

Kurdish Plight for Statehood

1914-1924

Short History of the Kurds

Compiled by Shawn Leonard

Please click on the Flag of Kurdistan to begin!



Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Flag_of_Kurdistan.svg

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Context

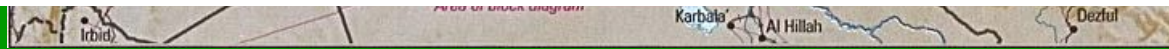
The objective of this presentation is to narrate a moment in time when the Kurds attempted to realize a nation-state in their ancient homeland in the mountains surrounding Lake Van, Lake Urmia and extending south and west between the Tigris River and the Zagros Range. An area known as...

Kurdistan

[Pictures
of Kurdistan
Geography](#)



[Pictures of
Kurdistan Culture](#)



Source: Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection at The University of Texas at Austin

The [Kurds](#) and their lands receive mention in the annals of Greek, Roman (including Byzantine), Sassanid, Islamic and Mongol expansions. Today, the Kurds still seek statehood and some observers believe their prospects are once again looking favorable but there was once an extraordinary window of opportunity...

[1914 - 1923](#)

[Kurdish Window of Opportunity](#)

Historical Timeline

300,000 - 3,000 BCE -- Prehistoric

3,000 - 728 BCE -- The Guti, Mannai, and Hurrians

728 - 331 BCE -- Persian Empires (Medians & Achaemenids)

331 - 238 BCE -- Hellenistic Empires (Alexander & Seleucids)

238 BCE - 640 CE -- Mixed Rule (Parthians, Sassanids, Romans & Byzantines)

640 - 1300 CE -- Islamic Empire (Umayyads, Abbasids, & Saljuqs)

1300 - 1914 CE -- Ottoman Empire and Safavids

[1914 - 1923](#) CE -- World War I & the Breakup of Ottoman Empire

1924 - Present -- Post-colonialism and the Modern Middle East



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Geography

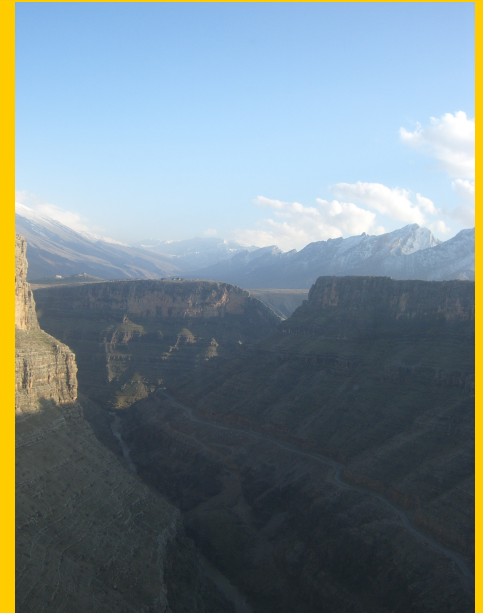
The following are pictures the author took during a seven month period in northern Iraq in late 2005 and the first half of 2006. All pictures were taken within Kurdish historical lands of Iraq and the author's intent is to show the diverse terrain in these ancient lands of the Kurds. Please note the drastic changes in relief, the cities and villages, the rivers, the arable fields and the desert scapes. It is truly an amazing place on Earth! For pictures of the Kurdish people and aspects of their culture please go to my [Culture](#) page.



Mountains in northern Iraq looking north into Turkey (Dahuk Province).



A small river flowing through a northeastern Iraq valley (Dahuk Province).



Stunning canyon cut through a larger valley in northeastern Iraq.



Mountain range forming the border between Iraq and Turkey east of Zakho; note the large village nestled in the foothills.



A Saddam-era observatory built on a mountain in northeast Iraq (Irbil Province).



Small village in northern Iraq between Irbil and Dahuk (Dahuk Province).



Tributary of the Great Zab River north of Irbil (Irbil Province).



Tals (hills) northeast of Irbil (Irbil Province).



Arable land and flood plain of the Great Zab River (Irbil Province).



Sunset over a village located between Irbil and Mosul (Irbil Province).



Looking east over arable lands with the city of as-Sulaymaniyah in the background (as-Sulaymaniyah Province).



