

CHAPTER 1

The Assyrian Adventure

By Lieut-Colonel F. Cunliffe-Owen, C.M.G

Late Director of Repatriation in the Civil Government of Mesopotamia

The event forming the title of this paper was inaugurated from the Refugee Camp, Baqubah, Mesopotamia, of which I was in charge from June, 1919.

Prior to going to Baqubah, I had had a lengthy association with the Near and Middle East in various capacities - in fact, since 1912. I had only in the previous year (1918) completed a mission to Central Arabia, involving many months spent with Ibn Saoud, the ruler of Nejd, and to turn from this especial centre of Moslemism (the purest and most strict in every sense of the word) to dealing with Eastern Christians, of which the Baqubah Camp was composed, was indeed a remarkable change.

At Baqubah, twenty-seven miles east of Baghdad, there were assembled some 45,000 refugees of three categories. There were two categories of Assyrians and one of Armenians. The first two categories were mountaineer Assyrians, mostly Nestorian Christians from the mountains north of Mosul, and plainsmen from the neighbourhood of Lake Urmia in Persian territory. the story of how these Assyrians came to Mesopotamia has been related before now. (*Full historical and other details connected with the Baqubah refugees and their movements will be found in the printed*

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reports of the Colonial Office (formerly India Office), under No. 36,170 of December 4, 1919, and October, 1921, compiled by Lieut.-Colonel F. Cunliffe-Owen and Mr. H.L. Charge.)

(In 1918 a British force operating in Persia encouraged the Assyrian (Nestorian) Christian mountaineers living in the Hakari valleys mostly north of Mosul vilayet to rise against the Turks. The rebellion was unsuccessful and after dire massacre the Assyrian tribesmen retired to British protection in Persia and were transported thence to a refugee camp at Baquba near Baghdad. (See History of Modern Iraq Page 312)

The mountaineers having decided to throw in their lot against the Turks, took up arms some time after the war began, and fought the Turks with some success. As time went on, however, these mountaineers went short of arms and ammunition, and as the Russian pressure on the Turks declined, the Assyrians were forced away from their country. They managed, however, to effect a junction with their Urmian brethren, who had actually joined the Russians and had taken up arms with them. After the second Russian retirement from Turco-Persian localities, the united Assyrians were left in the lurch. They defended Urmia with great resolution, but being assailed on all sides by Kurds, Turks, and even Persians, they had to evacuate Urmia, and made their way, with all their families and belongings, to a district where they hoped to get in touch with the British. On their way they were joined by a large number of Armenians from the Van and Caucasian localities. This combined mass of people eventually got into touch with the British near Sian-Kaleh, and were sheltered behind our lines of communication.

During their retreat numbers of people of both sexes were killed or died, but, as I have said, some 45,000 got through, and, as these people could not be maintained or supplied in the forward area, they were gradually shepherded down to Baqubah. Here they were on a line of railway by which they could be fed, and a vast camp was set up for them on the Diyala river.

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This camp was installed on the most approved lines of Military management. Water-supply was laid on, ample rations issued, and large supervising medical and administrative staffs established. In the early months these refugees naturally required some rest and recuperation, but when I joined the camp they were in the most healthy and vigorous condition, and the time had arrived when efforts had to be made to reduce the cost of this vast undertaking. Concurrently with my arrival, the supervising staff was reduced to a great extent, and shortly after my arrival I got rid of almost all the expensive European and Indian personnel, and replaced them by refugees themselves. However, this was not enough, and some means had to be devised of either repatriating these people or making them to a certain extent self-supporting. The difficulty about repatriation lay in the fact that the conditions in the country from which they came were still very disturbed. Operations were in progress against various Kurdish recalcitrant elements to the north of Mosul, while in the Urmian Persian localities the conditions were still worse. As for the Armenians, no one would receive them overseas at any spot where they could reach their former homes.

As regards the other problem, that of making the refugees self-supporting, any project on these lines involved a large outlay, and such was not worth while except for permanent habitation. Only a very small proportion was skilled in any form of work other than agricultural. There were, too, comparatively large numbers of women and children and old persons. Generally speaking, the men showed strong disinclination for settled work; any parties that were sent out to work compulsorily with Government Departments were unsatisfactory. However, by the institution of camp industries in a small way, gardens and for age farms, a certain return was being got in by the end of 1919, and the cost of the camp, originally about 18 lakhs per month, was reduced to about 9 lakhs per month. At the beginning of 1920 the position in the Mosul area had improved, and it was felt that some determined attempt must be made for repatriation.

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The difficulty about the Assyrians was that they had no reliable leaders, and no unanimity among the various elements to effect repatriation as a whole. It was possible to place them in a zone of country north of and quite close to our administrative line of the Mosul vilayet, but when this was put to the people no willing acquiescence was obtained. Some of the mountaineers would listen to no plan other than going back to their own particular regions under British protection. Others would not leave the present line of British occupation, and nothing would satisfy the Urmians but to go back to Urmia. **None of them could understand why the British were not prepared to send an armed force to install them in their old territories and occupy the country.**

The nominal, or rather theoretical, headship of the mountaineer Assyrians had been vested in the Nestorian Patriarchate of the House of Mar Shimoun. This Patriarchate was an offshoot of the old-time See of Antioch, but had diverted from it to follow the tenets of Nestorians. With the Turks, it was customary to deal with the subject races through the spiritual heads, and hence the Patriarchal family came to be regarded as the representatives of the Assyrian communities within the Turkish dominions. The Mar Shimoun, however, who was in office in 1915 was murdered under circumstances of great treachery by Simko, one of the Kurdish chieftains against whom the Assyrians were engaged in the operations around Urmia during the retreat.

The successor was not of the same stamp, and was, moreover, an invalid, and incapable of exercising much leadership. This fact, coupled with the wanderings of the Assyrians and their prolonged absence from their old homes, caused the Patriarchal influence to wane. Also, the Urmian groups, being Persian subjects, acknowledged the Patriarchal influence in but a slight degree.

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**SURMA KHANUM**

The Patriarch's sister, Surma Khanum, in somewhat less disturbed times, might well have been looked to in a directing sense. Her name is well known to many in England, as she came to this country in the autumn of 1919 to plead the cause of the Assyrian nation. She was received in all the influential circles and remained at home until the autumn of 1920. An educated and exceedingly intelligent lady, she would no doubt, have achieved great things for her nation had the times been more propitious. As it turned out, however, her prolonged absence rather augmented the disunion of the people, and, after all, what they really needed was a determined and single-eyed male leader, capable of welding all the diverse elements together.

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AGHA PETROS

Under these circumstances one **Agha Petros** came forward. He was by origin a mountaineer from the Baz country, who had latterly travelled a good deal, and finished up by owning prop-

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erty in Urmia. Rather a mysterious personage, he had attained some eminence before the war, and during the war had done some good work in conducting the Assyrian retreat. He was, though of a different religious persuasion to the Nestorians, and was strongly hostile to any temporal power being accorded to the Patriarchate, but as certain sections of people were strongly attached to him he came forward with a project to reconcile the various conflicting wishes by compromise. **He proposed that the mountaineers and Urmians should combine to regain part of their former territory and form a combined Assyrian nation from the refugees at Baqubah, who would be afterwards joined by the large numbers who were still in the Caucasus, near Tabreez, and in America. He recognised that it would be impossible to return to their full former mountain habitat, but that it would be possible for the Assyrians, if suitably provided with arms as a precautionary measure, to regain the mountain country from near Gawar eastwards, where they would actually join up with the Urmians who would return to Urmia. It was recognized that this project was feasible of execution providing the Assyrians were united, and if they arrived in these localities they could claim to return to their own homes without necessarily fighting. As for the Persian Urmian subjects, they only asked of the Persian Government to return to their former properties peaceably, and would engage to hand in all arms if the other inhabitants did likewise. Agha Petros stipulated for certain armaments and initial supplies, after which he would be responsible for the movement under the benevolent encouragement of the British. He secured the adherence of the whole of the Urmian community and of about two-thirds of the mountaineers, and under these auspices, and with a hope of obtaining the establishment of an Assyrian nation, the proposal was agreed to.**

If some such project were not entertained, it was probable that all hope for a future Assyrian nation would disappear, and, as events transpired, this forecast was correct. It was decided to give Agha Petros an equivalent of rifles to that which was origi-

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nally in the possession of the Assyrians when **they were disarmed at Baqubah**, to fit them out with certain material and transport, and to transfer them as a preliminary measure to a camp north of Mosul. With the small staff available this was a large undertaking, but such were the assistance and support accorded to me by **Sir Arnold Wilson**, the then civil Commissioner, that the first section of the people with their families left Baqubah at the end of April, 1920, and were conveyed by rail and march to a camp at Mindan, on the Ghasir Su River, about twenty-seven miles north-east of Mosul. It was anticipated that all the sections, each one consisting of about 1,200 persons, would arrive at Mindan by about the end of June, and this would give ample time for the men to proceed forward and to prepare a way for the women and children to follow later. Events proceeded according to plan up to the middle of May (when I myself left for Mosul), and we had then about five sections of people collected. I made arrangements for an advance camp near Akra for the armed men, where, too, a supply dump could be formed for the forward movement. The men were also organized in proper parties, and comprehensive arrangements made for food-supplies and issue of material. It was at the end of May, however, that a serious hitch occurred owing to the Arab attacks on the Mosul-Baghdad railway line. I managed to return to Baqubah to ascertain the position and returned again to Mosul at the end of June, but it was not until the middle of July that movements were resumed.

After a small respite the attacks on the line commenced afresh and again matters were held up; however, additional preparations were still made in the forward area. Early in August I again went to Baqubah, and with great difficulty initiated further resumption of movements with all due and necessary precautions, only to be again confronted with further and still more serious difficulties. After a few days at Baqubah, and when the movement was again in full swing, I found a column of troops arriving near our camp, Arab disturbances having apparently occurred beyond the river. It took all our energies at Baqubah to help this column with transport, working parties, and detrainment.

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After two days this column, after engaging in some not altogether successful operations on the far bank of the river, suddenly commenced to withdraw to Baghdad. Concurrently with this the political authorities came into my camp and informed me that the rebels were entering Baqubah town, there being merely a small detachment of native infantry left behind to guard the Baqubah railway bridge. No word came from Baghdad as to how I was to defend the camp, nor with what means. The camp perimeter was some seven miles in extent, and a large part of it was under close rifle range from the opposite bank of the river.



Assyrian Levy in Native Costume

By chance a small proportion of the rifles allotted for the repatriation movement had been retained temporarily by me at Baqubah, but the majority of our rifles were discarded Winchester weapons of 1866, with defective ammunition, and of ammunition

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for the few modern rifles there were only ten rounds per rifle. Soon we came under a continuous and sustained fire from across the river, involving many casualties in the hospital and the transport lines, which for the sake of a convenient water-supply were close to the river. I organized the defence in sections as far as possible, but the difficulty was that at that time of the year parties of Arabs could cross the river both above and below the camp. Parties did so cross, and day and night we had to watch these and drive them off. Added to this, with so few British personnel, it was difficult to prevent the refugees firing away all their ammunition. Telegrams were despatched to Baghdad, in the interval of the line being cut, to get more arms and ammunition. After three days a consignment was despatched, only to be derailed five miles from the camp station.

I took a mounted party of refugees, who succeeded in dispersing the Arabs and rescuing the consignment, which was brought in by hand. From this point offensive measures were undertaken, and the Arabs within a radius of about eight miles learned a wholesome lesson from the refugees; villages were burnt and arms and prisoners were captured. After this the situation was relieved by the arrival of a regiment, only to be again rendered grave by the reports of large fresh assemblages of Arabs arriving, released by the fall of Shah Roban. The defence, however, was successfully maintained, though the supply of rations was becoming a difficulty, and the whole camp was on half scale. It was now decided, largely on account of the food difficulty, that the camp should be evacuated. The remainder of the Assyrians were consequently sent on up to Mosul, and the Armenians were despatched to near Basrah, where they could await shipment overseas at some future date. With the fighting still in progress, this movement required considerable adjustment, together with the dismantling of the camp and the salvaging of all the stores. Day and night these movements were carried on, with the result that the camp was practically evacuated by the beginning of September 1920. (1)

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(1) The above operations and defence of Baqubah Camp were dismissed in the military despatch of the G.O.C. in the following words: -

“ As for the refugees at Baqubah, they were well armed, and could look after themselves. “



Sir Percy Cox

Meanwhile, at Mosul, the delay in keeping the refugees at Mindan with large numbers of arms in their hands caused some trouble with local authorities, added to which the interim camp near Akra was attacked by the Surchi Kurds. The Assyrians themselves dealt with these most successfully and chased them back to

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their villages, capturing large quantities of stock. the Assyrian parties moving up to the line were also attacked at intervals.

After a rapid rush down to Basrah to see the Armenians installed, I lost no time in then hastening back to Mosul, where, notwithstanding the difficulties, I pushed **Agha Petros** on to complete his arrangements. I found him extremely dilatory, but by my personal efforts, and with those of my assistants, we got some sort of organization into the parties, and fixed a date for the forward movement. some of the most important material had, however, still been hung up in Baghdad, and I had once again to return to see about this. On my arrival at Baghdad I was informed that, owing to the departure of the Civil Commissioner (whose help and advice had never failed me in all these movements), and the arrival of the new High Commissioner, instructions had been given to suspend the repatriation movement until the actual orders of the latter had been taken.

The season was getting very advanced, and there was no time to lose if the project was to be carried thorough. I accordingly went down the river to meet Sir Percy Cox, and put the matter before him. He was most sympathetic, and gave sanction to carry on the policy of his predecessor, and with this sanction I returned to Mosul. I found Agha Petros had again done little in my absence, and I urged him on to such effect that, by October 19, we managed to get all the armed men assembled with transport and with reserve food for three months in the forward camp near Akra. This assembly made really a very good appearance, there being some 6,000 armed men grouped according to their tribes, under their respective banners of red crosses on a white ground, and something like 2,500 pack-mules.

In co-operation and agreement with the local Kurdish chiefs of the immediate neighbourhood we moved forward through Akra and ascended the Akra-Dagh. from there, according to plan, at the limits of our occupied territory, I left the expedition entirely in the hands of Agha Petros; two

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British officers, however, remained with it to watch events, and report to me as to progress, according to the lines agreed upon.

The country immediately across the Akra-Dagh was nominally in our administrative sphere, but in reality it was occupied (up to across the Zab) by the Surchi and Zibari Kurds, who were hostile to us, and upon whose leader a price had been set by the British Government for the murder of the Late Mr. Bill.

These particular Kurds, as anticipated, opposed the Assyrian advance, but were easily brushed aside, and the expedition moved into the Barzan country successfully. Here was reached the limit of our administrative sphere, and Agha Petros, according to plan, should have moved, negotiating as he went, towards Neri, and thence north-east and east.

Unfortunately, as it turned out, a large body of his mountaineer people got out of hand. The temptation to branch off westwards towards their actual former country was too strong for them, and, in addition, their old habits of pillaging and looting asserted themselves. Agha Petros, in consequence, lost control of this his best category of fighting men, and his weaker Urmian category were left in the lurch. What Agha Petros had in effect actually promised these mountaineers is even now not altogether clear, but it is probable that he had promised one thing to them and another thing to the Urmians. However, the upshot was that, after some weeks, Agha Petros and those who had followed him doubled back to Mindan Camp, and the recalcitrant contingent, after securing various booty among our friendly Kurds, circled round and, unable to make their way to their own Tiari country, percolated back into the Mosul vilayed by way of Amadia.

Thus unfortunately ended this enterprise, upon which so much care and trouble had been expended. **We had endeavoured to give the Assyrians a chance of national unity in a suitable zone of their own, and it was worth make the attempt, as oth-**

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erwise there would have always have been the reproach against us of lack of sympathetic treatment to this small nation, which had, to a large extent, been sacrificed in the war.

The result, however, only showed what had all along been seen as the danger, that, as in the case of so many of the Eastern nationalities striving for liberation, there is no cohesion and no unity of aim among the component parts.

Having regard alone to British interests, the establishment of a strong and united element on the borders of our occupied territory must have been a safeguard to us. Their interests are our interests, and there would be an absence of that potential hostility which cannot help being inherent in certain of our Moslem neighbours. This is, of course, not to say that our policy should have been to turn out such of the Moslems as were installed there. Furthermore, had this Assyrian movement succeeded, the Armenian Christians from Baqubah could have been passed through to unite with the large numbers in the Caucasus, and give added strength and extent to the then existing Armenian Erivan State.

After the return of the Agha Petros expedition, the season was too advanced to do much in the way of alternative repatriation measures, but it was found possible - not, however, without some grumbling - to settle some 1,200 families on the land just north of Mosul. These families consisted of those who were all along averse to Agha Petros' scheme, but it required some moving to get them away from the comforts of the refugee camp. As spring approached preparations were commenced to get the above amplified and so finally dispose of the refugee camp. As was customary each group of persons asked for different settlement. Nothing would induce the Urmians to settle on the land, while, as regards the mountaineers, some only were agreed to follow the above-mentioned families; Agha Petros' following remained obdurate, and would listen to nothing except again to make their way by force of arms to their old homes. On account of the misdeeds of these people in the late expedition it was not possible to let them embark again upon such an adventure.

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By the end of May that contingent which was willing to settle down peaceably commenced joining those who had previously gone in the neighbourhood of Dohuk and Akra, and the first-named settlements were extended, by arrangement with the existing Kurdish elements into country a good way to the north of Dohuk and to our nominal administrative border. The other mountaineer families were cleared out of camp on fixed dates, and given equal allotment of stock and subsistence grant to the "willing" families. After some continued stubbornness these people realized that they must accept the reasonable measures taken for them, and they eventually joined up more or less in the neighbourhood of the others.

As for the Urmians, they would hear of nothing but return to Urmia. they were accordingly given a grant in money equivalent to what the mountaineers had received, and were left to make the best of their way into Persia via Hamadan. The Persians at first turned these people back, although they were their own subjects, but now they are managing to filter through with a certain proportion remaining in Mesopotamia, where they found suitable work, and others joining relatives in America. **The upshot of the above is that instead of a united Assyrian nation of some 100,000 persons, which the first scheme contemplated, the Assyrians are now split up separately - some 15,000 are congregated in the settlements north of Mosul, where, notwithstanding their former continued protestations, they are living in amity with the Kurds under our aegis, and have provided a substantial contingent for the frontier levies.**

As the Middle East resumes more peaceable conditions and the different nationalities see that, notwithstanding their religious differences, it is yet possible to live side by side with one another, these settlements of the Assyrians may yet form the nucleus to which the nation as a whole might attach itself. As for the Armenian category, so often mentioned in the foregoing, they are at last in transit to Batum, but it is unfortunately the case that

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they contain at least one-third among their number of incapable persons who must be a permanent charge on some authority or other. Inasmuch as the upkeep and repatriation measures of the Assyrian and Armenian refugee in Mesopotamia have cost - the British Government 500 lakhs of rupees, it is hoped the benevolence of this very considerable outlay is fully appreciated and realized.



**Captain D.F. Kessler, the Adjutant and Rab Tremma Soski Paulos
of the 5th (Basrah) Battalion RAF Levies Iraq 1942.**

CHAPTER 2

Assyrian Affairs.

**From Dr. Wigram
10, Metropol St. Athens.
19th March 1924**

To: The Most Reverend the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.

My dear Lord Archbishop,

1. I have received a long letter date February 29th from Dr. Ishu Yaqub, our Mission Dr. in Mosul, about the local political situation.

The only advice I can give is this, that the Assyrian people must accept whatever terms the Iraq Government will offer them, and promise loyalty to that government. They can make themselves so indispensable to it in fact, as being the best fighting force available, that they need not fear oppression from it. If however they make themselves objectionable to the Iraq Government (and I fear that some individuals have not been free from blame in this matter of late), then they give excuse to the Iraq Government to say "we cannot do with these Assyrians", and to the British Government to say "we cannot go to war for them". In that case they may be handed back to the Turk, and to utter destruction.

As for other schemes, ideas of transport of the whole nation to Cyprus, as Yaqub suggests, or to Southern France, (as

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Miss Barclay and Agha Peros suggest,) seem to me simply impracticable. They were so judged in 1918, when money was a deal more plentiful than now.

If Yaqub be right in his idea that Sir H. Dobbs proposes to:

(a) Guarantee the Ashiret status of Tiari, Tkhoma, Baz, Jilu, under Iraq Government.

(b) To let the rest of the people settle in the Amadia district, (Sapna plain,) making a good read up to that point, and stationing the Assyrian levy in the district.

(c) Allowing Mar Shimoun per Surma to appoint the local governors in Dohuk, Amadia, and Akra, - why let them accept such terms at once, with thanks to Heaven and the governors. I cannot help thinking however that Ishu Yaqub is attributing his own ideas to Sir H. Dobbs.

(2) Concerning Ishu Yaqub himself.

I have just had a long interview with Dr. L. B. Perry, recently "Surgical Specialist" at the Mosul Civil Hospital, and now on his way back to Baqubah after leave in England, to take up a similar appointment in Hillah.

Dr. Perry has much sympathy with, and admiration for the Assyrians, but not much, I fear, for Ishu Yaqub himself.

He puts the matter thus. "Yaqub is living in comfort in Mosul, with a magnificent surgical and medical outfit, and good house. He is, however, not wanted there, where there are plenty of doctors and hospitals, and any Assyrian can get all the attendance he needs. He is wanted, on the other hand, up at Bibaydi, where there is plenty of room for him to live, and where he could travel in districts where his presence is required. Was it the intention of the good people who sent him that he should live where he

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is not wanted, or where he is wanted?

He thinks that Yaqub has rather got round Surma, who knows quite well what would be better for her people, but is not certain whether she has the authority to give orders to Yaqub. He adds that a young English Doctor with a taste for travel and experience would cost no more than Yaqub, and would be far more effective, and that Yaqub, if retained there, would do better under Surma's direct orders.

(3) Assyrian Refugees in Greece.

There are about 350 of these still here, (Tkhoma and Tal men mostly,) flotsam of the war, swept by it first to Caucasus, then to Constantinople, and finally to Greece. As refugees they have worked well, and given less trouble than any other type. (That is, unless you call beating a greek policeman giving trouble. I own they did that once). Now, they have made money, by their own labour, and they want to return to their own homes, to the lands they own there, at their own expense.

Yet, at the request of the Iraq Government, the British Consuls here have received instructions to refuse them all passports, and to decline all responsibility for them. The result is that these people are now here, with no nationality, and are unable to get permission to go to their own homes. The reason for this extraordinary conduct is, the prejudice which the Iraq Government has, not without excuse, for anything that bears the name Assyrian, even while they have to rely on the Assyrian levy for defence. A contributory cause is some difficulty which arose in Egypt, when we did send off a party of 200 of these people on a previous occasion.

The details do not matter, for your Grace knows that Assyrians will tumble into any hole available, even if they have to dig it themselves.

The result is, that these people are now condemned, apparently, to perpetual exile, for the crime of being expelled from their

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own homes while fighting as our ally, and the "Refugee Problem" in Greece is further tangled, by keeping people here who ask nothing better than to take themselves off.

That Greek Officials should worry those in such an anomalous position is only to be expected. The British Legation and Consular Authorities both say, "The position is disgraceful, but we can do nothing on the face of the direct orders we have received". I entirely agree with both positions.

I have written direct to authority in Baghdad, (Major Bourdillon, c/o the Residency) sending the letter by Major Perry, who knows him well. In this letter I have explained the situation.

I now ask if you can put the matter before the F.C. and ask this; "There are several hundred Assyrian Refugees in Greece, anxious to return at their own expense to lands which they own in their own country. Is it not possible.

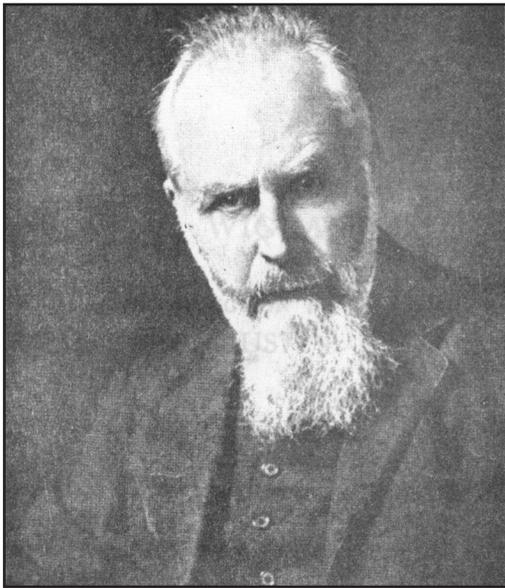
(a) To persuade the Iraq authorities to allow them to return to their own country.

(b) To permit the British Consular authority to facilitate their passage?

Surely, it does not seem much to ask, and our present attitude is regarded as shameful even by the Greek authorities, - and for once most English here concur in their opinion.

I remain, etc.,

(sd) W.A. WIGRAM.



Dr. W. A. Wigram



A. HORMUZD RASSAM

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A.HORMUZD RASSAM

19, Eastern Road,
Romford, Essex.

To: His Excellency,
The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,
Whitehall,
London, S.W.1

Excellency,

The Assyrians in Iraq.

My name will be familiar in your department of State as the late Accredited Representative of the Assyrians who on their behalf petitioned the League of Nations many times during 1930-1932, acting always in strict accordance with the rules of procedure laid down for such action.

I am fully aware that my so doing was not welcome to His British Majesty's Government or to that of Iraq, yet you will do me the justice to agree that I was quite within my rights as the then only possible spokesman of my Nation, a Chaldean by descent and resident in London. And I beg that your Excellency will carefully observe that from the moment the decision of the League of Nations was given, and Iraq became a sovereign Independent State, I have refrained from any word or action that might in any way embarrass the efforts to bring about a settlement of the Assyrians, either in Iraq or elsewhere. I recognised once the decision was given that the Assyrians could not be settled in Iraq as an Autonomous People, that it had to be accepted as final, and that recriminations would serve no useful purpose. It is now my hounded duty to offer to place my services at the disposal of His British Majesty's Government and that of His Majesty of Iraq in any capacity they may dictate that will help to bring peace in the land of my ancestors. I belong to one of the oldest and most noble Chaldean families in Iraq - I am proud of

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my Iraqi blood - and I greatly wish to see peace and prosperity among all its inhabitants and especially between the Arabs and the Assyrians. Your Excellency will be aware from the records in your Department that for the past fifty-seven years the name of "Rassam" has always been associated in the Middle East with the welfare of the Assyrians.

Christian Rassam (my uncle) and Nimrod Rassam (my cousin) held the post of British Vice Consul at Mosul for a period of fifty seven years, up to 1913, while the Mosul Vilayet was within the Ottoman Empire, and were many times called upon to act officially on their behalf. The name of my illustrious Father, Hormuzd Rassam, - whose diplomatic services under the Indian and British Governments ended with his rescue, by the British Expeditionary Force under Lord Napier of Magdala, from imprisonment by the King of Abyssinia, to whom he had been sent as the Head of a Diplomatic Mission from Her Majesty, the late Queen Victoria, - was well known throughout the Near and Middle East, and was revered by Arabs and Christians alike. So it was that when in 1930 the Assyrian People required a National Representative, they called upon me to act for them.

These are the reasons, your Excellency, why I am now impelled to place my services, if and whenever required, at your disposal, and to use all the influence of my Father's name, to help to bring about a peaceful settlement of those Assyrians who wish to remain in the land of their Forefathers, as true and loyal subjects of the Kingdom of Iraq. I venture to enclose for your Excellency's consideration a Memorandum on the present state of affairs in Iraq.

I have the honour to be
Your Excellency's most obedient Servant.



A. Hormuzd Rassam

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A.HORMUZD RASSAM

19, Eastern Road,
Romford, Essex.
Great Britain.

**MEMORANDUM OF THE
POSITION OF THE ASSYRIANS IN IRAQ**

(1) It must be assumed as a fact, which I feel to be true, that the majority of the Assyrians are unwilling to leave Iraq, and are only prepared to do so on account of the fear of reprisals in the future. they are there now with their blood-relations the Chaldeans, and many of the native born Arabs are also akin, and their attachment to the country is clearly exhibited when they hold annually their three days **Fast of Nineveh. (Bauthat Ninvayeh)**

(2) The Aspiration of the Assyrians for a National Enclave was not new. After the Great War, an effort under Aga Petros supported by the British authorities of that time was made to effect an autonomous settlement. This failed. They then united with the Chaldeans and presented a Petition to the Peace Conference through Said Effendi Namik, a Chaldean Advocate. This failed. Once again, their claims were put forward to the League of Nations through myself. This failed and the decision was accepted by myself as final. I feel that no apology is necessary or desired for doing what was my duty to my People.

(3) These long drawn out hopes and disappointments have left the Assyrians in an unsettled state of mind, have embittered the Iraqis against them, and have left both sides in a position of great difficulty. The Iraqis consider they have been harbouring in their midst people whom they regard as Foreigners, and from their point of view quite rightly resent visitors who refuse to conform to the rules of the house and refuse to adopt the nationality of the country in which they receive sanctuary. The Assyrian point of view was logical so long as any possibility remained of the League

BRITISH POLICY IN ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT 25

of Nations granting their request, but its continuance was wrong once the decision had been given against them, and Iraq became a Sovereign Independent State. Until this decision was given, the controversy in the English papers on the subject was diplomatically correct, but its prolongation after the decision was given against the Assyrian Petitions was fatal, and led to the anti-Assyrian outbreak in the Iraqi Press and made it a subject for exaggerated religious animosity. No one can fail to understand the resentment of the Iraqis to what was interference in the internal affairs of their newly-formed independent State - any other nation would have felt the same.

(4) So here was (and still exists) the stage set for a conflagration of inflamed passions. The mistake was that neither the League of Nations nor the Authorities in Iraq foresaw and prepared against future events of which anyone with an intimate knowledge of the East must have seen brewing, and of which I had warned the League of Nations beforehand.

(5) The need now is to find a man in whom both sides have complete confidence (I do not suggest myself - there are many more competent). He must possess great diplomacy, an intimate knowledge of the East and Mesopotamia, of the races concerned and their mentality, and above all he must be impartial, and not belong officially to any Church. He must be in a position to explain to the Assyrians their exact position without fear of misunderstanding. This has never been done by one whom they trust and whom they knew has no personal axe to grind. He must explain that while there was in the past no harm in having national aspirations, they are now impossible to obtain. That no adjoining country is eager to accept them. That while there might be a possibility that some far distant country might receive them, they would have great, if not greater difficulties to surmount in a still more strange country with people of diametrically opposed points of view and mentality. Whereas in Iraq, all or nearly all its People are descended from one common stock, and possess the same Oriental mentality. That by adopting Iraqi nationality in com-

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mon with their blood relations (their obvious and only possible course) and by becoming good and loyal Citizens, they can work for and benefit the Country of which they are a part, and in whose soil lie the bones of their Ancestors.

(6) He must be in a position to reassure them on behalf of the Iraqi Government that once they have become good and loyal Citizens, they will receive full protection from future reprisals and be given every opportunity, in common with all other inhabitants, to prosper and to purchase property of their own for agriculture, schools, and other developments, and that all their rights as a loyal minority will be respected.

(7) Finally - Nothing would clarify matters more than a carefully drawn up proclamation by the League itself written in Arabic and Chaldaic, and issued with the approval of the Iraq Government to the Assyrians explaining the position. Such a document, accompanied by a statement showing what funds will be available for vital improvements in the country in which the labour of the Assyrians could be largely absorbed, and gradually settled, for the welfare of the whole Kingdom, would in my opinion, be readily accepted, after they had been reassured by the explanation proposed to my preceding paragraph 5. The sum required for such a purpose would be much less than what would be necessary to transport to and settle them in another country. If the Assyrians are approached in the way I have indicated, I feel sure that the majority will be thankfully accept, and that a permanent and peaceful solution of the present difficulties can be obtained. It must be strongly impressed upon all that this is not a religious question but one of national pride. That whereas Iraq was once the centre of successively Chaldean and Assyrian Empires, so it was the Home of the Caliphs of Baghdad, and that consequently all have a right of place in the country, and a common aim in raising it to its ancient glory.

BRITISH POLICY IN ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT

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**LIST OF POLICE POSTS IN
THE ASSYRIAN VILLAGES.**

NAME OF QADHA.	NAME OF VILLAGE	POPULATION	NO. OF ARMS IN THE VILLAGE	POLICE STRENGTH (FOOT)
AMADIYA	Cham Sus	200	4	12
	Tahlawa	75	2	3
	Daudiya	275	26	12
	Tani	200	22	3
	Dahi	140	17	3
	Araden	515	93	4
	Hamzia	50	12	10
	Bibad	250	42	10
	Sar Sinak	150	4	10
	Dohik	130	23	3
	Birozan	200	-	3
	Diraluk	130	5	7
	Sakreen	65	2	10
	Birbank	75	-	3
	Cham Sheriti	70	-	12
	Cham Rabtek	90	10	12
	Musa Laka	55	2	6
	Chelki	210	53	22
	Kani Balaf	110	19	12
	Safra Zor	35	3	3
Qadish	150	1	10	
DOHUK	Kandi Nazi	35	2	10
	Kend Kusa	150	30	6
	Alkoshki			6
	Mijilmakht	190	-	5
	Kori Kafan	250	50	36
	Bakir Ulya	-	-	12
	Bakir Sufla	150		5
	Salahi			10
	Kafila Sin	80		5
	Dostka			3
Tel Khasaf			6	

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NAME OF QADHA. STRENGTH	NAME OF VILLAGE	POPULATION	NO. OF ARMS	POLICE IN THE VILLAGE (FOOT).
	Qala' Badri			8
	Khershana	15	5	5
	Nordinawa			6
	Kabirtu			5
	Sarshur			6
	Garfil			5
	Busiryán			6
	Kani Gulan			12
	Bablu	65	10	8
	Badi			8
	Hijarki	85		5
	Aluka	30		5
ZIBAR	Dinarta	113	-	10
	Kashkawa	134	122	5
SHAIKHAN	Ain Hilwa	100	1	5
	Qasrun	38	-	4
	Dairstune	22	-	4
	Baibus Ulya	57	1	4
	Taftyán	120	1	4
	Jarrahiya	114	7	5
	Birozawa	65	-	4
	Qasraj		1	4
	Alnisairiya	41	-	-
	Biboz	33	1	-
	Karanjak	35	-	3
	Biban			5
	Dahkan	33	5	-
	Karrana	110	2	5
	Bibos Sufla	33	-	-
	Dirstek	45		2
	Qasruk	13	-	2
	Mulla Barwan	35	2	-
	Badriya	100	7	-

BRITISH POLICY IN ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT

QUADHA	NAME OF VILLAGE	MONETARY ASSISTANCE	SEEDS Wheat	TAGHAR Barley	MULES	OXEN	AGRICUL-tural imple-ments	BLANKETS	REMARKS
AMADIA	Chem Sos Tuhalawa Musalga Sufra Zir	I.D. 100 Fils 00	50						No other needs
DOHOK	Karshna Bakawa Majalmakht Gori Kafan Kifla Sin Baqir Sufla Injirki Kenda Kosa Alocka Inhabitants	17 250 11 - 26 250 - - 15 - 7 500 29 - - - 1 4 500	22 4 14 10 5 3 1/2 10 30 -	18 4 12 - 5 1/2 2 1/2 - 13 -	2 - - - - - 2 - - -	- - 5 - 4 2 8 - -			No losses suffered. Took shelter at Korj- Kapan & did not return to the village & now inhabited by Ashutis. Inhabitants scattered Inhabitants moved to
	QI'at Badri	50							
	Nafdara	17							

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Dohok.

QUADHA	NAME OF VILLAGE	MONETARY ASSISTANCE	SEEDS Wheat	TAGHAR Barley	MULES	OXEN	AGRICUL-tural imple-ments	BLANKETS	REMARKS
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For subsistence of villages	I.D	Fils	43	533					
For subsistence of families at Dohok	66	825							159
Al Koshki		5							
Keri Bahen		19							

N.B. Each Taghar equal to 266 Kilos.

BRITISH POLICY IN ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT

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Name of Qada	Name of Village	Financial assistance I.D. Fils.	Stores Wheat Taghar	Barley Taghar	Mules	Oxen	Agricultural implements	No. of blankets	Remarks
SHEIKHAN	Ain Halwa	20 -						65	People did not apply for stores, but they will be given when they do so.
	Qasrur	4 -	17	8	-	8	4	12	Part of its inhabitants are reluctant in accepting anything
	Pios Ulia	18 -	4	1	-	-	1		This village was not looted & does not require blankets.
	Tuftiyan	2							Rais Malik Tallo refused to take anything as he decided to leave village.
	Jarahiyah	13 -	6	4	-	2	1	12	All these were handed over to Malik Nimrood & the Inhabitants refused sowing except himself.
	Pirozawa	13 -	30	38	-	2	5	-	Part of its inhabitants refused assistance.
	Nisieiah	11 -	16	6	-	-	3	-	They will be given their requirements when they apply for them

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Biyose	10	-	17	-	14	6	14	Declined to come & receive the oxen & agricultural implements & do not require stores or blankets.
Biyose Sufla	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Badriyah	18	-	30	-	28	14	60	
Karanah	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	After they received the money they left the village.
Bahindawa	10	-	4	-	6	8	35	Inhabitants left the village. Requirements will be given to them when they decide to cultivate as they intend to move to Makanan village.
Karanehiq	1	250						
Dahkan Artokh	4							
Birstiq	8							Inhabitants are still reluctant to receive assistance.
Al Qosh	54	950						This money was distributed among the families who took refugee in Al Qosh for their maintenance & for return expenses to their villages

BRITISH POLICY IN ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT

REPAIRS IN VILLAGES PARTLY OF WHOLLY DESTROYED.

Name of Qadha	Name of Village	Population	Number of original houses	Number of rooms destroyed	Number of wooden doors	REMARKS
SHAIKHAN	Karana	110	25	25	-	Inhabitants left the village before completion of repairs.
	Dairstone	22	5	26	-	-----do-----
	Bairuzawa	65	14	16	62	Completely repaired.
	Karanjaq	35	6	41	-	After repairing part of the village work had to stopped as the villagers have left the village.
	Jarrahiya	114	33	9	60	Completely repaired.
	Nasiriya	41	18	30	28	-----do-----
	Qasrun	38	10	30	30	-----do-----
	Ain Hilwa	100	27	110	90	-----do-----
	Baiboos	33	8	35 - 40	27	-----do-----
	Badriyah	100	15	50 - 55	71	-----do-----
	Dahkan	32	5	2	-	Repairs of the two rooms started but were stoppec owing to the desertion of same by their owner Malik Yonan.
	Artokh	-	4	1	-	Owner refused its repair as he left the village.
	Ain Bakra	-	-	93	-	(Repairs started but their owners refused their repairs and left the villages for Mosul.)
	Maknan	-	-	59	-	
	Baqqaq	-	-	56	-	

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REPAIRS IN VILLAGES PARTLY OF WHOLLY DESTROYED.

Name of Qadha	Name of Village	Population	Number of original houses destroyed	Number of rooms destroyed	Number of wooden doors	REMARKS
	Baiboos Ulia	57	14	-	8	Nothing was destroyed in it.
	Tuftiyan	120	20	-	26	-----do-----
	Bahandawa	124	36	-	37	-----do-----



ASSYRIAN LEVY IN PARADE



ASSYRIAN LEVY OFFICERS IN IRAQ

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CONFIDENTIAL

High Commissioner for Iraq
To The Secretary of State for the Colonies. -
(Communicated by Colonial Office;
Received in Foreign Office,
May 9 1924)

(Telegraphic). P.

PRINCIPLES of policy towards Assyrians detailed in your telegram of 19th January have already been communicated to Prime Minister for Council by letter, of which a copy has been sent to King Feisal. Letter contained in particular an invitation to the Iraq Government to undertake to grant lands to the Assyrians on favourable terms and without charge and afford them a generous measure of liberty in management of their own local affairs. Letter explained advantages which Iraq would gain by such an arrangement. Resolution accepting the proposals contained in the letter was passed by Council of Ministers on 30th April. I am forwarding by air mail copies of letter and resolution. I have satisfied myself that north of Mosul there is sufficient Government land available for all Assyrians likely to require it. On the 4th May, however, inhabitants of Kirkuk were the victims of an atrocious massacre perpetrated by Assyrian levies, which has changed whole situation. I am reporting separately upon this.

Above refers to your telegram of 10th April

DOBBS.

BRITISH POLICY IN ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT 37

M. G. Haigh
Chaplain.
Lambeth Palace.

9th May, 1924.

To:
Sir John Shuckburgh, K.C.M.G.,

Dear Sir,

The Archbishop of Canterbury, on returning from the Continent, has found a letter from Dr. Wigram written on March 19th, with regard to Assyrian Refugees in Greece. He asks me to send you a copy of this letter. He believes you are aware of the circumstances to which Dr. Wigram refers.

His Grace does not know how far it is possible to act on the lines suggested by Dr. Wigram, but he feels sure that you will be ready to consider the statement in the letter with a view to seeing whether it is possible to make any arrangements of the kind contemplated.

I am, etc.,
(sd) M. G. Haigh
C H A P -

LAIN.

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J. E. Shuckburh
Downing Street,

Date: 26 May, 1924.

To: The Reverend M. G. Haigh.

Dear Mr. Haigh,

Thank you for your letter of the 9th of May, forwarding a copy of a letter from Dr. Wigram with regard to the Assyrian Refugees in Greece.

In view of the incident at Kirkuk on the 4th of May, I do not think that the present is a good moment for taking up the question of the repatriation of these refugees. The matter will, however, not be lost sight of.

I have sent a copy of the correspondence to the Foreign Office, and to Sir Henry Dobbs.

Yours Sincerely,

J. G. Shuckburh

CHAPTER 3

FUTURE OF ASSYRIANS.

Refers to Foreign Office Letter of May 19th, 1924
(E 4190/88/65).

Transmits copy of Baghdad despatch of May 8th forwarding copy of letter to President of Council of Ministers putting forward proposals for settlement of Assyrians in Iraq, and extract from proceedings of Council of Ministers on April 30th when these proposals were accepted.

Most Satisfactory,

Sir Percy Cox

(Sent to Air Ministry).

Extract from the Proceedings of the Council of Ministers held at Baghdad on Wednesday, April 30, 1924.

There was read out his Excellency the High Commissioner's letter dated the 2nd April, 1924, on the subject of the settling of Assyrians in Iraq territories, whereupon the Council of Ministers passed a resolution accepting the proposals contained in the said letter.

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**The Under Secretary of State,
Colonial Office,
London S.W.1**

Date: 19th May 1924

To: The Colonial Office of 19th May 1924

Sir,

I am directed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to transmit to you for the information of the Secretary MacDonald, copies of the papers noted below, on the subject of the future of the Assyrians.

I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

J.E. MASTERTON SMITH.

BRITISH POLICY IN ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT 41

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
J. H. THOMAS, P.C., M.P.
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,
DOWNING STREET, S.W.1**

Date: 8th May, 1924.

Sir,

I have the honour to invite a reference to my telegram No. 237 dated the 6th May, 1924, concerning the future settlement of the Assyrians, and to transmit herewith copies of the marginally noted documents under reference therein.

“Letter No. P.O. 68 dated 2. 4. 1924 from the Counsellor to H.E. the High Commissioner, Baghdad to H.E. Ja’far Pasha al-Askari, President of the Council of Ministers, Baghdad.

Extract from proceedings of meeting of Council of Ministers held on the 30th April, 1924.

I have etc.,
(sd) H. Dobbs
High Commissioner For Iraq.

**Secretariat of H.E.
The High Commissioner
For Iraq.
Baghdad, 2nd April, 1924**

**To: H.E. Ja’Far Pasha Al-Askari, C.M.G.,
President of the Council of Ministers,
Baghdad,**

My dear Prime Minister,

I am directed by His Excellency the High Commissioner to address you on a matter which is undoubtedly of supreme

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importance to the Iraq State at the present juncture, namely the position of the Assyrian people in relation to the Mosul frontier.

The British Government have had the Assyrian question under the most careful consideration for some time, not only because of the services rendered and the sacrifices made by the Assyrians for the Allied Cause during the War, but also because of the importance to Iraq of having on the Iraq side of the frontier and attached by gratitude and loyalty to the Iraq State this small but warlike people and the districts which they occupy. In negotiating the Mosul frontier, the British Government is therefore disposed to press for the frontier to be fixed as far north as possible so as to include the greater part of the Assyrian people other than those who belong to Persian districts that is to say so as to include the mountains occupied by the Taiyari, Tkhuma, Jelu and the Baz Assyrian tribes.

The advantages of this to the Iraq State need not be enlarged upon, but His Majesty's Government has also to consider the interests of the Assyrians themselves, and it cannot support Iraq's claim to the extreme northern frontier unless it is assured, and can satisfy the world, that the Iraq Government will do its part in assuring a prosperous future to those Assyrians who will be settled within its borders.

The Assyrians now in Iraq may be divided as follows: -

From Persian territory 5,000 Persons

From Territory which was formerly
Turkish and which the British
Government proposes to claim
for Iraq (Taiyaris etc.)14,000 Persons

From Turkish territory not to
be claimed for Iraq 6,000 Persons

Total 25,000 Persons
(Men, Women and Children)

BRITISH POLICY IN ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT 43

It is suggested that the 5,000 Assyrians from Persian territory should be pressed to return to Persia, satisfactory assurances regarding their future treatment being obtained from the Persian Government. As regards the 14,000 persons from territory to be claimed for Iraq 7,500 persons have already returned to the Taiyari and Tkhuma country and most of the remainder will return there when that country has been definitely assigned to Iraq.

There will remain therefore for new settlement in Iraq only the 6,000 persons from Turkish territory which is not to be claimed for Iraq and possibly a few thousand more persons who may take refuge in Iraq later. At the outside the total number to be settled, including those already in Iraq, will not exceed 12,000 persons or 2,400 families.

His Excellency has ascertained that there are more than sufficient deserted lands, the property of the Iraq Government, to the north of Dohuk and in Amadia and the northern hills, upon which these people could be permanently settled. The British Government is now anxious to know whether the Iraq Government will assign these vacant lands free of charge and on favourable terms, and without causing loss to other Iraqis, to these Assyrians from Turkish territory and will grant both to them and to the Assyrians of the Taiyari, Tkhuma, Baz and Jelu country, if it is secured for Iraq, a generous measure of liberty in the management of their own purely local affairs, such as the choice of their own village headman and the making of adequate arrangements in each village for the collection and payment, subject to supervision by the Iraq Government, of such taxes as that Government may fix. Such a loose form of administration the Assyrians enjoyed before the war under the Turks and the Iraq Government will doubtless realise that only in this way can it secure the friendship and military services of the people who will be the defensive outpost as part of Iraq's most vital frontier. **Nor would these be the only advantages to Iraq. If, by satisfying the British Government and the League of Nations that she is prepared to deal generously with the Assyrians on the lines**

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suggested above, Iraq secures the extreme northern frontier claimed, the great bulk of the non-Persian Assyrians will be within her frontier and there will be no field for the intrigue which would inevitably result if half the Assyrians were in Iraq and the other half in Turkey. Again if the Iraq Government can by generous treatment secure the friendly regard and loyalty of the Assyrians, the danger will be avoided of their applying to the French or the Russians for support, a danger which would be by no means remote if the Assyrians were not assured of the intentions of the Iraq state. Lastly, looking still further ahead to the time for the admission of Iraq to the League of Nations, what better proof could she offer of her ability and desire to deal justly and wisely with persons of different race and faith than to point to a friendly and satisfied body of Assyrians settled within her borders?

The immediate necessity is to satisfy the British Government that in contending for the extreme norther frontier, so as to strengthen the Iraq State and secure the future of the Assyrians, they can count on the active co-operation of the Iraq Government in providing land on which the Assyrians can be settled and a satisfactory arrangement under which they manage their own local affairs. His Excellency invites the Iraq Government to consider the whole question urgently from this point of view in order that he may be able, as he hopes, to give the British Government the assurances of Iraq's co-operation in this definite policy, so that the British Government may feel fully justified in insisting on the extreme northern frontier in the interests of the Iraq State and of the Assyrian people. As the Mosul frontier negotiations will, it is believed, open very shortly at Constantinople you will realise how necessary it is that His Excellency should be in a position to reply without delay to the enquiries made by the British Government on the points dealt with in this letter.

Yours Sincerely,

(sd) Nigel D. Davidson.

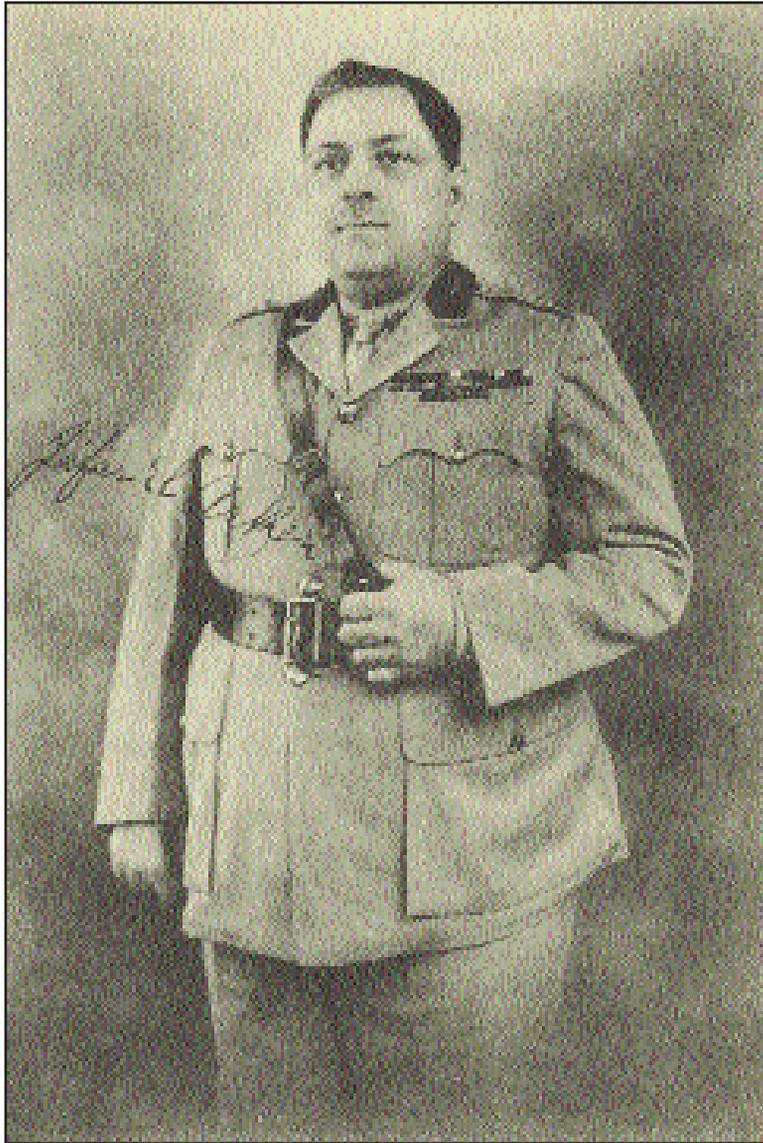
Extract from the proceedings of the Council of Ministers held at Baghdad on Wednesday the 30th April, 1924.

“There was read out His Excellency the High Commissioner’s letter No. P.O./68 dated the 2nd April, 1924, on the subject of the settling of Assyrians in Iraq territories, whereupon the Council of Ministers passed a resolution accepting the proposals contained in the said letter.”



King Faisal with a group of Arabs (Second from right) and Fahad Beg (Centre) Sheikh of the Anazeh

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JA'FAR PASHA AL-ASKARI

BRITISH POLICY IN ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT 47

No. 2150/265/1924

**British Mission,
Constantinople**

16th June, 1924.

The Eastern Department,
Foreign Office,
London, S.W.,1

Dear Department,

Your despatch No.11 of the 4th instant (E.4714/88/65) to
Sir Percy Cox arrived after his departure.

As no copy was sent to us we are keeping his copy and
presume that you will send him another if you still consider it nec-
essary.

Yours ever,

CHANCERY.

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ASSYRIANS IN INDIA.

Refers to Foreign Office letter of March 14th, (E 1879/88/65).

Transmits copy of correspondence with Government of India who are making enquiries as to number of Assyrians in India.

From India Office To Foreign Secretary, Govt. of India
Dated 10th April 1924.

INDIA OFFICE,
WHITEHALL, S.W.1
10th April 1924.

To: The Foreign Secretary,
Government of India.

Sir,

With reference to the letter from the Foreign Office of the 14th March No. E.1879/88/65, relative to the Assyrian community in India, I am directed by the Secretary of State to request that inquiries may be made, so far as possible, in accordance with the wish expressed by the secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the second paragraph of that letter, and that the result may be communicated to this Office at an early date.

For the reasons indicated in the third paragraph of the same letter, the importance of exercising due discretion should be impressed on all officers concerned in the inquiry.

It is understood that the information is desired in the case of refugees from Iraq as well as of those persons who have been settled in India for a considerable time.

I have, etc.,

(Sd) L. D. WAKELY

BRITISH POLICY IN ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT 49

From:

**The Deputy Secretary
To the Government of India
In the Foreign and Political Department,**

Sir,

His Excellency the High Commissioner for Iraq is contemplating the formulation of a scheme for the **Establishment of Assyrian settlements in the Mosul Vilayet**. Should the scheme materialise it is proposed to settle therein, should they desire to be accommodated there, not only the non-Persian Assyrians whose original homes fall within the boundaries of Iraq as they may be eventually determined, but also those whose homes may under the boundary settlement to be effected with the Turkish Government be included in areas apportioned to Turkey, and who may for that reason not desire to return to them. To assist him in the preparatin of the scheme the High Commissioner has expressed a wish to be supplied with a rough estimate of the numbers involved.

It is understood that there is an Assyrian or Nestorian community in India of a certain magnitude, and I am to request that if you see no objection with the permission of His Excellency the Governor in Council the Government of India may be furnished, as early as possible, with an approximate estimate of the number of Assyrian refugees from Iraq as well as of those persons who have been settled in India for a considerable time now residing in (The Madras Presidency, The Bombay Presidency, the Bengal Presidency, The Punjab Presidency, The U.P. Presidency, Burma Presidency, Bihar and Orissa Presidency, The C.P. The Assem, The N.W.F.P. Baluchistan, Ajmer-Merwera, Coorg, Delhi, Hyderabad, Mysore, Central India, Rajputana, Baroda, Kashmir, Gwalior, Punjab States., and in the event of the future of the Assyrian nation in Iraq being decided in a manner favourabled to their aspirations, to enquire what proportion of them are likely to desire to establish themselves in the proposed settlements.

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In making enquiries on the latter point the greatest care should be exercised so as to avoid raising any hopes among the refugees that their repatriation is contemplated or that His Majesty's Government or the Government of India have assumed any financial liability in this connection. The enquiries should therefore be discreetly and indirectly carried out.

I have etc.,

Sd. C. Latimer,
Deputy Secretary to the
Government of India.



MAR TOMA DARMO IN MALABAR

BRITISH POLICY IN ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT 51

E 6275/88/65

Activities of Marcus George Daniel.

Transmits copy of telegram of June 10th from Melbourne requesting enquiries may be made whether Daniel is bona fide representative of Assyrian Church, as he has applied for permit to visit Australia to lecture and collect funds for persecuted Assyrian Christians.

Transmits also copy of telegrams from Tabriz and Baghdad showing that Daniel is an impostor.

**British Legation,
Tehran,
23rd June 1924**

To: His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,
Foreign Office,
London.

Sir

I have the honour to transmit herewith copies of correspondence, as marked below, on the subject of Marcus George Daniel, a begging imposter.

I have the honour to be with the highest respect,

Sir,
Yours most obedient, humble Servant,

Smadoey

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- 1-Telegram from Melbourne dated 10th June 1924
- 2-Telegram from Mr. Gray Tabriz, dated 15th June 1924 (No. 15)
- 3-Telegram from Hicom, Baghdad, dated 19th June 1924 (No. 119)

1- Copy of telegram from Melbourne to Mr: Ovey, dated 10th June 1924. Archdeacon Marcus Daniel now in South Africa applies for permit to visit Australia to lecture and collect funds on behalf of persecuted Assyrian Christians.

Several previous collectors (of this) class were found to be rank imposters notwithstanding the production of numerous apparently genuine credentials. Glad if you would ascertain from Patriarch of Assyrian Church if Daniel is bona fide representative authorised by them to collect for the purpose mentioned. Should appreciate early reply.

- 2- Copy of telegram from Mr. Gray, Tabriz to Mr. Ovey dated 15th June 1924.

From two good sources, one being archbishop Graillia, highest dignitary here of Assyrian church, I gather Daniel is not Archdeacon but a well known rascal probably collecting funds for personal benefit in Australia having had to quit America.

- 3- Copy of telegram from Hicom, Baghdad, to Mr. Ovey, dated 19th June 1924

Your telegram No. 81

Marcus George Daniel was sentenced to one year's imprisonment for performing a BIGAMOUS marriage in Baghdad in 1921. He served nine month's imprisonment in Rio de Janeiro; is a plausible SCOUNDREL and ex communicated priest who earns his living by begging tours.

Addressed to Tehran, repeated to Tabriz 140/S.

BRITISH POLICY IN ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT

53

Credit Lyonnais

West end Branch,

4, Cockspur street,

Charing Cross,

London,

Tel: Gerrard 9037

30th July 1924

The Secretary,
Foreign Office,
Whitehall, S.W.1

Dear sir,

We should esteem a favour if you would kindly confirm to us the accuracy of the statement made to us by General Agha Petros of the Hotel Cecil, W.C.2, who has been in the habit of transacting certain business with us, to the effect that he is a General of the Assyrian Army and was President of the Assyrian Delegation of Lausanne Conference, and was here on a Political Mission to the Foreign Office,

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours Faithfully,

Manager,

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E 6564/88/65
CONFIDENTIAL.
Foreign Office,
S.W.1

The Manager,
Credit Lyonnais,
West End Branch,
4, Cockspur Street,
Charing Cross, W.1,

Date: 6th August, 1924.

Sir:-

In reply to your letter Private and Confidential of the 30th ultimo, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Ramsay MacDonald to state that, as General Agha Petros is not a British subject it is not possible for this department to vouch for his alleged rank.

He was undoubtedly present at Lausanne during the conference but was not admitted to a seat at the conference table and his activities there on behalf of the Assyrians were thus of a more or less personal nature.

He was subsequently received at the Foreign Office on various occasions in an informal and unofficial capacity,

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

LANCELOT OLIPHANT

BRITISH POLICY IN ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT 55

**Telegram from the Acting High Commissioner for Iraq
To the Secretary of State for the Colonies.**

Dated 14th August, 1924.

Received, Colonial Office, 4.26 p.m. 14th August, 1924.

Priority.

Incident occurred on 9th August north of territory administered by us near Khan? between Tkhuma Assyrians and the new Vali of Julamerk. Vali, accompanied by forty sowars, was making tour of the frontier to collect revenue and owing to this, Tkhuma Assyrians were in a great state of alarm. They had therefore taken up a defensive position near above place. The Turks attacked them and a fight ensued in which the Vali and some of his escort were captured.

Casualties Turks, three killed, two died of wounds and two wounded, Assyrians, one man, one boy, and one woman killed. On the 11th Malak Khoshaba, one of their head men freed the Vali and escort and returned arms from fear of punishment by us.

Above is report received from Administrative Inspector, Mosul, who proceeded by air at once to see that the Vali was returned with suitable escort but found on arrival that he had already been released.

Addressed to Colonial Office No. 401 repeated to Constantinople No. 153S.

Extract from letter of the Rev. E. W. McDowell, D.D. of Mosul, dated July 3rd, 1924, to Mr. R .E. Speer.

Thank you for making use of my letters in behalf of the Assyrian people. And also for sharing with me the extracts from the letters of Mr. Carter and Mr. Philip Kerr. It is a pleasure now to recall the personalities of Philip Kerr and Sir John Shuckburgh. The extracts have interested me deeply because of recent events in this area. The writer, or rather Mr. Kerr, reveals a very intimate and on the whole, correct knowledge of the situation here. The Assyrians in the Mosul area may be divided into three groups: Those who are still refugees, temporarily occupying villages two days North of Mosul, along the Zakho-Dohuk-Akra line, all well within the Iraq boundary. Second, those who are occupying their own homes a little farther north, in Supna, Amadia and Berwer; territory evidently considered by the English as within their mandate sphere. Third, The Assyrians of Tiary and Tkhoma, several thousand of them, who while not sent by the Authorities were encouraged by them to return to their homes, and which was all right. That territory is debatable ground. **Sir Percy Cox I think desired to include it in Iraq, and with justice. But the Turks claim it as theirs. And it is important to inform you that they are at this moment moving to occupy it.**

Word has just come down from Tiary to the effect that a Turkish army has appeared in the neighbourhood of Julamerk. It is stated that they have come to collect taxes from certain Kurds. Certain Kurdish chiefs are in conference with the Turks in Julamerk. Before the arrival of the Army the Christians were informed that if they proposed to reside in Turkish territory they would have to surrender their arms and pay taxes. I read the movement as follows: The Turks refused to grant any of the Mosul territory to Sir Percy. Up to the present that part of Kurdistan has not been officially or fully reoccupied by the Turkish government. At this point in the procedure it would be the natural thing for them to do, to assume control of just as much of that debatable territory as they possibly can without coming into serious conflict with

BRITISH POLICY IN ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT 57

the British. They would appoint and locate Mudirserfs, Kaimakums and all the local officials and then proceed to collect taxes. The army is there to assist them in this process, and in sufficient strength to warn the English to keep hands off. The territory they actually occupy they will stand a good chance of retaining when it comes to another conference. We may expect them, therefore, to push as far south as the English will allow them to at this time. This will probably mean the whole of Tiary and Tkhoma.

The Tiarrians are greatly disturbed. They have occupied their mountain passes and are on the watch night and day. They have sent messengers asking for help from the British. It is not yet known what the British will do. It will be a difficult problem for them. Where will they draw the line at which they will say to the Turks, "Thus far but no farther," and say it with a fighting force? Without aid the mountaineers will not be able to hold their own against a well equipped army supported by all the Kurds of that wide spread region. It is probably one of the chief purposes of that Turkish army to sweep all the Tiarrians and Tkhomians out of the mountains. I do not think that this movement will involve the city of Mosul. But I do think that the Turks will come down as far as they can without calling down on themselves too great opposition from the English.



ASSYRIAN PLATOON NO. 21 IN 1926

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ASSYRIAN OFFICERS IN LONDON

You will have noted that the treaty between Iraq and England was signed in Baghdad recently, but only after prolonged opposition on the part of the Iraq Mejlis-Assembly. Two clipping from the Baghdad Times will indicate something of the temper of both sides.

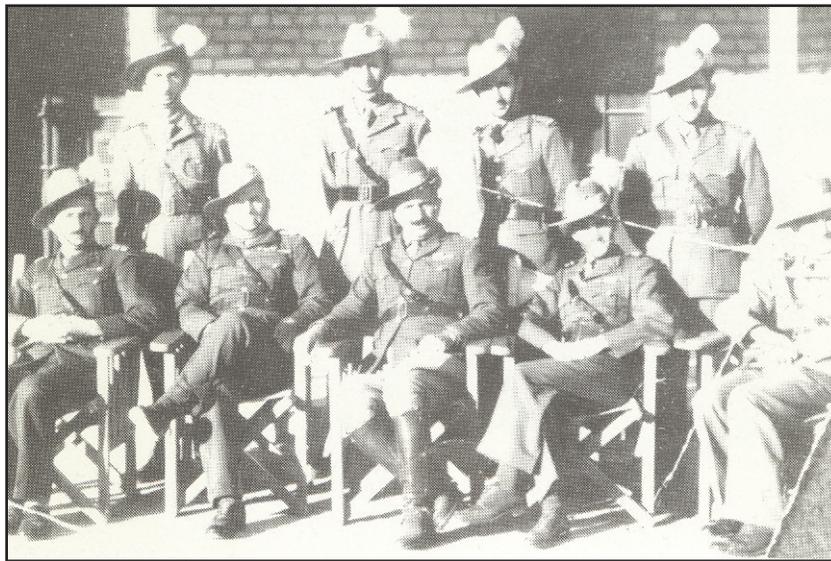
Most unfortunately, right in the midst of this discussion, the Assyrian soldiers ran amuck in the city of Kerkuk and in the fighting which followed some forty or fifty of the Moslems of Kerkuk were killed, among them being a Sheikh of considerable reputation. There was great excitement all over the country including Baghdad and Mosul, but the Government handled the matter wisely and firmly and a big disturbance was nipped in the bud. But it has stirred Moslem hatred and antagonism to the limit all over Mesopotamia and Kurdistan. The Iraqi Assembly demand the removal of all the Assyrians from their territory, and especially the Assyrian army. **The government had to confess that they could not dispense with the services of the Assyrian army in defending Iraq from the Turks.**

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It should be stated that the trouble in Kerkuk was started by Moslems, made worse by Arab police and bungled by the officers in command of the Assyrians. But it was a sad blunder on the part of the Assyrians. They also lost heavily in killed and wounded.

But the incident proves conclusively the utter impossibility of the Assyrians dwelling anywhere in this land without the presence of the English.

And the anomaly of the situation. The Arab is as bitter an enemy of the Assyrians as the Turk and just as dangerous but he is depending upon these Assyrians to save him from the Turk. That once done, the Arab will turn on the Assyrian and rend him.



ASSYRIAN OFFICERS IN HENAIDI

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Assyrian National Association
Warcester Branch
92 Austin Street
Worcester, Mass.,
United States of America.

Under the Secretary of State,
Foreign Office,
London S.W.1

Honorable Sir:

The Assyrians in America since this world's great war, are anxiously waiting and praying that a good message from His Britanic Majesty's Government will come to those Assyrians who valiantly fought the battle of the Allies.

While I was in Paris and London, in a capacity of the Assyrian delegate from America, I was assured that His Majesty's Government would look after them. For the last six years, Assyrians have suffered from deportation and many thousands are in Aleppo, Marseilles, Russia, etc., who are in a dangerous and pitiful condition. There is no hope for them to come to America or elsewhere but to our place toward Mossul or in Iraq State. As President of the Assyro-Chaldean Association, I would venture to ask from His Britanic Majesty's Government their attitude in this regard.

From some newspaper reports we learn that the Kurds and the Assyrians are working in harmony under His Britanic Majesty's protection. We hope this will bring them to a closer relation as the Kurds were originally Christians. We hope the British Government with the consent of the Iraq Government will assign the vacant lands for the settlement. We trust that His Britanic Majesty's Government will bring into effect the policy which has been attained -- assuring the Assyrian people their freedom and the settlement of their local affairs.

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Awaiting for your answer, I remain,

Yours very truly,



President.
Dr. S. K. Yoosuf.

FUTURE OF THE ASSYRIANS.

Refers to Foreign Office letter of September 11th,
1924
(E 7571/88/65.)

Suggests that Assyrian National Association in United States of America should be informed that future of Assyrians must depend upon ultimate position of Turkey-Iraq frontier which is now being considered by League of Nations.

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FOREIGN OFFICE

S.W.1.

GREAT BRITAIN

22nd September, 1924.

Doctor A. K. Yoosuf,
Assyrian National Association,
Worcester Branch,
92, Austin Street, Worcester, Mass.,
United States of America.

Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 22nd ultimo, relative to the attitude of its Majesty's Governmen towards the future of the Assyrians, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Ramsay MacDonald to inform you that the **future of the Assyrians must depend in some measure upon the ultimate position of the frontier between Iraq and Turkey. The question of that frontier is now under consideration by the Council of the League of Nations, to whom the matter has been referred for a decision.**

I am

Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

(Signed) (LANCELOT LIPHANT)



SIR PERCY COX

CHAPTER 4

DELEGATION ASSYRO - CHALDEAN AND YIZEDIES Geneve Hotel Richemond

**(General Agha Petros, Legion d'Honneur)
(Commander-in-Chief of the Assyro-Chaldean Forces,)
(President of the National Executive Committee.**

To His Excellency
President of the Society of Nations,
G E N E V A.

Sir,

We the Members of the Assyro-Chaldean and Yezidi Delegation thank God for having chosen and assembled here the most intelligent men of the Greatest Powers of the World. God's purpose in so doing is to see that Justice is dealt out impartially, and we thank him for giving us language to explain our condition.

1. The South Part of the Mosul Vilayet is mostly inhabited by Arabs, about 20% only being Assyro-Chaldeans; but the **North of Mosul Vilayet belongs entirely to the Assyro-Chaldeans, Yezidis and friendly Kurds under Sayid Taha. Not a single Arab or Turk ever dwelt there.**

Therefore there can be no question of the North of Mosul Vilayet being handed over to any power whatsoever, but in simple

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justice must be given to its lawful owners who speak the languages of the country, - under British Mandate.

2. If therefore, You, the most Honourable Members of the Society of Nations, allow and accept to see the North of Mosul Vilayet handed over to any power other than its lawful owners, I and the other Members of our Delegation most solemnly protest against as being unjust and unlawful in God's Sight. It is not because we are poor and helpless that justice should be denied us.

3. **THE NORTH OF MOSUL VILAYET
BELONGS TO THE ASSYRIANS.**

If it is taken from us, it is indeed a poor reward for the services we rendered during the Great War as "The Smallest Ally" of the "ENTENTE", a poor reward for the loss of one-third of our population, not to mention all our material losses. And now, if the North of Mosul Vilayet is not restored to us, we shall lose our Nationality and our Language, which is as old as the world, for we are the only people living to-day who speak the language of the cradle of humanity, which we have kept and spoken for thousands of years.

4. We have no objection to returning and living in our Homes in the North of Mosul Vilayet as long as we are under British Mandate, but we cannot live under our War Enemies, for **We are Christians**, and the laws of those Countries governing the Christians and Mohammedans are entirely different, as the attached ANNEXE A. will show. If we are left scattered among Mohammedans we shall certainly be massacred - as our Forefathers have been in the past, and everybody knows that all Christians who owned property in Turkey have been obliged to leave and their property confiscated, they and their Wives and Children driven to wander in search of food and help. A Home must be found for those unfortunate Refugees, and the only place which I can earnestly recommend is the Home of our Forefathers: The North of Mosul Vilayet, - under British Mandate.

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5. Since 1920 all the children born of Parents of the North of Mosul Vilayet who have been kept round the city of Mosul have died for they are a Mountain People, who cannot live in the Plains as the climate and water is unsuitable.

6. If we give up our right to our Homes and Fatherland where shall we go to found new Homes to protect and keep our Nationality and our Language ?? All other Nations and Peoples have a Home, why should we be the only exception??.

Therefore, as the **North of Mosul Vilayet belongs to us, I feel sure that all the honourable members of this Society will admit that in asking it to be left us under British Mandate, we are simply claiming our right, and we are moreover asking it for the sake of peace in that part of the country.**



(General Agha Petros, Legion dHonneur)

(Commander-in-Chief of the Assyro-Chaldean Forces,
(President of the National Executive Committee.)

26th September 1924.

With the agreement of the Assyro-Chaldean
and Yezidis Delegation,



GENERAL AGHA PETROS

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ANNEXE A.

The laws which govern Mohammedans and Christians are entirely different, as the following examples taken from Persian-Mohammedan Law will show: -

1. According to Mohammedan Law, a Christian man can become a Mohammedan, but a Mohammedan can never become a Christian.
2. If a Christian woman marries a Mohammedan, the Marriage is recognized as lawful, but were a Mohammedan woman to marry a Christian she would be immediately put to death.
3. A Christian Man cannot sit on a Jury or Tribunal, nor can he act as witness. Before any man can act as witness he must first present himself to and receive a letter from a "Mulla" (Priest) authorising him to be a witness. In this way, the legal question, so far as Christians are concerned, is in the hands of the Mohammedan Clergy and not of the Legal Body, for the Priests never give an authorisation to a Christian to act as witness.
4. Before any new Law can be promulgated, it must first be approved by a Council of five "Moshtaites" (Bishops). If this new Law is found by that Council to be in keeping with the KORAN, it is accepted, if not - it is refused. This mode of legal procedure can never be changed until the "Secret Prophet" IEMAM comes on his Blue Horse.
5. If a Christian Girl marries a Mohammedan, the property belonging to all her kindred - to the seventh degree, belongs to her by legal right. In other words, the property of her Parents, Brothers, Sisters, Uncles, Aunts, Cousins, etc. is taken over by her as each of them dies, and she thus becomes the sole recognised heri. Therefore, if those reasons given above are alone taken into consideration, it will easily be understood how impossible it is for any Christian to accept or live under such a regime.

(GENERAL AGHA PETROS)

CHAPTER 5

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

**QUESTION OF THE FRONTIER
BETWEEN
TURKEY AND IRAQ**

**Report submitted to the Council
by the Commission instituted by
the Council Resolution of
September 30th 1924**

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**EXPLANATION OF PRINCIPAL
ARABIC OR TURKISH TERMS.**

- Eyalet: A province (general term)
- Vilayet: A province under a Governor-General (“Vali”).
- Sanjak: Sub-division of a vilayet.
- Liwa: A district governed by a “Mutessarif”, approxi-
mate-ly the same as a Turkish Sanjak.
- Qaza: The territorial jurisdiction of a “Qadi” (judge),
hence an administrative district or town-
ship;
sub-division of the liwa.
- Nahia: A sub-district governed by a “Mudir”: several
nahies make up a Qaza (Townshhip).
- Jebel: A mountain or hill.
- Wadi: A valley, usually a dry river-bed.

Part One.

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION

The Council of the League of Nations, during its thirtieth session, at the meeting held at Geneva on Tuesday, September 30th, 1924, which was devoted to the examination of the question of the frontiers of Iraq, decided to set up a special Commission of three members "with a view to collecting the facts and data which it required to fulfil the mission entrusted to it under Article 3, paragraph 2, of the Treaty of Lausanne". Under the terms of the resolution adopted, this Commission:

" Shall lay before the Council all information and all suggestions which may be of a nature to assist it in reaching a decision. It shall give due consideration to the existing documents and to the views expressed by the interested parties, both as regards the procedure and as regards the substance of the question. It shall receive all communications which the parties may wish to transmit to it. It may proceed to investigations on the spot, and, in that case, may avail itself of the services of advisers appointed respectively by each of the two Governments concerned.

" The Commission shall fix its own procedure.

" The Council instructs the President and the Rapporteur on this question to appoint the members of the said Commission by common agreement."

The President of the Council and the Rapporteur on the question invited Count Teleki, former Prime Minister of Hungary, M. af Wirsén, Swedish Minister Plenipotentiary, and Colonel Paulis (Belgium), to carry out this task. They agreed to do so, and met at Geneva on November 13th, 1924, in order to constitute this Commission. The following is a brief account of its activities since that date.

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The Commission immediately acquainted itself with the documents prepared by the Secretariat of the League of Nations concerning the **frontier-line between Turkey and Iraq.**

After studying the minutes of the Conference of Lausanne, the minutes of the sessions of the Council and the memoranda of the British and Turkish Governments, the Commission drew up the general plan of its work. It came to the conclusion that it would be necessary to proceed to the spot in order to carry out an enquiry and to collect locally the data it required. It decided that it would be necessary to go thoroughly into certain special questions and for that purpose to obtain documentary information direct from both Governments concerned. It accordingly decided first of all to get into personal touch in London and Angora with the said Governments. A questionnaire was sent from Geneva to each of the Governments concerned in order that the Commission, when it reached London and Angora, should be able, without loss of time, to obtain the supplementary information which it required before proceeding to carry out its enquiry on the spot.

Before leaving Geneva, it was decided to elect M. af Wirsén President of the Commission.

When the Commission arrived in London, it was received by the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs and the Colonies. Several meetings and interviews took place, at which the experts of these two Ministries were present.

At the meeting on November 25th, 1924 Mr. Davidson, of the Colonial Office, welcomed the Commission and expressed the satisfaction of his Government that the Council had preferred to appoint a Commission - a procedure which the British Government had always thought would prove more effective for the solution of the dispute than a plebiscite.

In reply to this observation, the Commission thought it advisable to point out immediately that the Council had not in any

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way limited its power of action - that is to say, that it would be free to recommend to the Council a plebiscite as well as any other method of procedure which it might consider desirable.

Mr. Davidson thanked the Commission for this explanation and stated, that the British Government intended to forward a memorandum on its point of view concerning the difficulties of a plebiscite. At this meeting, and at the subsequent meeting, the various points raised by the Commission in its questionnaire to the British Government were examined in turn.

Finally, in conformity with a decision previously reached at Geneva, the Commission invited the British Government to appoint an assessor to accompany it and assist it when carrying out its work on the spot. At the end of the year the Commission proceeded to Constantinople, leaving that city on January 3rd for Angora.

