reasonably expected to shoulder responsibilities which others were willing to take. In the case under review, Britain shouldered the responsibility and the League—though admittedly reluctant—was willing to throw the responsibility on Britain. The League could not have insisted more than it did on the necessity of practical protection of the minorities nor could it have refused the admission of Iraq to the ‘Holy Place’. The admission of Iraq in 1932 was cut and dried since 1929, as Britain had undertaken since that date to admit Iraq unconditionally, provided Iraq was prepared to sign a Treaty of Alliance before admission, which would safeguard the British interests in Iraq. Iraq signed the Treaty under conditions to be explained hereafter. Britain inundated the League of Nations with flowery reports on the fitness of Iraq. The High Commissioner, in a secret circular to all the British provincial officials, conveyed to them the principles by which they should be guided in order to facilitate the acquisition of this coveted Treaty.

A British officer who had been in the country for many years was bound by his duty to come in daily contact with all classes of people, (whose experience was necessarily much wider than the High Commissioner issuing the circular), did not hesitate to offer the following remarks: "Have never seen such balls in my life."

There was the fear that the Iraqi extremists and intriguers (the majority of whom are such) would prevent the passing of the Treaty by the cabinet and the parliament. It was, therefore, arranged with the King of Iraq that he should be proclaimed a dictator with a cabinet appointed by him in consultation with the Mandatory Power. Resolutions of the cabinet were to be executed after agreement with the British officials. The Advisor of the Ministry of Interior accordingly issued orders to the Administrative Inspectors to be prepared to take over direct charge of their respective divisions in accordance with his instructions which had the approval of the King. The reason was that the British policy was being opposed by even the most moderate people like Sir 'Abdul Muhsin beg al Sa'dun. It was most unfortunate that 'Abdul Muhsin beg should have committed suicide casting the shadow of tragedy over the Sa'dun family. Parenthetically, may we say that this, a spirited altercation between Major Hubert Young and 'Abdul Muhsin Beg at Qasr Kadhim Pasha, and 'Abdul's self-destruction on the same day, are no mere inconsequential sequence of events.

There was a complete silence as to what the terms of the new Treaty would be. The Kurds became restive and the other minorities began to feel apprehensive. Sir Francis became terribly occupied in answering letters of the leaders of the Christian minorities, other than the Assyrians whose case was "Special", assuring them that their interests would be safeguarded—though omitted in

the Treaty—by the League of Nations when the Iraqi case went up before the League. His answers were typical of those in possession of Mgr. Yusuf Khayyat, the Syrian Catholic clergyman—a Christian deputy until 1932.

Mgr. Berre, the Papal Delegate, sent in his protests on behalf of the Roman Catholics. No sooner did Mgr. Berre take a public attitude in defending the rights of the Christians than his postal communications with Rome were placed under censorship and on six occasions he discovered that his letters were destroyed. He lodged an official complaint with Major Wilson, the Administrative Inspector, who as usual, acted as a post letter box. His untimely death late in 1929 at Mosul greatly weakened the case of the followers of Rome who were left alone undefended. Mgr. Berre's death was a severe blow to the Christians, for the blunders committed by his successor clearly indicate that a bright future does not await the Christians in that part of the world.

A. VI/P.V.3. 1932.

### **League of Nations**

#### **Thirteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly**

#### **Sixth Committee**

#### **Provisional Minutes**

of the Third Meeting held on Saturday, 1st October, 1932,  
at 10 A.M.

Chairman: M. LANGE

NOTE: The comments contained in parentheses are mine.

**The Chairman:** "Iraq had subscribed to a declaration whereby it had entered into the undertakings required by the Council in regard to the protection of minorities." (Who would see that this declaration is honoured? The man who signed this declaration on behalf of Iraq had, before presenting it to the League, announced



in Parliament on the 5th of May, 1932, that this declaration would not in any way alter the attitude of the government towards the minorities.)

**Sir Denys Bray** (India): "The admission of Iraq as a member of the League would be sincerely welcomed in India." (Is that all?). . . "He hoped that the manner in which Iraq dealt with her admittedly difficult minorities would stand forth as a worthy and lasting example to other countries both in Asia and in Europe." (I am sure other civilized countries would not like to follow the example of Iraq given to the world in August of 1933.)

**M. Dollfus** (Switzerland) . . . "and that country's application for admission to the League was a very welcome occurrence at a time when confidence in the League's work was undergoing a severe test. That was why he attached very great importance to the assurances given by the Mandatory Power in regard to the protection of racial and religious minorities in Iraq. (How do these assurances tally with the statement of Mr. Arthur Henderson, British Foreign Minister, when he said that "when Iraq is admitted to the League, British responsibility would be no more and no less than any other power in the League of Nation?"). In this respect, he felt that he was speaking not merely for his own country but for public opinion throughout the world. In particular, the League would follow with intense interest and solicitude the future of that Assyrian Nation which, after being driven from Turkey to Persia, had finally settled in Iraq; even then its troubles had not been at an end. It had, for instance, been settled in villages abandoned by the Kurds which villages the Kurds had then re-occupied. The Assyrians were in a sense stateless, had suffered greatly from malaria and the nature of the regions granted to them was not over-hospitable. The same observation applied to the small Chaldean minority. Public opinion demanded the fullest guarantees for the protection of these Christian minorities."

**Viscount Cecil of Chelwood** (United Kingdom) was confident that Iraq was fully able to fulfill her duties as a member of the League. It should be noted that the admission of Iraq constituted a precedent (a very bad one indeed). The most elaborate precautions had, therefore, been taken and every aspect of the question had been most carefully examined (the massacre took place only ten months after this declaration). He could assure the delegates of Switzerland that the closest attention of the League and of the British Government had been paid to the question of the Assyrian minority. This point had in fact been specially submitted to the Foreign Office

and British authorities in Iraq. (Did the latter authorities truly represent the Assyrian case?). Only after the fullest enquiries and on the strength of specific assurances (I suppose assurances of the Iraq Government with whom I would not venture to entrust a cow) had the British come to the conclusion that the entry of Iraq into the League as a sovereign State would be to the advantage not only of Iraq but also of the Assyrians. (Too high a logic for me to comprehend). He could further assure M. Dollfus that the very best land available had been given to the Assyrians. (Why then infant mortality at times, 100 per cent?). The problem of land had not been an easy one to solve (Cherchez the Arab officials).

"Obviously the League, after the admission of Iraq, could not continue to supervise the situation of minorities in a direct manner. (That is exactly why we maintain that the League has not, and cannot, have the least responsibility for what has taken place). He personally was convinced that Iraq would deal fairly, not only with her Assyrian minority, but with all her minorities. (Past history of Iraq would challenge this statement). It should be noted that the minorities' declaration accepted by Iraq was the most stringent that had ever been drafted. (Very true, but on paper only). If anything went radically wrong the League could take action but personally he was sure that nothing of that kind would occur. (But we told you this would occur). Iraq was anxious to show that she was worthy of the confidence placed in her and her record had really been a good one." (Should have said a really bad one.)

C.770.1932.VI.

C.P.M.1930(3)

Geneva, November 14th, 1932.

## Iraq

Communications from the Assyrians population forwarded in connection with the termination of the mandatory régime in Iraq and referred to in the Council's decision of September 24th, 1932.

## Opinion of the Permanent Mandates Commission.

"... The Permanent Mandates Commission,

"Having examined the petitions from the Assyrian community in Iraq which have been forwarded to the League of Nations since the Commission's twenty-first session.

"Having noted the observations of the United Kingdom Gov-



ernment on those petitions and heard the additional information given orally by the representative of that Government.

“Endorsing the attached conclusions of its Rapporteur,

“Draws the Council’s special attention to the great importance both for the Assyrians themselves and for Iraq of providing the Assyrians with opportunities for settlement in a homogeneous group which would satisfy their economic needs,

“For the rest, it considers, for the reasons stated in its Rapporteur’s conclusions, that there is no need for it to submit to the Council any other special recommendation in regard to those petitions.”

### **Conclusions of the Rapporteur to the Permanent Mandates Commission.**

“From a comparison of the documents analyzed above and of the numerous petitions previously addressed to the League by Assyrian groups or on behalf of the Assyrians of Iraq there arises a definite impression that this community is dissatisfied with its present lot and profoundly uneasy as to its future. A few discordant voices in this concert of complaints and appeals to the League only emphasize its practical unanimity.

“It should not, however, be inferred—as the Commission has already pointed out on other occasions, while expressing the concern with which it views the position of the minorities—that either Mandatory Power or the Iraqi authorities are open to grave reproach for the manner in which the Assyrians settled in Iraq have been treated under the mandatory system.

“Among the Assyrians of Iraq the greater number, who have come from Turkey into Asia, have found shelter in this country in the course of the last few years. They are encamped there in conditions which, in most cases, are precarious and miserable: they are refugees.

“They have had to be settled on land. In fact, these mountaineers have been settled in districts consisting of marshy and unhealthy plains, or dispersed in small groups or families in the midst of the Kurdish or Arab population.

“In the petitions which the Commission has had to deal with at its previous sessions, we find an expression of the feeling of insecurity inspired in the Assyrians, not only by the climate, with the casualties which it causes in their ranks, by the sterility of the land which has been assigned to them and by the precariousness of



their rights to cultivate the soil, but *especially by the scattering of their community among populations of other races.*

"It is this latter circumstances which explains these individual acts of violence, these attacks against persons and property which the Assyrians have constantly complained of, and which they fear—since the cessation of British control has appeared imminent—will be multiplied to the point of making the conditions of existence of their community definitely intolerable.

"The root cause of the state of unrest revealed by the petitions we are dealing with resides in the fact that it has not yet been possible to collect the Assyrians of Iraq into a homogeneous group in a region suitable to their needs.

"Your Rapporteur is inclined to think that as long as this has not been done the discontent and moral dissidence of this section of its population will remain like a thorn in the flesh of Iraq. This opinion seems to fall in with that of the government of the United Kingdom when it states that 'the return of the Assyrians to their old homes in the Hakkari mountains would still undoubtedly be the best solution'.

"It has not been proved to the satisfaction of an impartial observer that lands combining the requisite conditions for the settlement of the Assyrians in a homogeneous group do not exist in Iraq, or that the possibility of re-settling them in their country of origin must be definitely ruled out. It would be desirable for the Council of the League to use its influence in favour of one or other of these solutions being sincerely sought.

"We share the confidence of the government of the United Kingdom in the part which the Assyrian element is destined to play in Iraq, but we are inclined to believe that the Assyrians would be still more unlikely to remain loyal subjects if they were placed in conditions more closely approaching to those which they had been led to expect in view of the circumstances to which they draw attention.

". . . . A modification of the northern frontiers of Iraq as defined in the Council's decision of 1925 and in the provisions of the Angora Treaty of 1926 suggested in the second petition could only take place as a result of an agreement between the States concerned. Such an agreement might constitute a satisfactory solution and be sought by Iraq should it be found that there was no territory in Iraq itself which was suitable for the settlement of the Assyrians as a homogeneous group.

"As regards the future status of minorities in Iraq, which is also dealt with in this petition, it has already been defined and

guaranteed by the declaration recently signed by the Iraqi government on the recommendation of the Council of the League of Nations. This declaration makes it open in future to the Assyrians, as to the other minorities in Iraq, to resort to the ordinary procedure in the matter of the protection of minorities."

**Report Presented to the Permanent Mandates Commission by M. Orts, Member of the Commission, Rapporteur.**

"The signatories of the petitions of October 20th and 23rd, 1931, assert that it will be impossible for them to *live* in Iraq after the withdrawal of the Mandate. They therefore ask that arrangements be made for the transfer of the Assyrians in Iraq to a country under the rule of any of the Western nations, or, if this is not possible, to Syria.

"The Government of the United Kingdom replied in its observations that if the French Government, or any other European Government were prepared to offer the Assyrians compact accommodation, (once the Assyrians are out of Iraq, it is no longer a concern of the United Kingdom Government) to guarantee them fair and permanent conditions, (presumably same as in Iraq!) and to finance their transport, and if the Assyrians themselves desired to accept the offer, neither the Mandatory Power, nor the Iraqi Government, would object.

"Such a contingency, however, seemed so remote that the United Kingdom Government did not think it expedient to take any steps in the matter." (Why? Are there in mind more military expeditions against the Kurds? Give the Kurds their national rights and then there will be no necessity to use the Assyrians against their friendly neighbours to maintain a "balance of power.")

II.

**League of Nations.**

**Sixty-Ninth Session of the Council**

C./69th Session/P.V. II.

**Eleventh Meeting (Public)**

*Held on Monday, December 5th, 1932, at 4 P.M.*

President: Mr. Connolly.

". . . . **M. Marquis Theodoli**, thanked the Council for giving him an opportunity to expound briefly the reasons for the grave

apprehensions felt by the Permanent Mandates Commission for the future of the Assyrian refugees in Iraq.

"On the outbreak of the war, the descendants of that ancient race had been living in the mountains of Kurdistan. About 30,000 had perished in the defence of their homes or succumbed on the road to exile. The disaster had broken up families, severing wives from their husbands and children from their parents. The survivors were now dispersed in Russia, Persia and some 35 and 40 thousand of them, in Iraq.

"For many years the fate of those in Iraq had constantly preoccupied the Permanent Mandates Commission in consequence of the appeals and complaints which in the form of petitions the Mandatory Régime had enabled them to bring to the notice of the League.

"The Mosul Commission's Report testified to the faith reposed by these unhappy people in the League. Their entire attitude had moreover shown their unbounded confidence in the United Kingdom as mandatory for Iraq.

"As the Mosul Commission had observed at the time of the 1925 enquiry, all Christians had pronounced in favour of the allocation of the Mosul Wilayet to Iraq, since that, in their view, meant they were placing themselves under British protection. The Assyrians indeed did not fail to recall the belief in which they had been upheld that the British Mandate over Iraq would last for not less than twenty-five years.

"They had had full confidence in the Mandatory Power and had unreservedly placed their fate in its hands. Throughout the duration of the Mandate these refugees had furnished the recruits for the Assyrian Levies, which had been the most trustworthy auxiliary force at the Mandatory Power's disposal in the country, and had for twelve years maintained order on the Iraqi frontiers and preserved their integrity wherever they were menaced.

"That had been the position right down to the announcement of the forthcoming cessation of British control, which had caused deep perturbation among the Assyrian community in Iraq. From that time petitions had flowed into the League.

"The petitions which, by its decision of September 24th last, on the eve of Iraq's entry into the League, the Council had instructed the Permanent Mandates Commission to examine, represented a last appeal to the solicitude of the League and likewise of the former Mandatory Power. Had not indeed, the latter stated, through its accredited representative to the Permanent Mandates Commission,



THAT IN RECOMMENDING IRAQ'S ADMISSION TO THE LEAGUE IT REGARDED ITSELF AS 'MORALLY RESPONSIBLE?'

"The Permanent Mandates Commission's report was before the council and showed that in the Commission's opinion there was some justification for the apprehensions felt by the Assyrians in Iraq for the future of their race.

"Experience moreover had shown that in Iraq racial and religious prejudices still held sway. He would merely mention the case of the Bahai sect in Baghdad, WHICH SOME YEARS PREVIOUSLY HAD BEEN THE VICTIM OF A DENIAL OF JUSTICE WHICH HAD NOT YET BEEN REPAIRED, notwithstanding THE RECOMMENDATIONS RENEWED BY THE COUNCIL ON FOUR SEPARATE OCCASIONS;

"There was in the conclusion to the Commission's report one proposal, viz. 'Draws. . . . special attention to the great importance both for the Assyrians themselves and for Iraq of providing the Assyrians with opportunities for settlement in a HOMOGENEOUS GROUP which would be in keeping with their tradition and would satisfy their economic needs.'

"In the Commission's view—and he would urge this point particularly—THERE WAS NO OTHER SOLUTION FOR THE POLITICAL SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEM WHICH WAS THE CENTRAL POINT IN ALL THE ASSYRIAN PETITIONS:

"It was by reason of the grave character of the matter before the Council that the Chairman of the Permanent Mandates Commission had decided to draw the Council's particular attention to this question. ON THE SOLUTION FOUND TO IT MIGHT DEPEND THE FUTURE OF THE REMNANT OF A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN THE EAST."

**M. Massigli** (France), speaking as French Representative, willingly assented to M. Bene's proposal; (Formation of a sub-committee). "The past glories and present misfortunes of the Assyrian people gave it so strong a title to the solicitude of the Council that the latter could not but associate itself with the anxieties which had given rise to the discussion and which had found expression both in the Mandates Commission's report and in the statement just made by its Chairman. Further, the very special character of the case before the Council must be plainly recognized, and the Rapporteur had not failed to draw attention to it. Means

must be found for putting an end to a problem with which the Council had been previously concerned following on reports from the Mandates Commission at the time when Iraq was still in a state of tutelage. M. Massigli expressed his satisfaction that the Council would continue to be able to avail itself of the Mandates Commission's advice in solving this problem.

"That being the case, he would merely put forward the hope that the Council Committee which it was proposed to set up would speedily bring this work to a successful conclusion. He desired also to emphasize the importance of the Assyrian people's recovering, as soon as possible, the feeling of security which was one of the conditions for its development."

**Sir John Simon** was very glad, on behalf of his Government, to give his willing adhesion to the Rapporteur's proposal, which seemed to him, under the circumstances, to be the best way of dealing with this matter. All members of the Council felt the greatest anxiety to secure the best mode of treatment for this very difficult case. This ancient people, with its great traditions, and now very reduced in numbers, left their homes in Turkish Kurdistan and they were the survivors of the Assyrian nation who found their way as refugees into Russian territory. The United Kingdom, in view of its responsibilities in that area, was very well aware of their difficulties, and had shown in a very practical way its interest in their fate. (For the United Kingdom had interest in the Assyrians). This people were housed, fed, and clothed for years, (one year) at the expense of the United Kingdom Government, and although the latter were not responsible for their entry into the War on the side of the Allies, they had continually given the best assistance they could, which undoubtedly was needed. (Were not the Assyrians in need of this assistance when they were being massacred in August, 1933, in Iraq?) It so happened that the Mosul boundary, as decided by the Council, did not include, as the United Kingdom had suggested, the district on the Turkish side from which many of these refugees came. (Sir John Simon refers to **Hakkiari**. The British Government's aim, by asking the inclusion of that region in Iraq, was not in my opinion primarily for the explicit good of the Assyrians. The Turk **MUST** not be in the vicinity of the Mosul oil.) Whilst not in any way challenging that decision, the United Kingdom Government could not but view with gravity the present position of these people.

**M. Biancheri** gladly supported, on behalf of the Italian Government, M. Benes' proposal to set up a Committee of the Council to consider the question of the Assyrian communities in Iraq. At the



same time he expressed the hope that the question would be settled as soon as possible and that the solution would be such as to allay the apprehensions of the Assyrians. This would be in the interests of Iraq itself, whose development and progress were followed by the Council with keen sympathy.

**M. Andvord** accepted the resolution proposed by the Rapporteur and stated that the Norwegian Government attached great importance to the satisfactory solution of the question. It concerned the fate of a people which had been sorely tried for many years, which was justified in counting on the realization of its hopes and whose only object was to live in peace.

**M. Von Weizsacker** said that the remarks made by the various speakers proved the interest taken by the Council in the fate of the Assyrian community settled in Iraq.

He associated himself with the Rapporteur's proposal and hoped that it would be possible to find a method which would be acceptable to the Iraq Government and in keeping with the legitimate aspirations of a community which might rest assured of the Council's entire sympathy.

**M. Benes** thanked his colleagues for accepting his proposal. The question was a grave one and involved the moral responsibility of the Council and the League. The Council was bound to settle this question to the satisfaction of all concerned. That was perfectly feasible."

### League of Nations

C.69th Session/P.V.14.

#### Sixty-ninth Session of the Council

#### Fourteenth Meeting (Public)

*held on Thursday, December 15, 1932, at 4:15 P.M.*

President: Mr. Sean Lester.

Present: All the representatives of the Members of the Council and the Secretary-General; The United Kingdom was represented by the Hon. A. Cadogan; France by M. Masigli; Germany by M. Von Weizsacker; Italy by M. Biancheri; Japan by M. Nagacka; Norway by M. Lange; Poland by Count Raczynski.

Below is an extract from the resolution passed by the Council of the League of Nations at the above meeting on the recommendation of the Committee of Three refer-



red to in the former discussions. It should be remarked that all the members had stated that a *homogeneous settlement* was the only means by which to make the Assyrians feel secure. Through pressure brought to bear on the Committee of Three, the question of homogeneous settlement was changed into that of homogeneous units, an expression that allowed to Iraq Government to disperse the Assyrians which resulted in an exodus to Syria. The relative part of the resolution was this:

"Notes with satisfaction the declaration by the representatives of Iraq of the intention of the Iraq Government to select from outside Iraq a foreign expert to assist them for a limited period in the settlement of all landless inhabitants of Iraq including Assyrians and in the carrying out of their scheme for the settlement of the Assyrians of Iraq under suitable conditions and, so far as may be possible, in homogeneous units, it being understood that the existing rights of the present population shall not be prejudiced."

The *Mar Shimun*, who was then in Geneva naturally felt very perturbed at the sudden change because his many years' experience of *settlement schemes* left no doubt in his mind that the resolution, unless so altered as to be harmonious with its original tenor that was intended, and carried out under the auspices of the League, would be disastrous to his people. To discharge the duty he owed his people, he addressed the following note to the League of Nations, which I repeat verbatim for its historical character and for pointing out to those who sold the honor of their wives and daughters for mundane interests.

*Geneva, December 16, 1932.*

*His Excellency,*

*President, Permanent Mandates Commission,  
League of Nations, Geneva.*

*Sir,*

*I beg to bring the following petition before Your Excellency.*

*As the Assyrian petition dated the 17th of June, 1932 and subsequent petition dated 22nd of September, 1932, were both ad-*

*dressed to you and the procedure followed with regard to them consisted of a consultation of the Mandates Commission as if Iraq was still considered to be under Mandatory Regime in so far as the question of Assyrian refugees was concerned, I most respectfully beg to submit the following for your kind consideration and favourable disposal.*

*The resolution passed by the Council of the League of Nations on the 15 December, 1932, is not in conformity with the spirit of the recommendations set forward by Your Commission from time to time and does not in any way guarantee the least hope, not only for the future welfare and safeguard of the Assyrian as a whole, i. e. in the way of a homogeneous settlement in Iraq, but not even for a quick way for urgent relief work for the 15,000 Assyrians who are now living without homes and utterly destitute in Iraq. The conditions under which this part of the Assyrians are at present living are fully explained in the appendix to my letter dated 3rd November 1932, which replies to observations made by Iraqi Government to Assyrian petition dated 17th June, 1932. (See note B. on numbers unsettled).*

*Thus after having personally represented the case of my people before you and the members of the Council for a period of three months in every way that has given you the most authentic information of their past and present pathetic state, I am returning, and I have to give them the message that they are still to continue under the same state of suffering.*

*Excellency, I again beg leave to repeat that the resolution of the Council adopted on the 15th December, 1932, will not in any way better the present miserable conditions of the Assyrians in general and especially those in Iraq. It is an admitted fact that the Assyrians are still refugees in Iraq whose problem the late mandatory power has failed to solve and, therefore, that problem was left to the League of Nations. At the same time it is inconceivable how this problem is practicable to be solved by a "foreign expert" who is not authorized by the League of Nations itself directly, and who will simply depend on the facilities given to him by the local authorities on the spot and any local funds that may be forthcoming.*

*In my opinion a solution of the problem cannot be formed if the carrying out of any plan is entirely left to discretion of Iraqi Government and the "foreign expert" appointed by it.*

*I therefore implore Your Excellency to be so kind as to approach the Council of the League and obtain their consent to the following points.*

(1) *That their decision of the 15th December, 1932 may be reconsidered in the light of full recommendations of your Commission and the needs of the Assyrians as already laid down before it, i. e. granting a full homogeneous settlement under the auspices of a Commission of the League of Nations, after completion.*

(2) *If however, a full alteration of the Council's resolution is impossible, I still request that its decision may be modified as follows:—*

*That instead of a "foreign expert" appointed by the Government of Iraq, a member of the League of Nations from a disinterested party be appointed for the work fully authorized by the League Council to make the project of a homogeneous settlement operative in so far as it will not be prejudicial to the present legal possessors of the land. Moreover, in this connection I beg to point out that, if the scheme is entirely left to the Iraq Government even in its financial aspect, it will never be operative, since that government has already admitted that "no funds are available for further settlement operations" (vide reply from H. E. Nuri Pasha to the Assyrian petition addressed to H. E. the British High Commissioner in Iraq—letter No. 3083 dated 2nd August, 1932, printed as appendix VI.)*

*In conclusion, I beg to add that I have discharged my duty in this respect before the late mandatory power and the League of Nations to my utmost, and if the Council will, still in spite of this my humble and last request in the name of my people, refuse to consider their last decision, the consequences will be inevitable disaster, unparalleled in the history of this remnant of the Assyrian nation and the Oldest Christian Church.*

*If Your Excellency is not the competent authority to deal with this petition, I would be most grateful if you would kindly pass it to the authority concerned.*

*I have the honour to be, Sir, Your Obedient Servant.*

*Sd. Eshai Shimun*

*By the Grace of God, Catholicos Patriarch,  
of the Assyrians.*



## SECOND BOOK

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### THE FINAL BETRAYAL OF THE ASSYRIANS

*"We have seemed by the abandonment of the Assyrians and Kurds to sacrifice our very honour."*

—Sir Henry Conway Dobbs, C.B.E.,  
K.C.S.I., K.C.M.G., K.C.I.E.

Formerly H.B.M.'s High-Commissioner for Iraq.  
(From Sawt al Iraq of March 3, 1933. His lecture at a meeting of the Royal Empire Society, February 15, 1933, at the Hotel Victoria, London.)

His premature death on May 30, 1934, at his home at Cappoquin, Co. Waterford, is deeply regretted.

*“Fear not each sudden sound and shock,  
'T is of the wave and not the rock;  
'T is but the flapping of the sail,  
And not a rent made by the gale!  
In spite of rock and tempest's roar,  
In spite of false lights on the shore,  
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!”*

From Longfellow's  
*The Building of the Ship.*

## CHAPTER XV

### THE FINAL BETRAYAL OF THE ASSYRIANS

#### PART I

The signs of a long-awaited wicked plan of the Iraq Government became self-evident when Nuri Sa'id in a letter to *the Mar Shimun*, Patriarch, at Geneva, invited him to go to Baghdad via Rutbah to interview Naji Shawkat, then Prime Minister. At the same time orders were issued to the two frontier police posts at Sinjar and Rutbah to dispossess *the Mar Shimun* of his passport on arrival at either of these two places and prevent him from entering Iraq territory.

The usual arbitrary orders, which were communicated to the frontier posts twenty days before *the Mar Shimun's* departure from Geneva, were withdrawn at the eleventh hour through British intervention.

On the 19th of December, 1932, *the Mar Shimun* left Geneva, arriving at Beyrouth on the 31st, and Damascus on the afternoon of the same day. On the 1st of January, 1933, I joined His Beatitude at Damascus and inquired from him the result of his visit to Geneva. He was kind enough to permit me to read the resolution of the Council of the League, dated December 15th, 1932; at the same time explaining it to the Assyrian clergy and to a lady who had come to Damascus to offer their respects and obedience to the Patriarch.

After a sojourn of two days in Damascus, *the Mar Shimun* returned to Baghdad by the Nairn Transport Co.



on the morning of the third of January, accompanied by his secretary, the Rev. Deacon Emmanuel Shimun.

About one hundred Assyrian clergymen, Assyrian officers and leaders of all Assyrian tribes had, on the fourth of January, hastened in twenty cars to a distance one hour above Ramadi to greet the arrival of the Patriarch. On arrival at Ramadi, the police asked *the Mar Shimun* to sign a document to the effect that he would, on arrival in Baghdad, report to the Commandant of Police. On the Khir bridge near Baghdad, there was an unusual activity of plainclothesmen. *The Mar Shimun* proceeded to Hinaidi where he was the guest of the Assyrian levies.

On the fifth of January, he was invited to dinner by Sir Francis Humphrys. The Air Vice-Marshal and Brigadier Browne were also present. Sir Francis asked *the Mar Shimun* to use his good offices with the levies to maintain tranquillity. He no doubt knew that his betrayal would badly affect the loyal spirit of the levies.

On January eighth, *the Mar Shimun* was received by the Prime Minister, who assured him of a satisfactory settlement of the Assyrians, no doubt "if he remained in power," with whom, he said, "he sympathized." *The Mar Shimun* was also received by the King who reminded *the Mar Shimun* of the discussions they had at Sar Amadiyah. At that conference, the King promised *the Mar Shimun* a villa; a fat salary, and an open door in the government services for his immediate relatives and all those he recommended provided he cancelled his projected visit to Geneva. On being asked as to what the fate of the Assyrians as a whole would be, the King evaded the question.

A point which is closely connected with the settlement of the Assyrians must be cleared before I go any further.

Major D. B. Thomson, the English "foreign expert" appointed by the Iraq Government for the settlement of

the Assyrians, in his confidential report No. T/A/C/172 dated the 28th of September, 1933, to the Minister of Interior, Baghdad, (copies of which were distributed by the Iraqi delegation to the International Press at a tea party at Geneva) states on page four of his report, "Further discussion with these people emphasized the opinion I had already formed, namely, that the *Mar Shimun* and his representatives had not fully and clearly explained to the Assyrians generally his failure to win the agreement of the League of Nations to the claims he submitted. Consequently, it was felt that only by freely and clearly explaining the true facts to the Assyrian leaders could they be made to understand the real position of affairs. With this end in view, it was decided to have a meeting in the Mutasarrif's office, Mosul, on the 10th of July, 1933, of all the Assyrian tribal Maliks, Raisses and notables. At this meeting, the final decision of the League of Nations made on the 15th of December, 1932, was read and explained in its relation to the requests contained in the Mar Shimun's petition of September, 1932, and the policy of the government regarding citizenship, land tenure, suggested area for settlement, etc., were also explained."

The report of Major Thomson, verbose and tedious as it is, is not worth recording in full, for it is a resume and, in places, a true copy of reports written during latter years by the local officials of Mosul which are unreliable. He admits in his covering letter to the Minister the defectiveness of his report, for he states, "I would emphasize that in the time given to me to write this report it is quite impossible to deal as fully and adequately with the question as I should like".

Moreover, it is an admitted fact that officials who have been years in Iraq have failed to grasp the full significance of the Assyrian problem. Thomson could not have achieved this in two months, stormy and cloudy as

they were, or even could have been able to form a preliminary idea of the whole Assyrian question. He, however, accuses the *Mar Shimun* of having failed to explain to the Assyrians his failure at Geneva. Had Major Thomson taken the trouble to make "some inquiries," he would have found that between the period of the 10th to 29th of December, 1932, thirteen articles were written by the Iraq press at the instigation of the cabinet to publish the news of *the Mar Shimun's* failure, Major Thomson had apparently relied on what vague information the Iraq sources were inclined to place before him, and without verifying the authenticity of such biased information, he committed his first blunder. He probably lacked the courage to verify, for he was the servant of, and paid by, the Iraq Government.