Looking east toward Iran from a mountain above the city of as-Sulaymaniyah (as-Sulaymaniyah Province).



The city of as-Sulaymaniyah as viewed from the east; note the groves of coniferous trees in the foreground (as-Sulaymaniyah Province).



The city of Dahuk from the south (Dahuk Province).



The calm after the storm, receding flood waters along the Great Zab (Irbil Province).



Rugged terrain in northern Iraq southwest of the gateway city of Zakho (Dahuk Province).



A train heading southeast toward Mosul across the northern Ninewa Plains (Ninewah Province).



A small village located on the northern Ninewa Plains between Mosul and Dahuk (Ninewah Province).



Late afternoon sun over the Tigris River in Northern Iraq (Ninewa Province).



Flooding of the Great Zab River (Irbil Province).



Early Spring in the hills north of Irbil between Irbil and Dahuk (Irbil Province).



Small olive tree grove east of Mosul (Ninewa Province).



Runoff waters flowing out of small village east of Mosul (Ninewa Province).



Looking north across the Habur Gate border crossing between Iraq and Turkey north of Zakho (Dahuk Province).



Arable lands east of Zakho in northern Iraq (Dahuk Province).



More flooding of the Great Zab River (Irbil Province).



The city of Irbil (capital of Irbil Province and of the Kurdistan Regional Government) looking south (Irbil Province).



A village's cemetery northeast of Irbil; note how it is located on a small hilltop (Irbil Province).



Arable lands southwest of Kirkuk; major pipelines out of Kirkuk oilfields are buried underground in the foreground (Ta'min Province).



Forest northeast of Kirkuk looking west (Ta'min Province)



Looking south across the city of Kirkuk (Ta'min Province).



Looking northeast from Kirkuk toward oil extraction facilities (Ta'min Province).



Mountain range located to south of Dahuk (Dahuk Province).



Remarkable geological features located west of Zakho (Dahuk Province).



Small tributary of the Tigris River in northern Iraq (Dahuk Province).



Looking north up the Tigris River near the border between Iraq and Turkey (Ninewa Province).



Mountains and hills with coniferous stands north of Irbil (Irbil Province).



Looking north toward the town of Sinjar and the eastern terminus of Sinjar Mountain in the background (Ninewa Province)



Looking northeast across the small city of Tall 'Afar west of Mosul; note the Byzantine frontier castle in the center of the city (Ninewa Province).



The "tals" (hills) located between Mosul and Tall 'Afar (Ninewa Province).



Flooding of a tributary of the Great Zab River in northern Iraq (Ninewa Province).



Mountains and valley southeast of Dahuk (Ninewa Province).



Mountain home near Zakho (Dahuk Province).



Picture of a map in a KRG office depicting the historical Kurdish lands in Iraq (not the official borders of the autonomous KRG according to the Iraqi central government).



All pictures are the property of Shawn Leonard.

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People and Culture

The following are pictures the author took during a seven month period in northern Iraq in late 2005 and the first half of 2006. All pictures were taken within Kurdish historical lands of Iraq in an effort by the author to present a snapshot of Kurds and their culture. By no means do I offer these pictures as completely representative of such a diverse culture. For pictures of the Kurdish landscape please go to my [Geography](#) page.



Outside the gate of the University of as-Sulaymaniyah; note the Iraqi and Kurdish flags and the women in Western dress (as-Sulaymaniyah Province).



Girl with new toy in Dahuk (Dahuk Province).



"Umara Market" in downtown Dahuk (Dahuk Province).



Girls playing in Zakho (Dahuk Province).



Big sister and little brother in Zakho (Dahuk Province).



Boys looking cool for the camera in Zakho (Dahuk Province).



Another cool pic (Dahuk Province).



Man on donkey south of Dahuk (Ninewa Province).



Kids gathered in small village near the Tigris River in northern Iraq (Ninewa Province).



Cheesing for the camera in small village in northern Iraq (Ninewa Province).



Village life in northern Iraq (Ninewa Province).



Football in a town north of Mosul (Ninewa Province).



KRG President Masoud Barzani's likeness and Kurdish flag adorning a government building in a town east of Mosul (Ninewa Province).



Man and son shepharding sheep in northern Iraq (Ninewa Province).