During the exchange of views which took place between the Commission and the representatives of the Turkish Republic, and incident, similar to that which occurred in London, showed that it was necessary to state, without leaving any room for doubt, the nature of the Commission's powers, which left it free to choose between the British and Turkish suggestions as to the procedure to be followed and to propose, with regard to the fundamental question at issue, any frontier-line it might deem desirable, provided always that it lay between the extreme frontier limits claimed by the two Governments.

It is to be noted that, in covering letter of its reply to the Geneva questionnaire, the Turkish Government, after summarising the principal arguments in support of its views, put forward the following considerations:

“ My Government is convinced . . . that the expression of the popular will should be regarded as the essential factor in the solution of the problem, and it hopes that the Commission will

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take into consideration **the most earnest desire of the Turkish Government and people that the solution may be found in a free expression of the desire of the population of the Mosul Vilayet.**

“ For the first time since the foundation of the League of Nations, a dispute of considerable importance between a great Western Power and a Near Eastern Power regarding the final destiny of an Oriental people has been brought before the Council of the League. Feelings of good-will and mutual confidence between East and West, and the faith of Oriental peoples in the new era for which the League of Nations stands, will depend very largely on the solution your Commission may advocate, after a thorough investigation of the question.

“The Government of the Republic is convinced that your Commission sincerely desires to contribute to the creation of mutual confidence between these two parts of the world, which would be so desirable a result, and will wish to ensure the triumph of justice by recommending that the Council should allow the population of the Vilayet of Mosul freely to determine its own fate.” After long discussion, the Commission succeeded in persuading the Turkish Government to accept its point of view.

The Commission also invited the Government of Angora to be good enough to appoint an assessor to assist in its work and investigations. Shortly before its departure, the Commission learned that the assessor would be General Jevad Pasha, Inspector-General of Troops in the Diarbekr region. The latter would be accompanied by experts to assist him in his task. The Commission then went to Konieh, where it had the honour to be received in audience by H.E. Mustapha Kemal Pasha Ghazi, President of the Turkish Republic.

By Damascus and the Syrian desert, the Commission then proceeded to Baghdad, where it arrived on Friday, January 16th, 1925.

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The Commission accepted an invitation to stay for a few days in Baghdad. It was, indeed, desirable for it to collect information there concerning the economic relations which existed between the former vilayets of Baghdad and Mosul and to study the administrative methods and political situation of the new State. The members of the Commission were the guests of the British High Commissioner, Sir Henry Dobbs, who also invited the Turkish assessor to stay at the Residency, whereas the Turkish experts were housed in another part of the town.

The High Commissioner introduced Mr. Jardine, who had been appointed by the British Government to act as assessor to the Commission. He was accompanied by the former Minister of Public Works, Sabi Bey, as representative of the Government of Iraq.

On the day after its arrival the Commission was presented by the High Commissioner to H.M. King Faisal, who welcomed it and explained his views and those of his Government on the question of the frontiers of his country. His Majesty transmitted to it officially the text of his speech of welcome and a written memorandum.

In this document, after setting forth the justice and legitimacy of the claims of Iraq, he referred to the ancient civilisation of the Arab people and the former splendours of the city of the Caliphs, which was once the centre of a famous civilisation. He gave an historical summary of the Arab nationalist movement and showed how the Arabs had not hesitated to avail themselves of the opportunity offered by the world-war to join the Allies and expel the usurpers. He showed that the Turks withdrew north of the frontiers of Iraq when the Armistice was signed, and that a British military occupation was then established in the three vilayets of Basrah, Baghdad and Mosul. Shortly after this occupation the British Government communicated to Parliament its intention of keeping the promises which it had made to the Arab people and establishing a national government in Iraq. That Government had now been in existence for four years, and the progress realised had

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allowed the British Government to transform the mandate into a treaty of alliance. Had not the British representative on the Council of the League of Nations declared that Iraq would soon be in a position to become a self-governing State and request admission to the League of Nations?

He was sure that the Commission would perceive the difference between the present state of affairs and that which existed under Turkish rule. His kingdom, founded on justice and the civil and religious equality of all his subjects, only desired to enjoy lasting peace; and, when such frontiers had been granted to Iraq as would guarantee that country's stability, to throw all its youthful energy into the development of its natural resources. In this connection he mentioned the irrigation schemes for the plains of the Diala and Euphrates -- schemes which would reopen over three million acres to agriculture. The railway-line from Baghdad to Mosul via Kifri and Kirkuk was nearing completion. Finally, his Government was on the point of concluding a contract which would ensure the exploitation of the Iraq oil-fields.

Reverting to the future relations of Iraq with Turkey, he stated that his people were animated by friendly feelings towards their neighbours. "We respect the Turkish nation", he said, "and wish it all prosperity. We ourselves, however, desire to live in peace and security in order that we may be able, by working and developing our resources, to serve the cause of all mankind. To attain this end, our country must be left entire and intact, and we must possess a frontier which will guarantee as against all aggression. This is for us a question of life and death."

He was sure that when the Commission had examined the question in all its aspects - ethnical, geographical, economic and strategic - it would arrive at the conclusion that to deprive Iraq of its natural frontiers would be to deal a mortal blow at the future of the country.

The note concluded as follows:

“ The bringing into existence and consolidation of a permanent Government in Iraq is dependent on the preservation of the *status quo*, as I consider that it is impossible, both strategicaly and economiccally, for a Government in Baghdad to live if Mosul is detached from it an held by another Government. Nor can a real life be hoped for the people of Iraq without Mosul. What is more, my convictions and my experience of the mentality (original spiritual state) of the Turkish people, their historic ambition for extension and invasion and the absence of another line of frontier safeguarding to the existence of my country make me declare that it will be impossible to maintain internal peace even in normal times except by the creation of a permanent military force which it is not within the powers of the Iraq amputated to create either at present or in future.

Likewise, I do not believe that any foreign capital will come into Iraq when foreign capitalists are aware that the country is constantly exposed to **risks, anarchy and invasion**, Therefore I consider tht Mosul is to Iraq as the head is to the rest of the body; and it is my unshakeable conviction that, though the question is only one of fixing a boundary between Iraq and Turkey, it is nevertheless and in fact the question of the Iraq as a whole. Accordingly, the happiness or misery of four millions of human beings is placed in the hands of the members of your honourable Commission. If for any reason the Commission may consider that it should recommend to the League of Nations any alteration or modification of the present frontiers of Iraq, it should at the same time recommend to the League the choice of a new status for the Iraq in its entirety, and it shall be responsible for the destinies of this mass of human beings.

The Commission on that day held a meeting at the Residency in the presence of the High Commissioner. At this meeting an incident occurred, the effect of which was to delay the commencement of work for a fortnight. Sir Henry Dobbs said

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that among the Turkish experts there were two - Nazim Bey and Fettah Bey - who, although nationals of Iraq, had engaged in transactions directed against the present Government of their country. These two persons, against one of whom a warrant of arrest had been issued, had been obliged to flee the country and were now availing themselves of the presence of the Commission in order to return to Iraq and possibly, under the cloak of diplomatic immunity, to engage in activities likely to disturb peace and order. This danger was the greater since, at the present time, the patriotic and nationalist parties, whose intense excitement in the present circumstances could easily be understood, had already uttered threats against them. He asked that the two experts should be recalled.

The members of the Commission were unable to share Sir Henry Dobbs views. While deploring the fact that the Turkish Government should have appointed experts who were compromised in the eyes of the Iraq authorities and whose presence therefore rendered the Commission's task more difficult, **the Commission pointed out that the two experts in question were citizens of the Vilayet of Mosul and could not be regarded as Iraqi subjects until the question of the frontiers had been finally settled.**

The Commission reported this incident to the Turkish assessor and did not conceal its surprise that the Turkish Government should have selected these experts. However, for the above-mentioned reasons, it was decided not to place any pressure on General Jevad Pasha with a view to having these experts recalled. In the meantime, the Turkish assessor informed the Commission that his experts and aide-de-camp had been placed in an "entrenched camp" and kept under observation. The Commission immediately drew the attention of the High Commissioner to the fact that such procedure was unjustified.

The Commission felt it its duty to proceed to the spot, and it noted that the Turkish delegation had indeed been housed some

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few kilometres from the town in military barracks surrounded by barbed wire. As a result of the Commission's very energetic representations to the High Commissioner, it finally succeeded in having the Turkish experts transferred to rooms near the Residency. On the other hand, it assured Sir Henry Dobbs that the Turkish experts would not go into the town. It felt that this arrangement was admissible on account of the special conditions obtaining in the City of Baghdad, but it stated that, as soon as it arrived in the disputed territory, it would insist that full freedom of movement should be accorded to the Turkish delegation.

The first phase of this incident terminated at Baghdad by the communication of the following note sent to the British High Commissioner and the Turkish assessor:

“ the reply of His Excellency the High Commissioner and the representations made by His Excellency General Jevad Pasha have suggested to the Commission the following observations:

“ 1. The Commission again expresses its regret that the Government of the Turkish Republic should have thought fit to send with its assessor attached to the Commission of the League of Nations persons who, by reason of their recent political activity, were, to say the least, hardly suited to accomplish so delicate a mission. The fact that these two gentlemen have been mentioned by name in the minutes of the Constantinople Conference should have made it possible to foresee that difficulties and complications would arise likely to hinder the work of the Commission.

“ 2. The Commission considers that, so long as it remains outside the disputed territory, it cannot oppose certain measures which the authorities responsible for public order state that they have been obliged to take in order to ensure the personal safety of the Turkish assessor and his experts.

“ 3. The Commission considers, however, that, when it

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is at Mosul or in any other locality in the disputed territory, the Turkish assessor must enjoy complete freedom in order that he may be able to support as he thinks best the arguments laid before the Commission by his Government. Consequently, he must be able to avail himself freely and at all times of the assistance of his experts and such persons as he may think fit to employ. It is clear that, if these conditions are to be fulfilled, the experts must enjoy the right to move about quite freely. After consultation with General Jevad Pasha, the Commission reserves the right to come to an agreement with the local authorities concerning the measures to be taken to ensure the personal safety of the persons accompanying it.

“ The Commission is convinced that the two parties will realise that any difficulty of an internal or secondary nature placed in the way of the accomplishment of the Commission’s task can but hinder the satisfactory progress of the enquiry entrusted to it. It hopes that the two Governments will do all that likes in their power to render it unnecessary for the Commission to take decision which would inevitably delay the speedy settlement of the dispute.”

During its stay at Baghdad, the Commission, on the invitation of the Iraq Government, visited a number of Ministries, the Military School, the hospitals, educational establishments and agricultural schools, and received various delegations. It also visited the markets, granaries and wood depots in the commercial centres of the town in order to obtain an insight into the trade between Baghdad and its neighbourhood and the northern regions. It endeavoured to obtain direct evidence of the economic interdependence of the former vilayets of Mosul and Baghdad. It studied the Customs statistics with particular care, sought out pre-war consular reports and thus gathered information regarding the economic situation of the country. The Commission proceeded to Mosul by the Sharqat Railway, which runs for a certain distance alongside the Jebel Hamrin, the frontier proposed by the Turkish Government.

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The Commission arrived at Mosul on the afternoon of January 27th and took up its residence in a large house near the town which is used as the residence of King Faisal when staying in this district. Immediately after its arrival, a further regrettable incident occurred. This incident is related by Count Teleki in a memorandum which may be summarised as follows:

“ On January 27th, the day on which the Commission arrived at Mosul, I went for a walk in the town with M. Roddolo and M. Charriere. As I was leaving our house, General Jevad Pasha, in uniform, offered to accompany me. I accepted his offer the more readily as I was curious to see what impression his uniform might produce on the population. Hardly had we come into the street -- the police not having yet followed us -- when about thirty persons (who I supposed were Arabs) surrounded the Pasha and kissed his hands amid cries of “Long live Turkey!”. The crowd following us grew until it must have consisted of about 200 individuals, and the shouting increased. As we were passing the barracks a few police officers intervened and endeavoured to disperse the crowd.

“As we arrived in the bazaar (Market) we were joined by three police officers, one of whom was an English-man. The crowd surrounding us had been increased by a large number of persons from the bazaar. The Pasha became the subject of further acclamations and further demonstrations of sympathy. The crowd seemed to consist of various elements. Some of those present were very respectable; others again, seemed to be beggars; there were also a great many children. The police officers renewed their efforts to disperse the crowd, which seemed to obey their orders. It was then that we noticed that behind us two policemen were using their sticks, and one of them attacked a middle-aged man who had taken refuge in a shop, elaborating him violently under our eyes. I felt bound to intervene. I called an officer and said to him: ‘ I forbid you to strike people in the presence of a member of the Commission of the League of Nations’.

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“ Continuing our walk in the direction of the Town Hall, we were followed by an ever-increasing crowd which the police endeavoured to control. When we arrived in front of the Nationalist Club of Iraq, situated opposite the Town Hall, we witnessed a counter-manifestation of students wearing cockades of the Iraq colours and acclaiming King Faisal.

“ Still followed by the crowd and surrounded by police officers, we returned to the house”.

On the morning following upon this incident, the Commission received a visit from the Mutasserif of Mosul, accompanied by Major Lloyd, the British Administrative Inspector, who stated that they would be bound to establish a system of supervision in order to ensure the personal safety of the Turkish delegation in view of the ever-increasing excitement manifested by the more extreme elements of the population. For this purpose, they proposed the following measures:

(1) The Turkish assessor and his experts should warn the administrative authorities one hour in advance of their desire to leave their residence. They should indicate the place to which they proposed to proceed and should be accompanied by the police.

(2) Jevad Pasha should be requested not to leave his residence in military uniform.

(3) Measures should be taken by the authorities to ensure that no political manoeuvre likely to disturb public order should be attempted by the Turkish delegates.

The commission, being anxious to safeguard the freedom of action of the Turkish experts, stated that it could not accept the conditions proposed by the Mosul authorities, and it drafted a note, which was at once dispatched to the Administrative Inspector and the Mutasserif.

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The purport of this note was as follows:

“ (1) We require that the Turkish delegates be given complete freedom of movement without any visible police escort. The Turkish assessor must be allowed to introduce his witnesses to the Commission, even if they wish to be examined in secret.

“ (2) It is the duty of the municipality to provide for the safety of the Turkish delegation; we can only allow such discreet measures of protection to be taken on their behalf as will not be perceived by the public.

“ (3) The Commission will refuse to open its enquiry until it has received satisfaction on these points.

On receiving this note, the Mutasserif and the British Inspector stated that they could not reply without first referring to the central authorities. The High Commissioner replied by telegram that, though he recognised the justice of the Commissions demands, he could not accept any responsibility on behalf of the British and Iraq Governments for any hostile acts which might be committed against the members of the Turkish mission.

At the same time, the Commission received by telegram from Angora a strong protest against the attitude of the Iraq authorities. The Turkish Government asserted that the occupying authorities must be held responsible for the safety of the Turkish delegates. A similar protest from the Turkish Government was forwarded to the Commission through the Secretariat of the League of Nations. It then dispatched to Geneva a long telegram explaining the origin of the situation created by the ill-advised choice of the Turkish experts. It also reproduced its reply to Angora, in which it pointed out to the Turkish Government that the latter could scarcely hold the Iraq authorities responsible if it refused to accept the precautions proposed by Baghdad.

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The Commission's situation in Mosul was becoming increasingly difficult. It learned that persons who had demonstrated in favour of Turkey had been imprisoned. The members of the Commission themselves were under constant supervision. Two police patrols were stationed at the entrances to the Commission's quarters with instructions to note the coming and going of members and secretaries and to telephone immediately to the central police-station of the city. Under these circumstances, the Commissioners came to the conclusion that no impartial enquiry was possible; they informed the two assessors of this decision and stated that the Commission would not begin work until this state of affairs was brought to an end.

Telegrams were then exchanged with the Angora Government, but as no definite reply was given to the Commission's proposals, it was finally agreed that, pending such definite reply, General Jevad Pasha - who, under the circumstances, did all that he personally could to assist the Commission in its work -- should take the responsibility for the safety of his delegation and should accept certain discreet precautions, so far as they did not damage the prestige and susceptibilities of the Turkish delegation or interfere with its freedom of action. A reply was received two days later, but as it still did not seem sufficiently explicit on the question of responsibility the following telegram was sent, which definitely put an end to the correspondence:

Mosul, February 8th, 1925

“ MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ANGORA. - T. 3. - Received your telegram of February 6th stating that Jevad Pasha's point of view is shared by the Turkish Government. We conclude that the Turkish Government definitely accepts the following written declaration given by Jevad Pasha at our request on February 5th.

“ ‘ In my own name and the name of my Government, pending a definite reply to your enquiry submitted to Angora, I

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hereby assume responsibility for the personal safety of members of the Turkish delegation in case of acts of violence. I hereby accept the discreet precautions proposed by the High Commissioner, which, if fairly applied, will not damage the prestige or susceptibilities of the Turkish delegation and will enable it to accomplish its work with you. - (Signed) JEVAD PASHA.'

"The Commission thanks the Turkish Government for its conciliatory attitude enabling the enquiry to continue with the assistance of the assessors. - DE WIRSEN." Up to that date (February 5th) the Commission, which had arrived at Baghdad on January 16th, had not yet been able to start work or even to decide on its programme. Having notified the assessors of its decision not to receive any delegation or interview any witnesses until this incident had been finally closed, the commission had been obliged, up to that point, to refrain from any official action.

In the meantime, however, the Commissioners had been able privately -- incognito, so to speak -- to form some idea of the views of the population. They had also agreed on the details of their tour through the vilayet and on the methods to be followed in the enquiry. With the object of acquiring general information, they had visited the bazaars and the different quarters of the town, as well as the prison. They visited unaccompanied certain persons in the town whose experience and knowledge of the country were well known. They were thus enabled to form a general idea of the situation, while at the same time obviating the possibility of pressure or propaganda by either party.

As soon as the official enquiry could be opened, it was conducted jointly by the three Commissioners. The Commission did not confine its interrogation to the local authorities, political committees and professional associations (doctors, lawyers, merchants, etc.), but extended it to all classes. The two assessors were also invited to submit lists of witnesses whom they would wish the Commission to examine.

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The Commission was thus in a position to carry out the enquiry in such a manner that every class of the population, and all individuals of any importance, should have an opportunity of expressing their views. To illustrate the method which was followed in the investigations, we may here quote the inaugural speech delivered by the President in the presence of the representatives of the various associations and corporations of the town of Mosul:

“ We cordially thank you for your visit. The Commission has come to make an absolutely impartial enquiry into the frontier question. It will be guided solely by the desire to secure the real welfare of the people. The Commission expects in its turn that you will help it in its work. It wishes the desires of all parties to be conveyed to it freely; and it draws your attention to the serious results to the country of any persecution of persons who may give evidence conflicting with the wishes of the future authorities, whoever these may be. “ We trust that you will do all in your power to preserve tranquillity among the population, and that the younger people, who have nothing to do with politics, will refrain from useless demonstrations which are not calculated to promote tranquillity.

The most important persons were examined at a full meeting of the Commission, while others were interviewed separately by individual Commissioners. A considerable mass of evidence was thus collected, and it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that in the town of Mosul the Commission was able to obtain as complete an expression of the people's view as was possible. In view of the fact that the Turkish Government had founded its case on the necessity of consulting the peoples concerned, and that the British Government also had laid stress on the importance of this factor, it was essential for the Commission to endeavour to obtain the widest and most thorough knowledge of the wishes of the population.

The Commissioners realised at the outset that in the form in which they were obliged to put it -- i. e. Turkey or Iraq -- the

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question might give rise to serious difficulties, particularly as they were induced by the persons whom they interviewed to ask questions about the mandatory administration and the situation created by the treaty between Great Britain and Iraq.

This difficulty became still more obvious when the Commission received a telegram from the Prime Minister of Iraq protesting against the form of some of its questions. In its reply it upheld its right and affirmed it to be its duty to carry out without let or hindrance an exhaustive enquiry into all questions affecting the future of the country. The Commissioners must here repeat that their methods of enquiry necessarily involved a certain emotional excitement among a population whose political education is still at a very primitive stage and which had been subjected to an intensive propaganda campaign.

In order to expedite the Commission's work, which had already been unduly delayed by the incidents reported above, **it was agreed that the enquiries in the remoter parts of the disputed area should be conducted simultaneously by sub-committees.** This was perfectly natural, because it had been clearly shown in the course of the preliminary work at Mosul that the three Commissioners were in agreement as to the method of putting questions. Moreover, they had frequently observed that witnesses who displayed some uneasiness in their replies when confronted by the whole Commission gained confidence in the less intimidating atmosphere of a private conversation. Again, it was thought that this method would have the advantage of discouraging any indiscretions on the part of the police, while the Commission's temporary absence would afford an opportunity for restoring calm in the city.

If the Commission had moved from place to place as a body, it would have been obliged, owing to difficulties due to defective means of communication and lack of accommodation, to stay much longer in the country, the enquiry would have been delayed, and it might even have proved impossible to visit certain districts.

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As regards the presence of the British and Turkish assessors, this was a matter for the Commission, which had absolute power to require their attendance or not as it thought best. Indeed, no difficulty could arise, because it had been arranged that the four Turkish experts should be distributed among the sub-committees according to their knowledge of the different districts, while the British and Iraq Governments had resident inspectors and officials. As soon as the Commission's decision to this effect was notified to the assessors, the following note was received from Mr. Jardine: "The British assessor understands from a conversation with His Excellency the President of the Commission that a part of the Commission desires to proceed on tour on Sunday next, accompanied by representative of the British and Turkish parties attached to the Commission. He further understands that the destination of the members of the Commission who are to proceed on this tour is not to be divulged. The British assessor feels that the travels of the Commission (whose presence alone is naturally the cause of great political excitement), accompanied by representatives of both parties but without any prearranged programme of movement or procedure, so vitally affect the whole question of the preservation of law and order, for which the British and Iraq Governments are responsible, that the matter is beyond his competence, and he is obliged to inform His Excellency the High Commissioner for Iraq and await instructions."

In personal conversation, the British assessor pointed out that he considered it necessary to have each sub-committee accompanied by a police patrol for the sake of their personal safety, and that for this purpose the itinerary of each sub-committee would have to be known in advance. The Commission objected to this argument on the ground that it would destroy any possibility of an impartial enquiry. Mr. Jardine said he personally could not take the responsibility of letting the sub-committees start without adequate protection, and he asked the Commissioners to take no decision without consulting Sir Henry Dobbs, who was due to arrive on the following day.

On February 8th the High Commissioner arrived from

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Baghdad, and a meeting took place at which members of the Commission and their secretaries were present. At the request of Sir Henry Dobbs, the British and Turkish assessors were also asked to attend.

Sir Henry Dobbs explained that he had come to Mosul in the hope of smoothing over the difficulties which had arisen in connection with the Commission's methods of enquiry. He hoped, first of all, that the duties of the assessors and experts would be clearly defined and he asked whether the experts were assisting the Commission solely as interpreters. The President replied that the duty of the assessors was to be at the Commission's disposal to furnish any information they might require; the experts were there to assist the assessors. The Commission was, however, entitled to employ them direct, because it had full power to use every means of obtaining information. There was no reason why the Commission should not use the experts as interpreters, but that need not therefore be regarded as their primary duty.

The High Commissioner then turned to the question of the protection of the Turkish assessor and his suite. According to information he had received, the pro-Turkish party was organising armed escorts to accompany General Jevad Pasha wherever he went. It would, of course, be the duty of the police to arrest these escorts, whose proceedings might lead to trouble and disorder.

The President and the members pointed out that the police had not so far dispersed any demonstration in favour of Iraq and had not used their discretionary powers impartially, but they had given the impression that certain demonstrations which the Commission had witnessed were tolerated -- perhaps, indeed, encourage -- by the police. Count Teleki added that, although he had done no more than protest against the brutalities he had witnessed, it must not be concluded therefrom that he endorsed the other police measures which had been taken.

The High Commissioner dwelt on the excitability of the

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people of Mosul, but expressed the hope that the Commission would not be inconvenienced by any further demonstration of the kind. The President replied that such demonstrations were to be deplored, not because they inconvenienced the Commission but because they caused a regrettable amount of excitement.

Sir Dobbs hoped that the Commission would realise that, in the form in which it had pursued its enquiries in Mosul, those enquiries were bound to threaten seriously the authority of the British and Iraq Governments throughout the disputed area. It appeared from reports received at Baghdad that the questions put by the Commission to most of the witnesses had been of a nature to impair the prestige of these Governments by suggesting that the Commission was looking for evidence against the existing administration.

He admitted that the fact that the country was in the occupation of one of the parties to the dispute gave that party a stronger position than the other, and consequently obliged the Commission to use all possible means to obtain reliable information as to the real desires of the people.

He suggested that the Commission might work in closer touch with the assessors and that public opinion could be consulted through the local authorities.

The President said that the Commission was perfectly willing to consider the suggestions of both parties but that it would pursue the enquiry quite freely as its duty dictated. In any case, the procedure followed by the Commission would be set forth in a report to the Council of the League of Nations. He concluded by pointing out that the Commission's work had been hampered to a certain extent by the unjustifiable action of the police, not only against the witnesses who had been called but also against the Commission itself.

The High Commissioner again alluded to the difficulty

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of maintaining order and observed that it was the duty of the Government in power to enforce existing laws throughout the territory under its administration.

Speaking as a jurist, Count Teleki pointed out that Iraq legislation could only be enforced in the disputed territory so far as it related to the administration of the country and the maintenance of order. In regard to all matters connected with the sovereignty over the country, it was not applicable.

The High Commissioner regretted any excessive zeal which might have been displayed by the Iraq police, which was still in process of organisation.

There was another question which he thought should be touched upon. It was an important question and of such a delicate nature that he had hesitated to mention it, but he thought it likely that it might form the subject of a protest by his Government when the report came to be discussed by the Council of the League of Nations. The British Government, he thought, might not approve of the Commission's decision to make separately enquiries in different parts of the vilayet.

The nationalities of the members of the Commission would suggest that, in selecting them, the Council had endeavoured to establish a "perfect equilibrium".

He was afraid that his Government and public opinion in England might be led to imagine that the nationality of the individual members of the Commission, and the sentiments which might presumably be attributed to them, would not be without some influence on their respective conclusions.

The President, speaking both for himself and for his colleagues, felt that he must at once call attention to the inexpediency of this remark. He replied that this was a question of confidence; that the Council had unanimously selected the members of

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the Commission and had left them complete freedom to settle their own procedure; and that, while criticisms might have been passed by the representatives of the countries concerned in the presence of the Council at the time of its decision, they seemed misplaced at the present stage of the Commissions' work. He added that if this question were to be reopened, serious consequences might ensue.

The meeting closed with a detailed statement by the members of the Commission of the programme of their enquiry. The High Commissioner took note of this and promised to assist them by every means in his power.

The enquiry in Mosul was temporarily suspended, and the members of the Commission separated, arranging to meet again at Kirkuk on February 25th.

M. of Wirsen remained at Mosul with Jevad Pasha and Mr. Jardine to pursue the enquiry in the neighbourhood of the city. He visited the villages as far as Sinjar, Tel Afar, Karaqosh and Aqra, and summoned to the centres at which he stayed the notables from the neighbouring villages, lists of whom had been drawn up by the two assessors.

He also interviewed the chiefs of the Arab tribes west of the Tigris, notably the chief of the important Shamar tribe.

Count Teleki, accompanied by Nazim Bey, the British political officer, Mr. Lyon, and the Commission's interpreter, M. Kramers, carried on investigations in the Erbil district as far as Sheiklawā and Makhmur. He visited the Kurdish tribes of the Dizdai, Kushnawa, Kora, Girdi, Sheikh Bisani, the Arab tribe of the Thai, and the Sarli Villages.

Colonel Paulis, accompanied by Sabi Bey, one of the Iraq Government experts, and Kiamil Bey, one of the Turkish experts, conducted enquiries in the Kirkuk district as far as Shemshemal.

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He got into touch with the representatives of the Obeid, Jibur, Talabani, Dauda, Kakai, Amawand, Bashawand, Seferawand, Sirkhasaa, Shuah and other tribes.

In the neighbourhood of Kifri he parted company with M. de Pourtales, who continued the enquiry with the assistance of Fettah Bey and a British officer who was acquainted with the district.

M. de Pourtales travelled through the Jebel Hamrin and visited Kurdish tribes, including the Jaf, Zengana, Delo, Talabani, the Arab tribe of the Kerawi, and also the Bayat.

The Commission as a whole interviewed the representatives of the Miryusif, Abass, Surkhis, Herki, Khelani, Aku and Destidian tribes.

The routes followed by the Commission are shown on the annexed map No. I. Even more difficult than in the towns was the enquiry in the villages and country districts and among the nomadic tribes, where the people had less political experience and were more backward in civilisation. It must be added that the villagers and country people had little or no knowledge of the question.

The method followed by the Commission in its enquiry was to explain the object of its mission in very simple language to the persons who came to meet it and then to put question after the assessors had withdrawn.

The statement of the case was not always the same but was adapted to the position, intelligence and state of education of the witnesses. All witnesses were assured that secrecy would be observed in regard to their depositions, and the Commission found that the confidence inspired by its methods increased as the enquiry progressed.

The members of the Commission and the assessors met

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later at Kirkuk, and the Commission then proceeded to Sulaimanya to continue the enquiry.

On the return journey from Sulaimanya to Mosul the Commission stopped at Kirkuk, Altun Keupri and Erbil to complete the earlier enquiries made in this neighbourhood by some of its members. At these places it interviewed witnesses whom it had not been possible to examine during the earlier visits of members of the Commission.

On returning to Mosul on March 8th, the Commission was pleased to find that all traces of police supervision had disappeared. The Turkish delegation was left entirely free to move about the town and to make and receive visits; and if it did not take advantage of this freedom it must certainly admit that the local authorities offered no hindrance to the accomplishment of the second part of the enquiry.

The Commission feels bound to record the fact that the lists supplied by the British authorities gave particulars of all notable persons in the various localities, regardless of their professed opinions, even if these opinions were definitely pro-Turkish. At Mosul, during this second portion of the enquiry, the Commission questioned Ulemas of mosques selected indiscriminately in both the richer and poorer quarters of the town; owners of house, village and landed property; all electors of the second degree mentioned in the old Turkish lists; and all persons still living in Mosul who had been members of the municipal council of the town during the last twenty years.

Considering that its enquiry at Mosul was at an end, the Commission left for Zakho, passing through the large Christian villages in the Al-Qosh district and the Yesidi villages in the Ba-Edra region.

At Zakho the Commission received the chiefs and notables of the districts north and south of the line agreed upon at Brussels,

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and more especially the Christians of the villages in the territory of the Kurdish tribes of the Goyan and Jindi.

On leaving Zakho for Dohuk to continue its enquiry, the Commission found the population highly excited in the latter place. The witnesses were summoned to the Commission's quarters, which were outside the town, and a large crowd collected there. A rumour had been spread that the powers of government had been transferred to the Commission. Thanks to the latter's energetic action and the explanations given, tranquillity was restored. At Dohuk, as at Zakho, the Commission interviewed the persons from the town and neighbourhood whom the two assessors had asked leave to introduce.

At Dohuk the Commission examined the notables and delegates from Amadia and the northern parts, who had been summoned to that town in order to save time.

It need hardly be pointed out that the Commission did not confine its enquiry to the question of the views of the people on the political sovereignty over the territory. The enquiry constituted at the same time a psychological study of the population.

The questions asked also dealt with economic and commercial problems, of which the Commission endeavoured to make a thorough study by visiting warehouses, bazaars, markets, etc. in different places, particularly in the City of Mosul. In the course of the journey, ethnological, geographical and geological observations were also made, and data were obtained in regard to means of communication, agricultural resources, etc.

During its stay in the territory the Commission made several aeroplane flights in order to gain a general idea of the desert steppes and the extent to which they were habitable. During the first flight it also flew over the whole chain of the Sinjar Mountains, while in three other flights it covered the northern frontier from Zakho to Rowanduz. The Commission twice flew

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over the Jebel Hamrin.

Returning to Mosul on March 18th, the Commission spent a few days in co-ordinating the information collected, and, as the enquiry could then be regarded as closed, it left Mosul by the trade route through Deir-es-Zor and Damascus.

It met at Geneva on Monday, April 20th, and began the drafting of this report.

The Commission desires to express its thanks to M. Kramers, Lecturer of the University of Leyden, for his services as interpreter and for the valuable assistance he gave it during the preparation of the chapters on the Turks, the Kurds and the Sarli.

In the course of its work, the Commission availed itself also of the valuable assistance of:

Colonel L. Martin, Chief of the Map Department of the Library of Congress, Washington.

Mr. W. L. Westermann, Professor at Columbia University, New York.

Mr. A. C. Coolidge, Professor at Harvard University, Mass.

M. Eu. Oberhummer, Professor at the Universit of Vienna.

Dr. V. Pietschmann, Advisor to the Natural History Museum at Vienna.

Professor J. Bowman, Director of the American Geographical Society.

M. Ch. Uhlig, Professor at the University of Thubingen.

M. Gaudfroy Demombynes, Professor at the Ecole nationale des langues orientales vivantes, Paris.

M. E. Chaix, Professor at the University of Paris.

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M. A. Demangeon, Professor at the University of Paris.

M. Ed. Sachau. Professor at the University of Berlin.

Professor Mordtmann, of Berlin.

M. J. Nemeth, Professor at the University of Budapest.

M. A. David, Lecturer at the University of Budapest.

M. Z. Khanzadian, Director of Studies at the Comptoir

commercial et industriel du Levant, Paris.

Sheik Mohamed Abdel Rassul, of Cairo.

To all these gentlemen who were good enough to place their knowledge very courteously at the Commission's disposal to assist it in its work, the Commission desires to offer its sincerest thanks, in which it is sure that the Council will wish to join.



ASSYRIAN WARRIORS

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Sir HENRY R. C. DOBBS

Part Two

THE ASSYRIAN QUESTION

A. SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENTS

The question of restoring the Nestorian Assyrians to their former homes north of the boundary of the Vilayet of Mosul was not raised at the Lausanne Conference. Lord Curzon merely remarked, in a "Memorandum on Mosul" addressed to Ismet Pasha on December 14th, 1922, that the Nestorians who were driven from the region of Julamerk and the Persian border by Turkish troops during the war, who died in thousands in their flight to Iraq, and who had settled there, would fight to the death rather than permit the return of their new homes to a people who to them were the symbol of oppression. Ismet replied that when the Vilayet of Van was invaded by the armies of Tsarist Russia, the Nestorians acted in such a traitorous and cruel manner towards their Moslem compatriots, with whom they had been living side by side in complete tranquility for centuries, that they were bound to leave the country with the Russians when the latter retreated (Memorandum from Ismet Pasha to Lord Curzon dated December 23rd, 1922, and Minutes, Vol. 1, p. 282). It was at the Conference of Constantinople in May 1924 that the question was raised by the British Government as an argument for the extension of the frontiers of Iraq.

At the beginning of April 1924, the British Government had notified the Iraq Government of its intention to demand the cession to Iraq of a portion of the Assyrian territory. At the same time it explained the advantages which Iraq would derive from having on its northern frontier a warlike people united to the Arab State by ties of friendship and gratitude, and asked whether the Baghdad Government would be prepared to guarantee that Assyrians who had not yet settled should be able to acquire, on favourable conditions, some of the abandoned land in the northern districts. The British

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Government further asked whether the Iraq Government would be prepared to grant all the Assyrians the same local autonomy as they enjoyed before the war under Turkish rule.

The reply of the Iraq Government, which was given on April 30th, was in the affirmative.

The new British proposal was explained at the Constantinople Conference on May 19th, 1924, by Sir Percy Cox, who spoke as follows:

“ Moreover, since the negotiations at Lausanne were broken off, one problem has gained considerably in importance in the eyes of His Majesty’s Government. This problem is the future of the Assyrians other than those of Persian origin. His Majesty’s Government feels under the strongest obligation to secure their settlement in accordance with the reasonable claims and aspirations of their race. They have made an earnest appeal, which His Majesty’s Government cannot regard with indifference, to be established in their former homes under a British protectorate. However greatly such a solution might appeal to Christendom at large, His Majesty’s Government cannot, for various reasons, contemplate so grave an extension of its responsibilities. While, therefore, not prepared to respond to their aspirations in full, His Majesty’s Government has decided to endeavour to secure as the result of these negotiations, a frontier which, while fulfilling the recognised requirements of a good treaty frontier, will at the same time admit of the establishment of the Assyrians in a compact community within the limits of the territory in respect of which His Majesty’s Government holds a mandate under the authority of the League of Nations, if not in every case in their ancestral habitations, at all events in suitable adjacent districts. This policy for the settlement of the Assyrians has the full sympathy and support of the Iraq Government, which is prepared, for its part, to give the necessary co-operation for giving effect thereto. “ It is for these reasons that I have received instructions to claim the frontier marked on the map which I am now laying before you.”

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Continuing his speech, Sir Percy Cox said that he thought the Turkish Government would be prepared to meet the wishes of the British Government, because the administration and control of this inhospitable region, and of the communities which lived there, had in the past been a constant embarrassment to the Turkish Government and a fruitful source of friction with the Western Powers. He then observed that the proposal did not represent the maximum claim which could be put forward on behalf of the Christian minorities. In point of fact, the line was proposed as the result of a strong desire to meet the wishes of the Turkish Government as far as possible. If no agreement could be reached on the lines of the proposal which he had just submitted to the Turkish Government, the British Government reserved full freedom of action as to the frontier which it might claim before the League of Nations.

In his speech at the meeting on May 21st, Fethi Bey made the following reply on the Assyrian question:

“ Your Excellency, having expressed the desire to resume the negotiations at the point at which Lord Curzon left them at Lausanne, now abandons this attitude and raises a new question - that of the future of the Assyrians. To secure their future, you ask for the annexation, under British protectorate, of certain territories which are now under the flag of the Turkish Republic. To say that this demand does not astonish me would be a perversion of the truth.

“ The head of the British delegation at Lausanne maintained that His Majesty's Government desired that autonomy should be granted to the Kurds. Your Excellency put forward the claim of the Assyrians. You will perhaps, however, allow me to point out that in making those claims you have failed to observe that the Assyrians form an extremely small minority in the Vilayet of Mosul, and that, in defending the interests of this minority, you have not given quite such careful consideration as the case warrants to the aspirations of a very large majority -- namely Turks

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and Kurds. “ The Turkish delegation cannot believe that it is reasonable to tear away from their mothercountry some hundreds of thousands of Turks and Kurds in order to take under British protectorate a few score thousand Assyrians, some of whom, moreover, are emigrants from Persia.

“ The Assyrians are Christians, and I quite see why the British Government thinks them worthy of its special support. The Turkish delegation would point out, however, that all men, without distinction of race or religion, have the same rights, and that in its eyes the national aspirations of peoples, which cannot be stifled, must prevail over all other considerations. Thus, while it appreciates the humanitarian intentions of the British Government in connection with the protection of Christians, the Turkish delegation feels bound to add that it cannot understand why that Government should sacrifice the interests of Moslems to that end. You were good enough to remind me that the administration and control of this inhospitable region has always been a source of embarrassment to the Turkish Government. I cannot remember any serious difficulties that have been encountered by the Turkish administration, which has lasted for centuries in that region; and it is scarcely possible to recall any occasion on which a Turkish official has been treated there with anything but consideration and respect. If, however, administrative embarrassments are to be taken as a reason for surrendering territory, I might in my turn remind you of the outrages and insurrections to which the British administration has been openly exposed during the past four or five years in Iraq.

“ I should also like to add that the Nestorians would still find in Turkish territory the tranquility and prosperity which they enjoyed there for centuries, provided that they did not repeat the errors which they committed, with foreign encouragement, at the beginning of the Great War.”

At the meeting on May 24th, Sir Percy Cox made the following observation on Fethi Bey’s statement regarding the new

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problem: "I remember that Your Excellency pointed out that the arguments put forward by Lord Curzon at Lausanne could not be urged in support of the frontier-line now claimed. I should like to remind you that Lord Curzon, while maintaining his attitude in regard to the Vilayet of Mosul, did not attempt to describe a definite line for the northern frontier; he purposely left this task to the experts on both sides. The position taken up by Lord Curzon at Lausanne has necessarily been modified to some small extent as a result of more detailed topographical data which have recently been obtained, and of the urgent need which has been felt to safeguard the future of the Assyrians. His Majesty's Government has now decided to claim the line marked on the maps which I laid before you of our second meeting."

Sir Percy Cox then stated that it was not the intention to annex the territories in question under British protectorate or to subordinate the interests of the numerous Kurdish population to those of the Christian minorities in the vilayet. The Kurds were quite content with the local autonomy which had been granted them, and the case of the Assyrians had only been quoted, in conjunction with convincing topographical and strategical arguments, in support of the British Government's claim to a frontier-line slightly beyond the line originally proposed, which would make it possible to establish them in a single community, either actually in their ancient homes or in the neighbourhood, within the territory in respect of which His Britannic Majesty holds a mandate under the League of Nations. Fethi Bey's assertion that the Nestorians would find in Turkish territory all the tranquillity and prosperity which they had enjoyed in the past, provided that they did not renew their wartime activities, did not square with the Nestorians' own views. They had the most vivid memory -- entirely at variance with Fethi Bey -- of the treatment they had suffered in the past at the hands of the Turks. The discussions on the last day of the Conference are of special interest from several points of view.

Fethi Bey, while asserting that the Conference had met in

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accordance with Article 3 of the Treaty of Lausanne to reach a friendly agreement as to the frontier between Turkey and Iraq, began by pointing out that the northern frontier of Iraq was, generally speaking, as everybody knew, identical with the line which he had submitted to the Conference. As authority for this statement he quoted the Encyclopaedia Britannica. He then observed that until an agreement was reached as to the delimitation of the frontier the Vilayet of Mosul, though in the provisional occupation of Great Britain, was legally part of Turkey.

While the Turkish delegation merely put the question which was to be considered under the Treaty, the British delegation, by demanding the cession of additional territory belonging to the Turkish vilayet of Hakkari, had created a new question which nobody would have thought of raising during the Lausanne negotiations and which could not be inferred either from the spirit or from the letter of the Treaty. If the British Government insisted on departing from the object of the Conference by formulating new claims in connection with the Vilayet of Hakkari, he could only conclude that it wished the negotiation to fail.

The British Government's declaration of its right to advance a more extensive claim on behalf of Iraq when the dispute was submitted to the Council of the League of Nations could not cover anything outside the limits of the dispute in question; such a claim would be contrary to the provisions of Article 3 of the Treaty. When Turkey agreed to submit the dispute to the arbitration of the League of Nations he was not in any way prepared to be faced by unlimited territorial claims, and she could not therefore agree to discuss any question which was not covered by Article 3 of the Treaty. Indeed, according to Article 16, Turkey's renunciation of the rights and title over Iraq could not be regarded as duly established by treaty until the frontier between Iraq and Turkey had been delimited; for there could be no question of renouncing a territory on the southern side of a frontier which had not yet been defined. It was clear, then, that the British delegation had raised a new question, which had never been contemplated

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and could not therefore be related in any way to the question to be submitted to the League of Nations.

Replying to Fethi Bey's statement. Sir Percy Cox, during the discussion which followed, began by observing that if anybody thought that the northern frontier of Iraq should approximately follow the northern boundary of the Vilayet of Baghdad his view could not be taken seriously. "The Iraq which we are discussing is the territory in respect of which, after the war, His Britannic Majesty accepted responsibility towards the League of Nations and the territory which was discussed at Lausanne, subject to subsidiary territorial rectifications of the necessity for which His Majesty's Government has become convinced in the light of investigations made and experience gained recently." In any case there had never been any question of restoring the Vilayet of Mosul to Turkey. According to Fethi Bey, the claiming of territory belonging to the Vilayet of Hakkari was contrary to the spirit and the letter of the Treaty of Lausanne. But he (Sir Percy Cox had already reminded Fethi Bey that Lord Curzon had never suggested any definite frontier at Lausanne. He therefore maintained that the line which he had proposed to the Turkish delegation was in conformity with the letter and the spirit of the Treaty.

In conclusion, he stated that, so far as he knew, the line of the northern boundary of the vilayet of Mosul had never been delimited in any permanent or final form. Tribal and political conditions had necessarily made this dividing line fluid and variable. It depended on the influence of different Valis, on the administration and on other transient considerations. Moreover, an administrative division between two provinces of the same country was fundamentally different from an international frontier between two States, and he repeated that no final and permanent frontier had ever existed. If only for this reason, it was impossible to maintain the view that his claim to what Fethi Bey regarded as part of the Hakkari district was not in conformity with Article 3 of the Treaty of Lausanne. Fethi Bey replied that he could not accept Sir Percy Cox's statements as to the fluctuations of the boundaries of

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the Vilayet of Mosul, and added that so far as he knew no such conditions had ever obtained.

The Assyrian question was again raised by the two Governments concerned when the dispute was submitted to the Council of the League of Nations. **Under the heading of political arguments, the British Memorandum of August 14th, 1924, gives the following reasons for assigning the territory of the Assyrians as far as possible to Iraq:**

In spite of their isolated position in the heart of a country under Turkish rule, the small Assyrian people, in the very early days of the Great War, determined to espouse of the Allies and to seize the opportunity to break away from the rule of those whom their past history has led them to regard as their persistent oppressors. They endured great sufferings as the result of this decision. They were driven from their own country and died in thousands in their flight to Iraq.

For the time being they succeeded in settling partly in the southern portion of their own country and partly among the Kurds and indigenous Christians of the country immediately to the south of their old habitat. The British Government feels under the strongest obligation to secure their settlement in accordance with the reasonable claims and aspirations of their race. They have appealed for the establishment, in the whole of their ancient habitat, of a British protectorate.

The British Government has been unable for various reasons to respond to their aspirations in full but has endeavoured to secure them a frontier which would fulfil certain conditions and is now requesting the Council of the League of Nations to establish that frontier. **The latter, while fulfilling the requirements of a good treaty frontier, should at the same time admit of the establishment of the Assyrians in a compact community within the limits of the territory in respect of which the British Government holds a mandate under the authority of the**

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League of Nations, if not in every case in their ancestral habitations, at all events in suitable adjacent districts. To draw the line further to the south in this region would, apart from economic and strategic disadvantages, produce such a panic among the Assyrians that they would find no alternative but to resort either to mass emigration or to a fight to the death in defence of their ideals. Peace and prosperity upon this section of the frontier would be impossible.

Among its geographical and strategic arguments, the Memorandum in question advances a further reason in support of the proposed frontier -- namely, that the warlike Assyrian people were willing to give their loyalty to Iraq on certain conditions and would constitute a valuable frontier community to the Iraq State.

The Turkish Memorandum of September 5th, 1924, asserts that the British claims to the territory beyond the confines of the Turkish Vilayet of Mosul manifestly exceed the limits of the question which the two parties have agreed to submit to the Council of the League of Nations. The Council accordingly will only have to give a decision on the British claim in so far as it is within the limits of the question at issue. In support of this view the Memorandum quotes various expressions used by Lord Curzon which, it is urged, show that the dispute between the two parties relates exclusively to the Vilayet of Mosul. With reference to the arguments advanced by the British Government, the Memorandum observes that whatever sympathy that Government may feel for those non-Moslems of the Vilayet of Mosul who espoused the cause of the Allies during the war, this sympathy cannot justify the separation from Turkey of a large province in which they form scarcely one-seventeenth of the population. Moreover, the Nestorian Assyrians are not indigenous to the Vilayet of Mosul. If they were forced to leave their native country during the war, the reason was that they had taken up arms against their Moslem compatriots. They are, however, few in number. They had for centuries lived in prosperity and security among

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their Moslem countrymen.

The British Government's proposal to assemble the Assyrians in a compact mass on the frontier between Turkey and Iraq suggests that it is not quite certain whether, whatever may be the wishes of this community, it was really those wishes and not other considerations which prompted this proposal. The artificial grouping on the frontier of Assyrians who might be utilised against the Kurds and who would be animated by a spirit of aggression against Turkey certainly cannot be expected to produce the results that the British Government hopes to obtain -- namely, the establishment of lasting peace in these regions, good relations between Turkey and Iraq and the possibility of a safe existence for the Assyrians.

B. CONSIDERATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.

The position of the Assyrians in the Ottoman Empire has been explained in another section of this book. We will therefore merely repeat here that they enjoyed a considerable degree of independence under the government of their Patriarch, as the Turkish authorities seldom visited their country. Quarrels between Kurds and Assyrians seem, however, to have been frequent.

In the year before the war Russian propaganda on religious lines began to make itself felt. In the spring of 1915 the Russian troops advancing towards Julamerk got into touch with the Assyrians, who, at the instigation of the Russian commander, attacked the Turks. When, shortly afterwards, the Russians retired, the position of the Assyrians, exposed as they were to attacks by large Turkish forces, became untenable, and they were forced to withdraw with their families to Persian territory after six months' hard fighting.

On reaching Persia, however, they continued to assist the Russians, who formed several bodies of Assyrian troops. These

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troops fought under Russian command until the break-up of the Tsarist army, though one battalion was under the direct control of the Assyrian Patriarch. During the early part of 1918 the Assyrian formations joined the irregular force which, under the command of Russian officers who had remained in Persia, was defending the plains of Urmia and Salmas against the Turks. Their position became increasingly difficult, partly owing to quarrels with the Kurds and partly as the result of the intervention of the Persian authorities, who were anxious to disarm these forces operating in Persian territory. About the end of July the Assyrians were obliged to retire before the attacks of Turks, Kurds and Persians, and they then sought shelter in the territory occupied by the British forces. The Assyrians who had settled in Persia, like the Armenian organisations, had taken part in the war against Turkey from the outset. They suffered the same fate as the Assyrians of Turkey.

During their retreat the Assyrians were exposed to the greatest sufferings; many were killed in battle, others died of hunger and exposure. Nevertheless, nearly 50,000 Assyrians and Armenians succeeded in reaching Hamadan in the middle of August 1918. From Hamadan they were sent by stages to the camp of Baquba, on the Diala, about 50 kilometres from Baghdad.

Immediately after the Armistice a plan was proposed for repatriating the Assyrians, but this proved impossible, largely owing to repeated outbreaks of disorder among the Kurds. As a result of the disturbances at Amadia in July 1919, the Civil Commissioner suggested to the military authorities that they should evacuate all the Moslem Kurds from the Amadia district, where there would be room for the Assyrians assembled at Baquba. In that case they would all be settled in the Vilayet of Mosul. The number of Kurdish families to be transferred was estimated at 2,000. The British Government, however, was unwilling at that time to take any definite decision on this question. The number of Assyrians at Baquba at the end of 1919 was 35,000, divided into two groups consist-

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ing respectively of Assyrians from Hakkari and from Urmia (in Persia).

In the Spring of 1920 a certain Aga Petros, an Assyrian mountaineer of the Baz tribe, who had played a not-unimportant part as commander of the Assyrian troops during the war, conceived the idea of creating an Assyrian buffer State on the Turko-Persian frontier, while leaving it open to those who preferred to do so to return to their homes in the mountains of the Vilayet of Hakkari. The execution of this scheme was delayed by the Great Arab revolt of 1920, and failed in October owing to the incapacity of Aga Petros and the resistance of the Kurds in the districts north of Aqra. In the course of the fighting which took place the Assyrians looted several districts inhabited by Kurds who had taken no part in the hostilities.

After this the Government was obliged to try other measures. It decided to settle the Assyrians tribe by tribe, gradually extending their territory northwards. By the summer of 1921, 7,500 persons had been settled in this way, some in the neighbourhood of Zakho, Dohuk and Amadia and some in the more northerly districts of Barwari Bala and Upper and Lower Tiari. A considerable number of Assyrians joined the "Levies". The Government distributed rather more than 1,900 rifles and a certain amount of ammunition among the Assyrian tribes who had returned to their homes north of the frontier of the Vilayet of Mosul.

In April 1924, the number of Assyrians settled in the territory administered by Iraq and in the region to the north now claimed was estimated as follows:

From Persia	5,000
From the territory subsequently claimed	14,000
From Turkish territory north of the above	6,000
TOTAL	25,000

Of those in the second group, 7,500 were already settled in the territory claimed at Constantinople. They returned to the

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south side of the treaty-line in consequence of the incidents which occurred in 1924. It was the British Government's intention to take steps to enable the Assyrians who came from Persia to return to their country. The relations between the Assyrians and the Moslem peoples are not always as good as they might be, this being, in the view of the authorities, partly due to the lack of tact displayed by the Assyrians themselves, who are of a warlike temper and have somewhat rough manners.

In August 1923, a brawl occurred in the bazaar at Mosul between Arabs and Assyrian soldiers. In the same month hostile demonstrations took place there against a body of about 800 Assyrians who had just been repatriated from Constantinople. Still more serious was the mutiny of two Assyrian companies in the garrison of Kirkuk. This incident, which occurred in May 1924, arose out of a dispute between Assyrian soldiers and Moslem merchants. Despite the efforts of their officers and non-commissioned officers, the men went round the town firing on every Moslem they saw and looting shops and houses. There were casualties, some of them fatal, and British troops had to be sent by air to restore order. The following are the liberties enjoyed by the Assyrians in Iraq. Their disputes are settled by arbitrators of their own race; their chiefs have an official or semi-official position and collect a regular tithe and a cattle-tax with the help of police chosen by them from their own tribes. This situation, however, has had to be altered owing to the departure of a large number of them as the result of the frontier incidents which occurred in the autumn of 1924. The family holding the patriarchate is the only Assyrian authority recognised by the British and Iraq authorities.

The British High Commissioner at Baghdad informed the Commission of this Government's intentions in case the frontier claimed should be given to Iraq. The territory immediately south of the frontier would be reoccupied by the Assyrian tribes which formerly lived there. At the present time this territory is inhabited by only about 10,500 persons, including 750 Christians. The Assyrians whose homes were

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north of the proposed frontier would be settled in the neighbourhood of Dohuk and Amadia -- at a certain distance from the frontier. Thus they would not be exposed to the temptation of returning to their homes in Turkish territory and so giving rise to frontier incidents.

The total number of Assyrians to be settled would be only about 20,000 if the Assyrians from Persia returned to their own country. According to later information there is in Russia a considerable number (about 30,000) of Turkish Assyrians who would wish to return to their own homes provided that these did not remain under Turkish rule. The British authorities also informed the Commission that the future treatment of the Assyrian would depend entirely on the decision taken with regard to the frontier. If the territory occupied by the Assyrians is not assigned to Iraq they cannot be granted any local autonomy, because in that case they would not be settled in homogeneous communities. If the frontier were drawn towards the south, thus incorporating in Iraq only a small part of the former Assyrian territory, it would be impossible to find land for the Assyrians in Iraq. The plan for settling the Assyrians depends on the acceptance of the frontier proposed by the British Government. Even if lands could be found, the Assyrians could not live in the plains owing to climatic conditions. Other difficulties would be produced by the difference of customs between the Arabs and the Assyrians, which would strain the relations between them, whereas Assyrian and Kurdish customs are much more similar.

The Commission recognises the necessity of protecting the Assyrian people and enabling them to live in the most favourable conditions that can be secured.

The Commission does not feel, however, that the solution proposed by the British Government is consonant with the principles of equity which should govern the desired settlement.

In the first place, the Turkish Government's objections to

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the presentation of new territorial demands after the Lausanne Conference seem by no means groundless. It appears from the documents of that Conference that from the beginning the British delegate claimed the northern boundary of the Vilayet of Mosul as the frontier of Iraq. If any modifications were mentioned they were modifications of the Treaty of Sevres; but according to the provisions of that Treaty the Zaza of Amadia was to be restored to Turkey.

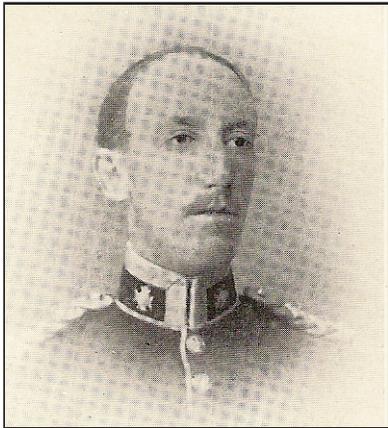
In another letter, dated December 26th, 1922 Lord Curzon invited Ismet Pasha to appoint experts to discuss the precise trace of the northern frontier of the Mosul Vilayet, which was to constitute, in the future treaty, the boundary between Turkey and Iraq. This appears to show that nothing was contemplated other than slight rectifications which could be dealt with by a delimitation commission. The British Government's proposals, however, as presented at Constantinople, considerably exceeded mere rectifications. There would appear accordingly to be some reason for thinking that the proposal made at Constantinople implied the opening of a new question and that the Turkish Government had good grounds for refusing to discuss it.

Another objection to the solution proposed by the British Government resides in the circumstances under which the Assyrians took up arms against Turkey. There is no doubt that this people rose in armed revolt against its lawful government at the instigation of foreigners and without any provocation on the part of the Turkish authorities. It is also established that the conditions of life enjoyed by the Assyrian people within the Ottoman Empire were rather better than those of the other Christians, since they were conceded a fairly wide measure of **local autonomy under the authority of the Patriarchal House.**

Under these circumstances it would hardly be fair to take from Turkey a territory which indisputably belongs to her in order to settle in that territory a people that deliberately took up arms against its sovereign. The Commission is led to conclude that the most satisfactory solution would be

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for the Assyrians to accept the offer, made by the Turkish delegate at the Constantinople Conference, that they should be allowed to return to their former homes. In that case it would have to be added that the Assyrians must continue to enjoy the same local autonomy as formerly and that their safety must be guaranteed by a complete amnesty.



Lieut. Co. Gerald E. Leachman
C.I.E., E.S.O
The Royal Sussex Regiment,
Kiled 14th August 1920 in Iraq.



Leachman Photo taken outside the
Residency at Baghdad in 1912 on his
return from his travels in Arabia.

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Mar Yoseph Kananishu, Mar Shimun

Mar Zia Sargis.



**THE ASSYRIAN PATRIARCH MAR SHIMOUN,
SURMA KHANUM AND SOME OF THE ASSYRIAN
LEADERS IN SAIR AMADIA, DOHUK. IRAQ**

CHAPTER 6

SETTLEMENT AND REPATRIATION SCHEME

Since the closing of the Mindan Refugee Camp in the Summer of 1921, several attempts have been made by the Iraq Government to solve the Assyrian Settlement problem.

1921. When the Refugee Camp was closed, 501 ex-Ottoman Assyrian families whose pre-war homes were in undisputed Turkish territory, were settled in 27 villages in the Dohuk and Aqra Qadhas of the Mosul Liwa and it is understood that the majority of the original settlers are still living in these villages, but a number were re-settled, at their own request, under later Settlement Schemes.

1921-1922. Meanwhile a repatriation scheme was being carried out under the direction of a British Official, for those Assyrians whose pre-war homes were in 'disputed territory', and the following is given as a rough distribution of the Assyrians in the autumn of 1921:

Settled and repatriated North of Amadia	- 6,950 souls.
Settled in Amadia district	- 1,100 souls.
Settled in Dohuk, Zakho, and Aqra districts.	7,450 souls.

TOTAL	15,500 souls.
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Repatriation was continued in the spring of 1922, when the whole of the Upper and Lower Tiari proceeded to their pre-war homes. The Tkhuma, Baz and Jilu followed.

1922-1924. For two years, from the summer of 1922 until the

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autumn of 1924, the Assyrian Settlement problem appeared to have been solved, as with the return of the majority of the refugees to their pre-war homes, there were sufficient lands in the Mosul and Arbil Liwas for the settlement of the remainder.

NOTE:- The Assyrian Settlement problem was not solved, because the Assyrian were been attacked by the Turks and drove them back beyond their borders to the Iraqi territories, at the same time the British, the Turks and the Iraqis were planning to sign an agreement between them, Quote from the Middle East in World Affairs, Third Edition, Printed at the Cornell University Press, by Lenczowski mentioned on page 131, second paragraph:-

“Much wisdom and moderation were required to put aside these suspicions and to make a friendly advance toward their former enemies. On June 5, 1926, Turkey concluded a treaty with Great Britain definitely settling the Mosul question. Turkey agreed to relinquish her claim to Mosul in return for the promise that 10 per cent of Mosul’s oil production should be available for her use. To Turkey’s satisfaction, no mention was made of Kurdish autonomy or independence. **Moreover, the British accepted the Turkish decision not to allow the Assyrian expellees of World War (I) to return to their homes in Turkey.** The treaty resulted in definite improvement in Anglo-Turkish relations. In 1929 part of the British Mediterranean fleet paid a courtesy visit to Istanbul, and former enmity gave place to a steadily growing friendship.”

Autumn 1924 As a result of an affray between a party of Tkhuma tribesmen and the Turkish Vali of Julamark who was on a revenue collecting tour in August, 1924, the Turks retaliated towards the end of the following month (September, 1924) by sending large military forces into territory then under the administration of the Iraq Government. These troops compelled the total evacuation of the districts North of Amadia to which Assyrian refugees had been repatriated.

Tiari, Tkhuma, Baz, and Jilu tribesmen came pouring back

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to Amadia, the following being an approximate estimate of their strength: -

	Families.	Souls (at 5 for family).
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Upper Tiari	400	2,000
Lower Tiari	1,090	5,450
Tkhuma	250	1,250
Jilu	250	1,250
Baz	300	1,500
	-----	-----
	2,290	11,450

The Iraq Government was again faced with the Assyrian Settlement problem. As a temporary measure, as many families as possible were domiciled in the Shaikhan, Barwari Bala, and Dohuk districts. A few families spread eastwards to the Dasht-i-Harir and around Batas in the Arbil Liwa. Others scattered to the towns of Iraq.

1925. The refugees remained in the areas allotted to them, but were not definitely settled, as it was still hoped that the disputed territory, from which they had been driven by Turkish troops in the previous autumn, would be included in the Kingdom of Iraq.

In December, 1925, the resolution adopted by the Council of the League of Nations, gave the bulk of the territory formerly inhabited by ex-Ottoman Assyrians, to Turkey, and all hopes of repatriating them were finally dispelled.

1926. During 1926 various areas in Northern Iraq were suggested as probably being suitable for the settlement of the refugees - the Surchi areas (Mosul and Arbil Liwas), the Rania district (Arbil Liwa) the Shahrazor Plain (Sulaimani Liwa), and the Barazgird valley in the Baradost Nahiya of the Arbil Liwa.

Nothing the size of the area required was available unless the Kurdish inhabitants of those districts were to be dispossessed

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of property owned by them for generations and then re-settled in other parts of Iraq, but it was thought that accommodation might be found for several hundred families in the Barazgird valley which was reported to have been deserted by its former inhabitants owing to famine and military invasion during the Great War.

A Commission was therefore sent up to that area in September, 1926, to make investigations on the spot. This Commission was composed of a British Administrative Inspector, the Qaimmaqam of Rowanduz, an Agricultural expert of the Iraq Government, and three Assyrian representatives of the Tiari, Jilu, and Shemsdinan Sections. After a very thorough enquiry it was ascertained that even with a considerable amount of pioneering, the Barazgird Valley could only provide accommodation for 473 families (2,365 souls). It appeared also that the Assyrian representatives themselves did not appear to be enthusiastic about this settlement scheme.

1927. Preparations nevertheless continued during the same year to establish a Settlement in this area. The land was surveyed by the Tapu Department and the area was photographed in sections by the Royal Air Force, at the expense of the Iraq Government as preliminary measures to the registration in the name of Government of twelve 'mahlul' villages in the Barazgird valley.

Detailed enquiries were also made by the local administrative authorities to ensure that these lands did not belong to Kurdish tribesmen so that no claims should be made to the land by Kurdish tribesmen after Assyrians had been settled there. The Assyrians continued to show reluctance and raise objections to this scheme on the grounds that the area was too isolated and too near the Iraq-Turkish Frontier, rendering the settlers liable to raids by Kurdish tribesmen and possibly to interference by Turkis and in November they announced that they did not wish to proceed to this area at this season and asked for a postponement until the next spring.

OTHER SETTLEMENT

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SCHEMES. (1927).

Meanwhile efforts were also made to settle Assyrians in suitable areas in the Mosul Liwa, in accordance with the following resolution of the Council of Ministers which was passed on March 8th, 1927.

- (a) that the refugees should be informed that the Government was prepared to grant special exemption to every individual who would develop and till land and comply with the advice and orders of the Government in accordance with law.
- (b) That the settlement of refugees in localities where their settlement might be objected to by neighbouring Governments, or by the original inhabitants on account of Haq-al-Qarar or any other legitimate reason should be avoided.

In pursuance of this resolution the necessary orders were then issued to the Qaimmaqam of Amadia through the Mutasarrif of Mosul. The Qaimmaqam summoned the Assyrians concerned and proposed the following settlement:

1000 Upper Tiari	in Barwari Zair.
1500 Upper Tiari	in Nahla (Aqra).
1000 Upper Tiari	in Government villages
and dependents	in Doski.
4000 Lower Tiari	in Barwari Zair.
Halamun and Garumus	
Assyrians.	in Chamsus.

The Upper and Lower Tiari announced that they would not make a decision until the following spring and the Geramus Assyrians decided to remain in Chalki.

On 6th September, 1927, a madhbata (Document) signed by Malik Ismail of the Upper Tiari, and forty-six signatures of Chiefs of the Upper and Lower Tiari, the Tkhuma, the Halmun

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Jaraya, and the Daiza sections was presented to Government. In this 'madhbata' it was stated that the Government had offered to settle them in empty villages with very little water and a bad climate, and that as they saw no possibility of being able to return to their pre-war homes, they had no intention of living in Iraq even if the Government offered them settlement in better villages. At the end July, 1927, a British Officer was appointed Assyrian Settlement Officer, and with the concurrence of the Iraq Government, under the direct orders of His Excellency the High Commissioner.

This Officer (Lieutenant Fowraker) had served for several years with the Assyrian Levies and had acquired an extensive knowledge of the different Assyrian tribes and spoke their language fluently. The Settlement Officer encountered difficulties from the start. In the autumn of 1926 there had been a proposal to establish settlements in Ismail Beg Rowanduzli villages and in Batas and Dashti Harir but the Assyrians concerned had asked for a postponement until the spring of 1927. In April 1927 they agreed to move in August but when the time came they asked for a further postponement until the following spring on the grounds that they had been given insufficient notice - an excuse which obviously had no justification.

1928. The Settlement Officer continued his enormous task through the remainder of the year 1927, and until the middle of November, 1928. He moved constantly among the Assyrian tribes investigating their needs, inspecting possible settlement sites, interviewing Government Officials and local landlords, drawing up leases for the settlers, and with the funds at his disposal assisting families to move into new and more suitable settlement areas.

The difficulties were immense but by degrees the Settlement Officer was able to effect redistributions, with the object of grouping the Settlers as far as possible according to their tribes, and also of making the best use of the available sites.

During 1928 the Settlement Officer continued his efforts

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to induce Assyrians to settle in the Baradost area.

In May he accompanied Malik Ismail and sons, and ten representatives of the Upper Tiari, to that area, and reported that those Assyrians liked the country, but he could not obtain any definite promise from them that they would move up immediately, owing to the fact that they appeared to be satisfied with existing conditions in the villages in which they had been settled in the Mosul Liwa.

In October, 1928, the settlement Officer reported that sixty families had stated that they would be willing to proceed to the Baradost area in the following spring. **Lieutenant Fowraker** was, however, unable to see the scheme materialise as he left Iraq on the 15th November, 1928.

PROGRESS UP TO NOVEMBER 1928.

On November 14th, 1928, the Administrative Inspector Mosul assumed the duties of Land Settlement Officer. There then were not more than 500 families remaining to be settled. Some of these could not be settled as they were malcontents of various kinds who either wished to return to Turkey or were naturally wanderers. About 250 of them wished to settle in the Baradost. The Administrative Inspector reported that poverty in the Mosul Liwa amongst the Assyrians was non-existent and that they were in fact more prosperous than their Kurdish Christian and Yazidi neighbours.

A large part of the recently settled Assyrians submitted madhbatas (Documents) to the Mutassarif and Administrative Inspector expressing the wish to deal with the Iraq Government Officials direct and refusing any interference from Mar Shimun.

1929. During the year 1929, over 100 families were settled, and in February, 1930, the Administrative Inspector Mosul reported that presumably between 350 and 400 still remained to be settled. Assyrian cultivators proceeded to the Baradost area in

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the autumn to prepare the land for occupation during the following year.

1930. BARADOST SCHEME.

In April, 1930, it was decided to abandon the Baradost Scheme for the time, owing to anti-Assyrian agitators and to the unsatisfactory situation in the neighbouring area of Barzan and forty-two families who were to have gone up to the Barazgird Valley, were distributed among villages near Rowanduz by private agreement between those families and Kurdish landlords.

SCHEME FOR FINAL SETTLEMENT OF REMAINING 300 ODD FAMILIES IN MOSUL LIWA.

The Administrative Inspector Mosul was then requested to submit definite proposals for the final settlement of those Assyrian refugees who had not yet been settled, and of whom a great number were reported to be Ashutis.

He replied that : -

“There was no suitable area in the Mosul Liwa where the Ashutis could be settled all together.

It had been hoped that the Baradost Settlement would produce a considerable exodus of the Upper Tiaris from the Mosul Liwa, thereby leaving room for the settlement of Ashutis or others in their place. The postponement of the Baradost scheme prevented this.

There were still half a dozen empty Government villages in the Barwari Zhair, but it was probable that the bulk of these would be accepted by Assyrians of the Bani Gippa section who were to leave villages in Zakho where they had failed to agree with Kurdish partners.

Muhammed Najaifi, a leading Mosul land owner, was pre-

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pared to take some 200 families of Assyrians at Cham Pashai and other villages in the Slaivani Nahiyah.

These villages were at that time unoccupied and possessed, in addition to ample cultivable land, good winter and summer grazing grounds and were also situated close to the Tigris.

Although he tried to induce any Assyrians to accept this offer, the fact that these were not hill villages deterred them and he thought that it was extremely unlikely that the Ashutis could be compelled to accept what others had refused.

In connection with the Ashutis, he suggested that Administrative Officials in the Mosul Liwa should receive instructions to do their best to settle them in any available villages."

1931. A further attempt was made to establish a settlement in Baradost and in August a force of Levies was despatched to Haruna to facilitate the settlement. Conditions, however, were not favourable owing to the dislocation caused by the raids which were carried out from the neighbouring district of Barzan by the followers of Sheikh Ahmed of Barzan and the plan was accordingly postponed.

1932. With the defeat of Sheikh Ahmed of Barzan and as a result of the recent military operations against him and with the setting up of regular administration in the neighbouring Qadha of Zibar the way is now open for settlement in the Baradost Nahiyah if the Assyrians desire it.

III. REMISSION OF TAXATION GRANTED BY THE IRAQ GOVERNMENT TO ASSYRIAN SETTLERS.

It was decided by the Council of Ministers at their meeting on the 6th January, 1927, to remit the sum of Rs. 8,960/8 on Koda demands for the year 1924 in the case of Assyrian Settlers in the Mosul Liwa. On the 17th April, 1927, the Council of

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Ministers decided to grant remissions on the 1926 Koda demands up to the sum of Rs. 14,602/8.

On the 4th February, 1928, the Council of Ministers agreed to the remission of the Koda demands for the year 1927, amounting to Rs. 19,374/8. With the increasing prosperity of the older settlements in the Mosul province, however, many settlers had become fully capable of bearing their rightful share of taxation, and during 1928 sheep tax was collected from the majority of the settlers.

The Assyrian Settlement Officer had stated that in the majority of cases, there would be no hardship experienced by the settlers in the Mosul Liwa, as a result of the collection of these taxes. No complaints on this account were received from the settlers, and the Mosul Liwa authorities gave careful and sympathetic consideration to deserving applications for remission of taxation.

During 1929, the Council of Ministers passed resolutions at various times remitting a total sum of Rs. 3,129/13, mostly in the case of the Assyrians in the new settlements of the Arbil Liwa. On the 30th September, 1931, after examining the recommendation of the Ministry of Finance, the Council of Ministers agreed to remit the sum of Rs. 3,522/11 from outstanding demands of Land Tax in the case of Assyrian settlers in the Mosul Liwa, and the sum of Rs. 3,079/- in the case of settlers in the Arbil Liwa.

Up to the end of 1931, the following remissions of taxation had been granted by the Iraq Government to the Assyrian settlers:-

Liwa.	Demands for	Animal Tax.	Land Tax.	Date of Council of Ministers decision
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Mosul	1924	Rs. 8,960/8	-	6.1.27
Mosul	1926	Rs. 14,602/8	-	17.4.27
Mosul	1926	Rs. -	Rs. 372/12	7.9.29
Mosul	1927	Rs. 19,374/8	-	4.2.28
Mosul	1928	Rs. 243/8	-	24.9.29
Arbil.	1927/28	-	Rs. 1,925/11	7.9.29
Arbil.	1928	- 213/3	-	24.9.29
Arbil.	1928	-	374/11	23.11.29
Mosul	1928/30	-	Rs. 3,522/11	30.9.31
Arbil.	1928/30	-	Rs. 3,079/-	30.9.31

Totals.		Rs. 43,394/3	Rs. 9,274/13	
Grand Total		Rs. 52,669/-		

IV. ARRANGEMENTS MADE BY THE IRAQ HEALTH SERVICE IN AREAS INHABITED BY ASSYRIANS.

In 1930 the Assyrians complained that they had been settled in malarial areas, and the British Civil Surgeon of Mosul, Dr. McLeod, was accordingly instructed to make an investigation. The following extracts from his report are interesting: -

“The Assyrian settlement established by Government arrangements in Mosul Liwa commencing in 1927 number 122. they are all in mountainous country. There are also unsettled tribes numbering 400 families. These tribes graze in Amadia Qadha during the summer months and in winter in Shaikhan Qadha.

The situation of the Assyrian Settlements as regards health compares equally with the general distribution of the other inhabitants of the mountains in so far as Mosul Liwa is concerned that is to say some sites are healthy and other unhealthy. In the north of Iraq this is simply a question of malaria which is associated very largely with rice cultivation in the more fertile regions.

The point must be emphasised that the Assyrian communities generally are living under similar or equal conditions with

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the other similarly situated inhabitants of these mountainous regions and are receiving equal medical treatment which is as much as the country can afford. It may be mentioned that a number of very healthy Assyrian Settlements are to be found between Sawratuka (on the Dohuk - Amadia Road) and Amadia. On the other hand there are five or six unhealthily situated villages in the Nahla Valley of the ..

Quinine is always available for free distribution among communities who request it, but to treat the innumerable scattered villages more thoroughly, more civil dispensaries are required and each dispensary needs more personnel so as to permit of a section of the dispensary being continually on tour in each district. This would necessitate a greatly increased Health Budget and at present additional funds are not forthcoming.

I would sum up the situation as follows:

1. The health of the Assyrians is the same as that of the other inhabitants of the mountains. Some are in healthy areas and others are in unhealthy localities.
2. To say that the Assyrians are dying by hundreds is a great exaggeration.
3. There are nine civil dispensaries in the Qadhas of the Mosul Liwa, five of these are in Assyrian Settlement areas and all are doing good work. Practically all the settlements are within fifteen miles of a Government dispensary.
4. The infantile mortality is no heavier than that in similar communities in the mountains of the Liwa. It is proportional to the incidence of malaria.
5. The incidence of malaria is often high in the mountainous districts but it falls on Muslims and Christians alike.
6. Practically the entire civil medical personnel of the Mosul Liwa are Christians. It is a mistake to say that there is any dis-

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crimination whatever between Christians and Muslims in providing medical facilities.

7. Under present conditions in Iraq it is impossible to obtain reliable vital statistics from the small towns and villages in any part of the country. However it is the duty of local Mudirs (Directors) to keep the administration informed of any unusual sickness or deaths in their areas if a health service official is not present."

The following is the present position - (July, 1932).

1. HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES.

There are now one 1st class hospital and eleven dispensaries in the Mosul Liwa, as follows:-

Hospital (1st Class)	Mosul City.
Dispensaries.	Amadia, Baib, Zakho Aqra ,Shaikhan, Dohuk, Tel Kaif, Tel Afar, Sinjar, Shergat, Zummar.

Of the dispensaries, the first six on the above list are in areas in which there are Assyrian settlements. Arrangements are also being made to establish two more dispensaries in the Amadia Qadha, one probably at Kani Masi and the other at some village near the frontier. These two new dispensaries should be in working order by September, 1932.

There are also a '2nd Class' hospital and two dispensaries in the Arbil Liwa which the Assyrian settlers in that Liwa can use.

Hospital 2nd Class	Arbil town
Dispensaries.	Rawanduz, Batas.

The Rawanduz dispensary is about four miles from the large settlement at Diana, and Batas is the centre of the Dera Harir group of Assyrian settlements, and was established mainly for the

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benefit of the settlers.