I said that the news of *the Mar Shimun's* failure was published in the Iraq press at the instigation of the Iraq cabinet. The following example is a positive proof.

After the disturbances at Sulaimaniyah on the 6th of September, 1930, when the Iraq army opened fire on the Kurdish civil population, the Kurds as in the past, complained to the League of Nations. The League rendered its decision and Sir Kenehan Cornwallis addressed a note to the Minister of Interior, Jamil al Madfa'i on the 3rd of February, 1931, which I summarize below:

"You know that the Kurdish demands for an autonomous Kurdistan were rejected by the League of Nations in view of the attitude taken at Geneva by His Britannic Majesty's Government.

"The League's decision, I understand, will shortly be communicated to the petitioners and to the Iraq Government. I strongly recommend that the Iraq press be prevented from commenting on the decision of the League lest the Kurdish feelings be aroused. I must also put on paper my views necessary for the pacification of the



Kurds which, if they had been followed at the time, the present uneasiness would not have risen. I warned you of the inadvisability of the premature withdrawal of Colonel Tawfiq Wahby Beg, the Mutasarrif of Sulaimaniyah. He was, however, withdrawn. The local language law for the Kurdish districts was not allowed to pass by the Inter-parliamentary Committee without introducing into it amendments that are objectionable to the Kurds. The Kurds are unfortunately aware of this. An area education officer should be appointed. The number of Kurdish police inspectors should be increased and non-commissioned officials gazetted. A Kurdish bureau in the Ministry of Interior should be instituted."

The Minister of Interior who had officially informed Sir Kenchan in an office note of September, 1930, that one regiment and two guns were sufficient to deal with the Kurds as in the times of the Turks, agreed to warn the press to abstain from commenting on the decision of the League. The other measures taken—the Kurds prefer to be without—were of no value, for the Kurdish Assistant Director of Administration, in the Ministry was given to sign travelling bills, orders of transfers of junior officials, etc., that were sent to him by his Arab superior to sign on his behalf. Of the Director of Education, I have spoken under the heading "The Kurds", and I should like to elucidate the other crippled measures taken, but I prefer to leave that to the Kurdish society now occupied in writing a book on Southern Kurdistan.

When Salim Bazzun's paper "Al 'Alam Ul 'Arabi" attempted to produce the translation of that most able article by Fusilier, the press bureau warned the editor on the 18th of September, 1932, that he would be liable to punishment if he did so.

Two Christians applied for permission to open newspapers and were illegally refused. The Kurds have a news-

paper at Sulaimaniyah but the editor's articles must first be censored. The Arab newspapers on the other hand, were at liberty to publish as much material, provided that the material was calculated to demoralize the non-Arabs.

Yet, Yasin al Hashimi in his observations on the petitions of *the Mar Shimun* of August 16th and 30th, and September 12th, 1933 (page 4) referring to the Iraq parliament and the press, states "Both these institutions are free and the Government is in no way responsible for speeches in the Chamber, or for articles in the press."

Will Yasin Pasha permit me to draw his attention to the vigorous protest he lodged with King Faisal against Nuri Pasha's Government during the first quarter of 1932? (See pages 38-39 of the book "les Consequences tragiques du mandat en Iraq"). Did he not there say that the Iraq Government was "appropriating the freedom of the press and over twenty newspapers were suppressed"? How does this coincide with his statement to the League? Has there been any change since then either in government personnel or their administrative policies? Or was that protest merely a maniacal manœuvre to secure a job?

As regards Yasin's statement concerning the freedom of speech in Parliament, I only wish it were true. But a people whose representatives cannot differentiate between "ZAMILI" and "ZMALI", are not fit to enjoy constitutional freedom thrust on them by Britain.

ZAMILI in Arabic means "My colleague".

ZMALI in Arabic means "My donkey".

Sometime back, a bill was to be passed by the Iraq parliament and when the time for voting came, a deputy rose and said: "I agree with my Zmali".

On the 11th of January, *the Mar Shimun* travelled to Mosul, his Patriarchal See. On his arrival, he decided to invite the Assyrian leaders to a meeting he wished to con-

vene on the 14th to explain to them the Council's resolution of the 15th of December, and obtain their views. On the 12th, the Commandment of Police, Mosul, in a very urgent letter No. 575 dated the 12th of January, informed *the Mar Shimun* that a permit to hold the meeting was necessary. On January 13th, *the Mar Shimun* deputized Mar Yosop Metropolitan, and Bishop Mar Sargis to the Mutasarrif and permission to hold the meeting was obtained. Owing to bad weather, some leaders were unable to attend the meeting at such a short notice, but on the 16th, all were ready with the exception of "Khoshaba" of the Lower Tiyyari who was induced by the Qaimaqam not to attend.

It was on this meeting of the 16th of January that *the Mar Shimun* explained the resolution of the League. The statement made by the Iraq Government on page 3, paragraph 3, of its Blue-book for the period of 13th of July, 1932, to 5th of August, 1933, that "there being reason to believe that *the Mar Shimun* had concealed from his followers the results of his visit to Geneva and the decision of the Council of the League of Nations" is fallacious. There is no doubt that the Blue-book was written by those who normally receive their information from spies who spend most of their time in the coffee-houses and submit fictitious reports to justify the grants made to them. The meeting held by *the Mar Shimun* was public and had the government's permission for a definite purpose i.e. to explain to the Assyrians the resolution of the Council. In all the reports submitted by the Iraq Government to the League, I have traced no letter from the Mosul authorities immediately after the meeting of January 16th to say that *the Mar Shimun* had concealed from the leaders the resolution of the Council which was made public property long before the return of *the Mar Shimun* to Iraq.



The malicious perversion of the truth in its Blue-Book was but a part of well conceived but sordid scheme to spread dissension among the Assyrians while *the Mar Shimun* was at Geneva. Anti-Assyrian madhabatas, which later were discovered to carry 65% forged signatures, were sent to Sir Francis to present to the League. The remaining signatures were collected by corruption. These madhabatas contained signatures of those Assyrians who two months previously had begged the *Mar Shimun* to travel to Geneva and defend their case. (See appendix "A". A case in point would give the reader a general idea as to the methods employed to obtain such perfidious documents with which to pull the wool over the eyes of the members of the League.

Addunya Elias, an Assyrian, applied to Nuri al Sa'id for a job when the latter was Prime Minister. Nuri gave him a letter to Nichola Abdul Nur who, before being charged with embezzlement<sup>1</sup>, was the Director for patrol affairs. Nichola was told to give Addunya a job on condition he write a pro-Iraq article. Addunya was also told that that was necessary in view of the news of Assyrian emigration from Iraq. Nichola (or better known as Thabit) who had quickly risen to the title of "Excellency", but once again an effendi, drafted an anti-Assyrian article and sent it to the press, representing to Addunya that the article contained a request for Iraqi nationality paper without which he could not employ him. The article was immediately published. Addunya went to present his case to the press but no attention was given to him.

Nichola is now charged with embezzlement (probably not the first of its kind) of some two thousand pounds from the industrial exhibition held at Baghdad.

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1—Al Akha al Watani of 18/7/32.

Al Istiqlal of 20/11/32 and of 7/5/33.

Al Tariq of 14/5/33.

On the other hand, the Iraqi Government deceived Mar Sargis and “Khoshabah,” the signatories to the petition shown in appendix “A”, but not without the British official’s help.

“Khoshabah” was promised to be made “Sheik ul Mashayikh” of the Assyrians, if he were to consent to the Dashtazi settlement scheme; his son, Yusuf, a student in the military school, was to be promoted to the rank of an officer; his second son Daud was to be made a police officer; other relatives were to have access to government posts in preference to the other “obstinate” Assyrians; and his son-in-law, Lazard, was to be made Mudir Nahiyah of Dohuk.

Mar Sargis was promised two houses; one at Dohuk and the other at Khirshainiyah. His brother Oraham was to be made a police officer. He himself would be given a favourable position. A sum of 800 Rupees was remitted him; and a land case, outstanding for the last four years, was to be settled to his satisfaction.

For these privileges, they were asked by the government to:

- (a) Renounce the Mar Shimun,
- (b) Deny their complaints made to the League of Nations against the Iraq Government,
- (c) Agree to the Dashtazi settlement a one-eyed project,
- (d) Sign documents proposed from time to time by government officials stating that the government was benevolent and was affording the Assyrians the best treatment.

While I pity Khoshabah for having obliterated his past record, I can find some justification for his subsequent actions. Khoshabah who, some years ago, had assassinated his wife and two children, had fled to Turkey and it was due to the intervention of the *Mar Shimun*—

when Wilson referred the case to him—that he was allowed to return to Iraq. This case of homicide was left open by the Iraq authorities to use it as a weapon against him should he at any future date denounce the actions of the government.

For the actions of Mar Sargis, there is no justification. He should not have remained a “dead instrument” when Assyrians of his own blood were being murdered by a bunch of rogues.

It was under these circumstances, that the Iraq Government attempted to separate the body from the head. The Iraqi officials of all departments ignored the Assyrian recognized chiefs, and tried to break up in a few days only the Assyrian system of long-ages—an inherited system which made the Assyrian life an ordered whole.

The House of the *Mar Shimun* situated in Mahallat Shukur was surrounded day and night by a cordon of secret police in plain clothes. The names of his visitors were reported to the police and the Mutasarrif who were in league with the central authorities in Baghdad, the latter place being a nest for anti-Assyrian intrigues.

When “officially” those in power were “sympathetic” with the Assyrians, the press on the 21st of January, demanded the dismissal from the railways and the oil companies of all “these Assyrian refugees” as “they are a dangerous germ in the body of Iraq”.

The special report submitted by the Colonial Office to the Council of the League of Nations on the progress of Iraq during the period 1920-1931 recorded the following statement on page 277:

“There is little doubt that irresponsible influences were at work, chiefly in Baghdad, to make trouble between the Assyrians and the Kurds. The object seems to have been to divert against the Assyrians a supposed antipathy of the Kurds to the Arabs and also to weaken both Kurds and Assyrians by applying the maxim divide



et impera. As is described below, steps were taken to check these manoeuvres when they came to the notice of the Iraqi Government; but in the meantime the result had been to create an erroneous impression that attacks upon Assyrians would not be regarded too seriously. Cases have indeed occurred in which Assyrians were murdered and the murderers were not traced. For example, five Assyrians were found murdered near Rowanduz in May, 1930, and no one has yet been brought to justice. Murders have also occurred in the Mosul Liwa but many of these have without doubt been committed by bandits from across the Turkish frontier. It should be remembered that the Assyrians have good rifles, which offer a tempting prize to marauders."

The report goes on to say:

"There have been instances during 1930 of a certain tendency to depart from previous policy towards the Assyrians. For example, objection was raised early in 1930 by the Minister of Finance to the grant of remissions of taxation to Assyrian settlers. The Council of Ministers, when reminded of their resolution of the 8th March, 1927, ruled that that resolution applied only to the year in which it was passed, and that proposals for the grant of remissions for the current year must be considered on their merits. The Prime Minister assured the High Commissioner at the time that such proposals would receive sympathetic consideration and has recently repeated this assurance."

There is with Major Wilkins of the Criminal Investigation Department, Baghdad, abundant and conclusive evidence to show that those "irresponsible persons" were, as now, ministers, deputies, and high administrative and police officials. The report was cautious not to mention their names for sooner or later those intriguers were to be in power again and the High Commissioner must maintain cordial relations with them. The present Iraqi Prime Minister, Rashid 'Ali al Gailani; Rustan Haidar, Minister of Communications and Works; Nuri al Sa'id, Minister for Foreign Affairs; Yasin al Hashimi, Minister of Finance and various other agitators are shown in Wilkins' reports as the persons conducting the anti-Assyrian and anti-Kurdish campaigns.

The Administrative Inspector, and the Special Service Officer, Mosul, reported to the Advisor, Ministry of Interior and the Air Staff Intelligence, Baghdad, respectively, that Tahsin 'Ali the Mutasarrif of Mosul—a disreputable man, notoriously anti-Christian—was touring the district of Zibar in the Barzan area personally preaching a Holy War against the Assyrians. This Mutasarrif was acting under the direct orders of the then Chamberlain to King Faisal, now Iraqi Prime Minister. Tahsin 'Ali, Mutasarrif and the black-hand of Faisal and his gang, on the other hand, reported to the Minister of Interior that it was Capt. Paulet King, the special service officer, who was sending arms and ammunition to Sheik Mahmud to persist in his armed resistance against the government. A few months later this same Mutasarrif was transferred to another liwa on the Euphrates with an increase in pay as a reward for his good services in the Mosul liwa.

Rustam Haidar, an emigrant from Ra'albak, at times secretary to King Faisal and a Minister during the Assyrian massacre, informed a correspondent of a well known newspaper during the latter part of 1932 in Baghdad that "now that Iraq will secure a seat in the League of Nations, the extermination of the Christian as well as the Kurdish minorities in the Mosul Wilayet is inevitable and is looked upon as a sacred duty of Iraq, as the minorities must be sacrificed on the Altar of Pan-Arabism. If that opportunity does not present itself, we must find means to bring it about."

During this period of tension, when the mandate was still being obtained, Sir Francis took no steps to remedy the general position. This indifference led the Iraq officials to become more tenacious in their attitude. The individual murders to which the British report refers is only a small proportion of what was taking place. Under letter No. 350 of the 27th of April, 1930, a list showing names

of 76 persons killed was submitted to him and not only was no action taken but he did not even acknowledge the letter. The statement of people killed will be seen in appendix "B". The official statement that most of these murders were committed by bandits from across the Turkish frontier has been totally dispelled under the heading "The Chaldeans". Sir Francis' statement is based on that of the Administrative Inspector, Mosul, who in his turn receives his information from Iraqi provincial officials, the instigators of these crimes, and these are not expected to either send authentic reports or attempt to apprehend the murderers. The Administrative Inspector has no means whatsoever to check the authenticity of such malicious reports for he is the only one man charged with the administration of an area of some 14,000 square miles containing some 314,000 souls.

While these scandals were taking place, Sir Francis was submitting his reports to the League in praise of the "fair-Iraqi-administration". I have not heard of such a scandal in my life. I presume he had no time to bother himself with these Assyrians for his time was fully occupied by the elaborate dinners given him by Faisal and his ministers. British officers did warn Sir Francis that the position of the Assyrian would be calamitous if nothing were done for them before the lifting of the mandate. A high British officer in a secret letter No. S7/34 dated the 2nd of August, 1932, exactly two months before the admission of Iraq to the League, reported as follows:—

"I regret to inform you that on the afternoon of the 28th last July, four Assyrian civilians belonging to the village of Kouba near Bab Chikchik were attacked by about 30 men led by a man named Hamza and another named Jawer Ismail with the result that two were killed outright, one died of wounds and a fourth wounded. The names of the killed are Baymal Yacub and Giwargis Yacub, died of wounds, Shabu, wounded, Lashkiri.



"The Assyrians were attacked when they were unprepared for any form of hostility on the part of their neighbours and had no time to arm themselves or call for police assistance.

"This fresh murder has caused great unrest among the Assyrians in the neighbourhood and increases their wish and determination to concentrate what remains of their nation in one district.

"They maintain that if members of their nation can be murdered openly in this manner, while the British mandate is still in operation, their future extermination when Iraq enters the League of Nations is only a matter of time."

Since 1930, there have been no less than forty other Assyrians killed whose names are difficult to obtain at the present moment. I must, however, admit that only in one case was a murderer brought to justice and that was for political reasons. An Assyrian Ashita priest from the village of Sarsang and two Jews were treacherously killed. The Mosul frontier question having not been decided, it was necessary to pursue the murderer who was executed in Amadiyah.

The special report speaks of remission of taxation for new Assyrian settlers but it omits deliberately the name of the Minister of Finance, Yasin al Hashimi, who objected to the remissions in contravention of the agreement reached with Sir Henry Dobbs, an ex-High Commissioner in Iraq. Sir Henry had recommended a remission of five years taxation for new settlers for two reasons; (1) to develop deserted lands; (2) to enable new settlers to be self-supporting. This agreement was reduced to three years, but as soon as Yasin al Hashimi came in power, he dishonored the agreement by ordering collection of taxes from all new Assyrian settlers with retrospective effect. This remission was not in any way a privilege to the Assyrian; it is applied—without a hitch—in all other cases of new settlers.

While the *Mar Shimun* was still in Geneva, all kinds of coffee-shop rumors were reported to Baghdad to

please the Iraq officials (the only way the British officials can strengthen their positions and have their contracts extended) who were now after the *Mar Shimun's* blood so that on his return to Iraq his position might be rendered intolerable. The following are but a few examples:

Wilson who derives his information from the most dishonest Arab scoundrels reported in his letter No. 862 dated the 30th of October, 1932, that Rab Emma Giwargis Shabu and Rab Khamshi Odishu Nathan of the Assyrian levies talk of taking a zone by force if such is not given them. (Was not Elia the son of Malik Khamu the informant? Was it not after Messrs. Giwargis and Odishu having drawn their money from Elia's small bank that he commenced his stories?) Wilson recommends that the Dash-tazi land should be allotted to the lower Tiyyari and Ashita's who are peaceably inclined towards the Iraq Government. If the League does not accede to the demands of the *Mar Shimun*, the Assyrians will proceed to Russia. Absurd!

Wilson in a secret telegram No. S./865 dated the 1st of November, 1932, reports a secret meeting held on the night of the 30th of October, which was attended by Assyrian Bishops, maliks and levy officers but does not report what took place. He also accuses the sons of Malik Ismail of spreading dangerous propaganda but as usual he is unable to define the nature of propaganda or quote definite cases.

Commandant of Police, Mosul, in his letter 1599/II of 4th November, 1932, reports two Assyrian leaders Maleks *Yaku* and *Loko* of upper Tiyyari and Tkhuma touring Dohuk and Amadiyah respectively and again, like Wilson, he is unable to state the nature of their mission. Rumors of Kurdish-Assyro alliance were rife. Rab Khailah *David D'Mar Shimun* the father of the *Mar Shimun* was accused of arranging agreements with the

Kurds. (Rab Khailah was deputized by the Air Vice-Marshal to visit the Assyrian levies in those regions which it was not difficult to verify at the time if they knew their work better.)

On November 22nd, Wilson under No. S/892 reports that Khoshaba has proceeded to Dohuk and discussed Dashtazi scheme with the Qaimaqam and Dr. Baba for the settlement of the lower Tiyari. (Why allow government officials to dabble in politics? Can it be at all doubted that the villainous Iraqi officials were using every possible element against the *Mar Shimun*? Yet, he was told not to view the government policy with suspicion!)

Wilson recommends that Khoshaba be appointed in charge of the settlement and be given an allowance while doing so.

Mosul authorities speak of the settlement of only a small paid section of Assyrians. Recognized Assyrian leaders are threatened with imprisonment if they disapprove the government scheme. Anti-Mar Shimun propaganda by the officials, British and Arabs, continues.

On January 21st, Wilson in his secret letter No. S/25 reports that he doubts if the attitude of the *Mar Shimun* is entirely satisfactory. (Note the words "doubts" and "entirely".) The *Mar Shimun* is accused of not having visited Wilson on his return to Mosul and of attempting to create an anti-British feeling among his people, an accusation obviously ridiculous in view of an already intense anti-British feeling among the people.

Wilson states the *Mar Shimun* refused to receive Khoshaba who is accused of treachery towards the Assyrian nation. He admits Khoshaba has been assisting Iraq government and recommends the *Mar Shimun* be summoned to Baghdad. He instigates Mutasarrif to indite further accusations against the *Mar Shimun* and *Surma Khanim*.



Under letter S/28 of the 23rd of January, Wilson accuses the *Mar Shimun* of having announced the imminent arrival of a settlement expert. What nonsense.

Wilson on information supplied by Khoshaba (letter S/39 of the 30th of January) reports the *Mar Shimun* has informed certain Ashita sections not to accept settlement in the Dashtazi as this is only another trick on the part of the Iraq government to keep them isolated amongst Kurds in the frontier area. (Quite right too. Even a man with no eyes can see this and the evil motives behind it.) The *Mar Shimun* accused the British, especially Sir John Simon and Sir Francis Humphrys. (What a joke.) I thought that to abuse the British in Iraq was not considered even a misdemeanor or is that mercy a privilege to the Arabs? Does not Wilson read the daily Iraqi newspapers or listen to the talks in the Arab Majalis? Do not the Iraqi ministers boast of having killed British officers in Talla'far and other places?)

Rumors of emigration of Assyrians to Persia, Syria and Turkey continue.

Wilson in his letter S/42 of February 1st, brings new accusations against the *Mar Shimun* regarding the Ashitas based on information from Koshaba. To weaken *the Mar Shimun's* alleged propaganda, Wilson suggested the Mutasarrif be instructed to assemble the Maliks and inform them of the Iraq government's good intentions. If the *Mar Shimun* persists in his attitude, he and Surma Khanim should be summoned to Baghdad and detained there.

Letter No. S/48 of the 7th of February from Wilson states: Mr. Shlaimun D'Malik Ismail reported arrived at Dohuk on February 2nd and was the guest of Monsignor 'Abdul Ahad. He was accused of having expressed hopes of giving effect to Assyrian autonomy. (The report, based on hearsay, is devoid of truth.)

The Iraq government suppressed Mutasarrif Mosul's stupid letter c/28 of the 18th of January, 1933, and did not produce it in its "great Blue-book."

Anti-*Mar Shimun* propaganda by the Iraqi government in Gorigawan, Kiflasin and Machlamakht villages finds no favor.

Mutasarrif recommends action against the *Mar Shimun* and the Assyrian notables.

In letter No. s/50 of the 11th of February, Wilson states that the *Mar Shimun* visited Mutasarrif and himself on the 9th of February as a result of Squadron Leader<sup>1</sup> Reid's visit to him. The *Mar Shimun* reported to Wilson unconstitutional actions by Iraqi officials and quoted instances in which prominent Assyrians had been abused by Qaimaqams of Dohuk and Amadiyah and Wilson before inquiring into these accusations scribbled down a note to the Minister of Interior to say that these were grossly exaggerated. The *Mar Shimun* suggested settlement of Assyrians by tribes and not as the government desired to disperse them more than they already had been scattered.

On February 14th, the Iraqi Times produced minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission regarding the Assyrian settlement (and therefore the Iraq government's accusations or those of Wilson and Thomson that the full position was not explained to the Assyrians fell to the ground).

Cornwallis on February 16th states that the king will shortly be summoning the *Mar Shimun* to Baghdad to discuss matters with him. Appointment of MacDonnell of the late Egyptian government was proposed. The Dashtazi scheme was to commence forthwith.

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<sup>1</sup>—Another English intelligence officer disguised in missionaries' robe.  
 "Zdimun Min Nwiyyi Dagal Bid Ati Bi-lwish-ta D'Piri Ina Mgawayi Diwi  
 Chalujina".  
 A. Y. De Kelaita.

On February 18th there were in the press more attacks against the Assyrian employees and attacks against Armenians for alleged offenses diverted against Assyrians.

February 22nd s/16. Malik Khamo of Baz lodged information with Wilson against the *Mar Shimun* in regard to the settlement. All that the *Mar Shimun* had apparently said to the Assyrians was to "have patience and await the arrival of the settlement expert." Mar Sargis (according to Wilson) is reported to have said that had it not been for Malik Khamo, he (Mar Sargis) would long ago have been won over to the Iraq government by Makki effendi, Qaimaqam Dohuk.

The government instigated a "loyal party" to submit madhabatas against the *Mar Shimun*.

On February 25th the *Mar Shimun* was invited by the Mutasariff to attend what they called a "Local Settlement Committee" whose functions, if it had any, for all the authority was vested in the President-Mutasarraf, were pre-arranged months before. A police official, Raphail effendi, a member of this committee, happened to be the uncle of the *Mar Shimun*. The appointment of Raphail effendi, who was alleged to represent the Assyrians, was protested by the *Mar Shimun* for being a government official as he was bound by duty to carry out the instructions of the government thus injuring the interests of the Assyrians. When the *Mar Shimun* was invited to attend the meeting, the President, Vice-President and the Secretary had already been appointed and everything was put and dried before hand. The *Mar Shimun* was also requested to express his views regarding the six members the government had in view, and he could also nominate one or two persons, but the acceptance of his views about the six members of his nominees entirely rested in the hands of the government. The invitation was therefore a "formal one" with no legal value in any way.



On February 28th, Wilson reported to Baghdad that the *Mar Shimun* had definitely declined to associate himself with the work of the gewgaw-Settlement-Committee. On March 6th, the unscrupulous Mutasarrif reported that *Malik Loko* "The Assyrian Extremist," was still spreading his propaganda amongst the Assyrians; based his information on the reports of Qaimaqam, Amadiyah, who was already responsible for many flagitious acts against the Assyrians.

On March 18th, Wilson reported that he encouraged the *Mar Shimun* to draft a "Community law" for the Assyrians "on the lines of those of other communities." It is true that owing to the dissensions caused by the Iraq government among sections of both the Jewish and Armenian orthodox communities, the government enacted two laws for these two communities, but they now curse the day they accepted those laws which deprive them of all rights of "personal status." Those laws have enabled the government to interfere in all their personal, family, and religious affairs. The Iraq government has also been attempting in vain to apply similar laws to the Catholic communities but this has met with complete refusal. The Chaldean Patriarch, the Syrian, and Armenian Catholic Bishops, rejected Drower's prejudicial proposals on the 7th of May, 1932, and left his room never to see him again if the government had no better proposals.

During the Turkish days, the Christian communities were allowed full liberty to administer their own personal affairs.

Wilson would have done better if he had advised the Iraq government to set her own house in order first before advising the *Mar Shimun* to leave even the family affairs of the Assyrians to the discretion of an unchivalrous government.

Mar Sargis and Malik Khamo proceeded to Shaikhan to obtain signatures that these two were their leaders.

They failed to collect these madhabatas (March 28th.) While government officials encourage collection of anti-*Mar Shimun* madhabatas, they brand the followers of the *Mar Shimun*, on the other hand, as criminals for expressing their views and desires of their own free will.

Between the 15th and 23rd of April, Qaimaqam of Dohuk and Wilson furnished Baghdad with more false information against the *Mar Shimun*, Maliks *Yaku*, *Loko* and other Assyrians, but that information, based on hearsay, contained no definite acts of harmful activities on the part of those complained of.

On May 10th, before proceeding on leave, Wilson reported that the flouting of government authority by Assyrians may be followed by attempts by the Kurds to behave in a similar manner. To allow the *Mar Shimun* and *Surma Khanim* to go to Sar Amadiyh in the Summer would be a "fatal mistake." He recommended that the sons of Malik Ismail should be prevented from visiting Mosul and Arbil liwas and that *Rab Emma Giwargis of Tkhuma* should be removed from Mosul. These grossly exaggerated reports made in bad faith made life for the Assyrians impossible. Had Major Wilson satisfied himself with sending his reports to his British superiors only, the evil would have been less. All the reports he sent to Baghdad were shown to his Arab Mutasarrif who in turn showed them or reported their contents to his subordinate officials and to the Arab Commandant of the Mosul area, Bakr Sidqy, who was looking for an excuse to set a match to the fire. The Iraq government had long been awaiting the opportunity to exterminate the Assyrians, until a little while before, the proteges of the British; but it was their fear of British intervention that forced them to refrain from doing so. On discovering that it was now the "British Will" that the Assyrians should be dealt with thus, the Iraq government spared no time in finding an excuse to do so.

Early in May, Rais Skharya of 'Ainid Nuna was insulted and abused by the Qaimaqam of Amadiyah for having visited the *Mar Shimun* in Mosul. This was reported by the Patriarch to the Mutasarrif but no action was taken. At the same time, Agha 'Aizarya of Targawar, formerly an Assyrian officer, now living in Diana, was sent for by the officer commanding the Iraq army in Diana, and was told that the "army was there to deal with the Assyrians and not with the Kurds." "The Army is here," the Commandant added, "to have the eyes of the Assyrians pecked out." The Imam attached to the army at Diana warned the Moslems not to visit the Assyrians or go to their cafes, for they were "infidels and religiously unclean."

Mosul town, the headquarters of the Mutasarrif, is linked by telephone with all the important administrative centers of the Liwa. It is through these lines that most of the official instructions are passed for the mal-treatment of the Assyrians so that no trace, will be left in the official records as to how things are pre-arranged.

Official written instructions from the central authorities were normally conveyed to the Mutasarrifs by means of letters. On receipt of these, the Mutasarrif repeated them to his subordinate officials in the districts, and in all cases affecting the Assyrians, verbal instructions were given by the Mutasarrif to his Qaimaqams and Mudirs to disregard the official instructions and send in unfavourable reports to the Liwa headquarters. These were transmitted to Baghdad, duly supported by the Mutasarrif, and ultimately by the Administrative Inspector in view of the unanimity of the replies received.

On May 12th, an agitation was caused by an Arab officer living in Mahallat Shukur, in the same quarter where the *Mar Shimun* resided. The Arab officer who was spending the night with a loose woman in company of other brother officers reported that stones were thrown into his house and accused the Patriarchal-family of



having done it. Anyone having the slightest knowledge of the locality and construction of the Patriarchal-House will, *prima facie*, discredit the report. There is no doubt that the stones, if they were ever thrown, were either thrown by (a) the Arab competitors of the Arab officer or (b) by the respected Moslem Harem in that locality. The "honest officer" is the friend of Bakr Sidqy with whom the stone case was pre-arranged to give the Iraq army an excuse to raid the Patriarchal-House. On the bare evidence of the complainant, the Rev. Is-haq, the private Chaplain of the *Mar Shimun* (of Nochiya), Mr. Shlaimun D'Malik Ismail, the brother of *Malik Yaku*; Mr. Athanasius the son of Mr. Shlaimun, and Mr. 'Antar of Quadchanis, were at once accused by the police of having thrown the stones.

Bakr Sidqy, who three months later, was the commander to issue orders for the wholesale massacre of the Assyrians, ordered his troops to occupy all the strategic points from 'Ain Kibrit to Ghuzlani. The Arab officers in Mahallat Shukur evacuated the place. There was left only a Kurdish officer who was deeply grieved to see the Assyrians being victimized on the altar of Arab fanaticism. The *Mar Shimun* interviewed the Mutasarrif and informed him of the preparations that were being made for the destruction of the Assyrians by Bakr Sidqy. The Mutasarrif, as usual, regretted the whole affair and telephoned Bakr Sidqy to arrange an interview. The brave commander replied that his time was fully occupied that day but he would certainly arrange the interview the following day. That day never came. As the danger was now imminent not only to the Patriarchal-House, but also to all the Assyrians, the *Mar Shimun* made complaint to Squadron Leader Omally, the British special service officer, to Mr. Moneypenny the British Consul, at Mosul, and to the Air Vice-Marshal. On the 16th of May, 1933, under

the pretext of registering, the Assyrians were called upon by the Mutasarrif and the police authorities to hand in their arms for registration purposes despite the fact that they all held legal registration permits for every rifle they had in their possession. The plan was first to disarm the Assyrians and then attack them without any resistance on their part. As the Assyrian levies were also accused of the stone-case, the Air-Vice-Marshal travelled to Mosul and after holding an inquiry, dismissed the case as being a fabricated one. At the same time that the Assyrians in Mosul were asked to hand in their arms, those in Diana were asked to do the same. Due to the presence of the Air Vice-Marshal, the non-surrendering of arms by the Assyrians, and the timely representations of the Patriarch, Bakr Sidqy did not find the moment opportune to embark upon the scheme of massacre which had the full approval of the higher authorities in Baghdad, but he was allowed to remain in Mosul to conduct the massacre operations, not because there were no better officers than himself but because he was the right man to do it.