Running boy in Tall 'Afar (Ninewa Province).



Girls in ceremonial dress in Dahuk (Dahuk Province).



Boys and girls performing a traditional dance in Dahuk (Dahuk Province).



Boys and Girls finishing traditional dance in Dahuk (Dahuk Province)



Girls in a small village in northern Iraq (Ninewa Province).



Mother and daughter collecting water in northern Iraq (Ninewa Province).

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"Window of Opportunity"

Despite evidence of several periods of varying degrees of autonomous rule through the ages, the Kurds have never enjoyed a completely sovereign state. As World War I drew to an end, the leaders of the winning Allied Powers began a disjointed process of determining how the Ottoman Empire would be partitioned. It coincided with a period of nationalism spreading through Asia Minor and the Caucasus with Turks, Kurds, Armenians, Georgians, Azeris and a host of other smaller ethnic groups trying to advance out of the passing colonial/imperial era.

Timeline

- 1914** - Start of WWI
- 1915** - Ottoman Empire fights war on four fronts
- 1916** - Sykes-Picot Agreement
- 1917** - British capture Baghdad and Jerusalem
- 1918** - End of WWI
- 1919** - Paris Peace Conference / Treaty of Versailles
- 1920** - Treaty of Sèvres **Landmark Event I**
- 1921** - Conference of London I
- 1922** - End of Turkish War of Independence
- 1923** - Treaty of Lausanne **Landmark Event II**



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1914

It is said that Europe was a tinderbox as spring turned to summer in 1914. The concept of nationalism was spreading with astonishing speed across the continent as long-oppressed nationalities sought to cast off the yokes of imperial states. Nationalistic and progressive organizations often using the term "young" in their titles (e.g. "Young Bosnia" and "Young Turks") were as likely to flourish in capitals as well as the countryside attracting huge followings often with militant dispositions. So was the situation in late June when a [Young Bosnia](#) operative assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand--crown prince of the [Austro-Hungarian Empire](#)--in Sarajevo, the sleepy provincial capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina (until 1908 under Ottoman control). In the short course of two months, Europe erupted in flames as jealous empires clashed in war. Initially, Sultan Mehmed V of the [Ottoman Empire](#) was reticent to break neutrality but in the end and as a sign of his decreasing authority within the empire, the [Young Turk](#)-led [Committee of Union and Progress](#) (CUP) flexed their new-found power and sided with the Central Powers.

January

February

March

April

May



June - 28 JUN - Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand commencing [WWI](#)

July - 28 JUL - First battle between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Serbia

August - 02 AUG - Signing of the [Ottoman-German Alliance](#)

September

October - 29 OCT - Ottoman Empire formally enters WWI allying with the [Central Powers](#)

November - 22 NOV - The British Empire seizes Basra, culminating a successful first month of war in the Persian Gulf

December - 22 DEC - Start of [Battle of Sarikamış](#) with Russia; ends with Ottoman defeat in January 1915

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1915

Battles continue to be wage across Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. 1915 marked the high water point for the Central Powers as they achieved significant victories in their offensives. However, by the end of the year, the advancing Central Powers stalled and the remainder of the war would be characterized by intensely violent trench warfare battles. The Ottoman Empire quickly found itself fighting (and nearly overwhelmed) on four fronts: the [Mesopotamian Campaign](#), the [Caucasus Campaign](#), the [Dardanelles \(Gallipoli\) Campaign](#), and the [Sinai-Palestine Campaign](#). These threats to the empire exacerbated long-established cracks in the central government's authority over empire and ignited [nationalist movements](#) within the empire.

January

February - 02 FEB - [First Suez Offensive](#) by the Ottoman Empire against British forces in Egypt (Ottoman defeat)

March

April - 25 APR - Invasion of Gallipoli by British, Australians and New Zealanders (lasted through 1915)

- [Van Resistance](#): Armenian & Kurdish Resistance defended city of Van until arrival of Russian forces; planted seeds for [Armenian Genocide](#)

May

June



July

August

September

October

November - 22 NOV - [Battle of Ctesiphon](#): British column advancing on Baghdad countered by Ottomans and forced to retreat to Kut

December - 07 DEC - [Siege of Kut](#) begins by Ottoman forces

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1916

While the war in Europe became a stalemate, the Middle Eastern theatre surrounding the Ottoman Empire heated up. The Ottomans gained some breathing room with the defeat of the Entente Powers at Gallipoli in January and at Kut in April but from there the prospects for victory darkened. The Russians continued to press the Caucasus Campaign capturing two important Turkish regions. Although unsuccessful at Gallipoli, the British renewed their efforts to the south with an eye toward Palestine and perhaps of greatest importance, entered into an alliance with [Grand Sharif Hussein](#) who would muster the Arab Revolt.

