

The Advent of Constitutionalism in Kurdistan: A Case Study

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Received: Dec. 2014 & Published: Feb. 2015

Abstract: *The years after uprising of Sheykh Abdoulah Nahri, has not any outcome but war, drought, disease and insecurity in Kurdistan. West of Iran which had been became the center of big governments in World War, became disrupted by the uprising of Sheykh Mahmoud Barzanji. Ottmani attack on Kurdistan, lead Christians evacuate these areas and Semko who saw there is no army in the area started to loot and expand his dominance in border areas. Reza khan who turned to a dictator, sent major AmanAllah khan Jahanbani to fight against him, Semkos' uprising is suppressed. Semko fled to Ottoman. A few years later Kurdistan retained its growth and relative calm, until the early World WarII, by the gendarmes. The purpose of this study is to collect situation in Iran's side Kurdistan in international war. This topic helps a lot to shed light on events occurred during these years, and widening the point of view of researchers on Kurdistan area.*

Keywords: *World War, Kurdistan, Constitutionalism, Semko*

1. Introduction

Around 1850 A.D, Shamdinan, Barzanji and Barzani sheykhs raised in Kurdistan. Sheykh Obeydollah Nahri started uprising by encouraging and stimulus of Britain and Ottomans, since the Kurdish tribes were neither united nor aware of its nature, they were suppressed generally. Ottoman Turks greed to Iran's border areas, caused they constantly stimulate nomads among them nomads settled in border lines like Shekaks by the leadership of Semko. During 1877-1888 wars between Russia and Ottoman huge damages was occurred, especially Ottoman emperor engulfed in insecurity, drought and disturbance, the paper 61 of Berlin treaty in 13th of January 1868 stated, Ottoman government should perform reforms according to the regional situation in areas settled by Armenians, and guarantee their safety against Kurds. The Community of Kurds solidarity which was established by Sheykh Obeydollah, moved along Ottoman government policies which caused lesser lands exit from the Ottoman government's hand [1].

Lack of equipment's and information also enough force to build order, provided required bed for starting fight and hostility and stimulate big powers like Russia, Britain and Iran. In the early years of constitutional and constitutionalism, people and Bourgeoisie class in Kurdistan had the appeared to be traditional and especially agric. Feudal and land owners known as, "Agha" strongly reacted against any sort regulation in the society also progress of reformations and underclass became more affluent. Since they had power, prosperity and enough prevalence among other classes, followed the despots [2].

In important cities of Iran pioneers of constitutionalism were mainly clergymen, the situation in Kurdistan was similar and highly influential sheikhs like Sheikh Mohammad Mardoukh was the establisher of community called "Sedaghat" which means "Honesty" in Sannadaj [3]. According t the Kurds demands during institutionalism no separation thought did not appeared among the Kurds not verbally nor in action, however Ottmani Kurds during that era multiplied their efforts in

order to achieve similar constitutionalism results in Ottmani, and asked for a kind of Kurdish nationalism, but Turk authorities always responded harshly to any action.

In Mahabad also Fatah Qazi established a constitutionalist community, but minor tyranny occurred by the Mohammad Ali shah, dampened the role of constitutionalists. Policies were followed by the Ghajar politicians and tyrants in Kurdistan, including removing consolidation between constitutionalists and tried by creating serious obstacle as division, blocked the way on building constitutionalism. The role of Tsar of Russia which was against any kind of freedom and modernism and considered as in serious supporter of tyrants is not ignorable.

2. Kurds of Iran during the First World War

Between 1914-1918 the world changed, most countries were involved in the war between Austria and Russia in Balkan, difference between France and Germany since 1870 about Alsace-Velleron, also marine and economic competition between England and Germany [4].

Closure of Ottmanis to Germany and entering to the war in favor of Germany, because of hostility and difference with Russia, caused most parts of Kurdistan under Ottmanni territory suffered greatly, and still its different parts exist in several countries like Iran, Turkey, Syria and Iraq. Desire to plundering, using Ottamanis advanced arms and religious minds' of Kurds of Iran, and get great spoils are among the main reasons that Kurds entered to the World War.

In the early years of war, community under the name of Freedom of Kurdistan formed in Azerbaijan region which had leaders like Sheikh Abdoulghader Nahri and Seyyed Taha Afandi.

In the early years of twentieth century and by the beginning of the First World War, we are face with new changes, which

namely the ruling and political power of Qazis in Mahabad. Individuals as "Gharani Agha Mamesh", "Ali khan Dehbokri" and "Semko" were among clans who civil class confronted with them in shifting power.

Beginning of Ismail Agha Semkos' activity From hundreded years ago different Kurdish clans settled in west of Uremia Lake including:

- Abdavidiz clan in Shahpour region.
- Roudaki clan in Targawar.
- Jalali clan in Agri and Makou region.
- Mameli clan inn Shahpour region.
- Zardi clan in Salmas, Naghadeh and Oshnaviyeh regions.
- Shekak clan in Urmia.

Ismail Agha Semko was born in Abdavi clan and for many years had big part of West of Iran under his control. So we will look at to the events happened to the Shekaks' tribe, years before Ismail Semko. Later we will review chronological of political events related to the Semko.

Ismail Agha was the head of Shekak tribe during the period of war between Iran, Russia (don't taken mistakenly with Ismail Agha Semko), this person provide great services to the Iran's war leader, after his was killed, Ali agha the head of Shekak tribe, started spoil, later on Omar agha, Semkos' father selected as I the head of the Shekak tribe. Mohammad agha the oldest son, Jafar agha was smart and awe person, influential man, he doubled the army forces of the tribe, but later was killed by the Nezam Al-SoltaneMafi ingovernery of Tabriz. Killing of Jafar Agha, made Ismail agha very angry, this was the main reason of starting a national and tribunal by him. This not only provided Ottoman's interference in west of Iran, but also made the way to entrance of Semko to the politic and rulingarena.

