

**The spoils of war and priorities for peace, 1918-1926: A study of British  
policy towards the Greeks, Armenians and Kurds in Anatolia and  
Southern Kurdistan.**



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## Abstract

This thesis analyses the considerations of British officials when arriving at positions on granting sovereignty/ authority to: (i) the Greeks in Smyrna, southwest Anatolia; (ii) the Armenians within north-eastern Anatolia; (iii) the Kurds within south-eastern Anatolia; (iv) and the Kurds within the Mosul vilayet (Southern Kurdistan/ present-day northern Iraq), from 1918-1926. The concepts of “Orientalism” and “civilisation” provide the theoretical basis and are applied to the sources analysed. The thesis argues that Britain’s actions were influenced by the prevailing stereotypes of each people and “civilisation”, but ultimately rooted in political and economic interest. The Paris Peace Conference presented an opportunity to strengthen Britain’s position in the eastern Mediterranean and in the Middle East through support for the design of friendly states and re-drawing the political map of the territory within the former Ottoman empire. Each case was part of the process of erecting a new imperial structure in the Middle East. This new structure was to be based upon the organising principle of ethnic nationalism, as promoted by the Allied powers, including Britain. The British role in each case can be described as: the leading supporter of Greek goals in Anatolia; predominantly a supportive observer of Armenian goals in Anatolia, leaving the French to play the role of lead supporter; a cautiously supportive observer of the Anatolian Kurds with little authority outside of its dictation of the Treaty of Sèvres; and a cautious detractor of the autonomy of southern Kurds, having occupied the Mosul vilayet in 1918 and held full colonial authority over it, experimenting with autonomy but ultimately deciding on its abandonment. By 1926, the goals of the Greeks, Armenians, and Kurds in Anatolia and Southern Kurdistan had not been achieved, and all had withered away in British Middle Eastern policy.

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## 1 Introduction and research question

During the supremacy of a European imperial system and towards the conclusion of the First World War, the idea of “self-determination” for colonised peoples became a topic of Allied discourse. In good faith or otherwise, US President Woodrow Wilson’s “Fourteen Points for World Peace” speech on 8<sup>th</sup> January 1918 had shown crucial reception to this idea, with his twelfth point stating:

*‘the Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development’.*<sup>1</sup>

The Great War on the Eastern Front was concluded by the signing of the armistice of Mudros in 30<sup>th</sup> October 1918. This solely involved the parties of Great Britain and the Ottoman empire. At the Paris Peace Conference, the “Big Four” Entente powers (Great Britain, France, the United States and Italy), victorious in their war efforts against the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman empire, and Bulgaria), were now confronted with the question of the right to sovereignty and independence of numerous delegations of peoples under colonial administration.

However, political and economic considerations, as well as archetypal perceptions of peoples and “civilisations” permeated the British and Allied approaches. Thus, there appeared radically different British perceptions of granting authority, sovereignty and independence to different ethnic groups within the Ottoman empire. This thesis seeks to analyse the considerations of British officials when arriving at positions on granting sovereignty/ authority to: (i) the Greeks in Smyrna, southwest Anatolia; (ii) Armenians within north-eastern Anatolia; (iii) Kurds within south-eastern Anatolia; (iv) and Kurds within the Mosul vilayet (Southern Kurdistan/ present-day northern Iraq), considering a diverse range of factors. It will examine the British position in respect of Greece, including the military expansion into Izmir (referred to henceforth as Smyrna, its name prior to 1930), its position

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<sup>1</sup> [Woodrow Wilson] David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, I.B. Tauris (London, 2010), p. 115.

on the proposed creation of an autonomous and independent Armenian Republic in north-eastern Anatolia and an autonomous Kurdistan within south-eastern Anatolia.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it will discuss the transformation of the British empire's policy in respect of the governance of the vilayet (an Ottoman district/ province) of Mosul (encompassing the Sanjaks of Mosul, Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah), between 1918-26. It must be stated, however, that none of the areas studied in this thesis are ethnically homogenous, although Justin McCarthy's study of the 1912-13 Ottoman censuses demonstrate Muslims constituted the 'overwhelming' majority in every vilayet (province) of Anatolia.<sup>3</sup>

This thesis intends to answer the research question: *Which factors best explain the British discourse and decisions on the autonomy and authority of the Greeks, Armenians and Kurds in Anatolia and "Southern Kurdistan", 1918-1926?* This constitutes a unique study which builds upon existing literature. The choice of these three cases is related to the making and aftermath of the content of the two peace treaties with the Ottoman empire. Firstly, the Treaty of Sèvres (the final treaty to emerge from the Paris Peace Conference), signed 10<sup>th</sup> August 1920 but never ratified, and secondly the Treaty of Lausanne, in session from 20<sup>th</sup> November 1922, with negotiations interrupted between 4<sup>th</sup> February and 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1923, and finally signed 21<sup>st</sup> July 1923.<sup>4</sup> In order to provide a satisfactory answer to this research question, this work will analyse both the significance of political and economic factors as well as conceptions of a hierarchy of peoples and "civilisations" and the limitations of these factors upon British policymakers. The significance of the term discourse is to identify the variety of views within British Governmental departments and offices, in addition to the malleability of these positions in the context of a changing political landscape in Anatolia. It also assumes there was a lack of unity between Allied policies on the negotiations of the Sèvres and Lausanne Treaties, as is asserted by Alan Everard Montgomery.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Articles 62-64 of the Treaty of Sèvres: in Lawrence Martin, Ed., *The Treaties of Peace 1919-1923 vol. II*, Carnegie Endowment for international peace (New York, 1924) pp. 807-808 (see appendix 6 and figure 1).

<sup>3</sup> Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880-1925*, University of Texas Press (Austin, 1989), p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Fiona Venn, 'Oleaginous Diplomacy: Oil, Anglo-American Relations and the Lausanne Conference, 1922-23', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 20:1 (2009), p. 414.

<sup>5</sup> Alan Montgomery, 'The making of the Treaty of Sèvres of 10 August 1920', *The Historical Journal*, 15:4 (1972), p. 775.



These selected cases represent the most significant historical decisions concerning the Ottoman empire's First World War peace settlement that are still resonant in contemporary Middle Eastern politics. Since the 1923 Greco-Turkish population exchange after the Treaty of Lausanne, the Greek and Armenian population of Smyrna has been insignificant, and Turkey has retained territorial integrity over Anatolia. This study traces the origins of the post-First World War borders of Iraq, Turkey, and Syria which, in addition to the Kurdish portion of Iran, remain central to the question of Kurdish sovereignty. Great Power interests in Middle Eastern oil has, since this period, increased exponentially. The Kurdish issue has risen to prominence in current affairs, with ongoing conflict between the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK) and the Turkish state; Turkey's recent operation "olive branch" launched in the Syrian city of Afrin against various Kurdish forces; the exhaustive attempts to capture Mosul due to its significant oil deposits by multiple forces; a referendum for Kurdish independence in the semi-autonomous Southern Kurdistan in Iraq (2017); and the repeated reference by prominent Turkish politicians such as Süleyman Demirel and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to the renewal of Sèvres conditions placed upon Turkey by the West, widely characterised as "Sèvres syndrome".<sup>6</sup> These current political realities are rooted in the decisions made during the period in question in which Britain played a pivotal role. In each selected case, the goals of the ethnic group were not achieved, however, the ethnic groups possess unique relationships with British officials and each case was handled differently by the British.

The terms of these treaties shaped the borders of the modern Middle East and provide great insight into the involvement of colonial Powers in the region. The evidence considered will contribute to a picture of changing British visions for Anatolia, Thrace and Kurdistan, as well as perceptions of the various ethnic groups involved. The British role in each case can be described as: in the instance of the Greek operation in Anatolia, Britain was the leading supporter; in the case of Anatolian Armenia, Britain was predominantly a supportive observer leaving the French to play the role of lead supporter; in the case of Anatolian Kurds, Britain was a cautiously supportive observer with little authority outside of its dictation of the Treaty of Sèvres; finally, in the case of the southern Kurds (in the territory which would become

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<sup>6</sup> Fatem Göçek, *The Transformation of Turkey Redefining State and Society from the Ottoman Empire to the Modern Era*, I.B. Tauris (London, 2011), p. 98.

northern Iraq) Britain was a cautious detractor having occupied the Mosul vilayet in 1918 and held full colonial authority over it, experimenting with autonomy but ultimately deciding on its abandonment.

This thesis will expound the following arguments. Britain's actions were influenced by the prevailing stereotypes of each people and "civilisation", but ultimately rooted in political and economic interest. Although, the realities of security and peace restricted British capabilities in forcibly attaining these results. Conceptions of "civilisation" adulterated western officials' perceptions of different peoples' right to and capacity for independence and self-governance. However, this factor cannot fully explain the British vision for the Middle East nor can it substitute factors such as geopolitical and economic interests. Achieving the initial British political vision for the post-First World War Middle East involved a concerted effort to weaken the Turkish state and ensure its separation from its former imperial possessions (in similar fashion to Austria), with the concurrent strengthening of Greece and expansion of its borders into Asia Minor. Secondary and subordinate to this goal was British support for the creation of an autonomous Armenia and Kurdistan within Anatolia, for Kurdistan, under the condition that its leadership sufficiently lobbied the newly established "League of Nations" (LN) for independence.<sup>7</sup> This was part of an attempt to carve out a political landscape which could be penetrated for the benefit of British interest. These experimental attempts at border drawing are reminiscent of those in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1880s and arguably constitute an attempt to promote the continuity of European imperialism "on the cheap" as the majority of European states had suffered heavy losses of life, property, finance and power as a direct result of the Great War. The knowledge of Ottoman/ Young Turk atrocities against the Armenians, Assyrians and Pontic Greeks (in the Black Sea region of northern Anatolia) during the War, reinforced by longstanding western "Orientalist" thought and justified the "punishment of the Turk" and anti-Ottoman/ Muslim sentiment.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See Articles 62-64 of the Treaty of Sèvres: in Lawrence Martin, Ed., *The Treaties of Peace 1919-1923*, pp. 807-808 (see appendix 6).

<sup>8</sup> Alan Montgomery, 'The Making of the Treaty of Sèvres', p. 777.

This thesis will outline a definition of the concept of “Orientalism” and the western conception of “civilisation”, review the relevant literature and detail the research methodology utilised. It will chronicle the details of the relevant historical context and analyse discourse to determine the most important forces and influences upon British policy in order to develop a view of the differences and similarities between the British policies towards each of the selected ethnic groups. The chapters will explore each case individually, then the assessment of each case will be compared in the conclusion.

Figure 1 (below) Map of the Treaty of Sèvres (1920) in: Lawrence Martin, Ed., *The Treaties of Peace 1919-1923 vol. II, Carnegie Endowment for international peace* (New York, 1924), p. 789.

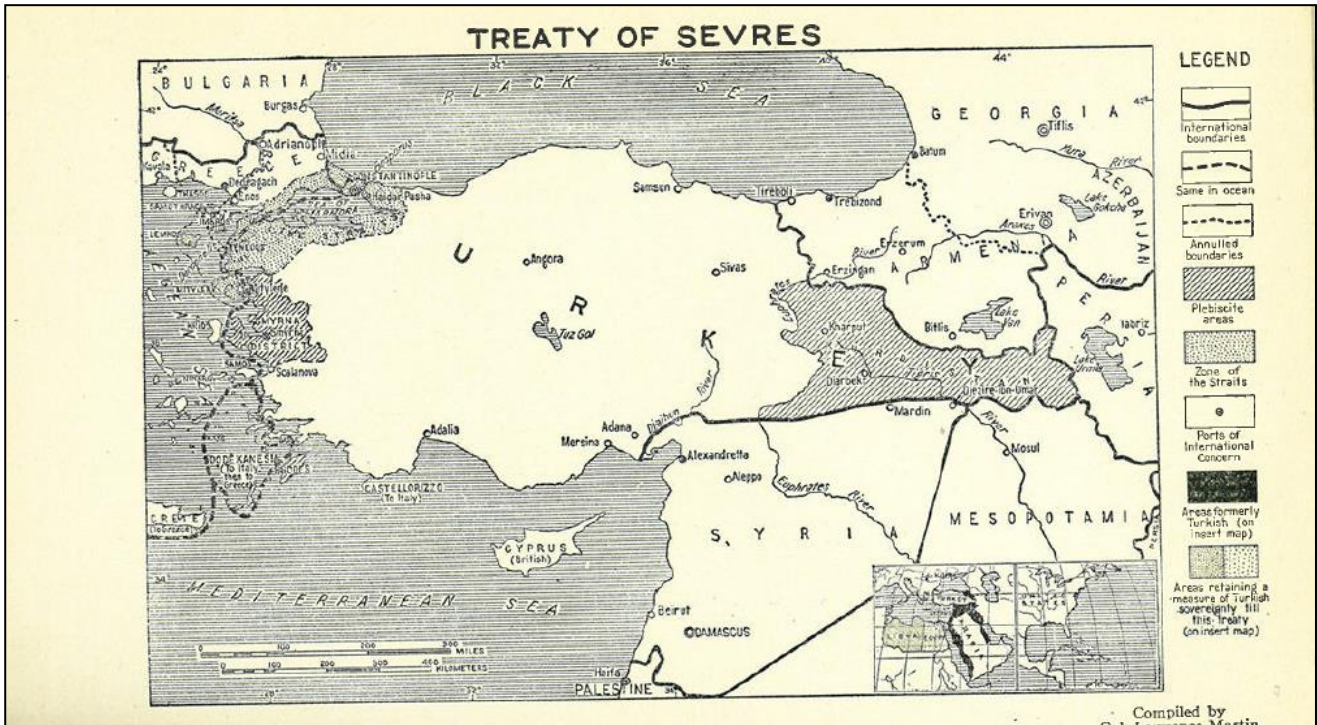


Figure 2 (above) Map of the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) in: Lawrence Martin, Ed., *The Treaties of Peace 1919-1923 vol. II, Carnegie Endowment for international peace* (New York, 1924), p. 989.

## 1.1 Western conceptions of civilisation in the “Near East”

The subject of research, the post-war task of delivering representation to stateless peoples in the Middle East, required the Allies to consider the ethnic, religious, territorial and cultural characteristics which shaped the region. This can also be linked to longstanding European conceptions of the “Near East”, as well as conceptions of distinctive “civilisations”. Ordering the world into states necessitated ‘the compartmentalisation of the planet into discrete civilisations... against the backdrop of imperialism, racial doctrine, and the agenda of pan-nationalist movements’.<sup>9</sup> The treatment of ethnicity and biases towards peoples due to archetypal perceptions of their inherited characteristics (mainly, in this case, with relation to simplified views of the history of the people within the region). This is integral to the concept of Orientalism, which Edward Said argues ‘expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles.’<sup>10</sup> The components listed, according to Said’s concept, contributed towards a reductive western image of negative stereotypes of the Near East, frequently serviced as evidence for western innate superiority.<sup>11</sup> This thesis will critically examine the interplay of this concept of ordered civilisation and Orientalism in British discourse and decision-making on the Greek, Armenian, and Kurdish ethnicities calls for self-determination in Anatolia and Southern Kurdistan.

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<sup>9</sup> Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?*, Princeton University Press (Princeton, 2016), p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Random House, Inc. (New York, 1979), p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

## 1.2 Literature review

The most prominent survey of the early negotiations is offered by Paul Helmreich's "From Paris To Sèvres", published in 1974. The British perspective on Mudros to Lausanne is handled by Alan Everard Montgomery's doctoral thesis "Allied policies from the Armistice of Mudros, 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1918, to the Treaty of Lausanne, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 1923". Additional articles by Montgomery and Theo Karvounarakis address both the Treaties of Sèvres and Lausanne, with Montgomery assessing the context for the signature of the Sèvres Treaty and the early historiographical literature available despite Montgomery contentiously declaring the Treaty 'stillborn'.<sup>12</sup> Karvounarakis summarises the British, Turkish and Greek positions on both treaties. Various other scholars handle the post-war settlements more concisely such as Erik Goldstein's "First World War Peace Settlements". Kaye Pasley's PhD thesis "The Collapse of British Imperialism in Turkey 1919 to 1923" convincingly argues the British attempted to shape the Turkish peace terms in hopes of establishing imperial control over the region.

Scholarship specifically concerning the British position on the Greeks, 1918-1923, is enriched by several leading contributions. Eleftheria Dalezious's doctoral thesis "Britain and the Greek-Turkish war and settlement of 1919-1923" focuses upon the Greek occupation of Smyrna and its aftermath. Erik Goldstein's article "Great Britain and Greater Greece 1917-1920", as well as Karl Larew's "Great Britain and the Greco-Turkish War, 1912-22" illuminate British policy to the Greeks, the former explaining the role of the Foreign Office's Political Intelligence Department (P.I.D.) and the latter examining British Foreign Office documents from 1921-22 released fifty years later. The literature focusing upon the Armenians is heavily centred upon the events which occurred during the war to the Armenian community within the Ottoman empire. Helpful contributions used in this study are a recently published edited collection "A Question of Genocide Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire", which includes articles from dozens of scholars, providing various perspectives on the history relating to Armenia, and leading historian Ronald Grigor Suny's "A History of the Armenian

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<sup>12</sup> Alan Montgomery, 'The Making of the Treaty of Sèvres', p. 775.