January - 09 JAN - Final British evacuations from [Galipolli](#) bringing closure (and Ottoman victory) to the Dardanelles Campaign

February - 16 FEB - [Battle of Erzurum](#): Russians capture city of Erzurum (northern reach of Kurds)

March

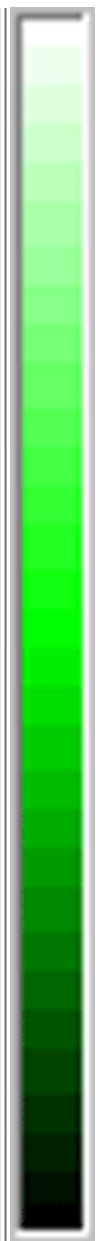
April - Russians capture Black Sea port of Trabzon (Trebizond)

May - 16 MAY - Signing of the secret [Sykes-Picot Agreement](#): first attempt at partitioning the Middle East by the Entente Powers

June - 08 JUN - Grand Sharif Hussein signs alliance with Entente Powers commencing [Arab Revolt](#)

- 16 JUN - Ottoman Red Sea port of Jiddeh surrenders to Arabs

July



August - 03 AUG - [Battle of Romani](#) (Second Suez Offensive) ended in Ottoman defeat by British

September

October

November

December

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1917

The previously isolationist Americans entered the war this year but had little initial effect in the trenches extending across Europe. The [Russian Revolution](#) effectively removed Russian pressure against the Ottoman Empire in the Caucasus and Eastern Anatolia but that was the only good news for the Ottomans. The British redoubled their efforts in Mesopotamia finally capturing Baghdad while making slow but steady gains in Palestine with the eventual claim of Jerusalem. The Arab Revolt gained steam in the Hejaz region of western Arabia and the Trans-Jordan conducting raids on Ottoman forces throughout.

January

February

March - 11 MAR - British capture Baghdad from the Ottomans
- 19 MAR - the British commander, General Sir Stanley Maude, issues the [Proclamation of Baghdad](#)

April - 06 APR - United States declares war on Central Powers
- First and [Second Battles of Gaza](#): British launch two unsuccessful attacks on Gaza

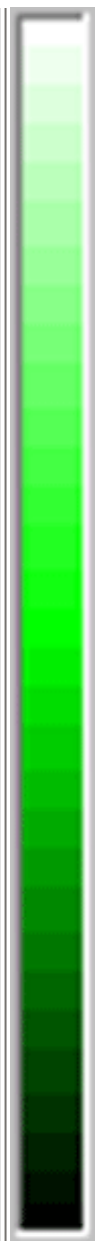
May

June

July - 06 JUL - Arab forces capture Ottoman Red Sea port of Aqaba

August

September



October - 31 OCT - [Battle of Beersheba](#): British capture Ottoman city of Beersheba

November - 07 NOV - [Third Battle of Gaza](#): British finally capture Gaza from the Ottomans

December - 11 DEC - [Battle of Jerusalem](#): British General Allenby accepts Ottoman surrender of Jerusalem

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1918

Although it was not a certain outcome at the beginning of the year, by November the "war to end all wars" came to a close. While Bolshevik Russia sought a quick end to the war with a series of treaties with the Central Powers, the injection of American blood and resources allowed the Entente Powers to eventually prevail. The Ottomans gained back their territories lost to the Russians earlier in the war through treaty but that did little to offset the hemorrhaging of the empire in Mesopotamia, Arabia, Palestine and Syria to the British and Arab forces. The Young Turks under the increasing influence of star military leader, [Mustafa Kemal](#), reconsolidated and refocused their efforts on creating a successor state to the Ottoman Empire. Meanwhile, the Kurds, Armenians, and various Arab factions all began seriously considering statehood.