2. MEDICAL OFFICERS AND STAFF.

There is a British Civil Surgeon at Mosul, and there are Doctors at the following qadha headquarters of the Liwa: -

- | | | | |
|----|--------|---|--------------|
| 1. | Zakho | - | a Christian |
| 2. | Amadia | - | ---- do ---- |
| 3. | Dohuk | - | an Assyrian |
| 4. | Aqra | - | a Muslim. |

These are in Assyrian Settlement areas.

With the exception of the Aqra doctor, all employees of the dispensaries north of Mosul city are Christians.

3. SUPPLY OF QUININE.

Quinine is available at all the dispensaries, and the doctors take supplies of quinine for distribution when they tour in the districts. The issue of supplies to villages headman for distribution to villagers when necessary, was discontinued because it was found that the headmen were selling them.

It should be noted that the increase of the number of motor roads has rendered the hospitals at Mosul and Arbil more readily accessible to patients from the out districts.

It is the policy of the Government to increase the number of hospitals and dispensaries throughout the country as funds permit and in the implementing of this policy the northern districts will not be forgotten. If some of the Assyrians are settled in such places as the Baradost the Government will give sympathetic consideration to the provision of medical facilities there.

V. ALLOWANCE PAID BY GOVERNMENT TO THE MAR SHIMUN.

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In May, 1923, a monthly allowance of Rs. 300/- was sanctioned for payment to the Mar Shimun, and this sum was paid until April 1st, 1932, when the new Iraq currency was introduced. The monthly allowance is now Dinars 21/375.

**VI. ASSYRIANS IN THE IRAQ ARMY,
THE IRAQ POLICE FORCE, AND THE LEVIES.**

(1) IRAQ ARMY.

The following Assyrians are serving in the Iraq Army:

Officers.	4
N.C.Os	7
Other Ranks.	58

TOTAL	69

(2) IRAQ POLICE FORCE.

The Assyrians serving in the Iraq Police Force are as follows: -

Mosul Liwa	269
Arbil Liwa	111
Kirkuk Liwa	11
Sulaimani Liwa	31

TOTAL	422

Note. The total of the Iraq Police Force is 8094)

In the Mosul Liwa, Assyrians form about 25% of the Liwa Police Force, and the majority of those Assyrians are serving in districts in which Settlements have been established, as the following statistics show: -

		Assyrian Police.
Amadiya Qadha		126
Dohuk	=	31
Zibar	=	37
Aqra	=	16

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Shaikhan	=	9
Zakho	=	34
Other	=	16

	TOTAL	269

VII. ASSYRIAN OFFICIALS IN THE IRAQ GOVERNMENT.

The Assyrians at present employed by the Iraq Government are 15 and 143 in the Department of Railways.

In addition, the Government has no objection to the employment of Assyrians in Government posts in accordance with its laws and regulations according to the ability and qualifications of each.

VIII. EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS.

We give below the names and standards of Government schools existing in areas in which the Assyrians are living: -

	Name of School.	Standard.	Classes.
	-----	-----	-----
Amadia:	Amadia School	Elementary	7
	Bamirni =	=	5
	Kani Masi =	Primary	1
	Aradin =	Primary	2
Dohuk:	Dohuk School		
	for Boys	Elementary	6
	Dohuk School		
	for Girls	Primary	2
	Atrush School	=	3
	Sumail =	=	2
	Mangish School	=	3
	Baida =	=	2

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Mosul Qadha: Al-Qosh = Elementary 5

Instruction in these schools is made in the Arabic and Kurdish languages and in some of them lessons are explained in Syriac and Surit.

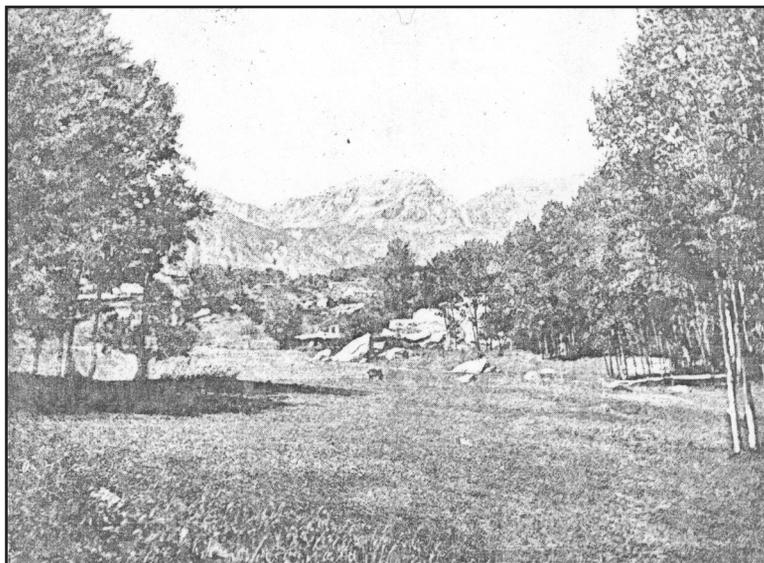
**ASSYRIAN PRIVATE SCHOOLS
AND GRANT-IN-AID TO THEM BY EDUCATION.**

There is only one school of this nature, namely the Local Assyrian School at Mosul, to which the grant-in-aid provided for this year (1932) is Rs. 900/-. This grant-in-aid was Rs. 500/- during last year. It is given as a salary to the teacher of the Arabic language. There are also two schools in Baghdad. One is in Daniel Street, the standard of which is between primary and intermediate. The Ministry of Education has under consideration a grant of financial assistance to it next year, after the conditions laid down in the Law for the Grant-in-Aid to Local Institutions have been completed. The matter will be referred this summer to the Financial Assistance Board. The second is situated in the Assyrian Camp, the standard of which is primary; it does not receive any grant-in-aid.

A request was made to the Ministry of Education from Mosul for the opening of twenty Assyrian schools there, but as the schools, which were required to be opened did not vary in form from "Katateeb" the Ministry replied that a regular permit was not required and that the schools could be opened when the buildings had satisfied the necessary sanitary conditions. The practice is that these "Katateeb" teach the religion in the first degree and in the language of their pupils. It is understood that a considerable number of these schools have been established.



**SOME OF THE ASSYRIAN LEADERS
IN TRADITIONAL CLOTHES**



VILLAGE OF QUCHANUS

The Ministry of Education treats the scientific institutions on equal terms from the legal point of view and helps every school

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which is found worthy of financial assistance, after it has completed the conditions laid down in the Law for the General Education and Grant-in-Aids. The Government policy is to increase the number of elementary schools and spread education in all parts of the Kingdom whenever the necessary sums are available. The Government will not forget the northern districts in which the Assyrians are settled and will consider with sympathy the grant of necessary grants-in-aid according to Laws and Regulations.

IX. OTHER PRIVILEGES GRANTED TO THE ASSYRIANS BY THE IRAQ GOVERNMENT.

In addition to

- ing
- (a) the remissions of sheep tax and land revenue amounting to Rs. 52,699/-,
 - (b) the monthly grant of Rs. 300/- to the Mar Shimun,
 - (c) special educational grants,
 - (d) medical facilities and
 - (e) their employment in the Police, Army and other administrative posts, in the winter of 1924, the Iraq Government voted a sum of Rs. 96,000/- for expenditure on relief to the Assyrian refugees who had been driven back to Amadia by Turkish troops in the autumn of that year. As the refugees were totally ruined, road schemes in the Mosul area were also initiated as a charitable measure.

Free grants of land described under the Settlement Schemes Section of this Report, remissions of rifle tax or reduced license fees for their private rifles (amounting to about 6,000) are other privileges granted by the Iraq Government to the Assyrians in this country.

SPECIAL RECOMMENDATIONS.

By League of Nations Commission
(JULY 16TH 1924)
G E N E V A

The Commission cannot close this report without drawing the Council's attention to three questions which, though they do not perhaps come within the Commission's terms of reference, are of vital importance for the pacification of the country and the welfare of its people.

These three question are:

- (1) Measures for ensuring peace within the country;
- (2) Protection of minorities, notably non-Moslem minorities;
- (3) Commercial measures.

**Protection of Minorities,
Notably non-Moslem Minorities.**

Since the disputed territory will in any case be under the sovereignty of a Moslem State, it is essential, in order to satisfy the aspirations of the minorities -- notably the Christians, but also the Jews and Yezidi -- that measures should be taken for their protection.

It is not within our competence to enumerate all the conditions which would have to be imposed on the sovereign State for the protection of these minorities. **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**

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local autonomy, recognising their right to appoint their own official and contenting itself with a tribute from them, paid through the agency of their Patriarch.

All the Christians and the Yezidi should be assured of religious freedom and the right of opening schools.

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 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 this supervision.

Similar agreements should be concluded if the disputed territory were partitioned between Iraq and Turkey.

Geneva, July 16th. 1925.

(Signed) AF WIRSEN. *(Signed)* COUNT TELEKI.

(Signed) A. PAULIS.

DECISION OF THE COUNCIL OF LEAGUE

Dated the 16th December, 1925.

Such hopes as the Assyrians still had of immediately regaining their homes in the Hakkiari mountains were finally dispelled by the resolution adopted by the Council of the League of Nations in December, 1925, whereby the bulk of the territory formerly inhabited by the Assyrians was allotted to Turkey. This decision falsified the assumptions on which previous attempts to solve the Assyrian problem had been based, and made it necessary to examine the whole problem *de novo*.

In reaching their decision the Council invited His

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Majesty's Government as Mandatory Power "to act, as far as possible, in accordance with the other suggestions of the Commission of Enquiry as regards measures likely to ensure pacification and to afford equal protection to all elements of the population." The Commission's suggestions in regard to the Assyrians were as follows:-

"Since the disputed territory will in any case be under the sovereignty of a Moslem State, it is essential, in order to satisfy the aspirations of the minorities -- notably the Christians, but also the Jews and Yezidis -- that measures should be taken for their protection.

"It is not within our competence to enumerate all the conditions which would have to be imposed on the sovereign State for the protection of these minorities. 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 Assyrian 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 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 this supervision."

(At their Tenth Session in November, 1926, the Permanent Mandates Commission decided that in their opinion "there would appear to be no occasion at present to appoint a League of Nations' delegate to ensure the protection of all sections of the population.")

The decision of the Council of the League, which was not

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accepted by Turkey till the Treaty of Angora was signed in June, 1926, seriously aggravated the Assyrian problem; at the same time the uncertainty which had hampered previous attempts to solve that problem was at last removed and a foundation was provided on which a policy could be framed.

When the recommendations of the Commission of Enquiry in regard to the Assyrians were examined, one difficulty at once became apparent. The recommendations appeared to be based on the assumption that the Assyrians would return to their former homes north of the frontier, as is implied by the opening phrase "Since the disputed territory will in any case be under the sovereignty of a Moslem State" In recommending that **"Whichever may be the sovereign State, it ought to grant to these Assyrians a certain local autonomy"** the Commission did not contemplate that, whereas the disputed territory would be under the sovereignty of Turkey, the Assyrians would remain under the sovereignty of Iraq. This is clearly shown by the following extracts from their Report:--

"The British authorities informed the Commission that the future treatment of the Assyrians would depend entirely on the decision taken with regard to the frontier. **If the territory occupied by the Assyrians is not assigned to Iraq they cannot be granted any local autonomy, because in that case they would not be settled in homogeneous communities.** "The Commission is led to conclude that the most satisfactory solution would be for the Assyrians to accept the offer made by the Turkish delegate at the Constantinople Conference, that they should be allowed to return to their former homes. In that case it would have to be added that the **Assyrians must continue to enjoy the same local autonomy as formerly and that their safety must be guaranteed by a complete amnesty.**"

The Commission appear to have expected that in course of time the mountain-bred Assyrians would find their way back to their homes in the Hakkari country even though that country was

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included in Turkish territory, and they did not contemplate, in view of Fethi Bey's offer made at the Constantinople Conference, that the Turkish Government would prevent the Assyrians from doing so. The expectations of the Commission were, however, not fulfilled. 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 when some two years later a number of Assyrians, who were led to believe that they would be welcomed in Turkey, made an attempt to cross the frontier, they found themselves opposed by Turkish troops. Moreover on the 25th June, 1928, the Turkish Consul-General, Baghdad, addressed an official communication to the Iraqi Ministry for Foreign Affairs stating that he had been instructed to inform the Iraqi Government that the Turkish Amnesty Law did not cover the Assyrians who would not be permitted in any circumstances to enter Turkey; that any Assyrians who attempted to enter Turkey would be punished; and that if necessary troops would be used against them and they would be arrested and handed over to the courts. It may be added here that the attitude of the Turkish Government towards the Assyrians has throughout greatly complicated the Assyrian problem. Since the Assyrians fought against them in the war, the Turks have regarded them as permanently hostile and only awaiting an opportunity to return to the attack. Not only have the Turkish Government denied the Assyrians access to their former homes, but they have constantly protested against the establishment of Assyrian settlements in the neighbourhood of the Turkish frontier and demanded the disarmament of all Assyrians and their removal from the frontier zone. Thus, His Majesty's Government in their endeavours to obtain favourable treatment for the Assyrians from the Iraqi Government have had to meet the additional difficulty that the grant of concessions to the Assyrians was adversely affecting Turco-Iraqi relations.

The frontier fixed by the Council of the League separated about 20,000 Assyrians, on a rough estimate, from their original homes which were situated on the north of the line, For the most

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part these 20,000 Assyrians were living a hand-to-mouth existence, scattered in villages of the Mosul liwa, many of which were unsuitable for permanent settlements. Schemes for transporting these people *en masse* to British colony or dependency had previously been examined and found impracticable. It was of course impossible, as the Commission of Enquiry had been clearly warned, to form any sort of Assyrian enclave in Iraqi territory. This could only have been done by the forcible ejection of Kurdish and Arab inhabitants over a wide area.

The only possible solution was to settle the Assyrian on unoccupied lands in the northern districts of Iraq and to assist them as far as possible in the early stages, by the provision of agricultural implements, seed, cattle, etc., to place their allotments under cultivation and to become self-supporting. Although it might be possible to group tribal communities together to some extent, the fact had to be faced that the Assyrian people must henceforward be scattered, living among the Kurds, sometimes even as tenants of Kurdish Aghas. This solution though by no means ideal was perfectly practicable. Though the Kurds and Assyrians have often quarrelled, they have been neighbours for centuries, and the Commission of Enquiry had reported in his Report. "We have been able to establish the fact that of all the Moslem races the Kurds live on the most friendly terms with the Christians."

The Assyrians are an industrious people and make good tenants, a fact which appeals to the Kurdish landlord, who consequently has an interest in keeping them contented. Moreover, those who have known the Assyrians since pre-war days have remarked among them an increased independence of spirit. They are no longer content to be, as many of them were before the war, down-trodden *ryots* of Kurdish Aghas. When drawing up leases with their Kurdish landlords during the settlement operations, for instance, instead of pressing for the periods of the leases to be made as long as possible, they generally preferred short terms as they did not wish to commit themselves unduly and were confi-

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dent of being able to obtain extensions on at least as favourable terms if they wished. (No case has yet been reported where they have failed to do so.) This increased independence of spirit while not altogether welcome to the Kurdish Aghas insures the Assyrians to some extent against persecution. Nevertheless it was recognized that the settlement of the Assyrians among the Kurds required very careful handling. The greatest care was necessary to avoid doing anything that might arouse the antagonism of the Kurds and lay up trouble for the Assyrians in the future. This consideration was constantly kept in mind during the settlement operations which followed. **The Assyrians have however persistently refused to face the facts of this position and their determined clinging to the hope of ultimate settlement in a compact body and their consequent reluctance to take up the scattered unoccupied lands available for re-habitation has been one of the big obstacles to their settlement.**

The third paragraph refers to a petition submitted to the Chairman of the Permanent Mandates Commission in October, 1931. This petition declared that it would be impossible for the Assyrian people to live in Iraq after the termination of the British Mandate and implored the League to arrange for their emigration to a country under the rule of a Western Nation. His Majesty's Government's Observations on this petition were forwarded to the Secretary General of the League of Nations on the 11th March, 1932. To turn now to the demands: -

No. 1. It is difficult to understand precisely what is intended by this demand. In the Ottoman Empire the word "Millet" was used to describe any group of people united by a common religion or race, and it seems doubtful whether it can be held to bear the special national, as distinct from racial or religious, significance which the petitioners seem to attribute to it. Nevertheless it may be assumed that what the petitioners have in mind is the grant to them of some form of special national status distinct from that which they enjoy at present as Iraqi citizens. It is indeed stated that mere recognition of the Assyrians as a religious community - with the special safeguards for the preservation of their ancient

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customs in matters of personal status which this implies - is not sufficient. His Majesty's Government feel bound in this connection to point out that the treatment of the Assyrians cannot be regarded as an isolated problem. There are as the League are well aware many different racial, religious and linguistic communities in Iraq; the Kurds, the Yezidis, the Shiah of the Euphrates, and even the Basrawis (the people of Basra) have all at some time during the last ten years put forward demands for some form of special and privileged status. Nothing of this kind could be given to the Assyrians without reviving demands for similar treatment from other communities, and national unity would then be endangered and with it, all the work of the last decade in Iraq.

But apart from this important consideration, there is the determining factor that unoccupied land does not exist in Iraq whereon the Assyrians could be settled as a single homogeneous community, and without compact settlement local administrative autonomy is clearly impracticable.

It will be recollected that a previous request for the establishment of an autonomous enclave, made in 1931, was rejected by the League Council on the recommendation of the Permanent Mandates Commission.

No. 2 The return of the Assyrians to their old homes in the Hakkari mountains would still undoubtedly be the best solution of their worst difficulties if this could be arranged. When the question of the frontier between Turkey and Iraq was before the Council of the League for settlement in December, 1925, His Majesty's Government pressed strongly the claims of the Assyrians to part of their old home lands, but under the resolution of the Council of the 16th December, 1925, the bulk of the territory formerly inhabited by the Assyrians was allotted to Turkey. The Turkish Government have so far refused to permit the Assyrians to return to their old villages and pastures, but His Majesty's Government are not aware whether the Turkish Government would now be prepared to consider the withdrawal of

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this interdict. In this connection it may be worth recalling that the League Commission set up in 1924 to examine the question of the frontier between Turkey and Iraq made the following statement in their report to the League Council (Page 83, League Document No. C.400 1925. VII):- “The Commission is led to conclude that the most satisfactory solution would be for the Assyrians to accept the offer, made by the Turkish Delegate at the Constantinople Conference, that they should be allowed to return to their former homes.”

No. 3. This demand is a corollary of No. 1. The ambiguities of the word ‘Millet’ have been discussed above and the difficulties in the way of creating what the petitioners evidently picture as a sort of ‘national home’ are discussed below; a word here is necessary touching the demand that the door must be opened to admit all ex-Ottoman Assyrians who are living outside Iraq and wish to return. His Majesty’s Government have no means of ascertaining accurately how many Assyrians are scattered throughout the World or how many of these wish to come to live with the Assyrians in Iraq, it is understood however that there are a very large number of Assyrian refugees in Russia and that it is these in particular that the petitioners had in mind when putting forward this demand.

These are believed to number between fifteen and twenty thousand, but the Patriarch himself estimates that there are more Assyrian refugees in the territories of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republic than there are in Iraq. A few have already been admitted to Iraq, but knowing the difficulties with which the Iraqi Government are faced in finding sufficient land on which to settle the Assyrians already on their hands. His Majesty’s Government would not feel justified in pressing the Iraqi Government to permit the immigration of large numbers from outside. The acceptance of this demand would not only add enormously to the already heavy responsibilities and obligations of the Iraqi Government, but it would also inevitably bring much increased hardship on the Assyrians themselves.

(a) A claim is made for the creation of a special

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sub-liwa to constitute the new “national home”; it is to include the whole of the Amadiyah district (or qadha) and the adjacent sub-divisions (or nahiyahs) of districts (or qadhas) of Zakho, Dohuk and Aqra. This is to become politically and administratively an Assyrian area. This area has presumably been chosen because it embraces the bulk of the villages in which Assyrians have been settled and also contains a number of other villages in which Assyrians have for long been established. Even now however the Assyrians are far from being the predominant racial element in this area. Appendix IV gives, firstly the latest population figures for the four qadhas (districts) of the Mosul Liwa (province) Zakho, Dohuk, Aqra and Amadiyah and secondly, the population figures for the Amadiyah qadha and the adjacent nahiyahs of the qadhas of Zakho, Dohuk and Aqra, this being presumably the area which the petitioners demand should be made into and administered as an Assyrian national home.

The latter area contains a total of about 77,000 inhabitants of whom 57,000 are Kurds and about 16,000 are Christians. Of the latter only about 60% are Assyrians. Moreover, it is necessary to point out that the four qadhas of Amadiya, Aqra, Dohuk and Zakho have been recognised as predominantly Kurdis qadhas within the meaning of Article 9 of the Iraqi Government’s declaration to the Council of the League.

The last stipulation of this paragraph of the petition is for a permanent British Adviser for the Assyrian sub-liwa. As the creation of the proposed sub-liwa is impracticable, this question does not in any case arise.

(b) The Iraqi Government have investigated the claim that more land is still available for the settlement of Assyrians within the area specified, and the report of the Committee set up for this purpose is annexed to the Prime Minister’s letter of the 2nd August to the High commissioner.

As regards the registration of title it must be explained that

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the Iraqi Government recently invited Sir Ernest Dowson, a land settlement expert to report on the whole question of land title in Iraq. A comprehensive scheme of land settlement has been drawn up in accordance with his recommendations and the work is to begin next Autumn under the supervision of British advisers.

It will necessarily be a long and meticulous task to complete settlement throughout the country, but means are being explored to begin as early as possible in the north in order that the question of giving title to all persons cultivating Government land may be examined. More than this it would be difficult to do since the grant of title to Assyrian refugees on preferential terms would very naturally provoke resentment among the large number of land occupiers who are cultivating the same land that their ancestors tilled for generations before them but who even now have no secure title to it.

The statement that sufficient land can be found in the area specified without evicting Kurds from their villages not only for all the ex-Ottoman Assyrians distributed about Iraq, but also for all these scattered about the world is contrary to all the information in possession of His Majesty's Government, and to the conclusion of the special Committee to whose report reference has been made above. It must also be remembered that, if the area were overcrowded beyond its capacity, there would be a danger of serious conflict between Assyrians and Kurds.

(c) To give the priority demanded, in an area where the Assyrians are outnumbered by others at the rate of about four to one would, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, be quite unjustifiable and would certainly cause strong resentment among the Kurds. The request that Syriac should be adopted as the official language is unacceptable for similar reasons and moreover, ignores the provisions of the Local Languages Law recently enacted with the approval of the League of Nations to give satisfaction to the cultural aspirations of the Kurds.

No. 4 The Mar Shimun or Patriarch is actually recognised as the

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Spiritual head of the Assyrians. He receives privately from the Iraqi Government a monthly allowance which there seems no reason to suppose they intent to discontinue. In all matters of personal status, in the conduct of their religious affairs, and in the administration of their churches and schools the Assyrians enjoy complete autonomy under the authority of their Patriarch. The maintenance of these privileges is assured by Article 6 of the declaration made by the Iraqi Government to the Council of the League. The Prime Minister in his letter of the 2nd August (see Appendix 6) has declared the readiness of the Iraqi Government to enact a law for the Assyrian community similar to those which have already been enacted for the Jewish and Armenian Orthodox communities.

What further authority the petitioners desire should be vested in their Patriarch is not certain, but clearly no temporal authority could be granted to the Mar Shimun which would prevent the application of the laws of the country to Assyrians in the same manner as they are applied to all other subjects of the Iraqi State.

Decorations of honour are awarded solely at the will of the Crown and His Majesty's Government consider it singularly inopportune that a claim for an award of this kind should have been put forward with these demands.

No. 5 The Iraqi Electoral Law provides that two Christian Deputies shall be returned to the Chamber from the Mosul Liwa. Up to the present time no Assyrian has been elected nor could the Iraqi Government undertake that one of the two Christian Deputies would always be an Assyrian. That would be contrary to the law and would be a discrimination which would certainly be greatly resented by the other Christian Communities who are more numerous than the Assyrians. Attention is however invited to the comments of the Prime Minister on this demand in his letter of the 2nd August.

No. 6 Provisions for safeguarding the educational rights of

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minority communities have already been made in Article 8 of the Iraqi Government's declaration before the Council of the League and His Majesty's Government would not feel justified in recommending any departure from these provisions in the case of the Assyrians. The Iraqi Government are however enquiring into the amount of State aid at present given to Assyrian schools and will sympathetically consider the possibility of increasing grants under this head. This is largely a matter of ways and means. The Ministry of Education has been giving financial assistance for some years to an Assyrian school in Mosul and the State school at Simel and Kani Masi both employ Assyrian teachers who teach in Syriac. In this connection attention is again invited to the Prime Minister's comments in his letter of the 2nd August to the High Commissioner.

No. 7 If the money asked for can be obtained from League funds or from any other outside source the gift will no doubt be greatly appreciated. His Majesty's Government do not consider however that the grant of such a large sum of money can justly be demanded from the Iraqi Government whose resources are already taxed to their utmost. **Moreover, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government a sum of 5,000,000/- rupees, if obtainable, could in the interests of the Assyrians be far better spent on settlement and social services in the villages than in the building of residences for the Patriarch and the Bishops and other ecclesiastical edifices.** It is perhaps worthy of mention that, in addition to housing and feeding the Assyrians for more than three years, His Majesty's Government themselves contributed in 1921 and 1922 more than a quarter of a million sterling from public funds for Assyrian relief and settlement, and, in addition, large sums have been contributed for this purpose from charitable sources in this country and in the United States.

No. 8. As appreciation of the benefits of modern medical science widens and deepens, demands for more hospitals and dispensaries increase on every side and the Government has not the means to give satisfaction to them all. At present there are dispensaries with

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a few beds at Amadiyah and Dohuk and three more dispensaries for the Amadiyah qadha have been included in the Health Service estimates for the current year. A motor road has recently been built from Mosul to Amadiyah which traverses the heart of the country where most of the Assyrian villages are situated. This makes it less difficult than before for serious cases to be taken into the Mosul Hospital for treatment and lessens the need for hospitals with beds in the outlying districts. A reference is invited to the third annexure to the Prime Minister's letter of the 2nd August to the High commissioner.

No. 9. There has been no suggestion that the rifles presented to the men who served in the Levies should be taken from them. These were originally given to the Assyrians for their self protection at a time when Civil administration had not been established in the mountainous districts. His Majesty's Government do not consider that it would be reasonable to demand that the Iraqi Government should in this matter, go beyond the assurance given by the Prime Minister in his letter of the 2nd August to the High Commissioner, in which he states that:-

“Provided the Assyrians conform to the law and do not misuse the arms which are in their possession they will in these as in all other matter receive the same treatment as the other inhabitants of the different areas in which they live”.

It is noteworthy that recent amendments to the Arms Regulations have legalised the retention by the Assyrians of their British army pattern rifles. Formerly such rifles could not legally be owned by civilians.

No. 10. The tenth demand was that all the preceding demands should be granted within ten days, as the condition of the withdrawal of the Levy manifesto of the 1st June to which reference has been made above. The British High Commissioner in Iraq to whom the petition under note was addressed in the first instance

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was however able to persuade the signatories of the absurdity of such a condition and they agreed that the Levy manifesto should be withdrawn and that the men should go on serving until the League gave a reply to their petition.

The next paragraph of the petition appears to be a demand for the inclusion in the Iraqi Government's declaration to the League of stipulations guaranteeing the acceptance of all the demands presented in the petition.

It is unnecessary for His Majesty's Government to recall to the Council the very careful manner in which the Iraqi Government's declaration concerning minorities was drawn up and finally adopted by the Council at their 67 Session in May last. The different articles of this declaration were most carefully elaborated to safeguard in every respect the rights of minority communities, they have been accepted by the Iraqi Parliament and the Iraqi Government have formally pledged their word to observe them. His Majesty's Government would deplore the reopening of such a delicate and complex question only a few months after a final decision had been given by the Council of the League concerning it.

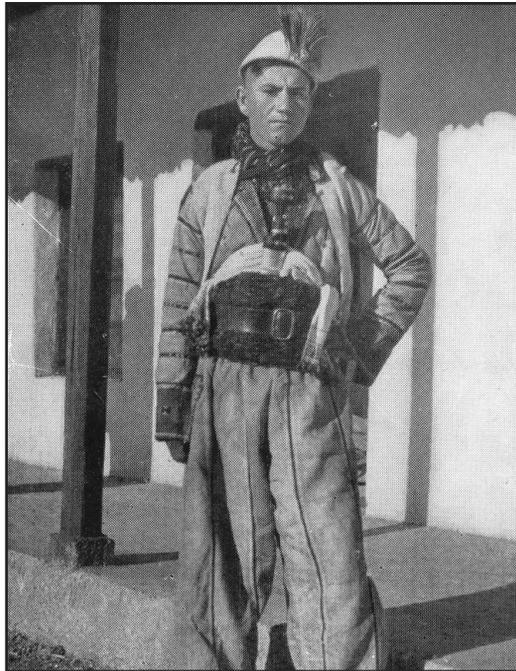
The petition ends with some stipulations concerning the future service of Assyrians in the armed forces of Iraq. The value of certain classes of the Assyrians as fighting men is recognised by the Iraqi Government, but the Iraqi Government is by no means dependent on the Assyrians for recruits either for the Army or Police. It is a great advantage to the Assyrians that these services should be open to their young men but His Majesty's Government see no reason why they should be offered enlistment on preferential conditions.

From the foregoing observations on the Assyrians' petition, His Majesty's Government do not wish it to be assumed that the problem of the future of the Assyrians has been substantially solved. That, unfortunately, is not the case, and indeed, in the

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considered opinion of His Majesty's Government, no solution of the problem which would satisfy Assyrian aspirations is to be found in Iraq. More than 2,000 Assyrian families have been allotted land in Iraq, but many still remain landless; and to find suitable vacant land or employment for these would present the greatest difficulty, and especially so since it is understood that the Assyrians of the Tiari and T'khuma tribes, who form the bulk of those still without land, are now unwilling to settle in the Baradost area - one of the few remaining high lands in Iraq where unoccupied government land of any extent is to be found.

Even the 2,000 families who have been settled are necessarily scattered over a wide area, and in the great majority of cases the settlers are the tenants of Kurdish landowners, with no security of tenure other than that afforded by leases drawn up under the supervision of a British Officer. These leases are of short currency - usually one or two years - for the reason that the majority of the Assyrians are not prepared to bind themselves for a longer term.



AN ASSYRIAN IN TRADITIONAL CLOTHES

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The Assyrians dislike the dependence of leasehold occupancy and want land to call their own. But when vacant government land is offered to them, they refuse it either because it is too isolated or because it is not so healthy, or not so fertile as the land to which they were accustomed in Hakkari. Naturally, the best of the government land in the mountains of Iraq is already occupied by the Kurds and was in their occupation many years before the Assyrians were expelled from Hakkari and came as refugees into Iraq.

The Assyrians ask that they should be settled as a single homogeneous community, and that their land should be recognised as their own. To make this possible in Iraq many thousands of Kurds would have to be dispossessed from their homes which they have lived for countless generations. The Iraqi Government have the utmost sympathy with the Assyrians, but they could not contemplate an act of such gross injustice.

If the Assyrians are to remain in Iraq they must accept such land as is available and on such terms as can be procured for them. Some of this land is undoubtedly malarial. The Iraqi Government have done their best with their limited resources to help the Assyrians to combat the malaria. But, although the Assyrians are no worse off than their Kurdish neighbours the toll of malaria cannot be denied. But what ails the Assyrians most is their homesickness; and ineradicable longing for their old native land which saps both their moral and physical strength, and which no number of hospitals or dispensaries can ever cure. They still cherish the hope that they will one day be allowed to return to their old homes in Hakkari, and it is this hope which is really at the bottom of the recent unrest and of their dissatisfaction with their conditions of life in Iraq. If their return to Hakkari is not practicable, then, in their own interests, the Assyrians must become reconciled as soon as possible to the equal citizenship in the Iraqi State which is doubtly assured to them by the laws of the country and by the Minority Declaration, which places them under the special protection of the League.

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**Appendix to Prime Minister's letter
No. 3083 of the 2nd August.**

**CENSUS OF THE ASSYRIANS
AND MANNER OF THEIR SETTLEMENT
IN IRAQ.**

**I. ESTIMATED STRENGTH AND
DISTRIBUTION OF ASSYRIANS.**

Although it is impossible to obtain accurate statistics at such short notice, the estimated strength of the Assyrians in Iraq at the present time is as follows: -

	Families
1. Assyrians whose pre-war homes were in areas now within the Kingdom of Iraq.	409
2. Refugees.	
(a) Persian Assyrians 500 families.	
(b) Ex-Ottoman subjects 3,500 families	4,000

TOTAL	4,409

i.e. 4,409 families at the usual average
of 5 souls to a family 22,045 souls.

(Note: - The Mar Shimun stated in 1929 to His Excellency the High Commissioner that there were then approximately 15,000 ex-Ottoman Assyrian refugees in Russia, and this figure was confirmed about the same time by the Norwegian Legation in Moscow.)

Although these Assyrians do not come within the scope of this report, this fact has been quoted as a matter of interest.)

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Detailed statistics of Assyrians in Iraq are as follows: -
 (As distinct from those of other origin)

1. The Assyrians whose pre-war homes were in areas now within the Kingdom of Iraq, and who did not leave their villages during the Great War, are domiciled in the Barwari Bala and the Nerwa Raikan Nahiyas of the Amadia Qadha, the majority of their villages being situated within a few miles of the Iraquo-Turkish Frontier.

The latest statistics received at the beginning of this month from the Mosul Liwa authorities show the following distribution:

BARWARI BALA Nahiya	305 families in 24 villages.
NERWA RAIKAN Nahiya	104 families in 7 villages.

TOTAL	409 families in 31 villages

2. REFUGEES.

These can be divided into two main groups: -

- (a) Persian Assyrians, mostly from the Urmia area. A few families have obtained land in the Iraq Government Settlements in Northern Iraq, but the majority are living in towns in this country and hope to return some day to their pre-war homes in Persia. In most cases they have refused to participate in any settlement scheme in Iraq.

A rough estimate of their strength and distribution in this country is as follows: -

1. BAGHDAD. i) Gilani Camp	350 families (Urmian)
ii) Baghdad East Camp	25 families (Urmian)
2. OTHER TOWNS OF IRAQ -	75 families
(Urmian)	
3. IN GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENTS.	
(Urmian, Tergawar, Margawar and	
Baradost Sections)	50 families

Total of Persian Assyrians	500 families

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(b) Ex-Ottoman Assyrians whose pre-war homes were in areas now situated in Turkish territory.

A rough estimate of ex-Ottoman Assyrians who are refugees in Iraq appears to be 3,500 families (17,500 souls) comprising the following Sections:

Sections	No. families.	Chief.	Sub-Sections(with number of families in brackets)
Upper Tiari	400	Malik Ismail	Walto (?)
Lower Tiari	1,090	Malik Shemsdin	Bani Mata (150) Bani Gippa (80) Bani Balyeta (90) Minyanish and Zawitha (70) Ashita (400) Halamun and Garamun (300)
Tkhuma	250	Malik Hormizd	Tal (?)
Diz	80	Malik Warda.	Tal
Jilu	350	Diocese of Mar Sargis.	Tal
Baz	350	Malik Khamu.	
Qudshanis	65		
Lewin	50		
Albak	40		
Serai	50		
Mar B'Ishu	225		
Gawar	30		
Nauchiya	480		
(Shamadinan, Girdi etc.)			
Sat	40		

3,500 families (17,500 souls).

Of these 3,500 families, it is estimated that 2,266 families (11,330 souls) have been allotted land in Iraq leaving a balance of 1,234 families of ex-Ottoman Assyrian refugees who have not been settled, the following being an approximate estimate of this balance:

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Levy families	600
Families of Assyrians serving in the Iraq Army.	30
Families of Assyrian Policemen	211
In Baghdad Camps.	
Railway Camp	87
Gilani Camp	130
Baghdad East Camp	15
Families of refugees who have obtained other employment in town of Iraq.	161

TOTAL	1,234

II. ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENTS.

Although the actual numbers of families in each village are liable to vary slightly whenever statistics are demanded, the following are as reliable as possible: -

	Number of vil- lages in which Assyrians have	No. families.	Villages Govern- ment.	Owned by: Private individuals.
	-----	-----	-----	-----
MOSUL LIWA.				

Amadia Qadha	38	494	15	23
Zibar “	6	98	6	-
Aqra “	7	94	5	2
Shaikhhan “	29	291	5	24
Dohuk “	46	686	10	36
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total in Mosul Liwa.	126	1,663	41	85

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ARBIL LIWA.

Rowanduz Qadha, (Headquarters Nahiya)	6	364	-	6
(Dera Harir Nahiya)	7	194	-	7
Arbil Qadha. (Headquarters Nahiya)	1	45	-	1

Total in Arbil Liwa.	14	603	-	14

Grand Total.	140	2,266	41	99

Includes a few families of Tergawar and Mergawar Sections.



**A GROUP OF THE ASSYRIAN PEOPLE
MEN , WOMEN AND CHILDREN
IN URMIA.**

**BRIEF FOR THE BRITISH REPRESENTATIVE AT
THE COUNCIL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.**

Assyrian Petitions

1. Two petitions submitted by representatives of the Assyrian community in Iraq are awaiting consideration by the League of Nations. Of these one, which was submitted in October 1931, states that it will be impossible for the Assyrians to remain in Iraq after the termination of the mandate and appeals to the Permanent Mandates Commission to arrange for the emigration of the Assyrians to a country under the rule of one of the western nations, or, failing that, to Syria. The other, dated the 17th of June, 1932, demands the **establishment of an autonomous Assyrian enclave either in the Hakkiari province of Turkey or in Iraqi Kurdistan.**

2. These petitions would normally fall to be dealt with by the Mandates Commission at their meeting in November next; but it is anticipated that before then Iraq will have been admitted to membership of the League of Nations, and there is reason to think that in that event the Mandates Commission would consider themselves incompetent to examine and report upon these petitions, since Iraq would then be outside the purview of the Commission. In any case there are considerations which render it desirable that a decision by the Council on these petitions should be reached without avoidable delay. It is proposed, therefore, that the British Representative at the next Council meeting should recommend the Council to set up some adhoc procedure for dealing with them expeditiously.

3. Before considering the petitions themselves and the action to be taken at Geneva, it would be well to examine the factors which have contributed to the present unrest among the Assyrians and their dissatisfaction with conditions of life in Iraq. For this purpose it will be necessary to review briefly the history of that portion of the race which now find itself in Iraq.

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4. It is well known how, at British and Russian instigation, the Assyrian left their homes in Turkish and Persian Kurdistan and threw in their lot with the Allies during the war. After having been twice deserted by the British and Russians during the War, the survivors of the Assyrian nation found their way as refugees into Iraqi territory, where they were housed and fed for three years at the expense of His Majesty's Government. Their numbers at that time were estimated at 40,000, of whom 10,000 only were inhabitants of what is now Iraqi territory. An attempt was made in the autumn of 1920 under Assyrian leadership to form an Assyrian colony on the Turco-Persian frontier; this proved abortive. In the summer of 1921, the Assyrian refugee camp was closed down, a money grant being made to each refugee family to finance their return to their old homes. Many of these families found their way back to their villages in the Hakkari country, which it was then believed would be included in Iraqi territory. Other Assyrian tribesmen, whose original homes were in territory which it was recognised would remain Turkish, were settled within Iraq territory near Dohuk and Aqra; there they still remain. The Persian Assyrians, numbering between 4,000 and 5,000 mostly dispersed to the towns awaiting the time when it would be possible for them to return to their homes in the Urmia district. Many of them are waiting still. **In the meantime large numbers of Assyrians were recruited for service in a force of local Levies, officered and paid by His Majesty's Government, which was raised in order to permit the reduction of the British Forces garrisoning the country. Some two battalions of the Levy Force still exist to protect British aerodromes in Iraq.** The strength of this force is likely to be substantially reduced when the Anglo-Iraq Treaty of 1930 enters into force with Iraq's admission to the League.

5. During the period 1921-1924 there seemed every prospect that the Assyrian problem would solve itself, that the majority of the refugees would filter back to their homes in Persia and Turkey, while the remainder would settle down and develop

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vacant lands in the Mosul district of Iraq. In order to assist this process, His Majesty's Government decided to press for a frontier with Turkey which would include within Iraq the greater part of the homelands of the Ottoman Assyrians. In particular it was decided to advocate the cession to Iraq of the Hakkari province of Turkey in which the Tiar, Tkhuma, Jelu, and Baz tribes had their homes. This scheme received its first set back in the summer of 1924, when the Turks, extending their administration into the Hakkari district, expelled those Assyrians who had returned there back into Iraq.

6. Some months earlier the northern frontier of Iraq, which, it will be recollected, was left undefined by the Treaty of Lausanne, was discussed between representatives of the United Kingdom and Turkish Governments at Constantinople. At this conference the Turks refused to consider any frontier which would leave within Iraq the Assyrian lands in Hakkari. In the course of the discussions, however, the Turkish Delegate stated that the Assyrians "would still find in Turkish territory the tranquillity and prosperity which they enjoyed there for centuries, provided that they did not repeat the errors which they committed, with foreign encouragement, at the beginning of the Great War."

7. **The hope that the Hakkari province would be gained for the Assyrians and Iraq was finally dispelled by the Council of the League of Nations, who, in December, 1925, allotted to Turkey the bulk of the territory formerly inhabited by the Assyrians, including the Hakkari province. In promulgating their frontier award, the Council invited the mandatory power to grant the Assyrians a measure of local autonomy. The British Representative at the Council meeting lost no time in showing that this was impracticable; he pointed out that the frontier awarded by the Council rendered it impossible to find in Iraq suitable territories for the settlement of the Assyrians as a compact and organised community, and finally destroyed their hopes of a separate and homogeneous existence. In the British evidence presented to the League**

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Frontier Commission, upon whose report the Councils award was based, it had been emphasised that, if the Hakkiari region were not assigned to Iraq, the Assyrians could not be granted any local autonomy, because, in that case, they could not be settled in homogeneous communities. In making their recommendations to the Council, however, the Frontier Commission appear to have expected that in course of time the mountain bred Assyrians would drift back to their homes in the Hakkiari country, and they apparently did not contemplate, in view of the statement made by the Turkish Delegate at the Constantinople conference, that the Turkish Government would place any obstacle in their way. These expectations, however, were not fulfilled. Ruthless deportations of Assyrians were carried out by the Turks in the frontier districts in the autumn of 1925, which effectually extinguished any immediate prospect of the Assyrians returning to live under Turkish rule, and since 1925, the Turkish Government have consistently denied the Assyrians access to their former homes.

8. The frontier fixed by the League Council in 1925, which was subsequently accepted by the Turkish Government under the Treaty of Angora of June, 1926, separated about 20,000 Assyrians from their original homes. His Majesty's Government and the Iraqi Government were thus faced with the formidable task of settling these Assyrians, who were mountaineers by origin, on unoccupied lands in the northern districts of Iraq. The difficulty of this task was enhanced by the fact that Iraqis generally were out of sympathy with the Assyrians, whom they regarded as an alien race bound to Iraq by no strong ties of patriotism or loyalty, and having no claim to the special consideration of the Iraqi Government or people; and the Assyrians, who have never concealed their hatred and suspicion of the Arab Government of Iraq, themselves did little to remove this latent racial antagonism. Nevertheless the Assyrians have had little to complain of in their treatment at the hands of the Iraqi Government; indeed in the matter of exemption from taxation they have been dealt with most

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generously, and it is scarcely necessary to add that they have not been subjected, at Iraqi hands, to the molestation and percecution which have their frequent lot in their original Turkish homes.

9. Between 1925 and 1930 the process of settlement continued, and by 1929 there remained only about 350 families for whom suitable homes had not yet been found. There seemed every reason to hope that before Iraq entered the League the re-settlement of Assyrians - not as a compact and homogeneous community, since this was impossible without the wholesale dispossession of Kurds from their homes, but dispersed among suitable villages in Iraqi Kurdistan - would be completed. The new settlements were in most cases beginning to prosper and the Assyrians themselves seemed reasonably content and willing to fit into their place in the body politic.

10. The situation was, however, fundamentally changed by the publication of the terms of the new Treaty with Iraq in 1930. when it was found that this Treaty did not - as from the nature of the case it could not - contain express provisions for the protection of minorities, the Assyrians showed themselves apprehensive at the prospect of the complete independence of Iraq. and addressed protests to British representatives. An agitation largely fostered by sympathisers from the United Kingdom, was set on foot against the termination of the mandate, and during the latter part of 1930 and 1931 a number of petitions were submitted on behalf of the Assyrians to the League of Nations. **These petitions culminated in 1931 in a demand for the establishment of an autonomous enclave.** This was rejectd by the League Council on the recommendation of the Permanent Mandates Commission, at whose instance the Council had previously caused the petitioners to be informed that the League would continue to protect their rights with the greater zeal and sympathy, if it were convinced that they were loyally contributing to the security and prosperity of the State of Iraq.

11. The Council's rejection of the demand for an autonomous enclave doubtless prompted the submission of the Assyrian petition of October, 1931, proposing Assyrian emigra-

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tion **en mass**, to which reference is made in paragraph 1 of this note. A copy of that petition and a copy of the observations of His Majesty's Government thereon is attached (Appendix 1). There is reason to think that, after submitting this petition, the Assyrian leaders made enquiries of the French authorities in Syria to ascertain whether a mass movement of Assyrians into Syria would be welcomed. It is understood that these enquiries met with an unfavourable response.

12. In the meantime the Council of the League had had under consideration the various guarantees to be entered into by Iraq towards the Council dealing with, among other matters, the protection of racial and religious minorities in Iraq. The text of a Declaration of Guarantees to be made by the Iraqi Government was drawn up by a special committee of the Council, and its terms adopted by the Council at their meeting on the 19th May last. The Declaration was subsequently accepted by the Iraqi Government, signed, ratified and deposited with the Secretary-General. This Declaration provides the most ample safeguards for the future protection of minorities in Iraq, and ensures that their cultural, linguistic and religious aspirations will be given full recognition. It was confidently hoped, therefore, that, with the rejection of their demand for autonomy, and with the removal of any fear of future ill treatment at the hands of the Iraqi Government, the Assyrians, realizing the impracticability of wholesale emigration, would become reconciled to equal citizenship in the Iraqi State.

13. This hope proved ill founded. On the 1st of June a manifesto was presented to the Brigadier commanding the Assyrian Levies in Iraq stating that, as the British Government had failed to ensure the future of the Assyrian nation, all the officers and men had resolved to cease serving from the 1st of July. **Subsequent enquiry showed that the Assyrian officers had entered into a pact with the Assyrian tribal leaders to act together to obtain satisfaction of certain demands concerning their future. It was discovered that a concentration of all the Assyrians in Iraq on the northern frontier was proposed. The**

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object of this concentration was reported to be either the formation of an independent Assyrian State within Iraq, or the seizure of the Hakkari province from Turkey by force. All arguments having failed to deflect the Assyrian officers and leaders from their course, it proved necessary to fly a British battalion from Egypt to Iraq for the double purpose of relieving the Levies in their duty of guarding the aerodromes and preventing them taking part in the proposed national concentration. This action achieved its purpose. The national concentration was abandoned and the vast majority of the Levies agreed to continue serving until a petition, submitted by the Assyrian Patriarch and other Assyrian leaders on the 17th of June, had been considered and pronounced on by the League. A copy of that petition and of the observations of His Majesty's Government thereon will be found in Appendix 2.

APPENDIX 2

It will be seen that this petition demands that the Hakkari region of Turkey should be ceded to Iraq and handed over to the Assyrians, or, failing this, that they should be given a large tract of country in the neighbourhood of Amadia, wherein the whole Assyrian race, both those at present in Iraq and those outside, should be settled as a single community. **In either case, the petition demands the establishment of an autonomous Assyrian enclave.**

14. The demand for the cession of Hakkari is, of course, quite impracticable. It is moreover most doubtful whether the Turkish Government would even now be prepared to allow the Assyrians to return to their old homes in that provision. There is however some slight indication of a possible change of heart; for example, **the Iraqi Prime Minister, during a recent visit to Angora, found the impression that the Turks were not unattracted by the idea of re-admitting the Assyrian into Hakkari with the object of using them as a counterweight to the Kurds,** with whom the Turkish Government are perpetually in trouble. There seems little doubt that an arrangement whereby the moun-

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tain tribes of the Assyrians could return to their homes in Hakkari, with reasonable safeguards of future good treatment, would provide the only satisfactory and lasting solution. These tribes were mainly responsible for the disaffection in the Assyrian Levies last June and for the wild project of a national concentration. They have hitherto refused all offers of land for settlement within Iraq, and it seems clear that their longing to return to their old homes in Hakkari is the real cause of their dissatisfaction with conditions of life in Iraq.

15. In the course of the conversations with the Assyrian Patriarch and leaders which led up to the withdrawal of the Levy manifesto, the Assyrian Patriarch was promised that His Majesty's Government would try to bring the matter before the league of nations prior to the termination of the mandatory regime and would do everything possible to ensure that the Assyrians received an early reply to their petition. If the normal procedure were followed, and this petition and the previous petition of October 1931 were left to be examined by the Mandates Commission next November and then, as would probably happen, referred by the Commission to the League Council to be dealt with under the normal minorities procedure, the Assyrian leaders might well consider that the promise given to them had not been fulfilled, and that they had been tricked.

While it is most important that the Assyrians should not be left with any such impression, **it is equally important that nothing should be done which might endanger Iraq's admission to the League at the next meeting of the Assembly. Any tendency on the part of His Majesty's Government to stress unduly the importance of the petitions, or any attempt to rush a decision through before Iraq enters the League, might give rise to suspicion at Geneva and involve serious risk of delaying the admission of Iraq.** In particular it is important to avoid any suggestion that these petitions call for any alteration in the minority provisions of the Declaration of Guarantees recently signed by Iraq, which, it is believed, represent the utmost that the

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Iraqi Government and Parliament could be induced to accept. Moreover no modification or addition to the Guarantees could be accepted by the Iraqi Delegates on their own responsibility. A reference to the Iraqi Parliament would be necessary; and that body does not meet again until November.

16. It has been agreed that the course involving the minimum of risk would be to bring the Assyrian petition of June last incidentally to the notice of the Council, merely as one of outstanding petitions which it would be well for an **ad-hoc** committee of the Council to consider in view of the fact that, after the termination of the mandatory regime, the Mandates Commission will no longer have competence to deal with such matters. It is, therefore, proposed that when the Council take note of the Iraqi Declaration of Guarantees and are about to pronounce the termination of the mandatory regime, conditional upon Iraq being admitted to the League by the Assembly, the United Kingdom representative should mention that certain petitions are outstanding, with which the Mandates Commission when it next meets will not, in the circumstances, be competent to deal, and should suggest that these petitions should be examined in case they contain anything of which the Council should take note, a special committee being appointed for the purpose to present a report to the Council as soon as possible. A less obtrusive way of dealing with the matter might be to allow the Council's Rapporteur to past forward those proposal in his report to the Council, and the United Kingdom representative may find it expedient to adopt this procedure unless there is strong reason for doing so, however it would probably be more in accordance with the pledges given to the Assyrians, and partially that the United Kingdom representative should himself put forward the proposal.

17. The procedure contemplated is either that the application of the Council's minorities procedure should be anticipated in the case of these petitions, that is to say, that in spite of the fact that Iraq would not then have been admitted to the League, the petitions should be considered, as if Iraq were a mem-

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ber of the League and the Declaration of Guarantees operative, by the Committee of Three of the Council; or, that a special **ad-hoc** committee with the same composition as that which framed the Iraq Declaration of Guarantees should be set up to consider the petitions and report to the Council.

18. Correspondence on this subject is at present proceeding with the League Secretariat and it is suggested that preparation of any draft statement to be made by United Kingdom Representative should wait until further consultation has taken place.

19. Both the Iraqi Government and the Assyrian Community will be represented at Geneva; the former by the Iraqi Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, and the latter by the Assyrian Patriarch, the Mar Shimun. Sir Francis Humphrys will also be at Geneva. **September 17, 1932**



MAR ESHAI SHIMOUN

CHAPTER 7

Mar Shimoun's Petition to the League of Nations 1931

**THE PATRIARCHATE OF THE EAST
Mosul, October 23rd, 1931**

PETITION ON BEHALF OF ASSYRIAN NATION

To: His Excellency
The Chairman of the Mandate's Commission
to the League of Nations,
GENEVA.

Reference the attached document I beg to inform your Excellency. The Assyrian Nation which is temporarily living in Iraq having placed before their eyes the dark future, and the miserable conditions, which are undoubtedly waiting to meet them in Iraq, after the withdrawal of the Mandate, they unanimously held a conference with me in Mosul, on the 20th October, 1931. In this conference were present the temporal and spiritual leaders of the Assyrian Nation as a whole, as the following related document shows the names thereof, and the future condition was most fully discoursed on the two following points:- (Can we live in Iraq, or not). On the conclusion of a very

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long discussion, it was unanimously decided by all the members, that it is impossible for us to live in Iraq, and the will of all the members was entrusted to me, through the said document signed by them that I may work through any way that I am deem possible for the immigration of the Assyrians out of Iraq. This being so, I, with the under-mentioned signatories who are the responsible leaders of the Assyrian Nation, submit before yor Commission our Nation's humble request, which in centuries past numbered in millions, but owing to the numerous persecutions and massacres that surrounded us, we are now reduced to a very small number. And up to the present we have preserved our language and our faith throughout all the persecutions and massacres that have befallen us.

The near past condition of our nation, has been fully made known to you, through the official workers of our Nation. This being so, we do not see it necessary to relate every condition in detail, **but we are positively sure that if we remain in Iraq, in a few years time we shall be wiped out of existence.** This being so, we implore your mercy to take care of us, and immigrate us to one of the countries under the rule of one of the Western Nations any of which you may deem proper. And if this is not possible, that you may request the French Government to accept us in Syria, and take us under its responsibility, because we can no longer live in Iraq, and we will leave.
(Signed by)

1. Eshai Shimoun (by the Grace of God,)
Catholicos Patriarch of the East.
2. Yoseph Khananishu, Metropolitan.
3. Zia Sargis by Grace, Bishop.
4. Khoshaba. Malik Yoseph.
5. Zia Malik Shamizdin.
6. Malik Andrews of Jelu.
7. Malik Marogil

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8. Malik Khanu of Tkhooda.
9. Malik Khamo of Baz.
10. Malik Ismael of Upper Tiary.

Letter of Request, the Metropolitans, Leaders of the Tribes (Maliks), Rayses, and the Priests:

We the Chiefs and representatives of the Tribes of the Assyrian Nation, that our names are under-mentioned, having considered the future of our Nation in Iraq, we gather unanimously to Mosul, to His Beatitude Mar Shimoun Patriarch. Having fully discussed the said case, we came to decide that our living in Iraq, after the withdrawal of the Great Britain's Mandate, is impossible.

This being so, we requested the Patriarch, as the head of our Nation, to struggle in every way that he may deem possible, for the fulfillment of our above related decision, that is to say immigrate us out of this country. And in the affirmation of our decision we are hereby attaching our signatures.

SIGNATORIES:

1. Yoseph Khanisho, Metropolitan.
2. Zia Sargis, by the Grace of God, Bishop.
3. Malik Andrews of Jelu.
4. Malik Nimrud of Jelu.
5. Malik Khnanu of Tkhooda.
6. Shimoun Barkhishu.
7. Zia Odishu.
8. Rayes Odishu of Rumtha.
9. Sulaka of Bohtan.
10. Shamasha Talya.
11. Shamasha Saipo.
12. Dinkha Bacus.
13. Revd. Tooma Archdeacon of Ashita.

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14. Buku Rayes Oshana.
15. Rayes Jajju Hormizd.
16. Khamis Shimoun.
17. Bacus Aiwass.
18. Shimoun Mooshi.
19. Yoseph Adam.
20. Malik Yokhanan of Tkhooma.
21. Malik Warda of Dizen.
22. Malik David.
23. Maksut Lawandu.
24. Shamasha Shlimun of Gundicta.
25. Revd. Sahda.
26. Shikhu Ispendiar.
27. Rayes Shinu of Upper Tiary.
28. Rayes Warda of Simeli.
29. Sawa of Taal.
30. Rayes Athniel.
31. Malik Khamo of Baz.
32. Malik Ismael of Upper Tiary.
33. David Khoshaba.
34. Malik Marogil.
35. Rayes Haroon.
36. Haroon Shimoun.
37. Lira Ishu.
38. Yonan Malik Giwargis.
39. Soru Bubbu.
40. Shamasha Ishu.
41. Rayes Nissan Yalda.
42. Rayes Dinkha of Sadt.
43. Shamasha Israel of Zawita.
44. Shamasha Gandalu. of Zawita.

CHAPTER 8

ASSYRIAN PETITION

Downing Sreet,
22nd August, 1932.

To: J. C. Sterndale Bennett, Esq., C. M. G. M. C.

Dear Sterndale Bennett,

I enclose three copies of the revised draft observations on the Assyrian petition, in which I have incorporated the amendments provisionally adopted at our discussion last Friday with Sir Francis Humphrys.

I enclose also three copies of the annex to Appendix 6 (The Prime Minister's letter of August 2nd) in which the small alterations agreed upon have been made on earlier pages.

I do not think that we can do anything more now until the Land Committee's report is received. I am sending a copy of this letter and enclosures to McClaghry.

Yours Sincerely,



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Observation of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom on the petition submitted by the Patriarch and leaders of the Assyrians in Iraq dated the 17th of June, 1932, to the High Commissioner for Iraq with a copy to the Chairman of the Permanent Mandates Commission.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

In order that this petition may be fully understood it is necessary to explain the circumstances in which it was put forward.

On the 1st of June, 1932, a manifesto was presented to the Brigadier Commanding the Assyrian Levies in 'Iraq stating that as the British Government had failed adequately to ensure the future of the Assyrian nation all the officers and men had resolved to cease serving from the 1st July. This manifesto was signed by all but one of the Assyrian Officers serving in the Levie. A copy of the full text is given as Appendix (I) to these Observations.

After receiving this manifesto the Brigadier Commanding the Levies discussed the matter with his Assyrian officers and ascertained that they and the Maliks, or Assyrian tribal leaders, had apparently entered into a secret pact to act together to obtain certain demands concerning their future. The Levy officers and men wished therefore to leave their service in order to be free to take part in whatever national movement might be ordered by the leaders. They had no complaints to make as to their conditions in the Levies and their wish to cease serving was, they explained, inspired solely by the desire to throw in their lot with the rest of the Assyrian people. It was also ascertained that there was to be a meeting of leaders at the Patriarch's summer camp at Ser Amadiyah (A grassy hill crest to the north of the Amadiyah town) on the 15th June.

On the 13th June, the High Commissioner summoned a meeting of representative Assyrian officers at the Residency in

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Baghdad. The officers could not be persuaded to withdraw their manifesto, as they stated that they could take no action without the concurrence of the Patriarch and all the other leaders. The High Commissioner accordingly agreed to await a final reply until the matter had been discussed at the Ser Amadiyah meeting on the 15th June.

At the same time he despatched a letter to the Mar Shimun urging him to use his personal influence as Patriarch to turn the Levies from their foolish and dangerous decision, and in a second letter he pointed out the serious financial loss that the Assyrians would sustain if they recklessly abandoned their employment.

A copy of the first letter is attached as Appendix (II). The Patriarch's reply to these letters, a copy of which is given as Appendix (III), forwarded the petition of the leaders dated the 17th June which is the subject of these observations. A copy of the petition was addressed to the Chairman of the Permanent Mandates Commission.

Further correspondence between the High Commissioner and the Mar Shimun followed, which resulted in the letter's summoning another meeting of the Assyrian leaders on the 5th July at which it was decided to accept the High Commissioner's advice, that the Levies should continue serving until the petition of the 17th June had been submitted to the League and a reply obtained.

The demands of this petition of the 17th June were communicated by the High Commissioner to the 'Iraqi Prime Minister on the 7th July, and the Prime Minister replied on the 2nd August commenting on these demands.

Copies of this correspondence are given in Appendices 5 and 6 in this book.

THE PETITION.

The signatories, headed by the Patriarch, may be said to represent the majority of those Assyrians now in Iraq whose original homes lie to the north of the Iraq frontier. **The others, numbering about three thousand persons, who are still in their original villages which lie within the borders of Iraq, are not represented among the signatories of the petition and have taken practically no part in the present agitation.**

The following list shows the status and tribe of each of the signatories to the petition:

Mar Eshai Shimun	Mar Shimun, the Patriarch.
Mar Yoseph Khananishu.	Metropolitan or Matran of Shamsdinan, now living in Harir. Next in importance to Mar Shimun. The Matran's Sister is the mother of Mar Shimun.
Mar Zia Sargis.	The Bishop of JILU.
Malik Shamizdin.	The Malik of Lower Tiari.
Malik Khoshaba M. Yoseph.	Of Lower Tiari, (A courtesy title only.
Malik Ismail.	Malik of Upper Tiari. The Pramier Malik.
Malik Nimrud.	The present Malik of Jilu.
Malik Marogle.	An ex-Malik of Jilu.
Malik Khnanu.	The present Malik of Tkhuma.
Malik Khamu.	The present Malik of Baz.
Malik Warda.	The present Malik of Diz
Malik Silim.	Head of the group of villages near Julamerk.
Kasha Sahda.	A priest of a district east of Tiari.

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Malik Sheekho.	Dizen and Diz are identical.
Malik Marogle.	Head of a group of villages around Lake Archag.
Malik Gullu.	Of Serai Mahmudiyah, east of Van near the Shikak Kurds.
Rais Khiru.	Of Iyal, a large village near the Persian frontier, Mar Bishu District.
Rais Dansa.	Of Mar Bishu.
Rais Talya.	Of Gagoran, near Diza Gawar.
David D'Mar Shimun.	Father of the Patriarch. The Rab Khaila of the Levies.
Daniel Ismail.	Second son of Malik Ismail of Upper Tiari. Rab Tremma of the 2nd Battalion.
Yaqob Ismail.	Third Son of Malik Ismail. Rab Tremma of the 1st Battalion.
Malik Hormizd.	2nd Battalion. Former Malik of Tkhuma.
Khoshaba Polus.	Of Tkhuma.
Shahin Gewergis.	Of Baz.

The Tiari Maliks are hereditary and hold office for life. The other Maliks are chosen from selected families by Mar Shimun and change office almost every other year. The first paragraph of the petition is merely a preamble and calls for no comment.

The second paragraph voices the disappointment of the Assyrian people that their hope that a national home would be found for them has not been realised and states their determination to obtain the realisation of this hope in whatever way they can. His Majesty's Government feel that it is necessary to point out that they and their representatives have always stated without equivocation that the Assyrians could not be settled in a homogeneous group with limited local autonomy except in their old home lands in the Hakkiari district of Turkey.

The League Commission set up in 1924, to examine the question of the frontier between Turkey and Iraq made the following statement on page 83 of their report. (*Page 107 of this*

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book)

“The British authorities also informed the Commission that the future treatment of the Assyrians would depend entirely on the decision taken with regard to the frontier. If the territory occupied by the Assyrians is not assigned to ‘Iraq they cannot be granted any local autonomy, because in that case they would not be settled in homogeneous communities. If the frontier were drawn towards the south, thus incorporating in Iraq only a small part of the former Assyrian territory, it would be impossible to find land for the Assyrians in Iraq. The plan for settling the Assyrians depends on the acceptance of the frontier proposed by the British Government. Even if lands could be found, the Assyrians could not live in the plains owing to climatic conditions. Other difficulties would be produced by the difference of customs between the Arabs and the Assyrians, which would strain the relations between them, whereas Assyrian and Kurdish customs are much more similar”.

Mr. Amery speaking at the Thirty Fifth Session of the Council on the 3rd September, 1925, said: “His Majesty’s Government has caused careful and exhaustive enquiry to be made into the possibility of settling the Assyrian population within the “Brussels line”. It is informed that it would be quite impossible to find in Iraq suitable territories for the **settlement of the Assyrians as a compact and organised community**. It is true that they might be dispersed gradually among the Assyrian and Chaldean villages south of the line. This would, however, result in finally destroying the hopes which are justifiably entertained by this ancient community of retaining a separate and homogeneous existence in their native home”.

A reference is also invited to 269-272 of the Special Report on Iraq for the period 1920-1931 where this point is dealt with in detail. (*Details in the next few pages*)

CHAPTER 9

Anti Mar Shimoun Petition to the League of Nations

**Air Headquarters,
'Iraq Command,
Hinaidi.
21st September, 1932**

APPENDIX "A" TO SUMMARY OF INTELLIGENCE No. 19

**Translation of Petition addressed to His Excellency Nuri Pasha,
the Prime Minister of IRAQ, for transmission to the
Secretarial of the League of Nations through His
Excellency the High Commissioner for IRAQ**

As Mar Shimoun and certain Assyrians who do not represent the Assyrian Community are seeking nothing but personal advantages in the name of that Community, we represent the following in order to reveal the truth and true facts; we the Assyrians in 'Iraq both refugees and original inhabitants are very grateful to the 'Iraqi Government and admit her kindness towards us. She has assisted us very much in our settlement and in employing

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us in Government appointments, in medical treatment and exemption from taxes and similar privileges. Now we are living under her justice in complete peace, prosperity, safety and tranquility, nor is there any difference between us and our 'Iraqi brothers and the guarantees concerning minorities which the 'Iraqi Government has furnished to the respected League of Nations are sufficient to safeguard our rights. In view of these our statements the demands of Mar Shimoun have therefore no value as we do not consider them because they are based on unsound principles and founded on his personal aims and wishes as they have not been made at the request of the Assyrians. He made these demands for his own benefit and those of his relatives and friends. He is moreover an ecclesiastic, having neither connection with other affairs nor any right to dispose at will of the destinies of the Assyrians. He only represents a small number of his relatives and his own family and we represent the communities and people mentioned against our respective signatures. We submit this document and request that Mar Shimoun' demands should not be taken into consideration and that we be permitted to live in peace and tranquility under the 'Iraqi flag.

LIST OF SIGNATORIES

Name of Chief.	Tribe.	No. of families claimed	Official estimate of families	REMARKS
Bishop Yuwalaha	Barwari Bala	-		Bishop of Barwari Bala, Nerva Raikan and Sapna. Represents tribes settled in present villages before Great War, 1914-18. Took no part in activities

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				for an Assyrian con- centration.
Zekharia Govergis.	Barwari Bala. 30)		30	
	(Ain Noni)			
	Village))			
Derwish David.-----	do ---- 20.)			
Yacub Shino.	Barwari Bala. 20)			Father and son
	(Hayis Village)			duplicated all
Shlimon Yacub -----do ----	40) 12 12			together represent
				families of
				Hayis.
Shlimon.	----- do --- 25)			
Marbina Haji.	Barwari Bala. 30		20	
	(Eyat Village)			
Tawar Ismail.	Barwari Bala. 15			
Jajju Esho	---- do ---- 20			
Zaia Tooma.	---- do ---- 15			
Esho Orahim.	---- do ---- 15			
Slaiman Gevergis	---- do ---- 15			
Khamis Shamo ----- do -----	10			
Khiyu Orahim	---- do ---- 25			
Zaia Aziz	---- do ---- 15			
Lazar Mako ----- do -----	10			
Zaia Noona.	---- do ---- 10			
Yukhanan Joseph	---- do ---- 15			
Hormez Shimoun	---- do ---- 15			
Doud Shiba	---- do ---- 17			
Yukhanan Nanoo	---- do ---- 8			
Kanoon Dakoo	---- do ---- 10			
Tooma.	---- do ---- 17			
Sada Shmuil	---- do ---- 7			
Khoshaba Shimoun	---- do ---- 12			
Yusuf Envia.	---- do ---- 87			
Khoshaba-a-Yukhanan	Barwari Bala. 52			
Khamro Antoo	---- do ---- 16			
Neesan Polis	---- do ---- 14			
Bareham Warda	---- do ---- 16			

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Sliwo Mirza.	----- do -----	12	The number of families
Khoshaba Warda.	----- do -----	32	in Barwari Bala Assyrian
Mooshi Naider	----- do -----	17	tribe is approx-
			matly 390 families,
Nomi Mooshi	----- do -----	36	according to official
Goriel Zomaia.	----- do -----	8	figures. Families
Lazar Goro.	----- do -----	7	claimed to be represented
Tooma Marogul	----- do -----	12	on the September
			petition
Doud Zia	----- do -----	24	are 749 families.
Rais Khiyu	Lower Tiari (Ashita).	300	Rais Jaju is the rightful
			chief of Ashita which was
			represented by the
			principal chiefs of Lower
			Tiari. Malik Khoshaba
			and Ziah Shemsdin
			both signed the June peti-
			tion.
Chosino Adam.	Lower Tiari. (Lizan).	100	This is a section of
			Lower Tiari; was
			represented by Malik
			Zaiah Shemsdin and Malik
			Khoshaba in JunePetition.
Jaju Dinkha.	Lower Tiari	50	----- do -----
Shabi Eshaia.	Lower Tiari	30	----- do -----
Gevergis Daniel.	Lower Tiari.	54.	----- do -----
Deri Maxud Lawando	Lower Tiari	200	There are only 40
	Bnni Gippa).		families with
			Benyamin and Maxud
Benyamin Cholo.	---- do ----		Lawando and not 270
Rais Ibrahim.	Nerva Tribe.	16	as claimed.
			There are only 4 fami-
			lies with Rais Ibrahim
			and not 16 as claimed.
Yacub Yoseph	----- do -----	40.	
Gilliana Mirza .	Nerva Tribe.	50	Mirza Gilliana
	(Nerva Zhor).		Gilliana Mirza of
Mirza Gillina	---do---	35	Nerva Zhor, father
			and son, both repre-
			sent 6 families,total

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			inhabitants of the vil- lage.
Zaia Malik Nimrud	Jelu Tribe.	400	The father of Zia, MalikNimrud, togeth- er with other two chiefs of the Jelu tribe signed the Assyrian petition at Ser Amadia Conference. Malik Nimrud himself actu- ally represents 50 families out of 100 Jelu families settled in Shaikhan Qadha and out of 250 fami- lies of the whole of Jelu tribe in Iraq. Zaia is 16 years old and is a school boy.
Rais Khoshaba Rowil	Deri Village of Sapna.	40	
Rais Yekhana.	Dergoni Village		

of Nahla. 40



Malik Khoshaba

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EASTERN (IRAQ).
CONFIDENTIAL

November 17, 1932.
SECTION 1.

(E 6023/23/93)

No. 1.

OPINION OF THE PERMANENT MANDATES COMMISSION

Note by the Secretary-General, League of Nations. -
(Received in British Foreign Office November 17.)

Geneva, November 14, 1932

The Secretary-General has the honour to communicate herewith to the Council the opinion (with one appendix and one annex) given by the Permanent Mandates Commission during its twenty-second session after the examination of the petitions from the Assyrian population in Iraq, in conformity with the Council recommendation of the 24th September, 1932.

OPINION OF THE COMMISSION.

When formulating its opinion, the commission fully realised how delicate was its task from the constitutional point of view. When, on the 24th September, 1932, the Council of the League of Nations asked the Mandates Commission to examine the petitions of the Assyrians of Iraq, that country was still subject to the regime provided for in article 22 of the Covenant, and Great Britain was responsible for the application to it of the tutelary principles of this article. Since then Iraq has been emancipated from its guardianship, and admitted to the League of Nations. There is now, therefore, neither a mandate nor mandatory Power in regard to Iraq. Furthermore, the Iraqi Government, which henceforth is alone responsible for the

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administration of that State, could not be heard by the commission.

Subject to this observation the commission, in response to the Council's formal invitation, addresses to it the following opinion: -

“ 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 twentyfirst session;

“ Having noted the observations of the United Kingdom Government on those petitions and heard the additional information given orally by the representative of that Government;

“ Endorsing the attached conclusions of its *rapporteur*; (1)

“ Draws the Councils 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 traditions and would satisfy their economic needs;

“ For the rest, it considers, for the reasons stated in its *rapporteur*; conclusions, that there is no need for it to submit to the Council any other special recommendation in regard to those petitions.”

Appendix.***Conclusions of the Rapporteur to the Permanent Mandates Commission***

From a comparison of the documents analysed above (2) 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 emphasise 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 the 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. No proof has indeed ever been provided that they were treated with unjustifiable severity by the Iraqi authorities, or that they were victims of an abuse of power; it is remarkable that in the petitions dealt with in the present report no complaint that can be entertained has been brought against these authorities.

Amongst the Assyrians of Iraq the greater number, who have come from Turkey in 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 the land. In fact, these mountaineers have been settled in districts consist-

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ing of marshy and unhealthy plains, or dispersed in small groups or families in the midst of the Kurdish or Arab population, according to the possibilities offered by the occupation of the soil.

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 circumstance 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 con-

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ditions for the settlement of the Assyrians in a homogeneous group do not exist in Iraq, or that the possibility of resettling 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 likely 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.

There is here a situation worthy of engaging the League's attention. It concerns the very existence of a race whose glorious past goes back to the earliest history, and it also concerns the future of Iraq. The League has followed the progress accomplished by this young State, and has consecrated its political emancipation: any factor which may hamper its peaceful and harmonious development cannot leave the League indifferent.

On the Other hand, there is one aspiration of the Assyrians which cannot find any encouragement; namely, that of granting the widest administrative autonomy to the Assyrian "nation" ("millet") grouped in the territory which Iraq may assign to it. The adoption of such a solution would imperil the unity of the Iraqi state, and could not but perpetuate the antipathy with which the Assyrians believe themselves to be viewed by the other elements of the nation in the midst of which they are destined to live.

The other specific solutions proposed in the various

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petitions call for the following observations: --

1. The request for the mass transfer of the Assyrian section put forward in the first petition is a matter on which the Permanent Mandates Commission cannot express an opinion.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. The Mar Shimoun's last petition merely reproduces in more general terms the assertions already contained in his previous petitions, and produces no evidence of a nature to change the commission's opinion.

Report presented to the Permanent Mandates Commission by M. Orts, Member of the Commission, Rapporteur.

At its meeting on the 24th September, 1932, the Council expressed the desire that the Mandates

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Commission should report to it as soon as possible on the petitions from the Assyrians in Iraq, forwarded to the League by the mandatory Power since the commission's last session.

The petitions from this source, which have so far reached the secretariat, are as follows: -

I. Two petitions, dealing with the same subject, dated the 20th and the 23rd October, 1931, emanating respectively from certain representatives of the Assyrians of Iraq and from the Mar Shimoun, forwarded by the United Kingdom Government, together with its observations, on the 11th March, 1932. (*Document C.P.M. 1282.*)

II. Petition, dated the 17th June, 1932, from certain Assyrian leaders and representatives of the Assyrian levies in Iraq, forwarded by the United Kingdom Government, together with its observations, on the 8th September, 1932. (*Document C.P.M. 1296*)

III. Petition from Bishop Yuwalaha, forwarded by the United Kingdom Government, together with its observations, on the 21st September, 1932. (*Document C.P.M. 1298*)

IV. Petition, dated the 22nd September, 1932, from the Mar Shimoun, forwarded by the United Kingdom Government on the 27th September, 1932. (*Document C.P.M. 1300.*) Letter from the United Kingdom Government dated the 2nd November, 1932, stating that it has no observations to make on this petition. (*Document C.P.M. 1321.*),

The petitions, dated the 20th and the 23rd October, 1931, and the 21st September, 1932, the originals of which were in Syriac, were forwarded by the United Kingdom Government in an English translation. Those of

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the 17th June and the 22nd September, 1932, were forwarded in English without mention of the language in which they were originally drawn up.

I

The signatories of the petitions of the 20th and the 23rd October, 1931, assert that it will be impossible for them to live in Iraq after the withdrawal of the Mandate from Iraq in 1932 therefor they are asking that all 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 United Kingdom Government replied in its observations that if the French Government, or any other European Government, were prepared to offer the Assyrians compact accommodation, to guarantee them fair and permanent conditions, 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.

With regard to the allegation that it will be impossible for the Assyrians to live in Iraq, the United Kingdom Government refers to the conclusions of the Permanent Mandates Commission on Captain Hormuzd Rassam's petitions. It feels confident that as soon as the Assyrians are convinced that their visions of an autonomous Assyrian State within Iraq, or of wholesale immigration is impossible of realisation, they will become a most useful section of the Iraqi nation.

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II

The Second Petition Asks ---

1. That the Assyrians be recognised as a “millet” (nation) domiciled in Iraq.

2. That the regions from which they came, now in Turkish territory, be returned to them, and the boundaries of Iraq extended so as to include them.