Genocide". In respect of British policy towards the Armenians, a useful article is Nazaryan Gevorg's "British policy towards the Armenian question" between 1918 and 1919.

On the Kurdish question David McDowall's "A Modern History of the Kurds" proves the most thorough contribution. British policy towards the Kurds, however, benefits most from the work of Robert Olson. Olson's book "The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880-1925" analyses the British policy towards the Kurds, and developments in Kurdish nationalism more generally, reviewing a range of documents from the UK Air Ministry, Colonial Office, and Foreign Office previously unused in any scholarly analysis. Although some of the claims of his Kurdish sources, such as those of Serif Ferat, are unverifiable.<sup>13</sup> Olson's article "The Second Time Around" analyses the British policy on the Kurds during 1921-22, including British consideration for support of a 'Kurdish rebellion in Anatolia', relying upon the UK Public Record Office and Colonial Office documents written by Lieutenant-Colonel A. Rawlinson.<sup>14</sup> Olson's work does, however, sometimes approach Kurdish nationalism with insufficient appreciation of the complicated and divided Kurdish collective identity. Elsa Tulin Sen's PhD thesis provides a comprehensive overview of Anatolian Kurds' national aspirations, although without strict focus upon the period in question. In relation to the Mosul vilayet, Saad Eskander's article "Britain's Policy in Southern Kurdistan: The Formation and the Termination of the First Kurdish Government, 1918-1919" provides a detailed exploration of early British policy towards Southern Kurdish autonomy, and his article "Southern Kurdistan under Britain's Mesopotamian Mandate: From Separation to Incorporation, 1920-23" follows the subsequent developments within this catchment. Kerim Yildiz's "The Kurds in Iraq" contributes a helpful background to the political dilemma facing Kurds in Iraq today.

The most significant study on Kurdish identity is Martin van Bruinessen's PhD dissertation "Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan", exploring the tribal, religious and nationalist political aspects of Kurdish identity and society. In contrast to Olson's work, this tends towards a view of a weak Kurdish nationalism in the

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<sup>13</sup> [Serif Ferat] Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism*, p. 27.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Olson, 'The Second Time Around' *Die Welt Des Islam*, 27:1 (1987), p. 91.

early twentieth century.<sup>15</sup> Cuma Çiçek's recent work "The Kurds of Turkey: National, Religious and Economic Identities" challenges the assumption of a homogenous Kurdish commune in Anatolia, exploring the cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity amongst the ethnic group. Malcolm Yapp's "The making of the modern near east" provides a useful outline of the Kurdish and Armenian questions. Regarding British oil policy in the Middle East, two leading works include Helmut Mejcher's "Imperial quest for oil: Iraq 1910-1928" and William Stivers' "Supremacy and oil: Iraq, Turkey, and the Anglo-American world order, 1918-1930". Various doctoral theses illuminate this subject, and, specifically, Fiona Venn's recent article "Oleaginous Diplomacy: Oil, Anglo-American Relations and the Lausanne Conference, 1922-23" highlights some of the issues directly addressed in chapter 5.2. In the English language, literature on the Turkish perspective is relatively limited, although Andrew Mango's "Atatürk" and Erik-Jan Zürcher's "A modern history of Turkey" provide attention to the Turkish nationalist view of Sèvres and the Turkish perspective during the Lausanne negotiations. However, this is beyond the scope of this study. Susan Pedersen's work "The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire" provides some insights into the emerging international dynamic of a fragile imperial system requiring rejuvenation through the guise of a "new" system.

Of the available primary literature, or insider histories, one of the most significant documents includes former British Prime Minister David Lloyd George's "The Truth About the Peace Treaties". In which Lloyd George ardently defends his positions, especially in relation to Greece. This included selective archival material purporting Allied unity on the positions for which he had drawn criticism, whilst the official archives remained closed.<sup>16</sup> A more critical perspective is provided by Harold Nicolson, of the Foreign Office's P.I.D. and a member of the Foreign Office delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. In "Peacemaking" he includes his private diaries, detailing his official duties at Paris, and in "Curzon: The Last Phase" he addresses Lord Curzon's role as Foreign Minister, especially in the Lausanne negotiations, where Nicolson performed the role of adviser.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, Arnold Toynbee, of the P.I.D.,

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<sup>15</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, PhD Dissertation (1978) 'Agha, Shaikh and State: On the Social and Political Organization of Kurdistan', Utrecht University, p. 70.

<sup>16</sup> Alan Montgomery, 'The Making of the Treaty of Sèvres', p. 775.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans*, Geoffrey Bles (London, 1951), p. 177.



adviser on Turkish affairs, and at the Paris Peace Conference, released a work of history in 1922 entitled “The Western Question” concerning the contact of the Greek and Turkish “civilisations”. William Rupert Hay’s “Two Years in Kurdistan”, with assistance from British administrators in Mesopotamia and Southern Kurdistan Arnold Wilson, C. Rundle, F. de L. Kirk, Edward Noel and J. Miller, recounts his experiences working as a Political Officer in the Kurdish portion of present-day Iraq.<sup>18</sup> In addition, Cecil Edmonds’ “Kurds, Turks and Arabs” provides further views of a civil administrator in Iraq. The most significant official documents available are contained in the project “Documents on British Foreign Policy”, edited by various historians and civil servants provided by the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs such as Rohan Butler and Ernest Woodward. “Series I, vols. IV, VII and VIII” relate to the Allied conferences which shaped the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres. The “First Series Volume XVIII 1922-23” relate to the making of the Treaty of Lausanne, and “Documents on British Foreign Policy Series IA Volume I” pertain to the British policy on the Iraq-Turkish frontier. These collections predominantly include accounts of multilateral correspondences, relevant conferences and discussions between British and other Allied representatives. Additional primary material can be offered in the form of internal discussion between the Foreign Office, War Office, Colonial Office, and Admiralty in documents available as micro-films at the British Library in London. Large quantities of official British documents have also been digitised by the UK National Archives and are readily available for download. The treaties (Sèvres and Lausanne) are enclosed in Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence Martin’s “The Treaties of Peace 1919-1923 vol. II”. Various documents, such as the “League of Nations Frontier Between Turkey and Iraq Letter and Memorandum from the Turkish Government” illuminates the case Turkey provided on its claims to the Mosul vilayet.

The events in question are well studied, however, there remains significant room for contribution. The literature possesses a palpable paucity of academic debate on the interpretations of British policy and the character of the British role in shaping the post-First World War Middle East. On the British policy towards the Greeks it is frequently argued, and essentially unchallenged, in the literature that Britain used Greece as a ‘proxy’ to protect the

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<sup>18</sup> William Rupert Hay, *Two Years in Kurdistan Experiences of a Political Officer 1918-1920*, Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd (London, 1921), p. vii.

Suez Canal and the British empire in India, and become the 'predominant power' in the Aegean Sea.<sup>19</sup> Although there are numerous primary sources relating to the British policy on Armenia, the literature is much more focused on the policy of the United States. On the Kurdish question, the development of British policy is accentuated, however, scholars have failed to adequately illuminate the political divisions within Kurdistan and investigate whether Kurdish separatism was dominant. What is striking about the state of research is the lack of recent historiographical contributions and revisions, with significant portions of the secondary literature being published in the 1970s and 1980s. Robert Olson's work is the latest comprehensive review of British policy towards the Kurds and his book was published in 1989. While new work on the Kurdish question is being released, this primarily concerns Kurdish identity and Kurdish nationalism, rather than detailed explication of the British policy towards the Kurds at Sèvres, Lausanne and afterwards, since this historical content has been assumed to have been researched to its full potential. The historiography establishes the differences between the British approach to Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian and Greek respective claims to sovereignty and independence, however, historians have arguably failed to fully explore the impact of ethnic bias and the idea of "civilisation". Moreover, the role of religion, principally Christianity and Islam, is arguably sparsely emphasised as a factor, and comparative analyses regarding British policy towards each ethnic group has rarely been undertaken, in favour of isolated studies.

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<sup>19</sup> Erik Goldstein, 'Great Britain and Greater Greece 1917-1920', *The Historical Journal*, 32:2 (1989), p. 339.

### 1.3 Research design and methodology

This research constitutes qualitative historical research based upon an extensive survey of the primary and secondary literature available. The concepts of civilisation and Orientalism (reference 1.1) provide an approach to which primary sources may be critiqued. The primary sources investigated in this thesis include archival material available in the British Library, catalogued as a collection of papers relating to Curzon as Foreign Secretary, 1919-24, with surrogate copies of official documentation available for public use in the form of micro-films, observable with the use of internal British Library readers. Additionally, documents digitised by the National Archives, especially Cabinet Office documents, relating to British policy on the Greeks, Armenians and Kurds; the British documents on foreign policy 1919-1939 series, primarily civil servant's accounts of the relevant conferences compiled by teams of historians and civil servants; and a vast secondary literature, including numerous PhD dissertations, academic publications and supplementary journal articles and general texts. The material analysed will be treated critically. While official government documents will be handled, the potential for self-censorship, misinformation and propaganda will be considered. For instance, the analysis will consider historians' use of sources, estimates and consider the limitations of relevant primary accounts. The sources analysed are limited to those in English language, however, this does not heavily impede an analysis of British policy.

## 2 Background – British perspective on the late Ottoman empire and the emergence of a Turkish Republic

The Ottoman empire was the foremost power in the Middle East during the medieval and early modern era, prior to its defeat in the 1683 second siege of Vienna and the resultant 1699 Peace of Carlowitz. However, the empire was plagued by dwindling power, debilitating debt and, during its latter history, sustained through the protection of external powers.<sup>20</sup> The Empire's military weakness required protection against ambitious Ottoman vassals such as Mohamed Ali of Egypt who defeated the Ottoman Army in 1833 in Syria, only to be halted by Russian and Austrian intervention, and again in 1840, marching upon Anatolia until British, Austrian and Lebanese rebel forces repelled the Egyptian advance.<sup>21</sup> For these reasons, the Ottoman empire earned the label, the "sick man of Europe". The empire was also exploited by western privateers and constricted by a set of concessions to the European powers known as the Capitulations. The Capitulations granted 'extraterritorial concessions to foreigners in commercial, judicial and criminal affairs' as a result of 'protégé communities' and 'increased foreign control in trade and economy'.<sup>22</sup> The fragility of the Ottoman empire raised the prospect of potentially dangerous power vacuums opening up for Russia and Austria to exploit. This was first posed by Austrian Chancellor Klemens von Metternich at the 1822 Verona Conference. This Conference had invited the new Conservative establishment in post-Napoleonic Europe (the "Concert of Europe"), the Duke of Wellington representing Great Britain, to discuss a new "order" that it hoped to arrange. The eastern question concerned the instability of the Ottoman empire and the potential for Great Power conflict, especially between Austria and Russia in the Balkans, in attempts to fill these power vacuums left by the decaying Ottoman empire. This resulted in British and French protection throughout the nineteenth century as a buffer against 'Russian expansionism'.<sup>23</sup> This Anglo-Ottoman policy

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<sup>20</sup> Harry Luke, *The Old Turkey and the New From Byzantium to Ankara*, Geoffrey Bles Ltd (London, 1955), p. 22.

<sup>21</sup> Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre Humanitarian Interventions in The Ottoman Empire 1815-1914, The Emergence of a European Concept and International Practice*, Princeton University Press (Princeton, 2012), pp. 23-24.

<sup>22</sup> Nevzat Uyanık, PhD Dissertation (2012) 'Delegitimizing the Ottoman Imperial Order at the threshold of New Diplomacy (The Interplay of Anglo-American Policies on the Ottoman Armenians, 1914-1923)', Princeton University, pp. 2, 11.

<sup>23</sup> Erik-Jan Zürcher, *Turkey A Modern History Fourth Edition*, I.B. Tauris (London, 2017), p. 45.

was founded upon the decision made by British diplomats Henry Temple (Viscount Palmerston), and Viscount John Ponsonby in the 1830s in favour of 'the doctrine of the 'independence and integrity' of the Ottoman empire'.<sup>24</sup>

However, ethnicity and religion became features of increasing significance in the British official mind. British volunteers such as Lord Byron romanticised the cause of the Greek revolution of 1821, and the British Greek Committee of 1823 implored Government to assist their national liberation on the grounds of Europe owing a debt to 'Ancient Greek civilisation', 'Christian solidarity' and 'the expansion of British commercial transactions in the Mediterranean.'<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, British support for the sovereignty of the Ottoman empire was reinforced during the Crimean war, 1853-56. Prince Menshikov of the Russian empire threatened to occupy Moldova and Wallachia if the rights of Orthodox Christians were not protected, resulting in British and French forces allying with the Ottomans and defeating Russia. However, the arrangement in which Britain pledged to preserve Ottoman territorial integrity was heavily shaken when Ottoman forces suppressed Bulgarian nationalists in the "April uprising" of 1876. This event provoked widespread anti-Ottoman sentiment in Western Europe capitalised upon by anti-Muslim orators such as William Gladstone. Gladstone condemned the Conservative Party's continued support for what Gladstone viewed as an Islamic empire slaughtering Christians, protesting that "all the Turkish authorities should walk out of the place", referring to the entirety of the majority Christian Balkans.<sup>26</sup> This conflict escalated into the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878 when the Russian empire responded to the persecution of Christian minorities by invasion. The war was a resounding Russian victory and was concluded by the San Stefano Treaty of 1878, stripping the Ottoman empire almost wholly of its European territories.<sup>27</sup> However, in accordance with the contemporary guiding balance of power doctrine, especially in respect of Russia, these Ottoman losses were

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<sup>24</sup> Elie Kedourie, *England and the Middle East: The Destruction of the Ottoman Empire 1914-1921*, Mansell Publishing Ltd. (London, 1987), p. 10.

<sup>25</sup> Maria Chatzioannou, 'War, Crisis and Sovereign Loans: the Greek war of independence and British economic expansion in the 1820s', *The Historical Review*, 10:1 (2013), p. 36.

<sup>26</sup> [William Gladstone] David Steel, 'Three British Prime Ministers and the Survival of the Ottoman Empire, 1855-1902', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 50:1 (2014), p. 48.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 68-70.

mitigated by the Treaty of Berlin, negotiated by the Concert of Europe, returning considerable areas in the Balkans back to Ottoman authority, including the southern half of Bulgaria.<sup>28</sup> The “sick man of Europe” had retained a foothold in Europe, at least temporarily.

During this period, the Ottoman Empire was threatened by separatists from Kurdish religious leader Sheikh Ubaydallah, as well as Greek Cretan and Armenian nationalists in Anatolia. Despite Ottoman success in the suppression of each of these nationalist movements, Crete was gradually released from Ottoman control and willingly granted its desired unification with Greece. Prior to the commencement of the First World War, the Ottoman empire descended into conflict with unified Italy over Libya in 1911, constituting an additional Ottoman defeat. This episode exposed the Ottomans’ military vulnerability, paving the way for the Balkan wars of 1912-1913 which the Ottomans were not prepared for ‘militarily, politically or economically’.<sup>29</sup> During the first war, the Balkan coalition devastated the deteriorating empire, yet, in the second war the Ottomans managed to re-gain territories in eastern Thrace from Bulgaria through the 1913 Constantinople Treaty.

Nevertheless, the Ottoman empire, akin to its Austrian, Russian and Prussian counterparts, had been adapting to the circumstances of rising nationalist sentiment within its multi-ethnic dominions. Throughout the Ottoman empire diverse districts with multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural communities existed - in the words of Prime Minister David Lloyd George, a ‘medley of races’.<sup>30</sup> While the Ottoman state ruled over its dominions, throughout its duration in large parts of the empire, the state’s power was ‘slight’.<sup>31</sup> In the words of German secretary of state Arthur Zimmermann, the Sublime Porte (Ottoman central government) possessed “minimal influence” over “the more distant provinces”.<sup>32</sup> The Tanzimat reforms enacted between 1839-1876, encouraged under pressure from the Christian powers, progressively established a system of communal self-rule in which “millets” operated as separate religious courts with power over their respective religious communities.

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<sup>28</sup> Irfan Orga, Margarete Orga, *Ataturk*, Tombridge Printers Ltd (London, 1962), p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>30</sup> David Lloyd George, *The truth about the peace treaties volume II*, Victor Gallancz Ltd (London, 1938), p. 1002.

<sup>31</sup> Erik-Jan Zürcher, *Turkey A Modern History*, p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> [Arthur Zimmermann] Ronald Grigor Suny, *“They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else” A History of the Armenian Genocide*, Princeton University Press (Princeton, 2015), p. 333.

