In order to follow the trend of events it is necessary at this stage to point out political feeling in Iraq.

At this time the Iraq Government proclaimed the Electoral areas throughout the kingdom and of course Kurdistan was included. The Kurds were very discontented at this inclusion but they had no oppportunity of openly expressing this discontent. In order to make some form of protest they seized upon the opportunity presented by the death of Hamdi Pasha who was a distant relative of Hamdi Beg, and derived the name of Pasha from the fact that he had been a Turkish Governor.

Their protest appeared to be organised from the fact that all at one time Hamdi Beg received numerous telegrams from practically all notables etc in Kurdistan. Hamdi Beg has many of the telegrams in his possession. They are all telegrams of condolence on the death of this distant relative. Many more telegrams were held up by the Postal Authorities. All the telegrams described Hamdi Beg as either "Prince Baban Hamdi Beg" or " Hamdi Beg Baban Prince of Kurdistan" among the notables from whom these were sent were:

President of Municipality Sulaimani
Governor of Alepja(whose father was chief of the Jaff tribe)
Secretary to the council of Administration Sulaimani
Uncle and brother of Shaikh Mahmoud
Aghas of Shiwekel in the name of the district
The secretary to the political officer
Chief of Shaikh Bizayni Tribe
Chief of Shuwan Tribe
Chief of Hamawand.

and various other high notables.

Hamdi Beg was afraid that the British Authorities would connect him with this protest. In order to prove that he had nothing whatever to do with it, he took the telegrams immediately to the C.I.D. explaining his position and asking for instructions. Here it was suggested that Hamdi Beg should see the High Commissioner. He saw the High Commissioner's Secretary who was now Major Bourdillon who allowed him to send telegrams thanking all these notables.

One of the most prominent persons connected with Iraq affairs was Miss Bell, the daughter of Sir Hugh Bell. She was at one time a political officer there and was also Oriental Secretary to the High Commissioner. She took a prominant part in the formation of the Iraq Government.

At this time Hamdi Beg was under the impression that Miss Bell's influence was rather against him and against the system of Government that the Kurds desired. He talked this matter over with a British officer who in order to allay his suspicion presented him with the following report written by Miss Bell :-

KURDISH SITUATION

In view of the fact that our present attitude towards Southern Kurdistan is admittedly merely a policy of marking time until peace with Turkey should set our hands free to deal with the Kurdish question and that such peace seems to be further off than it has been since the armistice. I venture to suggest that we should review our own resources with the object of discovering some means of ameliorating the present highly unsatisfactory conditions.

If it were possible to isolate Southern Kurdistan we might have succeeded in establishing a stable administration acceptable to the large majority on the very liberal principles which we have already adopted. But it is not possible; Local politics are largely at the mercy of propaganda from without and that propoganda directed by the Kamalists, has for its main object to oppose our work of pacification and construction. Any new organisation, however beneficient in intention, is bound to encounter the opposition of persons who conceive their liberties to be restricted by it - that those liberties are usually in the direction of evil doing makes no difference to the argument. These dissentiments form a body of material eminently suitable for Kamalist purposes, against which we do not seem to have found a suitable weapon. It is not the insurgence of a robber chief of the Karim Fattah type which need disquiet us, but the general unrest and dissatisfaction on which have been revealed of late by the Divisional Advisor's reports and by the petitions for the return of Shaikh Mahmoud which have reached His Excellency.

Mustafa Pasha when he was in Baghdad some 3 months ago informed me that though he personally was hostile to Shaikh Mahmoud; he thought that the great majority of the country, even including the Jaf. were in favour of his return, and recently the Divisional Advisor himself suggested this as a solution which might be entertained.

Our object in our dealings with Sulaimani is to hold the province forward in the path of peace and civilization. Is it likely that we should find substantial assistance from Shaikh Mahmoud? He has all the disruptive characteristics of the Kurdish Aga, joined to a natural waywardness and violence of character which must always make him a difficult associate in the work of establishing administration.

Yet to offer successful opposition to him and to what he stands for it is essential to set some other national ideal to work, and this must be a conception and a purpose which will appeal to those who have a real desire for peace and the economic and social progress which peace brings and at the same time be better able to rope in than we have been incohate nationalist aspiration and yoke them to its service. We may begin by admitting that the Arab national ideal is of no good to the Kurds. Every element in the country has refused close political union with the Iraq and the King is running in the face of all evidence when he imagines that his personal exertions might affect a change of feeling.

When are we to look for a more enlightened national ideal than can be found along the followers of Shaikh Mahmoud?

I call attention to the view of Taufiq Wahbi which I submitted to His Excellency about a fortnight ago. He is an officer in the Iraq army, an educated man and an ardent Kurdish nationalist. There are others like him in the Iraq Army- I do not think there would be any difficulty in getting them to agree on some such policy as that outlined by Taufiq Wahbi. It's advantage over everything we can put forward is that it is native not foreign, ~~while it is just~~ It is true that it is the view we should like to see accepted- why not give it a chance of making itself felt locally? In consultation with Ja'far Pasha and with the consent of the King, let Taufiq Wahbi select 8 or IO of his brother officers and go out to preach his doctrines in Kurdistan. The emissaries must be put into the closest touch with the Divisional Advisor whose consent to the experiment is of course essential.