January

February

March - 03 MAR - [Treaty of Brest-Litovsk](#): Bolshevik Russia's exit from WWI, all Ottoman lands gained by Russia returned (including many northern lands of traditional Kurdistan)

April

May - 26 MAY - Georgia declares independence forming the internationally recognized [Democratic Republic of Georgia](#)

- 30 MAY - Armenia declares independence forming the internationally recognized [Democratic Republic of Armenia](#)

June



July

August

September - 21 SEP - [Battle of Megiddo](#): British forces rout remaining Ottomans in Palestine opening Syria to British advance

October - 01 OCT - British General Allenby captures Damascus

- 30 OCT - [Armistice of Mudros](#): End of hostilities between the Ottoman Empire and Entente Powers

November - 11 NOV - [Armistice with Germany](#): End of WWI

- 13 NOV - [Occupation of Constantinople](#) by the Entente Powers following the end of WWI (lasted until SEP 1923)

December

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1919

While the fatigued Entente Powers with the United States (the "Big Four") basked in their victory moving slowly to redefine relationships and boundaries, Kemal and the Young Turks moved quickly to reinvent themselves as the [Turkish National Movement](#) knowing it was only a matter of time before the complete collapse of the Sultan and his empire. This reorganization took most of 1919 but it would pay great dividends in the coming years. Unfortunately for the Kurds, a man of Kemal's charisma nor a central movement materialized to advance Kurdish desires for independence. Yet, Britain's Prime Minister [David Lloyd George](#) and America's President [Woodrow Wilson](#) kept the plight of the Kurds and other stateless ethnic groups in the faltering Ottoman Empire on the table through the course of post-war negotiations.

January - 18 JAN - [Paris Peace Conference](#) opens and lasts through JAN 1920; first discussions of partitioning Ottoman Empire

February

March

April

May - 15 MAY - [Occupation of Smyrna \(Izmir\)](#) by Greek forces

June - 28 JUN - Signing of the [Treaty of Versailles](#): official end to WWI, established the [League of Nations](#) and establishment of massive concessions and reparations on the Central Powers by the Entente Powers



July

August - 28 AUG - President Wilson authorizes the [King-Crane Commission](#) to inform American policy regarding the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire; the report is kept secret until 1922 but recommends blanket self-determination (including the Kurds)

September

October

November

December

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1920

1920 was a year of great promise for the Kurds and most of the world. With the first gavel falling to open Wilson's grand experiment, the world finally felt a little safer as the League of Nations met to dissuade countries from pursuing war through collective security. Nevermind the abhorrent conditions placed on the former Central Powers by the Treaty of Versailles and that the United States Senate refused to allow the US to participate in the League of Nations, it was nonetheless a time of great promise. In the mountains which form the Armenian Knot of eastern Asia Minor, this promise was stirring in the form of a European concept known as nationalism. As with many other nations, the Kurds were tired of centuries of rule by foreigners and sought self-governance. Entente Powers Great Britain, France and Italy along with American promotion, provided this opportunity to the Kurds (as well as other local minorities) in the Treaty of Sèvres.

January - 16 JAN - Opening of the [League of Nations](#) (would last until 1939)

February - 12-24 FEB - [Conference of London](#): Meeting of Entente Powers to lay foundation for the Treaty of Sèvres and to restrict the power of the Ottoman Sultan

March

April - 19-26 APR - [San Remo Conference](#): Meeting of Entente Powers (with Japan) to confirm League of Nations [mandates](#) for specific

portions of former German and Ottoman Empire territories

- 23 APR - Creation of the [Grand National Assembly](#) by the Turkish National Movement as the new government of the new state of Turkey; proclaims Mustafa Kemal as president and [Ismet İnönü](#) as



chief of the General Staff

May

June - 14 JUN - First major clash between Turkish Nationalist forces and British forces outside Izmit; solidifies Nationalists & alarms Brits

July - 23 JUL - [Battle of Maysalun](#): French defeat of Syrian forces outside Damascus ending short-lived Syrian independence

August - 10 AUG - Signing of the [Treaty of Sèvres](#) (**Landmark Event I**); also effective date of British Mandate of Iraq

September - 29 SEP - Effective date of British Mandate of Palestine / Trans-Jordan and French Mandate of Syria

October

November

December

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1921

As the Turkish Nationalist Movement began their successful prosecution the Turkish War of Independence the Kurds continued to squander the opportunity given to them in the Treaty of Sèvres. The schism centered on the discord between the [Northern Kurds](#) (primarily living in present-day Turkey) and the [Southern Kurds](#) (living in present-day Iraq and Iran). The Northern Kurds were largely content with Turkish rule while the Southern Kurds agitated for independence but were under jurisdiction of the British Mandate.