From the police side, the stone-case was adjourned until the 23rd of May, on which date it was dismissed. The police, stationed in Mahallat Shukur for protection of the Assyrians, but in fact for surveilling and harassing the Patriarchal-House, were withdrawn on the 19th.

In most parts of the Assyrian settlements in the districts, the leaders were repeatedly insulted and scorned in many ways. Before the 12th of May, all the Assyrian police in the districts of Zakho, Amadiyah, Dohuk and Shaikahn, were withdrawn and transferred to far places in the south of Iraq. Those remaining in Mosul, fifteen in number, were disarmed and given "light duties." The Assyrian soldiers in the Iraq army were treated likewise.

While these things were going on, the Mutasarrif was discussing the Assyrian settlement and speaking of

the good intentions of his government. It was also at this time that the Mutasarrif suggested, after Wilson, to the *Mar Shimun* to draft a community law. The attention of the Catholic readers is particularly drawn to this falchion law which will, in a few years, compel the Christian institutions to accept the laws of Islam.



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE FINAL BETRAYAL OF THE ASSYRIANS

(Continued)

#### PART II.

It was on the 10th of May, 1933, that Major Wilson and the Mutasarrif recommended the summoning of the *Mar Shimun* to Baghdad to be illegally detained there. The Iraq government has, in publishing its Blue-Book, suppressed parts of this and other letters to enable it to give a totally wrong picture of the ugly atmosphere created by it and under which the *Mar Shimun* was expected to co-operate. One of Wilson's letters so suppressed was as follows:

"Ask the *Mar Shimun* to come to Baghdad to discuss matters with the Government. Detention to follow forthwith. This should eliminate the danger of seeing *Mar Shimun* installed in his Summer residence at Sar Amadiyah; the consequence of such a move will be against the interests of the Iraqi case.

"In order to break up the influence of the Patriarchal family, the Iraq Government would be well advised in increasing immediately the number (from 6 to 8) of the Assyrian police inspectors.

"Immediate promotion of Christian officers having taken part in the campaigns of the Iraq army against Sheik Ahmad of Barzan.

"Lady Surma and Captain Yaku have undertaken a strong anti-Government propaganda among the Kurdist tribes. It is urgently needed to invite these two persons to come to Baghdad where they should be detained and kept under control.

"Make pressure on the Patriarch to sign an official document recognizing the suppression of his temporal power.

"Iraq Government runs the risk of seeing the Assyrians proposing a scheme on lands near or bordering the Syrian frontier. All necessary steps should be taken to oblige the Patriarchal family to accept the Dashtazi region."

On May 12th, the Iraqi press attacked strongly the British policy in Iraq stating that as England has admitted before fifty-seven States that Iraq was capable of independence and fit to administer her own affairs, Britain should enjoy no special international status in Iraq and that "we shall under no circumstance have the Assyrian levies, whatever the consequences may be, for the presence of these levies is a sign of British military occupation." The press goes on to call the Iraqi leaders to condemn the British policy and show no leniency in achieving that end.

On the 14th, it was stated that no Assyrian refugees should be allowed entry into Iraq, and in order to augment the malicious feeling against the Assyrians, more attacks were made on the 17th against the Assyrians employed on the railways.

On May 22nd, the *Mar Shimun* was asked by the Mutasarrif to proceed to Baghdad and there discuss with the Minister and Major Thomson the settlement project. Though the request of the Mutasarrif was an urgent one, yet the *Mar Shimun* was kept waiting in Baghdad for six days before an interview was granted him by Hikmat Sulaiman, the Minister of the Interior, formerly of the Turkish Union and Progress party. In Baghdad, his residence at the Young Men's Christian Association was surrounded by a cordon of plainclothesmen. Thomson arrived in Iraq but via Nisibin-Mosul and not in Baghdad as the *Mar Shimun* was given to understand. The *Mar Shimun* was kept waiting despite a break in his health and the dreadful heat of Baghdad. Like his predecessor, the late Mar Benyamin, the *Mar Shimun*, who was treacherously assassinated by Simko on Persian soil, the attitude of the British authorities in regard to *Mar Eshai Shimun* did not much differ from that of Simko.

Before leaving Mosul, the *Mar Shimun* was informed by the Mutasarrif that his complaints to the League of

Nations on behalf of the Assyrian were of such a nature that the government would never forgive his action. In other words, he was to render an account. In Baghdad, the Minister told the *Mar Shimun* that the government was dissatisfied with his attitude and that he ought to sign certain documents which the government was about to prepare.

On May 31st, Thomson reached Iraq and on June 1st, the Iraq Times notified the arrival of the settlement expert who had a six-month contract with the Iraq government and who was, by the way, a schoolmate of Sir Francis Humphrys. The programme given to Thomson was that he should set himself to work and enforce the Dashtazi scheme. He accordingly carried out negotiations with individual Assyrians in the absence of the *Mar Shimun* with the result that he failed to carry out the programme dictated to him and this was a severe blow to the prestige of Thomson whose first steps were marked with complete failure. Thomson admits on page five of his report to the Ministry that he failed in his efforts with the Assyrians for he states, "On questioning the Assyrian villagers as regards their settlement, the chief answer with few exceptions was the same, 'we are refugees and unless we are told by the *Mar Shimun* to settle, we remain refugees'."

This attitude of the Assyrians, fostered as it was by the follies of the Iraqi officials and their ignorant advisers, was bound to lead to a deadlock. If wiser councils prevailed, and if it were really desired to avoid bloodshed, the express wish of the Assyrians, that the *Mar Shimun* should first be set free before any business could be transacted, should have been entertained unhesitatingly. Thomson does not state what actually happened at the meeting held in Dohuk during which he was faced with this Assyrian definite reply. On the advice of the Mosul authorities, Thomson summoned forty Assyrians to sound their opinion



in regard to settlement. Thirty-six out of forty told Thomson that they had already informed the *Mar Shimun* of their wishes whose leadership they still recognized despite the illegal actions that were being taken against him and warned Thomson that the means he was employing would undoubtedly fail him. The remaining four said they would agree to whatever settlement the government proposed. These were: Ismail of the Baz employed by the Rev. Cumberland of whose attitude I have already spoken; Goriyyi and his brother Yonan also of the Baz. They are the uncles of Ezra effendi the Assistant Commandant of Police and Goriyyi, though loyal to the government, was assassinated in August of 1933. The fourth was Khidu of the Baz whose son was a teacher in the government school.

The statement of these four individuals who could not have declared otherwise for fear of reprisals should not have encouraged Thomson to proceed any further with his unsound project. He should have endeavoured to create a healthier atmosphere before embarking upon his adventurous scheme. This was not to be, as the government was clamouring for bloodshed and it could have found no better instrument than Thomson to bring about such a scandal. Many English gentlemen in the service of the Iraq government had resigned their positions in the past and incurred the enmity of their superiors when they discovered that they would not be a party to a crooked policy. What then prevented Thomson from doing so?

Could he not have found a position that would have given him a fat salary other than by sucking the blood of Assyrian women and children?

During the Dohuk meeting Thomson heard with his own ears Rais Piru, Rais Tailu, Rais Zada, Rais Shimu, and others of the Baz say that the four persons mentioned above were not saying the truth. He had also, on another occasion

in Mosul, heard the Rev. Yukhannan of Tkhuma (Guntikta) say at the meeting attended by Mar Sargis, Khoshaba, Malik Khamu, and Chikhkhu and Giwu of upper Tiyyari that all "those present were a bunch of liars and to rely upon them in the proposed settlement without the *Mar Shimun* would only lead to undesirable results."

Such was the feeling of the Assyrians when Thomson decided to proceed to Baghdad to discuss, on his failure, matters with the *Mar Shimun*. On the other hand, the Iraqi officials were persisting in the policy of harassing the Assyrian leaders and villagers. The Qaimaqam of Amadiyah prevented *Malik Yaku* from visiting his own tribe and was asked for a written guarantee not to do so. Before the tragic Mosul meeting of July 10th, the Qaimaqams concerned had notified the Assyrian leaders, including *Malik Yaku*, that those not desirous of remaining in Iraq could leave the country, and that the government would bear their expenses until they left the Iraq frontier. *Malik Yaku* in his letter of the 22nd of May to Qaimaqam of Amadiyah makes these points quite clear. Moreover, he informed the Qaimaqam that the Assyrians were loyal and had no intention of defying the authority of the government and that the officials should not be swayed by perverse propaganda that was being spread by malevolents.

On May 28th, the Minister of Interior in his letter No. c/1104 notified the *Mar Shimun* that the government would not recognize his temporal power. It is of great importance that the doubts centering round this mysterious power should be cleared.

During the Turkish days, the *Mar Shimun* was recognized by successive Turkish Sultans as the Temporal and Spiritual Head of the whole Assyrian nation. His temporal privileges were:

(a) The appointment of tribal chiefs to the twenty-five Assyrian tribes,

(b) The settlement of inter-tribal disputes in his capacity as the final resort for justice, without reference to local authorities,

(c) Settlement of disputes that arose between Moslems and Assyrians,

(d) An annual tribute (nominal) was paid to the Sultan through the Patriarch,

(e) The Assyrians were exempt from conscription, particularly the independent tribes,

(f) Settlement of misunderstandings between the local officials and the Assyrians collectively or individually,

(g) The right to apply directly to the Sultan in cases of disagreement with the local officials,

(h) All administrative matters or subjects touching the general policy of the government affecting the Assyrians were referred to him.

These privileges which were recognized by the Turkish governments were enjoyed by all the Assyrian Patriarchs until the last days of the *late Mar Benyamin*,<sup>1</sup> the uncle of the present Patriarch. These privileges were referred to by the Commission of Count Teleki appointed by the League of Nations. On page 90 of that Commission's report the following reference is made:

*"We feel it our duty, however, to point out that the Assyrians should be guaranteed the re-establishment of the ancient privileges which they possessed in practice, if not officially, before the War. Whichever may be the Sovereign State, it ought to grant these Assyrians a certain local autonomy, recognizing their right to appoint their own officials and contenting itself with a tribute from them, paid through the agency of their Patriarch."*

*"The status of minorities would necessarily have to be adapted to the special conditions of the country; we think, however, that the arrangements made for the benefit*

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<sup>1</sup>—And later by the late Mar Ruwal until 1918.



*of minorities might remain a dead letter if no effective supervision were exercised locally.*

*"The League of Nations representative on the spot might be entrusted with the supervision."*

Ever since the entry of the Assyrians into Iraq in 1918, the present Patriarch did not enjoy those privileges nor did he apply for them. The only power he had was the respect of the people and whenever the British mandatory power or the Iraq government were in trouble they appealed to him for help which he was ready to give in the interests of both the ruling powers and the Assyrians. This temporal power has never been alluded to since 1918 and was brought in with the arrival of the settlement expert with the main object of cutting off the Patriarch from the Assyrians in all respects. The Iraq government has failed up to the moment of writing to quote one single instance to show that the *Mar Shimun* had asked for temporal power. There are no such instances to be quoted.

Thomson reached Baghdad and interviewed the *Mar Shimun* at the residence of Sir Kenehan Cornwallis. He said he had no executive power but was merely employed in an advisory capacity. That is to say, the Iraq government would not be bound by any of his recommendations though there was no reason to fear any misunderstanding as he was only to apply the dictates of the government from whom he received his salary.

On June 7th, Thomson wrote to the *Mar Shimun* to say that he was leaving that evening for Mosul. In that letter he conveyed to the *Mar Shimun* certain discussions which he said took place, but the *Mar Shimun* refuted these on the same day in a letter he sent to Thomson. The *Mar Shimun* also told Thomson that the inimical attitude of the Mosul authorities should be changed for the better if he wanted to succeed in his settlement operations. The

Minister of Interior drafted and sent to the *Mar Shimun* for signature the draft shown in appendix "E" which if signed would have meant the death warrant of the Assyrians as a whole for ever not for the contents of the draft itself but for the contents of the letter which accompanied it. The *Mar Shimun* introduced certain alterations in the draft letter in which he safeguarded the interests of both parties. This the Minister refused to accept. On the other hand, in reply to the *Mar Shimun's* letter to Thomson, the Minister of Interior in his letter s/1239 to the *Mar Shimun* said that the attitude of the Mosul authorities was perfect and that he should have nothing to do with the settlement operations. On the one hand the *Mar Shimun* is asked to coöperate; on the other, he is notified officially not to interfere. I am at a loss to reconcile these two policies.

Here a deadlock was reached and all communications with the *Mar Shimun* stopped. No British official went to see him as that would have brought the wrath of their Arab masters and caused the loss of their jobs which they could not get elsewhere.

The Council of State drew up a secret plan for the disarmament of the Assyrians to be attacked when this was done. At the same time orders were issued to the press secretly to re-commence a more vigorous press campaign than ever before to prepare the Arab population and the army to move against the Assyrians when the signal was given. It must be clearly understood that there occurs no movement in Iraq of whatever nature it may be without the British authorities' knowledge.

On June 16th, the press demanded the annulment of the Anglo-Iraq Treaty which was only eight months old. It stated that no threats would be of any avail to see that this treaty is altered and that Iraq must have a free hand in its administration, policy, finance, military, and justice.



On June 20th, the first debate on the Assyrian problem took place; the Premier was asked the source from which the Assyrians had obtained their arms and asked why there would be a British Consulate at Diana. The Premier was also asked to stop the encroachments by the Assyrians on the civil population. All these questions were pre-arranged with the Ministers and they had to be asked in parliament to be given an official colour.

On June 25th, under the heading "Britain and the Assyrians" the press stated:—"Britain dishonoured all its pledges to the Arabs and only respected those made to the Jews in Palestine and to the Assyrians. It is Britain who has encouraged the Assyrians to be disloyal and armed them strongly for this purpose. She has formed an Assyrian army and she is increasing their arms. The cabinet has resigned on account of the crisis caused by the Assyrian case. It must not resign but must handle the situation with an iron hand."

On the same day as this article appeared, another deputy asked the Premier if the government intended to disperse the Assyrians as otherwise they would be a danger to Iraq.

On the 26th the press demanded the settlement of the nomad Arabs in priority to the Assyrians who were refugees in Iraq. In the Senate, four senators asked the Prime Minister for precise details regarding the Assyrian settlement as the precedents of this problem were of a very grave nature.

Between the 27th and 30th of June, fifteen venomous articles were allowed to be published against the Assyrians and more fiery speeches were made in parliament on the same subject. A list of these will be found below:—

"It is Britain who is causing dissensions in Iraq. Under the pretext of protecting the Assyrian minority, she is causing great complications for Iraq for her own ends



and yet she is said to be the ally of Iraq. It is the British who set in motion the separatist movement of Basrah from the rest of Iraq and it is they who are causing friction between the Shia and the Sunna. It is also they who wish to create a certain autonomous State in the north of Iraq. The Assyrians must not be deceived or else they have the Armenian example before them. The formation of Assyrian levies for the protection of the British aerodromes must not be permitted. The Assyrians must be dispersed. The debates in parliament on the Assyrians must put the Iraqis on their guard. The seat at the League of Nations offered to Iraq must not deceive us. The cabinet must not resign; the parliament and the public are behind it. The present cabinet must take any action that it deems fit irrespective of the consequences. It must resist the settlement of the Assyrians or the formation of the Assyrian levies. The nation is prepared to sacrifice its all to see that the present cabinet pursues its policy towards the Assyrians. Pressure is being brought to bear on Yaku in the north and he is about to submit to the government. Police posts in Mosul have been reinforced and troops have been sent up to deal with the Assyrians and all necessary steps have been taken to protect the inhabitants (sic.). The Assyrians are criminals and certain elements of them must be eliminated."

The Prime Minister in response to certain deputies replied, "There has been no aggression on the part of the Assyrians against peaceful villagers. As regards the question put to me as to the source whence the Assyrians obtained their arms, I think that the source is well known to all of you. There is no need, however, to fear any danger to the public safety. The recommendations of the League of Nations do not compel us to settle the Assyrians in one district. A certain deputy said that British officers are carrying out certain acts behind the scenes. If such

things happened in the past, they should have come to an end with the old regime, and they must come to an end now. In this matter the responsibility does not depend on the government alone. The whole nation should know its national duty in such matters, and should carry it out."

On June 28th, there were other debates in parliament. "These Assyrians were brought into Iraq by the British for purposes of their own. We await eagerly the drastic action the government proposes to take against the *Mar Shimun* and his followers. The mandatory regime is now over. We are independent. The arms of the Assyrians must be collected. The government has allotted 13,000 dinars<sup>1</sup> for the settlement of these criminals. They must be dispersed throughout Iraq. The British are behind them. By supporting the Assyrians, Britain wishes to create another Zionism question in Iraq as in Palestine. The government and the Nation must take joint action. We are prepared to defend the country, and I hope that the rumor that it is intended to settle one thousand Assyrian families in the North is not correct. Government must take punitive action against the Assyrians. Their arms must be collected at once, and drastic action taken against them; to their settlement in a compact community, we shall never consent."

This was the political situation in Iraq at the close of June, 1933. The goal of the Government was to disarm the Assyrians and then attack them and cancel even the Dashtazi scheme. During the Arab insurrection of 1920, 65,435 rifles and 3,185,000 S.A.A. rounds were collected from the Arab tribes who had taken part in the insurrection up to July 26th, 1921, and the number of firearms in their possession in June, 1933, was estimated at some 150,000. These facts were well-known to the Assyrians and that is why *Malik Yaku* and his supporters refused

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<sup>1</sup>—Equivalent to a pound.

to surrender their arms which they had acquired legally. Had the Government disarmed the Kurds and the Arabs, the Assyrians would have been the first to do so. It was this refusal to surrender his arms that the Government and the British officials considered *Malik Yaku* as "flouting of Government authority".

On June 29th, the *Mar Shimun* protested to various diplomatic representatives in Baghdad against the anti-Assyrian press campaign and the revolutionary speeches in Parliament sending a copy of his protest to the British Ambassador in Baghdad. See appendix "F". It is my firm belief that if the British Ambassador whose Government was morally responsible for the protection of the Assyrians wished to stop those scandals and avoid a massacre, he was in a position to do so or else why shoulder "moral responsibility?"

There was no sincere desire on the part of the Iraq Government to respect the international obligations. The Iraq Government on discovering that the British Embassy was indifferent as to the fate of the Assyrians, encouraged certain agents to assassinate the *Mar Shimun*. Of this the *Mar Shimun* was warned by a British source, by a Diplomatic representative and by the Chaldean Patriarchate. One of the many arrangements made was a pre-arranged collision of his car with another, which, fortunately for the Assyrians, did not succeed. Residing as he was in Baghdad, south, between Hinaidi (the Assyrian levy headquarters) and the Gailani camp, (occupied by Assyrians) his assassination at his residence was not feasible.



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE FINAL BETRAYAL OF THE ASSYRIANS

*(Continued)*

#### Part III.

In July the Arab political parties joined hands and took an active part in the anti-Assyrian campaign. Public announcements by various parties were made and broadcast throughout the country. Britain was once more vigorously attacked and the demonstration of her Royal Air Force was treated with contempt. "The only solution for the Assyrian problem is an extremely drastic action and no attention should be paid to the British standing behind them. The Government must not take into consideration Britain or any other power. Our patience is exhausted and action must be taken."

Between July 1, and 14th, over eighty leading articles were written in the Iraqi press by all classes of the population, all demanding the final extermination of the Assyrians. The Iraq army in Mosul received private instructions from the Ministers to be ready at a moment's notice, the secret societies, especially formed for the purpose, got in touch with the Kurdish Aghas and Arab tribal chiefs to join the army. Makki Sharbati, the Qaimaqam of Dohuk, informed the Moslem chiefs at a private meeting that the Iraq Government would take no action for any act of violence committed against the Christians, the Assyrians in particular. The Criminal Investigation Department, whose superior was an Englishman, had full knowledge of what was happening behind the scenes, and knew the ultimate aim of the Iraq Government. The British Embassy and other British officers, who received copies of his special

reports, usually withheld from the Arab Ministers. The only action taken by the Embassy was to protest to the Iraq Government against two articles aimed at Great Britain. This newspaper was suppressed, only to reappear a few days later to join again the anti-Assyrian forces. Britain was proclaimed as the enemy of Iraq for having sheltered the Assyrians.

In Mosul, the telephone of the Mutasarrif was busy conveying instructions to the Qaimaqams to be prepared for the wholesale massacre of the Assyrians. There is only a thin partition which separates the room of the Mutasarrif from that of the British Administrative Inspector.

Though the general position of the Assyrians had now taken a loathsome aspect, our friend Thomson was still hitting his head against a strong wall. Lt.-Colonel R. S. Stafford,<sup>1</sup> who spent all his time in the south of Iraq, with no knowledge whatever of the problems in the north, succeeded Wilson, who took leave of absence. *Malik Yaku* came to Mosul and was ordered to give a guarantee for "good behavior". This, the Government considered necessary in view of so many false rumors that were spread about him. Mr. Panfil, an American missionary, posted bail for him; and *Malik Yaku* wrote a letter to the Government in the following vein:—

(1) "I give this document that my work and movements will be as blameless in the future, as they have been in the past, unless I am forced by false reports, like this time,

(2) I will obey all the orders and regulations of the Government and the orders of the officials, provided that

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<sup>1</sup>—This man resigned his position **after** the massacre as he was disgusted with the barbarous acts of the Iraq army. The later parts of the "Iraqi Blue-book" contained his letters to Baghdad, which, for the most part, though based on hearsay, was taken as a "Bible". He appears to be a man who dashes at solutions without sufficient thought and judgments on subjects whose head or tail he does not know.

such orders and regulations are not against the interests of my Nation and that the officials are not cruel,

(3) As soon as a decision is reached between His Beatitude, *the Mar Shimun* and the Government regarding the demands of the Assyrians who are pressing *the Mar Shimun* for them, I then am ready to interview Government officials not only in Mosul, but also in Baghdad,

(4) I will order my men to go as soon as the Government forces are withdrawn,

(5) The Rev. Panfil is guaranteeing all that I have said in this document."

The Government never took the trouble to inquire into the complaints substantiated with evidence by *Malik Yaku* and the other leaders against the tyrannical officials.

On July 10th and again on July 11th, 1933, meetings, which were attended by the Assyrian leaders, were held at the office of the Mutasariff, Mosul. The meetings were arranged by the Government with the ulterior purpose of causing friction among the Assyrians by employing paid servants to cause quarrels at the meetings and to create disrespect for the leaders. This group was given the privilege of arming with daggers and revolvers, and was spurred on by the officials to use abusive language to antagonize the leaders; but the latter, being apprised by experience, dealt with the situation calmly and wisely. Thus, the trouble at which the Government aimed was averted.

At these meetings, the acting Mutasarrif Khalil 'Azmi, Thomson and Stafford explained to the Assyrians, the Government settlement-policy. They were told to accept the Dashtazi region, which would not have accommodated more than two hundred families, while the unsettled Assyrians were over fifteen thousand. The three spokesmen told the Assyrians that those unwilling to consent to the land policy as outlined above could leave the country im-



mediately. They were warned that (a) Persia would disperse them, (b) Turkey would not accept them, and (c) in Syria the French authorities already had the problem of the Armenian refugees and had no lands to offer the Assyrians. "It is true that young Assyrians might be allowed to obtain employment in the French colonial armies, but let me tell you that such service is hard in the extreme."

Knowing the ill-intentions of the Government, and being at last convinced of the British betrayal, *Malik Yaku* and his brother, Shlaimun, *Malik Loco*, and other leaders, decided to leave Iraq, as there was no more future for them in that country. The *Mar Shimun*, being detained and under surveillance, his mail confiscated, and his visitors—if any—carefully scrutinized, and the Patriarchal House in Mosul closely watched, Maliks, *Yaku* and *Loco*, and other leaders, agreed to proceed to Baghdad (at the request of the Government) and consult with the *Mar Shimun*. Upon further consideration of this plan, they became rightly suspicious, and therefore concluded that the Government's invitation was another trick such as was used to trap the *Mar Shimun*, and decided to leave Iraq for Syria under the French Mandate. On the night of July 14th and 15th, an armed group of Assyrians carrying their British rifles (1914 pattern), which they had legally acquired, left for the Faishkhabour, the River, (which is the frontier line between Iraq and Syria) *via* Dohuk and Zakho, convinced that since the Government wanted to get rid of them, it would be expedient for their families and other relatives to follow. The Mutasariff and the Commandant of Police became aware of the Assyrian exodus three days later but was unable to discover their whereabouts until the Assyrians sent a letter to the Minister of Interior as follows:

July 23, 1933  
Near Khaniq.

Minister of Interior, Baghdad.  
Excellency,

*As a result of Mosul meeting, the Iraqi Government policy was explained to us both regarding settlement and Patriarch.*

*Mutasarrif openly said "those unsatisfied with this policy are free to emigrate from Iraq". Accordingly, we have come to the frontier and we request the Iraqi Government not to block the road to those who want to join us.*

*We have no intention to fight unless forced.*

(Sd.) Yaku D'Malik Ismail (Upper Tiyyari)  
Malik Baito (Tkhuma)  
Malik Loko Shlaimun (Tkhuma)  
Malik Warda (Diz)  
Rais Esha (Nochiyya)  
Rais Is-haq (Nochiyya)  
Malik Maroguil (Sarrah)  
Tooma D'Makhmura (Baz)  
Yushia Eshu (Drinayi)  
Malik Salim (Barwar)  
Shamasha Ismail (Liwan)  
Rais Mikhail (Sarrah)  
Eshu D'Kelaita (Timar D'Wan)

Other Assyrians followed the first group to be hereinafter known as group "A", and all the peoples of the lower Tiyyari, the Tkhuma, the lower Barwar, the Ashita extending up to Gali Salabakin (Amadiyah); all the Assyrians in Rowanduz; Barwar Qudchanis in Dohuk; the Bohtan Assyrians, Jelu, and Gawar in Shaikhan, were to migrate led by: Odishu Rais Oshana, Rais Yosep Mirwatti, Rab Emma Khoshaba, Rais Khoshaba, (of Galiyyid Barkho, representing Malik Shamdsin, invalid). Raises Saifu and Maqsul Lagippa and to join group



### ASSYRIAN LEADERS

Who signed the letter to the Iraqi Minister of Interior, not including Malik Baito of Tkhuma and Rais Makhaiel of Sara, who were killed on the Syro-Iraq frontier





“A” but the Iraq army molested them, therefore, they were prevented from leaving Iraq peacefully as they had intended to do. It is estimated that the entire movement would involve some 40,000 persons, which represented 95% of the total Assyrian population. The remainder (far in the south) would follow in due course.

The Police Headquarters, normally in Baghdad, were transferred to Mosul; two-thirds of the Iraq army forces were concentrated in Mosul liwa: over 1500 irregular Arab and Kurdish police and tribes were engaged and armed by the Government, pressing the Assyrians at the same time to surrender their arms.

Immediately after the migration of group “A”, His Britannic Majesty’s Government representative in London, travelled to Paris to discuss the situation with the French Government. The French authorities in Syria were now faced with an awkward situation. The Iraq Government demanded that the Assyrians be disarmed and be driven back to Iraq, an action which was contrary to article VI of the *Provisional Accord* of 1927, an agreement drawn between Iraq and Syria for the regulation of tribal movements on the frontier. This article was inapplicable in the case of group “A”, which had left Iraq with the specific approval of the Iraq Government; and which, according to the statements of the Iraqi representatives to the French, was not in a state of rebellion. Moreover, article V, paragraph 11 of the *Provisional Accord* is clear on this point. The intention of the Iraq Government was to have the Assyrians disarmed and driven back by French troops into Iraq to be totally massacred without possible resistance. The position of the French was extremely difficult, for they could not possibly drive into Iraq, a wholly peaceful population only to be butchered by the Iraq army which was at fault and the instigator of all the

troubles; and thus, force France to besmirch her glorious past, ruin her prestige in the East, and bring an inevitable shame to her name. Britain alone has been capable of doing this.

From the British, French, Assyrian, and Iraqi reports before me, the correct version of what actually happened is as follows:—

The French had no adequate knowledge of the acute persecution of the Assyrians by the Iraq Government that forced them to take refuge under quite normal conditions, in Syria. The Iraq Government had been concealing its acts of oppression and was censoring even the foreign mails to prevent any leakage of news.

As a result of the Anglo-French discussions in Paris, and of the gross misrepresentations of facts made to the French authorities on the frontier by Iraqi representatives (one of whom was the criminal Qaimaqam of Dohuk) “that there were no differences between the Assyrian and the Iraq Government” the French apparently notified the Assyrians to return to Iraq, as the Iraqi representatives had assured them that they would be allowed entry without being further persecuted or massacred. They were advised to leave the territory as otherwise the question might assume serious proportions. *Malik Yaku*, his brother Mr. Shlaimun, *Malik Loko* and Mr. Eshu D’Kelatia requested the French not to force them to return to Iraq because the past false accusations of the Iraq Government against them would, without doubt, lead to their persecution. They said that they had no intention of fighting, and were they to allow their compatriots to do so, they would be the first to take the field, but the fact is that their very presence in Syria was to avert this situation.

The news of the acts of callous oppression by the Iraq







YAKU D'MALIK ISMAIL OF UPPER TIYARI

"They split their forces in two groups. Yaku surprised the enemy from the rear . . . "

—*The Assyrian Tragedy*, p. 49



MALIK LOCO SHEEMON OF TKHUMA

"Malik Loco launched a frontal attack di-locating the  
Iraq army from Baikhr hill . . ."

—*The Assyrian Tragedy*, p. 49





YOUNG PATRICK, SON OF JOHN TAYLOR

They were taken during the war, and were  
 among the many taken by the

—The Annual Training, 1917—



MALIK LOCO SHLEMON OF TKHUMA

"Malik Loco launched a frontal attack dislocating the  
Iraq army from Baikhir hill . . ."

—*The Assyrian Tragedy*, p. 49





Government against the families of group "A", and others, were now rife. Individuals wishing to join group "A" were being shot down and tortured. Under these circumstances, Maliks, *Yaku*, *Loko*, and the other leaders, had no choice but to return to Iraq and save the situation by surrendering their arms and returning to their villages.