Roughly speaking Taufiq Wahbi's plan is as follows:-

(I) After suitable propaganda he would and his Majesty's Government permit Sulaimani to choose a Hukumdar.

(2) He would regard it as a disastrous return to the Middle Ages if their choice should fall on Shaikh Mahmoud and in order to prevent such an event, he would not permit Shaikh Mahmoud to return to Sulaimani till after the local administration was established. His absence and the efforts of Taufiq Wahbi and Co. would probably rule him out. That at least is the best hope.

(3) He thinks the choice might very possibly fall on Hamdi Beg Baban and he can think of no better man- he wishes he could. It is useless to bring a stranger from Constantinople or elsewhere, added to which the Kurds, naturally very suspicious, would think that we were forcing a card on them and pointedly avoid drawing it.

(4) He would next set up Kurdish Government in miniature, a tiny Cabinet with Mudirs of Interior, Finance and Education all amenable to the counsels of the British Advisor. The continuance of the British Mandate he regards as a Sine qua non.

(5) This done he would seek to regulate relations with Iraq. The Kurdish Government would send two representatives to meet two representatives of the Iraq Government, under the presidency of a representative of His Excellency, in Baghdad. Taufiq Wahbi's own wish would be to see the Kurdish province come under the Iraq throne, but with complete administrative independence. He fears that it may be difficult to get Hamdi Baban to accept this condition but hopes that economic and commercial considerations, to say nothing of a common determination to resist Turkish aggression, may prevail over his natural disinelination.

(6) He contemplates that once independent Kurdish Government is established in Sulaimani, other Kurdish districts might elect to join it, but agrees that no efforts should be made in this direction until the Sulaimani problem is solved. I personally doubt whether Kirkuk and Arbil would welcome Prince Hamdi Baban, but in this and in the rest. I should leave them to settle the matter themselves, seeing that neither we nor the Iraq Government can settle it for them.

This is his scheme! there is, so far as I can see no other on the tapis, is it not worth trying?

Hamdi Beg had received also a letter from Sir Arnold Wilson dated 4th June I920 thanking him for congratulations which Hamdi Beg had sent. This also showes somewhat Hamdi Beg's standing in Mesopotamia.

It appears that on the one hand they were contemplating making Hamdi Beg Prince of Kurdistan, whereas on the other hand they were continuing a process of persecution.

In I922, there were considerable disturbances in Kurdistan. The Turks profited by the troubles and marched into Southern Kurdistan with very few people and occupied various places. The general discontent was such that all British officials were forced to evacuate Sulaimani by Aeroplane in one night. On this Shaikh Mahmoud, a man of priestly descent whose grandfathers were the chief priests of palace of Baban's ancestors, was made ruler of Sulaimani. This was at the early occupation of this part of the country by the British Army.

Shaikh Mahmoud rebelled against the British and at the fighting was

captured and court martialled at Baghdad. He was condemned to death but reprieved and exiled to India.

On Hamdi Beg's reluctance to go to Kurdistan Shaikh Mahmoud was brought back from India on the understanding that he would accept rulership under the Arab Government. He was made ruler of Kurdistan but as soon as he put his feet on Kurdish soil he declined to recognise the Arab Government and demanded full independence. As soon as he entered Sulaimani, and as he could not get seperation from the Arab Government he openly rebelled. However, he freed the greatest part of Kurdistan from Turkish encroachment. The position in Kurdistan became worse than before and the British brought a Kurdish notable of Arab descent (Said Taha) to Baghdad in order to set up a rival Kurdish state to that of Shaikh Mahmoud. In this it was hoped ~~that~~ to prevent the Turks and Shaikh Mahmoud from uniting.

Said Taha was supplied with guns and soldiers. In the mean-time Major Noel and Captain Holt who was A.D.C. to the High Commissioner came to see Hamdi Beg at his house and they insisted that he should go to Kurdistan, for the time being under the Arabs in the hope eventually of forming a seperate Kurdish state. Hamdi Beg again emphatically declined. They left him in a very angry mood.

captured and court martialled at Baghdad. He was condemned to death but reprieved and exiled to India.

On Hamdi Beg's reluctance to go to Kurdistan Sheikh Mahmud was brought back from India on the understanding that he would accept vicerealty under the Arab Government. He was made ruler of Kurdistan but as soon as he put his feet on Kurdish soil he declined to recognize the Arab Government and demanded full independence. As soon as he entered Sulaimani, and as he could not get assistance from the Arab Government he openly rebelled. However, he freed the greatest part of Kurdistan from Turkish encroachment. The position in Kurdistan became worse than before and the British brought a Kurdish notable of Arab descent (Said Taha) to Baghdad in order to set up a rival Kurdish state to that of Sheikh Mahmud. In this it was hoped that to prevent the Turks and Sheikh Mahmud from uniting.

Said Taha was supplied with guns and soldiers. In the mean-time Major Noel and Captain Holt who was A.D.C. to the High Commissioner came to see Hamdi Beg at his house and they insisted that he should go to Kurdistan, for the time being under the Arabs in the hope eventually of forming a separate Kurdish state. Hamdi Beg again emphatically declined. They left him in a very angry mood.

P.S. This document was given to me (Omar) by the late Tawfiq Wahbi in Sweden in 1964, on the side of Hamdi Beg Bedirkan and his intimate then to the British. It is not clear where the text originally came from, but it is genuine.

Omar Sheikhmous