January - 11 JAN - [First Battle of İnönü](#): resulted in the first Turkish Resistance defeat of the Greek Army

February - 21 FEB-12 MAR - [Conference of London I](#) opens with European diplomats trying to salvage the Treaty of Sèvres

March - 27-30 MAR - [Second Battle of İnönü](#): major defeat of Greek forces by Turkish Resistance often viewed as turning point

April

May

June

July

August - 10 AUG - Expiring of clause in Treaty of Sèvres requiring Kurds to submit claim to League of Nations for statehood.



September

October - 20 OCT - [Treaty of Ankara](#) between Turkish Nationalist Movement and France ending French claims to Anatolia

November

December

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1922

Disparity between the Kurds and victory for the Turkish National Movement in 1922 bring an end to Kurdish aspirations for statehood. The Turks malign the Treaty of Sèvres as illegitimate and call for a new treaty. The former Allies convene the Conference of London II to again try to salvage Sèvres and their dignity after being soundly defeated by the Turkish nationalist forces. However, Britain and France continue to be bogged down in their respective mandates precluding any resolve to check Turkish aspirations.

January

February

March - [Conference of London II](#)

April

May

June

July

August

September

October - 11 OCT - [Armistice of Mudanya](#): effective end of Turkish War of

Independence signed by Turkey and Greece

November - 01 NOV - Grand National Assembly votes to abolish Sultinate officially ending the Ottoman Empire

- NOV 1922 - FEB 1923 - [Conference of Lausanne](#) convened at request of Turkey to create a new treaty replacing the Treaty of Sèvres

December

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1923

1923 marked the end for Kurdish hopes for statehood. The extraordinary success of the Turkish nationalists in the preceding three years provided them the political and diplomatic leverage necessary to remove all foreign (European) claims on Asia Minor. Minority claims such as those put forward by the Kurds and Western Armenians were simply ignored by their former European patrons. Fatigue on the part of the Europeans played a large part in this lack of concern as they (particularly the British and French) were exasperated by their numerous--and largely contentious--occupations in the Middle East. All of this lead to the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne, the master stroke of Kemal Atatürk and his fellow Turkish nationalists, which internationally codified the existence of the Republic of Turkey and their significant border expansion. At the same moment, the Kurds were relegated into the persecution of second-class citizenship in Turkey and Iraq.

January

February

March

April

May

June

July - 24 JUL - Signing of the [Treaty of Lausanne](#) (**Landmark Event II**) ending Kurds' Window of Opportunity for statehood



August

September

October - 29 OCT - Grand National Assembly proclaims establishment of the [Republic of Turkey](#)

November

December

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Treaty of Sèvres

10 August 1920

Compiled by Shawn Leonard

The Treaty of Sèvres was the culminating work of the Conference of London and the San Remo Conference held earlier in 1920 by Entente Powers--Britain, France and Italy with Japan. More specifically, it was the culmination of a process began by the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 and extending through the Paris Peace Conference and the subsequent Treaty of Versailles. Each of these events worked to partition the former Ottoman Empire. By no means was this process fair or equitable and as will be seen, many of the agreements were not enforced and some were altogether ignored. Out of the League of Nations' sponsored San Remo Conference came the "post-colonial" rule of the heart of the Middle East by France and Britain in the form of the Mandate system. The Treaty of Sèvres focused on Asia Minor and how to parcel out the heart of the former Ottoman Empire. As depicted in the map below, multiple players wanted pieces of the land for various reasons including historical influence, resources and perhaps most importantly, to limit the rising aspirations of the Turkish nationalists.