3. That, if it is impossible to fulfil this latter request, a “national home” be set aside for them, and that this home be open to all Assyrians who are ex-Ottomans; this home to be organised as follows: --

(a) **The whole of the district of Amedia and the adjacent parts of the districts of Zakhoo, Dohuk and Akra to be created a separate and specifically Assyrian district forming a sub-division of the Liwa of Mosul with an Arab mutassarif and British adviser.**

(b) An investigation to be made by an authoritative commission with a view to deciding upon improvements in the position of the Assyrian communities in Iraq. The necessary funds to be placed at the disposal of those communities. The land chosen for the settlement of the Assyrian to be conveyed to them as their individual property with regular title-deeds.

(c) Priority to be given to Assyrians in this administrative sub-division in the selection of public officials, except the mutassarif and technical advisers. The official language to be Syriac side by side with Arabic.

4. That the temporal and ecclesiastical leadership of the Mar Shimoun over the Assyrian “millet” be

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recognised by the Government.

5. That the Assyrians and the Patriarch have the right to nominate a member of Parliament.

6. That the Government establish schools at the places to be decided upon in consultation with the Mar Shimoun, and that the Assyrian language be taught in those schools in the same way as Arabic.

7. That 500,000 rupees be granted by the League of Nations or by the Iraqi Government for the erection by the Assyrians of residences for the Patriarch and bishops and churches and schools.

8. That a hospital and the necessary dispensaries be established in the sub-division.

9. That men who have served in the Assyrian levies be allowed to retain their rifles.

The United Kingdom Government states that, while the petitioners represent the majority of those Assyrians who have come from Turkey, the autochthonous Assyrians are not represented among them. Regarding their various claims, the United Kingdom Government makes the following observations: -

1. A special national status could not be given to the Assyrians without arousing demands for similar treatment from other racial, linguistic and religious minorities. The national unity of Iraq would thus be endangered.

Further, unoccupied land does not exist in Iraq whereon the Assyrians could be settled as an autonomous community and, without compact settlement, administrative autonomy would be impracticable.

2. When the question of the frontier between

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Turkey and Iraq was before the Council, the United Kingdom Government strongly urged that the lands where the home villages of the Assyrians were situated, most of which were ultimately allotted to Turkey, should be assigned to Iraq.

The best solution would undoubtedly be the return of the Assyrians to the Hakkari Mountain. The Turkish Government, however, has so far refused to permit the Assyrians to return to their old villages.

3. In view of the difficulties attendant upon the settlement of the Assyrians already in Iraq, the United Kingdom Government does not feel justified in pressing the Iraqi Government to permit the immigration of large number of Assyrians.

(a) The area claimed by the petitioners for the creation of an Assyrian national home contains about 77,000 inhabitants, of whom 57,000 are Kurds and 16,000 Christians, of the latter, about 60 per cent, are Assyrians. The four Qadhas mentioned in the petition have been recognised as predominately Kurdish within the meaning of article 9 of the Iraqi Government's declaration to the Council.

(b) With regard to the request for an investigation into the condition of the Assyrian colonies, it is pointed out that a special committee has already been set up for this purpose. On the basis of this committee's conclusions, the Iraqi Government has drawn up a plan for the settlement of the Assyrians. The question of the registration of title is the subject of a scheme based on data supplied by an expert. The grant of title to Assyrian refugees on preferential terms would, however, provoke resentment among the other inhabitants.

(c) It would be inadvisable to give the Assyrians a privileged position in an area where they represent only

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one-fifth of the population. The request that Syriac should be recognised as the official language is unacceptable for similar reasons and, moreover, ignores the provisions of the Local Languages Law.

4. The Mar Shimoun is actually recognised as the spiritual head of the Assyrians. He receives a monthly allowance from the Iraqi Government. The Assyrians enjoy complete autonomy in matters of personal status, religion and education, and the maintenance of this regime in future is assured by article 6 of the declaration made by the Iraqi Government to the Council. In any case, no temporal authority could be granted to the Mar Shimoun, which might prevent the application of the laws of the country to Assyrians.

5. The law provides that two Christian Deputies shall be elected by the Mosul Liwa. To guarantee that one of these two Deputies shall always be an Assyrian would be contrary to the law, and might provoke resentment among the other Christian communities, who are more numerous than the Assyrians.

6. The educational rights of minorities will be safeguarded by article 8 of the Iraqi Declaration. The Iraqi Government will sympathetically consider the possibility of increasing the grants given to Assyrian schools.

7. Assuming that the sum of 500,000 rupees asked for by the petitioners could be obtained, it could be better spent on facilitating the settlement of the Assyrians and the establishment of social services than on the building of residences for the Patriarch and the bishops.

8. At present there are dispensaries at Amedia and Dohuk, and three more dispensaries are to be established in the Amedia Qadha. A new motor road connecting the various Assyrian villages has made it easier for the sick to be taken to the Mosul hospital.

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9. There has been no suggestion that the rifles given to the men of the Assyrian levies should be taken from them. Recent amendments to the Arms Regulations have legalised the retention by the Assyrians of their British army-pattern rifles.

III

The third petition is signed by fifty-eight persons, claiming to represent 2,395 families in all. Its object is to refute the Mar Shimoun's petition of the 17th June (No. II)

The petitioners assert that the Mar Shimoun does not represent the Assyrian community, that he is seeking nothing but personal advantages for himself and his relatives and friends, and that his demands are based on unsound principles.

The Assyrians, both refugees and original inhabitants, are very grateful to the Iraqi Government, which has assisted them in various ways, has given them various privileges, and has secured them justice, prosperity and safety.

The guarantees concerning minorities which Iraq has furnished to the League of Nations are sufficient to safeguard their rights. They request that the Mar Shimoun's demands should not be taken into consideration, and that they should be permitted to live in peace under the Iraqi flag.

The United Kingdom Government in its observations gives particulars concerning the various signatories of the petition and their qualifications to speak on behalf of the Assyrian people. The petitioners' claim to represent 2,395 families is certainly exaggerated. In that Government's opinion, however, the petition shows that a

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considerable body of the Assyrians are not in sympathy with the Patriarch's policy and do not share the alleged dissatisfaction of the Assyrian people with their situation under the Iraqi Government.

IV

In the last petition the Patriarch refers to the recommendations of the commission sent by the League to Iraq in 1925 in connexion with the local autonomy of the Assyrians. It was, he says, those recommendations that led the Assyrians to vote for Iraq when the plebiscite for the Mosul Liwa was taken. The commission's recommendations, however, were not followed, and the mandatory Power has revealed its intention of leaving the Assyrians of Iraq in their present state of insecurity. **The Assyrians, he alleges, have a right to claim from the United Kingdom Government, for which they fought in 1918, either the return of their original homes, or, failing that, the grant of another area to serve as a national home. The League of Nations has assumed responsibilities in this respect, in as much as it has assigned the Hakkari Province --- the inheritance of their forefathers --- to Turkey and has given the Assyrians assurances of receiving their rights in the Mosul Vilayet.**



ASSYRIAN LEVY OFFICERS

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They therefore request that the Hakkari Province be given back to the Assyrians and included in Iraq under a special administrative system, or else the complete resettlement of the Assyrian people as an autonomous body as requested in the petition of the 17th June (No. II).

**Extract from Iraq Command Intelligence Summary
No. 19 for fortnight ending September 21, 1932.**

Assyrian Affairs

Reference paragraph 529 of 1932. The acting High Commissioner has received, for transmission to the League of Nations, a petition from a number of Assyrians who are in disagreement with the policy of Mar Shimoun. A copy of the petition is attached at Appendix "A", together with particulars of the signatories where available.

The June petition was signed by the Bishops, the maliks and officers of the 'Iraq Levies and the signatories purported to represent all the Assyrians in 'Iraq, with the exception of the Barwari Bala, Sapna and Nerva-Raikan tribes, who have been settled in their present villages since the days of Turkish rule and have always been con-

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tent to continue under the 'Iraq Government. The new petition, inspired by Bishop Yuwalaha of BARWARI BALA, is signed by these latter tribes and is a disclaimer of the June petition. It represents families who were considered, by virtue of the signatures of their maliks to be supporters of the earlier petition and it follows, therefore, that one of the two petitions cannot be accepted at its face value.

The recent petition has one virtue in that it specifies in some detail the villages and sections it claims to represent. The majority of its signatories are minor characters, such as village headmen, but this does not necessarily detract from the value of the document, which may be regarded as a petition from the people themselves, whilst the June petition, signed by the religious leaders, may or may not have had the support of the people.

At first sight the signatories of the Bishop Yuwalaha's petition appear to represent 2,395 families, but in actual fact some of the claims are excessive whilst others are already included in the larger figures, thus appearing twice. 1,200 families is a conservative estimate, which is probably about right.

Mar Shimoun's party, of which Lady Surma is now the most active member, is very indignant at the appearance of this latest petition and immediate steps are being taken to counteract its effect. Lady Surma asserts that the people were persuaded to sign the petition without knowing its real purport and she is now actively engaged in drawing up a statement to be signed by the same signatories attesting that they were induced to sign the document under official persuasion and pressure.

(Authority S.S.O. MOSUL)

COMMENT.

A document of the nature of the September petition will seriously embarrass the position of Mar Shimoun at GENEVA and it may be assumed that no stone will be left unturned by his representatives in 'Iraq in order to put him in possession of a document repudiating the genuineness of this latest manifesto and thus vindicating his claims to represent the Assyrian race. With regard to the petition itself, it does not represent the opinions of anything like 2,395 Assyrian families and it is more than probable that many of the signatories were ignorant of the text and motive of the petition at the time of signing and were encouraged to do so by Government officials, who apparently assisted in framing the document. At the same time, there is a gradually increasing number of Assyrians who view with displeasure the policy of Mar Shimoun and who are now no longer content to place their future entirely in his hands.

Chapter 10

Assyrian National Movement

The circumstances in which the move by air of an infantry battalion from Egypt to 'Iraq was undertaken in June, 1932, could be adequately described only by a detailed account of the problem of Assyrian settlement and of the various attempts which had been made, unfortunately without success, to provide for its solution. Such

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account would be more appropriate to a political appreciation than to a military record of events for the period covered by the present Report. In its definitely military aspect the problem became acute with the issue on 1st June, 1932, of a manifesto signed by the Assyrian officers of the 'Iraq levies which announced the intention of all the Assyrian ranks of the levies to terminate their military service at the end of June 1932.

The reason given for taking this step was that the British Government had failed to safeguard the future of the Assyrian nation after the termination of the mandate over Iraq. This revelation of the effect of the Assyrian national aspirations on the loyalty and discipline of the Assyrians serving in the 'Iraq levies came as a complete surprise. The leaders had planned this coup some months previously, but the secret had been well kept.

THE DECISION TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATIONS AND DISCHARGE THE ASSYRIANS

In spite of the grave breach of discipline involved in the manifesto, there appeared to be no alternative but to accept the resignations. It was clearly undesirable to retain in His Majesty's service men who had decided to break their engagements, and it was thought at first that the manifesto was no more than a bluff, designed to force the British Government to support the political demands of the Assyrian minority in 'Iraq. Plans were therefore made for the Assyrian officers and men in the 'Iraq levies to be discharged between 18th and 30th June, 1932.

ASSYRIAN PLANS

In the meantime every effort was made to find out what were the intentions of the Assyrian leaders, and whether any concrete plan lay behind the manifesto. The

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information which soon became available showed that the situation was far more serious than had appeared at first sight.

The Mar Shimoun and other leaders of the Assyrians had frequently expressed their grave anxiety at the prospect of the termination of the Mandate. They were convinced that as soon as the protection of Great Britain was withdrawn they would be subjected to continual persecution by the 'Iraq Government, eventuating perhaps in ultimate massacre. when questioned as to the cause of their fears they always pointed to certain incidents which had already taken place in the Kurdish mountains, such as the murder of Assyrians by Kurds and the subsequent failure of the 'Iraqi officials to trace the murderers, and the general indifference which the 'Iraqi Government showed towards such occurrences.

From the enquiries which were now made it appeared that the leaders, faced with the immediate prospect of the termination of the Mandate while their demands for homogeneous national settlement were still unsatisfied, had decided to take a desperate step to draw attention to their fears and to their demands, and if possible to force the British Government to meet their requests before the termination of the Mandate. This step was none other than to concentrate in the Amadia district the whole of that part of the Assyrian nation which had originally been domiciled in the Hakkiari district of Turkey. Whatever might be the political reactions of this plan, it would at least realise their oft-expressed desire to reunite the Assyrian nation. The resignation of the Assyrians in the Levies was the keystone of this plan. It was intended that the disbanded Assyrian soldiers should march through the country, carrying with them, willy-nilly, the civilian Assyrian population. The discharged Assyrians from Hinaidi would collect the civilian Assyrians living in

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Baghdad, such as servants, artizans and railway workers, and take them along with them to Amadia. Similarly, it was intended that the Companies at Diana should migrate with the whole population of Diana village to Amadia by way of the districts occupied by settled Assyrians (Dasht I Harir), and that they should take along with them the inhabitants of all Assyrian villages through which they passed. Simultaneously, the Assyrians employed in the 'Iraqi Army and police would resign or desert and join the movement. The whole nation would in that way move north and concentrate in the Amadia district.

POSSIBLE RESULTS OF THE ASSYRIAN PLAN

Although their plans subsequent to this concentration were nebulous, it was obvious that a movement of this kind would have highly dangerous possibilities, particularly as the Assyrians are well armed with some five thousand modern British rifles and ammunition presented to them by the British authorities under the Dohuk agreement of October, 1922. In the first place, the Diana migration of approximately 2,000 souls (including about 100 armed men) would pass through Kurdish districts, and as the provisioning of so large a number of migrants would give rise to serious difficulties, it seemed probable that disturbances would arise. Even if they did not arise during the march to Amadia, the resources of that district would be insufficient to support so great a concentration of people. With the coming of winter, if not earlier, this great surplus population would find itself without adequate accommodation, food, or means of livelihood.

Consequently, it seemed inevitable that sooner or later there would be serious trouble. If disturbances occurred before or just at the time when **'Iraq was about to be admitted to the League of Nations they might well result in a postponement of the admission of 'Iraq to**

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the League. Moreover, unless some real attempt were made to prevent the disbandment of the Levies it would appear to the 'Iraqis that the British were conniving in the Assyrian plan by deliberately disbanding the Levies to enable them to bring about their national concentration in the Amadia district. Thus the Iraqis might easily attribute the whole movement to a Machiavellian plan on the part of the British to prevent at the last moment the admission of 'Iraq to the League, and consequently to prolong the Mandate and baulk 'Iraqi independence. The knowledge that the Assyrians had been deliberately armed with modern rifles and trained in modern fighting tactics by the British would more than confirm and aggravate these suspicions, and would undoubtedly give rise to bitter resentment. The acute anti-British sentiment which might then develop, combined with the keen disappointment caused by the postponement of their independence, might ultimate in serious anti-British rioting.

IF CARRIED OUT**THE PLAN WOULD EFFECT: -**

- (i) The long desired concentration of the Assyrian nation.
- (ii) A situation of such potential danger as to embarrass both the British and 'Iraqi Governments, and compel attention to the Assyrian question.
- (iii) Possibly a break in the good relations existing between the British and 'Iraqi Governments.
- (iv) Possibly a postponement of the admission of 'Iraqi to the League, and the consequent continuation of the Mandate. Such might have been the formidable results of the Assyrian plan. Whether the Assyrian nation would ultimately have benefited from these events is another matter.

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THEY HAD TIMED THE PLAN ADMIRABLY IN THAT ; -

(i) The 'Iraqi Army and Police and the Royal Air Force were all fully committed to the Barzan operations. Consequently, neither troops nor police could be spared to deal with the movement. The resignation of the many Assyrians in the police engaged in the operations would have caused serious difficulties.

(ii) As a last resort, the Assyrians might joint the Barzani rebels, and in fact veiled suggestions to this effect were put about by the Assyrian leaders. This might well have led to widespread revolt in Kurdistan.

(iii) Disturbances resulting from the Amadia concentration would occur just at a time when they might well influence the League to postpone the admission of 'Iraq.

THE DECISION TO DETAIN THE ASSYRIANS

The discovery of the true nature of the Assyrian plans placed an entirely different complexion on the whole affair. At first, as described above, the Levy manifesto had been regarded as an attempt, complete in itself, to attract attention to the Assyrian demands. But when these plans for the whole-sale migration of the Assyrian nation and for their concentration in the Amadia district became known, it was no longer possible to deal with the Levy manifesto as a matter only of purely military or domestic concern. The grave political consequences which would follow if the first plan of disbanding the Assyrians was carried out, had to be taken into consideration. It would indeed be difficult to disprove the conviction which would inevitably arise in 'Iraq circles, that in deliberately discharging some 1,500 men from the Levies, the British Government were conniving at a challenge by the Assyrians just at the time when 'Iraq was expecting to become independent.

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Consequently, in the light of the information now available regarding the Assyrian intentions, it was agreed with the High Commissioner, that it was imperative to take steps to prevent the mass movement of the discharged Assyrian Levies. It was considered that means must at all costs be found to baulk the Assyrian plan to concentrate in the Amadia district, and that the best means available to us to prevent that concentration was to prevent the discharged Assyrians carrying out the marches by means of which they hoped to carry with them the great numbers of Assyrian civilians working in such centres as Baghdad, Kirkuk and Mosul, or settled in the villages in the Dash I Harir and Nahla districts. The High Commissioner was confident that, if it were possible to prevent these marches the whole concentration plan would fall to the ground. Our information indicated that the Assyrian soldiers themselves provided the main impetus in the hands of the leaders, and that the civilians would certainly not move of themselves. Thus, if the Levy soldiers could be stopped, the whole movement might be scotched.

In any event it was considered that it would be essential to avoid creating the impression that the British were conniving at the Assyrian movement by refraining from taking firm steps to prevent it.

There is always a seasonable migration of Assyrian families into the Amadia mountains in the early summer. During the month of June this migration became abnormally large, due to Assyrian soldiers despatching their families to the north in expectation of joining them later on at the end of the month. Although this movement was not in itself of grave importance, it was very desirable to check it, because it would be much easier to detain the Assyrian soldiers if their families remained with them, than if their families had already gone north. The concern

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which an Assyrian always feels for the safety of his family is well known, and he is liable under any circumstances to become anxious and restless if separated from his family. The Iraqi Government was therefore sounded as to the possibility of checking the northward movement of these families, but it was found that in their opinion it was not legally possible to do so. Our own attempts, necessarily cautious and circumspect, to check the movement of the families also failed, and the unavoidable loss of the strong hold over the Assyrian soldiers, which the presence of their families would have given us, had to be accepted. It would obviously have been much easier to prevent the movement of the Assyrian soldiers if they had to take their families with them, and they would certainly not go without their families.

**PLAN FOR THE
RESTRAINING OF THE LEVIES**

The High Commissioner proposed in the first place to take all possible steps by negotiation with the leaders to induce them to postpone or cancel their project. Should these efforts prove fruitless, we decided that we should have to consider means to prevent the Levies taking their discharge as they intended to do by the end of June and to detain them, if necessary, by force, in their cantonments. Plans for the forcible detention of the Assyrians in their cantonments had therefore to be considered.

Under any circumstances this would have been an extremely difficult problem and the departure of most of the families made it more difficult. In the first place it would obviously be necessary to disarm the Assyrians before detaining them, as it was above all things essential that the operation should be carried out without fighting of any kind. It was unlikely that they would quietly sub-

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mit to disarmament if they were aware that they were subsequently to be detained forcibly. The first essential to the success of our plans was therefore the utmost secrecy and we must on no account allow the Assyrian Levies for one moment to suspect that we did not intend to allow them to take their discharges at the expiration of the months notice which they had given in their manifesto. Accordingly, complete arrangements were openly made to put the discharges into effect.

In the circumstances, it was reasonable that precautionary measures should be taken to ensure that no trouble occurred at the time of the disarming and discharge of Assyrian soldiers, and no attempt was made to conceal the fact that certain precautionary measures of this kind would be taken. It was, of course, possible that the companies would refuse to hand over their arms or that they might create disturbances in connection with their final pay settlements, especially as it would be necessary to deduct from their final pay a proportion of their re-engagement bonus due on account of the unexpired portion of their contract. It was necessary, however, to take the most extreme care to keep our intention of detaining the men absolutely secret.

THE REQUEST FOR REINFORCEMENTS

What force would be required to ensure that the detention could be carried out without undue risk of serious disturbance had now to be considered. At this time the Barzan operations were in full swing and had in fact reached a very critical stage. It was quite out of the question to hold up these operations in any way. It was, in fact, most desirable that they should, if possible, be brought to a conclusion before the end of the month, **particularly as the Assyrians themselves had suggested that after they had concentrated in the Amadia district**

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they might decide to ally themselves with the Shaikh of Barzan. Nos. 30 and 55 (Bomber) Squadrons and half of No. 70) Bomber Transport) squadron, were engaged in the operations, and the aircraft depot was also fully employed in maintaining those units in aircraft and engines. The conclusion was reached that it would be impossible to exercise restraint on the movements of the Assyrian Levies with the available resources, at any rate not without suspending the Barzan operations, even so, there would still be no means of controlling the levies at Sulaimania and Diana.

To use 'Iraqi troops or police for the purpose of interfering in any way with the Assyrians was out of the question. It would certainly have led to fighting. Since there was nothing the Assyrians would have resented more than restraint by Iraqi troops. Even had it been desirable to use 'Iraqi troops for this purpose, such a course would have been impracticable, since eight out of the ten battalions in the 'Iraqi Army and all available police were also engaged in the Barzan area. The question of external reinforcements, therefore, compelled consideration. The Assyrians in the levies numbered some 1,500 men. Even supposing that it were possible to disarm them quietly so far as their service equipment was concerned, it was well known that more than 50 per cent. Of the serving men had either private rifles, automatics, revolvers or arms of some kind of their own. It was therefore possible that any attempt to restrain and confine them to their cantonments, instead of discharging them as they expected, might lead this formidable body to revolt and forcibly to break out of control. It was essential, therefore, that it should be possible to dispose of a sufficient force to overawe the Assyrians and convince them that resistance was impracticable.

For this purpose two battalions of British infantry

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were considered necessary. It was realised, however, that any such reinforcement would be extremely difficult to get, and that it was unlikely that we should be able to obtain the services of more than one battalion. After consultation with the High Commissioner, therefore, it was decided that we should ask for the minimum reinforcement of one battalion. It was explained to the High Commissioner that while two battalions would be necessary to confine the Assyrians to their cantonments for an indefinite period, one would probably be sufficient provided the Assyrians were allowed to take their discharge in slow time at the rate of so many per week. Our main object of preventing the mass marches of the Assyrians would be equally well attained in this manner. Moreover, it would put a definite termination to the length of time it would be necessary to retain the British troops in this country. It was suggested that the rate of discharge should be somewhere between 70 and 100 Assyrians a week. (This number was subsequently, at the request of the High Commissioner, reduced to 50 a week for the first month.) That would mean that the whole force might be discharged in about four months. The disbandment would therefore not be complete until well on into the Autumn, after the termination of the Mandate, when a concentration in the North would neither be so practicable nor so dangerous.

On the understanding, therefore, that the plan was modified to one of regulating the discharge of the Assyrians rather than the detention of the whole force for an indefinite period, it was decided that a minimum of one battalion should be sufficient.

It is unnecessary to enter into the negotiations which then took place between the High Commissioner and His Majesty's Government with regard to the provision of this battalion. It is sufficient for the purpose of this report to observe that the High Commissioner was

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assured that the exacting demands of the War Office relative to the comfort and welfare of the battalion would be fully met.

The most important condition was, perhaps, that the British soldiers should on no account be involved in any fighting with the Assyrians. It was confidently considered that the presence of the soldiers, the prestige of their sudden arrival in the country, and the extreme reluctance which the Assyrians would have to any open conflict with the British authorities would suffice to keep the situation in hand. However, in order to avoid any possibility of such conflicts taking place, orders were issued that on no account were the British soldiers to use force against the Assyrians, **and arrangements made that wherever a show of force might be necessary or wherever there might be risk of conflict with the Assyrians, Air force personnel should be use.**

At the same time plans were being prepared for the move of the batalion from Egypt. Plans for the detention of the Assyrians and for the control of the discharges were also matured about this time. In the first place, orders were issued defining the procedure to be adopted in connection with the discharge of all Assyrians who wished to go. These discharges would have to be completed by the end of the month in accordance with the Assyrian manifesto, and orders were prepared accordingly.

It was first of all necessary to arrange for the detachments at Amadia, Erbil and Kirkuk to join their parent units. It was also decided that the company at Margil should move to Hinaidi. This decision certainly increased the risk of trouble at Hinaidi by bringing the number of Assyrians at Hinaidi up to three companies, and a Levy Headquarters, amounting in all to 14 officers and 435 other ranks, or more than three times the strength of the British company who would subsequently have to guard them. There were, however, difficulties about detaining

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the company at Margil, and the additional risk at Hinaidi was accepted in view of the strength of the Royal Air force at that station. Orders were accordingly issued for all these moves to be completed by the evening of 27th June.

The Subsequent programe was as follows:

28th June. All Levy guards were to be relieved by British infantry, Royal Air Force, 'Iraqi Army or 'Iraqi Police by the evening of the 28th. In this connection the ready to-operation of the 'Iraqi Government in arranging for the relief of many of the Levy guards by men of the 'Iraqi Army or Police was greatly appreciated and should be placed on record.

29th June. On the morning of the 29th the Levy soldiers at all the four station, Hinaidi, Mosul, Diana and Sulaimani were simultaneously to hand in all arms, ammunition and personal equipment. All arms and ammunition were to be immediately disposed of as follows: -

At Hinaidi --- to the Armament Section of the Aircraft Depot.

At Mosul --- to the station Storehouse.

At Sulaimannia and Diana --- to be immediately loaded into Victorias and flown direct to Hinaidi for storage in the Armament Section of the Aircraft Depot.

30th June. At 0700 hours local time the Commanding Officer at each of the four stations would make his final address to the Assyrian officers and then to the men. Subsequently the Levy soldiers would hand in their clothing and bedding and would then be paid out before final discharge.

The above was the plan which was promulgated openly to all concerned, together with instructions for the

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necessary precautions to be taken to prevent disorder during the discharge and movement of Assyrians. These precautions included the dispatch of one section of armoured cars to Diana and one section of armoured cars to Sulaimanni. At Hinaidi, they included the control of traffic through the cantonment and the safeguarding of important points within the cantonment. Detachments known as flying squads consisting each of 20 unarmed airmen in six-wheelers were also detailed and dispatched to work with the Armoured Car Sections.

**SECRET PLANS FOR THE
DETENTION OF THE ASSYRIANS**

In addition to these orders secret instructions were issued dealing with the action which was to be taken for the detention of the Assyrians on 30th June. These instructions were issued and known only to the Officer Commanding at each of the four stations, the Officer Commanding the Levies, the Officer Commanding the British infantry, and two or three Staff Officers at Air Headquarters. Nobody else was informed. The orders were to the effect that at the address which the Commanding Officer was to make to the Assyrian officers on the 1st parade on 30th June, he was to inform the officers that the British Government had decided not to permit them to take their discharge *en masse*, but that they would be permitted to go at the rate of so many per week. A similar announcement was subsequently to be made to the men. Sealed orders were also issued defining the action to be taken in the event of any attempt on the part of the Assyrians to break out of camp.

METHOD OF CONTROL

The method of control depended mainly upon a show of force, upon the prestige of the British troops, and upon putting difficulties in the way of the Assyrians in

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obtaining and using transport facilities. In the first place, the Assyrian camps were to be watched by guards of the Northamptonshire Regiment. These men were armed, and the Assyrians presumably would suppose that if they attempted to break out, the Northamptons would use their arms. In fact, however, strict instructions were issued that they were not on any account to use force against Assyrians breaking out of camp. The only action they were permitted to take was immediately to inform the main guard. The main guard was directly in communication with the Royal Air Force flying squad, composed of half a section of armoured cars, together with six-wheelers containing 20 unarmed airmen. It had originally been intended that these airmen should be armed with axe helves. The High Commissioner felt, however, that if any physical force of this kind were used against Assyrians breaking out of camp it was possible that the Assyrians might retaliate by fire, since many of them carry private weapons of some sort. It would be necessary for the armoured cars to reply in order to protect the airmen, and as a result many casualties might be caused to both sides. It was agreed, therefore, that the airmen of flying squads should be unarmed and should depend upon the moral effect of their backing of armoured cars. The duty of the flying squad was immediately to round up the men breaking out of camp, and by remonstrances and threats, endeavour to persuade them to return to their barracks.

Of course, if practicable, Assyrians would be quietly arrested and taken back to camp in the vehicles of the flying squad. Apart from these precautions it had been arranged, in conjunction with the police, to enforce a strict control of taxi traffic. In some cases, notably at Sulaimania, it was expected to be possible by this means to prevent the Assyrians obtaining the services of any motor transport. Consequently, movement from there would be any great difficulty in preventing a march of

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that kind. At any rate, it would be possible to hold it up at the river crossings, and a flying squad was held in reserve at Kirkuk to co-operate with the police for that purpose. Similar measures were taken at all stations, and in the case of Diana, a flying squad was stationed at the exit of the Rowanduz Gorge with a view to holding up any movements of the Assyrians through the gorge. At Hinaidi, in addition to the control of road traffic, it was also found possible to arrange with the railways a scheme for the prevention of the use of the railways by large bodies of Assyrians should that be necessary.

In spite of all these elaborate arrangements the control scheme was in reality no more than a huge bluff. Reliance was placed upon the prestige of the British troops and upon the anxiety which the Assyrians entertained to avoid any physical conflict with the British authorities. But as we were denied the use of physical force, the other restrictions would not have prevented a really determined move of the Assyrians. Even so, however, we should probably have been able to do enough to convince the 'Iraqi that we were not conniving in the concentration of the Assyrians in the north, and that in itself would have been worth the move of the battalion from Egypt.

ARRIVAL OF REINFORCEMENTS

The time was now rapidly approaching when it would be necessary to come to a final decision on the question of reinforcements. His Majesty's Government had on 18th June sanctioned the despatch of a battalion from Egypt should this be necessary. It was, however, most urgently and expressly stipulated by His Majesty's Government that the battalion should not be moved unless it was absolutely essential, and the High Commissioner was most anxious that these stipulations should be scrupu-

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lously adhered to. In order to restrain the Assyrians from taking their discharge in accordance with their manifesto, it was essential that the troops should be in place at the various stations by 27th June.

It was calculated that it would take not less than six days to fly the troops over and get them into position at the four levy stations; should there be any delay due to weather, it would take longer. The High Commissioner was therefore informed that the very latest date to which the movement of the first company from Egypt could be postponed was 22nd June.

On 21st June, further efforts to induce the Assyrian leaders to withdraw the manifesto having failed, the High Commissioner signalled Egypt requesting that the battalion should commence moving on the following day. This movement was carried out by Nos. 70 and 216 (Bomber Transport) Squadrons, and, commencing on 22nd June, was completed on 27th June. A full account of the move is given later on. By the 28th the battalion (1st Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment), was disposed as follows: -

“ A “ Company ... ..	.....	.....	At Mosul.
“ B “ Company .....	.....	.....	At Diana.
“ C “ Comapny .....	.....	.....	At Sulaimania.
“ C “ Company, Battalion H.Q....	.....		At Hinaidi.

On 24th June “ B “ Section of No. 2 Armoured Car Company also arrived at Hinaidi from Amman, and the Armoured Car Sections were disposed as follows: -

No. 1 Section, No. 1 A.C.C.	-----	Mosul
No. 2 Section, No. 1 A.C.C.	----	Diana.
No. 3 Section No. 1 A.C.C.	----	Sulaimania
Half No. 4 section No. 1 A.C.C.)		Hinaidi
“ B “ Section, No. 2 A.C.C.)		Hinaidi

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In the meanwhile, the A.O.C. personally addressed the Levies at Hinaidi, Sulaimania, Diana, Mosul and Erbil, in a last attempt to convince them of the desperate folly of their intentions, and to persuade them to reconsider their proposed plan before it was too late. By bringing home to them the terrible destitution and distress in which they and their families would find themselves if they carried out their plan of concentrating in the Amadia district, it was hoped that many would secretly be glad of any excuse to escape such a disaster, and that they would, therefore, be in reality thankful to accept the way out which we intended to impose.

By the evening of 27th June, all levy detachments had rejoined their parent units, the Margil company had arrived at Hinaidi and all four companies of the Northamptonshire Regiment had reached their stations. Guard duties at Erbil and Kirkuk were assumed by detachments of the 'Iraqi Army, at Basrah by the Royal Air Force and at Ser Amadia by Royal Air Force personnel at the Summer Training Camp.

By 28th June, levy dispositions were as follows: -

1st Battalion (less 2 companies (	----	At Diana.
1 Company, 1st Battalion	----	At Mosul
2nd Battalion (less 2 companies)	----	At Sulaimania.
1 Company, 1st Battalion	----	At Hinaidi.
2 Companies, 2nd Battalion .	----	At Hinaidi.

On this day also guard duties at the four main stations were relinquished by the levies and assumed as follows: -

Diana.---By "B" Company, Northamptonshires.

Mosul, --- By "A" Company, Northamptonshires.

Sulaimania, ---By"C" Company, Northamptonshires.

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Hinaidi, ---

Levy Lines. --- By "D" Company, orthamptonshires.
 Magazine. --- By R.A.F. Guard.
 Aerodrome. --- By R.A.F. Guard.
 Residence. --- By 'Iraqi Army.
 A.O.C's Residence. - By R.A.F. Service Police.

On the morning of 29th June, the levies at all four stations handed in their arms and ammunition without trouble of any kind. By the same evening the arms from Sulaimania and Diana had arrived at Hinaidi and were safely deposited in the magazine. The stage was now set for the critical announcement which was to be made to the levies simultaneously at 0700 hours local time next morning by the Officers Commanding at all four stations to the effect that the officers and men of the levies were to be detained at the pleasure of His Majesty's Government.

WITHDRAWAL OF THE MANIFESTO

It was precisely at this moment, namely the evening of 29th June, after the Levies had been safely disarmed, that letter were received from the Mar Shimoun by the leading Assyrian officers calling off the "strike" and cancelling the manifesto.

This very dramatic *denouncement* was the result of further negotiations between the Mar Shimoun and the High Commissioner. It was the Mar Shimoun himself who had initiated the correspondence which finally resulted in this last minute cancellation of the Levy resignations. Negotiations had to all appearance reached a final deadlock on 21st June, when the Oriental Secretary, Captain Holt, reported from Amadia no change in the attitude of the leaders, and the High Commissioner thereupon informed the Colonial Office that negotiations had broken down and that he had had, therefore, to ask for the move of the battalion from Egypt. However, on 25th June, the

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Mar Shimoun suddenly re-opened negotiations by a signal which indicated a very changed attitude of mind.

Whereas previously he had insisted on the acceptance of all the Assyrian demands (except one dealing with Hakkari), he now intimated that he would order the Assyrian officers and soldiers to continue to serve loyally if only the High Commissioner would undertake to give his personal support to the Assyrian demands. In the few days between the 25th and the end of the month, letters and telegrams between the High Commissioner and the Mar Shimoun followed each other in rapid succession. Ultimately, on 27th June, the High Commissioner dispatched his final conditions which were accepted by the Mar Shimoun on 28th June. The Mar Shimoun, prompted by Squadron Leader G.S. Reed, O.B.E., who had been sent to Amadia to assist in the final negotiations, prepared on the 28th and 29th the necessary letters to the Levy units instructing them to continue to serve the British Government loyally for a further specified period. These letters were rushed to the units by air and for the most part reached their destination that afternoon and evening after the Levies had been disarmed.

SPEED OF COMMUNICATION

It was fortunate that the Mar Shimoun in his remote summer resort on Ser Amadia was located close to the Royal Air Force Summer Training Camp, commanded by Squadron Leader O. W. de Putron. The presence of the camp enabled us to keep in close touch with the Assyrian leaders, and also enormously facilitated the passage of correspondence between Baghdad and Ser Amadia. Had it not been for the wireless station at Ser Amadia and the landing ground in close proximity at Bebadi, it would not have been possible to have got the Mar Shimoun's cancellation orders through before the end of the month, when

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the Assyrians would already have demanded their discharge.

THE RECEIPT OF THE MAR SHIMOUN'S LETTERS BY THE ASSYRIANS

It had naturally been confidently anticipated that the receipt by the Levies of the instruction of the Mar Shimoun would have at once put an end to their intention to resign at the end of the month. This, however, did not immediately prove to be the case. Both at Sulaimania and Hinaidi, and to a lesser extent at Mosul, considerable doubt was expressed by the men as to the genuineness of the Mar Shimoun's letters. They could not conceive that the great plan for a national concentration could have been abandoned at the last moment. They noticed that the letters did not bear the Mar Shimoun's seal and asked for some more convincing confirmation of his instructions. When these objections were communicated to the Mar Shimoun he caused fresh letters to be prepared, signed and sealed in due form, and these also were expressed by air to all units on 30th June 1932.

INSUBORDINATION AT HINAIDI

The second edition of the letters proved definitely acceptable at Mosul, Diana and Sulaimania, and satisfactory reports from these three places were soon received stating that the men were prepared to carry out the Mar Shimoun's orders, and to continue to serve. At Hinaidi, however, all three companies vehemently discredited the genuineness of the letters and from the evening of the 29th, began vociferously to demand their immediate discharge. They would accept no explanations or assurances from either their British or Assyrian officers, and when all attempts in this direction to bring them to reason had failed, they were informed on the afternoon of the 30th that they would be

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confined to camp. Prearranged steps to this end were taken by placing guards on the Levy lines and by the control of traffic on the roads.

These unruly companies were duly informed according to plan that they would not be permitted to take their discharges in a body, but that they would be allowed to go at a reasonable rate. During the succeeding eight days, eight officers and 228 other ranks took their discharge and were conveyed in batches to the railway station for entrainment to Mosul.

COLLAPS OF MOVEMENT

On 9th July 1932, however, the remaining officers (nine) and men (213) at Hinaidi signified their wish to continue in the service. They paraded as usual, and were detailed for fatigues.

ASSURANCES FOR THE FUTURE

It now remained to take steps to ensure that there could be no repetition of this unfortunate episode. The letters addressed by the Mar Shimoun to all Levy units on 30th June, had given instructions that during the period of three months in which a reply from the League might be expected, the Levies were to serve loyally and if at the end of that period they wished to be discharged, they must do so in a regular and proper manner.

It was now explained to the Mar Shimoun that continued service in the Levies would not be acceptable without satisfactory guarantees of good behaviour for the future. It would obviously be most unwise and dangerous to maintain a force of armed men unless their loyalty and reliability were assured. Furthermore, the Mar Shimoun's instructions to continue in the service held good only for three months, whereas the High Commissioner's condi-

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tions which the Mar Shimoun had accepted stipulated that the Levies would undertake to serve loyally and truly until an answer was received from the League of Nations to the Assyrian petition, and it was unlikely that this answer would be received until the middle of October at the earliest.

The High Commissioner therefore requested the Mar Shimoun to instruct all Levy units that they were individually to give their word of honour that they would serve the British Government loyally and truly until an answer to their petition was received from the League of Nations, and that if they then wished to take their discharges, they were not to go in a body but must do so over a reasonable period not exceeding one month, in accordance with the orders of their British officers.

At first the Mar Shimoun regarded this request with some suspicion. He thought that an attempt was being made to obtain guarantees that the Levies would give no trouble until after the admission of 'Iraq to the League of Nations, which was expected to take place in September. He expected a reply to the petition before that date.

However, after receiving an assurance that the High Commissioner would do everything he could to obtain the reply as early as possible, and after another conference with the leaders on 6th July, further letters were issued by the Mar Shimoun in accordance with the High Commissioner's conditions.

The letters arrived at the various levy units on 10th July, and on 12th July all officers and men gave individual undertakings to abide by their terms. All restrictions were then removed. On this day also the High Commissioner gave authority for arrangements to be made for the return of the 1st Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment to Egypt.

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By 16th July, all Levy units had been re-armed and had resumed their normal guard duties in relief of the British troops, who commenced their return journey to Egypt on 18th July.

It is difficult to say how far the arrival of the Northamptonshire Regiment influenced the Mar Shimoun's sudden change of heart, but there is no doubt that their arrival completely altered the whole aspect of the situation. Up to that time the Assyrians felt that they had the upper hand, but from the moment the Northamptonshire Regiment appeared it was apparent to everybody, 'Iraqis as well as Assyrians, that the British Government were not disposed to be trifled with. **It was impossible for the Assyrians to know to what extent we were prepared to make use of this battalion in compelling the Assyrians to obey orders.** The Assyrian leaders and the Assyrian troops themselves might well have concluded that the British Government would not have gone to the trouble and expense of drafting this batalion into 'Iraq without intending to make use of the force which was thus placed at its disposal. The one thing which it was certain both the leaders of the Assyrians and the Assyrian soldiers themselves would wish to avoid was any physical conflict with the British authorities, and the arrival of this battalion, with its threat of the use of force, undoubtedly gave rise amongst the Assyrian soldiers to great anxiety. In my opinion the sudden appearance of the battalion was the principal cause of the re-opening of negotiations by the Mar Shimoun, with the happy results which subsequently transpired.

The general conduct and bearing of the officers and men of the Northamptonshires were beyond praise. The battalion undoubtedly made a great impression on the Assyrians and brought home to them something of the disgrace of their own behaviour. It is worth mentioning, per-

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haps, that without any initiative on the part of their officers the men of "D" Company at Hinaidi, who up to the 29th June were playing games and associating freely in a friendly way with the Assyrian soldiers, would have nothing whatever to do with them from the moment they showed signs of insubordination. This was typical of the admirable spirit which prevailed in the battalion. Colonel T. S. Murhead, the officer commanding the battalion was in every way most helpful and did all he could to assist in the difficult task of controlling the Levies at Hinaidi.

During the critical period Brigadier J. G. Browne, C.M.G., C.B.E., D.S.O., displayed the greatest firmness and good judgment in dealing with the insubordinate Assyrians at Hinaidi. At one time the situation at the Levy barracks at Hinaidi was very difficult and most disquieting. The men were openly insubordinate and refused to obey all orders. That the situation did not deteriorate was largely due to the firmness of the Company Commanders, who did not hesitate to arrest and confine the worst offenders, and in particular to the personal influence of Brigadier Browne himself, through which the situation was kept well in hand.

The special precautions by means of which the Assyrians were kept confined to their camp were ordered on 29th June and remained in force until 12th July. These precautions entailed a considerable amount of extra work of a very trying nature, including the manning of posts on the roads day and night during very hot weather. The conduct of all concerned throughout this difficult period was admirable, and in general all the airman, including those of the flying squads and others engaged in special duties, showed admirable keenness and uncomplaining readiness to endure considerable discomfort and hardship in the heat of an 'Iraqi midsummer'. The ready manner in which the 'Iraqi Government came to our assistance and provided

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guards, either of the 'Iraqi Army or Police, wherever required should be recorded, together with an appreciation of the services of the 'Iraqi Railways for their readiness to co-operate in controlling railway traffic, should that have proved necessary.

Further negotiations followed the publication of the National Pact. It was finally arranged that the Mar Shimoun should proceed to Geneva and present the demands in person to the Council of the League. He

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MALIK YACU MALIK ISMAIL

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despite his protestations of loyalty, the Mar Shimoun had not yet taken out Iraqi nationality papers and so had no passport. The Mar Shimoun complained, nevertheless, that difficulties were placed in the way. However, he went in the end, though it does not appear that he was told that not only Iraq but Great Britain would resist his demands. The Mar Shimoun left Mosul in October. He failed completely at Geneva. The proceedings there have already been described. He returned to Mosul at the end of December. Whether on his return he would have accepted the situation with the best grace possible is, perhaps, in any event doubtful, but during his absence certain things had happened which were bound to make him all the more suspicious of the good faith of the Iraqi Government.

CHAPTER 11
THE AFFAIR OF MALIK YACU
MALIK ISMAIL

During the late autumn of 1932 a violent campaign of propaganda and counter-propaganda had been going on in the Mosul Liwa. A certain Yacu, of whom there will be occasion to write much more, (Malik Yacu). had been touring the districts of Dohuk and Amadiyah on Mar Shimoun propaganda. Yacu was the son of Ismail, malik of the Upper Tiyyari, one of the most important Assyrian clans. He was a senior officer in the Levies, and had shown himself a good soldier in many engagements. That he was carrying out this propaganda while he was still a serving soldier was certainly a breach of the spirit, if not of the letter, of the undertaking which the Levies had recently given not to interfere with politics. **The local government authorities, too, had embarked on a vigorous campaign of anti-Mar Shimoun propaganda. They were doing everything in their power to weaken his influence. The officials may be given credit, at any rate, for thining that by weakening the Mar Shimoun they were benefiting the Assyrians. To some extent this Government propaganda was successful, and a petition counter to the Mar Shimoun, and signed by certain Asyrian leaders, was actually forwarded to the League**

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of Nations. For, as throughout Assyrian history, there was a party actively opposed to the Mar Shimoun. The leader of this party was Khoshaba, (Malik Khoshaba) one of the chiefs, though not the real malik of the Lower Tiyari clan. Khoshaba was a man of a stormy past. As a warrior he had done valiant service during the war. He had not taken part in the adventure of Agha Petros, with whom he had been on the worst of terms. Owing to a blood feud with a family of Kurds in the Lizan valley, he had been unable to return to Iraq when the Turks evicted the mountaineers from Hakkiari. He was, indeed, more a *persona grata* with the Turks than was any other Assyrian. On his return to Iraq he murdered his wife and daughter, whom he suspected of immoral conduct, and action which, though common enough for such a cause among the Arabs, had shocked the sensibilities of the Assyrians. A fall over a precipice in company with a bear had been a further shock to his nerves. He was a man of moods, and though his sincerity could hardly be doubted, his whole life was dominated by his hatred of the Mar Shimoun. He had, however, been among the signatories of the National Pact. He was, in short, by no means a type who could ever become a national leader. In his dislike of the Mar Shimoun, he was backed by the Bishop Yawallahah. This individual has been mentioned before for his gallantry in resisting the incursion of the Turks in 1921. His private life and character were, however, far from blameless. These two had long been opposed, for personal reasons, to the Mar Shimoun. It was not difficult to win them over to the Government side. But gradually the Government propaganda had other successes. **Bishop Sirkis of the Jilu, Zia, son of Shemsidin, the real malik of the Lower Tiyari, Malik Nimrud of the Jilu, Malik Khammo of the Baz,** and others were also won over. The news of the falling away of these people greatly angered the Mar Shimoun. He was still more incensed when he learnt that

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Khoshaba had been, in his absence, appointed as President of the Assyrian Advisory Committee, which had been set up to assist the official committee established the previous summer to find lands for those Assyrians who were still landless. The Mar Shimoun naturally felt that by this appointment of his deadliest enemy the Government had prejudged the whole case against him. In making this appointment the Local Iraqi authorities were undoubtedly guilty of a serious error of judgment. They argued that Khoshaba was the only leader who would work with them, but a little less haste might have obtained the co-operation of the Mar Shimoun.

An attempt on the part of the local Iraqi officials to nominate the maliks and raises of the different Assyrian tribes and sections further angered the Mar Shimoun, for such appointments had by tradition and in practice always been in his right. The attempt was ill-advised, especially as it was contrary to the general policy of the Iraqi Government, which years before had ceased to nominate sheikhs among the Arab tribes. Such titles had become purely honorary, and it would have been wiser to have allowed them to be so among the Assyrians also.

The Iraqi Government committed another serious mistake in not broadcasting to the Assyrians the details of the League's decision. The omission to do so allowed room for misleading reports and propaganda. The extraordinary manner in which ridiculous reports are spread and are believed in the East is well known to anyone who has lived there. The decision of the League was, it is true, published in the Arab newspapers, but the Arab newspapers were suspect among the Assyrians. A meeting of all the Assyrian leaders should certainly have been convened by the Government early in the year, so that the facts of the case and the Government policy could be explained. There was everything to gain from a frank exchange of

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views. Unfortunately, this meeting was not held until July 1933, when it was too late. One of the reports most generally circulated was that the League would appoint a committee of three foreigners, none of them English, who would undertake the settlement of the landless Assyrians. For, on his return, the Mar Shimoun had realised that there was no future for the Assyrians except in Iraq and had told his followers that this was the case. The cause of most of the trouble last summer was, apart from the question of "temporal" power, the refusal of the Mar Shimoun to co-operate with the Iraqi Government in the settlement which it was proposing to carry out. Actually, as related in a previous chapter, the League had accepted the Iraqi Government's undertaking to appoint a foreign official, not at that time employed in Iraq, to advise it on this settlement, and Major Thomson, an experienced official from the Sudan, arrived in Mosul at the beginning of June. But even Major Thomson's arrival failed to check the reports regarding the three foreigners. In fact, the Mar Shimoun's influence was such that only one definite application for land was ever made to Major Thomson.

While all this was happening the Government was taking such a serious view of the Mar Shimoun's non-co-operative policy that the Minister of Interior, in May 1933, sent for him to come to Baghdad. By a coincidence it happened that King Feisal early in June left on his state visit to London. From the beginning of his reign the King had shown remarkable skill in balancing the conflicting claims of the different sections of his heterogeneous kingdom, and it is probable that had he not left Baghdad and thus lost touch with the situation, the events that were to follow in the late summer might have been averted. With the King to Europe went the best brains in the Iraqi Cabinet, the one or two statesmen like men that the country possessed. At the helm in Baghdad was a group of ministers who lacked the wider vision and who reacted too

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quickly to national sentiment. When the Minister of Interior asked the Mar Shimoun to come to Baghdad, it was hoped that the misunderstandings between the Patriarch and the Government might be removed by personal conversations. It was indeed essential that something should be done, for while Baghdad was Baghdad, Mosul was Mosul. In Baghdad the politicians and effendis have always been busy bandying political theory and enjoying any political intrigue. In Mosul the mixed townsfolk, Christian and Moslem, lived much nearer the brink of the volcano. A recent incident in Mosul had greatly increased the tension in the town. Stones had been thrown at the houses of certain officers of the Iraqi Army, including **Bekir Sidqi Beg**, who was in command at Mosul, and Assyrians were accused. What happened is still somewhat of a mystery, but it appears that it was the Assyrians who really threw the stones but that the underlying reason was personal and not political. However, as frequently happens in the East, the Iraqi Army magnified the whole affair and took it as an insult, with the result that the simmering dislike of the Assyrians, which the Iraqi Army had always felt, grew rapidly into intense hatred. The British, as usual, were accused of connivance.

A ridiculous story went the rounds that the Air Officer Commanding and Brigadier Browne, who was in command of the Levies, had visited the Mar Shimoun in disguise, wearing beards and Kurdish clothes. The British liaison officer to the Iraqi Army at Mosul, Major White, was the object of bitter attacks and had to be transferred. Altogether the situation became extremely tense, for behind the hatred and suspicion was a real fear of the Assyrians. On my way up to Mosul from Diwaniyah in the south at the end of May, I had a conversation with the Minister of Interior, **Hikmet Beg Suleiman**, in which he expressed a real concern as to the possibility of an outbreak of the Assyrians in Mosul. There was at that time

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not the least likelihood of such an event, but that such a responsible person as the Minister of Interior should even consider it possible showed to what a point suspicion and misunderstanding had reached. **It may be, looking back after the event, that the Army leaders had already decided that the Assyrians must be taught a severe lesson and that the concern expressed by the Minister was based upon information or tendentious propoganda put up by the Army to excuse itself in advance.**

Whatever the truth, it is unfortunate that the conversations between the Minister and the Mar Shimoun, which had to be carried on through an interpreter as the Mar Shimoun knew little Arabic and the Minister no Syriac, only had the effect of deepening the mutual suspicion and distrust. Nor was the advice of the British Ambassador (The High Commissioner under the Mandate became the Ambassador once Iraq attained independence.) or other British officials, which was freely offered to the Mar Shimoun, productive of any result. It must be admitted that Sir Francis Humphrys and the Mar Shimoun were mutually antipathetic, while at this time the Mar Shimoun thought that all British officials in the service of the Iraqi Government had not other object but to further the interests of Iraq, however much these interest might clash with those of the Assyrians.

On his arrival in Baghdad the Mar Shimoun was, on May 28th, handed a letter from the Minister of Interior. The text of this letter was as follows:

During my recent visit to Mosul I explained to you the attitude of Government with regard to your personal position and I now wish to confirm in writing what you have already heard verbally.

The Government is willing to recognise you officially as the Spiritual Head of the Assyrian Community

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and to promise that you will at all times receive the respect due to you as the holder of that position. As you have already been told by the Mutaserrif of Mosul, it is anxious to enlist your help in preparing a Community Law on the lines of those already in force in the case of other communities. In order that your spiritual dignity should be properly maintained it has under consideration the creation of a source of income to assist you in a permanent manner and it does not intend to curtail the monthly allowance which is at present paid to you until such time as it is satisfied that you have ample provision from other sources.

I must, however, make it clear that the Government cannot agree to delegate to you any temporal authority. Your position will be the same as that of the other Spiritual Heads of Communities in Iraq; in all matters of administration the members of the Assyrian Community must conform to the laws, regulations, and manner of procedure which applies to all other Iraqi. I need not assure you how sincerely anxious the Government is to do everything possible to see the Assyrian Community, like other Iraqis, happy and contented and loyal subjects of His Majesty the King. It has declared its policy fully to the League of Nations at Geneva, which intimated its approval.

Amongst other things, in accordance with an agreement reached there last autumn, it is obtaining the services of a foreign expert to advise in the important matter of land settlement. This expert, Major Thomson, is expected to arrive in Mosul at the end of this month. His work will be of the greatest importance to the Assyrian community, and I trust that he will receive the fullest assistance from all those who have the welfare of the community at heart. I have noticed with regret that you have up to the present adopted an unhelpful and, according to some reports, even

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an obstructive attitude in this very important matter, and I am therefore compelled to ask you to give me a written guarantee that you will do nothing to make the task of Major Thomson and the Government more difficult.

If there are any points which I have not made clear in this letter, I shall be glad if you will bring them to my notice. The recognition of your position as described above is conditional on your acceptance of it and on your giving a solemn promise that you will in all ways and at all times act as a loyal subject of His Majesty the King. I shall be obliged if you will do this in a written reply to this letter in the form attached.

Enclosure

I, Mar Shimoun, have perused your Excellency's letter No. S/1104, dated May 28, 1933, and accept all that is contained therein.

I hereby undertake that I will do nothing to make the task of Major Thomson and the Iraqi Government in connection with the settlement scheme difficult, and that I will in all ways and at all times act as a loyal subject of His Majesty the King.

The Mar Shimoun thereupon wrote the following letter to King Feisal, dated May 31st:

I humbly request leave to give Your Majesty my opinion in the following lines about the present police of the Mosul authorities as I see it to settle the Assyrian question.

Knowing that a word from our Majesty at this hour to your Majesty's Advisers could change this policy, and thus bring the affairs of the Assyrians to a successful issue.

I was ordered by the Mutaserrif of Mosul with great urgency to proceed to Baghdad immediately in

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response to an invitation from the Minister of Interior, to discuss with him and Major D. B. Thomson, the Foreign Expert for the new Assyrian Settlement Scheme of the Assyrian affairs.

On the sixth day after my arrival in Baghdad, and after many attempts, I was granted an interview with H. E. the Minister of Interior.

In the meantime I have word from Mosul that the authorities there are still continuing their old policy with regard to the Assyrian question. If this is the case it is inconsistent with the purpose of my invitation to Baghdad as explained to me.

I very much regret to have to bring it to Your Majesty's notice that during my interview with H. E. the Interior Minister I was informed of the unfavourable attitude of the present Government towards me personally.

If I did not participate with the present policy adopted by Mosul authorities the reason has been that the policy was entirely unconstructive.

I do feel most confident that the present policy which has now for some time been carried on by the Mosul Liwa authorities only, as I presume, and which has already proved a failure, is not consistent with the noble spirit of Your Majesty, which has been more than once most graciously expressed to me by Your Majesty personally.

I take advantage of your noble spirit and fatherly kindness to assure myself that Your Majesty's desire is to make the Assyrian people a contented, loyal and helpful subject people within Your Majesty's Dominion, and to attain this end I am ready as I always have been to offer my utmost services to Your Majesty.

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Hoping at this later hour that some constructive scheme can be arranged, which will enable my people and myself to prove to Your Majesty's person our loyalty and gratitude.

In his reply to the Minister the Mar Shimoun declined to give his written undertaking. His letter is of some interest as in it he attempts to define the "temporal" authority of the Assyrian Patriarch, though, as noted in a previous chapter, his definition was by no means clear. In a later letter, however, written on June 28th, the Mar Shimoun states that "I am not claiming temporal power in the sense of temporal power delegated to me by the Governments named (he meant the Abbasids, Turks, etc.), but was referring to the traditional customs of the Assyrians which I desire to see maintained." This was hardly clear, nor did the letter show that the Mar Shimoun in any way realised that times had changed.

Conversations and interchange of letters continued for the next three weeks but without result. The Mar Shimoun wished to return to Mosul. On June 24th, however, the Minister of Interior wrote to the Mar Shimoun as follows:

I confirm my answer given to you by telephone on Thursday that I do not wish you to leave Baghdad for the present, pending further instructions. On June 29th the Mar Shimoun wrote as follows to the Minister: I beg to state that the action of the Government now confirmed by your letter No. B/1273 of June 24th, 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 rest with the Government.

I also wish to point out that the methods adopted by the local officials in dealing with the Assyrian Settlement Policy is contrary to the "Fundamental Law"

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or the Guarantee given by the Iraqi Government to the League of Nations on May 30, 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 fulfilment of the promises and recommendations of the League of Nations.

Finally, I again 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 Assyrians in Iraq.

(b) After settlement I will give the required promises in writing to do my best to make my Assyrian people as one of the most loyal and law-abiding subject of His Majesty and His Government.)

(c) I will then make preparations in accordance with the canons of my Church for drafting of a 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 (the right of Assyrians to leave Iraq).

P.S. -- May I draw your Excellency's attention to the inflammatory speech of an honorary Deputy recorded and broadcasted in towards the Assyrians.

The Mar Shimoun sent copies of this letter to all the foreign Ministers in Baghdad.

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The receipt of this letter infuriated not only the Minister of Interior but the whole Cabinet. Some of the Ministers wished legal action to be taken against him. What form such action should take was doubtful. Hikmet Beg Sulieman himself wished to arraign the Mar Shimoun before the ordinary courts, but on what charge was by no means clear. On the other hand, his detention in Baghdad or elsewhere on no charge at all was quite illegal. It could best be regulated by the provisions of the Tribal Criminal and Civil Disputes Regulations. The trouble was that these regulations applied properly only to tribesemen, but as the Mar Shimoun was claiming the headship of a tribe, as apart from that of a religious sect, the regulations might perhaps be stretched sufficiently to deal with him. A third alternative was the expulsion of the Mar Shimoun from Iraq as an undesirable alien

The Mar Shimoun had, as already stated, steadfastly refused to take out Iraqi nationality papers. On the other hand, he was as an ex-Ottoman subject now resident in Iraq, technically an Iraqi national. In the end he remained in Baghdad, living at the Y.M.C.A. under more or less open arrest until the end of August, when he was expelled from Iraq under a departmental decree of very doubtful legal validity. Further complications had been, however, added by the receipt of several telegrams from King Feisal, who was now on his state visit to London, instructing the Cabinet to allow the Mar Shimoun to return to Mosul on his own terms. The Ministers were much irritated by these telegrams and more than once threatened to resign. They considered that the King had allowed himself to be swayed by the views of the British Foreign Office. King Feisal, indeed, was out of touch with the situation, which had changed considerably since he had left the country a few weeks before. The whole affair may have been clumsily handled --- with the depths of mutual suspicion existing it was difficult to make any

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progress --- but the position had been reached that to allow the Mar Shimoun to return to Mosul on his own terms would have been a fatal blow to the prestige of the Government.

In the last chapter we have described the activities of the Mar Shimoun and his immediate entourage, but there were other Assyrians in the north who were beginning to come into the picture. By the end of 1932 it was evident to everyone in Iraq that the new independence had come to stay, and the Assyrians began to feel that they must themselves cast around for some solution to their problem.

Mention was made in the last chapter of Yacu, son of Malik Isamil. In January 1933 he resigned from the Levies, with whom he had served for the three previous years at Diana, near Rowanduz, on the newly opened motor road through the gorge into Persia. His father, Malik Ismail, now an old man, had been living there with him, but when Yacu resigned his commission both left Diana for Simmel, a large village about ten miles from Dohuk, the name of which will become particularly familiar in later pages. (*Some of the Assyrians in Simmel belonged to the Upper Tiyari, Malik Ismail's tribe, but the majority were Baz, also originally mountaineers from Hakkiari. The bulk of the settled Upper Tiyari occupied villages in the Bageria area on the main Dohuk-Amadiyah road.*)

The Mar Shimoun having embarked upon a policy of non-co-operation, Yacu, as one of his men, began in the early spring of 1933 to tour the Assyrian villages on a campaign of propaganda in support of this policy. His campaign was most intensive in the villages of the Dohuk district and in the Supna valley in Amadiyah. These activities were unsettling, not only to the Kurds in the neighbourhood, who had naturally heard of and were anxious

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about the projected Assyrian enclave in their country, but also among the Assyrians themselves, for they were now hopelessly divided, and those who had joined the pro-Government policy bitterly resented the conduct of Yacu. As always in the East, personalities came to bulk more and more largely, with the result that the questions at issue tended to be regarded less and less strictly on their merits. **Mekki Beg el-Sherbiti**, Qaimaqam of Dohuk, had been particularly successful in detaching Assyrians from the Mar Shimoun and in so doing he had earned the hatred of his followers. Yacu and Mekki Beg were personally antagonistic. Of all the Iraqi officials, none has been so bitterly attacked by the Assyrians as the Qaimaqam of Dohuk. He has been almost universally described as a bloodthirsty murderer. This was far from being the case. Mekki Beg came from Mosul and was an Iraqi nationalist. He desired nothing more than the future of his country. He considered, rightly or wrongly, that the Mar Shimoun was a danger, and he worked hard and, as already stated, with much success, to weaken his influence.

This, however, does not necessarily imply that he was opposed to the Assyrians as a whole. On the contrary, he, like the majority of responsible Iraqi officials, wished to see them become contented citizens of Iraq. In August he was for a time Political Officer with the Army, and in this capacity carried out his conversations with the French in a very satisfactory manner. Later, it is true, some of his actions at Dohuk were reprehensible, but at that time he was terrorized by the Army, the officers of which openly stated that he was a traitor to Iraq. It would have taken a much stronger man than he was to withstand them, and he was quite unable to prevent the executions at Dohuk. On the other hand, he was almost the only official who on his own initiative did anything to relieve the sufferings of the women and children. And in this I, personally, found him

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extremely helpful. Yacu's propaganda tours were, perhaps, not definitely illegal, though as he was persuading the Assyrians not to apply for Iraqi nationality and settlement, the last chance of settlement that they would ever have, he was undoubtedly doing them much harm. His habit of moving about with a large armed following was, however, clearly illegal. It is true that in the Kurdish mountains everyone is armed, and many others who've been equally loyal to us to their inevitable doom. We talk glibly enough about the assured security of the minorities when we know and a Kurdish Agha would think it beneath his dignity to move about without an armed guard. But Yacu was not a Kurdish Agha, and yet his following was often greater than that of any of the big Kurdish chiefs, and as such was likely to lead to a breach of the peace. In the year 1928 Mr. A. M. Hamilton was appointed to build a road in North of Iraq, it traverses on its way the gorges of Rowanduz and Berserini, and he called the road The Hamilton road runs from the Arbela of Alexander past the home of Saladin to the Persian plateau. The year 1932 saw the road completed by the end of the fast of Ramadhan, which fell that year in the late winter. One evening about this time said Mr. Hamilton, I sat in my hut in the Berserini Gorge chatting with Captain Baker Sidqi, an officer who had motored up from a district farther south to visit our part of the country. We had just come in from a walk along the road. As we passed the men's camp a coolie had pointed out to us in the V of sky between the steep sides of the gorge to the westward, the new moon that proclaimed the end of the Fast of Ramadhan. 'The gangs will be feasting to-night to make up for their month of comparative starvation,' I said to Baker. 'Had they consulted a calendar they would have discovered that the new moon was there behind the clouds two nights ago.'

'Well, that's Iraq for you,' said Baker, 'and yet we

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are said to have absolutely completed the education of the people --- at least so one must infer from our reports to the League of Nations. Now Baker was a most interesting character --- a man whose knowledge of the people, and the languages and traditions of Iraq was profound. Some might call him a dilettante and a cynic --- and so, superficially, he seemed to be --- but beneath his vein of evasive sarcasm lay a deep sense of responsibility to those he served, and to the ideal which he believed the British nation ought to strive after in Iraq. Of all the Englishmen I knew there, none more truly loved the East and its people. A gallant leader of lost causes and forlorn hopes was Baker; a man who believed in forming his opinions and making his decisions according to the facts as he found them. A man, therefore, who chafed under any orders he could not reconcile with his own clear-cut principles of justice. Like most other out-station officials in Iraq, he regarded with apprehension the recently proclaimed termination of the British Mandate, considering that this policy was bound to bring misfortune to many in the country who had trusted up. The reasons for the proposed hasty evacuation of the land were never made clear. We had to obey our orders. Yet we all knew that our work was but half completed and that the future if we left now --- was ominous. We felt that if our statesmen knew as much as we had learnt from our daily contact with the people they would have acted more cautiously. Storms and troubles surely lay ahead. As to the why and wherefore of it all we could but speculate.

The following conversation is presented in some detail to the reader that he may have a clear picture of the Assyrian-Iraq situation as it was then presented to me --- before the disastrous events of the following year. 'Yes, I am afraid that real education, and even toleration are still meaningless words in Iraq,' Baker was saying. 'The people of the country seem affable enough towards us on

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the surface, of course. In reality I believe that they consider us so many humbugs who always cloak or real aims under a guise of altruism and humanitarianism. They may despise us for this, but, more important, I believe they no longer respect us as a strong power.

‘Occasionally, as individuals, we may be popular and even praised by this faction or that --- depending on whether we’ve acted decently towards them or not --- but as for talking of Iraq’s everlasting gratitude towards Great Britain, that’s merely tomy-rot, and we-re fools if we let ourselves be led into delusions by such nonsense. Anyway it’s a slipshod policy, this evacuating without fulfilling our obligations. We’ve made friends with men like Ismail Beg here in Rowanduz for instance, yet we’re quite prepared to leave him that if we leave Iraq they have absolutely none. Such conduct can breed neither respect nor gratitude from any section.

‘As for gratitude, the Arab is a most astute judge of motives; he reads character intuitively and his real and lasting gratitude can be won only by the greatest self-sacrifice, and his respect only by pre-eminent qualities of leadership and fidelity to his interests.’

A MEETING THAT CAUSED THE ASSYRIAN TRAGIDY

As Baker leant forward to knock out his pipe after delivering himself of this speech, there came a rap at the door and Hamid ushered in my old friend, the Assyrian Rab Trema of the Levies, Yacu Ismail.

Yacu was resplendent in his major’s uniform, complete to sword-belt and service revolver. With moustache that turned up and with slight lisp in his speech, he was a very familiar visitor in my camp. His eyes had a way of lighting up and shining brightly when adventure was

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afoot, and I well knew his trusted worth as a companion in the mountains; but to-day he looked serious, even tired. I have brought my father, Malik Ismail, the head of our upper Tiyari Assyrians, to see you, Sir,' he said.

'Delighted,' I said, 'Bring him in to meet Captain Baker whom he already knows, I believe; come and sit by the fire, and Hamid shall fetch us some supper.'

The old man who entered on the arm of his son was a dignified Assyrian, wearing, as he usually did, the native dress of his people. It was similar in many respects to the Kurdish costume, though more varied and striking in colour, and instead of the grey fringed turban of the Kurd the head was surmounted by a shallow conical cap of thick felt which is peculiar to the Assyrians. White-haired, solemn and silent, with deeply-lined face of stone-grey colour, the old man looked and was one of the patriarchs of his people. He greeted us in Assyriac for he spoke very little English.

"I have just taken my father", Yacu explained, "over all your new bridges by car and far up the new road quite near to the Persian frontier. He is pleased to think that soon he will be able to motor to Urmia, and that we in Diana will then be but a few hours' journey from those of our people who still live in Persia.

'Yes,' I replied, 'it will be only a month or two before we reach the Persian plateau. Already my Department has arranged that Prince Ghazi shall open the new road, though I shan't be here to see it. They say that King Faisal is also coming with his ministers to inspect it, and I am sure he will be pleased with the part that the Assyrians have taken in its construction. One way and

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another you've helped a great deal, and my chief regret is that now my job here is completed I must be transferred from this district, and soon I may be out of the country altogether. I shall not see much of you from now on, Rab Trema, and shall just have to remember the good times we've had in the past.'

'We hear rumours of so many changes,' said Yacu with a trace of some anxiety in his voice. 'Do you think King Faisal will allow the Assyrians to remain at Diana, if, as we hear, the British Mandate is to terminate?'

'Oh, presumably,' I answered. 'You Assyrians have built Diana from a village of a couple of houses into quite a thriving town. It is now the capital of your Assyrian Empire just as Nineveh once was,' I laughed. 'Nobody, I imagine, will want to dispossess you of your little town.'

'So many rumours have reached us in the last few months,' he persisted. 'They have broken in upon the peace and optimism that was beginning to revive in our community. We hope that if the Mandate terminates, we shall still be under the protection of your all-powerful Air Force if we are to remain in this hostile Iraq'

Baker laughed and said rather cryptically, 'Why, of course, that's the whole idea --- as the League of Nations has been told.'

But Yacu just looked puzzled by these words and turned to me for an answer to his question.

'I am merely the road-engineer,' I said, 'and these matters are not within my province at all, but have not the Assyrians been regular British soldiers for the last ten years --- to say nothing of their sacrifice for the Allied cause during the war? All necessary pro-

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tection is always given to those who have served under our flag. And, quite apart from that, what is it you fear? The constitutional law of Iraq says there shall be no discrimination among the people, neither according to race nor religion. Arabs, Kurds, Jews and Christians have now all equal rights as they never had in Turkish days. Brittain gave that pledge to the League.'

'So the law says, but in truth are we Assyrians really a part of Iraq? Have we any lands that are our own as were the wild Hakkari mountains in Turkey, which we left sixteen long years ago to fight for our freedom? We cannot return to that old homeland, victorious though the Allies have long since been. 'I know I have no right to ask you or Captain Baker any questions as to our future, for that will be arranged by your Government and the League of Nations, but perhaps you could say something to reassure us at this anxious time.

'You who have worked among us may know, but does your nation as a whole realise what we have done since we first joined the Allied Powers in 1914? And now that the Mandate is to terminate will they see to it that our case is treated with that honour and justice for which the British people are noted?

'More than thirty years ago in the Hakkari mountains there came amongst us an English clergyman and missionary whom we greatly revere. I refer to the Rev. Dr. Wigram, a brave man who devoted his life to the education and betterment of our people. He founded the schools in which all we younger Assyrians have been educated. He taught us that the British nation stands for justice and liberty and that she has always stood by her pledged word. We believed him and that was why we joined the Allies and why we now hope that Britain will not leave us at the mercy of our

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enemies.’ ‘You’ve got a claim right enough, but your losses have branded you with the name of refugees, and the fact that you were an ally may easily be forgotten,’ said Baker.

‘But’, said the Assyrian, ‘by our desperate fighting and our slain soldiers did we not, when we fought our way to the side of the Russian Army, help materially to weaken Turkish resistance in Palestine and Mesopotamia, and thus contributed to the Allied victory?’ ‘Your little nation fought as gallantly here in Asia as Belgium did in Europe, was Baker’s reply. ‘Then is it known that though we lost nearly half our people in that struggle yet we have been dispossessed of all our lands and of our very homes ever since? Your British statesmen are well aware that we have served as Levy soldiers for ten long years and fought both Arab and Kurd on your behalf. Yet with what reward? We have not one inch of territory that we can call our own.’

‘We all appreciate your loyalty,’ I said. ‘Could this road have been built without the help of the Assyrians? The Kurds knew very well that they dare not challenge the (Assyrians) Diana battalion in mountain warfare.’

‘Then’, said the Assyrian, ‘it is strange that the Arabs have reaped a kingdom while we Assyrians, steadfastly supporting the British, reap nothing but promises --- as far as we yet know.

‘Hearing that Captain Baker was visiting you, we came to ask for any news of what might be provided for us in the future. It has been said in the past that we might perhaps be given some undeveloped corner of the British Empire. For centuries now we have been poor mountain folk and the Hakkari lands are so barren that even the Kurds have not used them since we left. The worst of territories would do if only it were a place of safety. If it

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should be impossible to arrange a migration of our 25,000 people at the present time, we should at least like to feel that we can rely upon British protection here in Iraq.

‘Look at our position to-day. We are scattered here and there in isolated groups, unwanted tenants in a hostile land, guarded only by the Mandate which now we hear is to terminate.

‘We believe that this scattering of our people throughout Northern Iraq has been planned by our enemies, who are allowed to suggest which places they think most suitable for us. Invariably they choose spots impossible for us to defend, or else malarial and unhealthy. For that matter it is pretty obvious that all the land in Iraq, which is naturally fertile and habitable is already occupied. What we need is some big irrigation scheme to open up new country. As yet nothing of the kind has been arranged for, and now the Mandate is to terminate.’

‘You Assyrians’, I said, ‘are as bad as the Kurds. You both seem to want a great deal in a very short time. After all, are you not now citizens of Iraq and free to take part in the Government, or at least able to persuade it to develop irrigation schemes or anything else you want?’

‘To ensure our protection such a scheme would have Government we have none,’ replied Yacu.

‘Oh, but there are many Assyrians in the police and other Departments of State,’ I exclaimed.

‘Yes, there are a few in junior positions,’ he admitted. ‘But none as senior officials, magistrates, judges, army officers or ministers or even Deputies in Parliament --- where our numbers would seem to warrant some representation. ‘We would not mind there being no share for

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us in the government if we could only be assured of our security in this northeren territory we have helped to open up. We have assisted with the roads and the buildings and in the police work of the north. We are not unfriendly with the Kurds. Ismail Beg, for example, has always treated us in as generous a way as we could desire. Do you think that perhaps Iraq will agree to keep us here to guard the northern frontier? No other troops could do it better. Then we might stay on at Diana.'

'I am sure something suitable is being arranged for you,' I said. 'Just you go on trusting us as you have always done.'

'Sorry to disappoint you, Yacu' said Baker, speaking slowly and standing up as he spoke, 'but there is little hope of your remaining at Diana. (The Levies, of course, were guarding the important Aerodrome at Diana in the interests of the Royal Air Force. with the termination of the Mandate, the activities of the R.A.F. in connection with the internal affairs of Iraq were to cease, and their place at Diana was to be taken by the Iraqi Air Force who would naturally be protected by the Iraqi Army.) Instead you are all to be moved to the lowlands well south of the Zab. Iraq knows all about the Assyrian as a mountain fighter and you have altogether too many friends here in Kurdistan --- at least certain people think so. 'Moreover, I am able to give you the hint that you will be "demobbed" and given orders to move from Diana even before we give up the Mandate. You will be told so officially before long, and then it will be "goodbye" to the mountains of Kurdistan.'

'To be moved to the Arab lowlands of Iraq!' said the Assyrian (Malik Yacu) in a low voice. Then after a pause, 'Is that true?'

'It is, I am afraid,' said Baker. 'Have you not been warned that your battalion is to be disbanded and that the

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air-landing ground, the barracks, and the town you have built are to be handed over to the Iraq Army'

'We have heard it rumoured,' he replied. 'Hence my questions to-day. Please allow me to tell my father.'

Yacu spoke a few sentences to the old man, who had sat during our conversation still as some sculptured figure hewn from the rock. He looked round upon us as Yacu ceased speaking and gave his reply in a voice that betrayed deep emotion. A grim, formidable warrior in his time, this head of the Fighting Tiyaris, as they proudly called themselves. Even now as he spoke to his son he was calm and dignified, but no longer was there any trace of hope to give life to his lined face.

'What does he say' I asked.

'He says', answered Yacu, 'that it was an ill day for his tribe when he led them to fight in a war for the liberty of small nations. Now we have to meet death at long last, so let us prepare to face the enemy whom we know, that we may the more readily forget the desertion of those whom to be under British control. As for our share in the we once thought to be our friends.'

'Very decent of the old chap to say nothing stronger than that about us,' muttered Baker, 'and for God's sake let's change the subject,' he added in my ear.

I pulled hard upon a bell-cord communicating with the kitchen next door, and Hamid promptly appeared with a tray of Kurdish savouries which satisfactorily disposed of the perplexing Assyrian situation for the time being.