By 1900 there were 14 different Christian millets and a Jewish millet under the Grand Rabbi of Turkey.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, by 1863 a 'sub-national constitution' had been established by the Armenian community within the Ottoman empire and ratified by the Ottoman state 'to specify the rules of religious and political governance in the community'.<sup>34</sup> This did not institute total equality, though, as discrimination persisted against religious minorities in 'public employment, education, and taxation'.<sup>35</sup> Demographically, in 1900, the majority of the 30 million Ottoman residents were in the Balkans, and the majority of the territory under Ottoman rule was pre-industrial, where 'subsistence farming and cyclic pastoralism were the dominant economic occupations for peasants and nomads in the countryside'.<sup>36</sup>

The resilient Ottoman state, however, became increasingly estranged with Great Britain in the lead up to the Great War. In 1878 Britain took control of the Ottoman-ruled Cyprus and, in 1882, occupied Egypt.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, although commercial projects between the Ottomans and the British and French predominated, the German construction of the Anatolian and Berlin-Baghdad railways signalled friendly relations between the Germans and Turks. This was to become increasingly significant as, in 1906, an Anglo-French pact brought Britain into an alliance with the Russian empire, arousing much Ottoman suspicion.<sup>38</sup> The inclusion of Russia in the "Triple Entente" proved problematic for Ottoman and Committee for Union of Progress (CUP) statesmen. Once Minister of War Enver Pasha was confronted with the decision of which alliance to join, he declared that allying with Germany was the only way to 'save' them from becoming the "vassals of Russia".<sup>39</sup> Following the turbulent diplomatic crisis of July 1914, Ottoman statesmen delayed the decision of placing itself in an alliance. The Ottoman-German alliance was negotiated between August-October 1914, with

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<sup>33</sup> Harry Luke, *The Old Turkey and the New*, p. 95.

<sup>34</sup> Bahar Rumelili, and Fuat Keyman, 'Enacting multi-layered citizenship: Turkey's Armenians' struggle for justice and equality', *Citizenship Studies*, 20:1 (2016), p. 70.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Uğur Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950*, Oxford University Press (Oxford, 2011), pp. 8, 11.

<sup>37</sup> Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914 The Ottoman Empire and the First World War*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 2008), p. 37.

<sup>38</sup> Elie Kedourie, *England and the Middle East*, p. 29.

<sup>39</sup> [Enver Pasha] Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914*, p. 97.

Young Turk leaders hoping for a swift conclusive war in which the Empire could avoid pledging any troops.<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless, by 5<sup>th</sup> November 1914, all Allied countries had declared war on the Ottoman empire following its bombardment of Russia's Black Sea coast. Crucially, during the war, numerous conflicting clandestine agreements were made between the Allies regarding the future of the Ottoman territories in the event of Allied victory. In March 1915, the Constantinople agreement between Britain, France and Russia established that the latter 'would be given Constantinople [Istanbul] and the Straits.'<sup>41</sup> In April 1915 the "Treaty of London" persuaded Italy to defy their binding alliance with the Central Powers to support the Allies militarily, after being promised territorial gains in south-western Anatolia.<sup>42</sup> In order to counterbalance Russia's gains, France and Britain concluded the controversial Sykes-Picot agreement in March 1916, declaring zones of influence for the two powers within the Ottoman empire. This denoted an internationalised zone in Palestine, 'French annexation of coastal Syria with an extended zone of influence in the interior, and British annexation of lower Mesopotamia with a similar zone of influence' bordering the French zone.<sup>43</sup> To add further complication, the border of these zones cut through the territory of Southern Kurdistan, with a French Area (A) wedged as a buffer between the British Area (B) and Russia.<sup>44</sup> This agreement, however, was only intended to avoid conflict between the Entente powers by 'designating areas of likely military occupation'.<sup>45</sup> While Robert Johnson reduces the role of the agreement to 'contingency planning', considering its goal of counterbalancing the clandestine agreement for Russian annexation of Constantinople, this appears

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>41</sup> Erik Goldstein, *First World War Peace Settlements 1919-1925*, Longman (London, 2002), p. 58.

<sup>42</sup> Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire*, Oxford University Press (Oxford, 2015), p. 21.

<sup>43</sup> Paul Helmreich, *From Paris To Sèvres The Partition of the Ottoman Empire at the Peace Conference of 1919-1920*, Ohio State University Press (Columbus, 1974), p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Saad Eskander, 'Britain's Policy in Southern Kurdistan: The Formation and the Termination of the First Kurdish Government, 1918-1919', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 27:2 (2002), p. 140. (Also see Figure 6)

<sup>45</sup> Robert Johnson, 'The de Bunsen Committee and a revision of the 'conspiracy' of Sykes-Picot', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 54:4 (2018), p. 612.



unconvincing.<sup>46</sup> Mark Sykes was acting 'upon definite instructions received from the Foreign Office', and the Franco-British agreement can be interpreted as the original blueprint for British and French imperial designs for the Middle East, and was later used and modified by Allied leaders during the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>47</sup> The agreement contrasted sharply with earlier British suggestions enclosed in the McMahon-Hussein correspondence of October 1915 in which British representatives had informally endorsed the creation of an Arab state under Sharif Hussein of Mecca, in return for a Hashemite revolt against the Ottomans. This commitment was further undermined by the Balfour declaration of November 1917 in which the British cabinet communicated to Walter Rothschild, head of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain, their support for the creation of a "Jewish homeland" in Palestine. However, British policy was clearly uncertain as is palpable in the April 1915 De Bunsen committee on British policy in "Asiatic Turkey" following the war. This committee recommended that Britain should 'avoid long-term' occupation, investigate into how to deliver 'local autonomy' to the different ethnic groups with a satisfactory commercial arrangement 'to satisfy all belligerent parties'.<sup>48</sup> Through the duration of the war, British officials, especially T. E. Lawrence, firmly backed the idea of building up 'a new Islamic empire' under the Hashemite dynasty: 'Hussein in Mecca, his younger son Faisal in Damascus, and his older son Abdullah in Iraq.'<sup>49</sup>

Approaching the later stages of the war British officials began to reflect on its long-term aims in a significantly more organised manner. The Foreign Office established the P.I.D. to this aim. Furthermore, colonialists prepared for an expansive role in the Middle East. For example, on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1917, instructions from the War Cabinet were telegraphed to Baghdad and Delhi stating that "Basra... [is] to remain permanently under British Protectorate in everything but name. It will accordingly have no relations with foreign Powers... Baghdad

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> David Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, p. 1026.

Also see Rohan Butler, and John Bury, Eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939 First Series Volume VII 1920*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office (London, 1958), p. 103.

<sup>48</sup> Robert Johnson, 'The de Bunsen Committee and a revision of the 'conspiracy' of Sykes-Picot', p. 614.

<sup>49</sup> Benjamin Shwadran, *The Middle East, Oil and the Great Powers Third Edition*, Israel Universities Press (Jerusalem, 1973), p. 215.

to be administered behind the Arab façade as far as possible as an Arab province by indigenous agency and in accordance with existing laws and institutions.”<sup>50</sup>

The Great War in the East concluded with the signature of the armistice of Mudros on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1918 on board HMS Agamemnon. Britain was represented by Admiral Somerset Arthur Gough-Calthorpe and the Ottomans by Minister of Marine Affairs Rauf Bey.<sup>51</sup> In the aftermath of the war, there were ‘1,084,000 British and imperial troops’ temporarily stationed in the Ottoman Empire, most notably forming the Allied occupation of Constantinople.<sup>52</sup> British troops also occupied Syria, Mesopotamia, Southern Kurdistan, and British officers stationed in western Iran.<sup>53</sup> The British Government had founded the P.I.D. in March 1918 who were officially tasked with “collecting, sifting and coordinating all political intelligence” or, as Erik Goldstein argues, tasked with considering Britain’s long-term war aims, effectively becoming the ‘nucleus of the British negotiating team at the Paris peace conference.’<sup>54</sup> The Paris Peace Conference was convened by the Allied leaders to decide the terms for the defeated Central Powers. The Conference attracted momentous expectation from the various ‘colonised’ and ‘stateless’ delegations in attendance due to Woodrow Wilson’s supposed support for the ‘self-determination of all peoples’.<sup>55</sup> However, it was to take a further year until the terms of the Ottoman peace treaty were seriously considered by the Allied partnership, as it was treated as secondary in importance to the German and Austro-Hungarian treaties. Before the German and Austrian colonies and Ottoman territories were absorbed by other colonial powers, the LN Mandate System was engineered by the Allied leaders (President Jan Smuts of the Union of South Africa being the principal architect). The Mandates were tiered by a class system indicating the mandate’s proximity to self-determination. The phraseology of Article 22 of the Covenant of the LN on the Mandate System indicated the total authority of colonial powers until the colonial powers considered

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<sup>50</sup> [War Cabinet] Elie Kedourie, *England and the Middle East*, p. 176.

<sup>51</sup> Erik Goldstein, *The First World War Peace Settlements*, p. 57.

<sup>52</sup> Paul Helmreich, *From Paris to Sèvres*, p. 28.

<sup>53</sup> David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 118.

<sup>54</sup> Erik Goldstein, ‘Great Britain and Greater Greece’, p. 340.

<sup>55</sup> Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*, Oxford University Press (New York, 2007), p. 4.

the Mandate “ready” for independence, referring to “peoples not yet able to stand by themselves’ ...and that ‘tutelage should be exercised by [the colonial powers] as Mandatories on behalf of the League’”.<sup>56</sup>

The terms for Turkey were decided at a number of conferences with the input of various departments. The First Conference of London, 1920 discussed Turkey and the “eastern question”, along with other issues, making progress towards Allied unity on the settlement. At this conference British attitudes towards Turkey were vehemently antagonistic, with the intention of weakening Turkey’s power and drastically reducing its territory and inadvertently supporting the sovereignty of non-Turkish populations in Anatolia. On 26<sup>th</sup> February 1920, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George stated to the Allied leaders that ‘he proposed to say that one of the principles upon which the [Supreme] council had proceeded was to cut off from the Turkish Empire all regions inhabited by non-Turkish races: e.g., the Arabs, the Armenians, the Syrians, and the Kurds, as these latter were certainly not Turks.’<sup>57</sup> At the San Remo Conference in April 1920, the terms were finally approved, and in August 1920 the Treaty of Sèvres imposed upon Turkey a “victor’s peace”, dismembering its empire and dividing all of its territories in Arabia between Britain and France, placing the Turkish Straits under international commission, creating an autonomous Armenia in north west Anatolia, a semi-Autonomous Kurdistan with possibility for succession in south-west Anatolia as well as putting Smyrna in South-West Anatolia under Greek administration.<sup>58</sup> This followed Treaties imposed upon the other Central Powers, Germany, Austria and Bulgaria, whose territories were similarly reduced by the Allies, plunging German politics into debate over irredentism (especially relating to the Polish corridor, Danzig/ Gdansk, and the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia). Simultaneously, the Greeks had deployed troops to occupy Smyrna, as agreed by the Allied leaders, further authorising a ‘Greek advance to Panderma’ (present-day Bandırma in north-western Anatolia, en route to Istanbul) at the Conference of

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<sup>56</sup> [Covenant of the League of Nations] John Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760–2010*, Cambridge University Press (New York, 2012), p. 173.

<sup>57</sup> Rohan Butler, John Bury, Eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939 First Series Volume VII 1920*, pp. 257-258.

<sup>58</sup> See Articles 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, and 71 of the Treaty of Sèvres (1920) in: Lawrence Martin, *The Treaties of Peace*, pp. 810 (see appendix 6).

Hythe and approved at the First Conference of Boulogne in June 1920.<sup>59</sup> In response, the Italians, uninformed of this decision by Greeks to occupy the zone they had been promised in 1915 and for which their country had entered the war, occupied Antalya, on the Mediterranean coast of south-west Anatolia. The post-war settlement derived from the Paris Peace Conference was the final treaty to be affected. It was imposed on the Ottomans by the British and the French, with the French being the weaker of the two parties due to their previously uncompromising stance on Germany, and, besides Grand Vizier Damat Ferid Pasha, was signed by an irregular ensemble due to the Ottoman Government's refusal to sign.<sup>60</sup>

In order to understand the development of the post-war political situation in Turkey, a variety of actors and events must be considered. Prior to the war, the "Young Turks" or "Unionists" of the CUP had predominated in the Ottoman Parliament following the 1908 revolution against the autocratic Sultan Abdul Hamid II and consolidated total control of the Ottoman state in the coup d'état of January 1913. The Young Turk's "three Pashas" who had led the Ottoman war effort had hastily fled Turkey subsequent to the signature of the armistice of Mudros. Whilst a new cabinet had been formed, the "Unionists" retained control of 'Parliament, the army, the police force, the post and telegraph services' and, despite their best efforts, the new regime's purges could not practically replace the majority of these officials.<sup>61</sup> It was wartime initiatives which had laid the foundations for an 'armed resistance movement from Anatolia' amid fears of British and French penetration of the Dardanelles and a potential fall of Constantinople.<sup>62</sup> For example, the CUP established the "Karakol" (the guard), as well as regional 'societies for the defence of the national rights'.<sup>63</sup>

General Mustafa Kemal Pasha, later honoured by the title Atatürk, had been sent to eastern Asia Minor to 'restore order' in May 1919 as inspector-general of the Ninth Army.<sup>64</sup> By September 1919 the Sivas Congress, reproducing much of the work done in the

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<sup>59</sup> Rohan Butler, J. P. T. Bury, Eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939 First Series Volume VIII 1920*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office (London, 1958), p. iv.

<sup>60</sup> See appendix 2.

<sup>61</sup> Erik-Jan Zürcher, *Turkey A Modern History*, pp. 134-135.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>64</sup> Malcolm Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East 1792-1923*, Longman Group UK Ltd (Harlow, Essex, 1987), p. 309.

preparatory Erzurum Congress of July-August 1919, outlined a series of goals which came to be known as the “National Pact” and the Nationalist/ Kemalist movement.<sup>65</sup> The movement had signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ottoman Government in October 1919, entitled the Amasya protocol. However, this was short-lived. This Nationalist movement was to become the key force in Turkish politics during the interwar period, garnering nationwide support during the May 1919 Greek invasion of Smyrna and the signature of the August 1920 Treaty of Sèvres. The Turkish Nationalists had formed its government in Ankara as a response to the Allied decision to take the Ottoman Ministry of War, the Admiralty, and other departments under ‘Allied control, with the military effectively coming under British supervision’.<sup>66</sup> The Nationalist movement’s stubborn rejection of the terms laid out in the Sèvres Treaty of August 1920 led the British to consistently support the Sultan until the October 1922 armistice of Mudanya. This was over a year later than the French and Italian recognition of the Turkish Nationalists’ legitimacy, with the French even acquiring ‘economic concessions’ from Turkish Foreign Minister Yusuf Kemal Bey in the Franklin-Bouillon Agreement.<sup>67</sup> This was significant as it was after Greek forces had been defeated and had begun to retreat following the battle of the Sakaria river in August-September 1921, culminating in the Turkish capture of Smyrna a year later, marking a decisive Turkish victory. Henceforth, the Chanak crisis, the signature of the armistice of Mudanya, the Treaty of Lausanne and, finally, the settlement of the Turkish-Iraqi frontier transpired.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Erik Goldstein, ‘The British Official Mind and the Lausanne Conference, 1922-23’, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 14:2 (2003), p. 189.

<sup>67</sup> Benjamin Shwadrان, *The Middle East, Oil and the Great Powers*, p. 216.

### 3 The Greeks – the stubborn British faction and the “Megali” idea in Anatolia

In the aftermath of the Great War, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George cultivated a strong relationship with Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos and a sympathy for Greek ambitions in Anatolia. This was to be secured through Greek military occupation in May 1919 as ‘authorized’ by Britain, France and the United States, and undertaken under British naval protection.<sup>68</sup> In two meetings, first on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1919 between the Big Three, and the next day between Lloyd George and Venizelos, it was clear Britain had assumed leadership of the Smyrna operation. On the 6<sup>th</sup> May, Lloyd George stated to Wilson and Clemenceau “we should tell Mr Venizelos to send troops to Smyrna. We will instruct our admirals to let the Greeks land wherever there is a threat of trouble or massacre”.<sup>69</sup> Each of the Big Three confirmed no objections to the immediate action of this policy, and once Clemenceau asked “should we warn the Italians?” Lloyd George answered a resounding “No”.<sup>70</sup> The following day, Venizelos recorded a conversation with Lloyd George in his diary in which Lloyd George stated “President Wilson, M. Clemenceau and I decided today that you should occupy Smyrna.”<sup>71</sup> The August 1920 Treaty of Sèvres was to include the territory of Smyrna under Greek administration and, upon the majority vote of Smyrna’s local parliament, referral to the League Council and potential plebiscite, the ‘definite incorporation in the Kingdom of Greece of the city of Smyrna’.<sup>72</sup> The Treaty allocated to Greece both Eastern Thrace ‘up to a few miles from Constantinople’ and ‘a sizeable enclave around Smyrna’, which was ‘Asia

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<sup>68</sup> Ernest Woodward, and Rohan Butler, Eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939 First Series Volume IV 1919*, Her Majesty’s Stationery Office (London, 1952), p. 643.

<sup>69</sup> [David Lloyd George] Michael Llewellyn Smith, *Ionian Vision Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922*, Penguin Books (London, 1973), p. 79.

<sup>70</sup> [Georges Clemenceau and David Lloyd George] *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> [David Lloyd George] *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> See Article 83 of the Treaty of Sèvres, in Lawrence Martin, *The Treaties of Peace*, p. 813 (see appendix 6).

