



حبر أبيض
WHITE INK



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“The Kurds and Modern Turkey”

Whoever examines the Kurdish reality from a purely historical perspective, will find that their situation was not better after the establishment of the Turkish Republic on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire in 1923 AD. After the Union and Progress Party (İttihad ve Terakki) took power in the Ottoman Empire after the coup of 1908 AD, the party followed the policy of Turkification against the minorities and nationalities residing in the country of all races and genders, including the Kurds. This policy was to integrate those minorities and other elements into the Turkish element by robbing their culture and language, displacing them from their areas of origin and distributing them to the states of the country. A decree was issued to expel all Kurds from their countries and disperse them in the Turkish states, provided that the percentage of the displaced and deportees in any Turkish town does not exceed %5 of the Turkish population! It also stipulated that Kurdish leaders and people of influence and influence would be forced to live and reside in large Turkish cities, and their followers from other clans and tribes would be distributed to distant villages to ensure that they did not communicate with those leaders in the cities. With this mentality mixed with abhorrent Turanian racism and the unfair mechanism regarding minorities, the Kurds were dispersed among the Turks so that their national components and their popular heritage would be lost with the passage of time.

The historical sources taken from the Immigrant Registration Department indicate that the number of displaced Kurds from Kurdistan to the Turkish states has reached about 700,000. Unfortunately, these records did not indicate the parties to which they were forced to migrate. This is a deliberate and clear intention to amputate tree leaves and branches from the roots, history and heritage. Clemenceau, the French Prime Minister during World War I, criticized this Turkish behavior against the Kurds when he said about the Turks: **“Through their bad management and various grievances from many ages, they have conclusively demonstrated that they are incompetent in managing the non-Turkish elements. In this case, we must not leave a nation in their administration”.**

Whether we agree or disagree with Clemenceau’s statement imbued with the colonial spirit on the legacy of the sick man (the Ottoman Empire), what the Union and Progress Party carried out in terms of displacement and exile of hundreds of thousands of Kurds is an unparalleled humanitarian disaster and a lack of mercy. In general, this statement had an impact on the activity of Kurdish associations in claiming their rights and obtaining autonomy and separation from the state. Hence, the government began to exploit the Islamic brotherhood and Ottoman patriotism. In an attempt to curb Kurdish activity, a higher committee was convened in order to discuss the demands of the Kurds, and it resulted in: granting Kurdistan autonomy, which was never achieved for them.

It is strange that the Kurdish issue was among the items raised in the famous Treaty of Sèvres, 1920 AD. In that treaty, the allies recognized the right to life for the Kurds and the independence of Kurdistan, for a period of two years under the supervision of Turkey, in preparation for declaring its general independence. Despite that, there was procrastination in implementing the important decisions in order to implement that clause, and the reluctance of Mustafa Kemal's government to implement the Kurdish demands. This forced the leaders of the Kurdish clans to send a telegram to the National Assembly in Ankara to demand what was stipulated in the Treaty of Sèvres to establish the independent state of Kurdistan, which includes the provinces of eastern Turkey, or else they would be forced to do so using weapons. In 1923, Mustafa Kemal himself recognized the Kurdish autonomy and that it should be granted to them in the areas where they constituted a dense population. This was in response to the Treaty of "Lausanne", which also included provisions on the right of the Kurds to independence.

However, all the promises went unheeded with the Kurdish dream. Geopolitics contributed greatly to the complexity of realizing that dream. The promises of the allies were not fulfilled due to the different geopolitical interests in the region. In addition, the Kemalist national movement repudiated the achievement of that desired national homeland for the Kurds stipulated in more than one international treaty. Rather, it dealt with them and their demands with cruelty and violence in order to quell their revolution. This was followed by a policy of forced displacement of Kurds from their areas, preventing them from using the word "Kurd" and calling them "Mountain Turks", and they carried out extensive cleansing at all levels of government and the press. Nevertheless, the Kurdish revolutions continued in succession between 1930-1925 AD, which resulted in great losses between the two parties in lives and money. The government of Ismet İnönü dealt with the Kurdish revolutions with unprecedented violence, forcing the revolutionaries to resort to the top of Mount Ağrıdag. However, that mountain was not spared from the large military campaign sent by İnönü to attack it and its revolutionaries. This was already done, but after the destruction of more than 112 Kurdish villages in a brutal way that cannot be imagined by humans. The Kurdish issue is still open as a deep wound that inflames from time to time in the history of modern Turkey.