3. Semko in World War

His policies got variety of forms and each time tends to a place. At the beginning Semkos' policies inclined to the Ottmanis, because of religious and tribunal

considerations, also because of their quick attacks, Ottmani began support them. Any of the hostile countries, were interested in get benefit from tribunal armies of Iran, because of weakness of central government.

Mr. Mojtaba Barzadie in his book "Political condition of Kurdistan" considered following reasons for it including [5]:

- Severe conservatism and not being involved seriously in favor of one of war sides; Russia or Ottomans.
- Increasing prosperity of Shekak tribe, which gained by the looting of Christians, Azeri's and Kurds has been settled in Somay Baradost area.
- Achieving many light and heavy arms belonging to the Ottmani and Russians at the end of the war.
- Not supporting civilians and Kurdish rural people against Russian attacks caused his army remained healthy.
- Competing Christians and finally evacuation from West Azerbaijan, was in favor of him.
- At the end of the war number of Turk soldiers in Ottmani troop, served in Semko arm and provide him valuable services.
- Edition of Somay Baradoust areas to his seemingly legal territories by help the Russians. Semko used the power vacuum in Azerbaijan, and Christians escape to the south, also by the means of available field for making the Kurdish tribes united, asked for independence and being separated from Iran. By the means of cash aids from his fans, began propaganda in Uremia, and asked for a local and Kurd ruler for the area.
- By the passing the time, Semko got stronger. By the full support of Britain consulate in Tabriz, he become responsible for handling and keeping the road safe, in this

way he became free to looting, at the same time Sheykh Shamdinan who has huge influence among Iraqi, Iranian and Turkish Kurds, decided to unite with Semko, in this way Semko retain his power.

Since Kurdish tribes found out, Semko could get rid of the heaviest pressures, took his side, and Semko in 1920 announced Kurds independence.

Among the other Semkos' jobs, publishing a newspaper in Kurdish. Mohammad Tamodon who his publication being occupied by the Semko forces says: I made a weekly newspaper in Kurdish-Persian under the title of "Roj Kurd-Shaw Ajam", which means kurd in the day, Turk at night.

Semko formed an organization to obtain custom from items of any kind which people intended to take them from Urmia to other cities. Custom bills were issued in Kurdish.

In "Contemporary Kurd History" Semkos' activities described as following, after unite and was submitted to Sheykh Taha: in August 1920, rebuilt the Salmas plain, and then occupied the Uremia plain and later Uremia itself, in January of 1921, the two biggest Mokri tribes namely Dehbokri and Mamash; announced they're ready to join to Semko, meanwhile in the Southern of Kurdistan, Horaman; King Jafar, the head of Nosoud district Horamis, asked the Semko to join him in an attack on Soleymanieh [5].

4. Iraq and Turkey Kurds and Semko

Semko was interested in working in Iran since his tribe was settled in border line of Iran; also he had close relation with the Kurdish communities and above that Seyyed Taha in Turkey. Semko hardly tried to attract the support of one the big powers like Soviet Union or U.K, he met Sheykh Mahmoud Barzanji in Soleymania. He couldn't annoy Turks, because his son kept as in captive in their hands. Difference in the general policies of Sheikh Taha the member of Turkey, Kurds

community; Semko the head of Shekak tribe, Motafa Pasha the member of Iraqi Kurds' community and feudal of Soleymani, Sheikh Mohammad Barzanji caused their unity of these four people turned to disunity [6].

From the Semkos' actions it can be understood that, he was mainly thinking of ruling the others, unlike what he claimed for independence of Kurdistan, he wasn't really looking for solving the problem and general providential to these processes of events.

5. Mahabad Occupancy by Semko

After ending the First World War, Semko reached to huge power in his uprising. He got benefit of power vacuum of government forces very much, and occupied Mahabad in sixth of October 1921, which in Mahabad known as Shekak year. Government forces in Mahabad defeated from Semko, and all gendarmerie forces killed in Mahabad [7, 8]. After capturing Mahabad, he let his armies to loot the city, and didn't do any preventive action to save the city and people. Among the public he left bad memory of himself.

In peak of power Semko decided to surround Boukan and Saeinghala by using Sheikh Taha forces. Semko conquests caused Turkish and Iraqi Kurds praised him like a hero, therefore some of those who had power in Saqez and Kermanshah, asked to get united with him in their territories [9].

6. The End of Semko Uprising

Quick and obvious victories of Semko, made Reza Khan so angry, he didn't find any excuse to not defeat Semko. Reza Khan telegraph which comes following indicates this point [10, 11]: "Ask the head of the tribes to come and get them understand clearly, they shouldn't thinking of returning their homes, unless decisively defeat the enemy (Semko and his followers)."

Rezakhan provided huge facilities to brigade General Aman Allah Khan Jahanbani.

In the early summer of 1922 in ShekerYazi mount (located in the south of Khoy) fighting each other. Army organization of gendarmerie, and fear and lack of confidence of tribes who has joined to Semko. meanwhile the differences which Omar Khan within the Shekak tribes expanded it, also lack of support by the England, caused Semko get defeated heavily at first day of fighting from the government forces, and take asylum to the Turkey, and finally lost his importance in political situation of the region. In later years after his defeat, from 1922 to 1930 stayed with Sheikh Mahmoud Barzanji, finally invited for talks in Oshnawieh inn Iran, even a day before his death negotiated with Major Sadq Khan Nowrozi, but a day after talks being killed in an unknown place by the Major Sadeq Khan.

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