Minor's largest city and an important seaport on the Anatolian coast of the Aegean'.<sup>73</sup> Action by the British was partly undertaken out of fear of Italian backlash, as they had been promised the city in a wartime agreement.

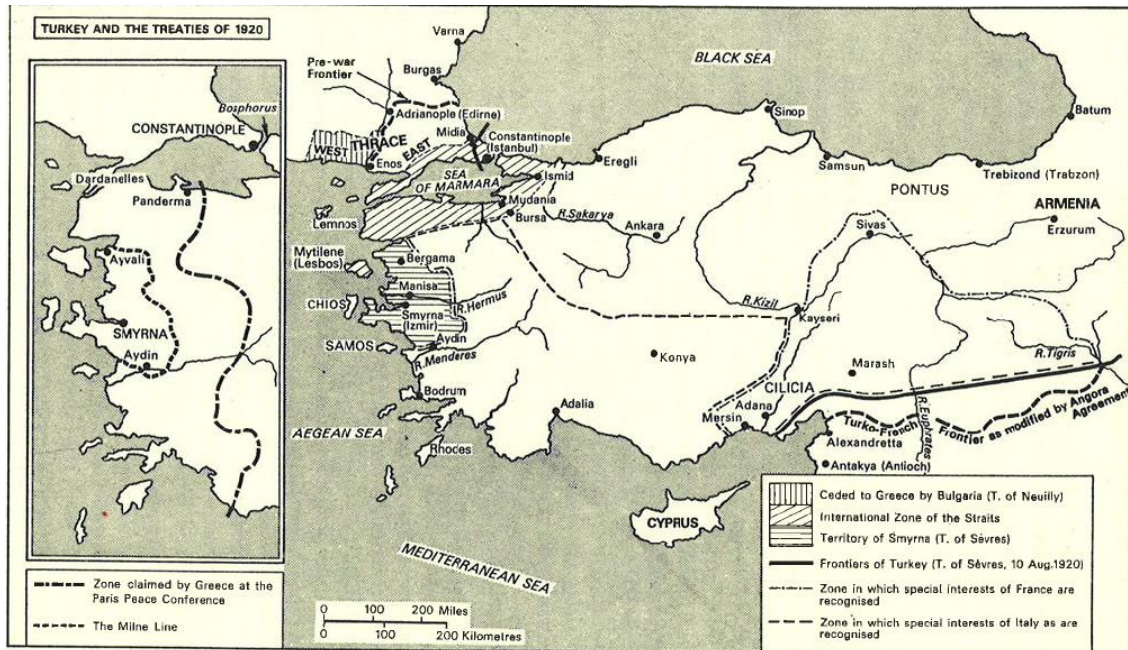


Figure 3 (above) Map of Greek claims in Asia Minor, in Michael Llewellyn Smith, *Ionian Vision Greece in Asia Minor 1919-1922*, Penguin Books Ltd (London, 1973), p. 22.

The British position in respect of the Greeks exposes an ethnic bias sharply contrasting with British attitudes to the Turks. The defeat of the Ottoman empire posed an opportunity for the enactment of the longstanding “megali” (“Great”) idea which, in the words of John Kolettis, supposed that “the Kingdom of Greece is not Greece; it is merely a part, the smallest, poorest part of Greece.”<sup>74</sup> The bias towards Greek ethnicity is rooted in longstanding notions of historical “civilisation” and an ethnic “character” during this period. British diplomat Harold Nicolson reflectively stated ‘for the Turks I had, and have, no sympathy whatsoever... The Turks have contributed nothing whatsoever to the progress of humanity: they are a race of

<sup>73</sup> Theo Karvounarakis, ‘End of an Empire: Great Britain, Turkey and Greece from the Treaty of Sevres to the Treaty of Lausanne’, *Balkan Studies*, 41:1 (2000), p. 171.

<sup>74</sup> [John Kolettis, 1844] Michael Llewellyn Smith, *Ionian Vision*, p. 1.

Anatolian marauders: I desired only that in the Peace Treaty they should be relegated to Anatolia. Such... were the feelings... with which I went to Paris.’<sup>75</sup> This attitude was mirrored in Lloyd George’s “The Truth about the Peace Treaties”: ‘Asia Minor for centuries made a rich contribution to the well-being of mankind. Under Turkish rule it made none of any appreciable moment.’<sup>76</sup> Arnold Toynbee, the most senior assistant to Ottoman expert Sir Louis Mallet within the P.I.D., had served in various propaganda offices and contributed such articles as “The murderous tyranny of the Turks” to the New Europe journal.<sup>77</sup> Toynbee suggested “the expulsion of Turkey from Constantinople may perhaps be regarded as a British desideratum on political grounds”.<sup>78</sup> Lloyd George also described the Turks with comparative contempt and the Greeks with admiration, claiming, in the most prosperous areas in the Ottoman empire, ‘the prosperity and productiveness of these areas were mainly due to the Greek settlers – peasants and merchants. They had been Greek in race and character and language for centuries before the Turk ever appeared in Anatolia.’<sup>79</sup>

Other senior officials in the British Government were less enamoured with the Greek cause and expressed criticism of support for the Greek operation in Smyrna. The British War Office had warned that this would be an ill-fated strategy. Prior to the San Remo Conference, the General Staff of the War Office circulated a Memorandum to the Cabinet on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1920, a view they reaffirmed on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1921, making their criticisms of Lloyd George and his supporter’s championing of “Greater Greece” abundantly clear on political and humanitarian grounds:

*“the General Staff, who are concerned only with British interests, have no desire to labour the Greek question, but desire to record their opinion that there will be no satisfactory settlement of the Turkish question until Greek ambitions are curbed... the General Staff are of the opinion that to persist in the present proposals for peace with Turkey, with existing forces at the disposal of the Allies, is to risk a great blow to British prestige without any corresponding*

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<sup>75</sup> Harold Nicolson, *Peacemaking 1919*, Constable & Co Ltd (London, 1934), p. 35.

<sup>76</sup> David Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, p. 1341.

<sup>77</sup> Erik Goldstein, ‘Great Britain and Greater Greece’, p. 341.

<sup>78</sup> [Arnold Toynbee] *Ibid.*, p. 342.

<sup>79</sup> David Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, p. 1003.



*return, and probably to cause massacres of Christians and Armenians on a scale unprecedented even in Turkey.*"<sup>80</sup>

In addition, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February the General Staff maintained this view fiercely: 'the General Staff have always been strongly opposed to the invasion of Anatolia by Greece and have considered this to be the greatest source of irritation to the Turks, who regard it, *not without reason*, as a dishonourable breach of the Armistice.'<sup>81</sup> In addition, further disagreement with British support for the Smyrna operation can be ascertained in a letter from Admiral Webb, stationed at Constantinople, to Sir R. Graham on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1919: 'the increase of friction out here between Greeks and Turks... all dates back to the time of the occupation of Smyrna by the Greek troops... The fact is that the Turks are getting extremely frightened, and therefore also extremely dangerous'.<sup>82</sup> The discourse from British detractors demonstrates political, military and strategic considerations dominated.

However, there were also significant geopolitical and strategic considerations at hand. Greece, of the cases selected, was the only one which had an established state of any reliability. The British support for "Greater Greece" or the "Megali idea" manifested itself in Prime Minister David Lloyd George's relationship with Greek premier Eleftherios Venizelos. The fact that Britain had suffered 722,785 military casualties (and over 100,000 civilian casualties) during the Great War meant that British public opinion was against engagement in further military activity.<sup>83</sup> In this position, Britain encouraged Greece to expand its borders without risking British lives (by proxy, as Eleftheria Daleziou suggests).<sup>84</sup> This is encapsulated in Nicolson's description of British use for Greece: "politically she was strong enough to save us expense in peace and weak enough to be completely subservient in war."<sup>85</sup> However,

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<sup>80</sup> General Staff of the War Office, IOR MSS Eur F112/290, 'The Treaty of Sevres. General Staff views on modification of terms', Secret, 16<sup>th</sup> February 1921, p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1 (emphasis added).

<sup>82</sup> Ernest Woodward, and Rohan Butler, Eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939 First Series Volume IV 1919*, p. 655.

<sup>83</sup> Brian Bond, Ed., *The Unquiet Western Front Britain's Role in Literature and History*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 2009), p. 24.

<sup>84</sup> Eleftheria Daleziou, PhD Dissertation (2002) 'Britain and the Greek-Turkish War and Settlement of 1919-1923: The Pursuit of Security by 'Proxy' in Western Asia Minor', University of Glasgow.

<sup>85</sup> [Harold Nicolson] Theo Karvounarakis, 'End of an Empire', p. 172.

British officials were not in unison on the support for Greek goals. Large contingents within the Foreign Office and the War Office, despite supporting internationalising Constantinople and the Straits, 'took sharp exception to Greek claims to western Thrace.'<sup>86</sup> Unforeseen changes in the Greek leadership shocked British leadership and paved the way for the rethinking of their support for Greek goals. On 25<sup>th</sup> October 1920 the reigning monarch King Alexander died suddenly; on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1920, Prime Minister Venizelos lost the Greek election 'to general surprise', and on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1920 King Alexander's father Constantine, perceived to be sympathetic to the Central Powers during the War, was reinstated to the throne via referendum subsequent to the death of his reigning son Alexander.<sup>87</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Guinness suggested the outcomes of these two democratic votes were primarily to choose "a King and Prime Minister who stand for a policy of peace".<sup>88</sup>

The British were forced to adjust to the Greek army's capitulation in Smyrna by September 1922.<sup>89</sup> In spite of Greek military failure, domestically, September 1922 resulted in the "Greek revolution" which removed King Constantine from power. It led to the sentencing of six Greek military leaders and anti-Venizelist Prime Ministers to death and the installation of military rule. This was accompanied by a 'renewed hope' from Lloyd George that the achievement of Greek territorial aims was still possible.<sup>90</sup> On 15<sup>th</sup> September, in an interview with the British Daily Mail Journalist Ward Price in a question regarding the possibility of the Allies refusing to 'hand over Constantinople', Mustafa Kemal stated:

*"we must have our capital... and I should in that case be obliged to march on Constantinople with my army, which would be an affair of only a few days. I much prefer to obtain possession by negotiation though, naturally, I cannot wait indefinitely."*<sup>91</sup>

With the Kemalists approaching the Chanak fort, controlled by the British and perceived as 'the key' to control the Straits and Constantinople, a war scare emerged. Prime Minister Lloyd

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<sup>86</sup> Paul Helmreich, *From Paris To Sèvres*, p. 44.

<sup>87</sup> Erik Goldstein, 'The British Official Mind and the Lausanne Conference', p. 187.

<sup>88</sup> [Lieutenant-Colonel Guinness] David Walder, *The Chanak Affair*, Hutchinson & Co (London, 1969), p. 94.

<sup>89</sup> William Medicott, Douglas Dakin, and M. E. Lambert, Eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939 First Series Volume XVIII*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office (London, 1972), p. vi.

<sup>90</sup> Erik Goldstein, 'The British Official Mind and the Lausanne Conference', p. 190.

<sup>91</sup> [Mustafa Kemal Pasha] David Walder, *The Chanak Affair*, p. 182.

George and prominent Cabinet Ministers Winston Churchill and Austen Chamberlain were readily supportive of British military action.<sup>92</sup> The Chanak crisis of September-October 1922 had significant impacts upon British politics. Prime Minister David Lloyd George stood firmly against evacuating the British garrison at the Chanak fort, bringing the British empire to the brink of open conflict with the Kemalist forces in Turkey. This was not received well by the British public, and ultimately contributed to the withdrawal of Conservative support for Lloyd George's post-war coalition government. As a result, Arthur Bonar Law succeeded as Prime Minister in 1922 and, following Bonar Law's resignation in 1923, Stanley Baldwin as respective successor Prime Ministers. As such, the hawkish faction of British Government supporting Greek aims in Anatolia was removed and the "megali" idea was lost in the Treaty of Lausanne. At Lausanne, Britain, represented by Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon, approached the second round of negotiations of 1922-1923 with the objective of modifying the preceding treaty, whereas the Turkish delegation's new chief negotiator, İsmet Pasha (later İsmet İnönü), intended to drive home a totally new and independent settlement for its united homeland. Thus, the strength of Turkish resolve forced the British abandonment of the "megali" idea.

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

## 4 The Armenians – sympathy without substance

British policy towards the Armenians showed its role to be that of a supportive observer with positive attitudes towards the Armenians. The Armenians emerged from the Great War with strong western sympathisers following the revelations of atrocities committed against their population by the CUP/ Young Turks during the War.<sup>93</sup> Significant evidence is provided by the conversations recorded in American Ambassador to the Sublime Porte Henry Morgenthau's diary. The Ambassador had an established working relationship with CUP leaders Talât Bey and Enver Pasha and, in 1915, Morgenthau recorded that Minister of the Interior Talât Bey had shockingly exposed his ethnic cleansing programme: "our Armenian policy is absolutely fixed... we will not have the Armenians anywhere in Anatolia. They can live in the desert but nowhere else."<sup>94</sup> In eastern Asia Minor and Cilicia (the lands within the Taurus and Amanus mountains), under the instructions of the CUP leaders, Armenians were systematically killed and displaced by an ensemble of Turkish, Circassian, Laz, muhacirs 'of disparate nationality' and Kurdish irregular forces.<sup>95</sup>

Christian solidarity again became a component of British diplomacy, Armenia having been the first nation to collectively adopt Christianity.<sup>96</sup> Ronald Suny aptly described the Great Power perception of Armenians as 'far from the centres of civilisation' but 'an outpost of Christian culture.'<sup>97</sup> David Lloyd George reflected that Armenia required Allied protection against Turkish misrule:

*'it was obvious that we could not agree to any settlement which would leave the remnant of the persecuted population of Armenia to the cruel mercies of the race which had massacred, outraged and pillaged it for a generation and continued it through and right up to the end of*

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<sup>93</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny, *"They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else" A History of the Armenian Genocide*, Princeton University Press (Princeton, 2015), p. 330.

<sup>94</sup> [Talât Bey] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xix.

See also Kaye Pasley, PhD Dissertation (1998) 'The Collapse of British Imperialism in Turkey 1919 to 1923', Mississippi State University, p. 43

<sup>96</sup> Marjorie Housepian, *Smyrna 1922 The Destruction of a City*, Faber Ltd (London, 1972), p. 10.

<sup>97</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny, *"They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else"*, p. 91.

*the War. But Armenia, with its depopulated and dispirited remnants, could not stand alone against the Turks on the one hand, and the Bolsheviks on the other.*<sup>98</sup>

However, British policy towards Armenia was flimsy and British officials even distrusted what they perceived to be the “typical Armenian”. George Kidston of the Foreign Office stated “I fear that there is not the slightest doubt that the Armenian is at least as good a hand at massacring as his Moslem neighbour.”<sup>99</sup> The British negotiated armistice of Mudros with Turkey left the ‘six Armenian vilayets’ in Turkey’s possession “subject to good behaviour”.<sup>100</sup> In October 1918, Mark Sykes endorsed the idea of ‘a Cilician Armenia under French tutelage, a Kurdo-Armenia from the Black Sea down to Siirt and Urfa’.<sup>101</sup> On 17<sup>th</sup> November 1918 British Lieutenant-General William Montgomery Thomson arrived in Baku with around 2,000 soldiers of the British Indian Army and ‘a detachment of Russian White Guard troops who were opposed to the Bolshevik Government’, essentially marking Thomson’s ‘governorship’ of the city until mid-1919.<sup>102</sup> Lloyd George stated that there were 170,000 British troops in ‘Russian Armenia, Caucasus and Syria’, although admittedly stating ‘they were not going to maintain’ the troops in Armenia.<sup>103</sup> On 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1919, Foreign Secretary Curzon had made clear to French General Henri Berthelot that establishing an independent Armenian state was ‘dear to Curzon’s own heart’, winning French approval.<sup>104</sup> Separately, much could be gained for Britain with the establishment of an Armenian state encompassing north-eastern Anatolia. However, the reality of limited resources and power in this corner of Anatolia, claimed by the increasingly organised Kemalist forces, dictated the abandonment of this policy. This was accepted with greater ease than with the Greeks in Anatolia.

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<sup>98</sup> David Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, p. 1255.

<sup>99</sup> [George Kidston] Paul Helmreich, *From Paris to Sèvres*, p. 202.

<sup>100</sup> Nazaryan Gevorg, ‘British policy towards the Armenian question from the Armistice of Mudros to the opening of the Paris Peace Conference’, *Fundamental Armenology*, 2:6 (2017), p. 10.

<sup>101</sup> David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 118.

<sup>102</sup> Nazaryan Gevorg, ‘British policy towards the Armenian question’, p. 10.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Alan Montgomery, ‘The Making of the Treaty of Sèvres’, p. 777.

British intelligence, informed by American data, listed the Armenian population in Asia Minor (western Armenia) in 1914 as 1,520,000, with a total of 1,805,000 Armenians within the Ottoman empire (including Syrian vilayets, Turkish Thrace, and Constantinople).<sup>105</sup> In 1916, the Russian census indicated there were 1,784,000 Armenians in Russian Transcaucasia (eastern Armenia) which 'probably included some refugees from Turkey', which accounts for the British estimate of the Armenian population of 3,400,000.<sup>106</sup> However, the British Foreign Office reported that, by 1920, the Armenian population had been reduced to an estimated 2,000,000.<sup>107</sup> Revelations of this extermination policy encouraged the anti-Turkish sentiment discussed in the preceding chapter, and developed sympathy with the Armenian cause.