To test the Iraqi assurances to the French that the Assyrians would not be killed, a small group, with mules, proceeded to cross the river and waited on the bank for another group to follow. As one of the groups was crossing the river, an Iraqi aeroplane gave a signal to the Iraqi forces that were entrenched all around the spot. Suddenly, the men in the river and those on the shore were attacked by a terrific fire from the hidden Iraqi. The Assyrians, hastily hoisting white flags, shouted to each other, "*Do not retaliate for the sake of our womenfolk and children left behind in Iraq*". The Assyrians withheld their fire and shot not a single gun until the cries of their dying convinced them that unless a defence was made, the entire band would be massacred. Among the innumerable acts of heroism, the heroic sacrifice of the Rev. Maroguil of Barwar, (Qudchanis), should go down in history in a blaze of glory, for making his body a bridge upon which the betrayed Assyrians crossed and retaliated by opening fire. *Malik Yaku* in his report to the author borne out by eye-witnesses, states, "As soon as we opened fire, though under no cover, the Iraq army displayed its gallantry by running disorderly before us to fortify themselves in their camp near by." The Iraq army took the offensive at six o'clock in the evening on the 4th of August and continued all the night of the fifth, when the Assyrians, with rifles only, counterattacked (until now on the defensive) and inflicted very heavy casualties on the retreating enemy. The casualties of the Assyrians were 10

killed<sup>1</sup> and 13 wounded<sup>2</sup>. The dead bodies of the Iraq army counted by the Assyrians numbered 80 and later reports indicated their casualties were heavier. The mount of Chai Bekhair, where the army was strongly entrenched, was captured by the Assyrians on the fifth by a decisive attack launched by *Malik Loko* of Tkhuma, supported by a strong party from behind. Those in the river and on the shore were rescued. Iraqi aeroplanes took part in all these operations, killing three of their own officers whom the Assyrians had captured and detained in a tent.

Like Aylmer at Wadi, "through lack of water", and want of food, Maliks, *Yaku* and *Loko*, also *Shlaimun* and *Eshu*, found that they could not hold their positions much longer, for the Iraq army was receiving considerable reinforcements while the Assyrians were getting weaker. Therefore, they decided to withdraw, after having rescued their compatriots from extermination.

During the fighting, however, about 250 Assyrians cut their way through the military cordon and returned to their villages in Iraq, to protect their families.<sup>3</sup> Iraqi aeroplanes dropped leaflets to say that all those surrendering their arms would be pardoned and in no way injured. A large number of Assyrians did surrender their arms to the civil authorities, but were immediately shot dead without trial. In a garden at Dohuk alone, on the 17th of August, fifteen Assyrians were tied up and shot down in the presence, and under the orders, of the Qaimaqam.

1—Malik Balto  
Rais Zomaya Daniel  
Jagis Misho  
Yokhanan Khano  
Rehana Sorisho

2—Malik Loko  
Anter Jindo  
Moshi Daniel  
Rais Jileo Nadir  
Rais Gewargis Gievo  
Hormis K. Gewargis  
Nessan Yonan

Zomaya Slewo  
Kishto Benyamin  
Rev. Maroguil  
Badal David  
Maroguil Koryakos

Shimun Warda  
Joseph Eshoo  
Nweya Yonan  
Yosep Kannon  
Kheyu Chado  
Malik Shikho

3—See statement of Sir Arnold Wilson at the end of this chapter.





A GROUP OF DIZ  
including Rais Ishaq of Shamazdin



A GROUP OF JILU, BAZ, SARA AND DRINAYE





A GROUP OF TKHUMA



A GROUP OF UPPER TIYARI  
including Odis ho Rais Oshana of Ashita, Lower Tiyari



The news of the battle was broadcast throughout the country by different governmental agencies, but, as usual, gross and shameful misrepresentations were made to further poison the minds of the Arab population. The Iraq Government stated that it was the Assyrians who first opened fire at Faishkhabour, and that the three Arab officers captured had their bodies mutilated. Leaving the Assyrian and Iraqi accounts of this incident aside, we have the disinterested report of Major Aldwards. His statement is, that group "A" had captured Arab officers in action and a considerable quantity of war material including explosives. As the fight was going on, the Assyrians were unable to take the prisoners with them so they tied them up and left them behind in a tent by which lay the captured ammunition. The Iraqi aeroplanes, wanting to blow up the ammunition, dropped bombs which resulted in the death of their own officers. This statement is borne out by the fact that these Iraqi bauble flyers dropped the bombs on Syrian soil, killing certain people there.

On 24th of September, 1933, *Malik Yaku* writing to me states:—

My dear Yusuf Malek,

. . . . . You have no doubt heard how the Iraq Government has fulfilled her promises to the League of Nations in regard to the protection of Minorities. Since long it was my desire to get in touch with you but unfortunately I was unable to obtain your address until recently when Jaladat Bedr Khan gave it to me.

I would be glad if you could have attached article published in reply to Nuri Pasha's statements.

I have not heard from the *Mar Shimun* directly or indirectly for some months now and we would be all glad here if you would keep us informed of all events as we receive no news or papers.

Yours sincerely,

Yaku Malik Ismail.

The article of Malik Yaku, conclusive as it is, was utilized in the proper quarters, but I must reproduce certain parts of it for its historical value.

**Nuri Pasha—**

The *Mar Shimun* was detained after trouble broke out.

**Malik Yaku—**

The *Mar Shimun* was officially detained in Baghdad long before the trouble broke out for having refused to sign documents dictated to him by the Minister. If his Beatitude would have signed these, he would have been considered a traitor and disloyal to his Nation. The Assyrians applied for his release but their requests were unattended to.

**Nuri Pasha—**

Malik Yaku entered Dohuk with an armed force to defy Government.

**Malik Yaku—**

I was invited to Dohuk by the Qaimaqam and I did not have with me more than twelve individuals some of whom had business of their own in Dohuk. Though so invited, the Qaimaqam informed me through the agency of Ezra effendi, the police officer, that he was unable to see me. To the Mosul authorities, on the other hand, he wrote misrepresenting the whole affair. Even if I had armed men with me, that custom was not unusual for tribal chiefs in Kurdistan. For instance, Sa'id Agha Garmawi, Ahmad Agha Barashi made visits to the Iraqi officials with armed followers.

**Nuri Pasha—**

Qaimaqam Amadiyah invited Malik Yaku to attend his offices and failed to do so.

**Malik Yaku—**

The Qaimaqam asked me where we should meet. I suggested Suwara Tuka, but on finding that the Government had already dispatched a force of fifty policemen and armored cars to effect my arrest, I refrained from going. I went to the hills.

**Nuri Pasha—**

Yaku submitted to the military force and he was pardoned. We regret such a pardon was given him.



**Malik Yaku—**

On June 26th, Colonel Stafford and Major Thomson came up to me with a telegram from the Minister that I would be given safe conduct if I only went to Mosul and explained my grievances to the Mutasarrif against the Qaimaqams concerned. This I did but there was still no remedy.

**Nuri Pasha—**

The action of the Assyrians was not due to the detention of the *Mar Shimun*.

**Malik Yaku—**

It is obvious that what took place was due to the cruel treatment meted out to our Patriarch by the Iraq Government. I personally told the Mutasarrif and the Qaimaqams that if they wanted to settle the question amicably, the *Mar Shimun* ought to be released. Their reply was that the *Mar Shimun* was a Spiritual Head and must not interfere in politics. On the other hand, these same officials were employing Bishop Sargis, Bishop Yuwalaha, Qasha Yosep d'Kelaita and Qasha Kina in the same politics which were withheld from the *Mar Shimun*. How can this be reconciled? It was quite impossible for those zealous and pure blooded Assyrians to bear any longer the harsh treatment meted out to their Patriarch who had been their Temporal and Spiritual leader for many centuries past and who had only represented to the Government the wishes of the Assyrians who had begged and pressed him to do.

Malik Yaku concludes:—

“Before closing, I should like to state that it is quite natural for the Iraqi Minister of Defence to award medals to all the troops who fought against us but he will not forget, I hope, that such medals should bear the pictures of the isolated and undefended women and children upon whom the army has been triumphant, while at the actual battle at Faishkhabour, the powerful Iraq army proved themselves exceptional cowards, a quality for which they have been so famous during their operations in Kurdistan.”

I cannot close this chapter without quoting a small paragraph from "The Crisis in Iraq".<sup>1</sup> I know, and the survivors of the massacre and the coming generations should know that it was through British treachery that the massacre was made possible.

Very few Englishmen would have made this very important statement of "*four squadrons of the British Air Force, whose intervention has been confined, of recent months, to dropping leaflets on Assyrians telling them to surrender. They did so and were massacred a day or two later in cold blood.*" (See page 305.)

I do not think there is any Assyrian in the four corners of the world who could doubt Sir Arnold's statement; and if we are not to forget our martyrs of Simeil and other villages, we should frame it (as I have done), and place it in a conspicuous place in every Assyrian house, and have its tragic consequences taught to our children as to how the Assyrians have been rewarded by the British with whom their relations date a century back.

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1—By Lieut.-Colonel Sir Arnold Wilson K.C.I.E.; C.M.G.D.S.O. The October issue (1930) of the *Nineteenth Century and After*. (London). See Chapter XIX.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE ARAB BARBARISM IN IRAQ

In 1929, circulars, drafted by Iraqi Ministers holding Ministerial posts in 1933, were circulated throughout Kurdistan for a general massacre of the Assyrians. These circulars, according to the Special Service Officer, Mosul, were caught in Rowanduz and the situation saved, not by the action of the local Arab officials who were in league with those in Baghdad, but purely and solely by Kurdish intellects, who, on receiving the news, took prompt action at the right time.

In 1930, on his visit to Mosul, Sir Francis Humphrys met different groups of representative leaders. One of those groups was composed of *the Mar Shimun*, Bishop Yusuf Ghanimah, and Qas Sulaiman Sayigh, Priest Gregor of the Armenians, Majid Agha, a Kurdish chief of Mizuri in Dohuk, (a very progressive Kurd who always did his best to cultivate friendly relations with the Assyrians), and another Kurdish chief of the Herki tribe. In conversation, amongst other things, Majid Agha said:

*"Mamurai Araban Fasad Kan Baima wa Asuri."*

"The Arab officials are causing dissension between us and the Assyrians."

Captain Holt, the interpreter to the High Commissioner, omitted to translate this phrase to Sir Francis but when he was reminded by those present, he regretted the error.

In April, 1931, arrangements were complete to massacre all the Christians in Mosul, but this was avoided due to the numberless complaints and reports sent to all directions by the Christian leaders. The British armored



car carried out a demonstration in the streets of Mosul; so the massacre did not occur.

In September 1931, the League of Nations was officially warned that a massacre would take place once the Assyrians are left to the mercy of the Iraq government.

In 1932 Sir Francis was reminded of the above attempts to massacre the Assyrians. He had to admit the fact but said:

"You need not fear. The British influence in Iraq would be much greater after the lifting of the mandate than what it has been and I, in my capacity as the British Ambassador, will have more time to devote to the interests of the Assyrians and see that what you fear of will not take place."

The members of the League of Nations were not convinced of the truth of the reports submitted to them and were extremely reluctant to release Britain from her obligations and responsibilities before making sure that they would not be accessories in what they knew would happen.

To break up all resistance in the way of Iraq, Sir Francis Humphrys made the following eminent declaration at Geneva:

*"Should Iraq prove herself unworthy of the confidence which had been placed in her, the moral responsibility must rest with His Majesty's Government, which would not attempt to transfer it to the Permanent Mandates Commission."*

After all due warnings to Great Britain, the door of the League of Nations was opened in the face of Iraq and was admitted as an independent member, under false pretences, without any safeguards for the protection of the Minorities, the Assyrians in particular.

Mr. Pierre Orts, (Belgium), as rapporteur to the Mandates Commission in June, 1931, (see minutes of the twentieth session) stated:

"Twelve years ago Iraq was included among the countries whose existence as an independent nation has only been provisionally recognized on condition that they were guided by a mandate. One of the reasons why Iraq was refused complete independence was that it was not yet considered to possess that spirit of tolerance which made it possible to place in its charge without any apprehension, the fate of the racial and religious Minorities established in the territories accorded to the country."

The statement of Sir Francis was inconsistent with the terms of the Anglo-Iraq Treaty of June 30, 1930, which conferred upon Great Britain no powers such as were implied in the assumption of "moral responsibility," by His Majesty's Government. On the other hand, Mr. Henderson, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, stated that when that Treaty became operative "the responsibility of Great Britain will be neither more nor less than that of any other Power."

Which has the greater authority—a formal treaty presented to Parliament and registered in the League of Nations and the official comment thereon of a Secretary of State, or a verbal statement made in secret session before the Permanent Mandates Commission by the *ex parte* advocate of the case of Iraq? The words *ex parte* are advisedly used, because the British Government was pledged by the preamble of the Treaty to do its utmost to secure the admission of Iraq to the League of Nations "without qualification or proviso" and was thus precluded from moving the League to insert safeguards on which it had failed to insist deliberately; nor was it reasonable to suppose that other members of the League would take the initiative in the matter which in no way concerned their own subjects.

Sir Henry Dobbs pressed the view in the "Times" that the probable course of events in Iraq was not such as to justify the acceptance of Great Britain of "moral responsibility" without the power to give effect thereto.

His views were also endorsed by a distinguished ex-Civil Commissioner in Iraq, Sir Arnold Wilson.

*Professor Vesey-FitzGerald* before the Grotius Society stated:—

“To denounce the Iraq treaty now might perhaps be a breach of faith with our allies, the Sharifian nationalists; to have signed the treaty at all or to observe it was, and is, a breach of faith both with the League of Nations and with our equally loyal allies, the Assyrian Christians.”

*His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury* stated:

“I most earnestly hope that the League of Nations will insist on obtaining the utmost possible security for the protection of these Minorities before a mandate is issued to the Iraq Government. This is the very least that we may have a right to insist upon in view of all the sufferings and sacrifices of these minorities.”

A letter from His Eminence Cardinal Bourne contained the following:

“His Eminence desires it to be known that he took great interest in the question of the Christian Minorities in Iraq, and that he knew that the Holy See was fully aware of what was happening to those Minorities.”

His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin and Dr. Scott Lidgett, the latter on behalf of the Evangelical Free Churches of Britain, also expressed the hope that the League would safeguard the national integrity of the Christians and the other Minorities.

We left Malik Yaku and group “A” in Syria, and I think it necessary to say a few words as to who Malik Yaku is, because the Iraq Government has been maliciously attempting to brand him as a rebel and no more than a “bandit.”

Malik Yaku is a very good Christian who never misses his morning or evening prayers. He comes from a very influential Assyrian family in upper Tiyari like the Barkho family of lower Tiyari. He has been in the



Assyrian levies and served with many British officers during the last sixteen years. He commanded the second Assyrian battalion and possesses an undaunted spirit. He rose to the highest military rank to which an Assyrian could rise due to his bravery and the innumerable successes achieved during the military operations in Iraq. Sensible, unselfish, and honest he was; he refused to permit his Nation and Patriarch to be enslaved by a race infinitely inferior to his.

His only fault has been that he and his brother-Assyrians, officers and men, have saved many British lives (by sacrificing their own) and saved millions of rupees to the British tax-payer by serving in dangerous fields which otherwise would have been done by British troops. If men are ungrateful, history is NOT.

In August, 1933, a Holy War was proclaimed against the Assyrians, and the Government newspapers and officials were in the foremost of those who advocated the *Jihad*. Glorious tributes were paid to those who were coming forward to join the Jihad. Tribesmen and townsmen of all classes were instigated by the officials to volunteer to proceed to the north and fight the Assyrians. Arab deputies armed proceeded to Mosul for the same purpose. Merchants were supplying the volunteers with firearms to whom the Government tendered its thanks for such acts of patriotism. Camels were being produced in hundreds to facilitate the task of the army for transport purposes to clear up the Assyrian zone. During August over two hundred and thirty libellous articles were allowed to be published against the "infidels." Further attempts to assassinate the *Mar Shimun* failed.

Through their chiefs, Arab and Kurdish tribesmen were given the orders of the Government: they offered one pound for every Assyrian head brought in, dead or alive; and that they would not be asked by the Government to

restore any or all of the property they could plunder. All acts of violence were lawful, and anyone not participating in this war would be betraying his religion and country. This was the Order of the Day.

We asked the "paper-guarantees" of the League of Nations to protect us, and we were told that that was the province of the "British moral responsibility." On application to the latter, she was found to be, in derogation of her *moral responsibility*, haphazardly indifferent to the fate of the people who had been her loyal allies.

There was now nothing to prevent Baker Sidqy, the Arab commander, who was so shamefully defeated by group "A" on the frontier, from embarking upon the general massacre-scheme for which preparations were made since the *stone-case* in May.

On his return to the Assyrian villages and settlements, all Assyrians found on the way were killed. Assyrians who, during all their stay in Iraq, had no interest in governmental affairs were treated similarly. To minimize the number of persons so killed, Assyrians, who had surrendered their arms and also those who had no arms, were tied and conveyed by military cars to the Syrian frontier and killed there after being tortured on the way. The Iraq Government in her communiqué regarding the battle on the frontier stated that ninety-five Assyrians were killed in action. We know that only ten Assyrians were killed and the remaining eighty-seven were killed under circumstances described above.

Under orders of the Qaimaqam of Dohuk and Amadiyah, the police began collecting the Assyrian arms since July 30th. The official massacre day was celebrated on August the 7th. The Assyrians living in the villages of: Sayyad Zari, Manawi, Qasr Yazdin, Mansuriyah, Chamma Gore, Kharab Kuli, Dari, Sarshuri, Garpili and Busuriyek, and many other villages were instructed to come

down to Simel village (the largest Assyrian settlement) to be protected by the Government against Arabs and Kurds! The idea of the Government was to reduce in this way the number of massacre zones as much as possible and prevent the spreading of their forces on a wide line. Those who did not turn out were killed in their own villages by the military columns in their districts. Simel, where there has always been a police post and which was now reinforced, was to suffer most. Goriyyil Yonan of the Baz, who was of the pro-government party and always assisted her in her schemes, was the first to be shot at the door of his home, although he had hoisted a white flag and had his Iraqi nationality paper in his hand. In one room of his home, eighty-one men from the Baz tribe were killed by revolvers and bayonets by Iraqi troops in uniform. Groups of men and women were turned out from Goriyyil's house and other houses in the village, tied up, and killed by machine-gun fire. Priests were barbarously tortured in every imaginable way and were slaughtered, after having their tools placed into their mouths. Assyrian women were ordered by the Iraqi commander to be stripped-naked and march before him. Pressure was brought to bear on the wife of Malik Yaku to say that the exodus and the battle were pre-arranged with the French authorities. They were ordered to sign documents on the spot to this effect.

Assyrian girls of nine were raped and burnt alive. Holy books were piled over their bodies and burnt with them.

The massacre in all the villages of Amadiyah, Zakho, Dohuk, Shaikhan, and Mosul Qadhas was carried out in the same manner and at the same time.

The Assyrian levies, who during that time were guarding the British Summer camp at Sar Amadiyh, were brought down by cars in great haste to the British aero-



drome in the vicinity of Simel and conveyed to Baghdad. They were not permitted to see what was happening. British aeroplanes flew over the massacre zones and took photographs from the air without giving any help or relief to those who were being massacred, although many of the latter were the families of the Assyrians still guarding the British interests in Iraq.

All foreigners were withdrawn from the Mosul liwa and confined in Mosul town. The Ministers of Interior and Defence were in Mosul and received hourly reports of the progress of the massacre. British officers in the Iraq army and those in the civil service were well aware of those horrors.

Assyrian villages were stormed, burnt to the ground, and later pillaged by Arab irregulars and certain Kurdish tribesmen. All the money the Assyrians possessed was robbed by the Iraq army and the civil officials from the rank of Qaimaqams to that of police constables. Kurdish aghas, who were always feared to take reprisals in such a case, in view of the operations undertaken against them under the orders of the British High Commissioners, gave shelter to Assyrian villagers and isolated persons instead of attacking them as was expected. The following Kurdish aghas are among others who protected the Assyrians during their tragedy:

Sheik Nuri Brifkani, Ahmad Agha al Atrushi and Qadir Agha of Aqra.

And though the Kurds in Arbil liwa were in a position to slaughter all the Assyrians in the Rowanduz settlement in view of their small number, yet the Kurds never molested them or remembered the near past.

Sheiks Ahmad and Mahmud were interviewed and requested by the Arab Ministers to attack the Assyrians and join in the Jihad, but they refused to do so. Sheik Mahmud was interviewed in A'dhamiyah.

King Faisal, who was in Europe with his Ministers asking the British Government to lend them a few million rupees, and Sir Francis, who was on a fishing trip, returned to Baghdad by air. Faisal is reliably reported to have asked the cabinet to resign or stop the massacre, and he was told that he was merely a refugee in Iraq, and he could leave the throne if the policy of the nationalists did not suit him. It must be remembered that Faisal had lost all his prestige in his last days subsequent to the admission of Iraq to the League, for he could not rely on British bayonets as he did before.

The British Embassy, though in possession of full reports of the ugly events in Mosul, kept the *Mar Shimun* entirely in the dark. On July 31st, in a letter to the League, the *Mar Shimun* stated:

*"My correspondence is either censored or confiscated, therefore, I am obliged to use indirect methods of sending Assyrian news out of Iraq."*

I, being in Beyrouth, the following telegram reached me which I radiographed to the League of Nations on August 1st:

*"Assyrian situation desperate stop Compelling Assyrians crossing Syrian frontier stop I under Government detention Baghdad stop Appeal for League's intervention."*

If the League's protection was of any avail, the massacre which took place six days after this telegram, might have been stopped. Even at this time, the British authorities, if they wanted, could have stopped the massacre; (if not by sending troops to Mosul) by sending Assyrian levies from Baghdad to the North whose mere presence would have prevented the Iraq army from attacking the Assyrians.

On August 17th, I received more telegrams from the *Mar Shimun* to the League of Nations:

*"Implore League's immediate intervention stop Assyrian women and children included in massacre through certain Kurdish tribes armed by the Iraq Government."*

The reference to the Kurds which was based on a first-hand information report (and on a statement by the Iraqi prime minister) who attempted to throw the responsibility on the shoulders of the Kurds was subsequently corrected in a letter dated September 12th and sent to the League of Nations by the *Mar Shimun*.

On August 17th also, the above telegrams signed by the *Mar Shimun* were sent to the following addressees:

His Majesty King George  
 His Excellency the President of the French Republic  
 His Majesty King Albert of Belgium  
 Her Majesty Queen Wilhelmina of Holland  
 His Excellency Signor Mussolini  
 His Excellency Herr Hitler  
 His Majesty King Haakon of Norway

With the exception of the last telegram which did not find the King of Norway at Oslo, the remainder reached their destinations.

The orders to stop the official massacre were passed on the 14th of August, though it cannot be said it was definitely stopped.

On August 16th, the Iraq Government passed an emergency law for the deportation of the *Mar Shimun*, his father, *Mr. David D'Beth Mar Shimun*, and his brother, *Mr. Theodore*. On the 17th, he was notified as follows, and on the morning of the 18th he was carried by British aeroplanes to Cyprus via Palestine, accompanied by two Assyrian officers, *Rah Emma Malik Hormiz* of *Tkhuma*, and *Rab Khamshi* officer *Yaku Eliya*.



No. S/1801

Date 25th Rabi ul Thani 1352

17th August, 1933

Ministry of Interior, Iraq  
To Eshai Mar Shimun,

This is to notify you that the Council of State has, by virtue of authority vested in him, decided to withdraw your Iraqi nationality and this Ministry has moreover decided that you should be deported outside Iraq.

For your information, we send you herewith a copy of the order relating to this.

Sd. Nashat al Sinawi  
For Minister of Interior.

No. S/1792

Date 24th Rabi ul Thani 1352

August 16, 1932

Ministry of Interior, Iraq

Whereas the Council of State has decided to withdraw the Iraqi nationality from Eshai Mar Shimun in accordance with the authority vested in the Council of State vide article I of the Law for the withdrawal of Iraqi nationality No. 62 for the year 1933 and whereas it has appeared that the deportation of the person in question outside Iraq is in the interests of Law and public security:

Therefore We, Minister of Interior by virtue of the authority vested in Us under article II of the law in question, order that he be deported outside Iraq frontier.

Sd. Nashat al Sinawi  
For Minister of Interior.

Similar orders of deportation were sent to Hon. David D'Mar Shimun and Mr. Theodore D'Bith Mar Shimun.

Before his deportation, the *Mar Shimun* was assured by the British Air Vice-Marshal that as soon as he left Iraq, he, together with Squadron Leader Reid (purposely brought down from Palestine) and Captain Baddiley of the Assyrian levies, would proceed to Mosul and establish a refugee camp for the Assyrian widows and orphans. He proceeded as far as Mosul where the Iraqi authorities

prevented him and his friends from going any farther, as they had not yet sufficient Assyrian blood. In Simel alone, over four hundred persons were buried in three trenches by a labour party sent from Mosul, and this, according to the statements of those who survived and the official reports of the administrative officials, was due to the complaints made by the officials who could not bear the smell of the dead bodies which were being eaten at night by the dogs and wild beasts.

The order of deportation, though applicable to the *Mar Shimun*, is also applicable to the new king of Iraq, Ghazi, together with some one hundred thousand persons, including Chaldeans, Armenians, and other members of the Iraq minorities, who had entered Iraq after the war, for the law itself states:

"Any person who, he or his family, were not habitually residents in Iraq *before the war* can be deported under this law."

This law is against the:

- (1) Treaty of Lausanne
- (2) Iraq constitutional law
- (3) Iraq nationality law
- (4) The guarantees of the League of Nations.

On August 21st, the *Mar Shimun* arrived in Cyprus with *Hon. David D'Bith Mar Shimun* and *Mr. Theodore*, and I joined His Beatitude on the 26th; for I was deported from Syria two days after the arrival in Beyruth of Nuri, the Iraqi Foreign Minister. .

Article 7 of the Iraqi constitution states:

"There shall be no violation of, or interference with, the personal liberty of any of the inhabitants of Iraq. None of them shall be arrested, detained, punished or obliged to change their place of residence, or be placed in bonds, or compelled to serve in the armed forces, except in conformity with law.

"Torture and the deportation of Iraqis from the Kingdom of Iraq are absolutely forbidden."

The Nationality Law of Iraq came into force on the 9th of October 1924, or two months and three days after the ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne. It laid down that Turkish subjects habitually resident in territory detached from Turkey became *ipso facto* nationals of the State to which such territory was transferred. Thus, the inhabitants of the State of Iraq, (including the Assyrians) being formerly Turkish subjects, now became Iraqi subjects.

Near Dohuk, there still stands an historical hill upon which thousands of Assyrians were persecuted in the old days. On this same hill, many Assyrians were executed during August, 1933. The last Assyrian to be shot was one Howel Odishu whose life was only saved by a miracle.

An impartial observer who happened to be in Baiji writes me as follows:

"On the evening of August 9th, 1933, the Arab employees of the Iraq Petroleum Coy.\* attacked the Assyrians and using chairs and sticks. Six Assyrians were wounded and the remainder ran away. The Police intervened and arrested the Arabs; three Assyrians were wounded. They were taken to the court at Takrit (in the Baghdad liwa), where the Arabs were acquitted, and an Assyrian was sentenced to ten days imprisonment.

"The following day, it was strongly rumoured that a second attack by armed Arabs would follow, as their instructions were that no Assyrians should be left alive. The Iraq Petroleum Coy. was compelled to collect all the Assyrians in one place for protection and to bring there the Assyrians employed at point K.2, a distance of five miles from Baiji. The number of Assyrians thus collected was some one hundred and fifty.

"Rumours of impending attacks by Arabs become rife. There was no attack on August 10th, but on the 11th, news received indicated that the Arabs in the service of the coy. would themselves carry out the attack. The Assyrians who were not prepared for such an eventuality ran to the British bungalows for protection. It should be remembered that there were a number of policemen and guards of the coy., on the spot for protection purposes, but as soon as the lights were out, they deserted their

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\*—Coy. is the British abbreviation of "Company."



posts and went away. Simultaneously with this, the Assyrians were attacked. Fourteen were wounded and one was killed. An Arab employee of the Coy. demanded that the dead body of the Assyrian killed should be burnt. The British officials did not agree.

"The rumours that the Arab tribesmen would also attack did not die out. The following day twenty Arab horsemen demonstrated, before the British officers, in front of the camp of the Coy.

"After the attack of August 11th, at the request of the coy. before the British officers, forty policemen and two machine guns were sent for purposes of protection.

"On August 13th, the rumours of the impending attack died away, but the Arab employees went on strike. They demanded the dismissal of all the Assyrians. Those who went on strike were about two hundred. They were also joined by some two hundred tribesmen. On the evening of that day, Arab employees carrying Iraqi flags proceeded to attack the camp. The police intervened. The ring-leader was summoned, and as the British officer would not consent to the contemplated attack, the latter was insulted by the ring-leader. The strikers then returned to the station and on their way back, they burnt down a car belonging to the Coy.

"At 9 p.m. in the evening, the Assistant Commandant of police, with a car loaded with machine gun, proceeded to the station and asked those on strike to be dispersed. This they refused to do. An enthusiastic—but excessively enthusiastic Arab rose and said: 'The religion that dominates is that of Mohammad and death means nothing to us'.

"The strikers thereupon attacked the police officer, who responded, with the result that two Arabs were wounded and one killed.

"On the 14th, the Coy. dispatched its aeroplanes to Baghdad and returned to Baiji carrying the Mutasarrif and the Commandant of Police, Baghdad. They interviewed the strikers, with the result that all the Assyrian employees were discharged with the exception of a few Assyrian clerks.

"A Chaldean (Catholic) was also wounded during this period of disturbance."

The intervention by the police was due to the pressure brought to bear on the Government by the Iraq Petroleum Coy whose interests were at stake. This is borne out by the fact that in centres where there was no oil, the Iraq authorities were allowed to play havoc with the Assyrians.

In Baghdad and elsewhere, all the Assyrian employees on the railways were withdrawn and dismissed and deserted to suffer famine and poverty.

The Rev. John B. Panfil, (American Missionary), who, in May, was informed by the Mutasarrif of Mosul that Bakr Sidqy's plan emanating from Baghdad was definitely to destroy the Patriarchal family gives the following account in a letter dated 31st July, 1933:

“ . . . . . The Assyrians who left Iraq represent 15,000 persons counting their families; thousands more are waiting for an opening in the military belt, to leave. Out of 40,000 Assyrians in Iraq, 5,000 will remain. The villages north of Mosul are deserted; rice fields left to dry; sheep abandoned in the hands of servants; belongings are sold by the women. It can be said that this third exodus of the Assyrians since the war, is general.

“The reasons for this desperate move are many. . . . They shed their blood for the delimitation and pacification of Iraq. The long and bitter experience of the past has proved to them that they cannot live in the villages of Kurds without a special arrangement: they knew that they could not expect much assistance from a Moslem Government, in case of difficulty. They knew that in the last incident of Malik Yaku, the Government actually armed the Kurds against them. They were told they would have to give up their arms before anybody else.