Of course Baker proved to be right in the prophecy he had given of the impending demobilisation and transfer of the Assyrians from Diana. It was announced to them

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one day when the battalion had been specially paraded, and a bitter day it was for the Assyrians and their officers alike. They were told that these were the final months of their long terms as British Levies.

Though every Assyrian knew full well the significance of this parade, they marched and counter-marched across the mountain aerodrome with the precision of guardsmen the pride of 'Alf' and 'Mac' and the other company-commanders who had laboured many a weary year to train their men to so remarkable a pitch of efficiency.

Malik Ismail and the older patriarchs and leaders turned out too, and came forward to salute the man who for years had been their beloved idol, the veteran Scottish colonel whom they knew had the welfare of each one of them at heart, but was now powerless to help them further. To do him honour Malik Ismail and his fellow-patriarchs, arrayed in their best ill-fitting European clothes, tried to step as proudly as they had done in their youth while already knowing the sentence about to be pronounced upon their people.

These old men were the leaders who, sixteen years earlier, had brought their followers from the Hakkiari fastnesses into a great world war, little knowing that it was likely to be the last fatal pilgrimage of their ancient nation. Disappointed, disillusioned, decimated as they had been in those years of war in Persia and Turkey, the period of service in the Levies and life at Diana had been happy enough, and for a time a new optimism had been born; so they came now to honour the British soldiers who had shown understanding and given help, and whose leadership they were now to lose.

One by one the old men bowed with due defer-

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ence to the Commander. Silently they awaited the fateful words announcing their dismissal from Britain's charge.

The instructions for the future, when read, spoke highly of the past work of the Assyrians and emphasised Britain's continued interest and good intentions towards them. The proclamation said that, in accordance with the policy of terminating the British Mandate, this fine force of Assyrian Levy soldiers must be disbanded. (As many as could be accepted were re-enlisted in the new British Aerodrome guards formed on the termination of the Mandate.) The British Government were fully appreciative of the steadfast loyalty of the Assyrians and, though it was considered advisable that they should evacuate Diana, it had been arranged that lands near Mosul should be put at their disposal. There, and in the other regions already selected, they could live in peace and prosperity under the Government of Iraq. Each Assyrian would be allowed to retain his rifle and be given one hundred rounds of ammunition in return for the Russian or Turkish rifles brought with them when they joined the force. Needless to say the British Government would continue to watch and safeguard their interest though the Iraq Government, which they would find generously disposed towards them and anxious to absorb all the Assyrians into the national life of the kingdom.

Thus was judgment passed on this unfortunate people, the disastrous march of events which was to follow quite unforeseen by those who had formulated this policy, though guessed in some measure by many Englishmen in Iraq. Alf was silent and grave. He had no shafts of wit for the Rab Trema on such a day. The Assyrians raised no voice of protest. They looked but once to the Ser-i-Hasan-Beg mountain towering before

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them, emblematic of the Kurdish fastnesses where, with all its dangers, for centuries they had preserved the integrity of their race and their religion; and at the word of dismissal they saluted smartly and were gone.

With their going was lost a prestige that had been hard won by the untiring effort of a little band of British soldiers and officials during fifteen long years of war and toil in Mesopotamia. The Assyrians tried to make the best of the new situation, but again their efforts seemed cursed and doomed to failure.

‘Doubtless’, said Yacu, ‘there is something of special importance in the arrangements made between the British and the Iraq Governments to absorb us into the national life of Iraq. With my military experience I shall apply for a commission in the Iraq Army, or, failing that, in the Police.’ ‘Yes, do,’ I said. ‘I am certain the Arabs will welcome the chance of making friends with the Assyrians now that the much-criticised British regime has practically come to an end,’ but it turned out that his hopes were unfounded and his plans frustrated at every point.

When I saw him again my job in the Kurdish mountains was almost finished. In a week’s time I was to pack my gear into the long-suffering car for the last time and go down to report at Headquarters in Baghdad. We had built a road which, it was hoped, would not only assist trade between Persia and Iraq, but would also carry peaceful administration into this most remote corner of the new Kingdom. Yet as I spoke with Yacu Ismail I almost wondered whether it would not have been better for all the mountain people had road-makers never come their way.

Yacu told me the result of this applications and interviews. The senior Iraqi officials say they are not wanting any more Assyrians in Government service,

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and they will not have me either in the Police or in the Army. In fact, many of those Assyrians who already hold Government positions are now being dismissed. Two of my cousins who were at the new Military College at Baghdad have just been rejected. They were of our fighting tribe and well educated --- ideal men for soldiers one would have thought. I cannot understand it. It can be nothing but an unjust prejudice against us, although considering our role during the last ten years as chief agents of the Mandate, I suppose it is not surprising that the Arabs dislike us.

‘Moreover the Assyrians in the Police are being steadily reduced. Really it seems all very curious in the face of the statement given to us so recently by the British Government. I wonder what is the real truth of the matter’

I was beginning to wonder this myself, for I was frequently receiving instructions from Baghdad questioning the further employment of this or that Assyrian. There were no orders for their transference to other works of the Department when they were no longer needed for the road. This surprised me, for I had always told my men, and believed implicitly myself, that Iraq would fulfil its undertaking to absorb the Assyrians and all others of the Minorities into the full life of the country. What did it mean?

Some time after my arrival in Baghdad I ran into Baker, who happened to be in one of his rare visits to the city. In the course of conversation I mentioned the Assyrians, referring especially to those of my late staff who were now looking for work.

‘Oh, that’s all right,’ he said. ‘Tell them to apply to the oil companies for jobs. Those with engineering experience will be needed on the pipe-line that is being built from Kirkuk to the Mediterranean. when it’s fin-

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ished they'll just have to join up with their pals of the demobilised Levies who are wandering like bands of lost souls with your friend Yacu in the Dohuk district. Some say the Assyrians may move across the Tigris into Syria, the idea being that the French may offer the protection we've refused to give.

'Whether it is fortunate or unfortunate for Iraq that we have armed the country --- both the Assyrians and the Arabs --- with British rifles, it is not for me to say. But it seems strange considering that only a few years ago we were confiscating every rifle we could lay our hands on in order to keep the peace. You know as well as I do that despite all our efforts we have not eradicated racial and religious hatred in this land. Sooner or later someone is going to get excited, those guns will go off bang, and a whole lot of people will be killed.

'Frankly and in confidence,' he added seriously, 'I don't like the look of it. Time and again I have reported what I believe to be the dangers in the present situation, and others have done so too, but we are not popular at Headquarters, we out-station men with doleful forebodings. They just reply from H.Q. that we take our jobs too seriously or words to that effect.'

A year later. I was back in England. Like many hundreds of others of my profession I was busy searching Victoria Street, that Mecca of engineers, for new worlds to conquer; in other words looking for a job. Anything but a cheery business. Kurdish road-makers were not at a premium in Victoria Street in 1933, that year of economic depression.

In the daily fatigue and worry and in the roar and bustle of London's traffic, Iraq and its problems became but a faint memory of a past life; Kurdistan a romantic dream of places that surely never existed and characters

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which never really lived --- Ismail Beg, Shikh Sayed Taha, Sayed Heusni Effendi, Yacu and the others. And the Assyrians, who were they? I elbowed my way towards Victoria Station.

‘Assyrians!’

The name seemed to come out of the crowd around me. I stopped dead and was instantly assailed on all sides. ‘Taxi? No, thanks, I’ll walk. Oh, so sorry, I’ll get out of the way. I did not notice you were running for a train. No, I don’t want any balloons.’

Surely I had been dreaming. This was London, not Kurdistan. A newspaper vendor, his boards tied to the railing, shouted lustily,

“Ere y’are --- all the results. Latest edi-shun. Full account of the races. All the results. **Assyrians** --- ‘

There was the word again, and it was even on his bill-boards! I bought his papers and scanned the headlines:

**ASSYRIANS MASSACRED
IN IRAQ
315 VICTIMS FOUND
PRISONERS SHOT**

**There has been a massacre of Assyrians
near the small town of Simel, forty miles
north of Mosul ... villages full of panic
stricken women and children ...
315 Assyrian prisoner shot in cold blood.**

That is a past and unhappy history. The Assyrians have emerged from the fiery furnace into which they were

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hurled, scorched but still alive, still a racial entity. they are, however, still in Iraq, largely in refugee camps. An attempt indeed, full of promise, was made to provide them, on the banks of the Orontes, with an area suitable for settlement, to whose developement the British and French Governments were generously to contribute. Unfortunately, when the French decided to abandon their Mandate over Syria, the tribes in the neighbourhood of the chosen area declared themselves hostile to the scheme, and, consequently, it had to be dropped.

A benefit may, however, yet be wrong from this disappointment. For Britain has again the opportunity to right, within her Empire, a great injustice for which she is largely responsible. British Guiana --- a country suggested for settlement by the Assyrians and investigated to that end by the League some two years ago --- may perhaps be regarded as a land neither well developed, nor wholly suitable for a mountain people; but it is better by far than a refugee camp in Iraq, and it offers a splendid opportunity for opening up a little known and potentially wealthy corner of the Empire, to the joint advantage of Great Britain and her ancient allies.

It remains my fervent hope yet to see my Assyrian friends settled in a peaceful land far from the 'fret and fever' of past tribulations.

From what was mentioned earlier, when Malik Yaco heard from Baker Sidqi himself that the Levies at Diana where he was serving as an officer, will be dismissed and disbanded, and all the Assyrians in Diana Village be moved to the lowland, well South of the Zab, he told his father Malik Ismail what the Iraqi Government is planning to do with the Assyrians , It was Malik Ismail's idea to meet death at long last, and also said, let us prepare to face the enemy whom we know, that we may the more

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readily forget the desertion of those whom we once thought to be our friends, this was told in front of Baker Sidqi, an Iraqi officer and from this English Engineer Mr. A.M. Hamiltons hut the Assyrian plan was prepared for the whole Assyrians to abandon the British Services all over Iraq and move to the north of Iraq.

The first hint of serious trouble occurred early in May when Malik Yacu came to Dohuk to see the Qaimaqam with an armed following of thirty men. The Qaimaqam was ill and unable to see him, whereupon Malik Yaco wrote a rather insolent letter that he would be unable to come again, as he "was occupied by household affairs."

On June 14th an incident of the same kind took place. Major Thomson had two days before passed through Dohuk, and had arranged with the Qaimaqam to see on his return some of the Assyrian leaders in order to explain to them what he was going to try to do in the way of settlement. Among those invited to meet Major Thomson was Malik Ismail. He, however, was ill and had gone to Baghdad. His son, Yacu, came in his stead, and he came with over thirty armed men. Major Thomson, naturally considering this an insult to himself as well as to the Iraqi Government, declined to see him

A few days later it was reported that Malik Yaco had gone to Bageira, a village on the road to Amadiyah. There he had held a series of meetings, for the villagers here belonged to his tribe. It happened that Malik Khoshaba and others of the anti-Mar Shimoun party were returning on June 19th from Dohuk to Amadiyah. Reports had been received that Malik Yaco intended to stop the cars in which they were travelling. The Qaimaqam took the precaution of sending two police armed cars as an escort and nothing happened. As a matter of fact, it is improbable that

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Malik Yaco really intended any violence, but that his activities had angered the pro-Government Assyrians is shown by the following petition which the Mutasserrif, Mosul, received from them a few days later:

We the undersigned greatly regret the action of Yacu Malik Ismail who brought 100 armed men on the route of **Malik Khoshaba, Malik Chikko, and Malik Zaia**, in order to kill them, we now consider these three Maliks as already killed. Although prepared to revenge in this hour we do not wish to do what is contrary to the laws and the honour of the Government. We request the Government to punish the defiant Yacu or else we will take our revenge ourselves. We request Government not to blame us.

(Twelve signatures of Assyrian Maliks and Raises.)

Malik Yacu was, therefore, ordered to come in to Dohuk to explain his recent activities. He refused and continued to refuse. Thus a serious situation was reached. Either the Government had to enforce its orders, or it had to abdicate its authority. The situation was aggravated when most of the Assyrians from Bageira and the neighbouring villages took to the mountains.

I can testify that at this time the local Iraqi officials did their utmost to induce Malik Yaco to come in. They failed, as did Major Sargon, the British Inspecting Officer of Police, who went out himself and tried to reason with Malik Yaco. To him Malik Yaco said that he would only come if ordered to by the Mar Shimoun. Unfortunately, the Mar Shimoun was not helpful. It happened that the Bishop in Jerusalem, Dr. Graham Brown, was in Mosul at this time. He had come on business connected with the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrians, and, of course, had nothing to do with the Settlement question. I explained to him the situation and

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pointed out the appalling consequences of any armed conflict with the Government and Malik Yaco's followers.

I begged him on his return to Baghdad to use his influence with the Mar Shimoun to persuade him to write a letter to Malik Yaco advising him to come in. The Bishop went to Baghdad, but was unable to induce the Mar Shimoun to write to Malik Yaco. It would, perhaps, be unfair to say that the Mar Shimoun was indifferent to the probability of bloodshed, though it is obvious that he did not realize the danger, frequently as he and his followers had spoken of the Iraqi Government's intention to massacre all Assyrians, nor did he realize the extent of his responsibilities. Malik Yaco remained obdurate despite every attempt to induce him to come in. The following letter which he wrote showed his frame of mind (the original translation is retained):

1. He (Malik Yaco) will not go to Dohuk or Simmel, because if he went there his men numbering 200 armed would follow him, he therefore does not wish to affect his reputation by such a gathering.

2. He will keep the peace and if **Werda Bonadan** was released, he would withdraw his armed men from the road.

3. He is still obedient to Mar Shimoun's orders whether he is in Iraq or elsewhere.

4. Malik Khoshaba and his followers are traitors, because they disobeyed the orders of the Mar Shimoun; he himself is loyal to Government and more benefit would be derived from him than those traitors.

5. Qaimaqam Dohuk affected him by restricting the liberty of some of his followers by false reasons, like his imprisoning Werda Bonadan for saying to Chikko "I'll kill

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you"; it was clear that his imprisonment by Qaimaqam Dohuk was directed merely against Malik Yaco.

6. He executes the orders of the Government; if any offence were to be committed by any of his men, he would arrest the accused and hand him to Government.

7. Qaimaqam Dohuk affected his reputation twice when he went to Dohuk, once to meet him and the second time to meet Major Thomson by his orders. On the first time there were with him 8 men and on the second 10. Qaimaqam Dohuk informed the Mutaserrif that there were with him 50 mounted men the first time and 70 the second time, and that without any inquiry being made but solely on the statement of mischief-makers.

8. He will preserve tranquillity in order to safeguard his prestige, his name, and his services up till now, and in order not to have his status fall.

9. He requests Government not to listen to mischief-makers or to restrict the liberty of his followers, which only increases the anger in his heart and in the hearts of his men; on the contrary, Government should be considerate with them in order that they may serve it.

10. The Government had given them liberty. If any of its officials assaulted them on his own account, they would also do the same to him; and they would not regard that as a crime as they are free.

11. After the return of Mar Shimoun and his decision to stay in Iraq permanently, then the Qaimaqam of Dohuk will see real fidelity.

Remarks. ---After Malik Yaco had signed this paper, he informed the head-constable that he would

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oppose the Government like a “Cat” if the Government wished to put him down.

The situation grew rapidly worse, especially as there were signs of restiveness on the part of the Kurds. On June 25th it was decided that Army troops would have to be concentrated in the Dohuk area. The following reasons alone justified such a step:

1. An overwhelming show of force might persuade Malik Yaco that resistance was hopeless.

2. Such a force might dissuade other Assyrians from joining Malik Yaco -- for it was officially announced that any Government action would be directed against Malik Yaco and not against the Assyrians as a whole.

3. The necessity of avoiding anything in the shape of a partial check, for such a check might result in the Kurds coming in out of control, a fear which was always present in our minds.

I must admit that it was with very considerable misgivings that, when consulted by Baghdad, I agreed to the employment of the Army. The Army officers were known to hate the Assyrians and in particular Bekir Sidqi, who was in command in the north, had openly stated what he would do to them if the opportunity occurred. The transfer of this officer had again and again been recommended by the British advisory officials, and, indeed, King Feisal in May promised that it would be immediately carried out. But he nevertheless remained at Mosul, with what tragic results will shortly be recounted.

I decided that as a last hope I ought to go out myself to see if I could bring Malik Yaco in. I was doubtful of success, as I did not know Malik Yaco personally, and Major Sargon, who knew him, had failed. I therefore

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telephoned to Baghdad asking for permission. I laid down the terms which I should offer him. These terms were exactly the same as Malik Yaco had been offered and had refused during the past ten days. I recommended that the order for me to go out should come from the Minister of Interior himself. My object was that if I failed and blood was later shed the Iraqi Government could sow that it had left no stone unturned in its endeavour to bring Malik Yaco in. The Minister agreed to my recommendation and I received the following telegram from the Acting Adviser to the Ministry of Interior:

Minister wishes you to see Malik Yaco as soon as possible if you see no objection and endeavour to persuade him to come in quietly. You are authorised to inform him that Government does not yet consider him criminal, but his recent actions have been such that they require explanation. He is required to come into Mosul to make those explanations. If reasonable, they will be accepted on grounds that misunderstanding has occurred. He will, however, be required to give with suitable guarantee an undertaking for good behaviour in future and that he will not go about with large armed parties.

The following day I left Mosul before dawn to meet Malik Yaco at an appointed rendezvous in the mountains. As I passed through Dohuk I met Major Thomson, who was on his way back from Amadiyah. I asked him to come with me, as I thought he would be able to help me, as indeed he did. At midday we met Malik Yaco. The first sight of the "rebel chief" coming down the mountain-side wearing plus fours, a soft hat, and tennis shoes, was not without its humor even at that moment. After two hours' talk Malik Yaco agreed to come in. Our conversation had been perfectly friendly, though Malik Yaco put forward a number of grievances, which I promised would be investigated at Mosul. According to arrangement I drove Malik

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Yaco direct to Mosul in my own car. On the way we passed a battalion of infantry on the march and other troops in lorries, who had been sent up to bring Malik Yaco in by force if necessary. Neither of us made any comment. At Mosul Malik Yaco descended from my car complete with rifle and bandolier of ammunition, and we arranged to meet in my office the following morning.

Naturally Baghdad as well as Mosul was relieved at Malik Yaco's surrender, but complications at once arose. The Iraqi authorities thought that this was a good opportunity to relieve the Assyrians of some of their arms. It was proposed to levy a rifle fine on the villages in the Bageira area which had joined with Malik Yaco in defiance of the Government's orders. Such a proposal, of course, was a direct contravention of the terms on which Malik Yaco had surrendered. The imposition of the fine would certainly have been resisted by force, as the Assyrians had for long been frightened that the Iraqi Government intended to disarm them. Had active hostilities broken out the Iraqi Government would have entered into them in the wrong. What made the Government case even weaker was the fact that no such fine had been imposed on the Barzanis, who had actively fought against the Iraqi Government for six months the year before, causing many casualties to the troops and heavy expense to the Treasury. Finally the Iraqi Ministers yielded to British advice, but not before it had been made clear to them that Major Thomson and I would at once resign our appointments if any attempt was made to levy a fine of rifles.

Nor was Malik Yaco's attitude at first much more satisfactory. In dealing with Orientals, officials or others, delays are inevitable. The Minister of Interior for some petty personal reasons did not at once approve of the terms of the undertaking which Malik Yaco had to sign. During the interval Malik Yaco told all and sundry that I had never informed him that he would have to sign such an

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undertaking. This was completely untrue, as I had read out the telegram at least twice, and had even handed it to him to read. Finally, he signed, but with ill grace. Malik Yaco is a fanatical type of man. Brave to a fault in battle, he has not the moral courage to admit when he is wrong in council. He had always been a rather difficult character in the Levies, though he had good qualities as well which made him popular. The following is an example of how difficult he, like most other Assyrians, was to deal with. A few days after he came into Mosul I thought it would be as well if he and the Qaimaqam of Dohuk made friends. A meeting was accordingly held in the office of the Mutaserrif. The Mutaserrif made a short and most conciliatory speech, saying that everyone wanted to forget what had happened and be good friends in future. The Qaimaqam agreed and said that he was perfectly ready to do so. He asked Malik Yaco to come to see him in Dohuk, so that they could talk things over together. Malik Yaco then asked if he could say a few words. He promptly embarked on a long account of his grievances. The Qaimaqam politely pointed out that this was not a Court of Inquiry, and that he had kept silent regarding his own complaints against Malik Yaco. Thus reconciliation was by no means assured.

Immediately after Malik Yaco's surrender I recommended that a meeting should be held in Mosul of all the Assyrian leaders in order that the Government's policy should be fully explained to them. It has been remarked earlier that the Iraqi Government must be blamed for its failure to hold such a meeting six months before. Then the atmosphere was generally calmer than in July, when the aftermath of Malik Yaco's adventure and the detention of the Mar Shimoun in Baghdad had embittered the feelings of all concerned.

Here it is to be noted that it was not until the beginning of July that the Assyrians in Mosul knew definitely

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that the Mar Shimoun was being detained in Baghdad. It has been suggested that Malik Yaco's defiance was, in part, a protest against the Mar Shimoun's detention. This was not the case.

The holding of the meeting was approved by the Minister of Interior, and it was held on July 10th. It would have been a great advantage had the Mar Shimoun been able to come but, with the temper of the Iraqi Ministers what it now was, it was obviously useless even to suggest that he might return to Mosul for a few days. Apart from him, all the other Assyrian leaders of every shade of opinion were present. In fact more came than had been invited, and the atmosphere in an overcrowded room on a particularly hot day became somewhat unpleasant. The meeting was addressed by the Acting Mutaserrif, Major Thomson, and myself. The Acting Mutaserrif dealt with the policy of the Government generally, Major Thomson with the details of land settlement, and I with the prospects of Assyrians who wished to leave Iraq. This last was necessary for two reasons. The Iraqi Government had given an undertaking to the League Council not to place any obstacle in the way of any Assyrian who wished to leave Iraq. On the other hand, it was essential to explain that the Iraqi Government had no power to compel other countries to accept the Assyrians. Quite apart from obtaining permission to leave Iraq, which was easy, permission had to be obtained from the country which it was proposed to enter, and this was by no means so simple. Certain Assyrians have subsequently claimed that I told the meeting that any Assyrian who wished to leave Iraq could do so and that those, who a week later left for Syria, were only doing what I told them. This suggestion is ingenuous, but hardly correct. At the second meeting which was held the following day several Assyrians asked how they could leave the country if they desired to do so. The Commandant of Police at some length and in some detail explained the

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procedure. The procedure certainly did not entail several hundred armed men crossing the frontier in a body and without the least warning to anyone. The Assyrians have also asserted that the tone of the official addresses at this meeting was so unfriendly that it was clear that the Iraqi Government did not want the Assyrians in Iraq. This assertion is a travesty of the truth. The Mutaserrif's address, in which he explained the Government's policy, was most cordial towards the Assyrians whom he stated, the Government was most anxious to see living as contented citizens of Iraq. After those addresses had been given the Acting Mutaserrif invited anyone present to ask questions. Many seized the opportunity. The views expressed were sharply contrasted.

A number of speakers expressed in no uncertain tone their complete sympathy with the policy of the Government. Two or three others regretted the absence of the Mar Shimoun. Among those who attended the meeting uninvited were certain irresponsible young men from Mosul town, who could not possibly be termed leaders. Unfortunately, an inflammatory speech by one of these gate-crashers caused some excitement, and members of the pro- and anti-Mar Shimoun parties commenced abusing each other. Feeling remained strained until the meeting was adjourned, it being arranged that it should be continued the next morning.

Late that evening the Mutaserrif and I each received a petition with a large number of signatures. It was written in Syriac, so we were unable to read it, but we had a good idea of what it contained, as there had been rumours current that afternoon that the Mar Shimoun party intended to refuse to attend the next day's meeting. When the petition was translated the next morning this proved to be the case. I discussed the situation with the Mutaserrif and it was arranged to send for the four most

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prominent persons who had signed the petition, namely Bishop Yusef, and uncle of the Mar Shimoun, Malik Loco of the Tokhuma, Malik Andrias of the Jilu, and Malik Yaco himself. After some conversation they said that the signatories of the petition were prepared to attend a meeting apart from the other party. **They gave as a reason that they feared that there would be trouble, if the two parties met together. In view of the feeling at the termination of the meeting of the previous day, there were some grounds for these fears. It was, therefore, arranged that there should be two meetings, the first for the Mar Shimoun's party and the second for the others.**

The first meeting passed without incident. Those present, who were about half of all those who had attended the previous day, expressed their complete satisfaction with the Government's policy, their loyalty to the King, and their obedience to the Government. The meeting ended with cheers for His Majesty, the Government, and the Army. **I remember well Shemasha Gavriel leading the cheers for the Army, at whose hands he was to meet his death at Simmel exactly a month later.**

The second meeting lasted much longer. The atmosphere was, in the absence of the opposition, far calmer than that of the previous day. At first most of the speakers dwelt on the difficulties which they had experienced in regard to their lands. It was clear that they were genuinely concerned about the lack of security in privately owned lands. Nearly all the speakers said that the presence of the Mar Shimoun was absolutely necessary if a satisfactory settlement was to be made. It was explained to them that the Mar Shimoun was free to return immediately if he signed the simple acknowledgment required from him by the Minister of Interior. The draft of this acknowledgment was read out to them. At the same time it was pointed out to them that the Government was inflexible in its determi-

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nation not to allow any “temporal” power to the Mar Shimoun. The discussion was perfectly friendly and those present acknowledged that they fully understood the policy of the Government, and thanked the Acting Mutaserrif for explaining it. **They undertook as long as they were in Iraq to obey all the laws and orders of the Government. They retained, however, the right to consult the Mar Shimoun as to whether they should remain in Iraq or not.**

After the meeting ended, the Mutaserrif, on my recommendation, requested the four leaders, whose names have been mentioned above, to remain behind. He unofficially suggested to them that they should go to Baghdad and see the Mar Shimoun and endeavour to persuade him to sign the required acknowledgment, so that he might return to Mosul and co-operate with Major Thomson in the settlement. It was explained to them that this advice was given to them purely in the interests of the Assyrians themselves. The Government had decided on its policy both as regards the position of the Mar Shimoun and as regards land settlement. This policy would be carried out whether the Mar Shimoun was in Baghdad, Mosul, or elsewhere. At the same time it appeared that a certain number of Assyrians would not apply for lands until advised to do so by the Mar Shimoun. These would suffer irreparable harm. After some conversation the four leaders said that they would think the matter over and that possibly two of them would take a letter to the Mar Shimoun in Baghdad. During the next few days Malik Yaco, Malik Loco, and Andrius saw Major Thomson on several occasions. I purposely did not see them, as I wanted their action to be as unofficial and therefore as spontaneous as possible. Eventually Malik Yaco and Malik Loco said that they had decided to go to Baghdad. They even asked Major Thomson to recommend a hotel. They left Mosul on July 18th. But they did not go to Baghdad.

CHAPTER 12

THE SYRIAN ADVENTURE

Instead of going to Baghdad they went to Syria. In Iraq the heat of the summer reaches its highest intensity with the passing of July into August. This, then, was the time of year chosen by the Assyrians for their adventure. Many British officials were on leave, the British Ambassador himself was many hundreds of miles away on the other side of Europe. In the country itself the summer had been an arduous one. This held true, of course, on the other side of the frontier as well, and the heat may perhaps be accepted charitably as an explanation for the peculiar manner in which the local French officials handled the situation.

When Malik Yaco and his friends crossed into Syria, they went first to the French frontier officials at a place near Ain Diwar, a few miles across the border. It appears that they put forward to these officials a request for permission for the Assyrians to enter Syria, on the

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ground that conditions in Iraq were impossible for them. The French officials telegraphed to Beyrouth (Lebanon) to ask for instructions, but unfortunately Beyrouth did not at once inform Baghdad that Malik Yaco and Malik Loco had arrived at Ain Diwar. The French later stated officially that the Iraqi Government failed to keep them informed of what was happening on the frontier, but it should be pointed out that there is, in close contact with the local situation, while the Iraqi Government before July 21st had not the slightest grounds for thinking that the Assyrians intended to move to Syria. On the other hand, it is of interest to note that the Assyrians assert that the Iraqi Government employed strong pressure on the French Mandatory authorities to evict the Assyrians from Syria. The facts are quite otherwise. Actually the Iraqi Government would have been only too pleased if the French had accepted these Assyrians. It was realised that the return of the malcontents to Iraq, even if no immediate trouble occurred, would only unsettle the remainder of the Assyrians. The Iraqi Government considered that it would be well rid of Malik Yaco and his followers.

Malik Yaco and Malik Loco, having put forward their request to the French authorities, did not wait for a reply, but sent word at once to the Assyrians in the villages telling them to cross into Syria. The French, they said, had promised to give lands to the Assyrians and to exempt them from taxation for a period of five years. They also said that the Iraqi Government intended to disarm the Assyrians at once. Both these statements were entirely false. The Assyrians from most of the Dohuk qodha moved, and there is no doubt that they had previously been warned to be ready. The Iraqi local authorities, on the other hand, had not the slightest inkling of the intention of the Assyrians, any more than had the British officers of the mutiny of the Levies in June 1932. The first information was received in Mosul on July 20th, and this

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was to the effect that the Assyrians from most of the Dohuk qodha had left their villages and that many had concentrated in the mountains above Basirian. Nothing definite was known of their intentions; indeed, it was still thought that Malik Yaco and Malik Loco were in Baghdad. There were, however, rumours that the Assyrians intended to march to Syria, and I personally informed the French Consul of this possibility. He stated that on no account would the Assyrians be allowed to enter Syria. From the Iraqi point of view the departure of the Assyrians to Syria appeared to be the lesser of two evils, even if it did cause complications with the French Mandatory authorities. If the Assyrians remained concentrated in the mountains trouble was absolutely certain. Such a concentration could only mean that the Assyrians were deliberately trailing their cloak in front of the Government, and such behaviour the Government could not possibly ignore.

The situation then began to develop. On the evening of July 21st the Qaimaqam of Zakho reported that large numbers of the Assyrians were crossing the Tigris by the ferry at Faish Khabur, a small Chaldean Christian village on the Tigris some three miles downstream of where the Khabur river enters it from the east, the Khabur here forming the frontier between Iraq and Turkey. This information I communicated at once to the French Consul at Mosul, and on the following day I told him that more had crossed. As was no doubt inevitable, there was great exaggeration of the numbers of those who had gone into Syria, and it was first reported that over 1,500 had done so. Not until much later, actually in the middle of August was the real number known, namely fewer than 800. The tribes which were represented in the movement were mainly Upper Tiyari, Tokhuma, Diz, and a few Baz and Ashuti.

When the Assyrians moved into Syria they left their families behind in the villages unprotected. This

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proves two things --- first, that they had certainly no warlike intentions; second, with equal certainty they felt no anxiety as to the safety of their women and children in Iraq. In this the event proved them to be correct; until the fighting at Faish Khabur on August 4th had completely altered the situation, no instance of the slightest aggression against these Assyrian villages occurred. It is by no means certain that the Mar Shimoun himself was informed of Malik Yaco's plan. He himself emphatically denies that he knew anything about it until it had been carried out, but the Iraqi Government is convinced that he knew all about it and approved it. It is at least probable that this movement was part of the plan drawn up the previous summer at the time of the Levie' mutiny, but was at that time not put into effect.

The situation was rapidly becoming more serious. The continued movement of large bodies of armed men about the countryside could not be tolerated, unless the Government was to abdicate its functions. Military forces were therefore sent to the Tigris with orders to allow Malik Yaco's followers to recross the river back into Iraq only on condition that they gave up their arms. The troops which had been sent up to the Dohuk area at the time of the Malik Yaco affair had not yet been withdrawn. The expense of moving them to Dohuk had been considerable, and in order to avoid an entire waste of this money it was decided to allow the troops to remain in that area to carry out the usual summer mountain manoeuvres.

(The disposition of the troops near Faish Khabur was as follows:

(1) At Dairabun, headquarters of the column, two battalions of infantry, two squadrons of cavalry, one section of mountain artillery. (Dairabun is a small Chaldean Christian village about two miles east of Faish Khabur,

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lying just below the Jebel Bekhair, a narrow range of mountains, which rise to about 4,000 feet.)

(2) At Bashikli Bala (on the main Dohuk-Zakho road, about fifteen miles from Dairabun, to which it is connected by a rough track), two battalions of infantry, two squadrons of cavalry, one section of mountain artillery.

In addition a motor machine-gun company was at hand. It changed its location several times. About 350 police also came under the orders of the O.C. Column.

The order that the Assyrians should surrender their arms on their return has been severely criticized. The Iraqi Government nevertheless had strong reasons for issuing it. The activities of Malik Yaco and this last movement had caused considerable restlessness in the north. Such conduct had to be prevented in future. It was, moreover, the intention of the civil authorities at once to return sufficient rifles to the Assyrians to ensure their self-protection. The Assyrians, man for man, were better armed than the Kurds, though numerically of course they were weaker. A fairer criticism can be directed against the Iraqi authorities on account of their failure to inform the Assyrians clearly enough as to the conditions on which they could return to Iraq. It cannot, however, be disputed that at this juncture the Central Government and the local civil authorities were most anxious to minimise the possibilities of a clash. Orders were even issued that any other Assyrians who wished to cross to the right bank should be permitted to do so. Only on July 27th, in consequence of objections on the part of the French authorities, were further crossings forbidden. It was, moreover, impressed on the military that every effort should be made to avoid bloodshed. Nor did any incident occur prior to August 4th, though a certain number of Assyrians on their way to Syria were turned back, and some of them disarmed. These Assyrians had come from the more distant districts

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such as Amadiyah and Aqra.

In the meantime, on July 23rd and 27th, the Iraqi Government made urgent representations to the French delegation in Baghdad, requesting the immediate application of Articles 5 and 6 of the Provisional Agreement for the Regulation of the Affairs of Frontier Tribes in force between the two countries. Under these articles the French were bound to disarm the Assyrians, and remove them some distance from the frontier. Actually, however, it seems rather doubtful whether this agreement could have been taken to cover an extraordinary case of this nature.

There were three other factors, which further complicated the situation. The first was doubt as to the actual frontier between Syria and Iraq. This frontier had been recently delimited afresh by a League of Nations committee. It was uncertain as to when the new frontier was to come into effect. If the old frontier was still effective, the majority of the Assyrians, who were camped in and south of the Wadi Safan, were still in Iraqi territory. The second complication was caused by the almost complete lack of information from French sources. It was not at first definitely known whether the French would accept the Assyrians or not. Though the Iraqi authorities knew they would almost certainly refuse to do so, it was difficult in the absence of definite statements from the French to convince the Assyrians in Mosul and elsewhere that this was the case. The third factor was the receipt of all manner of garbled and exaggerated reports.

These had the result of effectually cloaking the real facts. Apart from untrue reports of the movements of the Assyrians, fantastic rumours were being widely spread regarding the intrigues of the French and the British. The great majority of Iraqi, both officials and others, were firmly convinced that the French were at the back of the

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whole affair. It was believed that they desired trouble in Northern Iraq, and that they would seize upon it as a proof that the abandonment by the British of the Iraqi Mandate over Iraq had been premature and as a proof that they could not safely give up their own Mandate over Syria. The British too were attacked. It was reported and believed that a British aeroplane had dropped supplies of ammunition to the Assyrians, that the British Inspecting Officer of Police on his tour of the right bank of the Tigris had visited the Assyrians with instructions as to their future action, and that British officers of the Royal Air Force and Levies were deliberately stirring up the Assyrians against the Iraqi Government. In such an atmosphere it was difficult for anyone to work calmly.

On July 26th a conference was held at Faish Khabur between Iraqi and French representatives. At this the French pointed out that as the new frontier line had not yet come into force the Assyrians were not in Syria at all. This statement was indeed confirmed by the British Inspecting Officer of Police at Mosul, who on July 28th motored up the right bank of the river to find out the true position. They stated, moreover, that they were on no account prepared to accept the Assyrians in Syria. They promised to disarm them if they crossed the frontier.

On July 30th information was received that the French authorities had disarmed a large number of Assyrians. On August 2nd a second meeting was held between the Iraqi and French representatives. I had personally visited that morning Diarabun, where the headquarters of the Army had been established, and had advised the Political Officer, **Makki Beg el Sherbiti, Qaimaqam of Dohuk**, as to the points which required to be cleared up. Mekki Beg, incidentally, had with him an assistant Political Officer, Lazar Effendi, an Assyrian, who was Mudir of Dohuk. Another Assyriann, Ezra, who

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was an Assistant Commandant of Police and a man of the highest reputation, had been appointed to act as Qaimaqam at Dohuk in the absence of Mekki Beg. It was hoped that these appointments would reassure the Assyrians of the good intentions of the civil authorities. There was, in truth, much that was obscure, as the French had given no information as to the disarmament of the Assyrians. At the Conference, however, the French officer, Captain Lariste, stated:

1. The Assyrians would not be allowed to remain in Syria, and that they had been told this by a senior French Political officer.

2. That the Assyrians had crossed into Syria and had surrendered their rifles (a) of their own accord, (b) unconditionally.

3. That the number who had crossed into Syria was 415, and that 336 rifles with 13,000 rounds of ammunition had been surrendered. He estimated that about 350 more remained on the right bank in Iraqi territory.

4. That as for the frontier, he did not consider that the new boundary came into force until official orders had been received, and such orders had not yet been received.

Captain Lariste, however, was by no means explicit as to what was to be done with the rifles which had been surrendered to the French. It was vital that the Iraqi authorities should have clear information on this point, for it was now certain that the Assyrians would have to return to Iraq and it was absolutely essential to know whether they would return with their arms or not. Mekki Beg particularly requested Captain Lariste to give him notice if, when the Assyrians were evicted from Syria, they would return with their arms or not. Captain Lariste wrote this

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request in his pocket book, but most unfortunately took no further notice of it, and when the arms were given back to the Assyrians by the French authorities on the afternoon of August 4th, the Iraqi authorities were not informed.

Though the Assyrians in the event returned to Iraq fully armed, the news of the surrender of the rifles, which was the last we had heard, greatly eased our minds, and everybody hoped that the affair would be settled without bloodshed. This was particularly so because it was now known that a considerable number of the Assyrians, who had crossed into Syria, wished to come back. They realised that they had been deceived by Malik Yaco's statements, their eyes having been opened to this by the fact that the French, far from welcoming them, giving them land, and exempting them from taxation, would not have them at all. It was true that Malik Yaco himself and his diehards, mainly of the Tokhuma tribe, still refused to face the hard facts. Malik Yaco, indeed, was saying that he would prevent anyone from surrendering. As a result serious dissensions had arisen among the Assyrians, but as the recalcitrants were in the minority there seemed every hope of a peaceful solution.

It would be as well to sum up the position on August 3rd. The Iraqi Government has published a Blue Book in which its case is fully set out. To judge by this Blue Book the Iraqi Government had an overwhelming case. In fact, an American observer in Baghdad said to me that no Government over could have such a case! This was true. Nevertheless, though the Government's case was not as strong as the Blue Book represents, it was, in truth, reasonably strong. In the first place, it must be stated that the Iraqis could in no way be held responsible for the previous misfortunes of the Assyrians. They could truthfully say that they had never invited them to come to Iraq. They could hardly be expected to offer them more favourable

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conditions than those enjoyed by the original inhabitants of the country, be they Arabs, Kurds, Yezidis, or Christians. The Iraqi Government had, on the surface, at any rate, displayed exemplary patience in the face of the exasperating events of the last two months. Mistakes had been made certainly, but few Governments are guiltless of occasional errors of judgment. The Assyrians are, admittedly, a difficult people to handle. They have a veritable genius for irritating even those who are most sympathetic towards them. And the ordinary Iraqi official was hardly sympathetic. At best the Assyrian was held to be a political nuisance, at worst he was considered to be a danger to the State.

The Blue Book naturally laid stress on the arguments in favour of the Iraqi Government. A closer examination of this book will show, however, that the majority of the reports quoted had been written by British advisory officials. Few reports of Iraqi officials were printed. Some of these, of course, were quite sensible, but many were foolish and some even worse. The Assyrians, naturally, were aware of the attitude of certain Iraqi officials, and some violent articles in the Baghdad Press had increased their suspicions. They did not understand that this attitude on the part of officials was largely the result of their own aloofness. It is, however, only fair to say that up to last summer practically all responsible Iraqis did desire a peaceful solution of the Assyrian question, and wished to see the Assyrians living as contented citizens of Iraq. But their attitude had been changed gradually during June and July 1933. They had grown more and more irritated over what they considered to be the hopeless obstinacy of the Mar Shimoun in Baghdad and over Malik Yaco's behaviour in the north. Many were gradually coming to think that the Assyrian question must be settled once and for all. Most unfortunately, as has been seen, a large number of the responsible officials were on leave during the hot weather. King Feisal himself was in Europe, and among the others

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who were away were Sir Francis Humphrys, the British Ambassador; Sir Kinahan Cornwallis, the very experienced Adviser to the Minister of Interior; and the three ablest of the Iraqi Ministers. In the absence of these there was no check on the hot-heads.

To return to Faish Khabur. At eight o'clock on the evening of August 4th the Qaimaqam of Zakho telephoned to Mosul the report that the Assyrians had crossed the Tigris into Iraqi territory and had attacked the Army and that heavy fighting was still in progress. It appeared that while the Assyrians on their move into Syria had had to be ferried across the Tigris, they had been able to wade back, as the river, here about two hundred yards wide, had fallen considerably. (Even so, however, the current was still strong, and at least two Assyrians were carried away and drowned.)

There was no knowing what might follow this calamity if the news were true. It was hard for us in Iraq to understand how the Assyrians could fight at all, for we did not know until later that in the course of that afternoon the French authorities had returned their rifles to the Assyrians and told them that they must clear out at once. Regretably, the French took no steps to let the Iraqi authorities know what they had done. It appears, however, that a message from headquarters in Beyrouth was received by the local authorities at Ain Diwar saying that the arms must be returned at once to the Assyrians expelled from Syria. The precipitancy with which the local authorities obeyed these orders without considering the probable consequence is open to severe criticism. This, however, does not mean, as is generally held by the Iraqis to be the case, that the French acted deliberately in order to cause trouble. Actually, there was no need for the Assyrians to cross the Tigris to return to Iraq. They had only to move a mile or so down the right bank to be in Iraqi territory. Probably they did not realize this, and it is

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more probable that when the rifles were returned --- and here it is to be noted that those who had surrendered their rifles to the French were, for the most part, those who were prepared to surrender to the Iraqis --- the Assyrians crossed the river with no other intention than to return to their villages. They realised that they had made a mistake and they were quite willing to accept the terms offered by the Iraqi Government.

The Iraqi Army first heard of the Assyrians' return when the headman of Faish Khabur telephoned to the Army Commander at Dairabun. It appeared that the Army had neglected to watch the really vital part of the river between Faish Khabur and the Tigris - Khabur confluence, and so did not see the crossing. The headman, a Chaldean Christian, was instructed by the Army Comander to send four men to tell the Assyrians that they must surrender their arms, and at the same time a company of infantry and a squadron of cavalry were sent out from Dairabun to intercept the Assyrians. Another mischance occurred here, for no Political Officer accompanied this force. Soon afterwards, rifle and machine gun-fire was heard.

It is always difficult to find out who starts fighting, and it is no less difficult on this occasion. Both sides, of course accuse the other. I have had far more opportunity than anyone else of ascertaining who opened fire, and I have carried out lengthy inquiries, but I must confess that even now I am quite unable to say. The weight of circumstantial and contingent evidence is about equal, for while it was well known that the Army did not intend the Assyrians to escape a second time, as it considered they had escaped by the peaceful conclusion of the Malik Yaco affair, it was also known that Malik Yaco was prepared to go to almost any lengths to prevent the return to Iraq of those Assyrians who wished to surrender. He may have sent someone with the first parties, practically all of

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whom were certainly crossing with no idea but that of surrender with instructions, to fire a shot, knowing that the Iraqi troops would reply and so prevent the Assyrians from attempting to return to Iraq. On the whole it seems most likely that the first shot was fired by some excited individual on one side or the other, and this, with the existing tension, was quite sufficient to bring about a general engagement. Whoever did fire the first shot, heavy fighting at once broke out. The first man killed appears to have been an Iraqi cavalry officer, while the Assyrians were fired on by machine guns, apparently without much effect, whilst they were still crossing the river. As more Assyrians reached the left bank their superior numbers gradually drove the Iraqi troops back on to some low hills just beneath the Dairabun camp. When darkness fell about 8 p.m. the firing ceased, but a lorry full of ammunition which had been sent up without escort to the firing line fell into the hands of the Assyrians. Four soldiers in it were killed, and it is alleged that the unarmed driver had his throat cut.

The Assyrians were now convinced that they had been treacherously fired on by the Army. This was quite enough for this hot-headed people. All of them now crossed the river and a concerted attack was made on the Dairabun camp. This attack was led by those Assyrians, the Upper Tiyari and the Tokhuma, who had not at first crossed the river, and was directed against the pickets to the east and north of the camp. The attack failed and only one picket was captured. The Iraqi troops appear to have fought quite well, though indeed it would have been disgraceful if, well armed as they were and in trenches, they had been defeated, even in a night attack. The Assyrians have subsequently claimed that the Army was beaten and demoralized, and that the only reason for the attack not being pressed home was that the troops had taken refuge in the Christian villages of Faish Khabur and Dairabun,

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and that it was feared that the villagers might be massacred. I have made the most careful inquiries from the only sources which could be considered to be, in any way, impartial, and I have come to the conclusion that these Assyrian accounts are not true.

It is more likely that the successful Tokhuma on the left did not push home their attack because they saw that the Tiyari on their right had failed. In any case the captured picket was reoccupied the next morning with the aid of artillery and aeroplanes. The Army did not move out of camp until later in the day. The majority of the Assyrians recrossed the river into Syria unmolested except by aeroplanes, which bombed them. One bomb fell in Syrian territory and wounded two French soldiers besides some Assyrians. The Assyrians, who recrossed the Tigris, 533 in number, are now interned in Syria. Malik Yaco and Malik Loco, the latter of whom was slightly wounded, are among them. A few other Assyrians who had lost their way were rounded up by the Army during the day and shot out of hand. For on the recapture of the lost picket it was reported that the dead soldiers therein had been burnt and mutilated. such reports must, of course, be accepted with reserve. Atrocity stories invariably accompany the outbreak of hostilities. In this case they may, or may not, have been true, though it must be admitted that there is nothing in the character of the Tokhuma, the tribe concerned, to suggest that they were impossible. Unfortunately, the Army fully believed all these stories, and this undoubtedly explains the shooting of all prisoners during the next few days. And still more unfortunately these and other atrocity stories, all greatly exaggerated and some entirely unfounded, were published by the Iraqi papers throughout the country, and these enormously inflamed public opinion already sufficiently excited.

At the fighting at Dairabun the Army lost thirty-three killed, including three officers, and forty wounded.

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The Assyrians, though they were the attackers, lost considerably less. After the morning of August 5th there was not further fighting of any kind whatever, here or elsewhere. It is necessary to bear this important fact in mind.

CHAPTER 13

THE AUGUST MASSACRES 1933

It is impossible for anyone who was not in Iraq at the time to imagine the state of opinion in the country. The naturally inflammable Oriental imagination at once seized upon such news --- in the main distorted --- as flashed through the country. The Arabs were at boiling-point in their desire to punish the Assyrians. The Christian communities were terrified, not knowing what was going to happen and how they might be affected by the ultimate result. Added to this was the Shia unrest on the Lower Euphrates which was disturbing enough to the Government to make them welcome a diversion in some other direction. Since 1920 the country had enjoyed settled rule with the maintenance of law and order in almost every corner, and a generation was growing up not so accustomed as the older men to alarms and excursion of this sort. The extreme nationalists among the Arabs were, moreover, insistent that Britain was backing the Assyrians in their defiance of the Baghdad Government. They thought that Britain would be only too glad to use some pretext for intervening in the recovery of the coun-

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try which had so recently become independent. The wildest rumours circulated in all the bazaars, and the feeling, partly political, partly racial, partly religious, was more acute than had been known in the country for many year.

The Arabs were genuinely alarmed by the rumours, greatly exaggerated as it turned out, of the numbers of armed Assyrians who were moving about in the north. It was thought that the Army was being threatened by 1,600 or more armed men, and the Arabs knew well that by their service in the Levies most of these Assyrians were trained soldiers, many of them having held commissioned or non commissioned rank. These fears which were expressed in conversation among the Arabs and in the nationalist newspapers, were a further aspect of the *dammosa haereditas* which had resulted from the first enlistment of the Assyrians as Levies. The fears which the Arabs were everywhere expressing showed remarkably little confidence in the fighting powers of the Iraqi Army, especially as the Army was supplied with motor transport and every other sort of modern equipmment.

The Arabs indeed had always accepted the Assyrians' own estimate of their fighting value; several high Arab officials had told me that one **Assyrian was worth three Iraqi soldiers**. Moreover, the experience of the Iraqi Army during the Barzan operations in 1932 had given little ground for confidence. The Army then had been (to put it mildly) severely saken, and had only bee extricated from an extremely awkward situation by the inteervention of the British Royal Air Force. Nevertheless, even allowing for the misleading reports, there was no reason for Baghdad to have any fear on the militar score.

The military position was simple. Even had the troops at Dairabun been defeated by the Assyrians --- an

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extremely unlikely happening --- nothing really serious would have occurred, for there was another force of similar strength behind, and if the war had developed in this way, then the Kurds could justifiably have been organised. Further, **the Assyrians themselves were so disunited as to make concentrated action impossible.** It has been stated publicly in England that had the Assyrian attack on the Dairabun camp been successful a first-class war would probably have followed.

I have heard this suggestion rather tentatively put forward by one or two Iraqi officials in their attempts to condone the subsequent excesses, but I have not heard it even hinted at by any British official who knew the real facts. Had the Assyrians been successful, an awkward situation would certainly have arise, but it is beyond reason to suggest that Assyrians, operating in a hostile country, could have done much more.

They must have been anxious as to the safety of their families, which they had left entirely unprotected. This alone would have prevented them keeping together. Had the Iraqi Army been defeated, it was inevitable that the **Royal Air Force** would have been called in to help against the Assyrians, and the last thing that the Assyrians intended was to fight Great Britain. Indeed, the principal reason why the Iraqi aeroplanes were not fired on when they were dropping bombs at Faish Khabur and when they were flying quite low was because the Assyrians thought that they were British. These aeroplanes were new "Dragons," which the Assyrians did not know that the Iraqi Air Force possessed. I have stressed earlier the point that the Assyrians had, at first, when they crossed into Syria, no warlike intentions whatever.

I have also stated that the Assyrians who crossed the river on the evening of August 4th only desired to sur-

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render. It is true that the midnight attack on the Dairabun camp was deliberate. But this attack was made by men of a hot-headed race, who thought that their people had been treacherously fired on. Even in the unlikely event of the Iraqi Army having been defeated and almost annihilated, it is highly improbable that the Assyrians, when they came to their senses, would have taken any further belligerent action. I have thought it necessary to write at some length on this subject, in order to explain the psychology of the situation. Behind everything was a black background of fear. Many of the Assyrians genuinely thought that the Iraqi Government had long since planned to massacre them. The Iraqi genuinely considered that the Assyrians were a peril to the young Iraqi State. In any case, for several days there was feeling in Baghdad akin to panic, especially when news was received on August 5 of the restoration of the rifles, which action, inconsiderate as it certainly was, stirred the Iraqis to rage against the French.

Even in the highest circles there was talk of the "rid me of this turbulent priest" order. "Let all the Assyrian men be killed," they cried, "but spare the women and children as the eyes of the world are on us. Let the Arabs and Kurds be raised against the Assyrians. Let trouble be stirred up in Syria against the treacherous French." Saner counsels soon prevailed, but there can be no doubt that unofficial and verbal instructions of this nature did reach the Army. And the Army needed little urging on; it obeyed the instructions literally. For some days every male Assyrian encountered was shot. The Arabs and Kurds were raised, as will be related later, and encouraged to loot.

The news of the fighting at Dairabun had another result. It brought about a closing of the national ranks.

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During the summer there had been serious agitation on the Middle Euphrates, where the tribes fall most easily under the influence of the Holy Cities of Kerbela and Nejf. The Shia Arabs have always resented what they consider to be the political and administrative domination of the Sunni minority. During the summer of 1933 one of the periodical waves of agitation was at its height. At the end of June **Naji Shawkat Beg**, who had been Prime Minister in the last Cabinet, and who is one of the most level-headed politicians in Iraq, passed through Mosul on his way to Istanbul. In the course of a conversation with him I explained the seriousness of the situation in regard to the Assyrians. He replied, "Oh, that is nothing. What really is serious is the Shia unrest. Perhaps you are not aware that two of the provinces on the Middle Euphrates are entirely without Government and the third and most important, Diwaniyah, though it has the best Mutaserrif in the country, is only half under control." But the "**Assyrian peril**" quickly checked this agitation. Offers of help, perhaps not all of them very genuine, poured in from all over the country. King Feisal had returned to Baghdad on August 2nd. But how ill he was was not fully realised. Apart from which he was out of sympathy with certain members of his Cabinet, who, as already related, had resented his attempts at interference in the matter of the detention of the Mar Shimoun in Baghdad.

The civil authorities in Mosul, who on the whole kept their heads fairly well, were enormously handicapped by an almost total lack of information from Zakho. It is true that reports of a kind were received almost hourly, but most of these were so utterly fantastic as to be clearly unreliable. Not even the movements of the Army were known. The military, in fact, were deliberately doing everything possible to exclude the civil authorities. They knew that these inclined to moderation. They themselves

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had other views. In this they were assisted by the Qaimaqam of Zakho. This official was a man of the worst type. During the 1920 Arab rising he had been concerned in the brutal murder of certain British officers at Tel Afar, a town some twenty miles west of Mosul, and had at first been excluded from the subsequent amnesty. He was known to be not only anti-Assyrian, but anti-Christian. Indeed, his reports regarding the entirely harmless Armenians living in his qodha had caused not a little perturbation during the past year. For this reason he was not appointed Political Officer to the Army, and in revenge he did everything he could to thwart the Political Officer's work.

If only the civil authorities had known on the evening of August 5th the true facts of the situation, there is no doubt that practically all the subsequent bloodshed could have been avoided. The real position was as follows. After the failure of their attack, the great majority of the Assyrians crossed the river into Syria. A few others were rounded up by the Army near Dairabun and were shot. The remainder, perhaps two hundred in number, moved into the mountains. they had no wish to fight anyone; they had no desire except to get back to their villages as quickly as possible. And on their return it would have been perfectly easy for the police and administrative officials to deal with them. Those who took the route along the Khabur valley mostly managed to get back to their villages. most of them surrendered later to the police and some of them were sent into Mosul. Here they were detained in prison for a few days and then released. Those who took the more difficult route along the rugged Jebel Bekhair, which rises to 4,000 feet between the Khabur river and the Tigris plain were not so fortunate. They ran into the pickets of Kurdish tribesmen, which had been organised by the Qaimaqam of Zakho in conjunction with the Army Intelligence officers. The employment of Kurds in this

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manner was in direct contravention of the orders from Mosul. I had always dreaded what might happen if the Kurds were let loose, and an incident on August 7th in the mountains near the Suwara Tuka, fifty miles from Dairabun, in which two Assyrians had been killed and two others wounded, increased my fears. I represented the danger to the Acting Mutaserrif, who issued urgent orders that Kurds were on no account to be employed except under the strictest control. Unfortunately, these orders were not obeyed.

The Assyrians who had been intercepted by the Kurds were handed over to the Military, who shot them at once. Major Allfrey, who, as a member of the British Military Mission, had been appointed liaison officer to the column at Dairabun, (By a most unfortunate mischance he was absent on the night of August 4th-5th.) came across the bodies of fifteen Assyrians, who had obviously been shot in cold blood. He taxed Bekir Sidqi with this, who admitted that these execution had been carried out as a retaliation against the atrocities committed by the Assyrians at Dairabun. Bekir Sidqi had before this realised that the presence of Major Allfrey with the troops was an obstacle to his designs. He ascertained that Major Allfreys instructions were to remain with him. He made several attempts to escape such unwelcome attentions, but, failing, decided to come into Mosul himself. He knew that this plans would be carried out in his absence, especially as he had given strict orders that any other British officer sent out was to be boycotted. Fortunately, he turned down a suggestion that Major Allfrey should be "accidentally" shot. It may be stated here that Bekir Sidqi spent some time at Belgaum Senior Officers' school in India, and had, in the past, been generally liked by the officers of the British Military Mission. The other officers concerned had also served in close association with the British for some time, and had thanked the British armed

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forces for getting them out of their difficulties in the Barzan fighting of the year previously. Yet in August 1933 the Iraqi Army --- or at any rate, that portion of it in the north --- was intensely anti-British, **and a special flavour was given to the slaughter of the Assyrians because they claimed to be the friends of the British and had loyally served them.**

The strange story of Suleiman Nejm will show what the general feeling was like at this time. Suleiman Nejm was an Arab of some standing in Mosul, and he was thought by the Iraqi Army to be a British spy. As a matter of fact, he had for many years been a general source of information on frontier affairs, regarding which he possessed unequallyed knowledge. During the 1933 re-delimitation of the Iraqi-Syrian frontier, for instance, he had given valuable information to the League of Nations Commissioners. Later still he had brought news, inaccurate as it proved, regarding the number of Assyrians who had crossed the Tigris, but for some quite unfounded reason he was suspected by the Army. At the request of the Ministry of Defence, the Minister of Interior, without consulting the local authorities at Mosul, ordered that he should be arrested and handed over to the Army. Such an order was, of course, entirely illegal, but it was carried out. Suleiman Nejm was shot by Hajji Ramadhan himself (Bekir Sidqi's second in command), with the words, "I have much pleasure in shooting you as you are a spy of the British." The British, be it noted, are Allies of Iraq, and the British Royal Air Force had saved the Iraqi Army from destruction the previous summer.

By August 7th it became evident that throughout Zakko qoadha and most of Dohuk as well the civil authorities had lost conrol of the situation. Though no reports had yet been received of the shootings of prisoners, I knew sufficient of the attitude of the Army to be serious-

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ly alarmed, and my fears were greatly increased by the reports received on August 8th that Assyrian villages were being looted. Unfortunately, owing to the excited state of Mosul itself I was unable to leave the town. The least incident might have brought about serious trouble there. The British Inspecting Officer of Police, Major Sargon, had been the object of violent attacks instituted by the Army. The value of his work was, in consequence, greatly lessened. On August 8th he was removed from Mosul to Baghdad on the nominal grounds that his life was in danger, but actually because he was not trusted by his Iraqi colleagues, and because it was thought that he might, if he went into the Army zone, find out what was happening. I objected strongly, but I was not supported. I reported to Baghdad the gravity of the situation from the civil point of view, and it was arranged that the Minister of Interior, Hikmet Beg Suleiman, should come to Mosul as soon as possible. Unfortunately, he arrived too late.

On August 7th the Minister of Defence, **Jelal Beg Baban**, and the Director-General of Police, **Subhi Beg Nejib**, arrived at Mosul, but neither of these two individuals were likely to have a claming effect. **Jelal Beg** belonged to a famous Kurdish family, and to this rather than to any inherent merit or ability he owed his position. He had no control whatever over the Army, and the real object of his coming to Mosul (as I subsequently learnt) was to raise the Kurds all over the north. In this, happily, he was by no means successful. Subhi Beg was an ex-Army officer, who had been for a year attached to a British regiment in England. He was an extremely self-opinionated type, and was known to hate the Assyrians. At the time of the Malik Yaco's affair I had to request the Minister of Interior to check his exuberance. Subhi Beg had now been instructed by the Cabinet to enlist irregular police. In the course of the next few days upwards of one thousand were enlisted, among them over one hundred

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Assyrians from the northern districts of Amadiyah, where there had been no trouble. All these irregular police were armed and some were put in uniform. Here it must be said that, contrary to the reports which appeared at the time in the English Press, these irregular police behaved quite well. They may not have done much positive good, but they were guilty of no serious outrages.

Although in actual fact nothing remained by August 8th but a few small parties of Assyrians trying to get back to their villages, the reports which were being received painted a very different picture. It was, for instance, reported that large forces of rebel Assyrians were concentrated in the mountains above Basirian and above Dohuk. Arrangements were even made to accept the surrender of the former, though the dispatch of two private soldiers to get in touch with them was hardly the action which British officers would have taken under such circumstances. Many of these reports were spread maliciously by the Army Intelligence officers to cloak the killing which the Army had in view, while the Iraqi Air Force in its first operation seldom failed to bring back inaccurate information. (*For instance, the pilots reported on August 9th that Ziwa, a Kurdish village not far from Dohuk, was being attacked by Assyrians and that the attackers had been bombed. It was later ascertained that the Kurds of this village had never even seen an Assyrian, and that one of the Iraqi bombs dropped had killed a Kurdish woman and wounded her husband..*)

From August 5th to 9th an Army detachment swept the Jebel Bekhair, suffering severely from heat and thirst in doing so. Here and there in the mountains they came up with fugitive Assyrians, and every Assyrian they caught they shot out of hand. Clearly by now the Army had definitely decided that the Assyrians, as far as possible, were to be exterminated.

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No pretence was made that these operations had any purely military objective, for the Army Intelligence officers did not even take the trouble to cross-question the captured Assyrianns, who were simply shot as they were rounded up. Whoever may have issued the orders, if any orders were issued at all, it was evident by now that the Army Command was quite certain in its own mind that, in its decision to wipe out the Assyrians, it would, in the ultimate issue, be backed not only by Arab public opion, but by the Baghdad Government.

In various villages the civil authorities were found helping the military in their policy of massacre --- for massacre it had now become. From the 7th onwards shooting had been going on at Dohuk (*In Dohuk there lived an American missionary, Mr. Cumberland, and his wife. A man of highest character, he was greatly respected by the local officials and by the Kurds. On August 17th he was ordered to leave Dohuk --- his wife had already left on the outbreak of the troubles. He was accused of using his philanthropic and religious work as a blind for political activities. Such an accusation was absurd. Mr. Cumberland a few months before had greatly annoyed the Assyrians by an outspoken article in an American magazine, in which he had pointed out that all the alleged grievances of the Assyrians were not in fact well founded. Even in the case of Mr. Panfil, another American missionary livig in Mosul, where the Iraqis had perhaps more grounds for suspicion as he was in close touch with the family of the Mar Shimoun, there was not the slightest ground for considering that he was actively intriguing against Iraq. Mr. Cumberland's presence in Dohuk was, however, awkward for the military authorities, and it was they and not the civil authorities who had him removed*) and Zakho. On the 11th came the dreadful massacre at Simmel, and for the 13th an even worse massacre was planned by the Army to

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take place at Alqosh. At Dohuk there was only a small force of the Army, but the Intelligence officers rode roughshod over all the constitutional law of the country, for they had been arresting Assyrians without informing the civil authorities --- a procedure which was wholly illegal as martial law had not been proclaimed. **The worst feature of the shooting at Dohuk was that these wretched Assyrians were entirely innocent of complicity in Malik Yaco's operations. It was enough for the Arab officers that they were Assyrian. What happened during those dreadful days is now clear. Evidence has been taken from survivors and in particular from women. The Assyrian women make good witnesses. They are solid and unemotional --- even Boeotian in their heavy unimaginativeness**

The Assyrians in Dohuk were taken away a short distance from their village in lorries in batches of eight or ten, and were then turned out of the lorries and shot down with machine guns. On at least one occasion the heavy armoured cars were driven over the dead and dying alike. This brutality would appear incredible were it not to be eclipsed by what was yet to come. The numbers killed in and round Dohuk appear to have been about eighty, although the Assyrians naturally put them much higher. In any case a reign of terror existed in the village for several days. Many families were left without fathers and sons; in some cases bodies remained unburied, but, bad as the situation was, it was nothing to what was to happen at Simmel on August 11th.

During these days we in Mosul heard all kinds of conflicting rumours coming into the town. It was not easy to sift and test them all, particularly as a number of the junior officials of the civil administration, who were working hand and glove with the Army, were vitally interested in suppressing the truth. On August 11th the Minister of Interior, Hikmet Beg Suleiman, arrived in

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Mosul, having made the journey from Baghdad in a British Royal Air Force 'plane. On that day had occurred the shameful massacre at Simmel, but we were not to know of this until four days later.

Hikmet Beg Suleiman was more of a Turk than an Arab. He had served with the Turkish Army during the war, and was the brother of Shewket Beg, who had been one of the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress at Constantinople in 1908. Hikmet Beg had kept his head better than most of his colleagues during the recent excitement in Baghdad, and his first steps on his arrival in Mosul were, in view of what the situation was thought to be, eminently sound. He arranged for aeroplanes to drop printed messages in the Assyrian country stating that the Government forces would take no action during the next sixty hours, during which time any Assyrians who wished might surrender. On the same evening he held a meeting of the leading Christian dignitaries of Mosul, at which he begged them to do their utmost to get in touch with the rebels in order to induce them to surrender. The results at first seemed satisfactory, for on August 13th it was reported that 180 had surrendered their rifles at Alqosh, and only later was it ascertained that these 180 were not the rebels whose concentration in the mountains above that town had been --- incorrectly --- reported, but were merely Assyrians from looted villages near by who had come into Alqosh for protection. On the next day Hikmet Beg left for Dohuk and Amadiyah, and his influence was sufficient to put a stop to the shootings at Dohuk which have been described above.

I was sitting in my office on the morning of August 15th when Hikmet Beg returned. He came straight into my room in a state of collapse, for he had just come from Simmel, and even he, cynical Turk as he was, had been overcome by the horrors which he had seen. On the previ-

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ous day I had received reports that there were large numbers of Assyrian women and children in Simmel living in a state of starvation, but not a word had been said in these reports about the massacre which was the cause of this destitution, although there were other vague reports that a large number of the Assyrians had been killed by the Kurds and the irregular police --- that the Army were responsible was not mentioned in any of these reports --- in the mountains near Dohuk. These reports had induced me to write, on the evening of August 12th, an urgent private letter to the Acting Adviser to the Minister of Interior, with a request that he should show it at once to the British Charge d'Affaires. I had reported by telephone during the day the plight of the women of Simmel, and the Prime Minister himself telephoned to Hikmmet Beg at Amadiyah instructing him to visit Simmel and see for himself what could be done for the women. So Hikmmet Beg went there knowing nothing of the horror that awaited him.

SIMMEL MASSACRE

When Malik Yaco's expedition went into Syria, the Assyrian villages remained untouched for several weeks, but on August 8th some Tokhuma villages, whose able-bodied men were in Syria, had been looted by Kurds from the Zakho qodha, without doubt encouraged by the Qaimaqam. when the Kurds started looting the women and children fled to Dohuk and Simmel. None of them appeared to have been seriously molested, though personal ornaments and such things were in some cases stolen. The Assyrians then began to realize what was afoot. During the next two days the Arab tribes from the right banks of the Tigris started to cross the river. Their intention was obvious. they themselves admitted that they were out for loot and they claim that they had been told what

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to do. Nor was this claim entirely unjustified, as the first wild cries from Baghdad suggesting the raising of the tribes against the Assyrians had reached the Arab tribesmen of the **Shammar and the Jubur**. In their alarm the Assyrians left their villages and fled to Simmel.

Simmel is on the main road to Zakho, about eight miles from Dohuk, under the administration of which godha it came. It was the largest village in the neighbourhood and consisted of over one hundred Assyrians and ten Arab houses. The total population would have been about 700, most of the Assyrians belonging to the Baz tribe, with others of the Upper Tiyari and the Diz. The headman was a strong supporter of the Mar Shimoun and with fifty others had followed Malik Yaco into Syria. These fifty were almost entirely Tiyari, hardly any of the Baz being among them. The feeling of unrest in the village increased. On August 8th the Qaimaqam of Zakho appeared with a lorry full of soldiers. No satisfactory answer has yet been given to the question why he should have come with troops into a district that was outside his administration. He entered the village and told the Assyrians to surrender their rifles, as he feared that fighting might occur between the rebel Assyrians and the Government forces, in which case the people of Simmel would be less likely to be involved if they had no rifles. **Plausibly, but with lies in his heart, he assured them that they would be safe under the protection of the Iraqi flag which flew over the police post --- for Simmel, being a large village, had a police post of one sergeant and four men. The Assyrians then handed in their arms, which were taken away by the troops.**

Next day more troops returned, this time without the Qaimaqam, and disarmed further Assyrians who in the meantime had come in from the surrounding villages. The following day, the 10th, passed comparatively quietly. Nothing happened except that Arabs and Kurds could be

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seen looting neighbouring villages. They even came in and stripped the communal threshing floors on the outskirts of Simmel, where the cut barley and wheat was stacked in piles, for it was full time of harvest and the villagers were engaged in threshing and winnowing. The unarmed Assyrians could do nothing and the police did not intervene; they explained that they had no orders and that in any case their numbers were insufficient.

It was becoming quite clear now to the Assyrians what was likely to happen. Not only had they seen this looting going on, but they suddenly found they were forbidden to draw water from the village spring, being permitted only to go to the main stream, which was dirty. They knew that the Army had already shot many Assyrians. They had seen their head priest, Sada, taken out of Simmel. All day they watched the looting Arabs and Kurds. Not one of them dared to move from the neighbourhood of the police post, except one or two whose houses were near by, and who went to and fro on pathetic household tasks such as the making of bread, the last meal that many of them were destined to eat. They were now in a state of deadly fear, and they spent that night in an around the police post, which is built on a small hill. they now knew only too well the sentiments which the Arabs, and particularly the Arab Army, harboured towards them, and in the small hours of the 11th, when the moon had risen, the watching Assyrians began to observe their Arab neighbours of the village starting away driving their flocks before them. This opened their eyes beyond possibility of error. They realised the trap they had been led into and they knew that they were entirely helpless. The police sergeant ordered the Assyrians from the outlying villages to return to their homes. when they refused, saying that it was unsafe, he ordered them to leave the police post and go down to the houses in the villages below. They obeyed reluctantly. Some went to the house of Gavriel

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and his brother Tinan, who kept reassuring them that they would be safe and that the Government would protect them. As others were going down to the houses they suddenly saw lorries of troops and armoured cars arriving.

Looking round to the police post they saw a policeman pulling down the Iraqi flag, which until then had been flying, as it had flown for years, as a symbol of the law and order under which every inhabitant of Iraq could live in safety and security. Suddenly and without the least warning the troops opened fire upon the defenceless Assyrians. Many fell, including some women and children, and the rest ran into the houses to take cover. Not a soul was to be seen in the streets. The troops well knew that there was not a rifle or revolver left in the village. An officer then drove up in a car and the troops came in. This officer has since been identified as **Ismail Abawi Tohalla**, who comes of a well known but by no means respectable Mosul family. He shouted to the soldiers not to kill the women and children. These were ordered to come out of the houses and go up to the police post. Many did so.

A cold-blooded and methodical massacre of all the men in the village then followed, a massacre which for the black treachery in which it was conceived and the callousness with which it was carried out, was as foul a crime as any in the blood-stained annals of the Middle East. The Assyrians had no fight left in them, partly because of the state of mind to which the events of the past week had reduced them, largely because they were disarmed. Had they been armed it seems certain that **Ismail Abawi Tohalla** and his bravos would have hesitated to take them on in fair fight.

Having disarmed them, they proceeded with the massacre according to plan. This took some time. Not that there was any hurry, for the troops had the whole day ahead of them. Their opponents were helpless and there

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was no chance of any interference from any quarter whatsoever. Machine gunners set up their guns outside the windows of the houses in which the Assyrians had taken refuge, and having trained them on the terror-stricken wretches in the crowded rooms, fired among them until not a man was left standing in the shambles. In some other instances the blood lust of the troops took a slightly more active form, and men were dragged out and shot or bludgeoned to death and their bodies thrown on a pile of dead.

Gavriel, who has been mentioned in an earlier chapter as the individual who raised cheers for the Army at the Mosul meeting of July 11th, went out to plead for the Assyrians. He explained who he was, and said that his nephew, Ezra Effendi, had long been an officer in the Iraqi police. He showed his nationality papers, but these were torn in pieces before his face and he was shot in cold blood. A priest named Ismail who had taken refuge in the police post as driven out by the police, a rope was tied round his neck and he was kicked down the steps and dragged away by the troops, who shot him, afterwards throwing his body on the steadily growing heap of corpses. Whilst this organised slaughter was going on, the police sergeant, who had from the beginning taken a leading part in the diabolical plot, ordered the Assyrian women to clean up the blood from the neighbourhood of the police post. The women complied, but only for a time. Suddenly they rebelled against this inhuman order and told the police sergeant to turn the machine guns on them as they would rather die. The soldiers then took the men that remained down to a ditch and went on killing until every man was dead. It was then discovered that a few men had taken refuge among the women and that some of them had hastily got into women's clothes. These were rounded up and murdered.

When there was no one left to kill, the troops took

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their departure. This was about two p.m., and they went off to Aloka for their midday meal and afternoon siesta. As soon as the troops had gone, the tribes, who had been interested spectators, came in and completed the looting of the houses which the soldiers had commenced. The tribes had taken no part whatever in the massacre, but as the Army were equipped with modern machine guns and had no opposition, there was of course no need for any help. Later in the evening the troops came back, for the police sergeant had reported by telephone that a number of Assyrian men had appeared at the police post and taken refuge there. These were hunted out and killed. The shooting went on until about sunset. In the meantime the other houses in the village were crowded with weeping, terror-stricken women and small children. Few of them had any meal that night or for the next few days, for what grain there was in the village had been removed by the Kurds, who had also gone round the houses removing cookery utensils, bedding, and in some cases even the roof beams.

Next morning the women, already distracted beyond all reason, had a further shock when they saw the Army returning, for they did not know what this might portend. The Army, however, had merely come back to bury the dead. The bodies were collected and placed in a shallow ditch. It must be remembered that the month was August with a daily sun maximum of 160 degrees Fahrreneit!

According to the military report 305 men, four women, and six children were buried. Many of the killed were little more than half-grown boys. Some other twenty women and children were wounded. I myself saw later one child who had been shot in both wrists as he was being held in the arms of his father who was killed. That night and the subsequent nights some of the women were raped by the police sergeant

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and the soldiers. Doing everything possible to minimise what had happened, the Arabs have stated that no such incidents occurred. This is a lie. All that can be said is that throughout these terrible days there were fewer outrages on women than would have been expected. It was also everywhere stated at the time that this massacre was the work of the tribes and the irregular police. This, too, is a lie. It was the work of the Iraqi Army, disciplined troops under the direct command of their officers, the troops responsible for practically all the killing being the motor machine-gun detachments, while other troops who were passing the village throughout the day did nothing to stop what was going on.

Bekir Sidqi himself, who was to be acclaimed by the Baghdad mob as a conquering hero, and --- what was even worse --- was later decorated and promoted by the Iraqi Government, was not in Simmel but spent that day in Mosul, though there is no question but that he planned the whole affair. Indeed, it was subsequently admitted that the Army, had it not been prevented, had intended to carry out a similar massacre of Alqosh, and that the reports that Assyrian rebels had entered that village had been deliberately spread about to afford an excuse.

The burial in the shallow ditch, which was carried out most inefficiently, caused the stench under the burning sun to become almost unendurable, and every fly and pestilential insect for miles around was drawn to the village. In this unspeakable atmosphere there lived for six days one thousand terrified women and children who had seen all their male relations killed before their eyes. All they had to eat was a few dried water-melon seeds and they had scanty water. Even at night they had little sleep, for they did not know what might be coming next, and their dreadful experiences led them to put little trust in

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the protestations of the police that they were quite safe and that nothing more would happen. A little bread was sent from Dohuk, but nothing on an adequate scale was done until Hikmet Beg Suleiman himself on the 15th arrived in the village and was overcome by what he saw. As soon as he returned doctors and sanitary men were sent to Simmel, and the bodies were decently and properly re-interred.

When I visited Simmel myself with Major Thomson on August 17th few traces could be seen of what had occurred, but the sight of the women and children is one which I shall never forget --- and I spent more than three years in the trenches in France! That day the women and children were removed to Dohuk, and thence, as there was no proper accommodation, to Mosul, where they were placed under canvas in a camp, which will be described later. Every effort was made to hush up what had occurred and a censorship for a time imposed on outgoing letters. I was soon seen, however, that the killing could not be kept secret, for the Christians in the north had sent the news abroad, and in the nature of things an affair of this kind was bound to get out. In fact, the details were published in the Beyrouth newspapers before they were known in Mosul. So the Baghdad Government began to admit that there had been a slaughtering of the Assyrians, but they threw the blame on the tribes and the irregular police. Later this was found to be useless, and **Yasin Pasha**, the Iraqi delegate to Geneva, had to admit that the excesses had been committed by the regular Army. The Pasha went on to add that the excesses merited and had received severe condemnation. This was untrue.