During the war, the British had extended financial aid to Ottoman Armenian dissidents. On 14<sup>th</sup> December 1917, for example, the Director of Military Intelligence carried out the will of the British War Cabinet, 'promising assistance to the Armenians' in which 'the Armenian fraternity had collected a sum of between 5 and 10 million roubles, and giving figures for the cost of mobilising 20,000 men and maintaining 40,000 men for three months.'<sup>108</sup> In addition, the Director of Military Intelligence himself stated 'the most valuable help in this part of the world might be expected from the Armenians'.<sup>109</sup> In 1918, as the Russian civil war ensued, the Armenian National Council (chaired by Avetis Aharonian) proclaimed the First Republic of Armenia in the Armenian majority area of the Caucasus region, former territory of the Russian empire. These circumstances led to attempts, especially by American President Woodrow Wilson and tentatively supported by the Allies (including Great Britain) to integrate north-eastern Anatolia with the new Armenian state to its north. The American 'frontier for the future Armenian State' was agreed upon on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1919 by British Foreign Office attaches Harold Nicolson and Arnold Toynbee.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Eric Forbes Adam, IOR MSS Eur F112/291, 'The Armenian Question and Cilicia', 1<sup>st</sup> February 1922, p. 5.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>108</sup> Anon., CAB/23/4, War Cabinet, 'Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street', 14<sup>th</sup> December 1917, p. 4.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Harold Nicolson, *Peacemaking*, p. 291.

Significant portions of the Anatolian vilayets of 'Erzerum, Trebizond, Van and Bitlis' were to be included in the Armenian state, with a significant outlet to the Black Sea.<sup>111</sup>



Figure 4 (above) Map of *President Woodrow Wilson's borders of Armenia in Anatolia and the Caucasus submitted to the Paris Peace Conference (1919)* in Lawrence Martin, Ed., *The Treaties of Peace 1919-1923 vol. II, Carnegie Endowment for international peace (New York, 1924)*, p. 815.

Nonetheless, no Allied troops were provided to support the attainment of this goal, resulting in the Armenians' reliance upon Armenian military leader Andranik's volunteer force, comprising heavily of the American Armenian diaspora community, supported by the British Foreign Office.<sup>112</sup>

Following the war, the Armenians retained the sympathy of British and Allied policymakers and were given a significant portion of north-eastern Anatolia, attachable to the nucleus of the Armenian state established in the Caucasus. Politically, Britain benefitted significantly from this arrangement. As Paul Helmreich notes, this would 'remove control of

<sup>111</sup> See Article 89 of the Treaty of Sèvres, in Lawrence Martin, *The Treaties of Peace*, p. 815.

Also see Figure 4.

<sup>112</sup> Nevzat Uyanik, 'Delegitimizing the Ottoman Imperial Order', p. 114.

the northern gateway to India from Turkey and provide a buffer against Russian expansion'.<sup>113</sup> However, due to the prevailing conditions, it was clear the establishment of an Armenian state would require significant 'aid and advice of an economic, military, and political nature'.<sup>114</sup> Georges Clemenceau visited David Lloyd George on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1919 and, among other proposals, suggested the abandonment of the Armenia project, prior to the signature of the Sèvres Treaty.<sup>115</sup> Regardless, Lloyd George, backed by the Foreign Office, rejected the idea that 'the rise of Kemalism necessitated any drastic modification of allied plans.'<sup>116</sup>

The circumstances by which an Armenian state in Anatolia could be established were jeopardised in late 1920. First, Mustafa Kemal's nationalist army defeated a 'predominantly Armenian French force in Cilicia' in February 1920, foreshadowing the military outcomes of the next two years.<sup>117</sup> The Turkish nationalists and the Soviets collaborated over free movement of arms, materials and men between Transcaucasia and Anatolia. Upon the conclusion of this agreement in September 1920, Kemalist forces invaded Armenia, claiming victory within 2 months.<sup>118</sup> In the Caucasus, in the lead up to the October 1921 Treaty of Kars, agreeing the Turkish-Soviet border, the Armenian state in the former Russian empire had fallen to Soviet control.<sup>119</sup> By September 1921, a Cabinet document on the "Second Assembly of the League of Nations" noted a policy in which the Armenia matter was placed firmly in the hands of the LN: 'the Assembly urges the Council to press upon the Supreme Council of the Allies the necessity of making provisions in this [Turkish Peace] Treaty for safeguarding the future of Armenia, and in particular of providing the Armenians with a National Home *entirely* independent of Turkish rule.'<sup>120</sup> In September the following year, the firmness of Armenian

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<sup>113</sup> Paul Helmreich, *From Paris To Sèvres*, p. 13.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24.

<sup>115</sup> Alan Montgomery, 'The Making of the Sèvres Treaty', p. 776.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> Theo Karvounarakis, 'End of an Empire', p. 172.

<sup>118</sup> Richard Hovannisian, 'Genocide and independence, 1914-21', in Edmund Herzig, and Marina Kurkchian, Eds., *The Armenian past and present in the making of national identity*, RoutledgeCurzon (New York, 2005), p. 110.

<sup>119</sup> Eric Forbes Adam, IOR MSS Eur F112/291, 'The Armenian Question and Cilicia', 1<sup>st</sup> February 1922, p. 6.

<sup>120</sup> Anon., CAB/24/128, Cabinet, Second Assembly of the League of Nations on Armenia, 'Resolution adopted by the Assembly at its meeting held on Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> September 1921'.



independence was to wane in tone, as the following resolution added 'in the negotiations for a peace with Turkey, the necessity for providing a National Home for the Armenians should not be *overlooked*, and requests the Council to take all steps which it may think useful to secure this result.'<sup>121</sup> The General Staff of the British War Office, in proposing their modifications of the Treaty of Sèvres, were only concerned with 'British interests', and this pessimism is illuminated in a description of the political and military limitations and the dangers in supporting a weak Armenia in the face of the stubborn Turkish Nationalists claiming eastern Anatolia who possessed superior military capabilities:

*'either the Allies or the Armenians would have to undertake military operations to drive out the Turks from such portions of Eastern Anatolia as may be granted to Armenia, and the maintenance of a large force to preserve the frontier, when gained, against Turkish attacks. These difficulties have now increased owing to the decrease of Allied forces throughout the world, and the late defeats of Armenia at the hands of Kiazin Kara Bekr. These defeats have shown the impossibility of Armenia winning unaided from the Turks such territory as may be granted to her, and the danger of supplying the Armenians with arms, which will only find their way into the hands of either the Turks or Bolsheviks. The General Staff are of opinion that, as no successful military operations can be expected, the only means whereby an independent Armenia can be formed is for the Turks and Armenians to come to some understanding on the formation of an autonomous Armenia under Turkish suzerainty, with certain Turkish guarantees.'*<sup>122</sup>

The General Staff essentially suggests no British effort should be committed to the promotion of an Armenian state at the Lausanne conference. Curzon's addressing of the minorities question at Lausanne reflected this attitude, as on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1922 he stated: "the eyes of the world are on Armenia and Turkey, and the world will not be content that these wretched people should be left without any protection at the mercy of whatever the Turkish Government might be pleased to do... when we go away - and we may go away quicker than

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<sup>121</sup> Anon., CAB/24/139, Cabinet, League of Nations on Armenia, 'Resolution adopted by the Third Assembly at its meeting held on Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1922'.

<sup>122</sup> General Staff of the War Office, IOR MSS Eur F112/290, 'The Treaty of Sevres General Staff Views on Modification of Terms', Secret, 16<sup>th</sup> February 1921, p. 2.

you think – the whole world will look at what we have been saying and doing here during the last two days... The minorities problem excites more attention throughout the world than anything else, and by the manner in which it is solved, will this Conference be judged.”<sup>123</sup> In this instance, the Armenia question was used as a diplomatic tool to direct international opinion against the Turkish authorities which, according to Harold Nicolson, detracted from demarcation issues such as Mosul where international opinion tipped towards Turkey.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> [Foreign Secretary Curzon] Harold Nicolson, *Curzon: The Last Phase 1919-1925 A Study in Post-War Diplomacy*, Constable & Co Ltd (London, 1934), p. 317.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

## 5 The Kurds – experimental sovereignty of the lowest priority

### 5.1 The Kurds of Anatolia

Following the war, the Kurds in Anatolia appeared of little priority to the British, although British policymakers preserved their image as supporters of Kurdish independence. Unlike the Arab Hashemite leaders, Kurdish leaders were not encouraged to rebel against the Ottomans during the war and had little correspondence or prior experience with the British preceding the Sèvres Treaty. Political Officer William Rupert Hay admits, before the war, ‘the Kurd we had never heard of, or heard of only as the wildest of brigands.’<sup>125</sup> Accordingly, British policy towards Anatolian Kurds in the immediate aftermath of the war was somewhat confused. Arnold Toynbee suggested ‘the transfer of Turkish Kurdistan to Iranian sovereignty on condition it was an autonomous province with foreign, presumably British, assistance’.<sup>126</sup> The Treaty of Sèvres promised autonomy to the Kurds upon the referral of their case for independence to the LN, envisioned as being generated through a plebiscite of the Kurdish people in south-eastern Anatolia.<sup>127</sup> In its construction, Prime Minister Lloyd George, and French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau had considered exercising ‘protectorates over portions of the country’, although both ultimately opted not to accept this commitment.<sup>128</sup> Whilst the Mosul vilayet could potentially opt for inclusion with the Sèvres Kurdistan (reference 5.2), Kurdistan’s territory was essentially restricted to Asia Minor. However, in the north of the French controlled Syria, and in northern Qajar Persia (later Iran) there resided

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<sup>125</sup> William Rupert Hay, *Two Years in Kurdistan*, p. 2.

<sup>126</sup> David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 118.

<sup>127</sup> See Article 64 of the Treaty of Sèvres, in Lawrence Martin, *The Treaties of Peace*, p. 807 (see appendix 6 and figure 1).

<sup>128</sup> Rohan Butler, J. P. T. Bury, Eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939 First Series Volume VIII 1920*, p. 43.

considerable Kurdish populations. These areas were included as part of Kurdistan by the exiled Muhammad Sharif Pasha in his submission “Memorandum on the Claims of the Kurd People” to the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>129</sup>

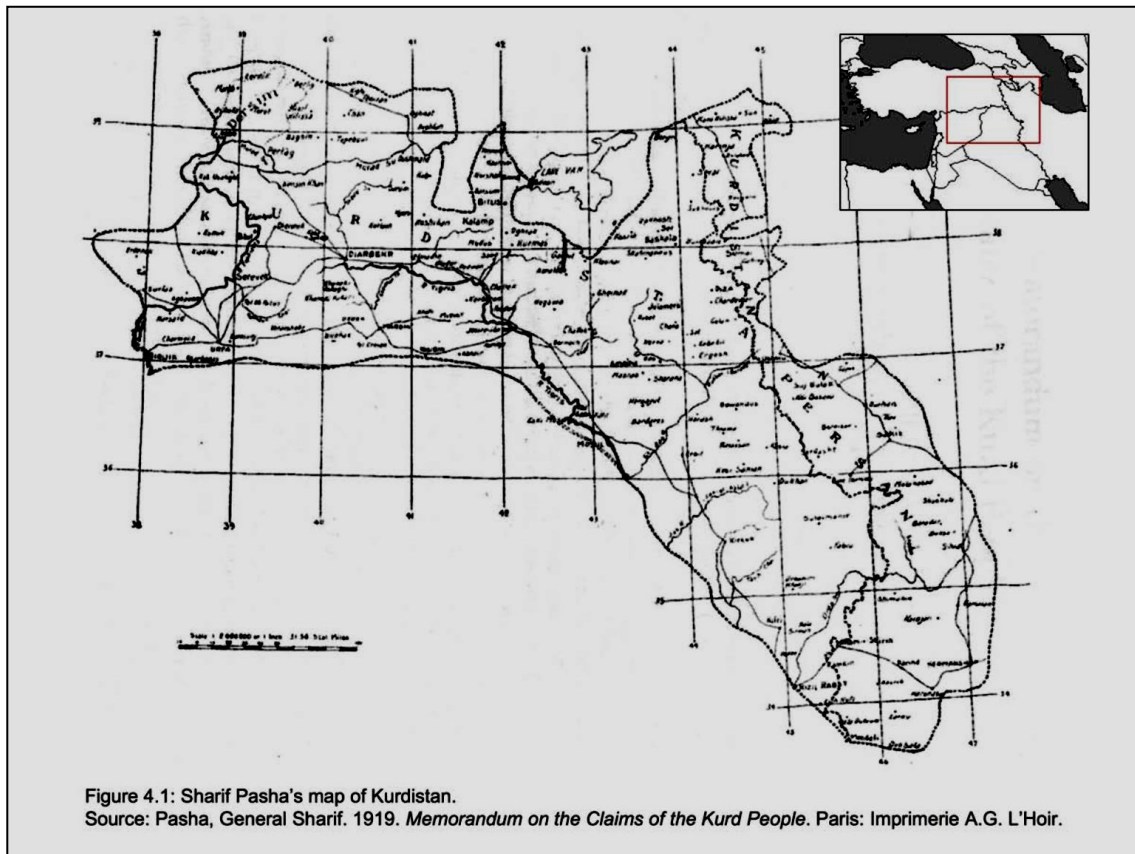


Figure 5 (above) Map of Sharif Pasha's Kurdistan submitted to the Paris Peace Conference (1919) in: Whitney Durham, PhD Dissertation (2010) 'The 1920 Treaty of Sevres and the struggle for a Kurdish homeland in Iraq and Turkey between World Wars', Oklahoma State University, p. 78.

However, following the war Kurdish nationalists developed both suspicion of foreign powers such as Britain, and disparate views of Turkish nationalism. As Malcolm Yapp outlines, there were three major problems entangled within the Kurdish question. First, 'separating the Kurdish from the Armenian lands as the same lands were claimed by both groups and the populations were still intermingled even after the massacres of Armenians'; for various reasons the British could not attach Mosul to Kurdistan, yet, from a Turkish perspective, 'a Kurdistan without Mosul would be a disturbing presence in the region'; and finally, 'the

<sup>129</sup> See Figure 5.

difficulty of finding representative Kurdish leaders'.<sup>130</sup> Kerim Yildiz argues the search for representatives leaders was based upon the 'unsubstantiated' claim that no Kurdish leader was found which sacrificed 'either his own or tribal interest for the greater purpose of the Kurdish nation.'<sup>131</sup> As evidence for this, on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1920, Prime Minister Lloyd George rejected the notion of a Kurdish nation and disparagingly diminished their "national consciousness": "it has never been clear what exactly the Kurds themselves preferred... I now have the impression that a Kurd does not represent any entity other than his own tribe... It seems that they have gotten used to rule by Turks."<sup>132</sup>

While it is doubtful Lloyd George had any contact with any Kurdish leaders or Kurds generally, that Kurds were not in his view either homogenous or united appears clear. Kurdish aghas (chiefs) such as Emin Ali Bedirhan rejected both the Kurdistan map presented at the Paris Peace Conference and Sharif Pasha's legitimacy, with many trusting Mustafa Kemal's movement with the protection of Kurdish lands against Armenian claims.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, some chieftains sent telegrams to the Paris Peace Conference 'claiming that they did not want separation from the Turks.'<sup>134</sup> The Kurdish population was fragmented, after an estimated 500,000 Kurds had died during both the war, and intertribal and interreligious violence in Anatolia after the war.<sup>135</sup> Contrastingly, in early 1920 Kurdish 'organisational meetings' had been convened in Diyarbakir, Van and Bitlis, and by summer 1920, the east and northern portions of the Sivas vilayet were under the control of Kurdish forces.<sup>136</sup> According to Serif Ferat, a Zaza Kurd of the Hormekli tribe, Miraley (Colonel) Halid Bey Cibran had begun organising Kurdish tribes in late summer 1920, in 'Varto, Bularik, Malazgird, Hinis, Karliova, Solhan, Çapakçür' and in July-August had seized Turkish armament shipments.<sup>137</sup> By November 1920, a Kurdish rebellion began in Dersim (present-day Tunceli) and this

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<sup>130</sup> Malcolm Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East*, p. 312.

<sup>131</sup> Kerim Yildiz, *The Kurds in Iraq The Past, Present and Future Revised edition*, Pluto Press (London, 2007), p. 10.

<sup>132</sup> Metin Heper, *The State and Kurds in Turkey The Question of Assimilation*, Palgrave Macmillan (London, 2007), p. 113.