“Sir Francis Humphrys has promised the Patriarch to help him to obtain some concessions for his people, if he would go to Geneva. The Patriarch failed to obtain any privileges in Geneva, but he was promised again a fair treatment of his people. When the settlement officer arrived, the Patriarch was put aside and told not to interfere. . . . The Government retaliated by inviting him to Baghdad and detaining him there. This last action brought to the memory of the Assyrians, the similar detention during the war, of Hormizd, brother of the then Patriarch, in Constantinople, and his subsequent death at the hands of the Turks. . . . The Government appointed five new leaders from different tribes, gave positions and salaries to the opposers of the Patriarch, favoured especially the Presbyterian Assyrians and took into confidence Mar Sargis, Bishop of Jelu tribe, at present—not on good terms with the Patriarch. In the villages a regular campaign against the Patriarchal authority was conducted by the Government officials. Those friendly disposed towards the Patriarch were ill-treated,



arrested and persecuted in many ways. The chiefs of the villages were called again and again under different pretexts and told to betray the *Mar Shimun*. The house of the Patriarch was watched, and he was warned not to hold any meetings.

"The Assyrians could not accept new leaders, could not resign themselves to be persecuted unjustly, could not drop so abruptly their allegiance to their Patriarch. . . . The Government made it clear to them that only a fraction of them would be settled in Dashtazi and others would have to stay where they were. Major Thomson, the settlement officer, seemed to be bound to the Government's policy. The great question of settlement as cherished in the minds of the Assyrians was reduced to a mere shifting of some six hundred families from one place to another.

"The offensive remarks about the Assyrians in the Parliament made it clear to them that they were unwanted in Iraq. The Arabic press, by publishing articles against the Assyrians, created a hostile feeling among the local population. The publishing in the American press of the article known to you by the Rev. Cumberland, and its translation in the Arabic papers, filled the hearts of the Assyrians with discouragement. The Bishop of Jerusalem<sup>1</sup> siding unconditionally with the Government's policy made them feel that our Church was also against them. These and other longer standing causes forced the Assyrians to the desperate move of leaving Iraq.

"If France accepts them, all others will slowly follow; they were ready last December to go to Persia but they preferred to give themselves up to France, which retains still the prestige of protecting the oppressed in the East. . . . Still this is a slip in the British policy in the East, which will be judged severely in the annals of future history."

The Rev. R. C. Cumberland. (American Missionary), in a confidential letter dated Baghdad, August 26th, to Dr. Speer writes as follows:

"I do not have my files with me here in Baghdad (and may never see them again), and so cannot say when it was that your last letter arrived. . . . At the moment our situation is that of very unwilling inhabitants of Baghdad. On Sunday, 6th, August, I received a telephone call from Col. Stafford, the Administrative Inspector, Mosul, asking me to bring my wife to Mosul, which I did that day. I returned to Dohuk the next Tuesday; on Thursday

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1—Bishop Graham Brown.



of the next week (the 17th) a telegram from Mr. Badeau said for all of Mosul Station to come immediately to Baghdad without questioning; we did so, and arrived here the afternoon of the 18th. Technically, I am the culprit; the Iraqi Foreign Minister wrote to our Minister, Mr. Knabenshue, complaining of my political activities and requesting my removal from Dohuk. . . . I might add that no specific charges were made and no evidence brought against me. . . . It seems to me obvious that Government does not want any foreign observer in the Dohuk district. . . . It is not surprising that Government wishes to have the present situation concealed; it is not a pleasant sight. I shall do my utmost to arrange to return to Dohuk as soon as possible.

"In the meantime, it may be well for me to write as fully as possible regarding the situation; for a postal censorship is easily possible, and I shall probably have to refrain from writing some kinds of things. It will probably be advisable for letters from the U.S.A. to be worded discreetly. There are others who are better qualified than I to give an official account; but my position has given me an opportunity for observation of certain aspects that few others have had.

"A strong case can be made though it is my opinion that, given the basic factors, the substance of the present situation was inevitably coming, and might as well be now as any other time. A very interesting chapter might be written, if all the materials were available, on real and supposed British promises to the Assyrians. Most generous terms were made to the *Mar Shimun*. . . . For the moment their position is shadowed by the notable victory . . . won at Simel with the aid of Moslem fanaticism and personal spite; the slaughter of innocent Assyrians. . . . At last Col. Stafford, in the hope of saving the villagers, went to the village where Yaku was and gave him his personal safe conduct to come to Mosul, where a guarantee of 200 pounds for good conduct was required, and was furnished by Mr. Panfil. . . . These Assyrians are described by Iraqi press dispatches as rebels and insurgents, but I do not think those words accurately describe them. . . . This I do know; all or nearly all of the Assyrian villages in the plain have been looted, some with loss of life. Most of the looting was done by Arabs and Kurds; most of the killing was done by the army.

"The massacre at Simel is known to you. There were probably a few "rebels" in the village at the time, that is, those who had crossed over to Syria and had got back. But nearly all were present there in obedience to Government order, having been told to come

in from the surrounding villages for protection. They were all without arms, and were shot down in cold-blood by the army. Such an exhibition of stark savagery and frenzied fanaticism has seldom been seen. In addition to this, I know not how many innocent people were taken from their homes in Dohuk, while I was there, and have not been seen since. . . The Simel massacres and similar events have gone far to destroy the confidence of the Assyrians and of other minority groups, especially Christians, in the good-faith of the Government. There seems not to be the personal integrity in the Government services to form a stable administration. To be sure, we as Americans are not in position to throw stones; but the objective fact remains that corruption is the rule rather than the exception in this country, and that it is not condemned by anybody of public opinion that is strong enough to check it. The outlook is not bright.

"I am sorry that for the present they have chosen to deny the facts of the Simel massacre; it does no good. . . One of the most discouraging features of the situation is the strong feeling, especially in Mosul, against all Assyrians, whether loyal to Government or not. Many Assyrians employed in all kinds of work are being dismissed these days for no reason other than that they are Assyrians. . . At Simel was proved what fanatical Islam and irresponsible Government are capable of, and it will not soon be forgotten. . . Both of these are fundamentally British problems. I have no information as to how they are going to be solved by them, but you will be able to attain that by other means than by my writing. If it were in the hands of the group of administrators and advisers that I have known here, I should not doubt that a wise solution would be reached. But this will go to London and Geneva, where there cannot be such a background of understanding, and where France will have a hand in it, on account of the connection with Syria. I have a profound distrust of French colonial policy. In spite of Iraqi denials, the main features of the facts will be known, and they cannot be entirely overlooked. Protests ought to be made. But I do not think that armed intervention would have a reaction in this country opposite to that desired, unless the League or some country appointed by it is ready to step in and establish a complete foreign administration.

"Mr. Badeau's letter to Dr. Chamberlain will give you a digest of the facts, and I understand that Mr. Willoughby has also written. I hope you will see the reports sent in by Mr. Panfil to his board; I should like to, but have not had the opportunity.



"I am finishing this a few minutes before Miss . . . . sets out on her homeward journey, taking it with her to avoid the postal censor."

An Englishman writing under date of September 22nd states:

"The Arab Government have no right to call this migration a rebellion. They have no mandate from the League to force a settlement resolution by the massacre of more than 2,000 innocent Assyrian people. Who will support the Assyrian Cause at the Permanent Court for the way in which the Iraq Government have broken the Minorities guarantees. The Iraq Government fear an International Enquiry and to prevent the same they have now agreed to withdraw their accusations against the French in Syria. They have decided to cover up things with the British Ambassador by making apologies to insulted British officials and consenting to bear the cost of the emigration of a certain proportion of the Assyrians. They intend to continue gagging the majority because of the expense of emigrating about 35,000 people. Afterwards they intend making conditions so hard and uncomfortable that they hope to force the rest to leave at their own expense or gradually to exterminate them. These are the people who fought with the British, Americans, French, Italians, Russians, and Belgians. They lost two-thirds of their numbers, their homes, and all that was dear to them. For more than 15 years they have been refugees and political pawns in international politics. When the truth and real extent of the massacre is known to the world and the League, both will be astounded and horrified."

A report dated 2nd of October received by the author from a very reliable Chaldean, states:

"Assyrian women, after having their wombs cut, the flesh thus cut was placed on their heads when they were in a state of agony. Assyrian boys were fastened by being pierced to the point of bayonets; others were flung in the air to fall on the points of the bayonets of others. On its return to Mosul, the Iraq army took many Assyrian girls in captivity and they are still in their possession."

While the anti-Assyrian campaign was going on, an Englishman went to see Mr. Cameron, the editor of the



Iraq Times, with the request to hear the Assyrian side of the case. That gentleman replied, "*I have still ten more years to do in Iraq. Do you want my bread and butter cut?*"

An Englishman who was told by Sir Francis that King Faisal was prepared to earmark 150-pounds for his institution "if he kept quiet" and which the Englishman refused to accept as "blood-money" writing of the Church of England Council in Foreign relations states:

"... Having been for centuries desirous of living under a Christian regime, they readily responded to the invitation of the Allies during the great war. The invitation, originally given by the Russians, was reiterated by the British later in the war and there can be no doubt that we benefitted greatly by their gallant and steadfast resistance of the Turk, Kurd, and Persian, a resistance which cost them the sacrifice of countless lives. . . Their assistance to us was encouraged by us with promises that they would not suffer on account of their decision, and that what they had lost would be made good. There can be no doubt either that they were made by us because we really needed the help which we hoped the promises would encourage. The impartial observer reading the minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission sessions and other documents cannot avoid the impression that our efforts to find the Assyrians a new permanent home, though numerous, were not pursued with that vigour which the payment of a debt of honour demands. . . . We should have had to employ more British troops in the country, for a longer period, had we not had the assistance of the Assyrians. They made our work in Iraq easier and less costly.

"... It is hard to believe that anyone at all conversant with the nature of Iraq politicians could have really believed that these guarantees meant much. It is difficult also to understand, on the more general side, how our representative at Geneva could have expressed such confidence in the fitness of Iraq to govern itself, let alone the Minorities. . . It may be said in passing that the writer has scarcely ever heard any of the British officials in Iraq speak of the Iraqis and their powers of Government with anything but the most profound distrust and even contempt, *when speaking off their guard*. . . . Mr. Panfil who knows the mountains intimately, tells me that settlement in three large groups would certainly be possible and that such arrangement would have been accepted by the *Mar Shimun*. . . . It became clear to the rank and file of the

Assyrians that their existence as a Nation and as a Church was being systematically threatened by the Government. . . . I have never heard any proof that orders to go to Syria were issued by the *Mar Shimun* from his quarters in Baghdad, watched as they were, day and night, by plain-clothes detectives. The only relevant evidence I have heard, is of an attempt by a police official to induce persons to give evidence of such a kind as would lead people to suppose that the *Mar Shimun* had given the order. . . . It is beyond dispute that Bakr Sidqy did order the shooting of 12 Assyrian prisoners. It is said by the Government that this massacre was the work of Kurdish irregulars. But if this was so, why were all the English and American people who either lived in the neighbourhood or whose duties normally took them there withdrawn from the neighbourhood or prohibited from entering it? Why was Mr. Cumberland, the American missionary resident in Dohuk, not far from Simel, withdrawn? Why was Captain Sargon, a British Police adviser, whose duties took him all over the area, brought back from Mosul to Baghdad? Why at a later stage were the officers of the British Air Force who went up north to superintend the relief of the relations of soldiers of Assyrian levies, prevented from going farther north than Mosul? It cannot be doubted that things had happened and perhaps were still happening in the mountain villages, which the Government were desperately anxious to conceal.

"About<sup>1</sup> seven Assyrian leaders, not connected with the Patriarchal family were transferred from the mountains of the north to Nasiriyah town. No news of these had yet been made public. No effort was spared to make the return of the victorious troops an affair of national and religious self-glorification. Triumphal arches were erected in Mosul. Baghdad was gay with flags and wreaths. Watermelons stained with red pigment and carved to represent Assyrian heads were transfixed with bayonets and daggers in Mosul. The newspapers kept the people up to the correct pitch. The public was reminded that the slaughtered Assyrians were Christians. The expectation that the Government might repudiate the massacre was damped by the promotion of Bakr Sidqy and the granting of a year's seniority to all officers who had taken part in the expedition. Free coffee for three days and free shaves for the same period were decreed for the rank and file and presumably paid for by the government. The gesture of defiance to the civilized world implied in the triumphant and laudatory reception of the

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1—See their names at the end of the chapter.

victorious troops is not the only sign that the Iraq Government intends to try and bluff the whole matter through. Unfortunately, its conscience is so guilty that it has lost all sense of proportion. . . . Similarly the congratulations of the Iraq Government by the octogenerian Chaldean Patriarch extorted by threats (so it is most credibly asserted) will carry no weight. It is significant that in this alleged chorus of approval from non-Assyrian Iraqi Christians, the voice of the French Apostolic Delegate, resident in Mosul, is silent, even in government reports.

"It is much to be hoped that the British Government will not try to assist the Iraq Government in smoothing over the deplorable events of the past few months. There are, however, many British residents in Baghdad, who see signs that we may not have the courage to admit at Geneva—that the statements made there last year were over-sanguine, and that we may try to obscure the seriousness of the situation for which we should shoulder deliberately, the moral responsibility."

A British eye-witness in the service of the Iraq Government, the following words appear in his secret report:

*"I saw and heard many horrible things in the Great War, but what I saw in Simel is beyond human imagination."* To this testimony should be added that of an American resident in Mosul: *"Kurds and Arabs, on whom the Government is putting the blame for killing the Assyrians, have saved hundreds of women and children from the hands of the Iraq army."*

Ja'far al 'Askari, the Iraqi Minister in London, of the same deceitful, dishonest, and treacherous stock and Nuri Sa'id in official communiques to the English press stated, "No massacre has taken place in any part of Iraq. No women, children, or disarmed men of the relatives of the rebels have suffered at all." The Iraqi delegation to Geneva admitted acts of atrocities having been committed. Who of these is a liar?

Mr. J. S. M. Ward in an article dated November 10, 1933, in the Daily Telegraph stated:



*"It was we, and not the French or Italians, who invited the Assyrians to rise against the Turks, and promised them their independence and our protection if they would do so."*

On August 31, *Lady Surma D'Beth Mar Shimun* with thirteen members of the Patriarchal family arrived in Cyprus, including a baby of forty days old. They were ordered to leave Iraq and were removed by air to Palestine and thence by ship to Larnaca. At the port of the latter, it was the unfortunate lot of the author and of Mr. *Theodore D'Beth Mar Shimun* to meet *Lady Surma* of whose exceptional high qualities the British Foreign Minister had a few years ago so highly spoken in the House of Lords, and who was now ordered to live in exile, against her wish, leaving behind her a wide field stained with the innocent blood of her people.

While doing no injustice to the Assyrian women who had upheld their traditional bravery during those agonizing months, these pages without being ostentatious feel under obligation of paying a tribute of praise to the venerable Shereni, daughter of Shamasha Daud of Tal, and the wife of Goriyyil Yonadow of Tkhuma Gawaya for her patriotic action during those very trying circumstances.

The news of the deportation of *Lady Surma* and the Patriarchal family was received with alarm and dismay in the Assyrian quarters in Mosul. The forcible removal of *Lady Surma* meant to them the severance of the head from the body. Disregarding the grave risk she was running to herself and the members of her family, Madam Shereni gallantly led a demonstration of Assyrian women in front of the Iraqi police who were on the point of enforcing the "womanish order" of the Baghdad Government. Shereni informed the Arab Commandant of Police that "You had better kill us all before removing *Lady Surma*." The order of deportation was kept in abeyance

for the moment, and Shereni and her daughter, Mrs. Raihani, wife of Nwiyya Yonan of Barwar Qudchanis, carried a message from *Lady Surma* to the Mutasarrif and Lt.-Col. Stafford, administrative inspector, Mosul, who was now a nonentity.

Later on, she led the demonstration to the residence of the British Consul and told him that "We shall all leave Iraq whose soil is stained with the blood of our sons, and we shall join the *Mar Shimun*, Patriarch, in whatever country he will be finally settled." And in front of the French Consulate, she reiterated the unanimous desire of the Assyrian People.

When the panic-stricken refugees began pouring down into Mosul from the outlying villages, Shereni helped them in every possible way. She gave them what dresses she had; supplied them with food within the limit of her scanty means; and as tailoress—though not her profession—she devoted her time and energy to this philanthropic work. In consultation with the Rev. Yukhanna<sup>1</sup> she made arrangements for the accomodation of forty Assyrians in the Church. She maintained them for about three months by begging food for them and by collecting what little cash she could from her brethren.

Her daughter, Mrs. Raihani, was by no means less zealous in the great work of her mother, and her son, Younadow Gabriel, a student in the American University of Beirut who is preparing for the medical school, has I am glad to say, inherited the high qualities of his mother. He is enthusiastic and a wise counselor, and it is the hope of the author that his betrayed Nation will, in the near future, find him to be an asset to her.

Hon. Zia D'Beth *Mar Shimun*, the uncle of the Patriarch, was a few days later ordered to leave Iraq and arrived in

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<sup>1</sup>—Known as Kasha Hanna Eshu, private Chaplain of His Beatitude the Mar Shimun, Patriarch.





YOUNADOW GABRIEL

MADAM SHIRENI OF TAL

MRS. RAHANI

"There is not a moment without some duty."—*Cicero*





Cyprus, thus the last man from the Patriarchal family who remained in Iraq, to share the lamentable conditions of those of his own flesh and blood was cut off from the rest of the Nation.

If present or future historians wish to describe "British betrayal" or "Iraqi Arab barbarism," they have to study the tragedy of the Assyrians.

Appendix "G" shows a small percentage of Assyrians brutally killed during the massacre period. Full statements up to the time of closing this report had not reached me, but reports emanating from English and American sources place the number of persons so massacred at 3,000.

Appendix "H" shows Assyrian villages burnt, destroyed, after the official orders to stop the massacre were given and long after the League of Nations was supposed to have intervened. Many more Assyrians, women included, have been killed, but it has been extremely difficult with a reign of terror in Iraq, to procure these.

Appendix "I" shows Assyrian villages burnt, destroyed, stormed and pillaged. The total number of Assyrian villages or settlements was ninety-five. Out of this number, sixty-five villages have been totally ruined or a percentage of two-thirds.

The following Assyrian chiefs and notables were arrested in Mosul and deported to Nasiriyah.

1. Mr. Alexander Kelaita of Mar Bishu.
2. Shamasha Skharya Qasha Isha of Mar Bishu.
3. Qasha Is-haq Raihana of Gardi.
4. Walik Sawa Warda of Tal tribe.
5. Mr. Malkezdaiq Shlaimun D'Malik Ismail of  
Tiyari.
6. Mr. Giwargis Haji of Chal.
7. Khuri 'Abdul Ahad.
8. Malik Andrews Malik Warda of Jelu.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE CRISIS IN IRAQ\*

The sudden death of King Faisal on September 8, in Switzerland marks a turning-point in the history of Iraq not less decisive than his coronation. He brought to his high position few advantages except those of birth: his father had few, and his brothers almost none, of his high qualities, and he was almost unknown in Iraq until after the war. In industry and intelligence, in political leadership, and in the use of 'constitutional' methods among peoples better accustomed to the arbitrament of the sword, he was in many respects the ideal Oriental monarch of the twentieth century. It is unlikely that any other possible candidate to the throne of Iraq could have succeeded, as he did, in retaining and, on the whole, strengthening his position without an open breach with the British Government on whom he depended for support and without appealing to the strong racial instincts of his subjects.

The pivot of the Constitution of Iraq is the King, who chooses his own Ministers and nominates all the members of the powerful Senate. King Faisal exercised all his powers; he managed successive Cabinets with such skill that the evils of party government never took root. The periodical elections, based on adult male suffrage through electoral colleges, were handled with equal skill. His failure to restrain the impetuous nationalism of his Arab followers and, in consequence, to secure the allegiance of his Kurdish and Assyrian subjects was due to no want of goodwill

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\*By Lt.-Col. A. T. Wilson, M. P.

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I have italicized points of importance in this chapter for emphasis.



or understanding, but rather to the inherent difficulties of a situation created partly by the circumstances which led to the establishment of the Iraqi State, and partly (as we shall presently learn in India) to the unsuitability of electoral systems in countries where racial or communal differences are acute. In such countries majority rule is synonymous with internal dissensions and open violence.

Few Oriental monarchs have been able to command, as did King Faisal, the whole-hearted loyalty and unbroken support of his European advisers. Their belief in him and their admiration for his qualities is the measure of the support which, in happier circumstances, he might have gained from the non-Arab races, Kurdish and Christian, in the northern part of his kingdom. It was in the management of these communities that he failed, and *his last days were darkened by the realisation of the fact*, for within a few weeks of his departure from this country all Europe was startled, and *shocked, by the news of the cold-blooded massacre of many hundreds of Assyrians in Iraq during the first weeks of August. What actually occurred must remain obscure until an impartial inquiry has been opened on the spot by some neutral authority appointed by the League. The Assyrians themselves, in a statement despatched from Iraq before the massacre, claim that they were told by British officials on July 11 that if they were not satisfied with what the Iraqi Government was doing for them they would do well to leave Iraq.* A thousand men under Malik Yaku decided to do so and entered Syria on July 30, in the belief that the French authorities would receive them. They were followed by a further large band. The Government of Iraq had not expected such a move and despatched troops to intercept further refugees: fighting followed on August 5, with a loss, according to the official Press bulletin, of twenty

Arabs and ninety-five Assyrians. The Arabic Press declared *that three Arab officers had been captured by the Assyrians and burned alive*. It was a lie (they had met their death by the overturning of an armoured car), but it served to inflame racial passions which were fanned by a public parade of the dead and wounded Arab soldiers. Such Assyrian leaders as remained in Mosul were now deported: British advisers had already gone to Baghdad by order of the Arab Government, lest they should be tempted to intervene. American missionaries in the vicinity had been required to withdraw some time before. Panic supervened. The Assyrians desired only to leave Iraq for Syria. The Iraqi Government were determined to prevent them. In isolated villages Assyrian men, women, and children were murdered by Kurds, paid and armed by the Iraqi Government, and their poor belongings stolen. Some *forty Assyrian villages were burned*. Some Assyrians fled into Turkey, and were, it is said, shot down on arrival. But it was at the village of Simel that the climax was reached. From 350 to 400 disarmed men, women, and children were here murdered in cold blood on their enforced return from the Syrian frontier at Faish Khabur. In the words of a *British eye-witness* 'I saw and heard many horrible things in the Great War, but what I saw in Simel is beyond human imagination.' To this testimony should be added that of an American resident in Mosul: 'Kurds and Arabs, on whom the Government is putting the blame for killing the Assyrians, have saved hundreds of women and children from the hands of the Iraqi army.' Against this must be cited the *communiqué* issued by the Iraqi Legation in London on August 18, which read as follows:

"No massacre has taken place in any part of Iraq, and it is very well known that about 1,300 armed Assyrians crossed the Iraqi frontier to Syria without the Iraqi

Government's knowledge, and, after a few days, forced their way back into Iraqi territory by killing frontier guards and causing loss of life. It is quite obvious that the Iraqi forces should deal with them, and the result was there were casualties on both sides. This does not mean massacre at all, but fighting between rebels and Government forces. No women, children, or disarmed men of the relatives of the rebels have suffered at all."

The only possible comment is that of the late M. Paul Cambon:

"The manners and customs of nations are independent of diplomatic conventions."

We are told that the massacre was ordered by one *Bekir Sidky Bey*, who commanded the Iraqi forces in the Mosul area, and had himself ordered the shooting of twelve unarmed prisoners. King Faisal, who had kept to his bed during the trouble and declared his intention of leaving for Europe a few days later, promised an inquiry. *His Cabinet retorted by giving the peccant commander immediate promotion to the rank of pasha and a public reception of unparalleled magnificence.* In the circumstances we need not be surprised at the sequel, as reported by *The Times* correspondent on September 15: "King Faisal's departure for Europe this morning attracted very little attention. Members of the Cabinet saw him off, but there were not more than fifty people at the aerodrome." The situation was, in fact, beyond the control of a sick man: he could but leave it to his Ministers to face, with the assistance of such counsel as they might be disposed to accept from the British Embassy, which, as the mouth-piece of the British Government (and for other reasons), cannot divest itself of responsibility for the tragedy. The Iraqi army is provided by His Majesty's Government with a British Military Mission. Their feelings may be imagined. I am assured that considerations of discipline



and military law alone have prevented them from resigning as a body. Their protest is on record.

The history of modern Iraq, one of the succession States of the dismembered Turkish Empire, began with the occupation of Basrah by the armed forces of the British Crown in November 1914. Its birth was foreshadowed on January 8, 1918, by the twelfth of President Wilson's fourteen points, declaring that 'the nationalities now under Turkish rule should be assured of an undoubted security of life, and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development.' Great Britain and France undertook to give effect to this stipulation when, on November 30, 1918, they declared that 'the end which France and Great Britain have in view . . . is the complete and definite liberation of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks and the establishment of national Governments and Administrations drawing their authority from the initiative and free choice of indigenous populations. . . .'

The 'peoples' and 'nationalities' concerned in Iraq included 2,000,000 Arabs (of whom the majority were Shiah), 500,000 Kurds, 80,000 Jews, 60,000 *Christians* (of whom 40,000 were of *Assyrian nationality*), 38,000 Turks, and 26,000 Yazidis. *The Jews, the Turks, and Chaldean Christians have little sense of nationality: they live, as separate communities, amongst the Arab population. The case of the Kurds and Assyrians is very different.* They are hillmen, as different in race from the Arabs of the plain as Scotch Highlanders from Greeks. They speak tongues which are wholly unrelated to Arabic. In appearance, in habit, by temperament, and by race they more nearly resemble 'Nordic' Europeans than Arabs. *They have been repeatedly promised autonomous institutions consistent with the declarations already quoted.* The unratified Treaty of Sévres made specific provision (Arti-

cles 62-64) for local autonomy for predominantly Kurdish areas, with full safeguards for the protection of Assyro-Chaldeans, both in Turkey and in what is now Iraq, and the fullest publicity was given to these proposals.

During 1919-1920 a scheme for settling the Assyrians as a national unit in lands, then vacant, in the northern and northeastern boundaries of Iraq was prepared. *Only the sanction of the British Government was needed. It was not forthcoming, 'pending the conclusion of peace with Turkey.'* The opportunity did not recur. Peace tarried, and the British Government proceeded to organize Iraq as a unitary State under an Arab king, the problem of Kurdistan and the Assyrians being put aside for subsequent settlement. For some years Kurdistan gave little trouble; it was administered, not by Arab officials, but by British political officers. The Arab Government was kept in the background, and few Kurds seriously believed that the day would come when they would be placed beneath the heel of the despised and hated Arab, nor could the Christians be made to believe it.

The 25,000 Assyrians who in 1918 reached the British refugee camp at Baqubah from Turkey and Persia were driven out of their homes by the Turks as a direct consequence of the attempt made by the Russians and by the British military authorities (under the instructions of the Eastern Committee of the War Cabinet) to make use of them against their Turkish lords. The proposal did not originate in and was not approved by local political officials, who in Mesopotamia had studiously avoided using the local Arab population against the Turks. It resulted in the creation of another minority problem which need never have arisen. It served to harden the heart of the Turks and to strengthen their resolve to eliminate, once and for all, all non-Turkish minorities within their boundaries by a renewal of those methods of massacre,

torture, and starvation by which, as recently as 1929, the Turks proclaimed themselves anew as the most savage of living races. The enlistment of Armenians and Lebanese Christians by the French authorities in Syria had somewhat similar results, but it seems destined to bring about in the near future an effective and desirable equilibrium between the Christian and Moslem communities in French mandated territory.

Having once embarked on this policy of *Divide et impera*,<sup>1</sup> 'that cunning old motto,' as Bacon calls it, we found it difficult to abandon. *The Assyrians are good fighting men: from 1919 onwards they performed invaluable service first with the British army, which they saved from utter disaster in 1920,*<sup>2</sup> and later as an integral part of the defence forces of Iraq under selected British officers controlled by the High Commissioner. They gave their services freely, not to the Arab, but to the British Government, in the hope that a measure of justice would some day be vouchsafed to them. We had used them so freely against Turks, Arabs, and Kurds alike that it is not a matter of surprise that the Turkish and Iraqi Governments have shown little inclination to co-operate in settling them as a homogeneous unit. The outbreak of Assyrian levies at Kirkuk in 1926, when several harmless shopkeepers were murdered, has not been forgotten, and the memory still rankles.

Between 1919 and 1923 a large number of Assyrians with official approval and assistance returned to the ancestral valleys in the Hakkiari district, the sovereignty of which was under discussion at Geneva between Turkey and Great Britain, which claimed it for Iraq. In June

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1—Our strategic aerodromes in Iraq are being guarded by Assyrian levies, for the simple reason that the Royal Air Force well know that they cannot trust the Iraqi army to do so, and British troops would cost too much money. . . .

2—See my *Mesopotamia: A Clash of Loyalties*, 1929, p. 291; Sir A. Haldane, *The Insurrection in Mesopotamia*, 1922, p. 247.



1924 the Turkish Vali of Hakkari attempted to enter the area on an official tour, but was ambushed by the Tkhuma clan and taken prisoner. An attempt to enter the area from the west was more successful, in spite of British resistance, and in September Turkish forces reached the 'no-man's land' where the Assyrians had settled, and burnt and plundered their villages, with the result that about 8,000 of them fled southward into Anglo-Iraqi occupied territory and arrived as refugees at Amadiyah.

Thus was undone the work accomplished three years earlier; for the result of the League inquiry, held the following year, was to allot to Turkey the greater part of the territory the Assyrian had been inhabiting. The decision of the League Council, in the words of Mr. Amery, 'falsified the assumptions on which previous attempts to solve the problem had been based, and made it necessary to examine the whole problem *de novo*.' The League Commission appears to have assumed that the Assyrians would sooner or later find their way back to their homes in the Hakkari country, even though it was included in Turkish territory, and it made recommendations for their protection; but what actually happened was that Turkey flatly refused to allow them to return—in fact, the deportations carried out by the Turks in the frontier districts with ruthless severity in the Autumn of 1925 effectually extinguished any immediate prospect of the Assyrians returning to live under Turkish rule, and later on the Iraqi Government was informed, in June 1928, that any Assyrians attempting to enter Turkey would be arrested and punished.

*The Assyrian problem, as it now exists, is thus largely of our own creation, and a solution has been made more difficult by our own action, or rather inaction. It was our duty to settle the Assyrians before we gave up the mandate. Our efforts were half-hearted and had no*

*result.* The Iraqi Government could scarcely have done worse, but their folly is the result of our spinelessness. We have been far too sensitive to the partisan views expressed by local politicians. As the official report states:

The cry that the land of Iraqis was being taken from them and given to aliens came easily to the lips of political agitators, and in the interests of the Assyrians no handle must be given to agitation of this kind. At the same time the Assyrians themselves required careful handling if they were to be prevented from themselves arousing the prejudices that it was essential to allay.