The Kurds, who were not directly represented at any of the preceding conferences or at the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres but did have the ears of various British, French and American diplomats, were specifically discussed in the [Treaty](#) (Section III, Articles 62 - 64) as aspirants for statehood and a rough deliniation of a potential state were defined (see map below) between the Armenia and the French and British Mandates. However, contingent upon this recognition was the need for the Kurdish tribes to unify politically and socially and present their case for statehood to the League of Nations within one year of the Treaty.

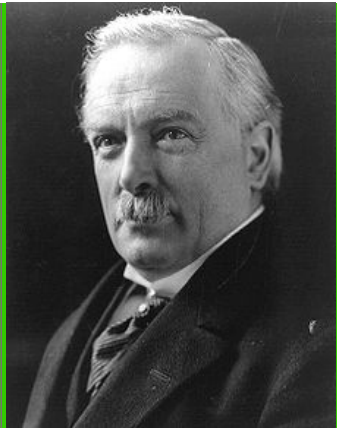


Source: Wikipedia Commons, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:TreatyOfSevres_\(corrected\).PNG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:TreatyOfSevres_(corrected).PNG)

ACTORS

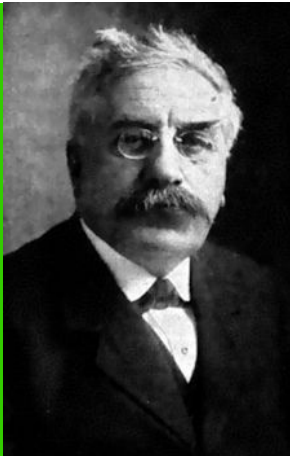
Great Britain	France	Italy	Japan	United States	Bolshevik Russia
Prime Minister David Lloyd George	Prime Minister Alexandre Millerand	Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti	Emperor Taishō	President Woodrow Wilson	Chairman Vladimir Lenin
					

Source: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/>



Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e8/David_Lloyd_George.jpg

Along with PM Millerand, one of the prime drivers of the partition process. Wary of Turkish nationalism, PM George supported Greece, France & Italy in their requests for parts of Asia Minor. He also supported statehood for Armenians and Kurds.



Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/59/Alexandre_Millerand.jpg

PM Millerand wanted to maintain France's influence in the region and saw a natural connection between its mandate in Syria and south-central Anatolia. He was less supportive of Kurd statehood than PM George due to the Kurds proximity to French lands in Anatolia--especially the regional capital of Diyarbakir.

wikipedia/commons/7/71/Young_giolitti.jpg

Little is known on Italy's position toward the Kurds. It is likely that they were generally ambivalent toward the Kurdish position as long as they had their piece of the pie in southwestern Anatolia.



Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/33/Emperor_Taish%C5%8D.jpg

Like Italy, little is known about the how the Japanese viewed the Kurds and if they had any position at all. For the most part, Japan had very little influence on matters regarded primarily European as the Middle East was still highly guarded by the likes of Britain and France.

Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2d/President_Woodrow_Wilson_portrait_December_2_1912.jpg

The US was not represented at Sèvres. President Wilson was a true believer in the rights of individual nations and was an advocate of statehood for the Arabs, Turks, Kurds and Armenians as evidenced by the findings of the King-Crane Report which he commissioned. However, by this point the US was largely regulated to the sidelines by the Isolationists in Washington who had regained control after reluctantly allowing Wilson to participate in WWI. They were adamantly opposed to US involvement in affairs outside of the Western Hemisphere.



Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8d/Lenin_CL_Colour.jpg

The Bolsheviks were not represented at Sèvres either. By signing the [Treaty of Brest-Litovsk](#) in 1918, the other Entente Powers sought to penalize Russia from what they perceived as Russian assistance to the Ottomans at a critical point in the war. Given Russia's own imperial instincts, it is unlikely that they favored separate statehood for the nations in Asia Minor. Indeed, by 1922, Lenin had annexed Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia into their growing empire.