Actually the troops were given triumphal receptions when they returned to Mosul, Kirkuk, and Baghdad. In Mosul the Crown Prince, (Ghazi, who is now King of Iraq, at a great military review, decorated with his own

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hands the colours of the troops who had been engaged against the Assyrians. **Bekir Sidqi, Hajji Ramadhan, and the other officers concerned were promoted. Bekir Sidqi on his arrival in Baghdad motored through the crowded streets amidst enthusiastic applause, sitting on the right hand of the Prime Minister.** However much Iraqis may deplore what occurred --- and in private many express a genuine disgust --- no one of them has yet stated publicly in Iraq that the Army had behaved itself otherwise than well.

But though the worst massacres of all took place at Simmel, this was not the only place where Assyrians were murdered. The Killings at Dohuk have already been described, and many also were shot at and near Zakho. The first reports regarding the number of Assyrians killed were greatly exaggerated; two thousand was a figure often mentioned, and few people, even Iraqis, suggested less than one thousand. Actually, as the result of careful inquiries, I have come to the conclusion that not more than six hundred lost their lives. The great majority of these were peaceful cultivators, who had committed not the smallest offence against the Iraqi Government. Altogether upwards of five hundred and fifty Assyrians were killed by the Army, of whom not more than twenty could, by any stretch of the imagination, be said to have been killed inaction. The Kurds, as a whole, behaved considerably better than might have been expected, especially in view of the undoubted encouragement they had received. Only at two places were they guilty of murder, though they did much looting. at a place named Savora the followers of Nisham Agha murdered twelve Assyrians in cold blood. At Qalla Badri, near Dohuk, some Assyrian women were killed and mutilated under atrocious circumstances. Other Assyrians in other places were killed by the Kurds in the course of their robbing and looting, but probably Kurds did not kill more than fifty altogether. **On the other**

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hand, several instances were reported of Kurds protecting Assyrian women and children. Mohammed Agha of Germawa, in particular, showed a fine spirit.

The Arab tribes, though intent on loot, did no killing at all. The civil officials, with the exception of **Abdul Hamid Dabuni, the Qaimaqam of Zakho, behaved reasonably well under circumstances of extraordinary difficulty, though it is true that some were weak and that in places they were terrorized by the Army. The Qaimaqam of Amadiyah, Majid Beg, kept order in his qodha, where, perhaps, an outbreak was more to be feared than anywhere else. He succeeded in gaining the entire confidence of the Assyrians, who are numerous in that district. The Qaimaqam of Aqra, Zibar, and Rowanduz, were, in easier circumstances, equally successful.**

The police were generally quite useless, and this was largely owing to the incompetency, if not worse, shown by the Director-General of Police himself, as before his arrival in Dohuk, the Commandant of Police had made some efforts to maintain order. Nevertheless, the police were guilty of few actual crimes. I heard of two Assyrians being shot by them at Dohuk, but that was all. Even the irregular police, though rather useless, committed no serious excesses other than a little looting. Some of the police inspectors were bullies, but nothing more than that! The sergeant at Simmel was the exception. He was a Kurd and an old Turkish gendarme. He had, no doubt, taken part in many massacres of Armenians and understood the routine. The Assyrian women testify that the other police constables at Simmel did their utmost to help them, though naturally they could not do much. The infamous police sergeant, it may be mentioned, was still at Simmel at the beginning of November 1933. He had taken large sums of money from the Assyrian women, but noth-

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ing has been recovered. He is now rich enough to retire if he wants to do so.

Thus ended the first military "operations" of the independent kingdom of Iraq. Had it not been for two things all would have gone well, even after the fighting at Dairabun. The first was the short period when heads were lost in Baghdad. The Arabs, particularly in the Press, are apt to be hot-headed and intolerant on political issues so acute as that of the Assyrians had become. **There is no doubt, as has been explained, that the Arabs were afraid of the Assyrians and were anxious to see strong measures taken against them,** and intensely relieved when these succeeded, even if most of them were appalled to learn what the Army had done.

The second was the deliberate brutality of the Army, which enabled the strong measures against the Assyrians to succeed in a way and to a degree which not even the most blood-thirsty politician in Baghdad had anticipated. The Iraqi Army's callous brutality can never be forgiven. From the Iraqi point of view it was disastrous, and the Government in Baghdad, bowing to the strength of public opinion, found itself unable to take the one step that would have put it right in the eyes of the civilised world; namely, the punishment of the individuals responsible. **Up to August 4th the Iraqi Government had an excellent case, but this case was completely destroyed by what happened to the Assyrians in Simmel and elsewhere. The massacres have blackened the good name of Iraq for many years to come.**

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CHAPTER 14

LOOTING OF THE ASSYRIAN VILLAGES

The looting of the Assyrian villages which was certainly not discouraged by some of the Iraqi authorities resulted in a total estimated loss to the Assyrians of at least £50,000. Sixty villages were looted and completely or partially destroyed. Even in the partially destroyed villages it was impossible to get the economic life of the place going again without considerable difficulty. How and when these serious financial losses are to be made good and by whom will be discussed in a latter Chapter.

It is important to note that there was not single act of aggression against the Assyrian villages until August 8th, by which time the Army Command had clearly made up its mind to carry out its organised extermination of the Assyrians. Even the defenceless villages of the men who had gone into Syria with Yacu had not been touched. The first looting were directed against the Tokhuma villages (Basirian, Girfil, Sarshor, and Dari.) which lie up against the mountains north-east of Simmel. The attackers were Kurds (from the Gulli, Sindi, and Slaivani tribes) who had undoubtedly been encouraged by the Qaimaqam of Zakho and certain military officers. During the next day, the 4th,

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continual reports were received of Arab tribes from the right bank crossing the Tigris. **These tribes were mainly the Jubur and the Hadadiyin,** and element of the great Shammar tribe followed later. At first it was possible to stop serious encroachments in the Simmel neighbourhood, and the Commandant of Police did good work in the area, though he was on several occasions obliged to open distant machine-gun fire on the raiders. On August 9th, however, the Director-General of Police assumed direct control. His dispositions of the now numerous police and his general apathy and incompetence were such that no further serious attempts were made to put a stop to the looting. The rank and file of the police were only likely to act if a strong personal lead was given, and this was just what was lacking. A senior R.A.F. officer on August 11th, who happened to be motoring along the Dohuk-Mosul road, saw large numbers of Arabs crossing the road carrying loot from the Assyrian villages. Police cars were moving up and down the road all the time, but displayed no apparent interest in what was taking place.

On August 11th sections of the Shammar crossed the river. These Shammar had the year before suffered very heavy losses among their sheep owing to a rainless winter, and were not unnaturally eager to seize such an opportunity of replenishing their flocks. They raided the villages south of Dohuk, villages which, like those west of Simmel, had taken no part whatever in Malik Yaco's Syrian adventure. Still further south, towards Alqosh, the Tai Arabs joined in the looting, and they were helped by the Kurds descending from the hills and by the Yezidis. The action of the Yezidis was particularly despicable. They, too, were a minority. They often lived in the same villages as the Assyrians and had been on quite good terms with them. Higher up in the mountains it was the Kurds who did the looting. **The followers of Sheikh Nuri el Brifkani, a religious leader and a Deputy in**

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Parliament, were the worst of all. The Assyrians here lived in several villages owned by Sheikh Nuri. when the troubles commenced they came to him and asked him for protection, which was promised but not given. The ordinary tribal rules of behaviour were ignored and Sheikh Nuri's followers looted the entire villages. They drove the Assyrians, men, women, and children, away, in some cases handing over the men to the Army, by whom they were duly shot. The other deserted villages on the Dohuk Amadiyah road were also looted as the days passed. In all there were sixty-four Assyrian villages in Dohuk and Sheikhhan qodhas. Of these sixty were looted. Four others in Amadiyah qodha were also looted, but here the Qaimaqam, an exceptionally able official, prevented further trouble. The more distant villages in Aqra, Zibur, and Rowanduz escaped unscathed. The looting did not end in the Alqosh (Sheikhan) area until August 14th, when the Commandant of Police showed praiseworthy energy, though he had again to make use of the police Lewis guns and caused some casualties among the Arab raiders. It was indeed time that the looting should cease, as there was every indication that the Arabs, in this undreamed-of opportunity, would next attack the large **Chaldean Christian villages**, which are dotted about the plain. As it was, two of them did share the same fate as their Assyrian neighbours, and at one of them the headman was killed, shot through the head, though his death was subsequently reported by the Acting Civil Surgeon at Mosul to have been due to concussion following a fall!

Naturally the degree of looting varied considerably. Some villages were entirely burnt out, in a number of others the houses were destroyed by the removal of the wooden roof beams. The wooden doors were nearly everywhere carried off. Practically all the household effects were lost except the more portable, in the cases where the Assyrians had some warning and were able to flee before the raiders

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arrived. About two-thirds of the live stock and practically all the grain on the threshing floors and in the village stores were lost, making, as already stated, the cash losses of the Assyrians hardly less than £50,000, and possibly much more. As with those massacred, those who suffered most by looting were entirely innocent Assyrians, who had taken no part in the Malik Yaco adventure, and who had committed no offence whatever against the Government. As with the massacres, every attempt was made to conceal the true state of affairs. On August 27th the English newspapers published the following telegram dispatched by the Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Iraqi Minister in London:

There was some trivial looting in several villages evacuated by the families of the rebels, but the Government restored the stolen goods to their owners and indemnified the people whose property it was impossible to recover. There is no truth in the report of the burning of villages, but a few insignificant outbreaks of fire occurred in deserted villages. the whole damage does not exceed a few pounds in each village.

When I read this remarkable telegram I pointed out to the Acting Mutaserrif in Mosul that it hardly represented the real facts. He agreed, but said that it was good propaganda. I replied that propaganda of this nature, which was sure to be found out sooner or later, was likely to do more harm than good. Unfortunately, the Iraqis have become far too fond of such propaganda, and they do not realize how transparent it is.

The local officials followed the lead of Baghdad. Every possible effort was made to show that no serious damage had been done, and that the Assyrian claims for damage were greatly exaggerated. I have not the least doubt that some of the claims were exaggerated. Even in

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England like claims would be. But to suggest that no damage at all was done was ridiculous. Every tour of inspection that I made showed this. My tours of inspection, of course, were resented by the Iraqi officials, but they could not be altogether stopped. These officials, especially in Sheikhan, were extremely callous. In Sheikhan the Qaimaqam as well as the Mudir of Alqosh, were Christians. They were both terrified out of their lives while the looting was going on, and kept all their police at headquarters in order to protect themselves. I am afraid that it must be admitted that local Christian administrative officials in a Moslem country can do little good. The best type of Christian does not seek such appointments. Those who do are anxious to say and do only what they think will please their superiors. In Amadiyah a Moslem Qaimaqam was able to recover most of the loot. In Dohuk the situation was admittedly difficult, as most of the men from the looted villages were either dead or in Syria, and there was no one to give the loot to even if it was recovered. But here and in Sheikhan, where all the men remained, considerably less than 5 per cent of the loot has been recovered, and this though it is known where much of it is. Of course it was difficult to order people to return loot when a little before they had been encouraged to take it.

Nor were any steps taken to restore the confidence of the Assyrian villagers in Sheikhan. They had been looted without the least excuse, as they had taken no part in the Syrian exodus, and prior to that had mainly belonged to the anti Mar Shimoun party. They had seen the results of the labours of the past ten years destroyed within the space of a few hours. They were not unnaturally cowed and dispirited. Hastily instructions were issued from Baghdad that the Assyrians should be made to return to their villages. These instructions were of course absurd, although, to do the Baghdad authorities justice, it must be said that they as yet did not realize to the full the extent of the damage.

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Least of all did they realize the state of mind of the Assyrians. Certainly there is a good deal of fatalism in the East, and it is true that massacre and killing has been the hard rule for centuries in those turbulent parts of the world. But for more than a decade there had been law and order in Iraq. The police normally were efficient, and had a good record in dealing with crime and maintaining security. The roads were safe, as they had not been for centuries. A new generation was growing up who knew not the old lawlessness of the older generation, and who had already begun to appreciate the blessings of settled order. Suddenly the Assyrians began to realize that in spite of the past ten years a situation had arisen in which they could no longer regard themselves as secure. After what they had gone through during the first few days of August, no Assyrian would believe what any Arab official told him. This was scarcely surprising, but it certainly made the question of resettlement infinitely more difficult. Nor did the local authorities invariably exercise the tact which might have helped to make things easier. In trying to obey Baghdad's instructions, the local authorities at Alqosh, where hundreds of Assyrian men, women, and children had fled for protection from their looted villages and were now living on the charity of the local **Chaldean Christians**, the Mudir and the Police Inspector ordered the Assyrians to leave.

They refused, saying with reason that they had lost everything they possessed, their villages had been destroyed, and that apart from that they were terrified. On this the men were collected in a large courtyard and a machine gun was pointed at them as a threat. That is scarcely the way to restore confidence. When I visited Alqosh myself on August 21st I found the Assyrians, like the Assyrians elsewhere, utterly panic-stricken. Not only were they disturbed, but their spirit was completely broken. It was difficult to recognise in their cowed demeanour

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the proud mountaineers whom everyone had known so well and admire so much for the past dozen years. At Alqosh I did my utmost to persuade the Assyrians to go back to their villages, explaining that the Government had promised to help them to the best of its ability. After a great deal of talk I was to some extent successful, only to find that the Qaimaqam of Sheikhan reported officially that I had done all I could to discourage the Assyrians from returning to their villages. Whether from animosity or indifference or both, it was not until a week later that the Qaimaqam or the Mudir went out themselves to see what was the condition of the villages.

The situation was becoming more and more acute. It was now mid-August and within six or eight weeks the cold weather would have begun. From now on I urged almost daily, by telephone or in written reports, that urgent steps should be taken to assess the compensation and to repair the villages. In particular I recommended that one at least of the British Land Settlement officers should be sent up to assess the compensation. It was clear that the local officials, even had they the will, had neither the time nor the ability to carry out this work. Finally, over a month later, a Land Settlement officer was sent up. But his terms of reference were limited. He was not authorised to deal with compensation claims. Nor had the recommendations contained in his excellent and detailed report been carried out when I left Baghdad for England in the beginning of December. Some of the villages certainly were repaired later. In about ten villages in Sheikhan qodha the houses were re-roofed, though in the cases where the Assyrians themselves had done the work they did not receive the payment which had been promised. Small cash advances were made, but these were wholly inadequate. The total amount distributed by way of relief was just over £600, but less than half of this went to Sheikhan qodha where the need was greatest. As already related, practically none of the

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loot was recovered and no compensation whatever has been paid.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that confidence did not return. I remember visiting at the end of August a village named Badriyah, near Alqosh. I found the headman, whose name was Momo Tomo, to be a man of great courage. He and his villagers had had their village entirely destroyed, and had lost practically everything they possessed. He took quite a cheerful view of the situation, however, and said he was going to carry on. He was only waiting for the assistance which the Government had promised. He obviously could not rebuild his village, without tools or material, as he had been told to do. The last time I saw him was at the end of October. By then his spirit was broken. He had seen no result from the promises made by the Government. He realised that there was no longer any hope. In my last tour of inspection I found everywhere complete dejection. The villagers were in most places too cowed to complain --- an unusual thing with Assyrians.

When I left Mosul in the middle of November 1932 the position as regards the sixty-four looted villages was as follows: thirty-three were still entirely deserted, eight were partially, and twenty-three entirely occupied. Even in the fully occupied villages there was little inclination to show the winter crop. I did my utmost to induce the villagers to do this. I also tried to persuade the men who had flocked into Mosul to go out again to their villages. I realised that where there were only a few left from any particular village it was impossible for them to return, but I suggested that the men from several different villages should join together and go to one of the large deserted villages, such as Basirian, which had, indeed, been looted, but which could easily be repaired. I was met with a black refusal. The reason generally given was fear. And here it

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must be mentioned that practically all the Assyrians in Dohuk and Sheikhan had been disarmed. For this there was no justification, as they had committed no offence. Finally, the Government agreed to return a few rifles, but the numbers returned were not nearly sufficient to restore confidence, for the Assyrians were fully aware that not less than one thousand rifles had just been distributed among their Kurdish neighbours. It is true that a number of temporary police posts were established, but these could do little or nothing to protect the Assyrians in the fields. Most of the villages in Dohuk and some in Sheikhan are even now still empty. In Dohuk the great majority of their original male inhabitants are either dead or are interned in Syria. But some, especially in the case of Sheikhan, have flocked as refugees into Mosul. There are probably upwards of eight hundred able-bodied men in Mosul, of whom perhaps sixty are in employment. The remainder with their families are living on charity, and this charity cannot go on for ever. How they and the people in the villages endured the following winter, when twenty degrees of frost was common, is not pleasant to think of. It is unfortunate that for reasons already explained they have one and all refused to go out to work. It was most important that they should do so. There was obviously not the slightest chance of their being able to leave Iraq for months to come. Apart from their being able to earn their own living, work was essential. Pauperization has already done an infinity of harm to the character of the Assyrians. Allowances, however, must be made for their state of mind, though this is not realised in Iraq. It is easy for Iraqi officials to take the line, "Well, it is unfortunate that all this has happened, but now you must start afresh." It was not so easy for the Assyrians, who had suffered so much, to forget what took place in August.

While the Arabs are totally unable or totally unwilling to understand the Assyrians' attitude of mind, to the Assyrians everything that the Iraqi Government does is

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suspect. They say that they never know when the next massacre may take place or on what slight pretext it may be begun. They realize that in their present disarmed condition they are no match for the Kurds and Arabs should another wave of resentment sweep over the country. They realize, none better, the way in which religious and national animosities can be fanned to white-heat and irreparable damage done before feeling settles again. They know how easy it is for any Government in Baghdad, by the expenditure of a few pounds, to mobilize furious demonstrations or to lash public opinion into a state of hysteria.

Even in the present state of Arab opinion it is not easy to obtain general support for any scheme to assist the Assyrians at the expense of Arab pockets. In these not-quite-civilised countries, public conscience is neither very acute nor highly developed.

But the Assyrians certainly are not easy to help. In October, having heard reports of overcrowding and destitution among the Assyrian refugees in Mosul, Major Thomson and I visited the Assyrian quarter. He found no serious overcrowding, and judging by the well-nourished appearance of the children, little destitution. It was, however, obvious that a difficult time would come during the winter. I therefore sent for the only priest left and one or two others of the leading men. I asked them to obtain particulars for me, according to a form which I had prepared, of the men, the number of their dependents, and their last employment. I realised that it would almost certainly be necessary later on to ask for assistance, and that such a request would have to be backed by facts. Two days later the priest came to see me. He told me that he had been nearly stoned in his attempts to obtain the information.

The Assyrians refused to give it, and said that they would only do so to an officer of the R.A.F. or Levies. I

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pointed out that this was a matter which concerned the Iraqi Government. The priest then tried again, but again failed.

The only bright spot was the refugee camp in Mosul. This has been run with a maximum of efficiency and a minimum of fuss by Major Thomson. He had to be firm at first with the Iraqi authorities, and had to point out that he could brook no interference from the local officials. He had also to be firm with the inmates of the camp. With memories of Baquba, they at first refused to draw their own rations. It was quietly but firmly pointed out to them that in this case they would have to leave the camp. The average population of the camp has been about 550, all women and children with the exception of a few old men. Of these some six hundred have relatives among the men interned in Syria. The remainder have no male relations left. The camp has cost the Iraqi Government approximately £200 a week. The food is ample, and blankets have been provided and new clothes. Most of them live in tents, but those who have so lived in cold weather know that tents are by no means so cold as is generally supposed. The health of the camp has been excellent, though there were seventy deaths up to November 30, 1933, mostly among young children, many of whom had arrived in the camp in a pitiable condition. An outbreak of diphtheria was quickly checked.

Much of this is due to the efforts of Flight-Lieutenant Dixon, a doctor of the R.A.F., whose services were kindly lent by the Air Officer Commanding, Air Vice-Marshal C.S. Burnett. His work was greatly appreciated by the Assyrians. Unfortunately, the Government doctor, an Assyrian, who took his place, was not of the same standard. Apart from anything else, he was suspect to the women of the camp, as he belonged to the anti Mar Shimoun party, while the women certainly did not.

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Besides the women and children in the camp the R.A.F. transported to Hinaidi by air upwards of eight hundred others, relatives of the serving Levy soldiers. Most of these would otherwise have had to be maintained in the camp. It was only after much difficulty that the R.A.F. were able to carry out this humanitarian work. Many obstacles were at first placed in the way by the Iraqi Government. Finally, however, the work was completed in a satisfactory manner.

THE REACTION IN THE TOWNS

It is strange to realize that King Feisal died in Ignorance of the atrocious. behaviour of the Iraqi Army. His state visit to London had been, unknown to the public, clouded by a succession of disquietening telegrams which, as has been described in a previous chapter, the Minister in Baghdad had been sending to London. The King finally found it necessary to hurry back from Switzerland, whither he had gone from England for a cure, and when he arrived at the beginning of August he found that the situation had passed completely beyond his control.

Everybody in Iraq had had a fifteen years' experience of British support of the Assyrians. The whole country to a man therefore believed that when Britain learnt of the massacres she would stand by the proteges - no other course seemed conceivable. The immediate result was that the British became as unpopular as the Assyrians; not even during the rebellion of 1920 had there been such a fierce wave of anti-British feeling in the country. The King, with his *feting* in London, was more than ever suspect as a tool of the British. The second-rate Ministers on the spot found themselves leading, and at the same time following, the crowd psychology of anti-British hate which they could not control, even had they wished to. The King, on his return, thus found that he could not ride

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the storm, and the idea took shape in London that reports from Baghdad about his ill health were but a cloak to cover his impending abdication. Stories were current of interviews between the Palace authorities and the British Charge d'Affaires, and it was said that the King, who wished to return to Switzerland, was with difficulty and, indeed, only on receipt of a telegram from exalted quarters in London induced to await the return of sir Francis Humphrys, who had been recalled from leave. The excitement was not confined to the Palace or the Chancelleries. The Arabic Press was venomous in the extreme. Christians in the country were going in fear and trembling. Personal friends of British officials and residents found it politic not to display their friendship too openly. When the first Assyrian attacks at Faish Khabur had failed, the excitement in the country was followed by a period of exaltation which pervaded all ranks and classes. This exaltation was perhaps natural as the **Assyrian "peril,"** as it was termed, had been vastly overestimated, and as is customary in the East, the first reports had greatly exaggerated the intensity of the fighting. Even to-day the real facts are not fully known in Baghdad. It is true that the Cabinet had had early news of the Army's excesses, although they had not had full details, but what facts they had were studiously kept away from the King. It is even true to say that the first reports of what the Army had done were received with genuine disbelief, and it was honestly thought that no Arab troops could possibly be guilty of such conduct. *(To Englishmen who knew the Arabs the news of the Simmel massacre came as a great shock. It is true that during the Mesopotamian campaign starving Arabs were guilty of many excesses against the wounded and stragglers, whether British or Turks. It is also true that in the moment of victory blood lust has often led Arabs to unnecessary killing. But massacres in cold blood are not consonant with the Arab character. Unfortunately, most of the senior officers of the Iraqi Army were Turkish trained, and to this*

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and to the fact that the recent events had really frightened them must be ascribed the behaviour of the Army at Simmel.)

A suggested inquiry was tentatively agreed to by the King, but when the Minister of Interior went to Mosul, as described in the last chapter, and thus was the first Iraqi to realize the truth, he saw at once the dangers of any inquiry, and therefore insisted that no inquiry should be held. He forced his point by the threat of resignation, and in his telephoned reports from Mosul to Baghdad he took the popular line of ascribing the whole affair to the actions of the Assyrians, and also to the reports that were leaking through of the machinations and the intrigues of the British. (It is the case that much of the first information was sent out of the country by foreign residents, many of them British, who were so disgusted at the massacres, that they felt that at all costs the news must be made known in Europe.) **Hikmet Beg** who, as already stated, was more Turk than Arab both in appearance and character, had never been considered as one of the Iraqi nationalist leaders, but he suddenly found himself raised to the pinnacle of a national hero. When he returned to Baghdad his protestations were accepted at their face value, and he was given a triumphal reception as the man who had broken the influence of the British in the north. **Sir Francis Humphrys arrived on August 23rd, and almost immediately the tension was eased and Hikmet fell from his pinnacle. Sir Francis made it clear that the British policy was not to support the Assyrians, but to support the Arabs in the maintenance of the integrity of the Iraqi State.** Later the publication of the Blue Book, which was translated into Arabic and reprinted in the Baghdad newspapers, proved conclusively that the British advisers to the Iraqi Government had done their utmost to assist the Government in its dealings with the Assyrians. Thus Hikmet's stock fell heavily.

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The situation in Baghdad and Mosul in the last week of August was indeed interesting. The British Ambassador's assurances had not yet had time to overcome the tense emotional excitement which had held the Arabs in its grip since the beginning of the month. When the battalions of the Iraqi Army returned to the capital they were given a tumultuous reception, although the demonstrations were largely artificial. (*It has always been easy in Iraq, by the spending of a few pounds, to organize great demonstrations of the riff-raff; in such demonstrations men of any substance are invariably conspicuous by their absence, but to any uninformed stranger they look genuine ebullitions of popular feeling.*) But the Baghdad demonstrations were nothing like those in Mosul, where the enthusiasm was certainly spontaneous and did not have to be organised by the Cabinet. At this time the Ministers had two objects --- it was important to impress on foreigners the unity of the nation and the undesirability of intervention; he also desired to impress on the King that he was dealing with a Cabinet backed by the nation and that if he opposed them it was he who would suffer, for as related in an earlier chapter the Cabinet had been greatly irritated by the attempts which the King had made to intervene over the Mar Shimoun's return to Mosul. The Ministers now felt that the King might display what they thought was further weakness. The Prime Minister was **Rashid Ali Beg**, a member of the famous Gailani family, an honest but hotheaded man. He had never been among the strongest supporters of King Feisal, (*And yet he had come to the Premiership from the post of Court Chamberlain and had thus, for some considerable time, been in the King's immediate entourage and receiving his close confidence.*) whose policy he had often frankly criticized. The Cabinet at the beginning of August was by the way of being a Coalition. The two Ministers who were the devoted friends and supporters of the King -- Nuri Pasha Said and Rustum Beg Haidar --- had accompanied him to

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London and were absent during the critical months. Within the Cabinet Hikmet Beg had in the past, no less than Rashid Ali, been outspoken in his criticism of the King. His anger and suspicion had been aroused by the King's attempt to rule the country as a kind of constitutional dictator --- the only way, be it said, in which Iraq can possibly be run for years to come, as the country's parliamentary system is a farce. **Yasin Pasha**, usually considered to be the strong man of Iraq, had maintained a sphinx-like attitude and the rest of the Cabinet were of little experience and less weight.

Throughout August the King was the subject of scarcely veiled attacks. He was held to be under the sway of the British. The fact that he was the greatest patriot in Iraq, and that it was he alone who could have brought about the independence of the country in so short a time, was ignored or forgotten. This is not the place to make long mention of the character or the services of King Feisal. He had his failings, and who has not? But if the Kingdom of Iraq is to survive, it will almost be entirely owing to the untiring efforts of its first King. The King on his return to Baghdad on August 2nd was a very sick and a very tired man. His English friends indeed had commented on his appearance during his state visit to London. The shock of the Assyrian affair, the realization that during the demonstration in Baghdad hardly a cheer was raised for him, while even the name of Mustapha Kemal was received with enthusiasm, his anger over what seemed to him a domestic disgrace at Angora, no doubt hastened his death. He left Baghdad, almost unnoticed, on the morning of September 2nd. He died at Geneva five days later. He had worn himself out in the service of his country. The news of his death shocked Iraq from end to end, and the inevitable reaction in his favour took place, but unfortunately Arab memories are short. (*King Feisal himself in his later years hardly ever mentioned Colonel*

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Lawrence, to whom he owed so much.)

In Kirkuk, too, there had been much excitement. Here the memories of the Levy outbreak in 1924 still rankled, and here a considerable number of Assyrians were employed by the Iraq Petroleum Company. Fortunately, the local authorities, unhampered by the military, took a firm line and no trouble occurred. Another Iraq Petroleum Company centre, Baiji, a village on the Tigris some one hundred mile south of Mosul, was the scene of some rioting. The Assyrian labourers were attacked by the Arabs and there were a few casualties. The prompt arrival of police reinforcements soon restored order.

It was in Mosul where the most serious reactions took place. This was natural. Mosul had had much to do with the Assyrians. For some years it had been the headquarters of the Assyrian Levies. Many Assyrians lived in the town, and the Mar Shimoun himself had had his residence here ever since he had completed his education in England. The Assyrians were disliked and feared. Mosul is a large town of one hundred thousand people, of whom over ten thousand are Christians. The **Chaldean Patriarch** lived here also, and there are also Bishops of the **Chaldean**, Jacobite, and other Christian sects, as well as an Apostolic Delegate, a Frenchman. Few people who have visited Mosul have spoken well of its mongrel inhabitants. Sir Mark Sykes, in his *The Caliphs' Last Heritage*, describes them in no uncertain terms.

The news of the exodus to Syria stirred the town greatly. For some months past, indeed, there had been a certain ebullience of feeling, caused by incidents such as the stone-throwing episode which has been described in an earlier chapter. The news of the fighting at Dairabun inflamed the passions of the mob. Not only the Assyrians, but the French and the English were bitterly attacked. The local newspapers led a violent campaign. The French had

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for long been suspect. It was commonly believed that they desired nothing better than trouble in Iraq in order to sow grounds for the maintenance of their mandate in Syria. The manner in which they had interpreted their mandae and in which they were carrying it out was very different from that of the British, and had been strongly criticized by Iraqis. The news of the return of the arms to the Assyrians intensified the feeling. Though the return of the arms, or rather the way in which this was done, was undoubtedly a serious error of judgment on the part of the French frontier officials, it is hardly believable that it was, as was believed even in Iraqi official circles, part of a deep-laid French scheme. The French Consul in Mosul, M. Lucas, was accused of having been in close touch with Malik Yaco before he left for Syria. such a charge was entirely unfounded. The British, too, were viciously attacked in the Press and elsewhere. (*And here it is to be noted that no steps were taken against any of the Baghdad newspapers which had been bitterly insulting Iraq's ally, Great Britain, whereas the English newspaper, the Baghdad Times, had a few months earlier been suspended for having reprinted certain references to the table manners of the Shah of Persia, which had already appeared in a London newspaper.*) The episode of the Inspecting Officer of Police has already been related. When I asked the Director-General of Police how he could possibly accuse Major Sargon of deliberately working against the Government which he was serving, he replied that he had definite information that the R.A.F. Intelligence Officer and the British Levy officers were nightly visiting the house of the Mar Shimoun. This, of course, was absurd. The R.A.F., too, were accused of dropping messages, food, and ammunition on the Assyrians. One Iraqi official was blamed for not having forwarded such a report, and when he gave as a reason that he did not believe it, he was further censured. An Iraqi aeroplane crashed in taking off, owing to being over-

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weighted with bombs. It was at once reported that a wheel had been deliberately loosened by the R.A.F. mechanics in order to cause an accident. Under like circumstances similar distorted reports are always believed by the riff-raff of a nation, but in Mosul the belief was shared by most of the intelligentsia of the town as well as by the officials. *(Needless to say, it was reported that Colonel T. E. Lawrence was present, stirring up trouble --- this time against the Arabs!* The Christians in the town were thoroughly alarmed by the violence of feeling, though as yet no definite threats had been made against them. It was, however, impossible for any Assyrian to move out of his quarter. A young Assyrian boy who had done so was assaulted and seriously injured under the eyes of the police, because he was thought to be about to place a bomb on the Mosul bridge! It had been reported earlier that an Assyrian had been poisoning the town water supply. The people of Mosul ignored the obvious fact that this would affect Assyrians as much as anyone else. The actual truth was that an Assyrian employed by the R.A.F. had been seen putting some clearing chemicals into the water, as had been done for the last ten years. *(A squadron of the R.A.F. was still stationed at Mosul. The guards for the camp and aerodrome were Assyrian Levies. The possibility of these Levies giving trouble in case of hostilities between the Iraqi forces and Malik Yaco had been the source of considerable anxiety to all of us in Mosul. In the event the Assyrian Levies gave proofs of the highest type of discipline, and this despite their natural anxiety for their families who were living in the Assyrian quarter in Mosul. A really extraordinary situation arose when the Assyrian Levies acted as guards to the Iraqi aeroplanes, which were loading bombs to be dropped on their kinsmen at Faish Khabur.*

The news of the failure of the Assyrian attack to some extent relieved the strain, though, as it was at first

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thought that large armed bodies of Assyrians were moving about in the mountains, some anxiety remained. On August 12th David Effendi and Theodore, the father and brother of the Mar Shimoun, were deported from Mosul. A considerable amount of propaganda harmful to both the Government and the Assyrians had been emanating from the house of the Mar Shimoun ever since the exodus into Syria had taken place. It was necessary that this should be stopped. A number of leaders of the Mar Shimoun's party had been deported from Mosul a few days earlier. It was also desired to deport Surma Khanum herself, the aunt of the Mar Shimoun. She had, without the least doubt, been at the back of the anti-Government propaganda. Her deportation, however had to be postponed. When the police officer went to her house, he found it full of Assyrian women in the last state of hysteria. They were capable of anything. The Iraqi officials in Mosul were unwilling to use force, as he, did not wish to have the blood of women on their hands, so Surma was left alone for the time being, though she left Mosul peacefully a few days later. (*When she left Mosul with a party of relatives she proceeded by road to Baghdad. The party stayed some time in the Y.M.C.A., whence they ultimately left for Cyprus, where they stayed for a while*).

When the news of the massacres in the north reached Mosul the reaction was very great, and a second and far more serious crisis ensued. In Mosul, unlike Baghdad, few of the inhabitants displayed the least regret for what had occurred. On August 18th the troops which had taken part in the Dairabun fighting returned to Mosul. They were given an enthusiastic reception. Triumphal arches had been erected. Some of the arches had been decorated with melons stained with blood and with daggers stuck into them. This delicate representation of the heads of slain Assyrians was in keeping with the prevailing sentiment in the town. There was no actual disorder, for the

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simple reason that the Christian population were careful to remain within their houses, but the Moslems were full of exaltation. There was much firing of revolvers and rifles in the air to mark their joy at the deliverance from the menace of the Assyrians. There were loud cheers for the Army and Bekir Sidqi. On all hands one heard cries of "Long live Iraq!" "Long live Mustapha Kemal! (*The ruler of Turkey; it must be remembered that as a town Mosul is still very largely under Turkish influence, and is very largely Turkish in sympathy.* Long live Hajji Ramadhan!" (the commander of the column). There was no cheering for King Feisal, although there was cheering for his son, the Crown Prince Ghazei (the present King).

The newspaper articles became more and more violent, and had more and more excited public feeling. On August 18th I wrote to the Acting Adviser of the Ministry of Interior a strong warning. I pointed out that a situation might shortly arise fraught with peril to the large Christian population of Mosul. The Iraqi Army was in a most violent mood, and in view of what had actually happened at Simmel it was obviously capable of anything. Apart from this, a violent campaign of anti-foreign and anti-Christian propaganda had lashed the mob into a state of frenzy. The Christians in Mosul were panic-stricken, and with an excited and entirely undisciplined mob any small incident might lead to a tragedy. I considered that the crisis would come if any foreign Powers or the League of Nations made any protests or demands. It was almost certain that the Army would object to any foreign intervention, and that its attitude would effectively prevent any attempts on the part of the civil authorities or police to maintain order. The reason for this fresh outbreak was the fear of foreign intervention. Hikmet Beg, the Minister of Interior, had been the first to realize the danger. He, without doubt, regretted the massacres which had occurred, and in fact he had been largely instrumental in preventing

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further excesses. But he saw that such events would inevitably lead to protests and even to intervention from outside Iraq.

Every Moslem and Christian in Iraq and particularly in the north was convinced that intervention by Europe was certain, unless Iraq could forcibly prevent it. In the course of the deliberations of the Permanent Mandates Commission at Geneva, as related in an earlier chapter, **Sir Francis Humphrys**, in answer to a question put by a member of the Commission, had stated that the "moral responsibility" would rest with His Majesty's Government if Iraq should prove herself unworthy of the confidence placed in her (the context being the treatment of minorities in Iraq following the termination of the Mandate). Whatever may be said in England (*Viscount Hailsham, the Minister for War, making a Government statement on the subject in answer to an interpolation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, interpreted the High Commissioner's declaration in the following words: "What sir Francis Humphrys was saying was this: that the Mandates Commission having asked: 'Are you satisfied that Iraq is so far developed that it can be safely entrusted with this liberty? Sir Francis Humphrys replied: 'I am satisfied that it can, but the responsibility for taking that view must rest on us, His Majesty's Government, rather than on you, the Mandates Commission, who obviously cannot know the facts so well. He was not saying and never was saying and never was understood to say, that he was guaranteeing, in the future, that His Majesty's Government would protect minorities in Iraq, and would assume a moral responsibility with regard to them. That he did not mean that, and was not understood to mean that is shown clearly by what happened afterwards. (Official Report of House of Lords Debate, November 28, 1933). or in Geneva as to the meaning of the words "moral responsibility," everyone in Iraq knows how the Assyrians had considered themselves to be the friends of*

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the British, and everyone knew the services which they had rendered to the British. Uninformed opinion could not believe that the British would desert their friends in time of trouble, and wide credence was obtained for the reports that British troops had been landed at Kuwait or even at Fao. (*The troops were even identified. It was said that a Gurkha Division had arrived from Karachi and there were widespread reports that British troops in India were under orders to stand by. Fao is in Iraqi territory at the mouth of the Shat-al-Arab; Kuwait is an independent principality at the head of the Persian Gulf, about ninety miles due south of Basrah; there is no harbour for big ships and no water supply inside the town, but these facts did not prevent the rumours from spreading.* So argued Hikmet Beg and nearly all the people in Mosul. The only way to prevent such intervention, which would menace the newly gained independence of the country, was the threat of further massacre. Hikmet Beg himself said to me. "If there is any outside interference or any attempt to obtain revenge, far worse will happen than has already occurred." Nor was this an idle threat. Messages were sent out to the Arab and Kurdish tribes to be ready to resist the foreigners to the last drop of their blood. The replies received were favourable, if hardly genuine. But the feelings of the Moslem mob in Mosul were genuine enough. Their latent fanaticism was easily stirred. Not that the matter was one of religion --- the Assyrian question was essentially political, and the threats to massacre the Christians were made not so much because of their religion, as because they were felt to be the weak link in the unity of the state. The Christians were naturally panic-stricken. For some days the tension was such that the slightest incident might have caused a general massacre. On several occasions I pointed out the danger to Hikmet Beg, and asked him to check the Press and the violent talk. He said he would, but he did little or nothing. He did not wish to give up his strongest weapon. He did not want, it is true, any outbreak to occur

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until the right moment, but he forgot that the passions of a fanatical mob are far easier to arouse than to control. **A speech made by Bekir Sidqi to the people of Mosul by way of thanking them for the reception of the Army still further increased the nervousness of the Christians.**

O, liberal sons of the Hadba (Mosul)!

Your display of the noble Arab character and your enthusiasm in honouring the Iraqi Army, which has disciplined the rebel Assyrians, and your great welcome to it in appreciation of the small duty which it has performed, has brought back to mind those immortal episodes, the true patriotism and the noble deeds, in which the people of Mosul were prominent under the most trying and difficult of times, when the sword of occupation was upon our necks. Thanks to you, O sons of the Hadba, thanks added to admiration and esteem, thanks which I offer as a pledge of what the Army is about to perform in the future, in accomplishment of the great duty, which the Army has felt and is still feeling that it must be prepared to perform. Therefore let us, with Army and Nation, await that day.

It was now becoming known that foreign intervention was unlikely, but it took some little time for this news to penetrate into Mosul. As has been noted, **sir Francis Humphrys** returned on August 23rd, but on August 27th when the Crown Prince the Amir Ghazi, came to Mosul for a visit and to inspect the troops, there was little difference in the emotional temperature. On this visit the Crown Prince was accompanied by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior.

A reception was held on his arrival in the Municipal Gardens -- previously known as the "Amery Garden" in honour of the **British Secretary of State for**

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the Colonie, to whose efforts in 1925 had been due the inclusion of Mosul in Iraq instead of in Turkey. The foreign Consuls were invited to this reception as well as the religious dignitaries, both Moslem and Christian. As the Crown Prince entered the usual cheers were raised, and these were followed by cries of "Down with Britain," "Down with the Colonizers." This, of course, was a direct insult to the British Consul, who was present in his official capacity. The incident was duly reported to the British embassy, but it does not appear to have been officially brought to the notice of the Iraqi Government. I personally was present at this reception, and I will always remember the icy feeling with which I was greeted. I have been through several periods of acute anti-British agitation in both Egypt and Iraq, but I have never experienced anything to approach the atmosphere which existed in Mosul during those August days of 1933.

The next day the Amir Ghazi held a review of the Army to which all the tribal chieftains from northern Iraq had been invited. Contrary to custom, the British colony in Mosul were not invited individually to this function, with the result that the only foreigners present were the Consuls (British, French, and Persian), the British Inspector-General of the Iraqi Army, and a British newspaper correspondent. The troops were greeted with tremendous enthusiasm, though it must be admitted that the machine-gun detachment, which actually carried out the massacres at Simmel, were not singled out for any special mark of approval. Bekir Sidqi and the principal commanders were the great heroes as the troops marched past. The Ghazi himself was the subject of great acclamations by the crowd, but the name of his father, the King, was not once heard during the cheering, which went on almost continuously, except during the silence which attended the decoration of the "victorious" colours by the Crown Prince.

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Notable amongst the tribal leaders who were received with acclamation was the tall figure of Sheikh Ajjil of the Shammar, whose tribesmen, it will be recalled, had been brought in to continue the looting of the massacred Assyrian villages.

During the next few days there were official dinners and receptions, to which the leading Christians were invited. Whatever their feelings, they had no option but attend. Some of them were "persuaded" to write telegrams to the League of Nations and other bodies expressing their entire satisfaction with the steps taken to crush the Assyrians "Rebellion." No doubt the bodies which received these telegrams took them at their proper value. They were, of course, not worth the paper on which they were written. This could not be otherwise when the local Christians saw the attempts which had been made during the last few days to create the atmosphere of a Jihad.

From now on, however, there was some improvement. Christians, even Bishops, who had at first been unable to leave their homes without insults, could now do so. But it was quite out of the question for Assyrians to leave their quarter. By the end of October, however, the situation, on the surface at any rate, was calmer, but it will be a long time before the situation in Mosul returns to what it was prior to August 1933. It is beyond question that as a result of these tragic events everyone concerned has suffered, British, Iraqis, Assyrians, and the League of Nations. It is not surprising that it is often asked whether these happenings could not have been prevented. It is easy to be wise after the event, but it is difficult to avoid the impression that in giving up the Mandate with the Assyrian question still unsettled a very grave risk was taken. With an extremely difficult, suspicious, and truculent people like the Assyrians on the one hand, and with hot-headed and inexperienced Iraqi officialdom on the other, it appears that a clash was almost inevitable. It is

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certainly not clear why operations against Sheikh Ahmed el Barzan were undertaken in the summer of 1932, in the course of which British aeroplanes were forced to drop delayed action bombs on Kurdish villages, while the infinitely more serious Assyrian question was left unsettled. It was hardly fair on the Iraqi Government that it should be faced with such a problem in the first days of its independence. For the Assyrian problem was not one of land settlement. It was essentially political.

Not the strongest advocate of British policy in the Near and Middle East during the last hundred years would venture to suggest that it has been entirely consistent; but political and commercial interests have as a rule tended to suppress moral impulses which have occasionally been felt. This has been far less realised in England than in the East, where, as in Europe, the British Governments are credited with a greater Machiavellianism than they usually deserve. There is, however, no doubt that as a result of the happenings of last summer British prestige in Iraq and throughout the Middle East as well has suffered a severe blow.

The dwellers in Iraq consider, rightly or wrongly, that we have let down our friends. A few Iraqi politicians may pay lip-service to the assistance which we rendered at Geneva, but the rank and file are frankly contemptuous. During the last three months that I was in Mosul no Christian and very few Moslems would willingly visit the British Consul, myself, or any other British official. They feared to be tarred with the brush of being friends of the British. It was difficult to blame them. It could hardly be expected that they would understand the enormous difficulties which the British Government had had to face in its endeavours to settle this complex problem.

The object of this book has been to show how

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great these difficulties were. It is hoped, moreover, that the account which has been given of the massacres will do something to dispel the rumours which have been current on the Continent and elsewhere that British officers were present at these massacres and did nothing to stop them.

The position of British officials in the civil administrations was one of extraordinary difficulty. They had no executive powers. It has been written, "An adviser without responsibility can only produce irritation, when his advice does not happen to agree with the opinion of the officer who has the responsibility." When the adviser and the responsible official are of different nationality, have different standards, and look at the question from a different angle, the difficulties are multiplied a hundredfold.

Not that the action of the local Iraqi officials could be greatly criticized, at first, at any rate, but with the atmosphere existing in Mosul during August it would have taken a very brave and a very strong man to have withstood public opinion, which considered any yielding to foreign advice flagrant treachery to the country.

Nevertheless, it is hoped that in justice to the Iraqis it may be realised that the massacres themselves were the work of a small section of the Army. It is true that weakness, some of it of a glaring nature, was shown by politicians at the time and afterwards, but there is no doubt at all that practically all responsible Iraqi feel deep and genuine regret for what took place, even if such regret is perhaps tempered with satisfaction that the Assyrian bubble has burst.

* * *

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HIS BETITUDE
ESHAI MAR SHIMOUN XXI
CATHOLICOS PATRIARCH
OF THE ASSYRIANS

The Athenaeum,
Pall Mall,
London S.W.1
22nd March, 1937.

**To the President of the Committee of Six (Assyrian question)
through the Political Secretary,
League of Nations,
GENEVA.**

Your Excellency,

The Assyrians heard with the greatest regret the announcement made on June 30th last year by the French representative, as to the political developments in the Levant and the abandonment of Ghab settlemen scheme.

They had every reason to expect that their problem was on the point of being satisfactorily settled: and hoped to enjoy security and justice under the French Mandate. With this hope in view, they were determined to endure patiently any suffering they might experience in this interval, and did their utmost to comply with the instructions sent to them from time to time by the committee.

Since the failure of the Ghab scheme, they have looked forward with great anxiety to the results of the enquiries being made by your committee, which results you hoped to lay before the Council during its last session: and for this they continue to wait.

The sympathy and interest shown by the Council has been

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greatly valued, and in spite of the successive disappointments, they still continue to hope for a satisfactory and permanent settlement.

The Assyrians are particularly grateful for, and have been much encouraged by, the kind words of sympathy and goodwill recently expressed by the representatives of the United Kingdom and France, who said that they desired to see the Assyrian question finally and happily settled.

A. According to reports which I have received the situation at present is as follows:

(i) The Assyrian refugees still remaining in Iraq continue to hope for their removal from that country.

(ii) The events which took place in 1933 have totally destroyed their confidence, and they have no hope of being able to live securely in Iraq.

(iii) They are regarded with contempt and distrust by their Arab and Kurdish neighbours, and live with a constant feeling of insecurity.

(iv) Acts of violence and individual murders of Assyrians have not ceased, and the culprits escape with impunity.

(v) It is not my intention to make any personal attack on the Iraqi Government: but I should be failing in my duty to my people if I did not draw your Excellency's attention to the changes which have recently taken place in the Government of Iraq, and which the Assyrians cannot but view with increased anxiety.

The Assyrians have learnt from past experience the value of any promises or guarantees that might be given; no matter what political attitude this Government may at present adopt towards them, it will never win their confidence.

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B. The economic situation of the Assyrians has been going from bad to worse.

(i) A large proportion of the people still remains without employment, and finds it difficult to exist at all.

(ii) Others are still earning their living as tenants: these have suffered considerable losses through having put up most of their immovable property to auction, especially at the time when they were expecting to emigrate to Brazil.

C. The situation of the Assyrians now settled on the Khabur is as follows:

(i) they were provisionally settled on the Khabur under the Ghab scheme.

(ii) The political and administrative difficulties affecting the Khabur settlement have been pointed out from the beginning, in the letter addressed by the French Government to the Chairman of the Committee of Six (Assyrian question), in reply to his communication dated March 22nd, 1935.

(iii) The Assyrians are also aware of the protest made by the Turkish and Iraqi Governments against their settlement within the limited area along the frontiers of Turkey and Iraq.

Eshai Shimon
:puxx uz 2 ≠
:acul?
Bivilil lu lo go
Luzuo?

The Assyrians on the Khabur cannot but view these facts with uneasiness, especially now that the French Government has decided to give up its mandate for Syria.

D. The situation of the Assyrian people thus remains more

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uncertain than it has ever been before. No one who understands the situation can doubt this fact.

It is twenty-one years since the Assyrians were driven out of their homes. The trials and sufferings which they have endured have been great. It is enough to say that over two-thirds of them have perished by massacre, captivity, starvation or disease.

Most of them have during this period built a house and provided other means of living no less than eight times, and have had the bitter experience of having had to abandon it.

Your Excellency, is it possible for a people with such experience to face yet another uncertain future?

The Assyrians are now a weary, broken and desperate people, and even if they were now induced to accept without protest whatever might be in store for them, this would provide no solution for the problem.

In conclusion, I wish, in the name of the Assyrian people to beg that whatever the results of your present efforts may be, the question may not be considered as settled, as long as it remains in its present state, and that the Committee may continue its efforts until a satisfactory settlement of the whole problem is reached.

May I, in the name of the Assyrian people, express our deep gratitude for all the efforts made by our Committee to find a solution of this difficult problem.

I have the honour to be, Excellency,
Your obedient servant,
By the Grace of God,

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Mar Shimoun
Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrians.

CHAPTER 15

THE ASSYRIAN NATIONAL PETITION

**Presented to The World Security Conference at
San Francisco May 7th, 1945**

THE PATRIARCHATE OF THE EAST

6346 N. Sheridan Road
Chicago 40, Illinois, U. S. A.

PETITION ON BEHALF OF ASSYRIAN NATION

To the Hon. Alger Hiss
Secretary-General
Veterans Building
San Francisco, California

BRITISH POLICY IN ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT 339

Excellency:

The Assyrian Nation of today is the remnant of the once great Assyrian Empire, and the greatest missionary Church the world has ever known. Their status as a millet, "nation", under the leadership of their Patriarch, known as the PATRIARCH OF THE EAST, was recognized and tolerated under the Parthians, the Sassanides, the Arab Khalifs, the Mogul Kahns, and the Ottoman Sultans.

Until World War I, the Assyrian nation lived in the mountains of Kurdistan to the North of Beth-Nahreen (Mesopotamia) and around Lake Urumia, in Persia, under the spiritual and temporal leadership of their Patriarchs. The Assyrians in Kurdistan, although nominally subjects to the Turkish Government, enjoyed a great measure of autonomy. The Turkish Government satisfied itself with a tribute paid through the agency of the Patriarch, His Holiness the Mar Shimoun, a title used by the successive Patriarchs to signify the foundation of the CHURCH OF THE EAST by Saint Peter.

ASSYRIAN NATION IN WORLD WAR I

This was the state in which the Assyrian nation lived prior to the outbreak of the First World War. The respective European powers --- **England, Russia, and France** --- had for many years been interested in the Assyrian nation in view of the strategic position which they held, and their undeniable quality as soldiers. The representatives of these Powers made regular tours among the Assyrians, disseminating the propaganda of their respective governments --- an act which the Assyrians were unable to avoid and the Turkish Government (equally) powerless to prevent.

This naturally increased the suspicions of the old Turkish *Regime* against the Assyrians, suspicions which were for the most part unwarranted and grossly exaggerated; but the fact is that these suspicions did exist, and when the tragic hour struck in 1914, the small Assyrian Nation was among the first to suffer the tragic

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consequences over which it had no control. In a document such as this, it is not possible to go into detail of the series of happenings which have already been documented by various writers.

However, whether with the knowledge of the central government or through instigation of local Turkish officials, the Mohammedan Kurds carried out a wholesale massacre of the Assyrians of the district of Albaq Gawar; men, women, and children alike were slaughtered, only young women being spared to suffer the worst fate of Harem life. The then Patriarch, MAR BENYAMIN SHIMOUN, alarmed by the tragedy, called a general meeting of all the leaders of the nation, composed of both the bishops and the *Maliks* who met in Diz on the 18th of April, 1915. After lengthy deliberations it was unanimously decided that --- in view of the fact that the Turkish Government had failed to observe its solemn obligation to safeguard the lives and property of the Assyrians --- the Assyrian nation accept the invitation of the Allies and particularly that of England, France, and Russia to join the common cause and to fight to the victorious end as their *Smallest Ally*. In reply to the ultimatum of the Assyrian nation, the Turkish Government informed the Patriarch *Mar Benyamin Shimoun* that if the Assyrian joined the Allies, his brother Hormizd, then a student at Constantinople (and held as hostage) would be put to death. The Patriarch who had hitherto exhorted his people to be patient in suffering, remained unmoved by the threat. Hormizd was accordingly put to death most cruelly.

In the meantime, the Patriarch made a personal contact with Chernosoboff, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Eastern armies, who was then in Salmas in Northwest Persia and who informed him that due to pressure on the Western front, the Russian armies were then actually withdrawing from Persia, and therefore, the help promised to the Assyrians was not forthcoming. It was at this time that the Assyrians around Lake Urumia suffered a terrible fate at the hands of the incoming Turkish armies and the Kurdish and Persian irregulars. The Assyrians in Kurdistan, in the meantime, had set a line of resistance west to the

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Vilayet of Mosul and northwest on the Persian border. they were attacked incessantly by powerful units of the Turkish army and swarms of Kurdish irregulars, yet they held on tenaciously for about four months, but being vastly outnumbered both in men and material, they finally had to retreat, and join the Russian Forces who had by now returned to Salmas and Urumia. Here they were organised into regular units and armed by Russians, and they distinguished themselves in many an engagement against the common foe.

However, the Russian Revolution of October, 1917, left the Assyrian nation stranded, and had from now on to fight alone against the Turks, the Persians, and the Kurds. In fourteen major battles the Assyrians were victorious, but the incessant pressure of the Turkish Regulars and the Kurdish irregulars necessitated a shortening of the line. This action on the part of the Turkish army was motivated by the fact that the Assyrian army was threatening seriously the northern flank of their armies that were engaged in a deadly combat with the British armies in Mesopotamia and Southern Persia.

In the meantime, our supplies were getting exhausted; the Assyrians were being persistently attacked from the north by Ali Ehsan Pasha's 5th and 7th divisions, from the south by the 6th division under Hajji Ebrahim Beg, from the west by the 12th division under Haidar Beg, while in the east we had our backs to Lake Urumia. Indeed, the situation was growing desperate.

It was at this juncture that the British Government through the agency of Captain George F. Gracey (D.S.O.), who was acting under the orders of the Intelligence Service, came especially for the purpose from Van --- his headquarters --- to encourage the Assyrians to organize their resistance against the Turks. At a conference held in December, 1917, or early January, 1918, in the name of England, Capt. Gracey undertook to furnish immediately the 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 nation. Colonel Nikitine, the

K. M. PENNINGTON, (A British Flight Officer)

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Russian Vice Consul, and Monsieur Paul Coujole, a French Medical Officer, Chef De L'Ambulance Francaise du Caucase, were present on the occasion and have testified to the fact.

It was also on this occasion that, on the advise of Captain Gracey the *Patriarch Mar Shimoun Benyamin*, accepted an invitation to a meeting with Simko Agha, a Kurdish Chief, at which the Patriarch, along with about a hundred leaders who accompanied him, were murdered treacherously. This was the greatest blow the nation could have suffered. Soon after this, K. M. Pennington, a British Flight Officer, who, at a great risk to his life, landed on a grazing ground with a message from the British General in Hamadan, urging the Assyrians to make contact in Sainkala with the British unit under the command of J. J. McCarthy, one hundred mile south of Tabriz and about half way between Urumia and Hamadan.

At the command of the Patriarch, *Polos Mar Shimoun XXII*, who succeeded the *Patriarch Mar Benyamin*, an Assyrian force under the leadership of *General Petros Elia* (one of the Assyrian Commanders) along with the bishop Mar Yosip and Zaya d'Beth Mar Shimoun, brother of the Patriarch.) effected a junction with McCarthy's unit.

However, the help thus promised and which was sorely needed never reached the Assyrians, now concentrated in the Urumia district. The Turkish forces in the meantime increased the pressure, and then it was found that the British Forces, which were already locked in a deadly combat with the Turks and harassed by swarms of Arab irregulars, would not be able to help the Assyrians effectively.

Threupon, it was decided to make contact with the British forces in Hamadan. A general retreat took place; forcing their way through a hostile territory, the Assyrians finally reached the British forces in Hamadan. It was during this - the worst Odyssey in the history of the nation --- that thousands of men, women, and

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children alike died of starvation and disease. Thus ended the first Assyrian chapter of the horrors of World War I, little revealing that a worse fate was yet in store for this gallant remnant of the most ancient Christian church and nation.

ASSYRIAN NATION UNDER THE BRITISH

In the meantime, thousands of Assyrian refugees were moved to Baquba, near Baghdad, where the British military authorities had established a great camp for their reception, and very good care was taken of them. Their able-bodied men at the same time, however, were formed into a military force, or otherwise employed for other useful purposes connected with the war.

The first Assyrian force under the British command --- and headed by Rab Khaila David d'Mar Shimoun, father of the present Patriarch --- were from now on employed with telling effect against the successive Kurdish and Arab uprisings.

Under the command of General Knightingale, the Assyrian Army went into action in July, 1918, against the Kurds of Amadia district, who had murdered a number of British officers. The revolt was broken, and thereafter the Assyrians were used by the British to police Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in order to smash the successive rebellions by the Arabs and the Kurds. By the admission of the then Civil Commissioner in Iraq:

It was the Assyrian force that saved the swamping of our rule in the Arab revolt and it was they who (as the C.O. in the field, Colonel Cameron, declared) rolled back the Turkish invation of Iraq in 1922 and 1923 at a time when the Iraqi troops were utterly unfit to take the field themselves.

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The following letter was received by the present Patriarch from **Colonel J. J. McCarthy**, who headed the British military Mission to Persia during the World War I:

I have sent a copy of a memorandum I have written on the Assyrian question from the time your people joined forces with us against the Turks in 1918 up till six months after the Armistice was signed. I have made a strong point of the fact that your people were definitely promised by me (acting under orders from headquarters, of course) that they would have their country restored to them, and that my orders and only reason for raising the Assyrian contingent in Hamadan in 1918 was to drive the Turk out and reoccupy the country.

I do hope the Foreign Office will do something and do it now and before it is too late. No good can come out of delaying matters and the British Government should face the position and do the right thing. It is all very difficult I know, but surely not impossible. After all, England is a big nation and we did, I suppose win the war? However, we didn't lose it, and if we had, there



THE CONFERENCE AT CAIRO

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would have been a different story to tell.

It is clearly our duty to fulfil promises made to people who stood by us when we were in urgent need of all the help forthcoming. We did not have too many staunch and loyal friends in the East in 1918. Few people realize what your unfortunate people suffered and are still suffering in return for their loyalty to England. I will do my best to make known the terrible hardships they suffered under my own eyes. Never shall I forget that retreat from Urumia when I met the panic stricken people on **Bidjar Road** and never do I want to see anything like it again.

One thing is now certain and that is they cannot be left to the tender mercies of the Arabs, whose one ambition in life appears to be to destroy them. This of course, was very obvious to anyone who cared to think long before the last trouble. Sir Arnold, dealing with the services rendered by the Assyrians, states: 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.

In 1920, the Baquba camps were closed, and the Assyrians for all practical purposes were let loose by the British to seek a solution to their own problems. About half the Assyrians made their way back to their ancient home in the Hakkari Mountains in Kurdistan, which was now no man's land. the rest were dispersed throughout Iraq to eke such existence as they could; some were settled as tenants to Arab and Kurdish land owners, and others found such employments as were available. The majority of the Assyrians from Urumia also found their way back as subjects to the Persian Government, but a considerable number of them, apprehensive of the future, remained in Iraq.

Early in 1921, a conference was held in Cairo, Egypt, and a definite plan for the formation of the future *Assyrian Levies* ("The Assyrians saved the British Army from utter disaster in

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1920." -- *Wilson's Mesopotamia, supra, p. 291.*) was now decided upon by His Britannic Majesty's Government, which was as follows:

Assyrian Levies are to relieve the British and Indian troops in Iraq, take over the outposts in Mosul district and Kurdistan, previously held by Imperial garrisons and fill the gap until such time as the Iraqi national army is trained to undertake these duties.

British officers such as Captain MacNarny and Captain Renton embarked on an intensive campaign persuading the Assyrians to join the Levies; they travelled into Hakkari and reached the remotest Assyrian villages in Kurdistan. The Assyrians believing that the British Government meant to observe the promise of a national home (made to them) responded unanimously.

An Assyrian Force of 6,000 strong, known as the Assyrian Levies under the British command and led by Rab Khaila, General David d'Mar Shimoun, (*Father of the present Patriarch.*) along with Assyrian officers, was trained and equipped during the year of 1922. In 1923, the Assyrian Levies were placed under the command of the Royal Air Force and commanded by Colonel Commander H. T. Dobbins (D.S.O.), 1922-1926. the Turkish threat to the Mosul Vilayet was imminent; they stirred up the Kurds to rebellion against the British. **The Assyrian Levies were used** successively both against the Turkish regulars and the Kurds, who inflicted defeat upon the latter in numerous engagements, and thus saved Iraq from total disaster. This, however, increased the hatred of all the Moslem elements against the Assyrian Christians, which were now looked upon as an effective instrument in the imperialistic policy of the British Government. Thus depleted of their man power (all the able-bodied men having enlisted in the Levies), the Assyrians in Hakkari were now suddenly attacked by the Turkish Forces and for the second time since 1915, they were again ousted from their homes.

It must be said that on this occasion, the British once

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more, despite the timely S.O.S., failed to give any assistance to the Assyrians in defending their homeland. In the meantime, the British and the Turks were disputing the ownership of the Mosul Vilayet, and the strongest argument presented by the British in their claim was that since the Assyrian nation had been dispossessed of their homeland by the Turks, they must be recompensed by a similar settlement within the Mosul Vilayet.

It was upon this understanding that the League of Nations awarded the Mosul Vilayet to Iraq rather than to Turkey, acting on the advice of the League of Nations' 1925 Inquiry Commission, which had stated: (*League of Nations Document, C 400 M. 147, 1925, VII, p. 490.*)

It is not our duty to enumerate all the conditions that would have to be imposed on the sovereign state for the protection of these minorities. 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 certain **local autonomy**, recognizing their rights to appoint their own officials and contenting itself with a tribute from them, paid through the agency of their Patriarch. These recommendations, however, remained a dead letter, and no serious attempt was ever made to honour them.

In the meantime, the Assyrians in Iraq continued to suffer untold hardships, mental, physical, and spiritual alike --- disappointed and disheartened in the extreme by the failure of the British Government to fulfil its promises towards them --- and looked upon with great suspicions by the Iraqi Government and constantly attacked by the Iraqi press as a foreign and unwelcome element --- they felt uneasy of the dark future facing them.

The Iraqi army was jealous of the achievements of the Assyrian Levies as a military force and looked upon them as an instrument in the hands of the Mandatory Power, rather than an

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asset to Iraq. Individual cases of injustice against the Assyrians were piling up, and they could expect no justice from the Iraqi Government or the Iraqi courts.

The majority of those settled as agriculturists were settled in malarious places, all of whom became afflicted with malaria resulting in a very high rate of mortality, approximating in the case of adults 30% while in the case of infants it exceeded 50%.

ASSYRIAN CASE BEFORE THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The Assyrian Nation, apprehensive of its future, petitioned to the League of Nations to find a solution of its problem before the mandate over Iraq was lifted.

In 1932 the ASSYRIAN LEVIES, fearful of the future of their families in accordance with the terms of their contract, gave the British authorities one month's notice, at the end of which period they were to lay down their arms. A national meeting was called at which the representatives of the Assyrian Levies were also present and on June 17, 1932, a *national petition* was sent to the League of Nations and to the British Government in which a number of specific requests were made to insure the integrity and safety of the Assyrians.

On a definite promise given by the British High Commissioner, Sir Francis Humphreys, to support certain specific claims contained in the *national petition*, I was requested to use my influence with the Assyrian Levies and urge them to continue in service. This I did successfully. the Assyrian Levies did continue in service. However the promises made by Sir Francis Humphreys were not kept --- and I returned from Geneva empty handed.

Iraq was in the meantime admitted into the League of Nations on a specific undertaking given by the British Government,

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which stated:

His Majesty's Government fully realised its responsibility in recommending that Iraq should be admitted to the League of Nations which was in its view the only logical way of terminating the mandate. Should Iraq prove herself unworthy of the confidence which had been placed in her the moral responsibility must rest on His Majesty's Government, which would not attempt to transfer it to the Mandates Commission. In the meantime, the Iraqi press embarked on a violent campaign of suspicion and hatred against the Assyrians with the full knowledge and encouragement of the Iraqi Government.

In April, 1933, I was invited to Baghdad by the Iraqi Government to discuss the settlement and a few days later as informed that I was under detention. The agitation against the Assyrians, in the meantime, took even a more violent and threatening aspect --- it was now directed on religious issue. At the same time the Assyrian leaders with whom I was not permitted to communicate, were subjected to all sorts of ill-treatment, the plain object of which was to drive them into despair.

The climax came during a meeting held in Mosul on the 10th day of July, 1933, when the Mutasarif (Governor) and his British adviser, Col. R. F. Stafford, told the Assyrian leaders to either submit to the policy which the government had decided for them --- which was contrary to the letter and spirit of the homogeneous settlement recommended by the League of Nations --- or else leave Iraq. The Assyrians did leave Iraq.

On July 14th and 15th, 1933, an Assyrian group of a few hundred men, carrying their rifles which they had legally acquired on the termination of their service in the Levies, left Iraq for Syria. The rifles were carried only as a means of protection while passing through hostile territory and upon arrival in Syria were handed to the French.

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On reaching Fesh Khabur on the Syrian frontier, they wrote informing the Iraqi authorities of their action and assuring them of their peaceful intention and begging that their families and the rest of their compatriots, who may wish to join them, be permitted to do so. In the meantime the wires between London, Paris, Iraq, and Syria clicked incessantly, and the Assyrians were told by the French authorities that they must return to Iraq. Their arms were given back to them.

The full force of the Iraqi army and a few thousand gendarmes and the Iraqi Air Force which had been in the meantime rushed up to the border, fully armed and prepared for a day such as this, were waiting on the other side of the River Khabur. The Assyrians were assured of the good intentions of the Iraqi Government, their only intention being to reach their families; they accepted the assurances and forded the river. But instead they were fired on from every side by the Iraqi army with every weapon at their disposal. A battle ensued in which about three hundred Assyrians engaged the whole of the Iraqi army. Those Assyrians that were able to break through the Iraqi lines reached their villages, and about half of them re-crossed into Syria and were interned by the French. Losses on both sides were light and it was hoped that this would be the end of it and the incident would close. However, the fanatic Iraqi army, led by the notorious **Bakir Sidqi**, (Kurdish origin) and the equally ruthless Yasin Pasha Al Hashimi (the Prime Minister) and Hikmat Sulaiman (the Minister of Interior) a wholesale massacre of unarmed Assyrians, men, women and children alike followed --- it was conducted by the Iraqi army in uniform.

The Semel massacre has passed into history as one of the ghastliest scenes of all times. To quote a British officer ("The Crisis in Iraq," supra, p. 412.) in the service of the Iraqi Government: I saw and heard many terrible things in the great war, but what I saw in Semel is beyhond human imagination.

But this was not all --- the perpetrators of the massacre

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were decorated; Bakir Sidqi was elevated to the rank of *Pasha*, and each of the others, responsible for the horrors committed on the defenseless Assyrians, was rewarded in some way or another.

On August 18th, 1933, I was de-nationalized without trial and deported from Iraq to the Island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean. After great efforts I was able to secure a permit from the British Government, which enabled me to proceed to Geneva, and plead the Assyrian case before the League of Nations. (*This was given only after the British authorities had exacted a written statement from the Petitioner pledging him to remain silent while in England. Thus it was that he was unable to place before the British public the true facts of the Assyrian case, or to defend himself against the many false accusations lodged against him by those antagonistic to the just cause of the Assyrians.*) My earnest plea for an inquiry commission to be sent to Iraq to investigate the facts leading to the massacre and the existing situation of the Assyrians was ignored.

Sir John Simon, the British Foreign Minister, speaking at Geneva on October 14th, 1933 on the Assyrian massacre stated: At the same time, those facts could not possibly be regarded as justifying the excesses which had been committed. The apportionment of blame, however, was a somewhat barren proceeding. In the meantime, efforts were made by the League of Nations to find a home for the Assyrians outside Iraq, but with no result. Finally the French Government offered a settlement in the region of the Ghab in Syria. However, owing to circumstances unknown to the petitioner, the French later declared that the scheme could not be carried through. Thus the question remained unsolved and the Assyrians were left in a worse plight than before. Those in Iraq were left in the same condition as prior to the massacre, in addition to the fact that they were now hated and despised more than ever. About eleven thousand or so, victims of the massacre, who had been settled temporarily on the River Khabur in Syria, were told that they had to remain there.

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This was the situation of the Assyrians in Syria and Iraq in 1937. All these years I have not been permitted to visit them. Nevertheless, we all hoped and prayed that time --- the great healer --- might in due course effect a cure; and the Assyrians may at last find peace and rest. In the meantime, however, the dark clouds of strife and war were growing daily more ominous, and it was clear that the nations of the world would soon find themselves locked in the deadliest combat of all times.

ASSYRIAN NATION AND WORLD WAR II

The British Government, fully realizing the seriousness of the situation, had once again embarked on an intensive campaign of recruiting every able-bodied Assyrian, and thus bring the Levy force to the required strength. The Assyrians again responded unanimously, so that by 1940 (when the war was declared) every Assyrian between the ages of 17 and 45 had volunteered in the Levies. It was the Allied cause again --- the cause of democracy -- which had failed them badly in the last war; nevertheless, they believed again that the Allies would this time do justice to their cause. Therefore, when the well organised Axis-fomented rebellion broke out in Iraq in 1941, led by Rashid Ali Al Gailani, the Assyrian troops numbering a few thousand strong, were the only force on which the British could rely to save this vital route of communication and supply for the Allied Nations. It must be remembered that in 1941 Great Britain was fighting with her back to the wall against all the Fascist hordes. She needed every friend and such friends in the Middle East were sadly lacking.

On May 2, 1941, the Iraqi Army marched against, and attacked, the Royal Air Force base at Habbaniyah was estimated at about 15,000 regulars and about 45,000 irregulars composed of Arab Tribesmen, and they were assisted by the Iraqi and the German Air Force, which was now operating from Baghdad, Mosul, and elsewhere in Iraq. The Assyrians fought valiantly --- assisted only by certain units of the King's Own Regiment which was flown from Egypt and a small number of Royal Air Force fighter planes --- and finally defeated the enemy inflicting heavy

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losses upon them. the losses, on the part of the Assyrian defenders, were also considerable. They followed the enemy to Fellujah where it tried to make a last stand, but they finally defeated and destroyed him completely.

The value of the services thus rendered by the Assyrian troops at this juncture lies in the fact that they not only defeated a rebellion of considerable proportion and thereby put an end to similar uprising which might have been in the making; but its special significance for Allied strategy as a whole lies in the fact that:

(1) By saving Iraq from the Axis, the Assyrians saved the Iraqi oil which was vital to the maintenance of the Allied fleet, as well as the air and ground Forces in the Mediterranean theatre of war.

(2) They saved the only overland route by which the Allies --- the United States of America, and Great Britain --- were able to help the Great Russian Ally.

(3) The occupation of Iraq by the Germans would have laid open the back door to Palestine, Egypt, and indeed the whole of the Middle East countries.

(4) they contributed to the defense of the whole of the Middle East --- they have been employed in Iran, Palestine, and Cyprus. Strong Forces of Assyrian troops have also been employed in Dalmatia, who have distinguished themselves against crack German divisions.

These are only some of the major exploits of the Assyrian troops. Thus, the Assyrian nation, the smallest ally, has proved itself to be of the greatest value to the cause of all the Allied Nations, and of which they are justly proud. Air Commander J. L. Vachell, a British Officer, writing in an English magazine, *THE QUEEN*, (March 9, 1944, "Our Smallest Ally." p. 10-11.)

(the period between the two wars they, the Assyrians, were

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primarily responsible for safeguarding our air fields in Iraq and for providing the ground forces which are an essential complement to air control. Not only did air control in Iraq save this country many millions of pounds, but it served as a model which was extended to several parts of the Empire. What is not generally appreciated is that, after severe disillusionment during that period, the services of the Assyrians during the present war have exceeded anything they did before. Had it not been for their loyalty at the time of Rashid Ali's German-inspired revolution in Iraq in May 1941, our position in the Middle East might have become most precarious.

On the other side of the picture, however, lies a gloomy future, one that is based on the most bitter experience of the past. They have again been used to crush a rebellion by the Arabs of Iraq --- one that was equivalent to a holy war. In the struggle, though much against their desire, they had to kill many a Moslem --- a fact which no good Moslem can forget. (*Capt. Somerset de Chair stated with resounding accent: "The Iraqi coup had failed by so little and the Iraqi hate the Assyrians; more than they hate the British, did they hate the Assyrians and once more the British Empire owed so much to few -- the Golden Carpet, London: Faber & Faber. 1944. p. 48.*

For more emphatic assertions on the part the Assyrians played in world War II in favor of the United Nations, see Appendices I, II, and III.

It is a repetition of the events that brought about the savage massacre of 1933 upon them, and they are fearful of the future. The Iraqi Government has already proved itself unworthy of the confidence placed in it, and the British Government has been unable to protect their life and property. The Iraqi Government itself has been subject to one *Coup d'Etat* after another, many of its high ranking officials have died a violent death or fled into exile. Therefore, it is clear that even if there were some favorably inclined officials in Iraq, they would

never have the ability to give protection to the Assyrians.

Air Commander J. L. Vachell in his foregoing article in *The Queen*, referring to the services rendered by the Assyrians covering the present conflict (World War II), stated further: They were unpopular with the people of Iraq before Rashi Ali's revolt, and the large part which they played in the discomforture of the Iraq army at that time will no doubt rankle for years.

CONCLUSION

Sir, with these facts in view, I as the Patriarch and legal representative of the Assyrian nation, have the honour to bring to your attention the plight of this ancient Christian nation, which now

Eshai Shimun

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stands at the cross-roads which spell total extermination --- or survival. Along with its disappearance would also disappear the most ancient Christian church in Christendom --- one of the richest cultures the world has ever known --- and the Aramaic language, the language of Christ, which is the language of the Assyrian church and people.

What is more, the thousands of Assyrians who have died for the cause of freedom and justice along with the millions of those of United Nations, would have died in vain. It is the principle that matters and not the quantity; justice is indivisible. It is small nations such as the Assyrians that need protection, and not vice versa. With firm faith in the guarantees of the Atlantic Charter and the subsequent declarations pertaining to **freedom, justice, and equality** for all peoples, both large and small, and relying upon justice of our cause and above all in the Almighty god, Author of all justice, I submit to your Honour this petition for the consideration of the proper authorities.

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The Assyrians are a people who have existed in the Middle East from the **dawn of history**. Assyria is their home, and by reason of history they have an undisputed right to their survival as a people in that home. (*See Minutes of the Assyrian Settlement Committee in London in Appendix IV.*)

In consequence of the last War (World War I), they are now settled in many countries, viz. : Iraq, Syria, Iran, Russia, United States of America, and other countries. If such a home were granted them under an international organisation that is to be set up, they would congregate in that home, which would enable them to live free from want and fear, and to preserve their Christian faith, their language, and their ancient culture. the Assyrians are a peaceful people and anxious to live with all their neighbours in peace and amity, and to cooperate with them to the fullest extent, irrespective of religion or creed. with this end in view, I offer my prayers to the Lord God of Hosts for an early termination of the present conflict (World War II), the success of the conference of Allied Nations, and the international organisation that is to evolved therefrom.

I have the honour to be, Excellency,

Yours very truly.

ESHAI SHIMOUN.
By Grace,
Catholicos Patriarch of the Church
of the East and the Assyrian Nation
Dated May 7, 1945

CHAPTER 16

Assyrians of Qamishli
Renounce Mar Eshai Shimoun
ASSYRIAN LIBERATION COMMITTEE
1949

Leaflet No. 11 Say the truth and fear not, as God is the Truth.