<sup>133</sup> Zeynep Kaya, PhD Dissertation (2012) 'Maps into Nations: Kurdistan, Kurdish Nationalism and International Society', The London School of Economics and Political Science, p. 129.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism*, pp. 20, 26.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

culminated in the Koçgiri rebellion, led by the former Kemalist officer Alişan Bey, chief of the Koçgiri tribe.<sup>138</sup> Robert Olson argues the organisation of the Koçgiri rebellion developed from a correspondence between Alişan Bey and Mustafa Kemal himself. In their correspondence, Alişan Bey had informed Kemal that the Kurds were working for autonomy, to which he replied that all of Kurdistan had pledged to support him in the Erzurum congress of July-August 1919.<sup>139</sup>

On 15<sup>th</sup> November 1920, subsequent to a meeting of Kurdish leaders, a communication was sent to the Kemalist Government in Ankara seeking clarification of several points and demanding a swift response. This included Ankara's confirmation of 'whether or not it accepted officially the promise of Kurdish autonomy as agreed to by the Sultan's Government in Istanbul.'<sup>140</sup> The Kurds then sent a further telegraph to Ankara on 25<sup>th</sup> November stating that if the 'independent Kurdistan... stipulated in the Treaty of Sèvres, the tribal chiefs of western Dersim would take armed action', to which 'Ankara responded that it was in agreement' whilst simultaneously reinforcing 'government troops at Sivas'.<sup>141</sup> A 'Kurdish revolution' was planned in which the Kurdish flag would be raised at Hozat (Tunceli), however, this rebellion was postponed until spring 1921.<sup>142</sup> This enabled the Kemalists to 'co-opt certain tribal leaders', and appoint a number of prominent Kurds to the Grand National Assembly (Ankara) in an attempt to unite Anatolia using the guise of pan-Islamism.<sup>143</sup> It is probable that the ultimate lack of cohesion and inferior organisational capacity of the tribal chiefs of Kurdistan in comparison to the modernised Kemalist forces influenced the British to restrain from providing military support to the Kurdish nationalists in Anatolia, despite having publicly supported the inclusion of Article 62 in the Sèvres Treaty.

Nonetheless, Major Edward Noel, the principle British Officer in Kurdistan 1918-22, appointed by Arnold Wilson and travelling north and south of the armistice line, remained an enthusiastic supporter of the establishment of states to represent the Kurds. He argued

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

‘strongly for three Kurdish polities: Southern Kurdistan based on Sulaymaniya and embracing Nihri, Rawanduz, Arbil, Kirkuk, Kifri and Khaniqin; Central Kurdistan, centred on Mosul, and Western Kurdistan centred on Diyarbakir and stretching as far north as a Kurdish majority persisted, all implicitly enjoying British protection and advice.’<sup>144</sup> A series of Kurdish insurrections occurred against the British authorities south of the armistice line (reference 5.2), and British support for Noel’s ideas waned. In the Foreign Office, Noel was frequently referred to as the “Second Lawrence”, to infer his romanticism for the causes of tribal peoples alike “Lawrence of Arabia”.<sup>145</sup> In Anatolian Kurdistan, Noel became the confidant of the notable Bedir Khan Kurdish family.

Mustafa Kemal insisted there was intelligence that the British were planning to organise an attack on Turkish forces at Sivas with Kurdish rebels.<sup>146</sup> Indeed, preparations were being made by the British in planning a Kurdish revolt against the Turks ‘on the same scale as the Arab Revolt’, principally promoted by Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Rawlinson, although these proposals were shut down as problematic towards the Armenians and Turks, with some having colonial considerations in mind. For example, diplomat Reader Bullard fearing ‘armed action against Turkey would be interpreted in some quarters as antagonistic to Islam’.<sup>147</sup> This fear was of causing offense to the Muslim population of British India.

As stated in the Treaty of Sèvres, the deadline for the opportunity for Anatolian Kurds to apply for Kurdish independence to the LN was 10<sup>th</sup> August 1921, one year following the signing of the Treaty. As this was fast approaching, during the March 1921 Cairo Conference, British Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill and supporting staff Major Noel and Hubert Young ultimately ‘agreed that a Kurdish state ought to be set up without delay’.<sup>148</sup>

The Kurds were arguably the most neglected group by the British delegation to the Lausanne Conference. Eric Forbes Adam, First Secretary to the Foreign Office, anticipated on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1922 that the French should require ‘nothing more than the European minority

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<sup>144</sup> David McDowell, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 120.

<sup>145</sup> Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>147</sup> [Reader Bullard] Robert Olson, ‘The Second Time Around’, p. 96.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

clauses' at Lausanne, and thus schemes to pressure Turkey to support ethnic Greeks remaining in Asia Minor were elaborated, with no concern for Kurdish independence.<sup>149</sup> Othman Ali argues Lord Curzon was enabled to abandon the Kurdish articles of the Treaty of Sèvres in order to bring Turkey into the LN and isolate Bolshevik Russia.<sup>150</sup> Kurdish nationalist activities following the Treaty of Lausanne were led by the secret organisation established between 1921-23 called the Ciwata Azadi Kurd (Society for Kurdish Freedom, or Azadi). The Azadi was principally tasked with obtaining 'British assistance' for 'their cause'.<sup>151</sup> While no evidence has been found to suggest British considerations of supporting Kurdish rebels in Anatolia 1921-23, in September 1924, the Beyt Şebab mutiny of over 500 Kurdish officers impressed British officials.<sup>152</sup>

In post-Lausanne Turkey, Kurdish nationalism in the Anatolian quarter of Kurdistan received religious reinforcement as Mustafa Kemal began to advance secular reforms in the new Republic. This culminated in the 1925 rebellion led by the Azadi and Sheikh Said, of the Naqshbandi branch of the Sufi order of Islam, calling for a Kurdish state 'where the Islamic principles, violated in modern Turkey, were to be respected.'<sup>153</sup> The uprising was brutally suppressed by the Turkish Government. Tens of thousands of peasants were killed, although no official figures are available, with 'large-scale deportations of Kurdish people' to disperse them to western and central Turkey.<sup>154</sup> The handling of this rebellion ultimately highlighted the divisions between Turks and Kurds and undermined the Turkish claims to the Mosul vilayet which, according to British intelligence, was home to 450,000 Kurds.<sup>155</sup> The Turkish claim that "the Turks and Kurds are indivisibly united by racial affinity" was no longer convincing.<sup>156</sup> This precipitated the December 1925 League Council decision to proclaim the

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<sup>149</sup> Eric Forbes Adam, IOR MSS Eur F112/291, 'Notes on possible answers to arguments likely to be advanced by French at Paris', p. 72.

<sup>150</sup> Othman Ali, 'The Kurds and the Lausanne Peace Negotiations, 1922-23', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 33:3 (1997), p. 524.

<sup>151</sup> Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism*, p. 45.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>153</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, 'Agha, Shaikh and State', p. 353.

<sup>154</sup> Kristiina Koivunen, PhD Dissertation (2002), 'The Invisible War in North Kurdistan', University of Helsinki, p. 104.

<sup>155</sup> Peter Beck, 'A Tedious and Perilous Controversy': Britain and the Settlement of the Mosul Dispute, 1918-1926', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 17:2 (1981), p. 274.

<sup>156</sup> Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism*, pp. 128-129.



Mosul vilayet's retention in the British mandate of Iraq.<sup>157</sup> Thus, Britain accepting Turkish control of Anatolia and the increasing secularism of Mustafa Kemal's Government provoked a divided Anatolian Kurdish population to support separatism. The Said rebellion thus helped enable Britain to retain the Mosul vilayet within the boundary of Iraq.

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Also see Peter Beck, "A Tedious and Perilous Controversy", p. 272.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

## 5.2 The Kurds in the Mosul vilayet and British policy.

Prior to the creation of the British mandate of Iraq, between 1918-1920, Britain had explored options for Kurdish autonomy in the Mosul vilayet, part of Southern Kurdistan. Although this gradually turned towards direct rule. Three pre-eminent figures were involved in the construction and implementation of British policy in the Mosul vilayet (with instruction from London): Major Edward Noel, the main Political Officer in Kurdistan, a sympathiser with Kurdish nationalism; Percy Cox, High Commissioner of Mesopotamia, an advocate of Kurdish inclusion in an Arab state; and Arnold Wilson, acting Civil Commissioner, a proponent of Kurdish autonomy within Mesopotamia. This area constituted the frontier between the Ottoman empire and Qajar Persia (later Iran). Historically this had been the only split within Kurdistan until the post-First World War re-drawing of the Middle Eastern political map and had essentially been an open border since the sixteenth century.<sup>158</sup> Although the Mosul vilayet, predominantly Kurdish in population, was divided into separate French and British “Areas” in the Sykes-Picot treaty, the Bolshevik revolution removed the strategic necessity for a French buffer between Russia and the British southern zone.

Thus, British troops occupied the zone with intention of forcing France to ‘accept de facto British control’ over the complete Mosul vilayet.<sup>159</sup> Mosul was occupied by British forces in Autumn 1918, shortly after the armistice agreement, considered by Turkish authorities as illegal, but defended by the British as ‘in full conformity with the terms of article 16’.<sup>160</sup> Whilst fundamentally retaining the French promise of Syria vis-à-vis the Sykes-Picot agreement, in December 1918 French Prime Minister Georges Clémenceau ‘consented to cede to England,

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<sup>158</sup> Kerim Yildiz, *The Kurds in Iraq*, p. 10.

<sup>159</sup> Saad Eskander, ‘Britain’s Policy in Southern Kurdistan’, p. 140.

<sup>160</sup> Cecil Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks, and Arabs: Politics, Travel and Research in North-Eastern Iraq 1919-1925*, Oxford University Press (London, 1957), p. 29.

Also see Helmut Mejcher, *Imperial Quest for Oil: Iraq 1910-1928*, Ithaca Press (London, 1976), p. 28.

Mosul'.<sup>161</sup> At first, in late October-early November 1918 this area constituted an autonomous Kurdish 'entity', with Sulaymaniya as its capital, 'under British political supervision'.<sup>162</sup>



Figure 6 (above) Map of Sykes-Picot spheres of influence in Southern Kurdistan in Saad Eskander, 'Britain's Policy in Southern Kurdistan: The Formation and the Termination of the First Kurdish Government, 1918-1919', p. 140

Mesopotamia, accounted for by the Ottoman vilayets of Baghdad and Basra, had been occupied by the British since March 1917. Mesopotamia came under direct British control following the conclusion of the Great War. However, in the northerly Mosul vilayet the British initially decided upon indirect control and fostering friendly relations with the population. This began in May 1917 when 'British political officers established relations with chiefs in Tuz Khirmatu, Kirkuk and Sulaymaniya.'<sup>163</sup> Considering British policy on the "southern Kurds" whilst visiting Sulaymaniya in December 1917, Arnold Wilson had decided against proposals for 'a free Armenia in the northern provinces of Turkey... provided an independent Kurdistan

<sup>161</sup> Elie Kedourie, *England and the Middle East*, p. 133.

<sup>162</sup> Jordi Gorgas, 'Urban Mobilization in Iraqi Kurdistan during the British Mandate: Sulaimaniya 1918-30', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 44:4 (2008), pp. 537-552.

<sup>163</sup> David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 118.

was established between an Armenian and an Arab State.’<sup>164</sup> In October 1918, Mark Sykes promoted the creation of ‘an autonomous Southern Kurdistan excluding Kirkuk, Altun Kupru and Arbil where the largest urban communities were Turkomen’, as to strive for a homogenous Kurdistan.<sup>165</sup>

In 1918, British officials were invited into Sulaymaniya by Kurdish leader Sheikh Mahmud Bazanji for ‘political and administrative advice’.<sup>166</sup> On 1<sup>st</sup> December 1918, Arnold Wilson, as acting Civil Commissioner, ‘visited Sulaymaniya and met the sheikh [Mahmud] and about 60 chiefs of Southern Kurdistan, including major ones from across the Iranian border.’<sup>167</sup> It was recorded that there was ‘virtual unanimity that the Turks should not return’, a ‘general recognition of the need for British protection’, however, a palpable scepticism of the British remained.<sup>168</sup> Some were unconvinced of the ‘wisdom of allowing Britain to administer Kurdistan’, and ‘others insisted Kurdistan must be separated from Iraq and directly administered from London rather than Baghdad, clearly hoping to return to the freedom they had enjoyed when ruled from Istanbul.’<sup>169</sup> Major Edward Noel was tasked with the promotion of nationalist over pan-Islamic movements, whilst informing the Kurds ‘it was not Britain’s intention to impose upon them ‘an administration foreign to their habits and desires’.<sup>170</sup> British policy was centred around rewarding agency, as:

*‘Kurdish aghas were given appointments as district governors... with authority over (also Kurdish) gendarmes... these gendarmes were often used as the aghas’ private armies. Even when the deliberate policy of indirect rule in Kurdish districts was discarded, the British continued to pay salaries to the “loyal” chieftains, thus strengthening their positions.’<sup>171</sup>*

However, by April 1919, Arnold Wilson’s attitude towards Kurdish statehood took a manifestly negative turn, stating the Kurds ‘within the economic orbit of Mosul and Baghdad’

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>165</sup> David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 118.

<sup>166</sup> Saad Eskander, ‘Britain’s Policy in Southern Kurdistan’, p. 141.

<sup>167</sup> David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 152.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Saad Eskander, ‘Britain’s Policy in Southern Kurdistan’, p. 143.

<sup>171</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, ‘Agha, Shaikh and State’, p. 241.

were fully aware that 'clean ethnographic borders were strategic and economic nonsense'.<sup>172</sup> This certainly accounted for the advent of smuggling across the new Kurdish borders. However, this sentiment reveals a profoundly pessimistic attitude towards a distinctly Kurdish autonomy amongst British policymakers. Sheikh Mahmud was appointed as Governor of the 'Kurdish Area B, extending from south of the Lesser Zab River to the old Ottoman-Persian frontier'.<sup>173</sup> Nevertheless, in June 1919, after British troops had begun to withdraw in droves, Mahmud led a Kurdish rebellion which involved the arrest of all British persons in Sulaymaniya, and the proclamation of Kurdish independence under Mahmud's leadership.<sup>174</sup> However, 'even neighbouring towns like Kifri and Khaniqin disowned him, let alone important nearby tribes like the Jaf.'<sup>175</sup> As a result, the uprising was suppressed and Sheikh Mahmud was captured and deported. In the short-medium term, this disturbance did not entirely overthrow the prospect of Kurdish autonomy. Although, British policymakers began to perceive the Kurdish 'less favourably' as a 'troublesome people' with 'unreliable leaders'.<sup>176</sup>

Although in January 1919 acting civil commissioner for Mesopotamia Arnold Wilson recounted that there had been installed "an independent Southern Kurdish state under British auspices", he himself had possessed the longstanding belief that the Mosul vilayet should be incorporated into Mesopotamia as an 'autonomous province'.<sup>177</sup> In August 1920, the Treaty of Sèvres made provision for the 'voluntary adhesion' of 'what had hitherto been the Mosul vilayet' within the 'independent Kurdish state' set to include south-eastern Anatolia.<sup>178</sup> By 1921, the stipulation of inclusion of the Mosul vilayet with an independent Kurdish state (and potential support of a Kurdish rebellion) loomed upon British policymakers. Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill, however, rejected Percy Cox's suggestion to

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<sup>172</sup> David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 121.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> William Rupert Hay, *Two Years in Kurdistan*, p. 371.

<sup>175</sup> David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, p. 122.

<sup>176</sup> Saad Eskander, 'Britain's Policy in Southern Kurdistan', p. 163.

<sup>177</sup> [Arnold Wilson] Paul Helmreich, *From Paris to Sèvres*, p. 29.

<sup>178</sup> See Article 64 of the Treaty of Sèvres, in: Lawrence Martin, *The Treaties of Peace*, pp. 807-808 (see appendix 6).

“encourage Kurds to [be] aligned with Greek forces, against the perceived Turkish threat to Iraq.”<sup>179</sup>

The creation of the British Mandate of Iraq on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1920, and the temporary placement of Mosul within the territory, created complications with view to the province being claimed by representatives of both the Kurdish and Turkish communities.<sup>180</sup> Security concerns over the increasingly antagonistic relationship Britain had cultivated with the new Turkish Government became pervasive. Due to Turkish claims, the issue remained essentially unresolved and unnegotiated until after the Lausanne Conference. The vilayet of Mosul was the only issue not resolved at the Lausanne negotiations between Turkey and the British empire. The Treaty of Lausanne itself postponed the issue and established that it was to be referred to the LN. The Turkish nationalists claimed self-determination for both Turks and Kurds, invoking their historical rule over the vilayet and explaining the importance of the vilayet in connecting Anatolia with Syria and Persia.<sup>181</sup> According to Andrew Mango, İsmet’s primary considerations for fighting ‘tenaciously’ for Mosul were its oil deposits and the possibility of exacerbating Kurdish separatism within Turkey between the separated secessionist Kurdish movements.<sup>182</sup> These concerns, combined with a significant expenditure on the protection of Iraq was of political consequence. On 20<sup>th</sup> February 1923, former Prime Minister Asquith urged Prime Minister Bonar Law to withdraw Britain from ‘any obligation in Iraq’.<sup>183</sup>

Despite these budgetary alarms, oil had become an increasingly significant factor in British policy in the Middle East, which applied heavily to Mosul’s inclusion in Iraq. Oil was first struck in Baku, Azerbaijan in 1846, then again in Abadan in Persia, 1911. Prior to the First World War, Jackie Fisher’s tenure as First Sea Lord, 1904-1910, had propelled the transition from the Royal Navy’s reliance upon coal-fuelled destroyers towards oil-burning destroyers, on the grounds of efficiency and reducing the Naval budget, paving the way for increasing

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<sup>179</sup> [Percy Cox] Robert Olson, ‘The Second Time Around’, p. 101.