We must now examine briefly the steps taken by the League of Nations in regard to the minorities question. The Commission appointed in 1924 by the League to recommend a frontier between Turkey and Iraq was a very strong and exceedingly competent body. It found the northern part of Iraq, which was in dispute, to be predominantly Kurdish. The Commissioners declared that but for the British Mandate, the maintenance of which was earnestly desired, the majority of the population would prefer Turkish to Arab rule. They decided against including in Iraq the former home lands of the Assyrians, on the strange ground that the British Government had never raised the question in earlier negotiations, nor in the Treaty of Lausanne:

Since the Assyrian question was the principal argument advanced by the British Government, in support of its claim to a frontier embracing a portion of the Vilayet of Hakkiari, the Commission considers that the British Government's claim to this frontier is not justified.

Thus in four lines the Commission rejected the claims of the Assyrians. The reasons given reflect little credit on us, but are entirely irrelevant to the merits of the case. The Commission proceeded to award the whole of the territory claimed by Great Britain (except the

Assyrian lands) to Iraq, subject to the conditions (1) that 'the territory must remain under the effective mandate of the League for a period which may be put at twenty-five years'; (2) Kurdish officials to be appointed in Kurdish territory. They added that if these conditions were not fulfilled the majority of the people would prefer Turkish to Arab sovereignty. They recommended the appointment of a League representative to reside in the northern part of Iraq, and they urged that the Assyrians should be given, like the Kurds, a certain local autonomy with the right to appoint their own officials and to pay tribute through the agency of their *Patriarch Mar Shimun*. Stringent minority provisions would be necessary, but would be a dead letter in the absence of effective supervision on the spot.

Having secured a favourable award by the Council of the League of Nations free of any such conditions except an invitation to be guided by the 'suggestions' of the Commission of Inquiry 'for the appeasement and protection of all elements of the population,' the British Government proceeded to negotiate for the termination of the Mandate. In February 1929 Sir G. Clayton was instructed to tell the Iraqi Government 'without proviso or qualification' that His Majesty's Government would be prepared to support the candidature of Iraq for admission to the League, and in November 1929, Lord Passfield issued a memorandum in which emphasis was laid on the excellent effect on the political atmosphere in Baghdad of this unqualified readiness to abandon all responsibility. The Mandates Commission of the League, and especially its very able *rapporteur*, M. Pierre Orts, were less optimistic. In reporting on the application of Iraq for admission to the League they observed that their information on the subject was derived solely from British



sources. They placed on record a pronouncement by *Sir F. Humphrys* which had seemed to them of great significance:

“H. M.’s Government fully realizes its responsibility in recommending that Iraq should be admitted to the League, which is, in its view, the only legal way of terminating the Mandate. Should Iraq prove herself unworthy of the confidence which has been placed in her, the moral responsibility must rest with H. M.’s Government.”

‘But for this declaration,’ observed the Commission sarcastically, ‘we should have been unable to contemplate the termination of a *régime* which appeared some years ago necessary in the interests of all sections of the community.’ *Sir Francis Humphrys* assured them that ‘in his thirty years’ experience of Mohammedan countries he had never found such tolerance of other races and religions as in Iraq.’ He did not, however, add that his official experience was limited to the North-West Frontier of India and Afghanistan—than which no part of the world is more fanatical, and where an indigenous Christian community does not exist.

In describing to the Mandates Commission the trend of events in Kurdistan *Sir F. Humphrys* was very optimistic. He had told them to abandon all idea of Kurdish independence, to face the facts and make the best of things as they were. As to Kurdish officials, Arabs who knew Kurdish might be better than Kurds. Efficiency and honesty rather than race should be the test. He found everywhere a genuine desire for peace, and believed that events augured well for future relations between Arabs and Kurds in Iraq. This was in June 1931. The Permanent Mandates Commission finally decided with obvious reluctance *to recommend Iraq for admission, subject to proper safeguards, on paper, for minorities*. These safeguards, whittled down to a bare minimum on the ground that Iraqi national pride would tolerate no provisions not

already to be found in European minority treaties, were duly approved.

*The actual course of events during the next few months entirely falsified the assurances given to the Commission. At the very moment when Sir F. Humphrys was being examined at Geneva the Iraqi Government were seeking means to establish their authority by force of arms in certain Kurdish areas, while the British were still at hand to support and assist the Iraqi army. There was no time to lose, and no difficulty in picking a quarrel with the chiefs concerned. One Shaikh Ahmad of Barzan, an old offender, was attacked in July 1931 by another chief and robbed of sheep, mules, women and children. He petitioned the Iraqi Government for redress, but in vain: he then took the law into his own hands and retaliated with effect, doing more damage than he had ever suffered. The Iraqi Government then decided to suppress him for ever. The time selected was midwinter, when it is difficult for tribesmen to resist air attack for any length of time. The Iraqi army first began operations, but failed and was extricated by the Royal Air Force, which bombed Barzan village. Shakh Ahmad, whose attitude throughout was that of the injured party, desired only to appease the Government and retain the autonomy so dear to him and to all tribesmen. All prisoners and captured war material having been restored, the incident might well have ended. But the Iraqi Government were little disposed to make peace. The time was coming when they would no longer be able to count on British moral and physical support. They prepared for a fresh war in the spring relying always on the Royal Air Force for help if need should arise. Roads were made, troops mobilized, and warning proclamations dropped by our aeroplanes, of which the following is a specimen:*

To Shaikh Ahmad of Barzan and his followers:

As you have ignored previous orders and proclamations . . . it is hereby notified that offensive action from the air will be intensified . . . . You, your villages and flocks will be attacked with machine-gun fire and bombs, some of which may not explode at once, but only after some hours. You are advised to remove your women and children to a place of safety . . . . Then operations will continue until all opposition has ceased and your leaders (named) have made submission . . . .

Take heed. Government is too strong for you; and further resistance is hopeless. Why should there be more bloodshed?

Shaikh Ahmad was in due course defeated and captured,<sup>3</sup> but not until some scores of tons of high-explosive shells had been dropped on his villages and flocks. A few months later a distinguished correspondent of *The Times* bore witness, in a special article, to this manifestation of 'the spreading and uniform pattern of civilization' in Iraq, adding complacently that nearly 100 Kurds who fled across the frontier to escape the civilizing influences of the Iraqi army and the British Air Force had been hanged without ceremony by the Turks, in pursuance of sentences previously passed for crimes committed when the country was in their hands some eighteen years earlier. That the Turks should be allowed to do to death by slow strangulation, as is their way, nearly 100 men from an area over which Great Britain held a mandate, without, as far as we know, any protest, was a shameful event. It had the effect of convincing the Kurds at long last that, however desirous individual British advisers may be of securing justice for them, nothing is to be hoped from the British Embassy at Baghdad. There has been no trouble with the Kurds since, but beneath the surface is deep discontent. The Kurds are implacably hostile to the present *régime*, and there

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3—It is said that he was released and sent back to Barzan, and his followers rearmed, shortly before the Assyrian massacre.



are other elements which will not be slow to take advantage of divided counsels at Baghdad.

Two questions require immediate attention both of the League of Nations and of the British Government. The first is the future of the Assyrian community. They have not been fairly treated; the crimes of which they have been victims are the consequence of their dispersion. They are difficult to manage, obstinate, rightly proud of their race, naturally suspicious of schemes for their benefit devised by men who see them through Arab eyes. They have not been well led; their leaders have not been well managed by British advisers, and have now been deported, in defiance of the Fundamental Laws and League guarantees, to Cyrus. Thousands of destitute women and children, who have seen their menfolk murdered in cold blood, are in refugee camps. Nothing is being done to re-establish them, and seed time is near. It is hard to serve two clients with divergent ambitions, and Lord Hugh Cecil's observation that British officials and their informants are commonly rather biassed on the side of the Moslem governors and against the governed Christians is not without an element of truth. The merits of the Iraqi Government have, as he says, been overrated; the distress and grievances of the Assyrians under-rated.<sup>4</sup> In this matter we can learn something from French officials in Syria, and it is to Syria that the Assyrians have, since 1931, looked for a home. They have seen the Armenians successfully settled there and assimilated. They have seen a just balance struck between Arab and non-Arab races and something like an equilibrium reached. One circumstance only makes the Assyrians view the prospect of a settlement in Syria with misgiving. They fear, as do their leaders, that the ultimate result might

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<sup>4</sup>—The present troubles were not unexpected, and grave warnings were sent home by responsible authorities as recently as August 1932.

be the transference of their spiritual allegiance to Rome. That is an ancestral feeling which we in this country, and especially the Free Churches should be able to understand.

They have lost faith in the League of Nations, for almost every specific safeguard suggested to that body by its own Commissioners since 1924 for their protection has been rejected or reduced to a pious phrase. The Council of the League did not endorse the proposal for a Resident League Commissioner, did not insist on the conclusion of a satisfactory land settlement, did not even send a Commission to make inquiries on the spot before terminating the Mandate. The League has done nothing since the massacres occurred except to circulate *ex parte* statements to all concerned; it can do nothing until the Council meets again. There is no precedent for a League inquiry into the troubles of a minority in a sovereign State, and none could be held unless the whole Council agree. The precedent might be most inconvenient to many countries. Great Britain, as the ally of Iraq, can scarcely take the lead. Who else will do so? The aggressors have three months' start.

Meanwhile, the Assyrians are being described as in 'rebellion,' and we are solemnly warned, in a highly inspired message from Baghdad, that

the present temper of Iraqi nationalism is such that any attempt to apportion blame or impose punishment might have the most undesirable repercussions in this country, much more serious than the troubles gone before. . . . There is a great difference between European and Asiatic standards of the valuation of human life. Iraq's standard, like those of her neighbors, has been evolved by centuries of misrule and oppression. . . .

Iraq, in other words, is proving an apt pupil, *in petto*, of Japan. In the circumstances it is not surprising that the Assyrians should look to the French in Syria for

help and a future rather than to the palsied hands of League officials.

The second question at issue relates to the settlement of the Kurdish claim for some degree of local autonomy in their affairs. In their case, as in that of the Assyrians, it can, in the words of Mr. W. H. Stoker, K.C. (who, as counsel for the Arabs at the inquiry which followed the disturbances in Palestine of 1929, speaks with some practical experience),

Scarcely be urged too emphatically that the inclusion of both Assyrians and Kurds in the new kingdom of Iraq has merely an artificial basis, of quite recent creation, fraught with probabilities of clashes and inconsistent with the Covenant, which expressly recognized their right to recognition as independent nations, and therefore not to be grafted on races and communities alien to them.

They are a homogeneous community, racially poles apart from their neighbours; a resident League Commissioner might secure from them what a British High Commission and a British Embassy have failed altogether to secure. If their national instincts cannot be met in some way they will remain an obstacle to the homogeneity of the Iraq kingdom.

We, on our part, have given hostages to fortune in Iraq on a scale without parallel in the East. European investment (by American, French, Dutch and British interests in equal proportions) in the Iraq Petroleum Company must amount by now to over £10,000,000, and is increasing. Another British oil company, with the strongest official Italian and German support, contemplates great developments, in each case in the northern area, which is most likely to be affected by racial troubles. The financial stability of the Iraqi Government depends upon the royalties received from these companies, which, in their turn, depend for their existence on the maintenance in these regions of a stable government. Baghdad



and Basrah are to the air communications of the British Empire in the East what the Suez Canal is to our sea-borne trade with Asia. We thus have a stake in the country greater, in proportion to the population, than in any other foreign country, except, perhaps, Argentina.

The last Socialist Government paid, it is to be feared, little heed to these facts when it made, as in India, the gesture which, by an unconditional promise to Iraq of admission to the League, entailed the ineluctable consequences which Professor Gilbert Murray and Lord Hugh Cecil, in harmony with myself, lament. To make pledges in haste and to cry over them at leisure has become a habit with us, as also the habit of 'leaving it to Geneva' to get us out of the trouble we have brought on ourselves by our own infirmity of purpose. May we not echo, as we listen to the impeccable oratory of successive Foreign Secretaries, the words of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe?

Oh! for one glance from Chatham's eye  
To make our vile mis-givings fly:  
Oh! for one cheer like that which broke  
From English hearts when Canning spoke.

The rising tide of nationalism in Baghdad cannot be checked; it must take its course, the dissident Christian minorities being, as were the Greeks of Asiatic Turkey, transplanted to less hostile soil. We need fear no breakdown of government in Baghdad: King Ghazi will, for many years to come, perforce rely on his advisers, one of whom Yasin Pasha, is a man of great ability, who can command the support of the Iraqi army and of the nationalistically minded public. The Assyrians once transferred, no one is more likely than he to meet the Kurds half-way.

With the death of King Faisal the movement towards westernization, of which he was the exponent, will be

overborne by the militant creed of self-sufficiency which inspires the rulers of Persia and Turkey. It need cause us no alarm, for Iraq depends on oil royalties for stability and will not permit its revenues, actual and potential, to be jeopardised. The 'national' movement which we and the Allies started in 1918 must now follow, with ever-increasing momentum, the course on which it has been launched. Kings who abdicate may be wise or foolish, but there can be no question of the folly of a king who, having abdicated, seeks to resume the sceptre. In Asia, as elsewhere, there are narrow limits to interracial and international action. The emotions that are evoked are a part of human nature, a product of untold ages in the past and of environment not easily altered. *But the position in which the British Government has placed itself to-day in Iraq is as intolerable as it is unparalleled. British advisers, whose advice is not asked; a British Military Mission forced to be silent spectators of foul deeds, four squadrons of the British Air Force, whose intervention has been confined, of recent months, to dropping leaflets on Assyrians telling them to surrender. They did so, and were massacred a day or two later in cold blood.* We are assured that calm reigns in Iraq, and that the League of Nations would do well to defer discussion of the problem till November. Meanwhile, let us talk of Disarmament and International Co-operation.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE END

The *Mar Shimun, Patriarch*, has addressed a desperate appeal to all the Christian Churches which will be found in appendix (J). This was justified by the fact that the struggle in Iraq, though purely political, was made by the Iraq Government, a war between the Crescent and the Cross.

The duties of Major Thomson who was appointed settlement officer have now become that of a sexton, and his original contract for six months will now be extended, for he has been appointed by the League of Nations, president of what is called a "local emigration committee." He will be assisted by an inspector of an administration and a local officer appointed by the Iraq Government. Proved oppressors to be given exceptional privilege of being both defendants and judges is inconsistent with common justice and is the most infamous scandal I have ever heard of. This action is mythical, and Major Thomson may yet be given a permanent position in Iraq!

No action whatsoever has been taken by anybody to protect the Assyrians or at least remove some of their tremendous difficulties and sufferings to which they are now subjected, despite the half-hearted intervention of the League of Nations. They have been left to die from cold, disease, fear, and by murders. Major Thomson, formerly in the Sudan civil service, and who sees with Arab eyes, gives the following account in his report No. T/A/119 of August 29th, 1933, of the Assyrian refugee camp:



"The Assyrian refugee relief committee was formed on 20th August, 1933. On Monday, 21st, the first consignment of refugees arrived from Dohuk and has continued daily as hereunder stated:

|             |     |         |
|-------------|-----|---------|
| 21st August | 200 | Dohuk   |
| 22nd "      | 560 | "       |
| 23rd "      | 200 | "       |
| 24th "      | 183 | "       |
| 25th August | 75  | Al Qosh |
| 27th "      | 70  | "       |
| 28th "      | 80  | "       |
| 29th "      | 200 | "       |
| <hr/>       |     |         |
| 1568        |     |         |

"I anticipate that there will be in the course of the next few days some 1,600 women and children, in the camp, which would be all that is necessary to deal with."

In another note of September 15th, Thomson writes as follows:

"The general condition in the camp is as it was when visited by the Minister, but the question of dealing with the refugees when the cold weather starts needs consideration."

#### ARRIVAL OF REFUGEES

|         |     |
|---------|-----|
| 30/8/33 | 108 |
| 2/9/33  | 74  |
| 5/9/33  | 98  |
| 6/9/33  | 122 |
| 10/9/33 | 29  |
| <hr/>   |     |
| 431     |     |

During this short period, there were, according to Thomson, 16 deaths among the betrayed Assyrian refugees.

"There are 302 women and children in the camp whose relatives are at present in Syria.

"Up to date 1,200 pounds has been expended. (Does this include your pay?)

"There are 27 orphan boys and girls in the camp with no known relatives. I have taken up the question of the disposal of these children with the Dominican Fathers in Mosul who may be able to help in the matter."

Such was the situation of the Assyrians, at the close of 1933, who trusted Great Britain. The fate of the Assyrians was tragic from the moment they shook hands with the British in Persia, and it was more so when they departed on the 3rd of October, 1932.

On September 28th, 1933, the *Mar Shimun* left Cyprus and travelled to Geneva arriving there on October 4th, 1933, exactly twelve months, since his People were treacherously given up. The League of Nations deliberations ended with a fine apology by the wildest assassin of the twentieth century, and finally it was recommended that the Assyrians should emigrate from Iraq.

When the Assyrians are evacuated from Iraq, it will be the duty of those interested in the remaining Christians to appeal to some Power to keep an eye on them which could intervene by force of arms if and when that Power feels there are signs of danger. No other measures will be of any avail. What the League of Nations can and what it cannot do is now too conspicuous to require any proof. But such intervention can only be effective (and avoid another massacre which is sure to come) before and Not after the tragedy.

On the other hand, I am of the opinion that the Kurds will not await much longer to be ruled by a backward Government much inferior to them in all respects. The British interests might demand the Kurds to rise much earlier than is anticipated, and I am convinced that the future safety of the remaining Christians (after the Assyrian forced emigration), lies in an autonomous Kurdistan in the whole of the Mosul Wilayet

as ra'iyyah, (subjects) of the Kurds who will no doubt ensure them religious freedom, and permit them to practice their habits and customs which has been impossible under the Iraq Government.

In conclusion, I hope the English reader will not accuse me of being anti-British in any way. I have attempted to place before the public facts which were kept in the dark. The Assyrians have many good friends, among the official and unofficial classes, and I personally know many English gentlemen who had done all in their power to make the Assyrian position tolerable and are now ashamed to find the Assyrians persecuted. But the change in their Government's policy, prejudicial as it was to the Assyrian interests, compelled them to become mere observers.

I may also add that recognized Assyrian National bodies or writers of any nationality desirous of any information on any specific point, the author would be too glad to place his services and information at their disposal, in the hope that better work may be produced, which, under the circumstances, this book has been written, was an impossibility.

I must admit that there are many gaps in this book which I could have better filled, but unfortunately the brevity of time and my unsettled conditions were not so generous as to enable me to do so. These gaps I hope to fill at some future date, which may not be far distant.



Some of the secret letters about the Assyrians should not, I think, remain secret any longer whereas the remainder can be published later.

Copy—Telegram

From: High Commissioner

To: Zinneremo, London

No. 14117

Dated: 20/11/1920.

My telegram dated 8-11 No. 13576 Refugees first partly owing to defection of TIARI and TAKHUMA contingents who endeavoured to break away to their old homes deserting the main body and partly owing to bad weather the Assyrian contingent are on their back to us, and the whole question of their repatriation has to be reconsidered. Secondly, I have sanctioned scheme for settlement of 1,200 families at Dohuk and Aqra and arrangements are proceeding.

PRIVATE

I have reason to suspect that the French Government is about to ask that the Assyrians be invited to settle between Mardin and Jazirah, and it is rumoured that certain of the Assyrian leaders have been heavily bribed to secure their consent. It seems possible that the French will offer to accept all future financial responsibility and to guarantee to arrange matters to the satisfaction of local Kurds and Assyrians alike. My information seems to derive corroboration from papers received under cover of your letter No. 41 dated 7/10.

I should be glad to have at a very early date an intimation of the wishes of H. M. G. should the situation develop on these lines.

COX.

## Telegram

From: Hicom Baghdad

To: S. of S., London

No. 38

Dated: 17/4/21.

Your telegram dated 13th received 15th. Refugees Questions, One Scheme comprises both alternatives. Some mountaineers would be settled within Mosul boundaries others up to a distance of 30 miles from our borders according to their own wishes. Questions two and three. Intention is to dispose of all mountaineers exact proportions of trans-frontier and cis frontier sections can be determined only by experience and after consultation with refugees themselves but I hope to be able to recruit the numbers required for Levy. Question four. Urmians are still at Mindan. Their numbers are approximately the same as those of the mountaineers. I suggest that a sum be voted for them equivalent to that voted for Mountaineers and that a Committee of the Urmians under the presidency of a British Officer be formed to arrange the most economical and equitable distribution of this last contribution by H. M. G. This involves the dispersal of the Church and people, but I see no alternative if the camp is to be clear.

HICOM.

## Telegram

From: S. of S., London

To: Hicom Baghdad

No. 7

Dated: 13/4/1921.

Recd. 15/4/1921.

Reference your telegram dated 10th instant Refugees. The grant of £200,000 recommended by the Cairo Conference was for settling the Mountaineers locally in conjunction with the new Levy scheme. Nothing seems to have been said about repatriating them. I should be grateful if you would reply to the following questions:

(1) Is the scheme for which you now want funds the second alternative given in your telegram No. 317/S dated Feb. 3rd?

(2) How many mountaineers is it proposed to repatriate, and how many would that leave on our hands?

(3) How much of the £200,000 is required for repatriation and how much for settlement?

(4) What has become of the Urmians? Are they still in camp at Mindan?

**SECRET.**

Office of the High Commissioner,  
Baghdad, 22nd April 1921.

To

G. H. Q. (2 copies).

Director of Repatriation, Mosul

Divisional Adviser Mosul.

Memorandum

Copy forwarded for information.

Sd./Secretary

To the High Commissioner for Mesopotamia.

Copy of a Secret Memo. No. 527 dated the 9th March, 1922, from the Special Service Officer, Mosul, to the Divisional Adviser, Mosul.

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I forward herewith a rough copy of a printed map which reached Mosul a few days ago with a letter from Agha Petros, in which he states that he was about to take steps to found an Assyro-Chaldean State in the area marked, and that the French had promised to assist him even with arms if necessary.

The lines of delimitation in my copy are in red, and it will be noticed that the northern boundary of Syria is that of the pre-Angora Agreement, while its Eastern one cuts through the middle of Sinjar.

Agha Petros' letter was dispatched from Beirut, and it is noteworthy that Anton Samhiri, who calls himself



'Representative of the Syrian Catholic Patriarch in Urmia and Kurdistan' left for Syria on the 3rd instant. I believe this man is a well-known intriguer on the part of Agha Petros.

If this scheme of Agha Petros' is anything more than a *ballon d'essai*, it is likely to lead to endless complications, as it includes in the new State of Kurdish areas Sairt-Lijje, and the country now under the control of Simko, while it leaves the Midiat-Azekh Christian area to the Turks, and also proposes to cut off a large piece of Persian territory. Furthermore, it is likely to prejudice recruiting for our levies in the minds of the Assyrians.

It is difficult to see how the French will be able to render any material assistance to this project. As an extreme possibility, it is suggested that the present Turkish concentration at Jazirah is intended as a threat, not to Iraq, but at the narrow French corridor with its points on the Tigris just below that town, or as a reserve to be moved to reinforce Mardin.

In my No. 519 of the 3rd instant it was reported that there had been fighting north of Aleppo at Killis. Although no confirmation of this has been received, an intelligent traveller who reached here on the 5th instant reports that French troops had been hurried back to the north of Aleppo, during the last week of February.

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Secret

No. 1777

Office of the Divisional Adviser,  
Mosul, dated the 14th March, 1922

To

The Secretary to H. E.,  
The High Commissioner, Baghdad.

Memorandum

Forwarded, with original copy of map as forwarded to me by S.S.O. for information

Sd/- Divisional Adviser, Mosul.

## 314 BRITISH BETRAYAL OF THE ASSYRIANS

Secret

No. 241

Office of the Administrative,  
Inspector Mosul,

Dated the 11th June, 1923.

To

The Adviser,

Ministry of Interior, Baghdad.

Memorandum

I forward copy of a Report on the Assyrians received from the S.S.O. Mosul.

Shortly after the receipt of this report, I had the opportunity of having a long discussion with the *Mar Shimun* and Tiari Chiefs.

They are much upset by the publication of the Protocol, and see in it a sign that they will be handed back to the mercies of a Mohammadan Government at the end of the period of grace.

They see no prospects of ever being able to live in peace under such conditions in their own villages. Lady Surma thinks that many of them in sheer desperation will return to brigandage once the friendly protection of the British Government is withdrawn.

Little weight was given to my assurance that British influence would still remain after the period of four years mentioned in the Protocol. They pointed out that even now they suffer many minor annoyances which auger a return, sooner or later, to the corrupt methods in vogue under the Turks.

For the time being, they realise the necessity of keeping on good terms with the Iraq Government—Lady Surma assures me that they will take special pains to do so, but asks that Government will investigate the possibilities of their emigrating to Canada or another British colony.

I would request that their plan may be laid before

H. E. the High Commissioner with a view to ascertaining on what terms emigrants are allowed into Canada.

Administrative Inspector, Mosul.

Confidential

No. S. O./92.

Secretariat of H. E.

The High Commissioner for Iraq,  
Baghdad, 9th January, 1924.

To

Ministry of Interior,  
Baghdad.

Memorandum

I am directed to refer to your memorandum No. C/41 dated 7/1/1924 with which was forwarded a memorandum from the Administrative Inspector, Mosul, enclosing a petition to His Excellency the High Commissioner from certain Assyrian chiefs, and to request that the Administrative Inspector may be instructed to inform the petitioners that His Excellency has read their petition and directs him to reply that the future northern boundary of the Iraq State is now receiving the consideration of His Britannic Majesty's Government, who are well acquainted with the wishes of the Assyrian people.

Sd/ Secretary to H. E.,

The High Commissioner for Iraq.

Another code telegram which *L'Orient* (10/8/1933), has published is worth while repeating as the comments of the Editor thereon are very interesting, indeed.

## LES FAITS DU JOUR

### *I. Secrets anglais. . .*

Il y a dix ans, exactement le 15 Septembre 1923, l'Interior de Bagdad câblait à l'Admintor ("Administrative Inspector") de Mossoul les instructions (secrètes) que voici:



Telegram Cod: (P)

From Interior Baghdad.

To Admintor Mossul.

No. c 2117 dated 15th September 1923.

"You should make every effort to dispose of Armenian refugees from Syria among the christian villages".

Ce qu veut dire:

"Prière déployez tous efforts pour vous défaire des (dispose of) réfugiés arméniens de Syrie dans les villages chrétiens".

Ou encore:

". . . pour établir les réfugiés arméniens de Syrie dans les villages chrétiens".

Dans l'un et l'autre cas, ce télégramme est singulièrement révélateur. Les massacres et les bombardements qui ont ensanglanté et ravagé le sol irakien ne nous apparaissent plus comme des épisodes accidentels d'une vieille lutte religieuse; ils sont le logique et tragique développement d'un programme d'unité arabe qui ne peut se réaliser pleinement que par l'expulsion — (ou l'extermination) — des communautés "minoritaires".

Que les "Minoritaires" d'ici, (et d'ailleurs), en fassent donc leur profit.

Les voilà tout au moins fixés sur la moralité et l'efficacité du système dit "des garanties internationales".

Si les Anglais faisaient évacuer, dès 1923, les villages chrétiens de la province de Mossoul, c'est que les représailles de 1931, de 1932 et de 1933 étaient déjà prévues—sinon préméditées.

Mais s'ils invitaient au contraire les Arméniens de Syrie à s'établir chez eux — (make every effort. . .) — cette invitation n'était qu'un guet-apens.

## II. "*L'histoire se répète. . .*"

L'histoire ne fait que se répéter, et il ne faut peut-être pas trop blâmer les Anglais qui continuent à faire leur métier d'Anglais.

Les intérêts de l'Empire sont aujourd'hui du côté arabe. Ils étaient jadis, ou plus exactement, ils ont été, à un moment donné, du côté turc: c'est à cette époque que Gladstone, après avoir suscité une rébellion arménienne contre la Sublime-Porte, faisait à une délégation d'Erivan cette impériale réponse, (déjà reproduite ici):

—"La flotte britannique ne peut pas arriver jusqu'au Mont Ararat".

Si les avions militaires de Sa Majesté s'étaient toujours trouvés dans la même impossibilité, il y aurait certainement aujourd'hui, dans la région de Mossoul, quelques têtes de plus sur des épaules chrétiennes.

Dans cette "trahison générale de l'Europe", qui a été dénoncée avec une vaine rigueur dans un pathétique appel à la conscience universelle, seule la France a fait exception: seule la fidélité française ne s'est jamais démentie.

C'est la principale moralité historique de ces faits d'histoire: les minorités orientales, chrétiennes et nonchrétiennes, clientèles naturelles de la France, n'auront de garanties, de sécurité et de liberté qu'autant que la France sera elle-même libre et forte, et dans la mesure où elle le sera.

C'est ce qui fait que nous participons directement aux lois fondamentales de l'équilibre européen: rien de ce qui se passe sur les rives du Rhin ou sur la frontière polonaise ne peut être étranger au chrétien de Deir el-Kamar ou à l'Alaouite de Lattaquié.

The friends of the Assyrians in England were very much concerned about their future in Iraq on the termination of the British Mandate. It was natural that they would make enquiries from the highest authorities in the land. That authority was Sir Francis Humphrys. I may quote one of his replies sent to a friend of the Assyrians in England.

The Residency, Baghdad.

15th December, 1930

Dear——

Thank you very much for your letter. I was very sorry to miss you in England, and believed that you returned to London two days after I had left for Constantinople. I was very much interested in the article entitled, "Lambeth and the Further East" which you were kind enough to send me.

I want you to feel quite satisfied that the Assyrians are being properly looked after in this country. When you

say that they are in a deplorable condition, you must remember that it is unreasonable to judge the conditions of Assyrian tribesmen who live in the hill tracts of Iraq by European standards. Judged by the standard of their neighbours, I can assure you that their lot is far superior to other tribes and sects, who are their fellow citizens in Iraq.

It is true that they suffer from malaria, but so do all tribes who live in the East, especially if they grow rice crops near their village, as the swampy ground in which rice is grown attracts mosquitoes. They have better medical facilities also than other tribes in Iraq.

The fact is that the Assyrians have no more legitimate complaints than other 'Iraqis at the present moment, but they are naturally apprehensive of what is likely to happen when the British Mandate is terminated. When this occurs, the responsibility for minorities will have to be fulfilled by the 'Iraq Government towards the League of Nations direct, and not through the British Government as at present. This is of course why it was impossible to make any mention of minorities in the new Anglo-Iraq Treaty. Roumania, for instance, is not responsible to Russia but to the League for the treatment of its minorities. It is extraordinary what a lot of misunderstanding there is on this point.

I hope shortly to see the *Mar Shimun* and Lady Surma, and I shall have much pleasure in giving them your message.

With all good wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Yours very sincerely,

F. H. HUMPHRYS.

The statement that "It is true that they suffer from malaria, but so do all the tribes in the East, especially if they grow rice crops near their village as the swampy



ground in which rice is grown attracts mosquitoes" merits some comment.

The best reply to this is that contained in the *Assyrian Tragedy* (p. 40).