Assyrians of Qamishli Renounce Mar Eshai Shimoun

INTRODUCTION

Receivers of this leaflet will have no doubt seen the series of

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leaflets issued by the A.L.C, particularly leaflet 5 (B) "Assyrians Repudiate Feudal Authority of Mar Eshai Shimoun 1949."

We are now pleased to state that the Assyrians in Qamishli (Syria) and its disstrict have made earnest requests for the publication of their own Letter of Repudiation of the same man's "Feudal Practices" which have been the direct cause for the ruination of the Assyrian people and their Church.

Other Letters of Repudiation, in addition to that from Khabur and the present one, have been received and are being considered by the ALC.

Mar Shimoun's circular-letter dated April 16, 1948, attached as an appendix to this leaflet was found, after careful examination, to contain hysterical statements of his own fabrication (*See Medical report on page 6 in Leaflet 5 (B) "Assyrians Repudiate Feudal Authority of Mar Eshai Shimoun 1949".*) and that his only object was to raise funds in the name of those who have already renounced him, which funds he has been using for purposes far remote from any honourable object.

The ALC has the pleasure to thank Mr. Yosip Solomon of Qamishli and his many collaborators for their energy in making the present work possible. Mr. Yosip is an active member of ALC who condemns Mar Shimoun's feudal practices in much stronger terms than any so far expressed by the Principal Body of the Assyrian Liberation Committee. The Assyrians will break the bonds of esclavage when every one can see through the same glasses as of Mr. Yosip Solomon's.

A. L. C.

December, 1949.

**Kamishli, Syria,
April 30, 1949**

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LETTER OF REPUDIATION BY THE ASSYRIANS OF KAMISHLI

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Alphabetically arranged, the names of signatories have been preceded by their respective family names.

To:

Whom it may concern.

Whereas after many years of unpropitious political leadership and feudal chieftainship which a certain Mar Eshai Shimoun of 6346 North Sheridan Road, Chicago 40, Illinois, U.S.A. unilaterally imposed upon himself in order to serve his unlimited personal interests and those of his family, so detrimental to the interests of the Assyrians as a people;

Whereas all representations made to him to desist from the practices of this harmful feudal chieftainship have failed; Whereas successive actions of this man have proved, beyond all shadow of doubt, that he is neither balanced nor sincere; Whereas he falsely alleges to be the "leader" of the Assyrians, making on that basis declarations and utterances and issuing appeals in our name as part of the Assyrian people:

We the Assyrians of the district of Kamishli in Syria do hereby formally deny the alleged leadership of Mar Eshai Shimoun, none of whose actions and declarations are in any way binding on us. He has issued appeals in our name, without consulting us, for fund raising of hundreds of thousands of dollars for which he has at no time rendered an account, thus cementing the doubts about him.

We have read the letter of repudiation dated December 10, 1948, signed by the Assyrian settlers in the thirty five villages along the banks of river Khabur, Northern Syria, and whose contents we hereby confirm. We would be grateful if you would be good enough to take note of this protest and make it known to any quarter which is likely to be misled by the declarations and appeals of this man.

It is unfortunate to state that the happiness of this man lies in the misery of the masses whom he uses as piece-goods with which he makes his living in the hotels of the United

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States of America and Europe.

1. Abdo Oshana
2. Abraham Zumaya
3. Adam Bocco
4. Adam Maroguil
5. Adam Oshana
6. Aiwas Dawid
7. Antar Giyyu
8. Antar Shibo
9. Antar Yonan
10. Antar Yukhanna
11. Azo gilyana
12. Azo Warda Petyu
13. Babico Lazar
14. Bieku Anar
15. Benyamin Antar
16. Bibla Sulaqa
17. Brikha Gillu
18. Brikha Kanon
19. Chucha Zumaya
20. Daniel Eshu
21. Daryawish Itchu
22. Dashtu Towana
23. Dawid Askar
24. Dawid Giwargis
25. Dawid Shimoun
26. Dawid Yukhanna
27. Delo Oraham
28. Dishu Yaku Rais
29. Eliya Eshu
30. Eliya Oshana

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31. Eliya Rowil
32. Enwia Aprim
33. Enwia Ziya
34. Eshu Adam
35. Eshu Babo
36. Eshu Khaggi
37. Eshu Lewee
38. Eshu Yukhanna
39. Ewit Oraham
40. Ewit Yonan
41. Giwargis Kako
42. Gilyana Dawid
43. Gilyana Khano
44. Gilyana Yukhanna
45. Goriel Yukhanna
46. Hasado Polus
47. Hormiz Giwargis
48. Israil Iskhaq
49. Isriel Hassado
50. Iskhaq Eshaya
51. Isa Mammo
52. Jajo Mamo
53. Khayil Enwia
54. Khano Khano
55. Khano Shlimon
56. Khiyu Barkho
57. Khoshaba Dawid
58. Khoshaba Mamy
59. Lazo Brayim
60. Mansur Toma
61. Marbina Goriel
62. Marbina Istapanos
63. Marbina Moshy
64. Marbina Sulaiman
65. Maroguil Warda
66. Mishail Baito
67. Nano Petyu

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68. Nicolas Marqus
69. Neesan Asmaro
70. Neesan Shimoun
71. Oda Giwargis
72. Odishu Bilbil
73. Odishu Dawid
74. Odishu Petyu
75. Ora Antar
76. Oraham Dawid
77. Oraham Eshu
78. Oraham Shamasha Eshaya
79. Oshana Maliksha
80. Patros Barkho
81. Patros Giwargis
82. Patros Shamasha Sahda
83. Patros Sypho Rais
84. Pethyo Iskhaq
85. Pethyo Khano
86. Pethyo Odisho
87. Pethyo Rais Dishu
88. Pethyo Warda
89. Pethyo Yawi
90. Pethyo Yonan
91. Pira Peleus
92. Polus Yaco
93. Polus Ismail
94. Sada Putrus
95. Sahda Eshu
96. Samano Brayim
97. Samano Yaco
98. Sawa Eshu
99. Shabas Youash
100. Shimoun Sliyu
101. Shimoun Sliyu
102. Shlimon Brikha
103. Slivo Daniel
104. Slivo Shamasha Iskhaq.
105. Sulaqa Zaya
106. Solomon Joseph S.
107. Somo Dawid

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- 108. Somo Mamo
- 109. Somo Oshana
- 110. Somo Putrus

- 111. Soro Marbina
- 112. Soro Oraham
- 113. Soro Shmiwil Loco
- 114. Sulaiman Eshu
- 115. Sulaiman Shamasha Marbina
- 116. Sypho Petros
- 117. Towana Odishu
- 118. Warda Abdal
- 119. Warda Giwargis
- 120. Warda Shamasha Khano
- 121. Yacob Awiya
- 122. Yalda Eliya
- 123. Yawanis Adam
- 124. Yonan Sindo
- 125. Yukhanna Brikha
- 126. Yukhanna Enwiya
- 127. Yukhanna Eshai Kasha
- 128. Yukhanna Barkho
- 129. Yukhanna Giwargis
- 130. Yukhanna Iskhaq
- 131. Yukhanna Manno
- 132. Yukhanna Neesan
- 133. Yukhanna Odishu
- 134. Yukhanna Shmuwil Kasha
- 135. Yukhanna Slivo
- 136. Yukhanna Sliyu
- 137. Yukhanna Yuwil
- 138. Yukhanna Zaya Kasha
- 139. Yosip Enwia
- 140. Yosip Murad
- 141. Zado Toma Rais
- 142. Zaya Kasha Yukhannan
- 143. Zakaria Kasha Eshu
- 144. Zozo Lazar
- 145. Zozo. Toma

CHAPTER 17

FUTURE OF THE ASSYRIANS

(1)

The events of the later summer of 1933, which have been described in the preceding chapters, have entirely altered the problem of the Assyrian minority in Iraq. This problem had been sufficiently difficult in 1932, when most people still hoped that the Assyrians would be able to settle in Iraq, but now these hopes have proved vain and it is clearly essential that the majority, at least, of the Assyrians, should be enabled to leave the country as soon as possible.

The Assyrians of Iraq can now be divided into three classes. Firstly, there are those, about 550 in number, who after the fighting at Dairabun recrossed the Tigris into Syria, and who have been interned there ever since. It is highly improbable that any of them would wish to return to Iraq, even though they do not appear to be finding conditions in Syria particularly pleasant. It is even more improbable that the Iraqi Government would be willing to accept them, if they did wish to return. Their families were maintained by the Iraqi Government in the Refugee Camp at Mosul until September 1934, when the French Mandatory Authorities after many hesitations, allowed them to join their menfolk in Syria. About 1,400 women and children availed themselves of the opportunity, and they are now living at Hassetche on the Khabur

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river, about forty miles from the Iraqi frontier. Their settlement here, however, cannot be, and is not intended to be, other than temporary. It should be mentioned that the Iraqi Government has paid the French £10,000 as a consideration for accepting the families. The French Government has, however, pointed out that unless the Assyrians are moved in the near future, even this generous contribution will be insufficient to cover the expenses likely to be incurred in Syria.

Secondly, there are those still in Iraq who suffered directly from the massacres and lootings of the summer of 1933. These are, as has already been described, cowed and dispirited. Most of them are people who had committed no offence against the Iraqi Government which proved entirely unable to protect them. It is now easy for supporters of the Mar Shimoun to turn round and say: "Well, we always told you that the Iraqi Government intended to massacre you, and now you see that we were right." These people are naturally still terrified, and it will be a long time before they can recover from their terrible experiences. They are in no way likely to be a danger to the Government, nor, however uncomfortable and unhappy they may be, on the other hand, are they themselves in any particular danger, as the Iraqi Government has now taken adequate measures to protect them. As related in an earlier chapter, many of them have not even now returned to their villages and are living on precarious charity in Mosul. A further problem consists of those women and children who lost all their male relatives during the massacres. The Iraqi Government hoped to distribute them among the Assyrian villages, giving a grant of £8 to each woman and £4 to each child, but this plan has not been successful owing to the unwillingness of the refugees to leave the camp.

The third class consists of those who did not suffer directly. They can be divided into two groups. The villages of the Assyrians in the Aqra, Zibar, and Rowanduz districts are scattered among the Kurds. They are unlikely to give any trouble, and there is nothing to show that they are much worse off than before ---

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apart, of course, from the altered atmosphere. In the qodha of Amadiyah, however, the position is rather different. Here, the Assyrians, particularly in the sub-districts of Barwari Bala and Nerwa Raikan, are almost as numerous as the Kurds. They still retain much of their former spirit, and though the truculence which they at times display may now in part be due to fear, that it exists is proved by their conduct in the September following the massacres, when it was alleged that on the day of the funeral of King Feisal in Baghdad, several villages went out of their way to hold ceremonies of rejoicing. Incidentally, some of the Assyrian women in Mosul displayed similar bad manners by spitting when the mourning processions passed their quarter. The Kurds in Amadiyah had been restrained from looting, and their disappointment was great and openly expressed when they heard what glorious looting had taken place farther south.

There is no doubt that they would eagerly seize any opportunity to take their turn. Such an opportunity will only be given them if the Assyrians themselves do something foolish, but this is not by any means beyond the bounds of possibility. Fortunately, there has been until recently an extremely capable Qaimayam at Amadiyah. It is doubtful whether anyone but Majid Bey could have prevented serious trouble in Amadiyah during the summer of 1933. He had the confidence of the Assyrians to an extent possessed by no other Iraqi official, and so long as he remained at his post no trouble was likely to occur. The Iraqi Government realised this, and retained him at Mosul for twelve months after the massacres, even though this delayed his well-deserved promotion. The Iraqi Government has also realised that it is in its own interests, as well as those of the Assyrians, that any Assyrian who may wish to do so, should be able to leave the country. It is true that at first certain local officials displayed signs of wishing to persuade Assyrians to stay, apparently thinking that it would be something of a blot on the good name of their administration if anyone wanted to leave, but it now appears that this phase has passed. In any case a committee has been appointed to ascertain the wishes of the Assyrians, and this committee has Major Thomson as its presi-

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dent, so there should be no difficulty in ascertaining the real desires of the Assyrians.

The next question is, "How many will want to go?" The actual number of Assyrians in Iraq is not accurately known (nor are the numbers of Arabs or Kurds, for that matter), but they probably total anything between 20,000 and 25,000. Most competent and impartial observers consider that it is fairly certain that at least 90 per cent will wish to leave, and it is quite possible that only a few hundreds will eventually remain. Some doubts have been expressed as to the intentions of the autochthonous Assyrians, the "rayahs" of Barwari Bala, but the latest information confirms the impression that they will not wish to stay. Throughout the Assyrian villages there was in the autumn of 1933 a move to sell their flocks, a foolish proceeding as very low prices were obtained. In many villages, too, there was a disinclination to sow the winter crop, despite the fact that all Assyrians had been told that there was even then not the slightest chance of their being able to leave until the summer of 1934 at the earliest. These indications, however, were sufficient proof of their intentions.

But though practically all the Assyrians wish to leave, they do not all wish to go to the same place. The anti-Mar Shimoun party still exists, and its leaders state definitely that they refuse to go to the same place as the Mar Shimoun. Before I left Mosul in November 1933, Malik Khoshaba came to see me. He told me that he realised that the Assyrians would never obtain such favourable agricultural conditions as they possessed in Iraq. He said, however, that in view of what had just happened, it was quite impossible for them to remain there, but that he and his followers did not wish to live in the same country as the Mar Shimoun if the latter was to be allowed to exercise any kind of "temporal power." He and his friends have said so again, and have requested that this should be brought to the notice of the League of Nations. The strength of the two parties cannot be accurately stated. Possibly the anti-Mar Shimoun party represent 25 to 33 per cent of the whole, but it is difficult to say, as none can tell for

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certain to what extent the sectional leaders, for example, **Malik Khammo of the Baz and Malik Nimrud of the Jilu represent the rank and file. Many Assyrians, even though they are not personally opposed to him, certainly feel that the leadership of the Mar Shimoun has been bad, but on the other hand, the events of 1933, and the failure of the Government to compensate the innocent victims, brought about a certain reaction in his favour.**

Feeling between the two parties has been bitter. At the beginning of November 1933 certain "raises" of the Ashuti, belonging to the anti-Mar Shimoun party visited the refugee camp in Mosul. They were immediately set upon and attacked by the Baz and Tokhuma women, who cried, "You are the people who persuaded our men to trust the Government and now they are all killed." Only the arrival of Major Thomson prevented them from being severely handled. Malik Khammo of the Baz would not dare to go near the camp. At the end of January following, a fight occurred between members of the two parties, which resulted in ten of them being lodged in the lock-up.

It is essential that the differences between the two parties should receive full consideration when the new settlement is made. It is possible that the Mar Shimoun will object to this, as he still hopes that the Assyrians may be placed in a homogeneous settlement. But, though some people may regret it, there is now no hope of anything in the nature of an Assyrian nation, and the sooner this is realised the better for all concerned. The Mar Shimoun can still retain his spiritual authority over Assyrians, wherever they are, as does the Pope over Roman Catholics all over the world, but more than that he cannot hope for. If the scheme, to which reference will be made a little later in this chapter, for the settlement of Assyrians in British Guiana is finally accepted, the area available is large enough to avoid settling the two parties in uncomfortable proximity.

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When the League of Nations Council met in November 1933 the question of the Assyrian massacres appeared on the agenda. The Iraqi delegates put up their case --- that represented in the Blue Book prepared by the Iraqi Government They admitted that excesses had been committed by regular troops, and stated that these excesses, whatever the provocation, merited and had received severe condemnation. Sir John Simon said the same thing. He said that any attempt to apportion the blame was beside the point. **What was essential was that the future of the Assyrians should be safeguarded. Both the British and Iraqi Governments were convinced that this could only be done if the Assyrians could be found new homes outside Iraq.**

The League of Nations and Great Britain have been severely criticized for their failure to carry out an inquiry into the events of last summer, and for their failure to obtain the punishment of the officers responsible. It is, however, difficult to see how any action could have been taken. Iraq is now an independent State, and would certainly have refused any League inquiry. In any attempt to force this upon her, there existed, as has been stated in the previous chapter, so great a risk of a massacre of Christians in Mosul town and the surrounding districts, that no responsible person would have dared to take it, for though rioting and disorders might have been stopped fairly quickly, they would not have been stopped quickly enough --- especially in view of the attitude of the Iraqi Army --- to prevent the death of, at least, hundreds of people. It may have been ignoble to give in before such a threat, but there was no alternative. It is possible, however, that a stronger diplomatic pressure might have been brought to bear on the Iraqi Government to carry out an inquiry of its own. It could have been pointed out that accounts of the atrocities committed by the Army had been published in every newspaper in the world, and that the good name of Iraq had been blackened. Iraq could best clear its name by holding an inquiry of its own and punishing any persons found guilty. In view of the temper of the people, it would have been impracticable to hold such an inquiry at once, but when the situation became calmer it would have been possible. The

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argument that the Army would not have brooked such an inquiry is not altogether valid. The Iraqi Army is rent by internal dissensions, and many of its officers, it is satisfactory to be able to say, have expressed their horror of what happened in the north. In any case, if Iraq is to be ruled by the Army the future is indeed dismal.

The Council of the League of Nations agreed to the statements of Great Britain and Iraq, and a special committee was appointed to inquire into the possibility of the Assyrians being found new homes outside Iraq.

Unfortunately, up to the date of writing, more than a year after the Simmel massacre, hopes that the Assyrians could be quickly moved from Iraq have been disappointed. The difficulty has been to find somewhere for them to go to. Early in 1934 there appeared a possibility that the Assyrians might be settled in Southern Brazil, on the estates of a **British Company which is developing certain forest tracts on the Parana river.** The Brazilian Government tentatively approved of this plan, and in February the League of Nations sent out a committee to investigate on the spot. This committee consisted of Brigadier Browne, who for some years had been in command of the Assyrian Levies, Major Johnson of the Nansen Relief Office, Geneva, and the Counsellor to the Swiss Legation in Brazil. The report was favourable, and despite climatic and other differences, there appeared to be no reason why the Assyrians should not flourish in Brazil. Unfortunately, it gradually became clear that public opinion in Brazil was opposed to any considerable Assyrian immigration. Malicious reports had been spread regarding the quarrelsome and pugnacious nature of the Assyrians, and it was feared that they might be employed as mercenaries on one side or another in the civil wars which not infrequently break out in Brazil. Such fears were quite unfounded. The Assyrians certainly have a warlike history, but they have fought for only what they have held to be their right and to protect themselves. They were not in the least likely to become involved in the quarrels of other people.

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Fears were also expressed, perhaps with more reason, that the Assyrians would not settle down as agriculturists, but would tend to flock into the already overcrowded towns. There were, besides, objections to the entry of any more Orientals into Brazil. It is quite true that the Assyrians are Orientals, though they are not black, as some Brazilians appear to have thought, but of all Orientals they would probably assimilate the most easily with the people of whatever country they go to. There are already many Syrians in Brazil, and for the most part they have proved excellent citizens. It is, of course, just possible that the Brazilian Government may reconsider its decision, but in the meantime it has had to yield to popular clamour, and an immigration law has been recently passed which appears to close the door to the entry of Assyrians into Brazil for some time to come.

The failure of the Brazil project was a great disappointment, and for some little time matters remained at a deadlock. The Committee for the settlement of the Assyrians which had been set up by the Council of the League of Nations in October 1933 dispatched urgent appeals to the Governments of a large number of countries, asking if there existed any possibility of settling Assyrians in either home or overseas territories. Among the countries consulted were Great Britain and the Dominions, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, and Argentina. In the meantime, private inquiries had been made, especially in England, as to what possibilities existed. Many people in England considered that **it would be of advantage to the British Empire if the Assyrians could be settled within it. Their value as fighting troops would not be lost, and economically they would be a considerable asset.** But none of the self-governing Dominions are prepared to accept Asiatic immigrants. There is not enough room in Cyprus.

The Assyrians themselves are averse to going to Africa, where the higher lands of Tanganyika would appear to be particularly suitable, though both here and in Kenya there are already sufficient mixtures of races to perplex the local administration.

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Outside the British Empire, Syria has been suggested, but here the French Mandate cannot endure for ever, and the Assyrians would eventually find themselves once again under the rule of a Moslem majority; apart from which, practically all the available lands are now occupied by Armenian refugees from Turkey. Of the other countries, the Argentine would appear to be the ideal, especially in regard to climate, but there is not the slightest reason to think that the Government of that country would consider the entry of large numbers of Assyrians, especially in view of the economic blizzard now raging.

The communications of the Assyrian League Committee has so far only produced two replies which can in any way be termed favourable. One was from the French Government, which on September 24th wrote that the settlement of some Assyrian families in the bend of the Niger (a little distance south of Timbuctoo) might be contemplated. It was pointed out that much investigation was required before it could be ascertained whether such a settlement was likely to be a success. The climate alone renders this most uncertain.

The other reply was received from the British Foreign Office, officials of which have been most assiduous in their efforts to find a solution for the Assyrian problem. In this reply, dated September 22, 1934, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, after pointing out the very great difficulties of finding any suitable home for the Assyrians, stated that in the British Colonial Empire the only possible place appeared to be the Rupununi district of British Guiana. He wrote as follows:

The area is an extensive one, and should be sufficiently large to accommodate all the Assyrians who may desire to leave Iraq. At present it is for the most part unsettled. A considerable number of horses and cattle are grazed upon it, and it appears to have possibilities of further development as a stock-raising area. Its agricultural potentialities have not yet been properly tested, but it is thought that limited areas would lend themselves to cultiva-

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tion sufficiently to meet the requirements of the Assyrian settlers and their stock. Much closer examination, will, however, be necessary, with particular regard to considerations of health and climate and to pastoral and agricultural conditions, before the district can definitely be pronounced as suitable for Assyrian settlement, and an independent and impartial investigation conducted on the spot with this object, under the auspices of the League of Nations, appears to His Majesty's Government to be essential for the satisfaction both of the Council of the League and of the Assyrians themselves, before any decision is reached. The Government of British Guiana estimate that a mission of investigation would require to spend three months in the colony for the proper accomplishment of its task.....

The land concerned is the property of the Government of British Guiana, but certain parts of it are at present leased to private interests. The largest of these interests is the **Rupununi Development Company**, which holds approximately 1,500 square miles of what is probably the best grazing lands. The Government of British Guiana have accordingly taken the necessary steps to secure an option under which, if the League of Nations decide to proceed with the scheme, the entire assets of the above company could be purchased for the sum of £35,000 at any time prior to March 20, 1935. The assets include not only land leases, but a quantity of cattle, horses, and buildings, which should be a useful nucleus for any settlement operation. There are in existence in the area certain well-defined Indian reservations which must be preserved and excluded from the land available for settlement. But these amount to only 855 square miles out of a total of 13,000 square miles, and they are so situated as not to present, as far as can be foreseen, any likelihood of disturbance of Indians by the settlement of Assyrians in adjoining areas and vice versa.

The climate of Rupununi district is tropical, lying as it does only 5⁰ north of the equator, but it is reputed to be healthy, though, of course, very different from that to which the Assyrians

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have been accustomed. There are two hilly portions rising to 2,000 - 3,000 feet above sea-level. The remainder of the area is open savannahs, consisting mainly of undulating park lands of mean height of 300 feet. The lower areas flood to a depth of 1 to 4 feet during the rainy season. The temperature ranges from 91.9⁰ F. to 71.5⁰ F., the nights being uniformly cool. The rainfall ranges from 55 to 80 inches, two distinct rainy seasons occurring. Perhaps the principal difficulty met with would be that of communications, as at present there are few roads, and the rivers are unnavigable owing to frequent rapid.

The Council of the League accepted the suggestion of the British Government that a committee should be sent to Guiana to investigate on the spot. Brigadier Browne was again appointed a member, and he is accompanied by an Italian agricultural expert. The Nansen Relief Office is not this time represented. The committee left England early in October, and its report should be received early in the New Year. If this report is satisfactory, the main difficulty, that of finding a place for the Assyrians to go to, will have been solved. But another difficulty remains, that of finance. At the time that the Brazilian scheme was being considered, it was estimated, perhaps rather highly, that the transport and settlement of each individual man, woman, and child who left Iraq would cost about £32. (The high cost of transport to such a distant place as Brazil was one of the first objections to that scheme.) As noted earlier in this chapter, it is still uncertain how many Assyrians will eventually decide to go. It is just possible that at the last moment a number will shrink from the long journey and the necessarily uncertain future in an unknown land. The quiet of the past year in Iraq, too, may have to some extent allayed their fears. In any case it is absolutely certain that at least half of the Assyrians in Iraq will wish to leave.

With regard to the remainder, one view is that either most of them will stay, or that practically all of them will go. the **Mar Shimoun, who has spent the last year, in the course of which**

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he had a nervous breakdown, moving between Geneva and London --- the other members of his family are still in Cyprus -- - will undoubtedly use all his influence to induce all Assyrians to leave Iraq, if their new home appears to be in any way suitable. It thus can be stated positively that the numbers who will leave cannot be less than 10,000 and very possibly will be double that number. On the basis of £32 a head, the total cost of settlement of 20,000 Assyrians in Brazil would have been at least £600,000. Though the cost of transport to British Guiana would not be less than to Brazil, say £120,000 for 10,000 persons, the cost of settlement may perhaps be expected to be somewhat less. Nevertheless, the initial costs of transport and settlement for 10,000 persons cannot well be much less than £250,000, and if double that number leave Iraq, as is by no means improbable, £500,000 would be a conservative estimate of the amount of money which will have to be provided. And who is to foot the bill? The Iraqi Government has officially stated that it will assist to the limit of its financial resources, but no one has suggested that it should contribute more than £100,000, especially as the maintenance of the refugee camp and other relief works has cost Iraq upwards of £20,000 during the past year. And here it must be remembered that both in the Iraqi Press and Parliament there have been protests against paying anything at all. The old arguments have been brought forward that Iraq was in no way responsible for the misfortunes of the Assyrians, **and that the Iraqis had never invited them to come to their country.** These arguments must have carried considerable weight had it not been for the unfortunate events of the last summer, even if it must be admitted that Iraqis are apt to forget that but for the lavish expenditure on the part of Great Britain, there would be no Iraq at all today.

The Assyrians, too, should be able to make a substantial contribution. Prior to the summer of 1933, they were, as a community, quite well off, since they are an extraordinarily thrifty people and save money in a remarkable manner. Many of them commonly carry on their person sums of £50 and more in gold. I

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remember once asking the Qaimaqam of Amadiyah whether he considered that the Assyrians possessed as much money as was generally supposed. He turned round to an Assyrian police corporal who was in the room, and said: "You have a £100 in gold, haven't you?" and the Assyrian replied with a smile, "Oh yes." several of the prisoners who were brought into Mosul at the end of August after the fighting were found to be carrying £50 to £60 in gold, which, of course was returned to them when they were released. Another Assyrian used to come in frequently to ask for a police escort to go out with him to help him to dig up £60 in gold which he had buried in the mountains. **Many Assyrians, too, had money out on loan with their Kurdish neighbours.** Unfortunately, as already stated, the Assyrian losses during the disturbances, assessed in cash, probably amounted to £50,000, and possibly were much more. Nevertheless, those sections of the community which did not suffer directly, still possess a good deal of money, and it should be possible for them to put up at once £25,000 or even more towards the cost of transport. Even then, however, a considerable sum, possibly as much as £400,000 will have to be found. At Geneva Sir John Simon has stated that the British Government is prepared to assist financially, if the other nations belonging to the League do the same.

The League Council has not yet considered this offer, but it is clear that few other countries will, in fact, be ready to contribute anything. Many of them, as is well known, have been in arrears with their ordinary subscriptions to the League. It is almost inevitable that they will point to the Declaration made by the accredited representative of Great Britain to the Permanent Mandates Commission in June 1931. This statement has been quoted in full in an earlier chapter. The British Government may be able to claim that the unfortunate events of the summer of 1933, which have made necessary the removal of the Assyrians from Iraq, were the fault of the Iraqis, or of the Assyrians, or of both, but it may be difficult to persuade other countries that, apart from anything else, "moral responsibility" does not infer "financial responsibility" as well. The unfortunate British taxpayer may

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well ask: "Could not all this have been avoided?" Perhaps, however, the burden may be lightened by something in the nature of a guaranteed loan. It is absolutely essential that the Assyrians should not be pampered any further. They are only too apt to expect everything for nothing, and this is one of the main causes of the deterioration of their moral fibre. There is no reason why they should not gradually repay most of the money, as the Armenians are doing in Syria. They may think this hard, and will certainly complain, but it will be for their eventual good.

When the difficulties of finance and place have been solved, and it is known to what country and by what means the Assyrians can leave Iraq, a member of the Nansen International Office for Refugees will proceed to Iraq to join the committee appointed by the Iraqi Government to ascertain the wishes of the Assyrians. This committee at present consists of Major Thomson, President; Major Wilson, Administration Inspector, Mosul, as a member; and as additional member, the Qaimaqam of the qodha, in which the committee is working, together with leading Assyrians of the particular district. One of the tasks with which the committee will be faced will be the liquidation of the property, movable and immovable, of the Assyrians. The Iraqi Government will certainly have to intervene in order to prevent a slump in prices, when, for instance, large numbers of sheep are thrown on the market. The actual transport will be in the hands of the Nansen Relief Office, which has had much experience of this kind of work in other countries.

Even if this British Guiana project is adopted, it is clear that many months must elapse before all those Assyrians who wish to leave can be removed from Iraq. The French Government has made it a condition of accepting the dependents of the men interned in Syria that these should be moved first, when new homes have been found for them. After them, it is probable that those Assyrians who are living in a state of destitution in Iraq will be the next to go. The most important of these are the refugees in Mosul. There are not less than 2,500 Assyrians in Mosul, of

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whom half have come in from the villages. Not more than a hundred of the whole are in employment, since even those who originally lived in Mosul have lost their jobs. Some, for example, owned taxis, but they have been forced to sell at a heavy loss as they found that they could no longer work. Thus practically all of them are living on their savings, or, in the case of refugees from the villages, on charity. Such savings and charity cannot last for ever. The Iraqi Government has fully accepted its responsibilities as regards the refugee camp, but has done little for those outside it. Not that these, as has already been related, are easy to help. It might have been of advantage if a member of the Nansen Relief Office had come to Mosul with a watching brief. He could have reported on the situation to the Iraqi Government. It was objected with some reason that the presence of a League Commission immediately after the termination of the British Mandate would delay the process of assimilation of Assyrians into the Iraqi State. Such objections are no longer valid, as there is no longer any idea of the bulk of the Assyrians remaining in Iraq, and as the Iraqi Government requested the League to find somewhere for the Assyrians to go to. A further suggestion that the British Red Cross might send a relief party to Mosul was also objected to, apparently on the grounds that this would discourage the activities of the Iraqi Red Crescent. But if there is one thing that is quite certain, it is that the newly formed Iraqi Red Crescent Society has not carried out any relief work among the Assyrians. (*The "Save the Children" fund of 40 Gordon Square, London, has been able to send out of its limited resources over £300 in money, together with 2,500 garments and 1,900 blankets.*)

The other Assyrians who are still in the villages and who were not directly affected by the disturbances, can follow later, if they wish to do so. Their present position, though uncomfortable, is not serious. Among others who will go will be the Assyrians, about 800 in number, who are still employed in the Levies. they are almost to a man strong advocates of the Mar Shimoun, and will certainly follow his advice. Their places as guards of the

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R.A.F. aerodromes will, presumably, be filled by Arabs and Kurds, who have already been recruited in considerable numbers for that force. **These men, are well paid.** All their well wishers must therefore hope that the British Guiana scheme may be found to be practicable. But if it is to be a success, it is up to the Assyrians to do their utmost to help. They must not expect perfection. They must realize that they will have to take the rough with the smooth, and that it is only by abstinence from the politics of the country and by hard work that they can prosper. And here another point arises. It has been noted earlier in this book that considerable numbers of Assyrians are no longer agriculturists, and some of them may find it impossible to return to agricultural life. But in whatever country they settle there should be openings for all kinds of labour. The Assyrians can work hard if they wish to, and there should not be too many round pegs in square holes.

It is sincerely to be hoped that the committee investigating the British Guiana project will be able to report favourably and that the financial difficulties will be overcome. Otherwise, a danger exists of the whole problem being shelved. There are so many important problems facing the distracted world at the present moment that this danger is very real. But such a solution, if solution it can be called, would be most unfair to Iraqis and to Assyrians alike. The Iraqis frankly want to be rid of the Assyrians; the great majority of the Assyrians do not want to remain in Iraq. If they do remain, further trouble is a mathematical certainty, and this must be avoided at all costs.

In the meantime, the lot of the Assyrians is indeed a tragedy. They feel, and they have long felt, that no one wants them, and such a feeling does not make them easy to deal with. The last twenty years of their life have been a nightmare. It is not pleasant to hear people say, "Oh, we are accustomed to being massacred!" There can be no one who does not now trust that their troubles are nearly at an end and that the future which lies before them is brighter than it has been for many hundreds of years.

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PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE - LONDON - U.K

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Draft Cabinet Paper

FUTURE OF THE ASSYRIANS
(2)

I am anxious about the future of the Assyrians in Iraq and Syria. My colleagues will recall that, during the war of 1914/18, this Christian community from the mountains of Eastern Turkey revolted, with British and Russian encouragement, against the Turkish Government, were defeated, and fled into Iraq. The post-war frontier settlement, reached as the result of a League of Nations decision and confirmed in the Treaty of Angora of 1926, placed their homelands on the Turkish side of the Turco-Iraqi frontier. The Assyrians were thereby left stranded in Iraq, and the efforts made to settle them on the land in Northern Iraqi were only partially successful. Political difficulties soon arose from the conflict between the desire of the Assyrians on the one hand for homogeneous settlement and political autonomy and, on the other, the determination of the Iraqi Government to weld together all the different racial and religious elements of the country. This conflict ended with the Assyrians' attempted exodus to Syria, their fight with the Iraqi Army and the "Massacre of 1933" The League of Nations thereafter tried for many years to find a home for the Assyrians outside Iraq. These efforts, extending to every part of the world, were unsuccessful, and all that was done was to settle some 9,000 Assyrians, who had crossed into Syria in 1932-33, on the Khabur River in Northern Syria. The

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remainder had to stay in Iraq.

The events of the present war have vastly increased our obligations towards these unfortunate people. The Assyrians had for many years previously been recruited by the R.A.F. for the Levy forces whose duty was to defend the British aerodromes in Iraq. When Rashid Ali revolted and sent the Iraqi Army to attack our air base at Habbaniyah in May 1941, the Assyrian units of the Levies stoutly defended it and afterwards took a notable part in the counter-offensive undertaken by our forces. Their loyalty to us has thus involved them in a second conflict with the Iraqi Army, and it is possible that after the war, when the British forces in Iraq have been reduced to peacetime strength, some Iraqi elements may be disposed to seek a favourable opportunity for revenge.

Since 1941, the British authorities in the Middle East have, in their efforts to deal with the shortage of manpower, greatly expanded the R.A.F. Levies and have in fact recruited almost every available Assyrian of military age in Iraq and Syria. The expanded R.A.F. Levies have served not only in Iraq but also in many other parts of the Middle East, including Syria and Cyprus, and have won high praise from their British officers.

There are at present, I understand, no outward signs in Iraq of feelings hostile to the Assyrians, but the fact that they have fought twice against the Iraqi Army and that they are themselves intensely distrustful of the Iraqi Government makes it impossible to regard their future in Iraq with confidence. In fact, the essentials of their position have not changed, to any great extent, for the better since 1933 when, after the "massacre", all concerned were agreed that the only possible way in which the political and economic security of the Assyrians could be assured was by means of re-settlement in a body outside Iraq.

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The problem which I should like my colleagues to consider is this. Must our future policy be based on the assumption that the Assyrians now in Iraq and Syria will have to remain where they are; or, alternatively, should a determined attempt now be made to settle them outside the Middle East? The first alternative, that the Assyrians in Iraq and Syria will have to remain where they are, is certainly not a very satisfactory solution. It means that the 20,000 Assyrians now in Iraq, to whom we undoubtedly have obligations on account of their loyal services in the Levies in the past twenty years, and particularly on account of their gallant defence of Habbaniyah during the critical days of 1941, will have to remain exposed to the possibility of future conflicts with their Iraqi Moslem fellow-citizens. **It is by no means clear that we shall be in a position to afford them adequate protection in case of emergency. All that can be done is to encourage them to become loyal and reasonably contented members of the Iraqi nation; and this probably means that we shall have gradually to cease recruiting Assyrians for service in the R.A.F. Levies. Even if this policy proves successful, I fear that their existence in Iraq will be somewhat precarious for many years to come. I need hardly remind my colleagues what strong criticisms would be aroused among the friends of the Assyrians in this country if some future misfortune should overtake this Christian community, and if His Majesty's Government were unabl to show that they had made reasonably adequate arrangements for its future protection.**

As for the 9,000 Assyrians in Northern Syria, the Khabour settlement was originally only intended to be a temporary expedient, pending the establishment of a more permanent Assyrian home elsewhere. Now that Syria has obtained her independence, it is impossible to feel confidence that this isolated and remote Christian settlement will continue indefinitely to exist without interference from its Moslem neighbours, and it will no longer be able to look to the French, formerly the Mandatory Power, for protection in an emergency. The Assyrian Patriarch, the Mar

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Shimoun, is now in America and is not permitted to visit his people either in Iraq or Syria, while the Patriarchal family, numbering about 20 persons, is in Cyprus, maintained at the expense of the British taxpayer, and is likewise forbidden to join the communities in Iraq or in Syria. The alternative solution, resettlement in a body outside the Middle East, will not be easy to put into practice. The fruitless endeavours during the past ten years to find a new home for the Assyrians have shown the difficulty of the task. **I can suggest no foreign country which would be at all likely to accept them - indeed, their very loyalty to the British cause would presumably make them all the more unacceptable to any foreign Government.** The possibility of settling them in the conquered Italian colonies has been investigated, with negative results; and Lord Moyne telegraphed last September his considered opinion "that the proposal to settle the Assyrians in any of the former Italian colonies in Africa must be definitely ruled out and "that it is not worth while carrying out further investigation of it". The United Kingdom representatives in the Dominions have been asked whether any of the Dominion Governments would be likely to agree to accept the Assyrians for settlement in a block, but all have replied that there is no possibility of their Governments doing anything of the kind. The only remaining hope seems to lie in the British Colonial Empire, and I understand that colonies which might contain suitable land for the purpose are Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda, Nyassaland, Northern Rhodesia and Cyprus.

If my colleagues decide that some place in the British Empire must be found for the Assyrians, I hope that the necessary enquiries and arrangements may be made most urgently and most confidentially. The urgency of the problem lies in the fact that, until a final decision one way or the other is taken as to their fate, it is impossible to deal with the Assyrian problem on a basis of finality. As for the need for secrecy, it is obviously undesirable that the Assyrians themselves, or their friends in this country, should be given reason to entertain any hope that they will be

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removed from the Middle East, unless there is adequate ground for believing that such a hope will be realised.

TOP SECRET

From: D. of Planns, Air Ministry

To: A.C.A.S. (P)

FUTURE OF ASSYRIANS - R.A.F. LEVIES

In his minute the V.C.A.S. has stated Enclosure 7A on the attached folder should be examined in conjunction with recent papers on internal security in the Middle East. He considers that paragraph 3(a) of Enclosure 7A should be amended on the lines that it is too definite on expression of the view that if the Assyrians remain in Iraq the R.A.F. levies will gradually disappear.

The Commanders-in-Chief M.C. have stated that Assyrian companies of R.A.F. levies are located as follows: -

Palesstine	12 companies (1,440 men)
Iraq	9 companies (1,080 men)

They have confirmed that it would be desirable for those in Palestine to be replaced in the event of serious internal disturbances since if they became in any way involved in interracial troubles, there might be reprisals against their families in Iraq with a consequent effect on their reliability. The Commanders-in-Chief stated, however, that it is not a military necessity to replace the Assyrian companies in Iraq who are likely to prove reliable but they suggest that the political desirability of their employment be referred to H.M. Ambassador Baghdad.

In a subsequent examination of the problem, the Foreign Office was consulted and stated that the use of Assyrians in Iraq might endanger their wives and families and compromise still further the safety of the Assyrian community in Iraq.

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It was therefore recommended that it would be unwise to rely on them and that their replacement was desirable. Their numbers were included in the approved figure of 10,690 noted by the Chiefs of Staff for the replacement of local personnel in the Middle East.

The amendment suggested by the V.C.A.S. to paragraph 3(a) of Enclosure 7A is, therefore, more in line with recent examinations on internal security in that provided no widespread racial disturbances arise noting has been said to indicate that the levies must gradually disappear if the Assyrians remain in Iraq.

In his letter JCS1518 dated 24th October 1944, a copy of which was sent to the V.C.A.S. under cover of JCS 1689 dated 19th November 1944, Air Marshal Slessor expresses the view that if possible we ought to get the Assyrians out of Iraq. He states that while the question of settling them in Cyrenaica or other ex-Italian territory has been considered on various occasions, he is not happy that it has not been turned down too lightly.

This agrees with the view expressed in paragraph 4 of Enclosure 7A.

I therefore consider that Enclosure 7A as amended by the V.C.A.S. is satisfactory. I suggest an addition to the V.C.A.S.' amendment as follows:

“In any event we should wish to continue fully to employ Assyrians in the R.A.F. levies at least until the defeat of Japan unless widespread racial disorders arise in the Middle East, in which case their replacements would be desirable.

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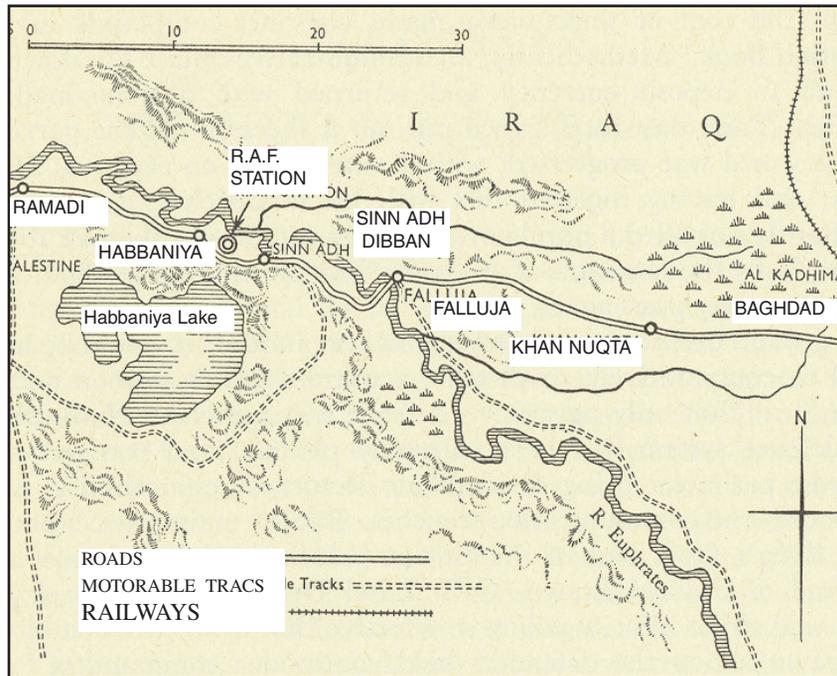
**MINUTES OF THE SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE
ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT
A SUMMARY OF THE COMMITTEE'S VIEWS
JULY 1945**

(This is a voluntary London Committee composed of such men as Air Marshall sir Robert Brooke - Popham (A.C.V.O., K.C.B., & c) Air Marshall Sir Ludlow Hewitt (A.B.E., K.C.B., & c) Air Vice-Marshall H.V. Champion De Crespigny (late A.O.C. Iraq), Rev. Canon William A. Wigram, D.D., A.M. Hamilton, and others.) (I agree with the general tenor of the Committee's views but not with that having reference to this small remnant of the Assyrian nation being dispersed into various part of the British Empire; nor would my people as a whole favor such a scheme which can result in nothing but a racial, national, and religious disintegration of this most ancient Christian nation. It is just that against which they have fought throughout history and for which they have paid so dearly. It would be a small payment of a debt of gratitude if our British friends were to direct their attention to securing a national homeland for the Assyrians who served the British Empire so valiantly in the land of their ancestors where they can live in security, freedom, and justice, and thus save them from the vengeance of their foes.)

There have now been a sufficient number of meetings of the Assyrian Settlement Committee to enable a summary to be written expressing its general views. On all the most important matters discussed, the Committee are in unanimous agreement, and it is thought that, as these have had the deep thought of all members, including some who are unfortunately no longer with us, they should be duly recorded.

1. The fact that the meetings have been so well attended shows the Assyrian question, difficult and seemingly beyond solu-

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AREA OF THE HABBANIYA EPISODE



ASSYRIAN OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS IN HABBANIYA
AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

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tion, is yet very seriously regarded by the Committee members, who believe it to be of deeper significance than just a chivalrous and Utopian ideal --- and are satisfied that major questions of honour and of policy are involved.

2. The Committee is agreed that there is a strong case for making Britain and the Empire thoroughly conscious of its obligations to the Assyrians, to whom we owe a debt which must be paid in full. the Committee believe there is also a League of Nations responsibility towards the Assyrians, and indebtedness from the United Nations as a result of their loyalty and courage at Habbaniya, but that the British liability towards them is the greatest.

3. Beyond and apart from present or past indebtedness to the Assyrians, the committee, though they have not frequently discussed the subject, are well aware that the Middle East is an area of high International importance. Because of the oil they think this must continue to be so for many years to come. Moreover from the British Empire's point of view the lines of sea and air communications passing through it to India, the Far East and Australia are vital ones. Hence it is evident that we must at all costs endeavour to maintain that part of the world in peaceful equilibrium --- a searching test of our diplomatic efficiency though this may be. Serious discontent in Iraq could be most dangerous to us, and every potential source of internal discord deserves study. the committee are resolved that it is not sufficient, as in the past, merely to put powerful British air or military forces to support incompetent Iraqi administrations, and that the needs and aspirations of all sections --- particularly the minorities --- must be equally and fairly considered.

4. The committee strongly disagree with the view that the Arab idea of the country's best mode of administration must always be accepted --- the Assyrians for example to be dispossessed of rights and massacred at their enemy's pleasure, with the British Government being asked to accept such a state of affairs as

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inevitable because of the racial antipathy of the two peoples and the misfortune of the Assyrians being temporarily without a homeland of their own. And while the Committee are fully conscious of the difficulties involved in advising and controlling Iraq when nominally independent and self-governing, nevertheless they think this course must, in some degree, be pursued if tranquility is to be secured by the best means. To allow the country to be a prey to periodic rebellions and massacres involving Kurd or Assyrian, Suni or Shiah, is to allow it to be ruled by gangster law, and we merely weaken ourselves in the eyes of all sections in the East by acceptintg such a state of affairs as inevitable.

5. The Committee believe that the Arabs are at least well aware of the sterling fighting abilities of the Assyrians, and if the latter cannot be moved from Iraq or Syria, there may, under British guidance, be some chance of bringing these two peoples to a better understanding. To this end, if the British could exercise more conrol over Iraq than since 1932, and pursue a policy of mediation and assistance --- particularly in relation to the settlement of the Assyrians on lands which could be made fertile by dams and irrigation, the relations might be much improved. The Committee further believe that the Tigris valley, fully developed on modern lines, could well support the Assyrians if the Iraqis wished it either in its upper or its middle reaches. The valley has, from time immemorial, been their ancient home, and its flood control, hydroelectric development and irrigation and navigation possibilities are as yet almost untouched. by such development with British help all sections could benefit.

6. In view of their acknowledged military efficiency and long service to the British Crown, the present policy of discharging the Assyrians from the RAF Regiment guarding British air bases in Iraq is not only unwise but dishonourable if some other employment such as secure settlement is not at the same time being found for the Assyrians, either by the Iraqi or the British Governments. This is almost exactly the policy which led to the complete unsettling of the Assyrians in 1932 and the subsequent

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massacres. The Committee have heard of it with grave alarm, and know that there is today a more anxious feeling amongst the Assyrians than has prevailed for a good many years past.

7. While the committee can understand the reluctance of Australia or Canada, who have many other post-war settlement problems on hand, to give any positive pronouncement on accepting Assyrians in those Dominions at present, Committee members are of the opinion they would at any rate make good settlers if given the chance, and are racially of a type that could be absorbed amongst European and British stock without introducing any permanent bar or racial cleavage. Moreover it is believed that the Dominions could be convinced on these points, but more easily perhaps if the British Government would guarantee to finance transportation and initial settlement.

8. the Committee do not abandon any of the settlement suggestions they have from time to time made to the Government or investigated privately, but they think that before pressing any scheme fully --- for example, by extolling the Assyrians as soldiers, builders or cultivators to the extent they might through the church, the press or radio, --- they should obtain from the Government a definite statement that Britain either will or will not undertake to do, or try to do, anything more for the Assyrians in Iraq. Upon this turns the extent and type of settlement that must be planned, and without it the Committee are considerably handicapped. The information should be freely given to us because the Committee consists of disinterested people wishing to do their best in the country's interests, and fully deserve the confidence of the Government.

9. It is believed that the influence of the Committee, unsuccessful as it has been as yet in arranging satisfactory settlement, has nevertheless caused the Government to think more deeply upon these questions. The Committee should be kept in being because it undoubtedly gives a much needed measure of confidence to the Assyrians themselves --- who are by now aware of its existence. It is well able to explain the Assyrian viewpoint

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owing to the experience of its members, and the trust the Assyrians have in them.

CHAPTER 18

FINAL SETTLEMENT

AREA OF THE HABBANIYA EPISODE

NEW AIR BASE WEST OF RIVER EUPHRATES

Under the terms of the Anglo-'Iraq Treaty of June, 1930, His Majesty's Government undertook to evacuate their air bases at Mosul and Hinaidi within five years of the coming into force of the Treaty and to move the Royal Air Force units located at these places (two Wapiti Squadrons, one Victoria Squadron, an Aircraft Depot, Air Headquarters, the General Hospital and all the ancillary units) to a new base to be constructed west of the River Euphrates.

This work, together with the lay-out of the whole air base and the designing of the buildings and installations required, has involved a tremendous amount of extra work on the part of all branches of the staff, the main load, of course, being borne by the Chief Engineer, Colonel A. F. Day.

The Habbaniyah Site

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The site, which is embraced between the Dhibban bend of the river Euphrates and the Habbaniyah Plateau, lies on land composed of the river Euphrates and the Habbaniyah Plateau, lies on land composed of the river alluvial, which happens to be particularly wide at this point owing to a comparatively recent change of course. Although the main aerodrome will be actually on the alluvial soil, the site adjoins the Habbaniya Plateau which could be used as an emergency landing ground should the aerodrome become unservicable in wet weather. The site will be completely protected from flooding by the Habbaniyah Escape works. Railway access to this site would be much easier than to any other site on the right bank of the Euphrates. Other advantages are relative proximity to Baghdad, ample water supply, fertile soil, adequate drainage gradients and proximity to the Habbaniyah Lake.

CRISIS IN IRAQ

In April 1941 the Germans invaded Greece. The drive for the German domination of Iraq had begun. But the timing went wrong. It went wrong because in Crete, as well as in Greece, the Germans met a far more stubborn resistance than they had expected. But primarily it went wrong because the Iraq Government was neither stupid nor blind.

It had been known to the Government for some time that five senior officers of the army (four of whom came to be known as "The Golden Square") were engaged in intrigue, and it was decided that they should be posted to commands remote from the capital where their power to be harmful would virtually cease. The order was given on the 25th March 1941. One of the conspirators called on the Minister for Defence. He said, in plain terms, that the order for posting would not be obeyed; that it must, in fact, be cancelled; and that if it were not cancelled there would be trouble.

This was mutiny. The position in which the Defence

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Minister found himself was extremely grave. No one could calculate how far the seditious intrigue had spread: it was possible that the traitors had a grip on the whole army, and how could a nation fight its own armed forces! He began to temporize. But Prince Abdul Illah, who since King Ghazi's death had been Regent for his nephew the infant King Faisal II, had no such doubts. Inheriting the statesmanship of Faisal I, he was passionately devoted to his country. He knew what mutiny was. He knew that to surrender the government to a clique of adventurers would be tantamount to handing the country over to the Germans. And he also knew just what treatment Iraq could expect from them. There would, he said, be no surrender to the mutineers.

For this patriotism he very nearly paid with his life. The rebel officers were not to be thwarted by one man's resolution, even if that man happened to be the lawful Regent to whom they had sworn allegiance. Assassination was a time-honoured device in Eastern politics: they coolly decided to resort to it now. It was fortunate for the future of Iraq that the Regent was warned of their intention and was persuaded at the last moment to save himself; fortunate, also, that the American Legation were ready to act, in the interest of the lawful ruler of the country, with boldness and resource. On April 2nd the Regent, with their assistance, **escaped to Habbaniya; from there he was flown to Basra, where he hoped to gather the loyalists about him and form a new cabinet.**

This was Rashid Ali's cue. He may well have been vexed that it came to him prematurely; but his new party, called Hizb al Sha'b, depended on the rebel officers for support, and had he failed to seize the chance they offered him his political career might have been over. Faced with that alternative he did not hesitate.

The means was to publish what purported to be a letter of resignation addressed by the Prime Minister to the Regent. This letter was, in fact never delivered to the Regent at all. Rashid Ali

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then assumed the premiership, 'in accordance' (it was publicly announced) 'with the requests of the people and the army'. How 'the people' were supposed to have expressed such a request it is difficult to understand. Apparently 'the people' had made no further demands, for no cabinet was formed, and no list of potential ministers was published. Ingenuously, a proclamation 'from the army' was issued, stating that the army had put Rashid Ali in power and heaping the Regent with abuse. Annoyed though they must have been that the *coup d'etat* had been mistimed, the Germans in their diligent fashion were ready with the propaganda which the situation demanded. The Press was at once brought under control, and the German wireless stations broke joyfully into a strident chorus of vituperation in which Britain, not unexpectedly, was the villain of the piece. The tragic dilemma of Palestine, always a useful stick for beating the British in Arab countries, was thrust into Iraqi ears with every decoration that an expert mendacity could conceive and with relentless reiteration. **The old story that the British had murdered King Ghazi, who in fact had been killed in a motor accident, was brought out again.** Race prejudice, Class prejudice, Religious odium, the grievance of 'inferiority' - every chord was played by the most expert, the least scrupulous propagandists in the world. B u t another figure was already on the stage. On the day when the Regent had escaped with his life, Sir Kinahan Cornwallis had arrived at Baghdad as the new British Ambassador to Iraq. The two men actually met for a few minutes at **Habbaniya** airfield. Sir Kinahan was not a stranger to Iraq or to its personalities. He had been personal adviser to King Faisal (I); he was a fluent speaker in Arabic.

The position in which the new Ambassador found himself could hardly have been more peculiar or less comfortable. There was no one to whom he could formally and lawfully present his letters of credence. The kingdom to which he was accredited was being run by a caucus of adventurers in practically open alliance with the nation which was trying (and was not unlikely) to exterminate his own. The arrival of German aircraft was expected

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hourly. The Iraq army was under the thumb of the rebels. **And since Iraq had been given her independence there were no British soldiers in the country at all. Among Iraqi notables Sir Kinahan had, in fourteen years of previous residence, made many intimate friends; but with Rashid in power none of these could afford the risk of coming to see him. Thus isolated, he summed up the situation, and, with full knowledge of the almost desperate military burden which Britain then carried, he advised his government that they must send troops to Iraq or be prepared to see the country in German hands.**

An urgent exchange of cables took place between London and New Delhi. With the Germans forcing their way into Benghazi and thrusting towards Athene, with British and Commonwealth troops locked in the struggle for Ethiopia, with the Far Eastern menace daily increasing, there was not a battalion to spare. But necessity knows no argument. At Karachi a force under Major-General W. A. K. Fraser, consisting of the 20th Indian Infantry Brigade with ancillary troops and one Field Regiment of artillery, was embarking for Malaya. It was decided to divert this force to Iraq. The force was not equipped for desert operations. It had not been loaded 'tactically': that is to say, its weapons were not stowed so that they could be deployed for immediate action on disembarkation. And it looked as if immediate action might be necessary. Time, however, counted for more than prudence. Simultaneously, three companies and one support platoon of the 1st Battalion, the King's Own Royal Regiment, were bundled into Valencias to be flown to Basra. Under the terms of the Anglo-Iraq Treaty of 1930, His Britannic Majesty was obliged to inform the King of Iraq of his intention to land British troops on Iraq soil. With the Regent virtually in exile, the British Ambassador could only carry out this obligation by dealing with Rashi Ali himself, as the *de facto* authority. To the landing of the first brigade Rashid, who was perfectly familiar with the Treaty, could only agree. When he was informed of the approach of another brigade he started to raise objections, maintaining that the

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first brigade should by then have been moved on. To this there was a simple reply: that the annual flooding had made the movement of armed forces north from Basra an impossibility.

The interviews that followed were in the nature of a diplomatic duel. Rashid Ali knew well enough that the British had not the armed strength to fight in Iraq; he also knew that as every day passed they would struggle to improve their military chances. At first sight, his best course was to unleash the army immediately and drive the British right out of the country. But if something went wrong,

if the British exercised their historic capacity for pulling chestnuts out of the fire, then the whole of his position might be lost before the Germans were near enough to give assistance and the best he could hope from them would be what soldiers call an Imperial Raspberry. Superficially, he held nearly all the cards; the one he lacked --- as subsequent events were to prove --- was the support of any but a trifling minority of the Iraq nation. And it is possible to feel a momentary sympathy with this small, bespectacled, ambitious and fundamentally crooked man, matched against a large and singularly handsome Irishman who knew every move in the diplomatic game, who played it according to the rules and with a quiet enjoyment, and who was congenitally incapable of losing either his temper or his nerve.

The second brigade arrived at Basra from India on the 28th of April. On the 29th April, units of the Iraq army began to move out of Rashid Camp, in Baghdad, for what the junior officers and other ranks were told (and fully believed) was an Exercise. **The place chosen for this training was fifty-five miles to the west of the capital, and was called Habbaniya.** The rights given to Great Britain by the 1930 Treaty included the maintenance and use by the Royal Air Force of certain stations. **Habbaniya was one of these.** Here, on the banks of the Euphrates, surrounded by an iron fence and by many hundred square miles of desert, an English township had been created, with tidy streets bearing the names

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London, Farnborough, Northolt; with neat bungalows where the doors fitted their frames and hot water came through the taps market 'Hot'; with English lawns, luxuriant trees, and now, at the start of May, a tumult of flowers. Here, in addition to a thousand members of the R.A.F., lived a large number of Iraqi labourers and their families, most of them Assyrians; and here, waiting to be taken away in the Valencias, was a small colony of British women and children who had been hastily evacuated from Baghdad.

This cantonment is on the north side of the airfield. On the south side there is a large plateau, perhaps a hundred feet high. A man standing on the edge of this plateau has the feeling that he could throw a stone into the cantonment. This is an illusion, for the distance is several hundred yards; but a good rifle shot could, from that position, put a bullet through a window of his choice. The whole cantonment is exhibited to that point of observation like one of the landscape targets which the British Army uses for training in target recognition: the huge hangars are in the foreground; and as if to serve as 'reference-point' there stands, almost in the centre, the great, high water-tank by which the trees and flowers, the human beings in that oasis are kept alive. It would be hard to imagine a more perfect position than this plateau for a force ordered to assault and destroy a village, and on this plateau Rashid Ali's force arrived: an infantry brigade, a mechanized artillery brigade, twelve armoured cars, one mechanized machine-gun company, a number of tanks: arrived, and began to dig itself in, with weapons pointing at the cantonment. It seemed, to the British who formed the aiming-mark, a peculiar kind of exercise. And the position was stranger still when the commander of the force, with a happy disregard for the Anglo-Iraq treaty, ordered the R.A.F. to stop their training.

But what was the answer to this challenge? The force available for the ground defence of the station consisted of 1,200 R.A.F. Levies. Some of these were Arabs, some Kurds, and about half were **Assyrian Christians**, members of a tragic and landless race. These Levies, against all the threats which were showered

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upon them, were to remain completely loyal to the R.A.F. and to the Regent's cause; and (as some of them were later to demonstrate once again in a brilliant amphibious operation in Albania) they were highly skilled, resolute, and fearless fighting men. but the only weapons they had were rifles and Lewis guns: no carriers, no Brens, none of the supplementary weapons which are the standard equipment of an infantry battalion. Of British infantry, there were the mere 350 men under Lt.-Col. Everett whom the Valencias deposited at **Habbaniya** on the last day of April, and who were to add another page of splendour to the history of the King's Own Royal Regiment. There were also eighteen elderly (but still robust) armoured cars, and two ponderous ornaments outside the Depot Headquarters which on examination proved to be unable firing-pieces. Against the two brigades of Rashid's force, with their up-to-date artillery and other weapons, the sum of this defence looked like a sombre jest. It was understood that relief might be expected from a small British force of all arms which was assembling in Palestine. but Palestine was as far, across the desert, as Edinburgh from London, while the brigades from India were separated from **Habbaniya** by another four hundred miles of desert and an immense area of flood.

There would still have been a sportsman's chance in a policy of defiance if the R.A.F. Station had been occupied by operational squadrons. It was not. It was purely a training station. It had precisely sixty-four aircraft which could, by bold improvisation, be made to serve operationally. For some thirty of these there were pilots who were experienced but out of operational practice, and pupils could be found with just sufficient flying ability and more than sufficient nerve to steer the rest into battle. These were likely to be opposed by an Iraq air force which was far from negligible and which might be reinforced by German or Italian craft at any hour. From no aspect of military science was the defence of **Habbaniya** a reasonable proposition.

With all these factors before him, and in the nightmare of having a colony of women and children under his protection, the

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R.A.F. Commander determined to defend it. In practice, one factor was in his favour: the men on the plateau had no good cause to fight for. Potentially these were able soldiers: from their stock a creditable army has since grown. They were also honourable fighters, as they were to show by scrupulously refraining from the bombardment of the hospital quarter.

(The Germans, when they came, showed no such pedantic regard for the rules of warfare.) And soldiers having a sense of honour do not give of their best when their senior commanders become adventures against the throne of their own country. This was a circumstance which was, at last, to prove decisive in the **battle of Habbaniya**. But it was not a factor on which the R.A.F. could reckon, for it is cardinal in military appreciations to suppose that the enemy's morale will be high.

The demand that flying practice should cease was refused, verbally and by hearty demonstration. Further, the Rashid Ali force was informed of the hardly disputable fact that its presence on the plateau was tantamount to an act of war; it was requested to continue its manoeuvres elsewhere. This demand in turn was refused. Normal communications between the R.A.F. and the British Embassy had been cut, but the R.A.F. had methods of their own for communication, and the Embassy were asked, approximately, whether it is legal to punch a man who is holding a heavy club over your head. On this nice question the Embassy gave formal advice, and the army on the plateau was then told that it must be gone by 05.00 hours on the 2nd May.

When it grew light on the 2nd May the army was still there. The R.A.F. training craft, rigged with improvised bomb-racks, swarmed into the sky. At 05.50 hours the first bombs fell on the plateau. In fifty-five seconds, by the watch of the Station Accounting Officer (who was, like his kind, an accurate man), the answering shells crashed down.

The Miracle of Habbaniya and the Bravery of the Assyrian Soldiers

The miracle of Habbaniya was achieved by coolness, by violent, unflagging labour, and by a measureless impudence. There were officers who understood the nature of war well enough to know what was possible and what was not; these, in their most private minds, could see that the fall of the cantonment was only a matter of time. The water situation by itself was not unlikely to decide the affair. The problem had been tackled; every bath, every available vessel, was kept full; but once the water-tower had been hit --- and it did not seem possible that there were several thousand mouths to feed and all new supplies had to be flown for hundreds of miles, in the few craft available, over enemy guns. It was still more likely that the station would be subject to direct assault. When Rashid Ali's brigades, with liberal artillery and tank support, decided to sweep down upon the cantonment there would be no surrender; but it would be the end.

With these facts before their eyes the garrison lived, worked and fought as if all the advantage were on their side, as if the rout of the enemy were only a matter of energy and time. "Three-quarters of the chance of success depend on a confident spirit", the Air Headquarters Bulletin mathematically observed, "and only one-quarter on material conditions." Aircraft were fuelled, loaded and started up behind the hangars; as soon as they were ready they taxied round the corner to the runways and took off under the enemy's nose. As each craft came back the fitter and riggers swarmed upon it; there was only one question, could it by any patching up and contrivance be made to mount the air once more? They worked methodically for nineteen hours a day and cursed the darkness for stealing the other five. Despite these efforts the number of serviceable aircraft dwindled; but a few Blenheims came to join the company, and to the army on the

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plateau it still appeared that through all the hours of daylight and, later, in the night as well the sky was alive with British planes. Methodically, the airmen attacked the gun positions, swooped on airfields from which hostile craft were already joining the fight, played havoc with supply columns moving up to the plateau from Baghdad. Methodically, the British families were emplaned for Basra, the families of the Assyrian Levies for Palestine. At their hasty meals men watched the shells falling and laid bets of fifty fils on the time when the water-tower would catch one, while station officers, disturbed by a stream of machine-gun bullets through the roof of their mess, made vigorous complaints in the Suggestion Book. Methodically, an administrative officer ran down to the Gulf to deposit currency and returned with a plane-load of groceries. Each day Intelligence put out a sheet to tell the garrison how the world war progressed, with a note or two on events at Habbaniya; and having digested this with his sandwiches, a man who could hardly be called a pupil now would go rather wearily back to the hangars, bully the remnants of an audaz into the air, and methodically bomb the enemy posts again.

The ground defence was no less aggressive; indeed, it would be hard to find in comparatively small-scale warfare a better sermon on the familiar text that only aggressive defence will succeed. Naturally a basic defence system had been minutely planned and was put into effect, the perimeter being divided into sectors of responsibility, with blockhouses and communication trenches. But the main preoccupation of the King's Own and of the Levies (which were both under the command of Colonel Brawn, O.C. Land Defence) was to seek the enemy and strike him: a policy so effective that from the start of the long-drawn action the defenders held continuous command of 'no-man's-land' between the two forces. On the first day some enemy guns were giving trouble from the other side of the Euphrates. **A platoon from one of the Assyrian companies crossed the wide, fast-flowing river in an old motor-boat and, with only small-arms covering fire from one of the blockhouses, advanced upon the guns across open and partially flooded ground. They**

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had caused some thirty casualties among the gun crews before machine-gun fire forced them back.

A few days later a patrol working north of the river took possession of an enemy car, several rounds of 3.7 howitzer ammunition and some spare parts. the heavily laden car was dragged in full view for several miles along the top of the bund, then put on to a motor-boat and bumboat lashed together and ferried across the swollen river. By now the enemy had become exceedingly wary of Levy patrols, which at night ranged far to hunt them in outlying posts: and in time so sharply was the power of the patrols realised that the enemy vacated his forward posts at night. It was this kind of supremacy which the defence planned to create. With the troops available, as compared with the enemy's, it could not be done except by continuous daring. That it was done is proved by the fact that no enemy patrols attempted to penetrate the British lines.

The Levies liked to be busy, and by way of recreation, when they were neither patrolling nor shooting from the block-houses they developed their training. Some of this was automatic; a diarist recorded with quiet satisfaction that "cars, bicycles and orderlies continued to assemble on the front door-step until a little bombing and shelling made all arrangements quite perfect". With more deliberation and under the friendly tutelage of the King's Own, they studied the Bren gun; and since the enemy were too well concealed to serve as targets they practiced on the ranges. "A quiet and uneventful day", the diarist occasionally remarks. It may be wondered if the enemy found the days equally agreeable.

The first large reward for the defenders' nonchalant audacity came on the 6th May. There had been some activity the night before, when an enemy patrol was caught in the open and severely damaged. At first light the routine reconnaissance of the plateau was made. It was empty. And some way off the last of the enemy vehicles were retreating eastwards. **The worst defensive position in the world had been more than held.**

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But the enemy had not gone far. At the eastern end of the airfield the road twisted through a spur of the escarpment; between this spur and the Euphrates he was in positions which would effectively hold the road against any advance towards Baghdad. This was intolerable to the R.A.F., who had decided that, given time, they could win the whole war with pupils in patched-up aeroplanes. It was intolerable to the Assyrian Levies, who now believed with some justification that they could beat anyone with their bare hands. And the King's Own were not prepared to tolerate if for as much as a few hours. The position centred on a village called Sinn Adh Dibban and known to the British, who liked places to have homely names, as Sidi Barrani. A plan to capture this village was formulated immediately. By 7.30 that morning the attack was under way.

Initially it was mounted by two companies of the King's Own, with R.A.F. armoured cars ranging the plateau to protect their right flank. The battle in its opening phase did not go well. The enemy, showing coolness and tactical sense, held their fire until the leading company was almost on top of their positions and then opened up with Vickers and Brens from the front and from the left flank. The attackers made a spirited effort to drive their assault home, but the volume of fire against them was too great. Much damaged, they fell back, while the armoured cars executed a considerable vengeance on their right. At the sewage farm, where they started to collect their casualties and re-form, they were still under intermittent fire and a counter-attack was Assyrian expected. This was a moment for which the Levies had waited eagerly, and a Commer car manned from No.3 Company drove up at full speed into the battleground to attack the enemy so ferociously with Vickers fire that the King's Own were given breathing space. They now launched a second attack, and this time the equivalent of artillery support was provided by the R.A.F., who had been shown their targets from the ground and who bombed them with extraordinary accuracy and daring. The 'Habbaniya Artillery' also came into action, leading the startled enemy to suppose that heavy guns had been flown up from Basra. (They had not realised what can be

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done, at a pinch, with ornamental howitzers.) With this access of covering fire the King's Own stove in the enemy's right flank, pounced upon the village and gained the ridge behind. It was then the Levies' turn again. No. 4 Company, covered by the armoured cars, was lorried out to an assault position on the British right flank, deployed there, and went straight in to the attack upon two posts still held by the enemy. These posts also crumpled, and the Sinn adh Dibban position was not occupied by the enemy again. **The action had not been without cost; seven of the King's Own were killed, twelve of the King's Own and two Levies were wounded; but the enemy sustained nearly a thousand casualties, excluding the 26 officers and 408 men who were captured. It was, at this early stage of the war, an interesting example of precise co-operation between ground and air, and the battle comradeship of the King's Own and the Assyrian Levies will not be forgotten by either. But pre-eminently it was another example, a classic in miniature, of the almost mystic power of the offensive mentality.**

THE NEXT OBJECTIVE IS FALLUJA

The ambition of the 'defence' (if it could still be called so) immediately stretched further. Twenty miles nearer to Baghdad the road crossed the Euphrates at a small town called Falluja, and so long as the enemy held this crossing an advance upon the capital from the west was virtually impossible. Falluja, then, was the next objective. the task would have been a stiff one for a force limited by no problems of manpower or equipment, for the village commanded the bridge and until the bridge was secured it was impossible, except by extremely circuitous means, to bring in an attack upon the village. Moreover, there were Messerschmitts in the sky now. but neither the King's Own nor the Assyrian Levies were to be restrained by such considerations as these. Their equipment had now been much augmented by weapons and other material captured at Sinn adh Dibban, including some 3.7 howitzers which would provide them with a supporting battery. Patrols kept the territory as far west as Ramadi, 20 miles away, and within a

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wide arc north of the river, under their unchallenged command. the R.A.F. were systematically punishing the reinforcements which the enemy tried to get through to Falluja, while on the British side some small reinforcements which included fighting and spe-



**ROYAL AIR FORCE HABBANIYA
SIGN POST**

cialist troops were coming through from Basra as fast as aircraft could be found to lift them. At all events, what had happened a Sinn adh Dibban could happen again. And the work of constructing a ferry across the Euphrates, by the aid of which a flying column might work round to attack Falluja from the rear, was begun at once.

In the long view, the capture of Falluja might have been a splendid but useless achievement, for the garrison of Habbaniya, with four platoons already detached as standing patrols and with a heavy programme of patrolling to maintain, could scarcely have spared a force large enough to hold the place when it was won. Logically, Falluja was only an interim objective; Baghdad, where several hundred British citizens confined in the

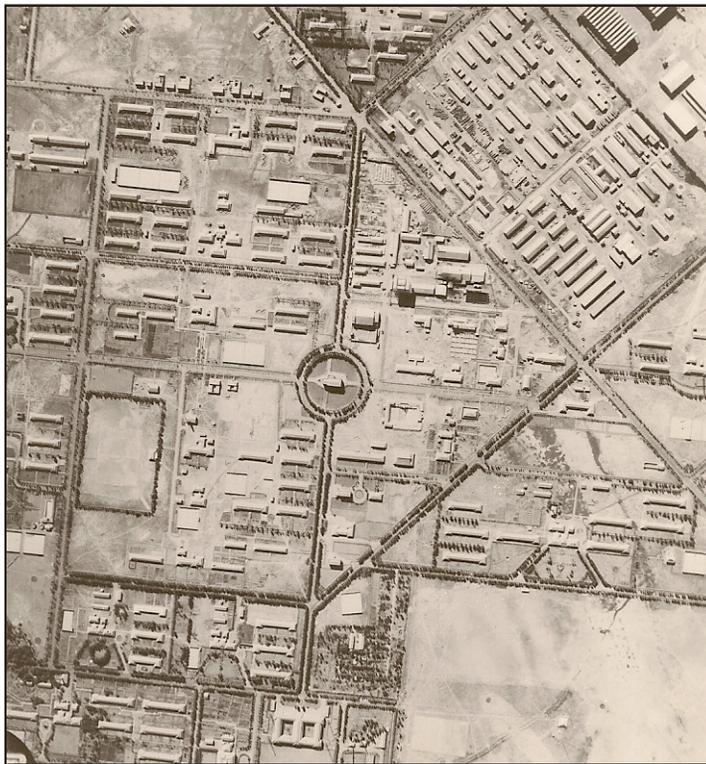
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Embassy and the hospitable American Legation were wondering what would happen next, was the real goal, and even the defenders of Habbaniya could hardly contemplate a 55-mile march upon Baghdad. but the background was changing. A cloud of sand thrown up by British vehicles was moving eastward from Palestine across the desert. The enemy, getting rumours of this new menace, supposed that they would now have tanks to deal with. The British were more accurately informed, but to them it was enough that they were to be reinforced by fighting men and by guns. the approaching column was commanded by Brigadier J. J. Kingstone, D.S.O., M.C. It consisted, in fact, of the 4th Mechanized Cavalry Brigade, made up from the Household Cavalry Regiment, the Wiltshire Yeomanry and the Warwickshire Yeomanry, with two companies of the 1st Battalion, the Essex Regiment, three squadrons of the Transjordan Frontier force eight R.A.F. armoured cars which had been rushed from North Africa, and a very modest allocation of field and anti-tank artillery. To serve as guides and as a protective screen it had men of the Arab Legion, desert fighters of almost fabulous endurance and resource, who were commanded by the equally prodigious Glubb Pash, and who at this time when the Germans seemed certain to win the war remained unshakably loyal to the British. for small parties, the crossing of the Syrian desert is not generally a difficult matter. but to take the several hundred vehicles of a brigade group at high speed across the desert at a time when the great Baghdad-Haifa road had not been completed involved administrative problems which were not trivial; the column received some attention from hostile aircraft, suffering casualties, and in the unclouded sunlight of this exceptionally hot mid-May the soldiers bumping in the crowded lorries over villainous tracks or man-handling them out of soft sand underwent great hardship. The column reached Habbaniya on the 18th, and was given a few days' interval to get into battle condition. Meanwhile the garrison sighed happily, and on the same evening started to execute their Falluja plan.

The tactics had been devised by Lt.-Col. Roberts, and Intelligence Staff officer who had been flown up from Basra to

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become commander of all the available forces, and who went about telling everyone (whether or no he privately believed it) that the enemy had not a hope in Hades against them and that Falluja was a piece of cake; if the garrison were in no special need of this tonic, they none the less took it gratefully. (And in this record of the events at Habbaniya, it is fitting that due tribute should be paid to Lt.-Col. Roberts for his remarkable personal influence on events. It was largely due to his drive and force of character that the operation proved, in the event, so successful.) The plan, in its essence, was to isolate the town by means of three groups placed west, north-west and north-east of it by night: to demand its surrender, and, if that were refused, to take it by shock. Another column was to disguise the intention by making a feint attack on



**HABBNIYA FROM AIR SHOWING ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH
AND THE ROYAL AIR FORCE HEADQUARTER**

Ramadi, which lay eighteen miles from Habbaniya in the opposite

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direction. The difficulties of the plan (in which lay the seeds of its success) were that the Euphrates ran between Habbaniya and the northward positions, while the westward position was also separated by floods which the rebels had made by breaching a dyke. The means to surmount these formidable obstacles had been worked out with the greatest precision. As soon as darkness fell the slow, delicate and dangerous business of ferrying the northward columns across the river began; these columns, which were supported by R.A.F. bridging and working parties, consisted of No. 2 Company of the Assyrian Levies, a Company of Gurkha Rifles, and a flight of R.A.F. armoured cars. The ferry, improvised 'as a hobby' by professional engineers and amateur artisans, did its job, and the boat parties, operating on a minutely detailed drill, got over safely. Meanwhile the King's Own, with whom it was now almost routine to be flown into battle, were embarking in their familiar Valentias; they were to be landed in the north-east position, where the armoured cars were to support them. On the near side of the river a column of Levies commanded by Captain A. Graham of the Green Howards was also facing an amphibious operation, which they had studiously rehearsed in the R.A.F. swimming-pool and which was now hindered by every device of ill-fortune. The pack-mules, who regarded the affair with high disfavour, went into reverse as soon as the water reached their fetlocks; lorries feeling their way in total darkness along the difficult track were ditched; and one of the boats, performing a half-roll, pitched a Gunner officer and his signaller into the deep water of the breach. But by seat and patience, and in the absolute silence which distinguishes troops in advanced training, men, guns and ammunition were brought safely across the floods. By first light, as if all the movements had been executed under Aldershot Tattoo conditions, the columns were ready in their battle stations.