<sup>180</sup> Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism*, p. 52.

<sup>181</sup> Anon., League of Nations C. 494. 1924 VII, ‘Frontier between Turkey and Iraq Letter and Memorandum from the Turkish Government to the Secretary-General’, Ankara, 5<sup>th</sup> September 1924, p. 9.

<sup>182</sup> Andrew Mango, *Atatürk*, John Murray (London, 1999), p. 367.

<sup>183</sup> Othman Ali, ‘The Kurds and the Lausanne peace negotiations’, p. 522.

reliance upon oil for the British Naval fleet.<sup>184</sup> Considering this demand from the Royal Navy, the prospect of oil in Mosul was something Britain was intent upon securing. Susan Pedersen highlights that a German technical commission in 1901 had commented that Mosul 'was a veritable 'lake of petroleum of petroleum of almost inexhaustible supply''.<sup>185</sup> Moreover, Cabinet Secretary Sir Maurice Hankey, the most senior UK civil servant, informed Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour in 1918 that "oil in the future would be as important as coal is now".<sup>186</sup> Helmut Mejcher emphasises the Cabinet Secretary's receptiveness to the ideas of Admiral Sir Edmond Slade, the Admiralty's oil expert, leading to oil becoming central to Lord Curzon's ambitions at Lausanne negotiations.<sup>187</sup> Andrew Ryan, present at the Lausanne Conference, observed that 'much time' was expended upon 'economic and financial questions'.<sup>188</sup> The Turkish Assembly tactfully used the commercial value of Mosul to its own advantage, in signing a concession on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1923 to the American "Chester Group" relating to 'railway and mineral rights' in an area encompassing Mosul.<sup>189</sup> This would bring American commercial rivalry to the centre of British policy, as America intended to 'ensure an outcome that was both favourable to American interests' and 'preserved' the 'open door', under either British or Turkish rule of the Mosul vilayet.<sup>190</sup>

Publicly, British representatives concealed their interests in the province of Mosul. On 12<sup>th</sup> February 1926 former French Prime Minister Joseph Caillaux twice 'anxiously' posed the question to British secretary Eric Phipps whether he 'considered the possession of Mosul to be vital for the British empire', which Phipps twice replied 'I did not consider it to be vital for the British empire, but that it was certainly vital for the Kingdom of [Iraq], for whose welfare Great Britain, as mandatory of the League, was responsible.'<sup>191</sup> The security of Iraq was a

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<sup>184</sup> Warwick Brown, PhD Dissertation (2003) 'The Royal Navy's Fuel Supplies, 1898-1939; the Transition from Coal to Oil', King's College, University of London, pp. 55, 60.

<sup>185</sup> Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians*, p. 272.

<sup>186</sup> [Maurice Hankey] *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> Martin Gibson, PhD Dissertation (2012) 'British Strategy and Oil, 1914-1923.', University of Glasgow, p. 19.

<sup>188</sup> Andrew Ryan, *The Last of the Dragomans*, p. 184.

<sup>189</sup> Fiona Venn, 'Oleaginous Diplomacy', p. 426.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 430.

<sup>191</sup> William Medlicott, and Douglas Dakin, and M. E. Lambert, Eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939 Series IA Volume I*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office (London, 1966), p. 429.

factor in British discourse, as on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1922 B. B. Cubitt of the War Office wrote to the Foreign Office that the incorporation of this province into the new Kingdom provided for a 'reasonable distance' between Baghdad and 'the Turks'.<sup>192</sup> In private correspondences to Foreign Secretary Marquess Curzon, Prime Minister Andrew Bonar Law expressed concern over potential conflict over the Turkish-Iraqi border. On 28<sup>th</sup> December 1922, Bonar Law worriedly wrote to Curzon that 'to judge by the papers it looks as if it were possible that the Turks might seize upon Mosul as the ground upon which to break it. This would be the most unfortunate thing which could happen in every way as half of our own people and the whole of the world would say that we have refused peace for the sake of oil.'<sup>193</sup> On the 8<sup>th</sup> January 1923, during the Lausanne negotiations, Bonar Law declared to Curzon that Great Britain 'should not go to war for the sake of Mosul'.<sup>194</sup> However, the veracity of Phipps' rejection of British vital interest is questionable. On the 1<sup>st</sup> May 1920 Winston Churchill, in his capacity as Secretary of State for Air and War, after referring to the 'pacification of Kurdistan', judged that military expenditure should not exceed £5,000,000 where civil expenditure should remain below £2,000,000 in view of the 'capital charges' associated with oil extraction, although suggesting a 'future profit' might 'be drawn from the Mesopotamian oilfields', with prospects of 'thoroughly good business for the British Empire.'<sup>195</sup> It is abundantly clear that the British were intransigent on the issue of Mosul from a confidential letter, dated 20<sup>th</sup> October 1922, from the Under Secretary of the Admiralty to the Under Secretary of State for the Foreign Office on the revisions of the Treaty of Sèvres, recommending that 'no modification of the Mesopotamian boundary with Turkey should be made which would jeopardize our control over the oil-fields or pipe-lines'.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> General Staff of the War Office, IOR MSS Eur F112/291, The War Office to the Foreign Office, 'Memorandum by the General Staff on the Proposed New Treaty between the Allies and Turkey', Confidential, 20<sup>th</sup> October 1922, p. 83.

<sup>193</sup> Andrew Bonar Law, IOR Mss Eur F112/282, 'Private Correspondence to Foreign Secretary Curzon', 28<sup>th</sup> December 1922, p. 22.

<sup>194</sup> Andrew Bonar Law, IOR Mss Eur F112/282, 'Private Correspondence to Foreign Secretary Curzon', 8<sup>th</sup> January 1923, p. 27.

<sup>195</sup> Winston Churchill, IOR MSS Eur F112/281, 'Mesopotamian Expenditure Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War', 1<sup>st</sup> May 1920, pp. 6-7.

<sup>196</sup> Under Secretary of the Admiralty, IOR MSS Eur F112/290, Admiralty to the Foreign Office, 'Revision of the Treaty of Sevres', Confidential, 20<sup>th</sup> October 1922, p. 83.



The Cairo Conference of 1921 opened debate for British policy on the autonomy of Southern Kurdistan. Gertrude Bell, Oriental Secretary, and Percy Cox, High Commissioner of Iraq, argued that 'the Southern Kurds would accept Arab rule', whereas Noel and Wilson disagreed, Wilson attempting to 'incorporate the Kurdish areas into British-administered Mesopotamia' due to its 'economic richness' – 'considerable surplus in wheat production, lumber, fruits, tobacco and most importantly, potential oil wealth.'<sup>197</sup> By 1920, Iraq, and the Kurds within the vilayet of Mosul, were engaged in insurrections against British rule. The mass revolt was suppressed successfully with use of the newly established Royal Air Force (RAF). Following the restoration of British authority in 1921, the Hashemite leader Faisal, removed from rule by French forces in Syria, was invited to the throne of Iraq. As a Sunni Muslim from the Hedjaz, he was a hard sell to the people of Mesopotamia and, thus, Faisal proclaimed support of pan-Arabism. This was of great concern for the Kurds and widened divisions between Arabs and Kurds in Iraq, as a plebiscite designed by Percy Cox revealed the majority of people in the Kurdish areas of the Mosul vilayet were against inclusion with Iraq and Arab rule in Southern Kurdistan.<sup>198</sup> Percy Cox argued the Kurds, 'unlike the Arabs, had neither a sense of nationality nor political reliability' and, 'as he found no sizeable support among Kurdish notables for his incorporation alternative, Cox excluded them from any discussion concerning their future'.<sup>199</sup> The British, however, viewed this as useful to controlling the new Iraqi Government under Faisal, since 'the hostile attitude of the Kurds towards the new Iraqi Government was not in fact altogether unwelcome; it was a constant reminder to Faisal and his friends that... Britain might express her consent to Kurdish independence'.<sup>200</sup>

Anglo-Turkish rivalry ultimately provoked the use of the Kurds by both sides to undermine each's authority, despite offering little autonomy to the Kurds themselves. Robert Olson describes British policy towards the Kurds after the mutiny of Beyt Şebab in 1924 as 'a

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<sup>197</sup> Saad Eskander, 'Southern Kurdistan under Britain's Mesopotamia Mandate: From Separation to Incorporation, 1920-23', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 37:2 (2001), p. 154.

<sup>198</sup> Nur Masalha, 'Faisal's Pan-Arabism, 1921-33', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 27:4 (1991), p. 691.

Also see Saad Eskander, 'Southern Kurdistan under Britain's Mesopotamian Mandate', p. 158.

<sup>199</sup> Saad Eskander, 'Southern Kurdistan under Britain's Mesopotamian Mandate', p. 158.

<sup>200</sup> Othman Ali, 'The Kurds and the Lausanne peace negotiations', p. 529.

diplomatic, political, and military instrument against the Turks'.<sup>201</sup> On 5<sup>th</sup> November 1925, a memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies Leo Amery to the British Cabinet entitled "Iraq and the Mosul Question" stated that:

*'The only ethnic element which crosses the frontier are the Kurds, who inhabit the northeastern mountainous part of the vilayet and constitute an actual majority of its population... The idea of a Kurdish national State, including the Kurds of Turkey, Iraq and Persia, as a kind of Asiatic Switzerland may be theoretically attractive, and was toyed with at the time of the Treaty of Sevres. But it is not a practical possibility, and apart from it there is no reason either of sentiment or of material interest which would justify any transfer of the Kurds of Iraq from a State where they are content and enjoy a considerable measure of autonomy and special consideration, to Turkey, where their religious and national interests would bring them into direct collusion with the fanatically Turkicising and anti-religious policy of Angora.'*<sup>202</sup>

In this memorandum, Amery suggests granting Mosul to Turkey is against Kurdish interests, referring to the religious discontent of the Said rebellion in February. As this was accepted by the League Council, on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1926, Turkey settled for '10% for 25 years' of the revenue from Mosul oil, thus relinquishing their claims to the province and ending the dispute.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism*, p. 52.

<sup>202</sup> Leo Amery, CAB/24/175, Cabinet, 'Iraq and the Mosul Question Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies', 5<sup>th</sup> November 1925, p. 2.

<sup>203</sup> William Medlicott, and Douglas Dakin, and M. E. Lambert, Eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939 Series IA Volume I*, p. 844.

## 6 Conclusion.

Prior to the First World War, the British empire had opted for the protection of the Ottoman empire due to British geopolitical and strategic interests. However, once the British and Ottomans became belligerents on opposite sides of the war, Britain, France and Russia decided upon partitioning the Ottoman dominions between themselves. Once the armistice of Mudros was signed, the Paris Peace Conference presented an opportunity to strengthen Britain's position in the eastern Mediterranean and in the Middle East through support for the design of friendly states and re-drawing the political map of the territory within the former Ottoman empire. Although, the Allies agreed not to mention partition in the text of the treaty.<sup>204</sup> The terms of the Treaty of Sèvres allocated large portions of the former Ottoman empire to autonomous ethnically organised polities, and saw Greece extending its state authority to south-western Anatolia. An analysis of the British discourse and decisions involving the Greeks in Anatolia reveals contrasting objectives of the War and Foreign Offices. The prevailing faction under Prime Minister David Lloyd George perceiving the Greece and its Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos as reliable allies. This contrasted with the British conception of the Turks, who were regarded as brutish and corrupt. Long-standing Orientalist thinking aided this notion, as senior British officials involved in post-war British policy on Turkey such as Arnold Toynbee had published anti-Ottoman, pro-Greek propaganda during the war. This perception was the principle upon which British policymakers attempted to use Greece, by proxy, to establish British supremacy in the Aegean Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean with the objective of protecting other valuable British dominions and overseas possessions such as the Suez Canal, Cyprus, the Abadan oil refinery and, ultimately, India. This policy, as can be ascertained from the warnings of the General Staff of the War Office, was a known risk and yet it was still backed heavily by the British Government. Of the three cases analysed, Greece is the only state pre-existing the Great War, with established forms of governance in western Thrace (south-eastern Europe) with an organised standing army.

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<sup>204</sup> [Lord Curzon] Rohan Butler, and John Bury, Eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939 First Series Volume VII 1920*, p. 100-101.

In contrast, the Armenian people inherited devastation from the extermination and deportation policies targeting their population during the war, possessed exceptional military weakness and required Allied protection. Britain did not wish to expend further resources on another mandate. However, it eagerly lobbied the United States of America to take on the responsibility whilst deciding against the long-term British occupation of Armenia. Ultimately, the rising strength of Kemalist forces meant the Armenian independence foreseen in the Sèvres Treaty was no longer viable. This factor similarly manifested as the primary obstacle for Greek and Kurdish independence in Anatolia. However, even after the military failure of the Greeks the British faction under Lloyd George persisted in the possibility of Greek authority over portions of Anatolia. This was not the case for the Armenians and the Kurds.

British policy towards the Kurds in Southern Kurdistan was first tempered with caution, with no direct control taken until Sheikh Mahmud Bazanji's 1919 uprising in Southern Kurdistan. In Anatolia, although mobilisation of the Anatolian Kurds against Kemalist forces was considered, it was never attempted as it did not compliment the wider British plan for the layout of Anatolia. This layout prioritised Greek military success. Major Edward Noel and others explored the possibility of military support to the Kurds within Anatolia, however, the rise of Kemalism and British support for the Greeks dictated that the British would not further antagonise Turkey in sponsoring an additional separatist movement. The outcomes of Lausanne emphasise how by 1923 Britain was not committed to the Armenian and Kurdish causes in Anatolia, since their sovereignty was diminished to the recognition of minority rights.<sup>205</sup> Nonetheless, following the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, the Kurds in Anatolia became a tool to be used against the Turks as the Kurds within the Iraq mandate did against the British. As Kurdish resistance to British rule in the former Mosul vilayet increased, budgetary considerations entered the discourse, leading some British politicians to suggest withdrawal from Iraq altogether. However, with the advent of aerial bombing and the RAF, the Air Ministry managed to exercise effective control over the territory of Iraq and the strategic importance of Mosul's oil deposits outweighed the costs in the mind of British policymakers.

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<sup>205</sup> See Articles 37, 38, and 39 of the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) in: Lawrence Martin, *The Treaties of Peace*, pp. 970-972 (see appendix 7).

The preceding chapters reveal a picture of a web of experimental policies attempting to exploit and promote pre-existing nationalist fervour within the former Ottoman empire for the British empire to secure favourable political and commercial circumstances for itself and the other Allied powers. Although Armenian nationalism had become a matter of survival, Greek nationalism in Smyrna was not dominant due to the multiculturalism of the city, and Kurdish nationalism up to this point was far from unopposed within Kurdish society. The British priority was placed on the territories it occupied following the war, including the mandate of Iraq and exploring calls for self-determination where they complimented British interests. Moreover, the idea of civilisation and the difference between the “Oriental” and “European” appears to have contributed to an ethnic hierarchy, a palpable influence over British policymakers. The Greek example highlights the extent to which ethnic bias could have a role in active British foreign policy. In contrast, the case of the Ottoman Armenians demonstrates the limit to which ethnic bias effected active British foreign policy in circumstances in which there were no significant strategic, geopolitical or economic forces present. Collectively, however, early British support for each ethnic group’s authority over the claimed portions of Ottoman territory can be linked to a concerted effort to weaken the Turkish state.

The British policy of controlling the Mosul vilayet must be viewed through the strategic interest in controlling its oil. This is further highlighted by the monopolisation of oil in the late 1920s. The redline agreement of 1928 handed:

*‘four conglomerates representing largely British, American, Dutch, and French interests... the majority of the companies involved... had other oil interests and, given surplus supply in the peaceful 1920s, wished to boost world prices by delaying drilling in Iraq. The [Iraq Petroleum Company] had exclusive control of Iraqi oil, but its major shareholders... had little incentive to find it and pump it.’<sup>206</sup>*

Thus, economic interests heavily influenced British insistence on Mosul’s inclusion with Iraq. Each case was part of the process of erecting a new imperial structure in the Middle East. This new structure was to be based upon the organising principle of ethnic nationalism, as

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<sup>206</sup> Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians*, p. 272.

promoted by the Allied powers, including Britain. Whereas the Ottoman regime had emphasised religious identity and pluralism. By 1926, the goals of the Greeks, Armenians, and Kurds in Anatolia and Southern Kurdistan had not been achieved, and all had withered away in British Middle Eastern policy.

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## Appendices

- **Appendix 1.1: The “Big Four”, Composition of the British Government, relevant Ministries and Ministers**

**The “Big Four” Allied leaders at the Paris Peace Conference 1919:** David Lloyd George (British Prime Minister), Georges Clémenceau (French Prime Minister), Woodrow Wilson (US President), and Vittorio Emanuele Orlando (Italian Prime Minister).