*"The diseases were due to swampy area, and no prophylactic measures were taken to improve the situation. Malaria in those parts is not due to rice cultivation as the British Government maintains. There are many districts inhabited by Assyrians where the effect of malaria or other diseases is not felt, although the settlers grow rice. In the districts of Nahla and Khalil Kan, for instance, where in the latter places no rice is grown, the death roll at times reached 95% especially among children. British officers and Americans have testified to this."*

The causes for malaria advanced by *The Assyrian Tragedy* are nearer to logic than the statement of Sir Francis. I do know that the Assyrians were settled on lands which the original inhabitants had deserted ages ago due to the presence of malaria, hence the mortality of ninety-five per cent.

Sir Francis is careful not to mention the other diseases which were ravaging the Assyrians in Mosul town itself. From personal experience I can speak of the eye-diseases. Because of the unsettled conditions of the Assyrians, the hostile attitude of the local authorities, which resulted in the impoverishment of these betrayed people, the great majority of them suffered from acute eye-diseases. Very few of them were able to go to doctors. The greater majority could not, but fortunate for us, the presence of the specialist, *Doctor Shimun Malke*, an Assyrian by nationality, and one of the most sincere friends of *His Beatitude the Mar Shimun* and the Assyrians as a whole, undertook voluntarily, at his own expense, to do what the Government and the Missionaries had failed to do. He treated the Assyrians free

of charge, visited the disabled and the sick, and helped most virtuously to relieve the suffering Assyrians.

Those with better pens might be able, perhaps, to describe more effectively Dr. Malke's spirit of self-sacrifice, but I consider that, as an eye-witness whilst I was in Mosul, it would be an act of gross discourtesy, were I to bring this book to a close, without acknowledging the services he so generously rendered to the Assyrians in the moment of need.

In the person of late M. William Martin, and later M. M. Jean Martin and Pierre Briquet, for reasons of humanitarianism, the Assyrians have found no better friends. The stand taken by M. Briquet on behalf of the Assyrian nation during the recent national calamity has made a profound impression upon the author, and therefore, he wishes to express his everlasting gratitude to him.

The following is an article by M. Pierre Briquet, in the JOURNAL de GENEVE, April 14, 1935, entitled UNE NATION SAUVEE:

*La S. d. N. dans son plus noble rôle*

C'est avec la plus vive satisfaction que l'on apprend, il y a quelques semaines, la tournure que prenait enfin la question assyrienne. Il n'était plus question de transporter ce brave petit peuple de montagnards dans la forêt vierge de Guyane, ni de l'abandonner à l'étiollement et à la mort au milieu des Kurdes hostiles de l'Irak. Le Conseil décida mercredi d'accepter l'offre généreuse de la France: les Assyriens pourront s'établir en Syrie.

Cette heureuse solution est due d'abord à un changement très net de l'attitude adoptée par le Foreign Office. La Grande-Bretagne ne parvenant pas à trouver dans son immense empire la place de loger 35,000 Assyriens, elle ne pouvait decemment s'opposer à ce qu'ils s'établissent ailleurs. Les abandonner à l'extermination après avoir utilisé leurs services eut été odieux. Londres finit par s'en rendre compte: son prestige n'aurait-il pas grandement souffert dans tout l'Orient? N'oublions pas non plus que nombre de journaux anglais s'indignaient. Le livre admirable et complet du



DR. SHIMUN MALKE

*The Intimate Friend of his People*

"They held it to be gross impiety, worthy of death  
if a youth did not rise in the presence of age."

—Juvenal





lieutenant-colonel Stafford<sup>1</sup>, longtemps fonctionnaire parmi les Assyriens, eut aussi une influence. L'Angleterre s'est montrée fidèle à ses traditions humanitaires; elle contribuera financièrement à l'établissement des Assyriens en Syrie.

On est heureux de voir l'Irak accepter la solution proposée. Il fait aussi un juste sacrifice financier, amplement compensé par un légitime regain de prestige à Genève. Les Syriens ne sauraient non plus nourrir aucun doute à l'égard des nouveaux hôtes de leur pays. On nous assure que les Assyriens, reconnaissants d'une généreuse hospitalité, ne songent qu'à contribuer à la prospérité de leur nouvelle patrie. Ils seront envers elle d'une loyauté parfaite.

Les Assyriens seront établis dans la vallée du Khabour, dans l'est du mandat syrien, à 200 km. à l'ouest de Mossoul. Ils y seront chez eux: on vient d'y retrouver des ruines assyriennes vieilles de 3000 ans. L'autorité mandataire a fait dans ce pays, qu'envahissait le désert, de grands travaux d'irrigation. C'est grâce à eux que les Assyriens peuvent y établir leur home. Ils y sont déjà 2200. On prévoit le transfert rapide de 4300 settlers supplémentaires. Mais la migration de la totalité de la petite nation est probable. Elle se produira au fur et à mesure que des terres pourront leur être assignées, et qu'ils exprimeront le désir de quitter l'Irak. M. Lopez Olivan (Espagne) président du comité pour l'établissement des Assyriens, va se rendre à Mossoul. Sa présence sur place et une garantie définitive.

L'établissement des Assyriens a un aspect financier. Ni la France, ni l'Etat syrien ne veulent en supporter les charges. Une partie importante des frais incomberont aux Assyriens eux-mêmes: installés sur des terre de rapport, ils seront à même, au bout d'une année, de subvenir eux-mêmes à leur entretien. Au bout de sept années débutera l'amortissement des capitaux investis dans l'affaire. Ce plan est similaire à celui qui fut déjà mis en œuvre avec succès en faveur des Arméniens réfugiés en Syrie.

L'établissement des Assyriens est un événement important. Il montre comment certaines questions territoriales peuvent être réglées. Il rehausse grandement le prestige de la S. d. N. Elle a contracté une belle dette de reconnaissance envers le comité et son distingué président, M. Lopez Olivan, qui a su prendre et assurer la décision que commandait la sagesse et l'humanité.

P.-E. B.

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<sup>1</sup>—The Tragedy of the Assyrians, by Lieut.-col. Stafford,—G. Allen & Unwin, London, 1935.





## APPENDICES

APPENDIX "A"

LETTER TO THE MANDATES COMMISSION BY THE  
MAR SHIMUN ET ALS.

(Original in Syriac)

Mosul,

October 23rd, 1931.

To:

*His Excellency,*

*The Chairman, Mandates Commission,  
League of Nations, Geneva.*

*Reference the attached document. I beg to convey  
to Your Excellency the following:*

*The Assyrian Nation which is temporarily living in  
Iraq, having placed before their eyes the dark future,  
and the miserable conditions which are undoubtedly  
awaiting them in Iraq, after the lifting of the mandate,  
have unanimously held a Conference with me in Mosul  
on the 20th October, 1931. At this Conference were  
present the temporal and spiritual leaders of the Assyrian  
Nation in its entirety as it will be observed from the  
document quoted above bearing the leaders' signatures.  
The future conditions were fully discussed and these  
centre around two points. (Can we or can we Not live in  
Iraq?) At the conclusion of lengthy deliberations, it was  
unanimously decided by all those present, that it is  
quite impossible for us to live in Iraq. The leaders' Will  
was entrusted with me vide the document signed by them  
to explore all means that I deem possible to find a way for  
the emigration of the Assyrians from Iraq. Under the  
circumstances, I, together with the undermentioned signa-  
tories being the responsible leaders of the Assyrian Nation,*

submit before Your Commission our Nation's humble request, which, in past centuries numbered Millions but reduced to a very small number due to repeated persecutions and massacres that faced us, we have been able to preserve our Language and Faith up to the present time. The Not distant past relating to the conditions of Our Nation has been fully made known to you by the medium of the official workers for our Nation. This being so, it is unnecessary for us to enlarge upon each item, **BUT WE ARE POSITIVELY SURE THAT IF WE REMAIN IN IRAQ**, we shall be exterminated in the course of few years.

**WE THEREFORE IMPLORE YOUR MERCY TO TAKE CARE OF US**, and arrange our emigration to one of the countries under the rule of one of the Western Nations whom you may deem fit. And should this be impossible, we beg you to request the French Government to accept us in Syria, and give us shelter under her responsibility **FOR WE CAN NO LONGER LIVE IN IRAQ and WE SHALL LEAVE.**

*Other Signatories*

*Yosep Khnanishu, Metropolitan.*

*Zaya Sargis, By Grace Bishop.*

*Khoshaba M. Yosep.*

*Zaya M. Shamizdin.*

*Malik Andrios, Jelu.*

*Malik Marogil.*

*Malik Khnanu, Tkhuma.*

*Malik Khamo, Baz.*

*Malik Ismail, Upper Tiyyari.*

*Sd. Eshai Shimun,*

*By the Grace of God,*

*Catholics Patriarch,*

*of the East.*

Copy to:

H. E. High Commissioner for Iraq.

H. E. Minister for Foreign Affairs,  
London.



## APPENDIX "B"

STATEMENT SHOWING NAMES OF 76 ASSYRIANS  
BRUTALLY KILLED INDIVIDUALLY FOR WHICH THERE  
HAS BEEN NO REDRESS.

| <i>Names of Persons Killed</i> | <i>Names of Villages</i> | <i>Names of Tribes</i> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Enwiyah Yacub               | Lagipa                   | Lower Tiyyari          |
| 2. Shimun Giwargis             | "                        | " "                    |
| 3. Dinkha Enwiyah              | "                        | " "                    |
| 4. Zia Talya                   | Galiyyah D'Barkhu        | " "                    |
| 5. Shimun Oraham               | " "                      | " "                    |
| 6. Oshana Aprim                | Zawita                   | " "                    |
| 7. Rev. Zkharya Dinkha         | Ashita                   | " "                    |
| 8. Dinkha Lazar                | "                        | " "                    |
| 9. Haui Warda                  | "                        | " "                    |
| 10. Ishu Hindu                 | "                        | " "                    |
| 11. Is-khaq Lachin             | "                        | " "                    |
| 12. Goriyyil Yosep             | "                        | " "                    |
| 13. Nannu Yokhannan            | "                        | " "                    |
| 14. Giwargis Yacub             | "                        | " "                    |
| 15. Ishu Yosep                 | "                        | " "                    |
| 16. Dinkha Zia                 | "                        | " "                    |
| 17. Odisha Polus               | "                        | " "                    |
| 18. Khiwru Hormizd             | Bnai Mata                | " "                    |
| 19. Yohannan Barkhu            | Mazraya                  | Tkhuma                 |
| 20. Sappu                      | "                        | "                      |
| 21. Dr. Shmiwal Parhat         | Urmia                    | "                      |
| 22. Oshana                     | "                        | Upper Tiyyari          |
| 23. Baitu                      | "                        | " "                    |
| 24. Mayyah                     | Urmia                    | Upper' Tiyyari         |
| 25. Harun Kaku                 | "                        | " "                    |
| 26. Maqsud Tuma                | "                        | " "                    |
| 27. Majji Khaya                | "                        | " "                    |
| 28. Hommy Mayyah               | "                        | " "                    |
| 29. Khoshaba Keena             | "                        | " "                    |
| 30. Bayi Yokhannan             | "                        | " "                    |
| 31. Chadu Mayyah               | "                        | " "                    |
| 32. Bazidu Mannu               | "                        | Jelu                   |
| 33. Napoleon Kurty             | "                        | "                      |
| 34. Maqsud                     | "                        | "                      |
| 35. Musa Ishu                  | "                        | "                      |
| 36. Sulaqa Hanna               | "                        | "                      |
| 37. Bairam Shalal              | "                        | Baz                    |

| <i>Names of Persons Killed</i> | <i>Names of Villages</i> | <i>Names of Tribes</i> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 38. Sharbatti Nisan            | "                        | "                      |
| 39. Yokhannan Gaggu            | "                        | "                      |
| 40. Shabi Khamu                | "                        | "                      |
| 41. Chuni Yokhannan            | "                        | "                      |
| 42. Rev. Qambar                | "                        | "                      |
| 43. Mattushlakh Israel         | Qudchanis                | "                      |
| 44. Elisha Hormizd             | "                        | "                      |
| 45. Shikhu Hormizd             | "                        | "                      |
| 46. Ishu Giwargis Shakal       | Nerwa                    | "                      |
| 47. Sliwu Shakarru             | "                        | Hamun-Giramun          |
| 48.-49. Oshana Nannu & bro.    | "                        | " "                    |
| 50. Tuma Hommy                 | "                        | " "                    |
| 51. Yalda David                | "                        | " "                    |
| 52. Shlaimun Daniel            | Nerwa                    | Hamun-Giramun          |
| 53. Tuma Yokhannan             | "                        | " "                    |
| 54. Ishu Milli                 | Shamsdinan               | " "                    |
| 55. Samari                     | "                        | " "                    |
| 56. Shinzar                    | "                        | " "                    |
| 57.-58. Qambar and wife        | "                        | " "                    |
| 59. Rev. Patrus Is-Khaq        | Kumani Sapna, (Ama'h)    | " "                    |
| 60. Rev. Gilyana Markhail      | " "                      | " "                    |
| 61. Odishu Israil              | " "                      | " "                    |
| 62. Shlimun Manny              | " "                      | " "                    |
| 63. Yalda Khoshaba             | " "                      | " "                    |
| 64. Dinkha Khamis              | " "                      | " "                    |
| 65. Ishu Kannu                 | " "                      | " "                    |
| 66. Hajji Sliwu                | " "                      | " "                    |
| 67. Shami Hormizd, (Woman)     | " "                      | " "                    |
| 68. Yasmi Gilyanan, (Woman)    | " "                      | " "                    |
| 69. Maryan Hormizd (Woman)     | " "                      | " "                    |
| 70. Sittu Marbina, (Woman)     | " "                      | " "                    |
| 71. Hormizd Ishaya             | " "                      | " "                    |
| 72. Nisan Daniel               | " "                      | " "                    |
| 73. Sahda Oraham               | " "                      | " "                    |
| 74. Yakhanis Sargis            | " "                      | " "                    |
| 75. Tuma Yosep                 | " "                      | " "                    |
| 76. Benyamin                   | Baydal, (Zibar)          | " "                    |

APPENDIX "C"

RADIOGRAMME OF THE ASSYRIAN METROPOLITAN OF INDIA.

October 10th, 1933.

*His Holiness Mar Shimun,  
Assyrian Patriarch,  
Geneva, Suisse.*

*Syrian Church of India, views with extreme consternation and protest against inhuman treatment of their brethren Assyrian Christian refugees enormous sacrifices for the Allies, and their subsequent services at their call also great hopes held out to them at least of a homogeneous settlement Present attempt to scatter them is flagrant injustice Complete confidence in League's justice support all representations of Mar Shimun Patriarch Hope League will right all wrongs, Give these suffering homeless people at least a homogenous settlement and protect them against foreign missionaries, creating disloyalty and preserve their traditional rights and customs.*

*Mar Timatheus,  
Assyrian Metropolitan of India.*



## APPENDIX "D"

DR. WIGRAM'S LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NEAR  
EAST AND INDIA."

To the Editor of "The Near East and India."

Sir:—Your leading article on the "Assyrian Problem," in your issue of October 19, puts the case for the prosecution so effectively that I am sure you will permit a statement of the defence.

1. The Assyrian-Iraq dispute may originally have been one of nationality, but a man who knows the East as well as your leader-writer must know that religious quarrels there follow national lines, and vice versa.

The fact that in this dispute the cry of "Jehad" has been raised, and the attempt made to settle it by forced conversion to Islam, shows that unhappily religion cannot be kept out of the problem.

2. These Assyrians have been given pledges that have been broken by us. Accepted as an ally in the War, they were definitely promised return to their own land, and the "Levy" was first organized for that end, in 1918. The long delay in Baqubah was caused by the fact that our Government mishandled the Turkish peace problem most disastrously.

When their return home was seen to be impossible, we promised them "either an enclave, or arrangements for safe and decent existence" (Curzon, House of Lords, 17-12-19) and the League of Nations promised them "all their old rights, including autonomy and the right to pay their tribute through their Patriarch." This was a clause included in the award of the League by which the Mosul province was assigned to Iraq. (Turko-Irak frontier. C. 400. M. 147. 1925. VII. p. 90.)

Now these promises have not been kept, and we have said in exchange that the Assyrians must be settled somehow, and we have accepted service from them on that understanding. Finally, we left the land before our time, with the promise still unfulfilled, and we blame the Assyrians for ingratitude.

3. You blame the *Mar Shimun* severely for his uncompromising attitude toward the Iraq Government, and accuse him of seeking only position for himself, to gain which he was willing to endanger his people.

I do not say that a youth of five-and-twenty has made no blunders in a problem where experienced British administrators have admittedly made many. Be it noted, however, that whatever he asked in the way of temporal power, he never asked for so much as the League had said was his right; and that those who blamed him for seeking any also asked him, more than once, to use that temporal power of his to keep the Assyrian Levy loyal to their duty when they shared the general unrest of their people. You must not blame a man for seeking to keep what you ask him to use for your convenience, and where all have blundered, shall we blame the youngest and most wronged?

Apropos of this accusation of self-seeking, be it remembered that the Iraq Government have offered the Patriarch wealth, for himself and his family, if only he would approve their scheme for the settlement of his people. He judged that the scheme meant national destruction, and at the least it was not self-seeking that made him oppose it.

Sir John Simon has said that it is no use trying to affix blame or responsibility in this affair. So far as Iraqis are concerned, we are willing to accept that ruling, provided that it is applied to Assyrians as well. The one set are raw administrators and hot nationalists, who had

given no pledges to the Assyrians specially. The other are hot-headed tribesmen, with a sense of injury against the world at large.

This, however, does not apply to the British Government. We gave pledges, we accepted service on the strength of them, and we then tried to slip out, leaving a question that had been too hard for us to those who had not our experience. Our responsibility continues, by our own avowal, and we have first to see that the Iraq Government does put a stop to the murders and maltreatment—forced conversions and the like—that are still going on. Second, we must see to it that the Iraq Government proclaims and enforces a complete amnesty for both sides in the matter. Third, we must find a home for these Assyrians, and must secure that all who want to come to it can be brought there, and that accommodation can be reserved for others to follow, as they find the conditions of life intolerable in Iraq.

By the time we have done this there will probably—we quote the experience gained from other refugee settlements elsewhere—be little change left out of a million pounds. We must stand prepared to pay that as THE BILL FOR THE WIPING OFF OF A STAIN ON OUR NATIONAL SHIELD.—I am, etc.,

W. A. WIGRAM,  
London, England.



## APPENDIX "E"

## THE TREACHEROUS DOCUMENT OF BAGHDAD.

*"I, Mar Shimun, have perused your excellency's letter No. s/1104 dated 28th May, 1933, and have accepted all its contents.*

*"I undertake hereby that I will do nothing to make the task of Major Thomson and the Iraq Government complicated in regard to the settlement scheme and that I will in all ways and at all times be as one of the loyal subjects to His Majesty the King, the Great."*

This is the senseless undertaking dictated to *His Beatitude, the Mar Shimun, Patriarch*, by the Minister of Interior with the approval of Cornwallis and Edmonds. *The Mar Shimun* had never complicated the task of Thomson or of the Iraq Government, nor was he at any time disloyal to King Faisal. Such documents accompanied by threats could not be exacted from the *Mar Shimun* who has his own obligations towards his People.

Moreover, the *Mar Shimun* was under detention in Baghdad, and Thomson, with the support of the piggish Mosul authorities, could have enforced his settlement project without implicating the *Mar Shimun* in a diabolical settlement to which the British advisers knew well that the *Mar Shimun* would, under no circumstances, give his consent.

The document was drafted and sent to the *Mar Shimun* for signature as if he were a "Minor." His liberty he certainly did not possess, but that was not a reason to apply to him the old Hamidian methods. The atmosphere prevailing then was exceedingly unhealthy and the coercive measures taken at Mosul against the Assyrian notables justly strengthened the Assyrian belief that the Government was only planning their destruction.

## APPENDIX "F"

THE MAR SHIMUN'S PROTEST TO THE FOREIGN  
DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES IN IRAQ.

As from the Assyrian Patriarchate,  
Mosul, at Baghdad,  
June 29th, 1933.

To:  
His Excellency,  
The Minister of Interior,  
Baghdad.

Your Excellency,

I beg to state that the action of the Government now confirmed by your letter No. S/1273 of June 24th, 1933, detaining me in Baghdad against my will for no just cause is illegal, and that any responsibility of what may happen when the news reaches my people rests with the Government.

I also wish to point out that the methods adopted by the local officials in dealing with the Assyrians on the Settlement Policy, is contrary to the "Fundamental Law" or the guarantees given by the Iraqi Government to the League of Nations on May 30th, 1932. Therefore I am arranging to place the documentary evidence before the proper authorities.

I am quite prepared to suffer any further injustice that the Government may put on me, but in no way will I submit to the methods which have been used to make me sign documents which betray my people into accepting an unreal fulfillment of the promises and recommendations of the League of Nations.

Finally, I repeat, as per my previous correspondence with Your Excellency, and also through your British Advisers:

(a) I am willing to assist in the settlement of the Assyrians in Iraq.

(b) After settlement I will give the required promises in writing to do my utmost to make my Assyrian people as one of the most loyal and law-abiding subjects of His Majesty and His Government.

(c) I will then make preparations in accordance with the Canons of my Church, for drafting of the law according to Your Excellency's suggestion and conformable to Article VI of the Fundamental Law.

If this is not agreeable to the Government, I claim the right to ask the League of Nations for the alternative settlement scheme.

(Sd.) *Eshai Shimun,*  
*By the Grace of God,*  
*Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrians.*

Copies to:

The Diplomatic representatives of:

|         |         |                |
|---------|---------|----------------|
| Britain | Turkey  | Belgium        |
| America | Holland | Norway         |
| Italy   | France  | Czechoslovakia |
| Poland  | Germany | Persia         |

P. S.—May I draw Your Excellency's attention to the inflammatory speech of an honorable deputy, recorded and broadcasted in *Al Istiqlal* of June 29th, and other local papers inciting hatred against the Assyrians.



## APPENDIX "G"

STATEMENT SHOWING NAMES OF ASSYRIANS MASSACRED  
BETWEEN 11th AND 16th AUGUST 1933,  
IN THE MOSUL LIWA.

| <i>Names of Persons Killed</i> | <i>Tribes</i> | <i>Remarks</i>        |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Priest Arsanis              | Lawan         | Strangled with a cord |
| 2. " Shmiwal                   | Nodis         |                       |
| 3. " Giwargis                  | Baz           |                       |
| 4. " Masikh                    | Tiyari        |                       |
| 5. " Shmoel                    | Diz           | Beheaded              |
| 6. " Sada                      | Lawan         |                       |
| 7. " David                     | Tkhuma        |                       |
| 8. " Adam                      | "             | Burned alive.         |
| 9. Rais Goriyil Shimun         | Baz           |                       |
| 10. Rais Mushi Haron           | "             |                       |
| 11. Rais Shima Isa             | "             |                       |
| 12. Rais Tailu David           | "             |                       |
| 13. William Goriel             | "             |                       |
| 14. Giwargis Goru              | "             |                       |
| 15. Goru Giwargis              | "             |                       |
| 16. Badal Giwargis             | "             |                       |
| 17. Haron Pattu                | "             |                       |
| 18. Zia Tuma                   | "             |                       |
| 19. Shmiwal Khoshab            | "             |                       |
| 20. Dr. Hakim Barkhu           | "             |                       |
| 21. Ishu Shaba                 | "             |                       |
| 22. Elias Marus                | "             |                       |
| 23. Yonadan Balu               | "             |                       |
| 24. Kaisar Nisan               | "             |                       |
| 25. Musa Shiba                 | Baz           |                       |
| 26. Kanaisah Jannu             | "             |                       |
| 27. Slaiman Khoshaba           | "             |                       |
| 28. Silmu Somo                 | "             |                       |
| 29. Soru Khamur                | "             |                       |
| 30. Ellu Sorishu               | "             |                       |
| 31. Mikhail Ellu               | "             |                       |
| 32. Sibdin Khamu               | "             |                       |
| 33. Khamu Sibdin               | "             |                       |
| 34. Khoshaba Musha             | "             |                       |
| 35. Isa Shima                  | "             |                       |
| 36. Aprim Isa                  | "             |                       |

| <i>Names of Persons Killed</i> | <i>Tribes</i> | <i>Remarks</i> |
|--------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 37. Baruta Dinkha              | "             |                |
| 38. Pittu Shaba                | "             |                |
| 39. Dashtu Shaba               | "             |                |
| 40. Khamu Pittu                | "             |                |
| 41. Shiba Pittu                | "             |                |
| 42. Ishu Isdu                  | "             |                |
| 43. Dinkha Shiba               | "             |                |
| 44. Shibu Dinkha               | "             |                |
| 45. Nimrud Oraham              | "             |                |
| 46. Marshu Kosha               | "             |                |
| 47. Yosep Sodo                 | "             |                |
| 48. Dinkha Abdul               | "             |                |
| 49. Yunis Giwargis             | "             |                |
| 50. Giwu Azzu                  | "             |                |
| 51. Shabu Assu                 | "             |                |
| 52. Shaba Dinkha               | "             |                |
| 53. Yukhanna Matti             | Baz           |                |
| 54. Matti Yukhanna             | "             |                |
| 55. Dikhu Yukhanna             | "             |                |
| 56. Shabu Malishu              | "             |                |
| 57. Odishu Shaba               | "             |                |
| 58. Yuwal Shimun               | "             |                |
| 59. Sulaqa Rahu                | "             |                |
| 60. Rashu Sulaqa               | "             |                |
| 61. Khamu Mina                 | "             |                |
| 62. Odishu Mina                | "             |                |
| 63. Eddi Shirinsha             | "             |                |
| 64. Benyamin Eddi              | "             |                |
| 65. Mikhail Eddi               | "             |                |
| 66. Yalda Soru                 | "             |                |
| 67. Dashtu Soru                | "             |                |
| 68. Qasha Zia                  | "             |                |
| 69. Shimun Qasha Zia           | "             |                |
| 70. Qasim Yacub                | "             |                |
| 71. Khubiar Matti              | "             |                |
| 72. Yosep Matti                | "             |                |
| 73. Saiman David               | "             |                |
| 74. Attu Shimun                | "             |                |
| 75. David Attu                 | "             |                |
| 76. Yacub Attu                 | "             |                |
| 77. Nisan Khoshaba             | "             |                |
| 78. Khoshaba Nisan             | "             |                |
| 79. Yatron Warda               | "             |                |

| <i>Names of Persons Killed</i> | <i>Tribes</i>    | <i>Remarks</i> |
|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| 80. Elias Gandar               | "                |                |
| 81. Eshu Asmoru                | Baz              |                |
| 82. Daniel Hanna               | "                |                |
| 83. Japu Dishu                 | "                |                |
| 84. Sava Kharibu               | "                |                |
| 85. Jubbu Kharbu               | "                |                |
| 86. Sulaiman Pulus             | "                |                |
| 87. Elias Darmu                | "                |                |
| 88. Jangar Baram               | "                |                |
| 89. Rais Jindu                 | Barwar Qudchanis |                |
| 90. Rais Yacub                 | " "              |                |
| 91. Rais Hawel                 | " "              |                |
| 92. Rais Odishu                | " "              |                |
| 93. Rais Bakus                 | " "              |                |
| 94. Sapar                      | " "              |                |
| 95. Mando                      | " "              |                |
| 96. Evan                       | " "              |                |
| 97. Bilbas                     | " "              |                |
| 98. Babila                     | " "              |                |
| 99. Havil                      | " "              |                |
| 100. Nisan                     | " "              |                |
| 101. Khoshaba                  | " "              |                |
| 102. Hablu                     | " "              |                |
| 103. Badal                     | " "              |                |
| 104. Giwargis                  | " "              |                |
| 105. Jallu                     | " "              |                |
| 106. Yosep                     | " "              |                |
| 107. Jwamar                    | " "              |                |
| 108. Kasha                     | Barwar Qudchanis |                |
| 109. Tulus                     | " "              |                |
| 110. Yacub                     | " "              |                |
| 111. Sawa                      | " "              |                |
| 112. Hormiz                    | " "              |                |
| 113. Badal                     | " "              |                |
| 114. Tosi                      | " "              |                |
| 115. Yosep                     | " "              |                |
| 116. Is-haq                    | " "              |                |
| 117. Iskandar                  | " "              |                |
| 118. Enwiya                    | " "              |                |
| 119. Tatar                     | " "              |                |
| 120. Khamo                     | " "              |                |
| 121. Babila                    | " "              |                |
| 122. Nisan                     | Tkhuma           |                |



| <i>Names of Persons Killed</i> | <i>Tribes</i> | <i>Remarks</i> |
|--------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 123. Barcham                   | "             |                |
| 124. Nisan                     | "             |                |
| 125. Barcham                   | "             |                |
| 126. Hormizd                   | "             |                |
| 127. Giwargis                  | "             |                |
| 128. Yukhanna                  | "             |                |
| 129. Hanna                     | "             |                |
| 130. Sliwa                     | "             | Women          |
| 131. Sonki                     | "             | "              |
| 132. Khammi                    | "             | "              |
| 133. Qasi                      | "             | "              |
| 134. Miriam                    | "             | "              |
| 135. Esmar                     | Tkhuma        | Women          |
| 136. Sinjana                   | "             | "              |
| 137. Shmini                    | "             | "              |
| 138. Marta                     | "             | "              |

N. B.—The above persons whose bodies could be identified, were killed in Dohuk and Simel. Lists of two thousand others are under preparation.