Hitherto the R.A.F. had refrained from bombing Falluja, as a number of civilians were known to be still living there. They now dropped leaflets demanding the town's surrender and at the same time giving detailed instructions on the way in which civilians were to leave it. The demand was ignored, and the town was then

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Assyrian Levy, No. 4 Squadron, Habbaniya - Iraq, 1953
 Mr Enwiya Essay Tomas (Third from the left front seated row) The writer's father
 A MACHINE GUNNER

heavily bombed. At midday Graham's column was ordered by field telephone to advance and force an entry. It was an uninviting task, for the ground to be crossed was boggy, it was under observation by enemy machine-gun posts and it gave no cover at all. The assault, however, was supported not only by air bombing but by accurately directed fire from a battery of captured 3.7 howitzers. Having worked their way to the bridge on a two-platoon front, **the Assyrian Levies went over it as if they were tanks instead of infantry. To their astonishment they found themselves, without a single casualty, the possessors of both bridge and town.**

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ANTHONY EDEN
BRITISH PRIME MINISTER 1945

The expected counter attack did not immediately take place. There was trouble only from free-lance snipers while the several columns were moving in to take up their positions for defence.

But a determined counter-attack did come in at 2 o'clock on the morning of the 21st. The enemy had much to help them: they knew the town intimately; they had friends hiding inside; and a counterattack on Falluja had been the subject of a Tactical Exercise Without Troops skilfully devised for the Iraq Army by a British Militar Mission. They now applied what are called the School Solutions, and the School Solutions would have proved correct but for certain interruptions. Of the two light tanks which managed to get into the town one was knocked out by the weapon so much despised by British infantry, the Boyes rifle, while the other remained floundering in a shell-hole, and at the critical moment when the enemy infantry came near the bridge, **Rab Khamshi Baijan Peki** and his Assyrian Levy platoon attacked them with such forocity that they were driven right back. A further attack was beaten off by the King's Own, who suffered heavy casualties in this achievement.

Thereafter Brigadier Kingstone, who had solutions different from the school ones to this and every other problem, arrived to take command. Sub-units of the Household Cavalry and the Essex Regiment were brought in to reinforce the defence. The

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knees of certain peaceful male inhabitants of Falluja were examined and were found to be sunburnt, suggesting that these citizens had lately worn the dress of soldiers; whereupon they were removed. And Falluja had rest, and the advance upon Baghdad could begin.

The plan for taking Baghdad may be regarded, in the broadest terms, as a repetition of the Falluja plan on a far larger scale. What was now called 'Habforce' was divided into two columns, of which one was patiently ferried across the river; again guided by the Arab Legion, it worked its way round by a northern route, and eventually, after an engagement near Taji, came into a position north of Al-Kadhimain, a short horse-tram ride north-west of the capital. Meanwhile the southern column, which was to advance on the line of the main road through Falluja, had to get its long train of vehicles across the floods which had earlier given so much trouble to Graham. It was a protracted and exhausting task, but practically the last one. The fort at Khan Nuqta, from which trouble had been expected, surrendered without firing. At the outskirts of Baghdad, after an exchange of artillery fire, a party from the enemy arrived to ask for terms.

A few hours later British officers were in the Embassy, where a house party of some three hundred British and Indians, including twenty women, had been leading with courage and good humour a slightly cramped but excellently ordered life within a circle of hostile machine-guns, with water and electricity still supplied by the enemy, and where, in the gardens, the enterprising traders of the city had been selling tea and sweets, tobacco, cosmetics, and rather faded issues of the London Evening News.

There were appalling scenes to follow, when in one night the worst elements of the rebellion had their final fling in the Jewish and residential quarters of Baghdad. But in Habbaniya the Assyrian Levies Band was playing through the lines. "A sign", said one of their officers, with perhaps a shade of regret, "of impending security."

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**THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SIEGE OF HABBANIYA
BY RASHID ALI THE (*de facto*) AUTHORITY IN 1941**

The Editor of the Assyrian Observer Mr. Andrios Mama Jotyar wrote about the siege of Habbaniya in Issue No. 82, dated December 2003 the following: The fact is that on the 29th April 1941, when the thousands of mechanised Iraqi Army troops were moved to Habbaniya plateau from Al-Rashid military camps at Hanaidi, all the Arab and Kurd Levy soldiers were disarmed and were confined to barracks guarded by the Assyrian Levies Soldiers. Neither the Kurd Levies nor the RAF student pilots contributed anything effective towards the breaking up of the historical siege of RAF Station Habbaniya in Iraq. In reality, the first physical encounter between the Iraqi Army troops and the British KORR, (King's Own Royal Regiment) soldiers started on 7th May 1941,

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In this photograph, which was dated to the time of Mar Shimoun's visit to Iraq, he is seen addressing the crowd. Behind him are other religious leaders including Mar Dinkha his successor (sitting in the middle, first row) and Rev. Toma who was well known to be one of the most well-known Assyrian priests in Iraq for many decades. You could also see at the top middle part of the picture, a photograph of the Iraqi president at the time, Ahmad Hassan al-Baker.

at Sinn-Al-Dibban, that was the nearest point of the Iraqi Army units to the Habbaniya perimeter. The KORR soldiers were secretly moved in from India. They attacked the defensive Iraqi Army positions outside the perimeter on fixed bayonets on foot. Many were killed on that day. They were buried at the British Cemetery, all killed in action on the same date.

The main offensive task for the survival of RAF Station Habbaniya was now given to the RAF Levies Assyrian soldiers. On 9th May 1941 at the zero hour at 5.0 a.m the Assyrian troops embarked the open trucks that drove them fast to the base of the plateau simultaneously from three separate directions. The

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Assyrian soldiers disembarked from trucks and stormed upwards onto the plateau where the Iraqi defences were positioned. After three days of field and hand to hand battle, thousands of Iraqi troops surrendered and they were accommodated in hangars inside the perimeter at the RAF Station. The majority of Iraqi troops fled in lorries towards Falloja and Baghdad. The KORR and the Assyrian Levies soldiers together encountered heavy battles with the Iraqi Army units at Falloja town and beyond, towards Baghdad.



I n
c o m -
r a d e s h i p
i n A r m s,
t h e

**MAR SHIMOUN XXI. WITH SURMA KHANUM AND THE
METROPOLITAN OF SHEMSDINAN**

Assyrian Levies and the King's Own Royal Regiment, share the glory and the bravery of this bitterly fought and brilliantly won the field battle against the Axis odds at a critical juncture during the second world war. Let it be known in the history of mankind that this was the first victory of the Allies since the beginning of war in Sept. 1939. This great victory paved the way for the subsequent victories thereafter that ensued until the final victory of war that was achieved in May 1945. We must be impartial and should give

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credit to those people who deserve it.

(E 78/78/G)

Anthony Eden
British Prime Minister

22nd January, 1945.

My dear Oliver,

The time has, I think, come when the Cabinet should be asked to take a decision regarding the future of the Assyrians. Broadly speaking, the question is whether these people must stay where they now are in Iraq and Syria, or whether it is essential to move them out of the Middle East and re-settle them elsewhere.

The problem of finding a new home for the Assyrians has, as you will remember, been fairly thoroughly examined during the past ten or twelve years. No satisfactory solution has yet been found. It is more than doubtful whether any foreign country or any of the Dominions would be willing to take them. We are told that the conquered Italian colonies must be ruled out. The only other possibility seems to be somewhere in our own colonial Empire, and it seems to me that if this were feasible, it would be the best solution.

If, on the other hand, the Assyrians have to remain in Iraq and Syria, their prospects are not very bright. Their loyal services to us during the war in the Royal Air Force Levies have increased our obligations towards them, and you will recall how gallantly

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they helped us to defend our air base at Habbaniyah against the attacks of the whole Iraqi Army. But their fine war record, which has given them a special claim on us, has obviously also increased the chances of future conflicts between them and the Iraqis (or the Syrians) It is moreover by no means certain that, after the war, **when our forces in Iraq and Syria have been reduced to peacetime strength, we shall always be able effectively to protect them in case of need.**

I enclose the draft of a Cabinet memorandum on the subject and shall be very glad of your help in dealing with this difficult problem. If you have any suggestions, perhaps you would let me know at the earliest possible date. I enclose a copy of a letter which I am sending to Sinclair on the subject.

Yours evr,
(Sg). Anthony Eden

Colonel The Et. Hon. Olivr Stanley.
M.P.

* * *

CHAPTER 19

The Day Mar Shimoun Visited Iraq

Mar Shimoun, the revolutionary and religious leader of Assyrians recorded one major and important highlight in his life, that was already full with great national and religious remarks. This was at the time he visited his homeland in Betnahrain in 1970. As the tradition has been set, the Assyrian Church of the East set the United States as a major base for its operations. Mar Shimoun traveled to Baghdad, Iraq from San Francisco to represent the Assyrians to the then president of Iraq Ahmad Hassan Al Bakar. The visit was also considered as a routine visit by the patriarch to Betnahrain, where millions of Assyrians lived then.

On the morning of that day in 1970, Mar Shimon's plane landed in Baghdad and waiting for him was the president and literally hundreds of thousands of people, including Assyrians, Arabs, Kurds and many more.

The people were not only different in their ethnic background but religion as well, Christians and Muslims. The man was well-known and respected much like today's Pope of the Catholics. He was not only known to Iraq but to the entire region and the Middle East in general.

Mar Shimoun was welcomed by the president and his staff once he got off the plane. Then and in a very powerful witness to Mar Shimoun's greatness, the Iraqi president acknowledged Mar

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Shimoun that “those people are all yours...” after seeing the great masses waiting for his holiness. Mar Shimoun was generous enough to reply “no Mr. Bakar, these people are all yours, and I am just happy that they are out here to welcome me...” the crew including the president and Mar Shimoun left the airport and for many miles and on both sides of the road, thousands of people could be seen waiting to see the Assyrian patriarch. Some of them waiting for hours.

Mar Shimoun visited all major Iraqi cities both in the north and south especially those with concentrated Assyrian populations such as Nineveh, Basra, and the capital Baghdad. Thousands of Assyrians had finally made their wish come true-to see the great Mar Shimoun who was not just a religious leader to them -- but a political one as well. After that historic visit, the Iraqi government gave more recognition to Assyrians and were now able to put the world “Assyrian” as their major ethnic denomination,

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**The Betrayal of the Assyrian Nation
By the British Government.**

Assyrian Empire has been wiped out of the map since the fall of Nineveh, their Capital in 612 by the Medians (Persians) and Chaldeans. The remnants of the Assyrians fled to the Hakkari Mountains and lived there as semi independent until the first world war when they were encouraged by the British and the Russian intelligents to rise against the Ottoman Empire, promising the Assyrians the independence after the war, but that promise was never fulfilled and kept. The Assyrians have been deliberately used and abused by the British during the last two world wars 1914 and 1941 and thereafter.

In 1955 the Assyrian Levies were disbanded and the last base, the Habbaniya RAF Station was closed down and handed over to the Iraqi Air Force. Most of the civilian employees were discharged, but some were employed by the Iraqis in Habbaniya works Directorate and at the Iraqi Royal Air Force.

The Levies got one off payment as a lump sum for their services and were gone seeking their fate no matter where the chance takes them. Most of the Assyrians integrated among the Iraqi people and tried to find jobs in the North, Center or South, mainly in Oil Companies, Roads, Pipelines and few worked as farmers in the North.

The British called the Assyrians their smallest allies for helping them to win both world wars, and in spite of keeping their promises for their independent land and country they have betrayed them and sold the country to Arab and established the Iraqi Government with the help of the Assyrians.

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Today thousands of the old Assyrian soldiers and veterans of the Second World War in Iraq and abroad are facing constant hardship and destitution. These are the brave Assyrian soldiers that were a potential part of the British Army that fought alongside the British soldiers throughout the 1941-1945 war and beyond. The brave and the faithful Assyrian soldiers of seventy three years ago are aged, infirm, frail and unable to provide for themselves and their families and are living in a miserable situations, and no one cares to help and support except their own children and families. This is how the British Government abandoned the Assyrian soldiers, their comrades in arms,

The Assyrians Who Were Left Behind

Since the official announcement for the handing over of the RAF Station Habbaniya to the Iraqi Airforce in 1955, the 4800 population which included RAF Levies, the British and the civilian employees and their families, were advised to seek alternative accommodation and employment.

The bitter news were received with a surprise and shock by everyone. People of many nationalities were gradually leaving RAF Station Habbaniya, seeking their fate no matter where the chance takes it. The British, except the RAF Instructors, to the Iraqi Airforce were posted back to Britain, RAF Levies Iraq were to be transferred to the Iraqi Army and the civilian employees went to Baghdad, Kirkuk, K/2, K/3, Mosul and Basrah and many returned to their villages in the North of Iraq.

The dispersement lasted until 1969, but there were left about 100 Assyrian families who had no means and no place to go to anywhere in Iraq. They were pressurised by the Iraqis to quit the Station and the remaining Assyrian families were obliged to get out of Habbaniya and established themselves an Assyrian village outside of perimeter, north/west towards Ramadi between the Euphrates River and HBN Flood Regulator.

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The new Assyrian Village is called **Khalideya** and has today flourished to more than 80 Assyrian families. Some still work at UBN others at Ramadi, Falloja and even Baghdad. The Iraqi Government, as a gesture, has installed all the necessary amenities. Some have build their own modern houses on land given to them by the Government. These Assyrian Christians still continue to travel to Civil Cantonment once a month to attend Church Service and Holy communion at the same old Saint George's Church at C.C. The monthly services are often officiated by the Metropolitan Mar Gewargis, who was recently on a visit to Britain.

As victims of unfortunate circumstances the Assyrians of Khalideya have fought hard to maintain their rights, for a home, a job and their religion as ancient Assyrian Church of the East. The Metropolitan who so kindly visited the Assyrian colony in Kent, informed that plans are in hand to have a new church build in Khalideya, so that they no longer have to travel to CC HBN for a church service and to teach the Assyrian language in Khalideya. The new Khalideya village , unlike the old RAF Station Habbaniya can be freely visited by everyone by day or by night without any restrictions, a permit or a pass.

Assyrians from Habbaniya Moved to the New Daura District in Baghdad

During the disbandment of the RAF Station in Habbaniya - Iraq in 1955, the British who were adviser to the Iraqi Government, decided through the blessing of the Iraqi Government to establish an Assyrian Housing Association one of its kind to help the Assyrian civilian employees of the RAF and the Ex. RAF Levy soldiers to obtain their own houses.

This brilliant project, was earmarked to take place at the New Daura farming lands along the banks of the Tigris river west of Baghdad. The land belonged to the British Government, and as

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a good gesture, they promised the Assyrian to have the land free. but some of the Assyrian did not agree on this together with Mr Page an English officer they decided to sell the land for a nominal price to the Assyrian. As a result many Assyrian Levies and civilian employees did not participate in the New Daura Assyrian Housing Scheme. An executive committee was established, some of the members were the Late Oshana Rab Emma Lazar, Dinkha Rab Khalia Zaia Gewargis, Andrious Mama, and Mr Page. The land was divided into many separate plots of 300, 600, and 900 meters. The plots were numbered and allocated to individual members in accordance with their choice of purchase.

Upon the receipt of a down payment, the balance of payments were to be made by instalments to the Aqarie Bank (A government bank for mortgages) The scheme was later extended to other Christian denominations. Specifications were made and tenders were invited. the contract was given to a Belgian Construction Company for the manufacture of pre fabricated concrete dwellings to be erected on site at the New Assyrian Daura in 1957.

The building works on site were progressing in Daura smoothly, opportunities for employment, businesses and financial support from Banks were plentiful. Baghdad was booming from all directions for Arabs, Assyrians, Kurdish, Armenians and others. Baghdad as well as the whole of Iraq were rapidly transforming like a growing paradise for all the races of people. The Banks, Commercial Establishments, Factories, Industries, Construction Companies, Western embassies, in Baghdad including the Iraqi Air Force and the Iraqi Army were all staffed essentially by members of the new Assyrian generation. The Assyrians were the masters of English, Arabic, Assyrian and French languages and were considered to be advisers of the Iraqi economical and political system, exactly as it was in the days Caliphate and Haron Al Rasid in AD 830, where Assyrians were administrators, notably accountants, scribes, physicians and teachers. In those days the Assyrians were commissioned to translate the scientific and philo-

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sophical works of the Greeks into the Arabic language for the Arabs.

The first batch of housing units near the banks of the mighty Tigris river were completed on schedule, inspected and handed over to their respective owners, who moved in without any problems. While the building works on site were going on uninterrupted, people all over Iraq were busy with the continued progress of their economy, prosperity and freedom, a sudden and astonishing military coup d' etat happened in Baghdad on 14th July, 1958. The Iraqi military forces toppled the government and grasped power. Members of the Iraqi Royal family were massacred including members of the government who were hunted and murdered in the streets. The unexpected revolution shocked the Iraqi people and curtailed every progressive social, economic and political life in Iraq. The foreign diplomatic corps in Baghdad were placed under restrictions and the entire country was like being toppled upside down. At this juncture the Aqarie Bank suspended payments for the construction company for the completed works on site and as a consequence the building site works at the Assyrian scheme in New Daura were also suspended indefinitely. Within a short time the utilities were installed by the Directorates of water and electricity and the houses were refurbished all at the expense of individual owners and were made habitable over after.

Within three months every house was occupied by their rightful owners, new gardens were dug at rear and front of every house, fruit trees, flowers, vegetables and shrubs were planted, arrangements for the irrigating from the near by Tigris river were made with the local municipal (Baladiya) and soon the New Assyrian Daura flourished beyhond imagination. When Habbaniya was made to fall by organised politics, the new Assyrian Daura Baghdad Iraq took up its place as the modern capital city of the Assyrians world wide. Not for long, in 2003 the Assyrians started to leave their homes and moved either to the north of Iraq or outside the country completely to Jordon or Syria

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for a safer place escaping from insurgents and bombs. A place that we the Assyrians can not defend can not be called our own home, until we have our own country and home to be able to defend it with our own life , we will be refugees in our own homeland, and our fate will be in the hands of other, the Arabs and the Kurds, the British have used us for their own benefit to control the country for the oil, then the Arabs used us in their offices and in wars against Iran and now the Kurds are using us to defend Kurdistan and to get more lands from Mosul Plains, once it was Assyria, and now they are calling it Kurdistan.

The Americans Promise the Iraqi Government to turn Iraq into a Paradise.

The British Government ruled Iraq for over 40 years, from 1918 through 1958, without introducing any kind of redevelopment plans for the ten million Iraqi people. Arabs, Kurds, Assyrians Armenians and others.

In 1955 after the handing over the R.A.F Habbaniya base to the Iraqi Royal Air force, the Iraqi government turned to Americans for advice and expertise. The American offered many new redevelopment programmes for the whole of Iraq. As a result the Iraqis and the **United States Overseas Mission** agreed to convert Iraq into a man made Paradise, not only for Iraqis but also to all the people of the Middle East. There were many plans set up, like academic education of Iraqis in the American States, agricultural and life stock programmes, including new technology in communications, transport and road systems as well as international leisure and tourism. The USOM therefore opened a large annex to the American Embassy compound and employed extra staff and commenced with the implementation of the said programmes.

Many groups of Iraqi boys and girls, some of them Assyrians, were now selected from Baghdad colleges and schools,

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brief and send to America for four years for academic studies.

The July 14th 1958, Revolution

In 1956 when I returned to Habbaniya and took a job at the Iraqi Royal Air Force as a store keeper and attending school at night, our Higher school building was next to the Aerodrome and the runway of the fighters jet, such as Hoker Hunters, I saw the American Air Force Soldiers erecting the communication Aerial poles next to our college just behind the school fence, and I new something was going on. The British were still advisers to the Iraqi government, but the Iraqi Government specially Noori Al-Said was stabbing them from behind, and planning to replace them by the Americans.

At this time there was a British Intellegent Officer in Baghdad, made a very close friendsip with some Iraqi Free Officers planning to overthrow the Government and take over, such as Abdul Karim Qasim, Abdul Salam Arif, Ismail Arif, Farid Dhia's Mahmood, Taha Shaikh Ahmad, Rafat Al-Haj Sirri, Salih Abid Al-Majeed Al-Samirrai, Rejab Abdul Majeed, Abdul Majeed Jaleel, Abdul Karim Farhan. and others. Regular meetings were held at this British Intillegent Officer's House. An Assyrian cook Care taker, and butler , by the name **Elia Benyamin**, was working for this English Officer, an eye witness that he saw and recognized most of the above Iraqi Free Officer attending the house of this British Intelligent Officer to meet him and discuss how to topple the governmen. The night just before the revolution, on the 13th of July 1958 This British Officer told Mr. Elia Benyamin, I want you to take whatever you want from this house, furnitures, beds and others because tomorrow it is going to be a revolution and a new government will be taking over, and they will kill the King, Prime Minister Noori Al-Said, and the Legent (Crown Prince) Abdul Ilah and most of the present official, and tonight I am leaving this country, and you will not see me again ,

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take care of your self and your family and good luck with the new government.

Early next morning, the opportunity to act on the revolution came when the Army command ordered the 20th Brigade, stationed at Jalula - a camp some eighty miles east of Baghdad - to advance toward Jordan to reinforce the Jordanian Army against a possible threat from Israel. But the truth was to topple the Jordanian regime and install a new one and put the Legent "Crown-Prince" Abdul Ilah (King Faisal' Uncle) King on Jordon.

On July 14, 1958, General Abdul Karim Qassim whose Military education was in England and , who was in command of the 19th Brigade, stationed at Camp Mansur, seized the chance to effect the overthrow of the Hashemite Dynasty and the Nuri Said Government, with the cooperation of the Free Officers of the 20th Brigade, which was to march through Baghdad on its way to Jordan. The plans for the takeover of the government had met with great approval by the Free Officers, especially because the king, the crown prince, and Prime Miniser Nuri Said would be in Baghdad at the precise time when the 20th Brigade would pass through the city. On July 4, 1958, General Qassim finalized the plans with several key officers, but did not inform all the Free Officers about zero hour for security reasons. He considered it vital that the plan remain confined to a close ring of Free Officers.

From July 4 to July 14, General Qassim, as the head of the secret organisation, had meetings with a selected handful of Free Officers to detail all the operational aspects of the takeover. they agreed that the first imporant announcement of the revolutionary regime to the people should consist of the names of members of the new government and of new officers commanding all military posts.

On the eve of July 13, 1958, the three battalions of the 20th Brigade, with a strength of approximately 2,000, began the march from its camp at Jalula toward Jordan. The Commanding officer

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of the brigade was General Ahmed Hakki Mohammed Ali, who was not a member of the movement, but within the 20th Brigade there were approximately ten Free Officers. One of them, Colonel Abdul Salam Arif, was a battalion commander. Following the plans set by General Qassim, Colonel Arif, together with the other Free Officers, convinced his commanding officer, General Mohammad Ali, to proceed ahead of the brigade with his headquarters staff, bypassing Baghdad, toward the town of Fuluja, in order to choose a bivouac (temporary stay) for the brigade.

Soon after the commander of the Brigade departed, Abdul Salam Arif stood among the soldiers and made a short speech, he said brothers we are going to Jordan to topple the regime and put the Crown Prince as a King on Jordan, do you want to go to Jordan and kill your own brothers and many of you will be killed at the same time, or shall we go and topple our government and have a republic for our people that they always wanted. We will be killing only few people to change our regime rather than going to Jordan and killing many. So the whole Brigade shouted let us go and topple this corrupted regime, so the Free Officers quickly



SHAIKH AHMED OF BARAZAN WITH HIS CHIEFTAINS

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took over leadership of the brigade. and moved toward the Castle, and when the brigade arrived at Castle's Post, some twenty miles east of Baghdad, all three battalions and their supporting units passed into Free Officer control. All other officers who resisted were arrested.

General Qassim had supplied some units of the 20th Brigade with ammunition from his depots in Al Mansur Camp because ammunitions was not usually issued to any military force passing through the capital. The 20th Brigade was fully liberated, revolutionized, and armed.

Early on July 14, a few Free Officers from the Baghdad Movement met the brigade at New Baghdad, a suburb on the eastern outskirts of the capital city. They were to guide the units of the 20th Brigade to the objectives of the revolutionar plan on the morning of July 14, 1958. At the same time, General Qassim secretly ordered his 19th Brigade to be on the alert for the second phase to back the 20th Brigade in the takeover plan.

The forces of the 20th Brigade, backed by the 19th Brigade, entered Baghdad under the full control and leadership of Free Officers. The takeover of Baghdad was accomplished as follows:

The First Battalion took over the police station in the south of Baghdad and established communications with the Free Officers in Rashid Camp. A detachment guided by Captain Ibrahim Jasim Altikriti, Captain Abdul Sattar Abdul Latif, and Captain Jasim Alazzawi stormed the residence of Chief of General Staff General Rafik Arif at Rashid Camp and arrested him. His arrest was vital to achieve the final victory of the Revolution. Eventually the three officers were able to control the whole camp and prevent any rescue force from entering the area. The second battalion occupied the ministry of defense and the Royal Court, disarming the royal guards there. The third battalion crossed the Tigris river and occupied the western part of Baghdad.

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A company of the battalion combat units surrounded Rihab Palace, where the royal family resided. The revolutionary force opened fire toward the palace, the royal guard returned fire, and a serious confrontation began to develop. Soon after, the situation aggravated a group of Free Officers from the nearby militar camp Washash, who rushed to the scene to back the revolutionary troops. that group included Captain Muhammad Ali Said, Captain Hamid Al Sarraj, and some noncommissioned officers. Following fruitless exchanges of words between the royal guards and the attacking force, the commander of the royal guard, Colonal Taha Al Bamarni, joined the revolution and ordered his guards to surrender to the revolutionary officers.

The royal family tried to resist the revolutionary troops which surrounded Rihab Palace. Lieutenant Abdul Sattar Al-Abusi, a member of the Free Officers Movement, joined these troops, bringing with him from the nearby school of Small Arms, where he was stationed, an antitank gun with a few shells. The royal family was surrounded in the palace and refused to come out. Lieutenant Al-Abusi ordered his soldiers to fire the antitank gun into the palace. Heavy smoke forced the royal family to come out peacefully without resistance. The King was holding the Holy Book (Kuran) in his hand, and he raised it high in the Air. Fearing that their appearance in front of the soldiers might discourage their revolutionary spirit, Lieutenant Al-Abusi immediately gave orders to fire. They were all killed, including the king and the Crownprince. The only survivor was the wife of the crown prince and her servant. Another contingent surrounded Prime Minister Nuri Said's house. Nuri Said succeeded in escaping from the troops that had surrounded his home. These troops guide was Nuri Said's former aide de camp, Colonel Wasfi Tair, who had orders to bring him alive to General Qassim. Nuri Said was able to escape from his residence by a fishing boat which was drawn up on the Tigris shores of his villa. He crossed the Tigris, took a taxi, and hid in an old friend's house in Kadhimain. Concerned about reprisals on his friend by the revolutionaries, Nuri Said left this house, disguised in a woman's black gown. Soon after he got out

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of the taxi, the angry Iraqi populace recognized him and he was killed in the street. All the other important government politicians were arrested. That day, Radio Baghdad announced the Revolution, the dethronment of the monarchy, and the proclamation of the Republic. Upon hearing the voice of the Revolution on Radio Baghdad, the people responded enthusiastically and rushed into the streets in huge demonstrations expressing their support for it. The body of Nuri Said & Crown Prince Abdul Ilah were displayed in front of the main gate of the Ministry of Defence. Rumours have spread that many Iraqis from the public have cut slices of the Nuri Said & Abdul Ilah's flesh and ate it for the anger they bear.

Proclamation No. 1 was announced on July 14, 1958. In this document, a People's Republic was declared in Iraq and a Council of Sovereignty was established. The government comprised most of the political factions. All liberal political parties were represented in the first cabinet by one minister or more: the National Democratic Party, the Independent Party, the Arab Socialist Resurrection Party, the Liberal group, and the Kurds.

It was the British Government's Plan to overthrow the Iraqi Regime, because they drifted toward the Americans, rather staying with the British for what they have done to them to liberate them from the Ottoman Empire and gave thousands of British life to do so. The Iraqi Army & the government were against the British in Iraq from start, but they could not oust the British while the Assyrian RAF Levies were in existence from 1919 up to 1955. The Anglo Iraqi treaty was revised where it demanded that the British administration in Iraq should end in 1955. This clause paved the way for the closing down of the British bases and the disbandment of the Assyrian RAF Levies in Iraq. At the same time the British were planning to overthrow the government by helping the Free Officers and Abdul Karim Qasim was one of them, therefore the British did not need the Assyrian to protect their interest, they had other means to do so. Only after the complete disbandment of the Assyrian Levies, the Iraqi Army manage to achieve a successful coup d'etat in July 1958. The members of the Iraqi

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Royal family & government ministers were murdered by the troops of General Abdul Karim Qassim, and the crucial role of the Assyrian RAF Levies ended.

After the 1958 Revolution the situations in Iraq were vague for the Assyrians those close the British tried to escape abroad to Britain, America or Australia. Many of my friends and relatives came to Great Britain, I myself because I was working with the Iraqi Air force as a Store Keeper at the beginning, and later as an accountant at the Habbaniya Works Directorate, became very close friend to Assyrians & Arabs. Their in Habbaniya in 1959. We established Habbaniya Employees Social Club, for the Assyrian and the Arab without any restrictions. The Assyrians and the Arabs lived together in peace in Habbaniya and we felt safe with the Arab more than the British, I left Habbaniya and moved to Baghdad to complete my study at the Baghdad University and to get my degree. But unfortunately because of the economic situation of my family I had to leave the school for work at the Damirchi Co. as an English and Arabic typist, I needed the money because my father when he left the Assyrian Levy at Habbaniya and settled in Dohuk with his family of ten members, hardly worked a full time job, so I had to support my family. The Assyrian and Chaldeans situations and life in Iraq become difficult, because not very long Abdul Karim Qasim was killed together with many of the Free Officers and a new regime came to power with the leadership of the Bath Party. After two years of my working with the Damirchi Co. I was employed by the American Institute of Languages as a Secretary for two years until it was closed, because of the Israeli- Arab war in 1966, I decided to plan to go abroad, so I started learning Electronic Engineering and T.V. at the T.V. Engineering Institute in Karrada - Baghdad and there I met Mr. Odisho Isaac, whom he was a member of one of the underground Assyrian Political Parties, and soon I became a member in their cell. The situation in Iraq in general became very difficult specially because of the uprising of the Kurds in the North and King Shah of Iran was helping the Kurds against the Regime. The Iranian regime wanted half of our waterways in Shat Al-

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Arab for their use for free or else. Ahmad hassan al-Baker was in power he tried every way to suppress the uprising of the kurds but he could not do so.

The Kurdish Rebellion

The opposition was searching for any and all means to use against the government. In spite of all the good intentions and deeds of the revolutionary government toward the Kurdish people and Mulla Mustafa Al-Barzani, the Kurds drifted over to the opposition.

In late 1960, the government had discovered efforts by foreign powers to instigate the Kurds against the Republic. The Iraqi opposition was getting help from the U.A.R to foment a Kurdish uprising. The government was having difficulty executing the Agrarian Reform Law in some Kurdish areas, and it was met with open resistance by certain Kurdish tribal chiefs and landlords. A minor insurrection erupted, led by the sheikh of the Surchi tribes in the northeastern part of the Kurdish region near Rawandus. It was quelled by the Communist Party, Mullah Mustafa Barzani's followers, and the police. A few months later, a prominent Kurdish sheikh was killed in Mosul and Barzani's followers were blamed for his death.

With the encouragement of the opposition in Mosul, some Kurdish tribes looted Barzani tribal villages. The government organised a fact-finding committee headed by a Kurdish cabinet minister and sent them out to investigate. Upon return to Baghdad, the committee gave recommendations for solving Kurdish problems. Misleading information had been inserted with the aim of persuading Qassim to take drastic measures against the Kurds, but Qassim did not take the report seriously.

He was under the belief, based on reports from the intelligence service, that Barzani was behind all this trouble. While living in Nuri Said's villa and being treated wonderfully, Barzani was, Qassim thought, instigating trouble in order to achieve polit-

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ical gain. Events proved that Qassim was right.

Barzani tried to meet General Qassim to display his allegiance to him. There were two meetings early in 1961, but no understanding between the two parties was reached. Governmental confidence in Barzani evaporated while the Democratic Party of Kurdistan exploited the political turmoil. Barzani fled Baghdad and joined his tribes. A few months later, tribal sheikhs and their followers joined the Kurdish insurrection, which appeared to be spreading to the entire Kurdish region of northeast Iraq. Kurdish civil servants, teachers, army officers, and soldiers began to desert their posts to join the insurrection.

For more than three months the government refrained from taking military action against the insurrection, but in early June, 1961, Kurdish armed bands attacked police stations in Kurdistan and blockaded the highway between the oil city of Kirkuk and the major Kurdish city of Sulaymania, cutting the main lines of communication. General Qassim then decided to advance a military column as a demonstration force from Kirkuk to Sulaymania to open the highway for normal transportation.

Some cabinet ministers gathered privately on Sept. 11, 1961, to discuss the Kurdish problem. they decided that the minister of health and the minister of education, Dr. Muhammad Al-shawaf and General Al-Arif, should have an immediate talk with Qassim and try to convince him not to send in troops, but to send a fact-finding mission of Kurdish and Arab ministers to try to pave a way to understanding between the government and the Kurds. Qasim was not persuaded and he ordered troops to march the next morning. when these troops got to the narrow Bazian Pass, Kurdish militiamen opened fire and the army had about thirty casualties.

Henceforth, there were continual confrontations between the government and the Kurds until the fall of the First Iraqi Republic. This was one of the main factors undermining the

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Republic and it cost the Iraqi people irreplaceable material, social, and personal losses. The only perceptible gain was to the vanity of a few Kurdish leaders, but the opposition had succeeded in using this to their own ends.

Some dissident political groups, President Nasser and various Western circles, stood behind the Kurdish uprising and used it to weaken the Republic of Iraq, while unsound administrative and political actions by the government served to widen the gap between General Qassim and the Kurdish people.

The First Iraqi Republic lasted four-and-one-half years, from July 14, 1958, until February 8, 1963. During the entire period, leadership of the government was vested in General Abdul Karim Qassim, who was prime minister and commander in chief of the armed forces.

General Qassim believed in and wanted a democratic form of government, but he did not feel that the government should be organized under political party lines. Toward the end of 1962, he promised to introduce permanent constitutional law on the basis of the people's parliamentary democracy. A committee had been formed within the Department of Justice to draft a constitution, but Qassim was overthrown before his promise had materialized. The year 1962 marked the final decline and imminent dissolution of the First Iraqi Republic. The principles of the Revolution were being suffocated in a gloomy, complex atmosphere of insoluble internal problems and complicated foreign confrontations.

There was no possible base of understanding between the various political parties and the government to join in a mutual unified front for the sake of the stability and progress of the country. The divisions among the political forces of the government on one side and the political parties on the other became sharper and graver. The Arab Nationalist parties of Iraq, backed by President Nasser's attacks on the government, waved the banner of the opposition. Nasser was anxious to eliminate the rival challenge to his established leadership of the Arab World, so the Iraqi opposi-

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tion suited his purposes well.

On the other hand, the Kurdish problem had become a mortal challenge to the Republic. The armed resistance set up by the ill-informed Kurdish tribesmen brought almost all progress in the country to a standstill, and caused tensions and divisions which the government was unable to effectively resolve. Most of the Iraqi Army was engaged from the instigation of the insurrection in 1961, until the fall of the Republic, in trying to subdue this revolt, and a great portion of the annual national budget was consumed in this fruitless military operation in an impossible mountainous region against a determined, warlike people, who, misguided as they may have been, their stagnated tribal leadership still felt they were defending their country against invaders.

The isolation of the army for two years from home and permanent camps created acute restlessness among the soldiers and junior officers. They began to question the validity



**Mr. Idris Mulla Mustafa Al-Barazani to the right
to his left is Abdul-Rahman and Sami**

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of this war and wonder why they were fighting part of the Iraqi people when it was possible to solve the problems by peaceful means. the high-ranking officers, on the other hand, wanted to crush the revolt by military force, and did not hold for negotiations with the rebellion leaders. General Qassim took the part of the higher officers, so the war continued.

As time passed, the Kurdish revolt, which started as a minor affair involving only a few tribes, widened into a critical, national, political issue, especially after the opposition established close contacts with Barzani. The war against a segment of the people weakened the credibility of the principles of the Revolution and motivated a wave of discontent among the Iraqi people in general. The procedures and actions of the Special High Military Tribunal, under the presidency of Colonel Fadil Al-Mahdawi, created unease and alienated a considerable part of the population and many political groups. the tribunal was heavily criticized for drifting from its proper function of application of the law toward political ends such as propagandizing against President Nasser. It lowered the respect for a judicial institution to engage in such controversy, instead of concerning itself strictly with the law. The communists and other representatives of the progressive younger generation, who rested their hopes in the continuity of the Republic by backing the revolutionary regime, were whipsawed by contradictions in policy, as when Qassim attacked the communists following the Kirkuk incident. The government then took a hard line toward the Communist Party and their sympathizers. The security forces, military intelligence, district governors, and other administrative officials in other departments began to hunt down the communists and leftist elements and jail them. General Qassim's 1959 speech was used as the pretext for this, but actually it was caused by the influence of members of the secret opposition who wanted to foment dissent and division within the parties which supported the government. The situation grew so murky and confused that the officials had a hard time differentiating between friendly elements and the true opposition, causing further loss of confidence in the government. The impression was

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widespread that Qassim had lost control of the situation and could not cope with the problems besetting the country, and perhaps had lost his nerve.

Iraq had isolated herself from the rest of the Arab World because of the Kuwaiti issue. Radio Cairo poured fuel on the flames by denouncing Qassim in scurrilous terms as a traitor to the Arab cause, further intensifying Arab Nationalist opposition and encouraging a coup d'état. The relations between Iraq and the West deteriorated markedly following Iraq's nationalization of the land previously under concession to the oil companies. Toward the end, Qassim even began acting suspiciously to the major supporters of the Revolution, the Socialist Bloc. In January, 1963, Qassim sensed that there was a coup in the making. Disturbances had flared up at high schools and at Baghdad University, and students began acting violently toward the administrators, crippling the educational process. The minister of education tried, with some success, to prevent the police and the army from entering school buildings and interfering with educational procedures and arresting students and teachers.

On the morning of Friday, February 8, 1963, several fighter planes from the Iraqi Air Force base at Habbaniya flew over the Ministry of Defense and started bombing the building. It was now perfectly clear that an overthrow of the government was under way. The Baath Party had mobilized its members, and with the cooperation of elements in the army and members of other pan-Arab Nationalist group, succeeded in overturning General Qassim's government. Qassim was at home, but he rushed to the Ministry of Defense to organize resistance to the attacking units. He was captured there along with Colonel Al-Mahdawi, the president of the Special High Military Tribunal, and General Taha sheikh Ahmed, the director of planning at the Ministry of Defense. They were taken to the television station, which was the temporary headquarters of the attacking forces, where a summary trial was given them. They were condemned and within a few minutes executed. General Abdul Karim Jidda fought bravely to the end at the

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ministry of defense where he was killed along with Colonel Wasfi Tahir. All the rest of the cabinet ministers, loyal army officers, political figures in the government, and prominent administrators affiliated with the First Republic were arrested and jailed, but later released after serving their time. Mr. Ismail, Arif was released after serving some six months in military jail. General Abdul Salam Arif was proclaimed president of Iraq, and General Ahmed Hassan Al-Bakr became prime minister. The cabinet was composed mainly of Baath Party members, with the participation of a few Arab Nationalist, Independence, and Kurdish members. This coalition lasted eight months, when General Arif, with the help of army officers and dissident members of the Baath Party, led a coup against that party, which was dominating the political scene. He dissolved the cabinet and jailed the majority of leading Baath members on October 18, 1963. Arif established a one-man rule until he was killed in a helicopter accident while visiting southern Iraq in 1966. At this time I was employed by the African-Iraqi



MAR TOMA DARMO ARRIVING BAGHDAD
ON the 7th OF SEPTEMBER 1968

On the Left is Rev. Isaac Enwiya, and on right are Malik Jajji
and Malik Youseph Malik Khoshaba.

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Trading Co. as a store keeper, and got married on the 16/6/1966, and was actively involved with the Assyrian Political Parties.

General Abdul Rahman Arif, Abdul Salam's brother, was installed as president of Iraq in 1966 by the help of officers posted to the Presidential Palace.

The Arif brothers succeeded in erasing what was left of the popular image of the July 1958 Revolution. In the last days of their regimes, neo-monarchist elements began reappearing on the political stage, but before they could consolidate power, the Baath Party succeeded in overthrowing the Arif government on July 17, 1968. This marked a revival of the spirit of 1958 and saved the Revolution from oblivion --- as merely an event in Iraq's past.

Since 1963, following Abdul Salam Arif's coup d'etat against the Baath Party rule, the Baath leaders have had the intention of seizing the political power by overthrowing the Arif's regime. The Party approached the key army officers, which Arif's regime heavily depended upon, and convinced them to join the party in overthrowing the second Arif regime. They succeeded in gaining the support of Director of Military Intelligence, Colonel Abdul Razzak Al-Nayif and Commander of the Republican Guard, Colonel Ibrahim Abdul Rahman al-Dawood.

Early in the morning of July 17, 1968, young selected Baathist members wearing military uniforms, led by Baathist officers, entered the Republican Palace upon the instructions issued by Commander of the Republican Guard, Colonel Ibrahim Al-Dawood, enabling the attackers to mount the tanks of the presidential tank regiment. The president awakened and surrendered to the attacking forces immediately without any opposition. A coalition government was formed from the Baath Party members, the independent politicians, and from the officers group of Nayif-Dawood Alliance. This cooperation between the Party leadership and the Nayif-Dawood group went through sharp criticism from the majority of the Party members.

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On July 30, 1968, another “white” revolution was staged by the Party members to purge the Revolution from the Nayif-Dawood alliance. Mr. Saddam Hussain, who had led the last revolution as well as mastering the July 17, 1968 one too, emerged as the new strongman in the party hierarchy and in Iraq. A Revolutionary Command Council was intrusted with supreme political authority, General Ahmed Hassan Al-Bakr became the president and the chairman of the R.C.C., and Mr. Saddam Hussain became the deputy chairman of the R.C.C. the new revolutionar government decided to wipe out all opposition, solve the Kurdish problem, enhance a wide range reform policy, and consolidate the independence of the country.

A manifesto concerning the settlement of the chronic **Kurdish problem was proclaimed on March 11, 1970.** A progressive National Front has been established between the Baath Party, in authority, the Communist Party, various Kurdish parties, and other political groups in 1972. In spite of the promises of self-rule which were embodied in the manifesto of March 11, 1970, the Kurds, under the tribal leadership of Mullah Mustafa Al-Barzani, refused to abide by the principles of the manifesto, fearing that Barzani’s role as a leader of the Kurds would diminish. Barzani and the Kurdish Irregulars engaged in a bloody guerilla war against the government troops on June 13, 1975.

CHAPTER 20

The Assyrian Role in the

Kurdish Question

In 1970 when the Baath Party was the only Party in power and ruled Iraq without any partners in power, They used a temporary political strategy and its aim was to stay in power alone for a long time, to reveal and discover the actual active and effective opposition powers to their regime in the Iraqi field, to bring them in the political process, firstly by convincing and participating in the political activities, to be his allied powers, and afterwards to unite them in a framework of the "United Interest" and oppose the Imperialistic power which danger the country, and to remove its opposing elements, or deal with the remainders and eliminate them, if they can not deviate and neutralize them. In fact to achieve this strategy, they issued a proclamation of the 11 March 1970 and later the Autonomy law for the Kurds in the Kurdish Region, but this Kurdish Rule did not last long and the Kurds with the leadership of Mulla Mustafa Al-Barazi revolt and uprising against the Baath Regime. The war continued many years with too many soldiers killed or deserted from the service, or captured by the Kurds.

The Russian was the only supplier of the weapons and amunitions for the Baath Regime, and because they were fighting against their own people, the Russian stopped supplying them with the ammunitions and weapons. The Baath Regime could not fight the Kurds alone any longer, so they approached the Assyrian leaders to use them against the Kurds as they are a good war machine and mountain warriors with the experience of the previous Assyrian Levy. The position of the Assyrians with this strategy was not clear, so it was necessary before preparing resolutions and laws that have been passed toward their affair, first to discover the importance of the Assyrians for the Baath Party in the context of this strategy. It was known that the Assyrian at that time did not form at all any separate political power in Iraq, and they don't have any direct importance in this strategy, but they had an indirect importance through the larger and effective main powers

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opposition to the Iraqi Baath Regime at that time specifically the Iraqi communist Party and the Kurdish Democratic Party, because of their ideology, calling to support the rights of the Nations and minorities, specially those suppressed, and not to discriminate between the Nations & Religious, whereas many Assyrians and Chaldeans were members or supporters to the Communist Party, even few were at the Leadership positions, merely to mention, the establishers, such as Peter Basil and Yousif Salman (Fahd), (Chaldeans), Mr. Theodoros, Mr. Benjamin, and Mr. Toma from Barbari Bala District (Assyrians), and also the same with the Kurdish Democratic Party, because of the joint interest and destiny, neighborhood and geographical intervention of the two Nations.

The Assyrians and the Kurds in the North of Iraq, because of the close, warm, and friendly connection between the two nations specially between the Barazani Family. The Great Kurdish Leader Mulla Mustafa Al-Barazani and some of the Assyrian Tribal Leaders. Many of the Assyrians in the North either have been members of the Kurdish Democratic Party or supporters, and few promoted to the leading positions in the party and in the Kurdish movement, and they sacrificed their life and became martyrs, such as Francis Al-Hariri, Hormiz Malik Jicko and others. In 1964 Mar Shimoun changed the old Calendar (Julian Calendar) of the Ancient Church of the East to the new Calendar (Gregory Calendar), as a first step towards Catholicism. The majority of the Assyrians of Iraq were against this change and they continued to use the Old Calendar under Rev. Isaac Enwiya of Daura Baghdad. I was actively involved in maintaining our old practise and I was the accountant for our group. We were holding our masses and prayes in Daura Church, and later we hired a small house in Tell Mohammed (Bus Depot) No. 3, next to the Police Station, for over a year we used this house as a church and our priest was Rev. Khoshaba. After one year we managed to buy a bigger house opposit the University of Tecnology in Tell Mohamed not very far from the first one. On the 7th September 1968 Mar Toma Darmo Metropolitan of India arrived Baghdad. The people

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who followed the old Calendar accepted Mar Toma Darmo as the head of the church. All this was done with the help of Malik Yousif Malik Khoshaba and the Iraqi Government wellcomed his Holiness as the head of the Ancient Church of the East too.

For the sake of history I would like to mentioned this, on one very hot summer day, after work at the African Iraqi Trading Co. as a Store Keeper, I came to see and meet his Holiness, Mar Toma Darmo at his new residency, I did not see him in the building, I asked Rev. Aweekam the young priest, where is the Archbishop, he told me, he is on the roof, it was so hot inside of the building that he could not stay indoors and he had to go on the roof, where there is some fresh air.

I went on the roof together with Rev. Aweekam, and we saw the Archbishop Toma Darmo sitting on one of the Garden's Chairs on the roof hiding from the sun under a shadow, we stood near him and I realised how much he was suffering from the heat, specially with his age, I remember he said to Rev. Aweekam, sin and transgression be on your neck if you consecrate yourself mor than a priest for this nation, they dont deserve more than a priest. In India the churchs are more organised and better administered, and every morning at five o'clock I use to take a chariot with a driver and two attendant to go from church to church to inspect, more than sixteen churches to attend, and to see if they are ready for the morning services, look here I am burning with heat and not a single Air cooler provided in this building. When I heard this, I came down and asked Mr. Khoshab Al-Mattawi to come with me, and we went to a supplier of air-cooler whom I knew in Bab-Al-Sharqi (Eastern Gate) in Baghdad, and bought two Air Coolers with my own money and took them to the Patriarch residency, we install one on the first floor where the Patriarch use to sleep, and the second one on the Ground floor in the sitting room where the reception was.

The Iraqi government made a declaration in September 1968 recognising Mar Toma Darmo as the head of the Ancient Church of the East. All the Churches including Mar Zaiya

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Cathedral were handed over to Mar Toma Darmo in Sept. 1968 itself. Although it is said to be a split based on the tribal rivalries among the Assyrians the majority of the Assyrians practiced the old Calender.

From all this, the Iraqi Government had their own policy to use the Assyrians against the Kurds and they thought that Malik Yousif can establish and form an Assyrian Force to attack the Kurds in the North and suppress their movement, and I saw one day that Malik Yousif was asking some prominent Assyrians to ask the people for enrolment for this force and he had two body guards with him all the time which he did not have one before. Mr. Khoshaba Al-Mattawi was one of his body guards and another.

On 13 September, 1968 Mar Toma Darmo consecrated Rev. K.A.Paul as Bishop Mar Poulouse. On 22 Sept. 1968 Archeacon Shliemon Gewargis a young clergyman 20 years of age, was consecrated Bishop and Metropolitan on the same day. He was given the name of Mar Addai. He was previously ordained priest on 15 Sept, and archeacon on 21 Sept. in Baghdad. Mar Addai was from Ashitha clan one of the largest tribe of Tyari. There was a feeling that Tyari tribe did not have bishops. As the patriarch Mar Shimon was from Kochanes, and Mar Yosip was from Nochiya, and Mar Sargis Episcopa was from Jelu, the people of Tyari were feeling that they were neglected by the hierachy.

Actually two other deacons were chosen to be bishops at that time. They are the present Metropolitan Mar Narsai Toma of Kirkuk and Mar Toma Gewarges of Nineveh. Both were deacons and 30 years old. But votes for the post of the Metropolitan of Baghdad fell on Mar Addai. The other two deacons were ordained priests. On October 11, 1968 Mar Toma Darmo was consecrated patriarch. The two Metropolitans Mar Addai of Baghdad and Mar Aprem from India conducted his consecration at the Mar Zaya Cathederal in Baghdad to Patriarch. Malik Yousif Khoshaba was the leader of the Tyari tribe. The Tyari tribe has two major divisions. The upper Tyari and the lower Tyar. Malik Yacob Ismaeil,

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was the Malik of the Upper Tyari. He always supported Mar Shimon. Malik Khoshaba was the Malik (Chief) of the Lower Tyari. He was opposed to Mar Shimoun family, therefore when Malik Yoseph Khoshaba took initiative to overthrow Mar Eshai Shimoun in 1968 and install Mar Toma Darmo as patriarch of the Church of the East, some people interpreted it as a revenge of Malik Yoseph Khoshaba against Mar Shimoun's family. He also said to be a Presbyterian. It is true some members of our church had deserted our church as a protest against the hereditary patriarchate of the Mar Shimoun's family. Tyari people could not tolerate their clergy being prevented from becoming bishops while the smaller tribe of Kochanes could claim the patriarchal throne for themselves for about 500 years.

Whether such an action was justifiable or not will depend upon the future of the Church of the East. The purpose of mentioning some facts and figures are for preserving them from posterity to know about what had happened, how and when. Mar Toma Darmo started to re-organise his church in the right orders. He had communicated with clergy in Syria and America. He had raised the Rev. Sheba Brikha of Syria to the rank of archdeacon on 13 Sept. in Baghdad.

Mar Toma Darmo died at St. Raphael's Hospital, Baghdad where he had undergone a successful prostate gland operation. His death was on 7th Sept. 1969, the first anniversary of his triumphant entry to Baghdad. After the death of Mar Toma Darmo, Mar Narsi Toma and Mar Toma Gewaris were consecrated Bishops and Metropolitans in December 1969. Mar Addai Metropolitan of Baghdad acted as the head of the church of the East. He was elected as the patriarch in February 1970 and consecrated in Feb. 1972.

One day while I was sitting in the reception room of the Patriarchate with Mar Adai the Patriarch and many of our followers, Priest, deacons and workers, suddenly Malik Yousif Malik Khoshaba entered the reception with such a rush looked like

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somebody was chasing him, and a letter in his hand shaking and shouting to Mar Adai. Look, Look the Kurds have thrown this letter over my fence to me in the garden, read it, read it, he was repeating his words and scared, When we took the letter, that was thrown over the fence to Malik Yousiph Khoshaba and read it, mentioned to Malik Yousif that, if you go ahead with enrolling and establishing an Assyrian force to attack the Kurdish movement, we will kill you and all your family, this time is a letter but next time will be a bomb. He told Mar Adai to move to the North of Iraq and stay there until he tells him to return, certainly next day Mar Adai was sent to the North and Malik Yousif himself went to Mosul, North of Iraq too. and he told us that if anybody ask whereabout was he, to tell them that he has gone to Mosul Directorate to move his father's grave, because it was under the Mosul Dam project and he have to move it somewhere else. and will be staying at least six months, all this was to proof to the Kurds that he will not go ahead with his plan complying with the Iraqi Government's policy to establish an Assyrian Force to use it against the Kurds in the North.

Mar Adai stayed in the North in Sharafiya, one of the Ashuti villages, at least for four months when he started sending us letters that he can not stay in the North, because the Kurds are asking him to become member of the Kuurdish Democratic Party and involve in the Kurdish movement together with his people against the Iraqi Regime. and Mar Adai did not give them any answers but was always asking us to bring him back to Baghdad, many letters was sent by him to us, but Malik Yousif was telling him not to go to Baghdad and ordering him to stay in the North to proof to the Kurds that he was not against them. But one day an Assyrian Officer called Enwiya and his brother Benyamin decided that they will go to the North and bring Mar Adai back to Baghdad, and truly they went to Sharafiya North of Iraq, and next day they were back together with Mar Adai. We were pleased, but at the same time we were worried about the split of the Church.

When Malik Yousif heard of Mar Adai's return to

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Baghdad, he joined the two Bishops Mar Toma and Mar Narsi and split the church into two groups. He and the two bishops in one group and Mar Addai and many priest in the other group. When the Iraqi Government found out that they can not use Malik Yousif to raise the Assyrian Force, and according to these esteems, the Assyrians at that time became very important element to the Baath Party, therefore they were implied within their strategy to contain the two major parties, the Communist and the Kurdish Democratic, to abbase and diminish their publicities and influence among the people through budging what ever could be budged of the Assyrian sympathiser with them and to draw them from their side to them, to be used against the Kurdish movement, which was a serious threat to the Baath Party which they wanted to impose its strategy over the whole of Iraq, specially the North of it. the Baath Party realised right from the beginning that the Geographical and Demographical Interlock between the two nations, the Assyrians and the Kurds, which was mentioned earlier, had some negative flanks created by the minor disputed events about, lands and villages ownership, belonged to the Assyrians and have been usurped and possessed by some Kurdish tribes, furthermore, the historical bloody struggle between the two nations in the past, in additon to that, the knowledge and experience of the nature of the area by the Assyrians, and being strong warriors in the mountain region and have been engaged many times in wars with the kurds in previous years. All these have been important factors to establish the nature of the Assyrian-Kurdish relation, and the Baath Party put it into his consideraton to exploit it in such a way that he can use the Assyrians in his struggle against the Kurdish movement, whether by political means, military, or by forming an Assyrian force or a Battalion to attack the Kurdish movement. To achieve this objective and aim, namely to draw the Assyrian approval and sympathy from the two parties mentioned above and to secure their friendship and trust toward them within their strategy, therefore the Baath Party issued several resolutions and decrees concerning the Assyrian rights in Iraq such as establishing a Central Committee for "Assyrian Nestorian Sect" which gave the Assyrian the right to elect their

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own representative to conduct their religious affairs, and what concern their personel, family counselling and Church admininstration which nobody approached the committee in question at the time of so said election, except those affiliated, or members of the Baath Party and ready to cooperate with them against the Assyrian interest. Thereupon a decree was issued to invite his Holiness the late Mar Eshai Shimoun, Patriarch of the Eastern Church to visit Iraq, and his Iraqi Naturalization to be returned to him which was stripped off him and he was deported outside Iraq during the Assyrian movement in 1933, being the Assyrian leader, can be used in the political game to attack the Kurds. When he visited Iraq on the 24/4/1970, that is nearly one month or so from the time declaring the resolution 11 March, he was officially well-commed by a large number of the public in Baghdad, and at the head of the reception, in Baghdad Air Port was the Deputy Minister of Inerior, plus representatives of the officials, and people organisations and all the leaders of the denomenations, and churches in Iraq including representatives of the Pope of Vatican in Baghdad, he was wellcomed like a State Leader, to inspect the Military guards of honour, and was escorted by a procession of Motorbyces on his way from the air Port to Baghdad, with the Radio, Television and Newspapers coverage of the event.

Furthermore, a numerous number of Assyrian people from different sects Chaldeans, Syrians, and the Assyrian Church of the East, and many more, and the procession was estimated, about 150 thousands, and also many anthems and National songs were sang to him, as well as many enthusiastic poems were read too, stimulating the National feelings, sympathy and compassion in such a way to be seen and strove with wonder and astonishment to see him as an Assyrian leader. The Baath party objective from all this affair was to put him in an affective situations so that his words and say will have a final and conclusive role to involve the Assyrians toward achieving their political aims and objectives, and after staying in Baghdad at the Green Palace as an Iraqi government guest, he started meeting with the Iraqi top officials in the Governmet and the Baath Party, Ministers, Deputy Ministers,

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including the President of the Republic Ahmed Hassan Al-Baker at that time, and also he visited all the cities where the Assyrian were living and he was welcomed officially and publicly, warmly and generously, with compassion.

In compliance with the Patriarch's demands, the government had fulfilled to him and to his Church followers few of Churches and religious demands, the most important one was the transfer, the ownership of the Churches to his followers which the government had previously given it to the followers of the Ancient Church of the East. The Nestorian Denomination "Assyrians" when they have refused to obey and comply with the Patriarch demand to undertake the new Gregorian Calender instead of the old Julian one, which was practiced and observed by the Ancient Church of the East for many centuries past, therefore the Church was split into two denominations, followers of the Old Calender headed by Mar Toma and the followers of the New Calender headed by Mar Eshai Shimoun. In addition to this, the other reason which was more important in the struggle and dispute between the two factions, and the government interveaned, which goes back to the days of the Assyrian Movement in 1933, and the the Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimoun, which the Assyrian movement had been attached to him and by his leadership and between Malik Khoshaba, the chief of (Bnai Mata) tribe, which belongs to the "Lower Tyari" one of the largest Assyrian tribes, and he was pro-Iraqi government and cooperative with her in a large scale against the Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimoun, his family and his followers and he was against the Assyrian movement. He remained and his folowers always pro-Iraqi Government which has been succeeded on the power, and for that he was awarded and compensated by accepting his son Malik Yousif and later his grand son Paul at the Military College and were graduated with a Militery rank. they served the Iraqi Army for many years, At the mid of sixties when the dispute occurred because of the calender, the son of Malik Khoshaba, Malik Yousif became prominent, after he retired from the Military Services, at the beginning he led the party against Mar Eshai Shimoun, though he was a member of the Protestant sect and not the Nestorian Denomination "Assyrian" and he

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remained cooperative with the Iraqi Government and close to it until 1970, when the Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimoun visited Iraq and the Iraqi Government started approaching and sympathizing with him and with his followers on the expense of the other domination, which became partially marginalized and ignored by the government, specially after they have become without churches except a small house here or there, to practice their religious rituals and rites, no nay their Patriarch was subjected to harrasment and on one occasion he was put in jail, attempting to creat any kind of confusion and disturbance between his followers.

In addition to this objective which the Patriarch Mar Shimoun has achieved by his visiting Iraq, he accomplished personally a great moral fulfilment, to return, respect to his religious personality and patriotism among the Assyrian and Christian together. by the revocation of the Government's law of his deportation out of Iraq, and the abrogation of the Iraqi citizenship and later was returned to him with honour, which was a very important matter to him specially, he was well known to be proud and esteemed whom he thought has been disgraced by the Iraqi government in 1933, when he was arrested and confined at the Y.M.C.A and then deported out of the country, and he was a religious man, and the head of the Assyrian Church well known in history, and belongs to a family that succeeded by inheretance, by consecutive holders of the Patriarchal chair for a period more than five generations, and indeed this aim has been achieved officially, at the same time on the 30/4/1970 a decree was issued by the President numbered 414 settled the return of the Iraqi Citizenship to the Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimoun and canceled all the previous resolutions and proceedings which was taken against him and pardon him from all the legal claims regarding this matter, and next day, means on the 1st May 1970 another resolution was issued by the President deciding on appointing the Patriarch Mar Shimoun, the Higher Chief of the Assyrian Nation in Iraq. In return, the ruling Baath Party enabled in achieving some of the tangible results by his tactic. In doing so, The Assyrians started to join the Baath Party or to cooperate and sympathize with him, inasmuch as the

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matter reached later an attempt to establish an “Assyrian Baath Party” by some Assyrian pro-Baath Party and Iraqi regime, and to dedicate some of the Assyrian abroad, by their organisations and publications from their Radio, News Papers and magazine for the Iraqi regime services and perform to promote the “Rights and Generosity” which has been rewarded to the Assyrians, in such a degree that the Assyrian Universal Alliance was selected, because it was the only main Assyrian Organization in refuge abroad seeking the Assyrian rights in Iraq- to ask the president Ahmad Hassan Al-Baker personally in 1972, and his picture was displayed on the first page, the cover of their magazine known as, The Assyrian Star, later changed to Neg’ha but the prudent, intelligence and the understanding of his Holiness the Patriarch of how to deal with the previous Iraqi Government, the Baath Party did not accomplish their purpose totally from him, so he, the Patriarch refused to involve himself as he was a church Patron, in political matters, that the Iraqi government’s aim was to achieve its planned strategy toward the Assyrian. The Baath Regime tried to get rid of Mar Shimoun and the A.U.A. delegates by poisoning them, so they have commissioned an Assyrian girl to do the job, but she refused and somehow she informed Mar Shimoun and the A.U.A. delegates about the plot, After staying a period of 28 days in Iraq, they returned back to United States of America on the 22.5.1970 and from their Mar Shimoun refused the second invitation made to him by the Iraqi Government to visit Iraq, mentioning in his refusal that “he can not give his nation some void promises”, and he hinted to the Iraqi Government that the right person to do their job is Malik Yaco Malik Ismail whom he was living in Canada at that time with his family. The Assyrian girl involved, to poison Mar Shimoun was arrested and disappeared ever since.

After the failure attempts of the Baath Party with the Patriarch Mar Shumoun because of their strategy mentioned earlier, they started to look for another Assyrian Leader, a layman one, and not a religious one, so that he can not refuse, making excuses being man of the Church with a garment, and must have political experience among the Assyrians, and also must be in a

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special position among the Assyrians and be able to execute whatever aims and objective he likes. Actually they found the right man and was Malik Yako Malik Ismail as he was recommended by Mar Shimoun, and (Malik means Chief). He was the chief of the upper tiyari tribes, one of the well known tribes of their firm and courageous warrior type. He was one of the leaders of the Assyrian movement in 1933, and was in a very close relation and supporter of Mar Shimoun until the last days of his life. He and his followers also left Iraq during the Assyrian movement in 1933 to Syria, escaping the Iraqi Government's execution too, and became deported, according to the law, and his Iraqi Naturalization abrogated, but in the eyes of the Assyrians people he was one of their heroes, though he was deported outside Iraq and he settled in Canada until February 1973 when the Iraqi Government invited him officially to visit Iraq. The purpose was to prepare an environment and proceedings for Malik Yako's visit to Iraq. The Iraqi Government

in 1972 issued many resolutions and laws concerning the Assyrian rights in Iraq, and specified in such a way that meets the demands, continually asked by Malik Yako and his followers, specially the Assyrian Universal Alliance, which have been asking the previous and the present Government. Truly those resolutions met with their request. In April 1972 the Revolutionary Command Council announced a resolution (Decree) to grant "The Syriac Spoken" such as Assyrians, Chaldeans and Syriac the Cultural, Educational and Administrative rights followed by the establishment of many Cultural, Art and Literatures Clubs, and also an assembly for Syriac Language at the Iraqi Scientific Accademy, also a Syriac Radio and published a magazines in two languages, Arabic and Syriac, called "Qala Suryaya" which means "Syriac Voice" and also on the 25/12/1972 an important resolution was declared regarding the re-drawing of the administrative borders for all the Iraqi Governorates to creat adminis-

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trative units, in such a form to bring and gather the minorities in it, so that they will be able to practice and enjoy their rights, also on the 20/12/1972 they issued a special resolution to exempt and pardon all those Assyrians involved and connected with the Assyrian movement in 1933, from their committed crimes and to return their Iraqi Naturalization for those refugees outside Iraq which was abrogated before. This was the resolution concerned the two Assyrian Leaders Mar Shimoun and Malik Yako. Actually, after the announcement of these legislative laws, and resolutions, the environment was ready for Malik Yako to visit Iraq. So in February 1973, he arrived Baghdad as a guest to the Iraqi Government together with a delegate from Assyrian Universal Alliance (A.U.A) and his Iraqi Naturalization was returned to him and was appointed officially by a government decree "Chief of the Assyrian people" in Iraq, means by this decree he was replacing the Patriarch Mar Shimoun in his position, and this decree which agitated the wonders of those concerning the Assyrian affairs, because of the easiness of its issue, which indicates the Iraqi Government strong wishes to pass its policy toward the Assyrians, and in Baghdad all the opportunities to meet the Government officials and parties was made simple to Malik Yako to meet and discuss the Assyrian affairs. He attended many meetings with them to discuss the implementing of the Laws and regulations concerning the Assyrians affairs. A special committee was established regarding this matter and under his own leadership. Many representatives from Chaldean and Syriac Churches participated, and also a project was submitted to impliment the Revolutionary Command Council decree regarding creating the Administrative Units, fixing and defining its borders in the Assyrian region north of Iraq which some of it was interlocked with the areas comprised by the March 11 Manifesto concerning the Kurdistan Region Autonomy.

During the discussion with the officials, concerning the Assyrian Affairs in Iraq, Malik Yako was and been always known by his political

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experience, wisdom and persistent practices, with the previous Iraqi Government, and his ideological commitment toward his people, which he was in their eyes, one of their heroes. He rejected any kind of oppression and suppression on them for many years, he felt of the governments delay to comply with the Assyrian request which Malik Yako himself have been asking for so long, he was afraid that he will be succeeded to a limit where the government will be able to achieve its policy by these resolution and laws, without providing any rights to the Assyrians or implementing his requests.

The information which was available among the Assyrians at that time, and was discussed among the Assyrian patriots, showed and proved that Malik Yako realised that the bait and the flavours that the Iraqi Government was offering in such a form of Rights and distinctive marks, for the Assyrians, was only to pull, and involve him and the Assyrian people in a war against the Kurdish movement, and the Assyrian have no interest whatsoever in it, specially he was known by his good and warm

friendship with the great leader of the Kurds, Mullah Mustafa Al-Barazi, whom he have visited him in North of Iraq through Iran, before visiting Baghdad few years ago. He was reiterated and hesitant to deal with the Government and submissive to it, until reaching a point of convincing to lead him to refuse the government request of forming Assyrian forces, pleading for the protection of the Region designated and allocated to the Assyrian, and also to protect their rights given to them in the North of Iraqi from the Kurdish attack. The official concerning the Assyrian Affairs found him too difficult and stubborn to overcome and to pass their policy through him, specially when some members of the A.U.A and their followers and supporters whom already were cooperating with the Baath Party showed their readiness to facilitate the Government assignment more than what can be done by Malik Yako Malik Isamil.

All the time Malik Yako was asking for the rights of the Assyrian people without any concession and submission to the Iraqi Government so when

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he died in Baghdad on the 24th of January 1974, suspicion arouse between few of the officials that the government have arranged his poisoning by some type of Mercury elements which will slowly poison him and get rid of him. This was meant for Mar Shimoun but Mar Simun was cleaver enough to escape with his life, but he did not know that after one year of Malik Yako's death, in 1975, Malik Yako's son Mr. David will be at his doorsteps with a gun to put three bullets in his head in close range and killed him, in such a vagueness situation and proved to be for the interest of the Iraqi regime to get rid of him, so they have killed two birds with one stone. Malik Khoshaba died natural death. So the Assyrians Nation left with no real leader. With the Baath Regim's hope on the Assyrians Forces to use them against the Kurds diminished and collapsed and their leaders, dead or escaped, they have looked for another alternative. On June 13, 1975 with a clever endeavor, the Iraqi government signed an agreement with the late Shah of Iran in which he agreed to cease helping the Kurdis Revolt from his neigh-

boring country, the agreement was called Algeris and Saddam Hussain as Deputy Prime Minister signed the Agreement. In return the Shah realised some of his dreams by gaining concessions from Iraq at certain border areas and the Shatt Alarab waterway. The Kurdish Revolt collapsed immediately and all its leaders fled the country to neighboring Iran, including Barzani himself. Eventually Barzani took refuge in the U.S.A. where he died in 1979. Saddam Hussein did not stop their being humiliated by Shah of Iran, he took the initiative to remove Ahmad Hassan Al-Baker from Power and took the leadership himself and got rid of all his opponents.

Most of the Assyrians and Chaldeans started escaping from Iraqi and seeking refuge all over the world mainly in the U.S.A , Australia, Newzealand, Europe, Turkey, Arab Countries such as Jordon, Syria, and Egypt.

Wherever they settled they started establishing Societies, Clubs, Churces, and Political Parties to maintain their Traditional, Cultural and

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- Religious way of life. They have published many magazines, newspaper and established Radios, Televisions, and Satellites. The voice of the Assyrians started getting louder and louder by writing to the United Nations, to the leaders of most of greater countries such as U. S. A. and Great Britain. Their voice was on Air broadcasting their illtreatment by the Baath Regime. Cooperating with the Iraqi opposition parties. Whether Kurdish or Communist Parties. The Assyrians did not stop until Saddam Hussein was toppled and the Iraq was liberated from the Baath Regime, but, is it truly liberated or muddled and nobody can put it right.
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BRITISH POLICY
IN
ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT

Collected and Compiled
by
Isaac E. Asia

April 2009

Author's Note

I want to express my special gratitude for the help I received in collecting and compiling this book:

To my wife, Jenie, who has stood firmly behind me giving me patience, reassurance and continual support to complete this book. Without her encouragement I would not have been able to finish it.

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THE INSURRECTION IN MESOPOTAMIA, by Sir Aylmer L. Haldane.

IRAQ, A STUDY IN POLITICAL DEVELOPMMENT, by Philip Willard Ireland, F.R.G.S., M.A. Ph.D.

THE CRADLE OF MANKIND, by The Rev. W.A. Wigram, D.D.,

MOSUL AND ITS MINORITIES by Harry Charles Luke.

ROAD THROUGH KURDISTAN by A.M. Hamilton.

THE ASSYRIAN NATIONAL PETITION, by Kumball Press.

A CLASH OF LOYALTIES, by Wilson Sir Arnold Talbot.

IRAQ COMMAND REPORT by Command of the Air Council. C. D. Bullock,
 SPECIAL REPORT PROGRESS OF IRAQ Issued by the Colonial Office,
 THE TRAGEDY OF THE ASSYRIANS, by Lt.-Col R.S. Stafford D.S.O.
 THE ASSYRIAN TRAGEDY by Annemasse. Feb. 1934,
 THE BAQUBA REFUGEE CAMP. by Brigadier - General H.H. Austin, And hundreds of the documents from British
 Public Record Office.

FORWARD

Many of my friends have been asking me over the years to provide them with books on Assyrian history because they knew that I have collected many reference sources and 'top-secret' documents over the last 34 years. I promised them that one day they would be able to access a comprehensive study of Assyrian Modern and Old history and now I have fulfilled that promise. However the publication of this work has not been without difficulties and there have been many unavoidable delays through problems with my health and inevitably those of finance. Now I am pleased that all my efforts have ensured that this book will be available for study by all my Assyrian brothers as well as world wide.

Unavoidably most of the book is compiled from other writers' works but they are rare and genuine documents. Foreigners have always written Assyrian history often with a bias towards their sponsors ambitions and interest. I believe that this history is at last the truth even though sometimes telling it an reading it can be painful but to be true to God and his people the truth must be revealed.

Assyrians and Chaldeans have been constantly suppressed and oppressed by Turks, Persians, Arabs and Kurds, now is their chance to live in peace and harmony and all together prosper from being a united federal country. People should be able to work together and support each other, to defend their interests and their home, to survive and flourish. This had always been the aim of the Assyrian movements but unfortunately the British denied them this and instead used the Assyrians against the Kurds and Arabs to create a vicious hate between all three nations to further their own exploitation of the country's natural resources.

Now is the time for reconciliation and peace.

Isaac E. Asia
 21st March 2009

WHY THE BRITISH FORGOT THE ASSYRIAN AND THE CHALDEAN CHRISTIANS.

This book is unique and comprehensive in that it covers the modern history of the Assyrians and the Chaldeans. Ever since the Assyrian and the Chaldean empire was carved and divided between Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon the Assyrians have ceaselessly struggled for independence. In Iraq and Syria today their identity is still denied and their history bears witness to constant repression, bloody massacres and deportations. The Assyrian and Chaldean cause remains one of the most pressing problems because Iraq is their homeland.

Flight Lieutenant KM Pennington AFC, who had made a remarkable pioneer flight to Urmia where he was welcomed with enthusiasm, established communication with the leaders of the Assyrians. However the promised assistance, a convoy carrying arms and money, dispatched in July arrived too late. This resulted in the slaughter and massacre of thousands of Assyrians, old men, women and children, the Kurds and Turks spared no one. Several thousand, mostly women and children, also perished from disease and exhaustion during their long 1000 mile trek to Mesopotamia.

The Settlement Scheme was another bluff by the British but the truth was how to put the Assyrian in the British Snares that will never be free but slaves until they fulfill their objective in Iraq.

The British used the Assyrians for their own ends and to fulfil their plans for the benefit of the United Kingdom and left the fate of the Assyrian people in the hands of the fanatical Arabs.

**SAY THE TRUTH AND FEAR NOT,
AS GOD IS THE TRUTH.**

Isaac E. Asia Was born in 1937 on a British base in Hinedi, near Baghdad Iraq. His father was a lance corporal serving in the Assyrian Levey assisting the British Army.

When he was three days old they moved to a new British base in Habbaniya.

Isaac studied English, Arabic and Assyrian history and culture, and completed his secondary studies in 1960 - 61. He moved to Baghdad in 1962 where he completed his higher education at the American Institute of Languages.

As an Assyrian he was actively involved in Assyrian politics, organising meetings and circulating flyers about the cultural and administrative rights of the Assyrian nation. Due to the political nature of these activities, he was arrested in 1972, with other Assyrian members and mentally and physically tortured. When he was released he was further threatened because of his political beliefs.

In 1973 he came to the United Kingdom where he completed his studies in electronics. He continued to be interested in Assyrians, Babylonians and Chaldeans modern and old history collecting a library of books about it. He was one of the original member of the political wing of the Assyrian Universal Alliance and was actively involved in promoting the Assyrian cause to the British government and the media.

Isaac was one of the founders of the Assyrian Educational Trust and the Assyrian Refugees and Relief fund of the UK and twice held the post of cultural officer at the Assyrian Society of the United Kingdom. He owned Panorama Print Ltd. For fourteen years during which time he helped many of the Iraqi opposition political parties as well as individuals with their printing matter. He is very proud of the way he also helped many Assyrians to settle in the UK.

At the age of 65, in 2004 he retired and started writing his first book on the Assyrians, Babylonians and the Chaldean History, He is different. He's always different, and wishes to appear original and the young writer to quote Isaac.

His books will become an encyclopaedia Assyria worldwide for all the readers.