### **British Government**

**Prime Minister:** David Lloyd George, 6<sup>th</sup> December 1916 – 19<sup>th</sup> October 1922 (Coalition Government)

Arthur Bonar Law, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1922 – 20<sup>th</sup> May 1923 (Conservative Government)

Stanley Baldwin, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1923 – 16<sup>th</sup> January 1924 (Conservative Government)

Ramsay MacDonald, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1924 – 4<sup>th</sup> November 1924 (Labour Government)

Stanley Baldwin, 4<sup>th</sup> November 1924 – 5<sup>th</sup> June 1929 (Conservative Government)

**Foreign Secretary:** Arthur Balfour, 10<sup>th</sup> December 1916 – 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1919

**Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs:** Lord George Curzon (1<sup>st</sup> Marquess Curzon of Kedleston), 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1919 – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1924

Ramsay MacDonald, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1924 – 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1924 (whilst Prime Minister)

Austen Chamberlain, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1924 – 4<sup>th</sup> June 1929

**Secretary of State for War:** Viscount Alfred Milner, 18<sup>th</sup> April 1918 – 10<sup>th</sup> January 1919

Winston Churchill, 10<sup>th</sup> January 1919 – 13<sup>th</sup> February 1921

Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, 13<sup>th</sup> February 1921 – 19<sup>th</sup> October 1922

Edward Stanley (17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Derby), 24<sup>th</sup> October 1922 – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1924

**Secretary of State for the Colonies:** Viscount Walter Long, 10<sup>th</sup> December 1916 – 10<sup>th</sup> January 1919

Viscount Alfred Milner, 10<sup>th</sup> January 1919 – 13<sup>th</sup> February 1921

Winston Churchill, 13<sup>th</sup> February 1921 – 19<sup>th</sup> October 1922

Victor Cavendish (9<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire), 24<sup>th</sup> October 1922 – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1924

James Henry Thomas, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1924 – 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1924

Leo Amery, 6<sup>th</sup> November 1924 – 4<sup>th</sup> June 1929

**First Lord of the Admiralty:** Sir Eric Geddes, First Lord of the Admiralty 17<sup>th</sup> July 1917 – 10<sup>th</sup> January 1919

Viscount Walter Long, 10<sup>th</sup> January 1921 – 13<sup>th</sup> February 1921

Arthur Hamilton Lee (1<sup>st</sup> Viscount of Fareham), 13<sup>th</sup> February 1921 – 31<sup>st</sup> October 1922

Leo Amery, 31<sup>st</sup> October – 28<sup>th</sup> January 1924

- **Appendix 1.2: key British Middle Eastern “experts” and officials**

Sir Mark Sykes – Lieutenant-Colonel military officer, served in the Intelligence department of the War Office under Sir Maurice de Bunsen’s Committee on Middle Eastern affairs, the Foreign Office’s Arab Bureau, designed the Hashemite flag for Arabia, and, with François Georges-Picot, authored the 1916 Franco-British agreement on Ottoman partition commonly referred to as the “Sykes-Picot agreement”;

Maurice de Bunsen – head of the 1915 British Committee to consider British policy on the Ottoman empire;

T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence “of Arabia”) – British confidant of Emir Faisal during the Hashemite revolt against the Ottomans, served as an adviser to the Arab delegation to the Paris Peace Conference;

Edmund Allenby – led British and Imperial troops to capture Beersheba, Jaffa, and Jerusalem, October to December 1917; High Commissioner for Sudan and Egypt, 1919-1925;

Gertrude Bell – notable political resident in Arabia, appointed “Oriental Secretary”;

Percy Cox – High Commissioner of Iraq following the 1920 Iraqi revolt;

Arnold Wilson – British civil commissioner in Baghdad in 1918-20 (acting High Commissioner upon Cox's absence);

Foreign Office Political Intelligence Department officials: Louis Mallet; Arnold Toynbee; Harold Nicolson;

Major Edward Noel – political officer in Sulaymaniya and exponent of an enlarged Kurdistan;

Horace Rumbold, 9<sup>th</sup> Baronet – British High Commissioner to Constantinople 1920; British signatory of the Lausanne Treaty, 1923 (Lord Curzon the chief negotiator).

- **Appendix 2: Turkish leadership**

The three Pashas (preeminent Young Turk wartime leaders): 1) Minister of the interior, later Grand Vizier Mehmed Talât Bey (Pasha); Minister of War, Ismail Enver Pasha; and Minister of the Navy Ahmed Djemal Pasha;

Mustafa Kemal Pasha (later surnamed Atatürk): nationalist leader throughout the “Turkish war of independence” – head of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (Ankara Government) and later President of the Republic of Turkey, 1923-1938;

İsmet Pasha (later İnönü): Turkish chief negotiator at Lausanne, 1923, successor President to Atatürk, 1938-1950;

Ottoman signatories of the Treaty of Sévres: Grand Vizier Damat Ferid Pasha; Ottoman Ambassador for Switzerland Reşat Halis; Ottoman Minister of Education Hâdi Pasha; President of the Ottoman Senate (Ottoman upper house/ “Assembly of Notables”) Rıza Tevfik;

Mehmed VI: the final Sultan of the Ottoman empire, 1923;

Ahmet Tevfik Pasha: the final Grand Vizier of the Ottoman empire, 21<sup>st</sup> October 1920 – 4<sup>th</sup> November 1922;

- **Appendix 3: Greek leadership:**

**Prime Ministers:**

Eleftherios Venizelos, Prime Minister, 6 October 1910 – 25<sup>th</sup> February 1915; 10<sup>th</sup> August 1915 – 24<sup>th</sup> September 1915; and 14<sup>th</sup> June 1917 – 4<sup>th</sup> November 1920;

Dimitrios Rallis, Prime Minister, 18<sup>th</sup> November 1920 – 6<sup>th</sup> February 1921;

Nikolaos Kalogeropoulos, Prime Minister, 24<sup>th</sup> January 1921 – 25<sup>th</sup> March 1921;

Dimitrios Gounaris, Prime Minister, 26<sup>th</sup> March 1921 – 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1922 (tried and executed);

Nikolaos Stratos, Prime Minister, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1922 – 9<sup>th</sup> May 1922 (tried and executed);

Petros Protopapadakis, Prime Minister, 9<sup>th</sup> May 1922 – 28<sup>th</sup> August 1922 (tried and executed);

Nikolaos Triantafyllakos, Prime Minister, 28<sup>th</sup> August 1922 – 16<sup>th</sup> September 1922;

11<sup>th</sup> September 1922 – Greek revolution (military coup d'état led by Venizelist officers such as Nikolaos Plastiras, Stylianos Gonatas and Georgios Papandreou, following Greek defeat in Asia Minor, resulting in the “trial of the six” Greek officials blamed for the military defeat).

**Monarchs (House of Glücksburg):**

King Constantine I, King of Greece, 18<sup>th</sup> March 1913 – 11<sup>th</sup> June 1917; and 19<sup>th</sup> December 1920 – 27<sup>th</sup> September 1922 (anti-war);

King Alexander I, King of Greece, 11<sup>th</sup> June 1917 – 25<sup>th</sup> October 1920 (died).

- **Appendix 4: Armenian leaders:**

Armenian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference: Boghos Nubar Pasha, representative of the Ottoman Armenians;

Avetis Aharonian, representative of the Armenian Republic;

Andranik (Andranik Ozanian), Armenian military commander.

- **Appendix 5: Kurdish leaders:**

General Muhammad Sharif Pasha, southern Kurd, outspoken against Armenian genocide, exiled to Paris and head of the Kurdish delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919.

Sheikh Mahmud Bazanji – candidate for Kurdish leadership (a southern Kurd leading Sheikh of the Qadiri, proclaimed King of Kurdistan in various rebellions);

Sheikh Taha of Nihri (Sayyid of Nihri);

Sheikh Said – leader of February 1925 Kurdish rebellion in Anatolia – first large-scale Kurdish rebellion.

- Appendix 6: Select articles of the Treaty of Sévres, 1920 (emphasis added), in: Lawrence Martin, Ed., *The Treaties of Peace 1919-1923 vol. II, Carnegie Endowment for international peace (New York, 1924).*

**SECTION II. STRAITS. ARTICLE 37.**

‘The navigation of the **Straits**, including the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmora and the Bosphorus, shall in future be **open**, both **in peace and war**, to every vessel of commerce or of war and to military and commercial aircraft, without distinction of flag. These waters shall **not** be subject to **blockade**, nor shall any belligerent right be exercised nor any act of hostility be committed within them, **unless** in pursuance of a decision of **the Council of the League of Nations.**’ p. 799

ARTICLE 38. – will be a “**Commission of the Straits**” which controls the waters in ARTICLE 39 (Mediterranean mouth of the Dardanelles, to the Black Sea mouth of the Bosphorus ‘and to the waters within three miles of each of these mouths’. ‘The Greek Government, so far as it is concerned, delegates to the Commission the same powers and undertakes to give it in all respects the same facilities. Such control shall be exercised in the name **of the Turkish and Greek Governments respectively**, and in the manner provided in this Section.’ p. 800 – (according to new boundaries, these were the Greco-Turkish Straits, not just Turkish Straits)

**ARTICLE 40.** – ‘The Commission shall be **composed of** representatives appointed respectively by the United States of America (if and when that Government is willing to participate), the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, Russia (if and when Russia becomes a member of the League of Nations), Greece, Rumania, and Bulgaria and Turkey (if and when the two latter States become members of the League of Nations). Each Power shall appoint one representative. The representatives of the United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan and Russia shall each have two votes. The representatives of Greece, Roumania, and Bulgaria and Turkey shall each have one vote. Each Commissioner shall be removable only by the Government which appointed him.’ p. 800

ARTICLE 42. – the Commission will ‘have its own flag, its own budget and its separate organisation.’ p. 801

ARTICLE 43. – Commission duties: a) ‘the execution of any works considered necessary for the improvement of the channels or the approaches to harbours;’ b) ‘the lighting and buoys of the channels;’ c) ‘the control of pilotage and towage;’ d) ‘the control of anchorages;’ e) ‘the control necessary to assure the application in the ports of Constantinople and Haidar Pasha of the regime prescribed in Articles 335 to 344, Part XI (Ports, Waterways and Railways) of the present Treaty;’ f) ‘the control of all matters relating to wrecks and salvage;’, g) ‘the control of lighterage;’. p. 801

**SECTION III. KURDISTAN. ARTICLE 62.** 'A Commission sitting at Constantinople and composed of three members appointed by the British, French and Italian Governments respectively shall draft within six months from the coming into force of the present Treaty a **scheme of local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas lying east of the Euphrates, south of the southern boundary of Armenia** as it may be hereafter determined, and **north of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia**, as defined in Article 27, II (2) and (3). If unanimity cannot be secured on any question, it will be referred by the members of the Commission to their respective Governments. The **scheme** shall contain **full safeguards** for the **protection of the Assyro-Chaldeans** and other racial or religious minorities within these areas, and with this object a Commission composed of British, French, Italian, Persian and Kurdish representatives shall visit the spot to examine and decide what rectifications, if any, should be made in the Turkish frontier where, under the provisions of the present Treaty, that frontier coincides with that of Persia.' p. 807

ARTICLE 63. – Turkish Government 'accept and execute' 62 'within three months from their communication to the said Government.' p. 807

**ARTICLE 64.** 'If **within** one year from the coming into force of the present Treaty the Kurdish peoples within the areas defined in Article 62 shall address themselves to the Council of the League of Nations in such a manner *as to show that a majority of the population of these areas desires independence from Turkey*, and if the Council then *considers that these peoples are capable of such independence* and recommends that it should be granted to them, Turkey hereby agrees to execute such a recommendation, and to renounce all rights and title over these areas. The detailed provisions for such renunciation will form the subject of a separate agreement between the Principal Allied Powers and Turkey. If and when such renunciation takes place, no objection will be raised by the Principal Allied Powers to the **voluntary adhesion** to such an **independent Kurdish State** of the Kurds inhabiting that part of Kurdistan which has hitherto been included in **the Mosul vilayet.**' pp. 807-808

**SECTION IV. SMYRNA [Izmir]. ARTICLE 66.** (defines city's territory). ARTICLE 67. A Commission shall be constituted within fifteen days from the coming into force of the present Treaty to trace on the spot the boundaries of the territories described in Article 66. This Commission shall be composed of three members nominated by the British, French and Italian Governments respectively, one member nominated by the Greek Government, and one nominated by the Turkish Government.' pp. 809-810

ARTICLE 68. 'the city of **Smyrna** and the territory defined in Article 66 **will be assimilated**, in application of the present Treaty, **to territory detached from Turkey.**' p. 810

ARTICLE 69. 'The city of Smyrna and the territory defined in Article 66 remain under Turkish sovereignty. Turkey, however, transfers to the Greek Government the exercise of her rights of sovereignty over the city of Smyrna and the said territory. In witness of such sovereignty the Turkish flag shall remain permanently hoisted over an outer fort in the town of Smyrna. The fort will be designated by the Principal Allied Powers.' p. 810

ARTICLE 70. 'The Greek Government will be responsible for the administration of the city of Smyrna and the territory defined in Article 66, and will effect this administration by means of a body of officials which it will appoint specially for the purpose.' p. 810

ARTICLE 71. 'The Greek Government shall be entitled to maintain in the city of Smyrna and the territory defined in Article 66 the military forces required for the maintenance of order and public security.' p. 810

ARTICLE 72. 'A local parliament shall be set up with an electoral system calculated to ensure proportional representation of all sections of the population, including racial, linguistic and religious minorities. Within six months of the coming into force of the present Treaty the Greek Government shall submit to the Council of the League of Nations a scheme for an electoral system complying with the above requirements; this scheme shall not come into force until approved by a majority of the Council. The Greek Government shall be entitled to postpone the elections for so long as may be required for the return of the inhabitants who have been banished or deported by the Turkish authorities, but such postponement shall not exceed a period of one year from the coming into force of the present Treaty.' pp. 810-811

ARTICLE 83. 'When a period of five years shall have elapsed after the coming into force of the present Treaty the local parliament referred to in Article 72 may, by a majority of votes, ask the Council of the League of Nations for the **definite incorporation in the Kingdom of Greece of the city of Smyrna** and the territory defined in Article 66. The Council may require, as a preliminary, a plebiscite under conditions which it will lay down. In the event of such incorporation as a result of the application of the foregoing paragraph, the Turkish sovereignty referred to in Article 69 shall cease. Turkey hereby renounces in that event in favour of Greece all rights and title over the city of Smyrna and the territory defined in Article 66.' p. 813

**SECTION VI. ARMENIA. ARTICLE 88.** 'Turkey, in accordance with the action already taken by the Allied Powers, hereby recognises **Armenia as a free and independent State.**' p. 814.

ARTICLE 89. 'Turkey and Armenia as well as the other High Contracting Parties agree to submit to the arbitration of the President of the United States of America the question of the frontier to be fixed between Turkey and Armenia in the vilayets of Erzerum, Trebizond, Van and Bitlis, and to accept his decision thereupon, as well as any stipulations he may prescribe as to access for Armenia to the sea, and as to the demilitarisation of any portion of Turkish territory adjacent to the said frontier.' p. 815

SECTION VII. SYRIA, MESOPOTAMIA, PALESTINE. ARTICLE 94. 'The High Contracting Parties agree that Syria and Mesopotamia shall, in accordance with the fourth paragraph of Article 22, Part I (Covenant of the League of Nations), be provisionally recognised as **independent States** subject to the rendering of **administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory** until such time as they are able to stand alone. A Commission shall be constituted within fifteen days from the coming into force of the present Treaty to trace on the spot the frontier line described in Article 27, II (2) and (3). This Commission will be composed of three members nominated by France, Great Britain and Italy respectively, and one member nominated by

Turkey; it will be assisted by a representative of Mesopotamia for the Mesopotamian frontier. The determination of the other frontiers of the said States, and the selection of the Mandatories, will be made by the Principal Allied Powers.' p. 816

- **Appendix 7: Select articles in The Treaty of Lausanne, 1923 (emphasis added), in: Lawrence Martin, Ed., *The Treaties of Peace 1919-1923 vol. II, Carnegie Endowment for international peace (New York, 1924).***

'British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Rumania and the Serb-Croat-Slovene state, of the one part, and Turkey, of the other part'. p. 959

**Article 3(2): Border with Iraq** 'shall be laid down in friendly arrangement to be concluded between Turkey and Great Britain within nine months' p. 962

'In the event of no agreement being reached between the two Governments within the time mentioned, the dispute shall be referred to the Council of the League of Nations.' p. 962

#### SECTION III. PROTECTION OF MINORITIES.

Article 38: 'The Turkish Government undertakes to assure full and complete protection of life and liberty to all inhabitants of Turkey without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race or religion. All inhabitants of Turkey shall be entitled to free exercise, whether in public or private, of any creed, religion or belief, the observance of which shall not be incompatible with public order and good morals. Non-Moslem minorities will enjoy full freedom of movement and of emigration, subject to the measures applied, on the whole or on part of the territory, to all Turkish nationals, and which may be taken by the Turkish Government for national defence, or for the maintenance of public order.' p. 971