## APPENDIX "H"

## PERSONS BRUTALLY ASSASSINATED.

Statement showing names of Assyrians brutally assassinated subsequent to the "official massacre" and referred to in *Mar Shimun's* radiogramme of September 16th, 1933, sent from Nicosia to Geneva.

| <i>Names of Persons Killed</i>                                | <i>Districts</i> |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Dinkha Samano  | Barwari Jairi    |
| 2. Khoshaba Adam  | " "              |
| 3. Yokhannan Yonan  | " "              |
| 4. Odishu Pithyu  | " "              |
| 5. Shimun Iyyar   | " "              |
| 6. Tamar Maroguil   | " "              |
| 7. Shimun Makko   | " "              |
| 8. Yaku Makko   | " "              |
| 9. Benyamin Mamo  | " "              |
| 10. Jiwo Yaqu   | " "              |
| 11. Elia Adam   | " "              |
| 12. Shaba Shlaimun  | " "              |
| 13. Shaba Yokhannan   | " "              |
| 14. Yokhannan Giwargis  | " "              |
| 15. Shimun Odishu   | " "              |
| 16. Sliwu Majji   | " "              |
| 17. Dinkha Hormizd  | " "              |
| 18. Zia Qawila  | " "              |
| 19. Yokhannan Yonan   | " "              |
| 20. Giwargis Dinkha   | " "              |
| 21. Chikku Dadishu  | " "              |
| 22. Chaya Ruwal   | " "              |
| 23. Lawandu Yonathan  | Barwari Jairi    |
| 24. Qasha Mansur  | " "              |
| 25. Guzzi, wife of Shmiwal Majji                              | Aqra             |
| 26. Bibi, wife of Dinkha Hormizd.                             | "                |
| 27. Wife of Qasha Toma (No. 28 below, both killed on 3/9/33). | Dohuk            |
| 28. Qasha Toma  | "                |

## APPENDIX "I"

LIST OF ASSYRIAN VILLAGES LOOTED DURING THE  
TIME OF THE MASSACRE.

| <i>Names of Villages</i> | <i>Qadhas</i> |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Simel                 | Dohuk         |
| 2. Kolabni               | "             |
| 3. Mansiria              | "             |
| 4. Kharab Kulki          | "             |
| 5. Syyid Dhahir          | "             |
| 6. Qasr Yazdin           | "             |
| 7. Mawana                | "             |
| 8. Giril                 | "             |
| 9. Ser Shari             | "             |
| 10. Jajamani             | "             |
| 11. Dhari                | "             |
| 12. Garmawi              | "             |
| 13. Hajisni              | "             |
| 14. Masiki               | "             |
| 15. Ruhaidi              | "             |
| 16. Khabartu             | "             |
| 17. Kala Badri           | "             |
| 18. Zorawa               | "             |
| 19. Dostikia             | "             |
| 20. Salayha              | "             |
| 21. Tel Hishf            | "             |
| 22. Caraiphan            | "             |
| 23. Iazkin               | "             |
| 24. Raiawa               | "             |
| 25. Badi                 | "             |
| 26. Babalu               | Dohuk         |
| 27. Bagiri (a)           | "             |
| 28. Bagiri (b)           | "             |
| 29. Kola Hasan           | "             |
| 30. Majal Makhti         | "             |
| 31. Alqushta             | "             |
| 32. Gundikta             | "             |
| 33. Tutika               | "             |
| 34. Aloka (upper)        | Amadiyah      |



| <i>Names of Villages</i> | <i>Qadhas</i> |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| 35. Baroski              | "             |
| 36. Chami Ashrit         | "             |
| 37. Musalakia            | "             |
| 38. Sanora               | "             |
| 39. Chamashaki           | "             |
| 40. Atush                | "             |
| 41. Chamsuski            | "             |
| 42. Berbangi             | "             |
| 43. Dahoki               | "             |
| 44. Nourdinswa           | "             |
| 45. Ain Baqra            | Shaikhan      |
| 46. Karanjawa            | "             |
| 47. Porusawa             | "             |
| 48. Jarahiya             | "             |
| 52. Naristik             | Shaikhan      |
| 53. Ain Sifni            | "             |
| 54. Basifni              | "             |
| 55. Machna               | "             |
| 56. Badriya              | "             |
| 57. Dikan                | "             |
| 58. Baqqaq               | "             |
| 59. Qasroki              | "             |
| 60. Totiyan              | "             |
| 61. Ain Halwa            | "             |
| 62. Karana               | "             |

N. B. The greater part of the above villages were burnt down after they were looted.

The Assyrian Tragedy, (see p. 68), that remarkable document, shows that property and cash to the value of 1,776,400 rupees was looted by the Iraq army, the police and the civil official, Qaimaqams included.

Thousands of Assyrians suffered after the massacre through poverty and famine, and if only the booty was recovered and refunded to its rightful owners, hundreds of babies and old men and women would not have perished under the British eyes as they have been.

APPENDIX "J"

AN APPEAL

*From:*

MAR ESHAI SHIMUN XXI

CATHOLICOS PATRIARCH OF THE ASSYRIANS

*To:*

ALL THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

The present dolorous and grievous position of the Assyrians, the First Christian People who embraced Christianity, makes it incumbent on me Spiritually, as the Head of the Assyrian Church of the East, to broadcast, alas, a desponding appeal to all the Christian Churches to come to the aid of the Assyrians in Iraq who, for certain reasons coupled with religious frenzy on the part of the Iraq government, have been persecuted by that government during the month of August 1933, unfortunately under the eyes of the Greatest Christian Empire in the world.

This is one of the darkest hours in the history of the Assyrian Church and People.

The Assyrians, due to their inevitable entry into the world conflict of 1914/18, lost their original homes in Turkey and their fighting qualities and faithfulness were utilized by the British authorities for the last eighteen years in the hope that the latter would reciprocate by redeeming faithfully the promises made to the Assyrians for a home in which they could develop and prosper on Christian lines and Teachings.

The Anglo-Iraq relations which saw many changes were finally defined in the Anglo-Iraq Treaty of June 30, 1930, which deliberately neglected the interests of the Assyrians, thus leaving them homeless and destitute as the British Government undertook to support unconditionally

since 1929 the admission of the Iraq to the League of Nations in 1932 without making adequate provisions for the safeguarding of the Assyrian interests as was originally undertaken.

Ever since 1930, we have been making representations to the League of Nation in which we expressed in no uncertain terms our apprehensions for the future. The Permanent Mandates Commission did not only feel but shared our fears, but Sir Francis Humphrys, formerly British High Commissioner and now Ambassador, undertook on behalf of His Government to "shoulder the moral responsibility should Iraq prove herself unworthy of the confidence placed in her". Vis-a-vis this eminent declaration the League of Nations was compelled to be silenced before the British announcement and satisfied itself with "paper guarantees" for the safeguarding of the lives and properties of the Iraq Minorities. We protested and said that neither the "British moral responsibility" nor the "Paper guarantees" are sufficient to protect us once the fanatic Iraq government is let loose and I, in accordance with the unanimous opinion of the Assyrian People, definitely stressed the point in my appeal of September 1931 addressed to the League of Nations that, "If the mandate is lifted without effective guarantees for our protection in the future, our extermination would follow".

Only nine months have elapsed since the lifting of the mandate when our fears based on experience and facts have been substantiated by a wholesale massacre of the Assyrians in the Mosul Iiwa and by persecution of others in other parts of Iraq.

After a strong opposition from the Iraq government and with no one to defend our point of view, it was decided to appoint a settlement expert in an advisory capacity with no executive power. Being a paid servant of the Iraq government, it was natural that he would pursue



the policy of the Iraq government which aimed at the destruction in due course, of Our Faith, Language, traditions, customs and usages and Our existence as a Race. The Iraq government in order to render this one-eyed settlement futile, instigated and encouraged the fanatic Moslem elements against the Assyrians. An extensive press campaign throughout Iraq passed unchallenged for five months and thus it prepared the public opinion for a Holy War. It was now the universal belief of the Arabs that the war was between the Crescent and the Cross. This was finally put in operation in August 1933. Hundreds of thousands of Arabs volunteered to fight a handful of "unbelievers" and "infidels".

Men, women and children were massacred wholesale most barbarously by rifle, revolver and machine gun fire. Groups of Assyrians were tied up with ropes and shot down by the regular and irregular troops in the Iraq army. The Ministers of Interior and Defence and other high officials were a few miles away from the massacre zone. Priests were killed and their bodies mutilated. Assyrian women were violated and killed. Priests and Assyrian young men were killed instantly after refusing forced conversion to Muhammadanism. The rapacious Arabs who were armed and instigated by the Arab officials who received their instructions from the central authorities carried away the cattle and belongings of the Assyrians with impunity. Holy books were destroyed and Assyrian villages set on fire. Assyrian children whilst hanging on to their parents who were being driven to the butcheries were shot dead. Pregnant women had their wombs cut and their babies destroyed.

These atrocious acts were carried out by the military and civil authorities of the Iraq government. Certain irregular Kurds were also encouraged and armed by the Iraq government to joint in plundering of the Assyrians

but the action of such Kurds should not convey the impression that the enlightened Kurds favored the actions of their compatriots.

The British flying officers could do no more than take photographs from the air while those in the service of the Iraq government were prevented from visiting the massacre zones.

The names of the Assyrian Martyrs are in my possession which I will make known in due course. Only those acquainted with the atrocities of 1894/96 and 1915 will realize the ferocity with which the outrageous acts were carried out against my people in this twentieth century.

Under the circumstances I appeal to every Christian Church and Institution to use all the influence at their command to make known these facts and support wholeheartedly the case of my People before their respective governments and the League of Nations.

I should like to emphasize the fact that I am not making this appeal for Christian support just because we are Christians but because we have been definitely persecuted for being such. The Christian Teachings, Justice and Humanity make me feel confident that the support which I am most earnestly seeking would be forthcoming.

The Assyrian case is now being considered by the League of Nations and I beg for any support that you can give in the matter for which the Assyrian Church and People would be cordially grateful.

Should you require any additional details of the massacres or regarding the case in general, I should be glad to furnish you with such details.

Finally, I pray the Almighty God to crown your efforts on behalf of my martyred People with success.

(Sd.) ESHAI SHIMUN

*By the Grace of God*

*Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrians.*

Nicosia, Cyprus, September 20th, 1933.

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#### APPENDIX "K"

#### ANGLO-IRAQ DECLARATION OF 24th DECEMBER, 1922 REGARDING THE KURDISH GOVERNMENT.

"His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of Iraq recognize the rights of the Kurds living within the boundaries of Iraq to set up a Kurdish Government within these boundaries and hope that the different Kurdish elements will, as soon as possible, arrive at an agreement between themselves as to the form which they wish that the Government should take and the boundaries within which they wish it to extend and will send responsible delegates to Baghdad to discuss their economic and political relations with His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of Iraq."

#### DECISION OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF IRAQ DATED 11/7/1923

"That the Iraq Government do not intend to appoint any Arab officials in the Kurdish districts except technical officials.

"Nor do they intend to force the inhabitants of the Kurdish districts to use the Arabic language in their official correspondence.



"That the rights of the inhabitants and the religious and civil communities in the said districts shall be properly safeguarded."

**A TELEGRAM ADDRESSED BY THE IRAQI PRIME MINISTER TO THE MUTASARRIF OF KIRKUK.**

"Please inform the Administrative Council that their suggestions have been accepted and that the Government agrees that the appointments be filled by local men only and that the local language be considered as official.

"You may inform the Administrative Council and promise them the fulfillment of these conditions in an unofficial way."

**IRAQI PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH OF 21/1/1926**

"We should give the Kurds their rights. Their officials should be from among them. Their own tongue should be their official language and their children should learn their own tongue in the schools. It is incumbent upon us to give them their rights."

**IRAQI PRIME MINISTER'S CIRCULAR INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL MINISTRIES.**

"Your Excellency has no doubt seen the speech made by the Prime Minister in the Chamber of Deputies and published in the press on the following day. This speech embodies the policy which the Government pursued and will pursue in the administration in the Kurdish zone, namely, that the officials should be Kurds and the official language should be Kurdish.

"His Excellency has therefore directed me to request Your Excellency to endeavor to carry out this policy and adhere thereto in all that appertains to the establishments of the zone in question."

## STIPULATIONS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

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

Translation of Circular letter No. 2295 dated 18th February, 1926, from the Minister of Interior, Baghdad to Mutasarrif, Mosul.

Subject: *Kurdish Areas.*

After compliment:

We send you herewith a copy of the Speech delivered by H.E. the Prime Minister in Parliament which gives the Policy of the Government in the Kurdish Areas for perusal and to keep this Policy before your eyes as a Dastur which is the basis for action accordingly.

TRANSLATION OF THE SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE  
PRIME MINISTER IN PARLIAMENT.

(Feb. 1926).

We all are aware of the fact that the 'Iraq Government has fixed, on its institution, its policy towards the Kurds and the non-Mohammedan Communities. The Government has therefore considered, by virtue of duty, that the Northern nations and especially the Kurds should be given their natural rights and that they should have a satisfactory administration fit for the interest of their country. We all are agreed with this fact as well as the Constitutional Assembly admitted the present administration before the issue of the decision of the League of Nations. The terms of Article 3 are convenient and adequate to the wishes of the country.

This nation cannot live unless they should give all Iraqi Sects their own rights. We all are aware of the fact that the Turkish Government was scattered and disunited because they usurped the rights of the existing nations and prevented them to get up. This is a good lesson for us and we have to take it now as an example. We should not tread upon the policy of the previous Government i.e. the Turkish Government; we should give the Kurds their rights, their officials should be appointed from them, their official language should be their own language and the education of their children at the schools should be done in their language.

(Applause).

It is our duty to treat impartially and justly all communities whether they are Mohammedan or not and give them their rights.

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What about the position of the Jacobites, the Chaldeans and the other minorities who will be remaining in Iraq after the forced emigration of their brethren Assyrians. Are they also to be left to the Arab Yataghan? Geneva is too far to hear them and the Iraq Government cannot change its oppressive modes of rule? Must the Minorities revolt? If not, what is being done about their present and future safety?

Try to think of them now before it is too late.

The position of these unfortunate peoples is partly described in the following letter written by a Chaldean Bishop and whose name must be suppressed for very obvious reasons. The letter was addressed to Cardinal Bourne. Since then the position has become worse.



Mosul. le 8/8/1930.

Eminence.

Je me permet de m'adresser a la plus haute autorite Catholique du regne Britanique, au nom des Chatholique et de tous les Chretiens de cet Etat de l'Iraq pour l'interessier au sort de cet minorite dans ce regn Islamique.

Le mandat Britanique sur L'Iraq cessant et l'indpendance de ce pays obtenue, bientot nous autres Chretiens, nous allons nous trouver face-a-face avec la fantasime Mahometant, sans maitre sans protecteur, a la merci de la tolerance musulmane, que l'histoire et surtout la derniere guerre a montre combien elle est inconstante.

Dans cette angoise, nous levons les yeux vers votre Eminence la priant d'employer son influence sur l'opinion publique Anglaise en notre faveur, et plaider notre cause aupres de la societe des nations pour nous obtenir un modus vivendi, qui permette a ces restes des massacres de la guerre de vivre en surete.

Un noble chretien, originaire de cet pays, le. . . . . que des personne digne de foi, m'ont assure qu'il a consacre sa vie pour la delivrance de ces connationaux se trouve a present a londres. Dans son passage ici, il s'est rendu compte de l'etat des chretiens de ce pays, et it est a meme de pouvoir fournir a votre Eminence les renseignements relatifs a cette question, je me permet donc de le recommander a Votre Eminence.

Que Votre Eminence se mefie de toute autre requete que les interesses ne manquerons pas de presenter avec des souscriptions des chefs chretiens pour soutenir que nous sommes tranquilles et content dans la regime actuel; ce sonts des souscriptions forces et gard a nous si nous agissons autrement; mais la verite est comme je l'ecris a votre Eminence, malgre le risque que je cours par la presente lettre, c'est pourquoi je prie Votre Eminence de tenir mon nom cache.

(Signed).....

## APPENDIX "L"

## MINUTES OF THE IRAQ COMMITTEE IN LONDON.

The following minutes of the Iraq Committee are most interesting, in that they clear two important points: (a) "That the Government believed the Assyrians to be in imminent peril" and that "the principal massacre of Assyrians had been perpetrated by the Iraq regular army".

G. 12427.

4/9/33.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE IRAQ COMMITTEE HELD  
AT 15 GROSVENOR CRESENT, LONDON, S.W.I.

ON SEPTEMBER 14th, 1933, AT 3:30 P.M.

*Present:* Professor Murray (in the Chair), Brigadier-General Browne, Sir Nigel Davidson, Captain Gracey, Lord Lugard, Professor Margoliouth, Captain Mumford, Sir Walter Napier, Lord Rhayader, Canon Wigram and Sir Macartney and Miss White.

*Apologies for absence* were received from Major Buxton and Mrs. Dugdale.

5. *Minutes.* The minutes of the meeting held on August 29th were approved.

6. *Deputation to the Foreign Office.* Professor Murray and Lord Lugard reported that they, Lord Rhayader, Lord Hugh Cecil and Mr. Eppstein had conferred at length with Sir John Simon and Mr. Sterndale Bennett at the Foreign Office on September 5th. They retained the impression that the Government believed the Assyrians to be imminent peril and were in principle sympathy to the proposals put forward by the Committee at its last meeting.

7. *Communication from Iraq.* Lord Lugard communicated to the Committee a letter from the most reliable authority in northern Iraq confirming the fact that the

principle massacre of Assyrians had been perpetrated by the Iraq regular army, stating that a refugee camp had been formed for the women and children of the murdered men, and expressing the opinion that the only hope of safety for the Assyrians as a whole lay in their transfer to some other territory.

8. *Action in Support of the Committee's Policy.*  
It was

RESOLVED: (a) "That a letter, which every member of the Committee and certain other competent persons would be invited to sign, should be sent to the TIMES containing an assurance of support to H.M. Government in following a courageous and constructive policy directed to the following objects:—

- (I) The maintenance of the refugee camp as an immediate measure;
- (II) The appointment of an international commission of enquiry;
- (III) Insistence that the *Mar Shimun*, Major Thomson and other indispensable witnesses should be permitted and if necessary assisted financially to appear before such a commission;
- (IV) Transference of the bulk of the Assyrian community either to Cyprus or to Syria and their settlement by the Nansen Inter-national Refugee Office;
- (V) The contribution by Great Britain of the major part of the necessary funds for this purpose."



- (b) "That the Chairman be asked to communicate the Committee's views to the Foreign Secretary."

G. 12427.

18/9/33.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD AT  
15 GROSVENOR CRESENT ON TUESDAY,  
AUGUST 29TH, AT 3:30 P. M.

*Present:* Professor Murray (in the Chair), General Browne, Lord Cecil, Sir Nigel Davidson, Lord Lugard, Professor Margoliouth, Lord Rhayader and Sir Arnold Wilson, together with Major Freshwater and Mr. Macartney (secretary).

*Apologies for absence* were received from Major Buxton, Sir Austin Chamberlain, Mrs. Dugdale, Captain Mumford and Sir Walter Napier.

Captain Mumford and Mr. Eppstein submitted their views in writing.

1. All members of the Committee explained their views, Sir Arnold Wilson referring in addition to his articles in the SPECTATOR of August 25th.

2. It was unanimously agreed that the situation was very serious, and quite exceptional, both from the point of view of the protection of Minorities as a whole, of the Council and of H.M. Government. Its exceptional character was clearly indicated by the debates which had taken place in the Permanent Mandates Commission and on the League Council, in connection both with the admission of Iraq to the League and with the petitions from the Assyrians received subsequently.

3. It was agreed that it was not possible for the Assyrians to live in Iraq, even if a special resident Commissioner could have been appointed. The plan of settling them in Persia having proved impracticable, there

remained Turkey or Syria, and while settlement in their own homes in Turkey would have been the best solution, yet under present conditions this was not possible. There remained Syria. The Committee was agreed:

- (a) That the best solution would be for the Assyrians to be settled, in as homogeneous a bloc as possible, in Syria, with the help of the League Refugee Service.

P.T.O.

- (b) As a matter of immediate policy, the Committee, recalling the fact that petitions from the Assyrians were now before a Committee of Three, which would presumably report to the Council, felt that H.M. representative should press strongly for the Council to appoint a Commission of Inquiry to go into the whole question on the spot, its terms of reference being wide enough to cover the question of the Kurds also.

- (c) Meanwhile, a special Commissioner might be appointed as a temporary measure. The special nature of the case should be pointed out as justifying this unusual step. It would be for the League Commission to recommend the final solution.

4. Professor Murray agreed to put these views in writing before Sir Robert Vansittart, and to ask for an interview at which, he with Lord Lugard and Lord Rhayader, would explain the Committee's views more fully.

## APPENDIX "M"

REPLY OF THE ACTING-HIGH COMMISSIONER TO THE  
SIGNATORIES OF THE PETITION DATED  
SEPTEMBER 11, 1930.

The Residency,  
Baghdad.  
24th September, 1930.

S.O. 1174

To:

The Signatories of the Petition  
dated 11th September, 1930

"In common with all other British officials, I realize and appreciate the loyalty and devoted service which the Assyrian levies have always exhibited.

"With regard to your request that the Assyrian Levies shall not be used against the Kurds. I fully recognize the importance of avoiding any action that will impair good relations between the Assyrians and the Kurds. I have every hope that no internal trouble amongst the Kurds will arise, but should trouble unfortunately occur, I cannot of course give any definite promise that Assyrians will not be employed against the Kurds; I can only repeat that the importance of the matter is not being, and will not be, lost sight of.

"With regard to stationing Levies in the Mosul Liwa. You must remember that the Levy troops were raised for military purposes and it is impossible to employ them on police work. I regard it as the duty of the Police to protect scattered villages and as you are well aware a large proportion of the Police in the Mosul Liwa are Assyrians. At the same time I would remind you that there is a detachment of the Assyrian levies at Billeh and they afford some protection for your families.



"I am most gratified to note your expression of friendship for His Britannic Majesty's Government.

"As I have indicated above<sup>1</sup> I see definite signs that the Central Government in Iraq recognize the advantage that will accrue to them by obtaining your good will and I ask you to meet them half way, and show that you are ready to serve them faithfully as you have served His Britannic Majesty".

(Signed) R. Brooke-Popham,  
Air Vice Marshal,  
Acting High Commissioner.

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1—Only pertinent paragraphs of this letter have been here reproduced.

## APPENDIX "N"

## PETITION OF REV. S. ABRAHAM ET ALS.

New York, N. Y.  
September 1st, 1933.

To:  
The Consul General, (Great Britain)  
New York, N.Y.

Sir:

The undersigned, Assyrian National committeemen, beg leave to submit our petition, to be sent to your Government, as one of the World War Allies to help alleviate the deplorable and tragic fate of the Assyrians—World War Allies, who have been persecuted for centuries by their enemies, and now by the Iraq Government, which having disarmed the Assyrians, because they failed to renounce their Patriarch and accede to the Will of the Iraq Government which aimed at their destruction.

The homeland of the Assyrians is north of Mosul, but they were brought into Iraq by the strategy of the Allies after the Armistice to safeguard and patrol the frontiers of Mesopotamia. A brief chronology of the events which led to their present predicament and recent massacre is timely set forth herewith as follows:—

1914-1917. At the beginning of the World War, the Russians organized Assyrian fighting units to fight the Turkish army, and they fought throughout the conflict.

1917. British army officers arrived and re-arranged the said units, and in the same year a French medical unit of sixty members arrived in Urmia to assist in holding the eastern Front against Turkey, which enabled the British to pass through Hamadan and then to Resht, to the Caucasus.

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1—Only pertinent paragraphs of this letter have been reproduced here.

1917-1918. While holding our positions against the Turkish army, the British aviators advised us to retreat and consolidate our forces back to Hamadan. On this occasion, our soldiers had to break through the Turkish lines in order to join the British. At Hamadan, the British disarmed our army. Shortly thereafter, *Capt. Alexander Ameer*<sup>1</sup> and *Col. McCarthy* recruited eight battalions from the Assyrians and re-armed them. Their plan was to divide the Assyrian Force into three contingents to push forward to the North. Our men were, however, sent to Baqubah in Iraq to be fitted with army uniforms, when Armistice was declared. The British evacuated their troops some three years after and the protection of the frontiers was entrusted to our men.

1919-1932. The Assyrians guarded the frontiers of Mesopotamia and on numerous occasions were ordered by the British to subdue the Arab and Kurdish disorders and uprisings, as follows:—

1919. In the mountains of Kurdistan, several British officers were killed and the British authorities ordered the Assyrian forces under the leadership of Agha David to punish the perpetrators, which operations were successfully conducted and order was restored.

1921. Amir Faisal was crowned King of Iraq.

1922. Sheik Raqib of Batas revolted against the Iraq Government. A British officer was killed. The Assyrians were again called upon to take punitive action.

1920. More than 75 Assyrian policemen and soldiers were killed in Aqra and environs.

1922. Rowanduz was still occupied by Turkish troops. Two British and three Assyrian Battalions re-captured the town. The Assyrians lost several casualties in the operations

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1—The first president of the Assyrian National Federation in America (1933-1934). He died in Yonkers, New York, on January 16, 1935, at the age of forty-seven. His death was a lamentable loss to the nation he loved and served so well.





THE LATE CAPT. ALEXANDER AMEER

*President, Assyrian National Federation  
(November, 1933—June, 1934)*

"The multitude that does not reduce itself to unity is confusion: the unity which does not depend upon the multitude is tyranny."—*Pascal*



undertaken against Sheik Ahmad of Barzan when he took arms against the Iraq Government.

1924. The British made an attempt to settle the Assyrians north of Mosul. Mustafa Kamal Pasha sent Turkish troops to expel them. The Assyrians were once more forced to take refuge in Iraq which was under the British Mandate. The Assyrians lost all they possessed.

1925. Sheik Mahmud of Sulaimaniyah revolted against King Faisal's Government. The Assyrians were ordered to take action. The operations were successfully carried out and brought to a successful conclusion after very heavy fighting.

1914-1925. About 300,000 Assyrians were, during this period, either killed or incapacitated in the World Conflict for the cause of the Allies.

The Allies compelled us to fight our Moslem neighbors, under promises of freedom and a Home of our own for our self-protection but our aim has not been realized and we are left amongst our hereditary enemies, the Arabs.

Recent events in Iraq prove our reward to have been a wholesale massacre of our countrymen by the Iraq Government, by troops led by Bakr Sidqi who, press reports indicate, has been elevated to a Pasha for his heroism (?) in butchering helpless men and women in Assyria.

Our only hope, as we conceive it, lies in the establishment of an autonomous Government of our own people, under the protection of one or more of the stronger Nations of Western Europe, and in the homeland we have occupied for so many centuries, the territory comprehending the lands generally known as Amadia, Zakho, Dohuk, and Aqra and to be known as the new Assyria, lying north-east of Mosul, and bounded by Armenia in the north, Persia in the east, Kurdistan in the south and Asiatic Turkey in the west.



This, we understand, can be accomplished only by appropriate action of the League of Nations, and to that end we humbly pray your good offices in bringing the deplorable situation we have presented to the attention of your Government, in order that, if convinced of the justice of our cause, as we sincerely trust it will be, the necessary measures for our relief may be proposed by its representatives to the League at the earliest possible moment.

(Sd.) Rev. Shlaimun Abraham,  
and other Assyrian National Committeemen.

## APPENDIX "O"

PETITIONS TO KING GEORGE V., TO THE PRESIDENT OF FRANCE,  
AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF UNITED STATES.

Assyrian Eastern Church,  
New Britain, Conn.  
September 1st, 1933

*His Britannic Majesty,  
King George the Fifth.*

We take the liberty of appealing to Your Britannic Majesty on behalf of the Assyrians of Iraq. We wish to remind the British Government of the loyalty and love of our people in fighting for Great Britain as manifested by their enormous sacrifice and losses in defending the British Cause during the World War, even against their own Mother-country.

Humanity deplores and civilization condemns the recent atrocities committed on helpless Christian Minorities. The Assyrians in America, who fought in British ranks deeply regret that their brethren should be allowed to perish under Your Majesty's Flag. Therefore, we humbly beseech Your Majesty's protection by putting an end to these horrible massacres.

Sd. Joseph Aivaz, Secretary,  
Assyrian Protest Committee.

*His Excellency, the President of the French Republic.*

France has always championed the cause of defenseless Christian Minorities in the East. We wish to remind the French Republic of the sacrifice of our people in fighting on behalf of the Allied Forces against their own Mother-country, and of the sacred promises made by France to these Christian Minorities.

Therefore, we humbly beseech mercy of the French Government to permit these defenseless, persecuted Christians seeking protection of the French Flag, to be permitted entry into Syria.

Sd. Joseph Aivaz, Secretary,  
Assyrian Protest Committee,

*His Excellency, the President of the United States.*

We, Assyrian American Citizens and residents of the State of Connecticut, at a meeting held in New Britain, Connecticut, on September 1st, 1933, through our duly elected representatives do most vigorously protest the unwarranted and inhuman treatment, including the ruthless massacre of our fellow nationalists residing in Iraq, and do hereby petition and implore the President of the United States, either personally or through the regular constituted channels of diplomacy, to use the good offices and influence of the United States, in summarily and permanently suppressing the perpetrators of these atrocities.

Sd. S. K. David, Chairman,  
Sd. Joseph Aivaz, Secretary,  
Assyrian Protest Committee.



## APPENDIX "P"

PROTEST OF THE ASSYRIAN NATIONAL UNION OF FLINT,  
MICHIGAN, TO THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

October 7, 1933

To His Excellency,  
Secretary General,  
League of Nations,  
Geneva, Switzerland.

*Your Excellency,*

Inasmuch as a massacre of the Assyrians minority have taken place in Iraq by and through the newly formed despotic Government, its cold-blooded deeds have been heralded to every civilized nation of the world. The world's opinion already has been corporated and formed toward the guilty party, and the sense of their justice have been greatly aroused to such an extent that their voices through the Council of the League of Nations have demanded of the same rulers to appear before the Bar of Justice and give an account of their bloody hands, and face the leader of the same outraged people.

In addition to these barbarous acts, they are taking steps through their cunning diplomacy and are boldly attempting to declare to the world that the *Mar Shimun* is not the lawful leader and legal representative of all the Assyrians. Therefore, we are taking the steps to disprove their assumptions.

1. For about 400 years the *Mar Shimun* has been living in Turkey as the Head of the whole Assyrian Nation and had been recognized by the Sultans of Turkey and approved by an annual salary.

2. During the World War, the Turkish Government held the *Mar Shimun* responsible as the Head of the Assyrian Nation politically siding with the Allies.

3. All of the Assyrian tribes rallied round about him not only in Turkey but in Persia and elsewhere until his fall in the battle, March, 1918.

4. The same *Mar Shimun* was invited by the Russian Government in Georgia and bestowed upon him the honors of a Monarch, and officially and politically recognized him Russia's Ally.

5. Throughout the war, the Persian Government dealt officially with the *Mar Shimun* as the head of the Nation and held him responsible for every act.

6. In general, every Nation that had dealt with the Assyrians, has taken the *Mar Shimun* as the voice of the whole Assyrian Nation.

7. Throughout all the ages, the Assyrians in every country have lidded to the *Mar Shimun* and applied to him as the Head of the Nation. In the World War, he was Commander-in-chief of the Assyrian Forces.

8. Finally, at the present all the Assyrians in every country acknowledge him as their leader. Furthermore, We, thousands of Assyrians in American through the National Association are standing by him unanimously.

LONG LIVE THE *MAR SHIMUN*.

Very Respectfully,  
Assyrian National Union,  
Sd. J. J. Isaac, Secretary.

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F I N I S

## ERRATA

- Pg. 13, line 14: Read *eternal*, for enternal.
- Pg. 14, line 1: Strike out "the".
- Pg. 15, line 17: Read *extinction* for extension.
- Pg. 17, line 8 from bottom: Read *valiant* for valliant.
- Pg. 111, line 17: Read *various* for variou.
- Pg. 135, line 5: Read *than that* for that that.
- Pg. 151, line 7 from bottom: Read *vitiated* for viciated.
- Pg. 157, line 9: Read *primordial* for premordial.



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The author was born in Talkaif, in 1900, a town near Mosul, and received his formal education in the American College in Basrah. After the occupation of Mesopotamia by the British, he was employed in the Iraqi Civic Service from 1917 to 1930. Having surmised the betrayal of his nation, he retired from his position "to tell the truth". On August 25, 1933, he left Beyrouth and joined His Beatitude the *Mar Shimun* in Cyprus. On September 23, 1933, he accompanied the *Mar Shimun* as an honorary secretary to Geneva. It was during these crucial moments that he wrote this book, commencing it during the last week of August, 1933, in Cyprus, and completing the same in Geneva, in November, 1933. His book is the result of personal observation and study of the ultimate reality of the Assyrian Problem in the sanest fashion imaginable.

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