Ottomans:

Riza Tefik

Grand Vizier Damat Ferid Pasha

Ambassador Hadi Pasha

Minister Reşid Halis

The Treaty of Sèvres was doomed from the moment it was signed. Although the representatives of the Entente Powers were acting in good faith, the signatures on behalf of the Ottoman Empire were absolutely worthless. The Turkish nationalists under the extraordinary leadership of Mustafa Kemal and Ismet İnönü were successfully waging the Turkish War for Independence against all-comers including the British, French, Greeks, Armenians and Ottoman loyalists. The Ottoman Empire was fading quickly but the Turkish nationalists had no intentions

of losing Anatolia to any entity including the Kurds.

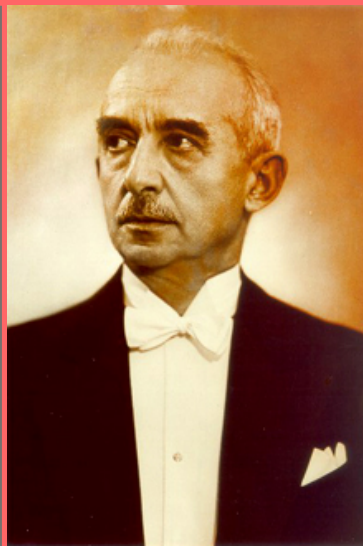
[Back to 1920](#)

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/%7Eabutalon/Treaty%20of%20Lausanne.html> (1 of 2) [12/10/2008 1:48:34 PM]



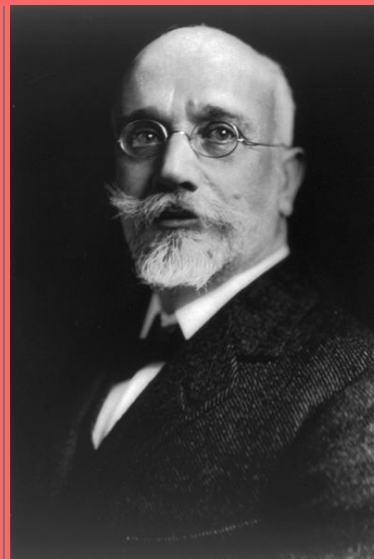
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:George_Curzon2.jpg

Lord Curzon was the primary negotiator for the Allies (Great Britain, France and Italy). The position of the Allies was to prevent Turkish territorial over-reach (primarily in reference to the former Ottoman vilayet of Mosul) and ensure that the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus Straights remained open. On both accounts, Lord Curzon was successful. The League of Nations eventually (1926) awarded Mosul to the British Mandate of Iraq.



Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Portrait_of_Ismet_Inonu.jpg

Foreign Minister İnönü was Kemal Atatürk's right hand man and master diplomat. At Lausanne, the Turkish position was strong given their recent victories in the Turkish War of Independence and the general sense of fatigue among the former Allies. İnönü shrewdly leveraged his position to attain the favor of the British and Americans in extending the Turkish borders further east than originally proposed (reducing Armenia's state and eliminating any chance for a separate Kurdish state).



Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:%CE%95%CE%BB%CE%B5%CF%85%CE%B8%CE%AD%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%BF%CF%82_%CE%92%CE%B5%CE%BD%CE%B9%CE%B6%CE%AD%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%82.jpg

Greece was lucky to even be invited to the table. They had suffered badly in the Turkish War of Independence where they lost Smyrna (Izmir) and their stake in western Anatolia. Indeed, in an earlier settlement with Turkey, Greece agreed to population exchange resulting in nearly 1.5 million Greeks being forcibly removed from Anatolia and resettled in Greece.



Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Mark_Lambert_Bristol.jpg

The US was not an official actor at the Lausanne Conference but they were represented by Admiral Bristol acting in his duty as High Commissioner to Turkey. Bristol was befriended by Atatürk and İnönü during the Turkish War of Independence leading to Bristol's avid support for the Turkish position at Lausanne.

The only unresolved issue of the Treaty of Lausanne was the former Ottoman vilayet (province) of Mosul in northern Iraq. Both Turkey and the British (through the British Mandate) laid claim to the land and the issue was left to a subsequent commission of the League of Nations. Two years later the commission ruled that Mosul should be part of the British Mandate and future state of Iraq. In 1927, oil was discovered in these lands near Kirkuk (Baba Gurgur Oilfield) by the [Turkish Petroleum Company](#). Throughout the late 1920s and 1930s, Kurdish rebels challenged the British occupation forces and nascent Iraqi government but each time were violently crushed.

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