



Obaidullah al-Nahri's revolution was their dream of independence

The Ottomans allied with the Persians to thwart the Kurdish dream

During the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire suffered from political, economic and military crises, and all attempts to reform the situation failed, and those crises increased after the Crimean War (1856-1854) and the Russo-Ottoman War (1878-1887), which contributed to the further deterioration of the economic conditions until the state got to the brink of bankruptcy. This affected most of its various states and territories, including the land of Kurdistan, which previously suffered from the unjust policies of the Ottoman, and from the misconduct of Ottoman officials, in addition to the marginalization, neglect, the imposition of various taxes and compulsory recruitment to the natives.

The situation of the Kurds worsened after the Ottoman Empire grew weaker subsequent to the Crimean War.

All of these factors combined together affected the economic life of the Kurds and their system based on agriculture and grazing. The situation got worse and desperate; famine spread, followed by the spread of epidemics and diseases.

The nature of the Kurds and their life were not separated from their lands and their deep and powerful links with it, as it is what provides them and their livestock with sustenance by farming and grazing them. That nature made the Kurdish element imbued with the love of the land and closely related to it.

These factors and the miserable conditions the Kurds lived through, were the reason why the Kurds changed their view of the Ottoman Empire, so they took a negative, rather extreme and often hostile stance. This was evident in the repeated rebellions and revolutions against the Ottoman empire, as Kurdistan witnessed many revolutions against the Ottomans, especially after (1820), such as the revolution of the Zazas, followed - in the period between (1839-1829) - the revolutions of Hakkari, Rawanduz, Tur Abdin, and the revolution of Sharif Khan Badlisi; however, all of these revolutions failed and resulted in the fall of most of the Kurdish emirates until, in 1847, they languished under the tyrannical Ottoman rule.

Poverty, poor living conditions, taxes, and compulsory recruitment made the Kurds detest the Ottomans.

The Kurdish revolutions increased; thus, the antagonism toward the Ottoman state was aggravated, subsequent to Kurdistan directly submitted to rule of the Ottomans. Most of those revolutions in their infancy, aimed at independence and achieving the principle of preserving the land and its bounties. Then, that principle developed into the idea of autonomy within the motherland. The goal of the Kurds was to achieve independence in decision-making and self-rule, through the ideas of Kurdish tribal leaders. At the end of the nineteenth century, they tried to reduce reliance on tribal leaders in order to reach the idea of nationalism; at that time, a new approach was formed that rooted the values and ideology of Kurdish nationalism. Then, the widespread popular uprisings led by Sheikh Obaidullah bin Taha Al-Nahri, took place in the year 1880; he is one of the sheikhs of the Sufi orders with wide influence, spread and pervasive throughout Kurdistan; his revolution is one of the most important and last revolutions, as the revolution broke out in the Iranian lands adjacent to the city of Shamdinan in the Gulmerek region, and he was able to extend his control in many areas, he even managed to take control of many Kurdish regions, and he owned a lot of land, in addition to 200 villages that he obtained from the Ottoman authorities, and the other part he inherited from his father, Sheikh Taha. This made him widely influential until he became one of the best Kurdish leaders, as he is a descendant of the famous Kurdish Shamdinan family, which was highly respected among the people of the region.

A number of historians have attributed the most important reasons for the outbreak of the revolution of Sheikh Obaidullah al-Nahri, to the deteriorating economic conditions in all Kurdish regions, which was one of the most important causes of the revolution, and the unjust and inequitable policy used by the Ottoman and Iranian states in the Kurdish regions; all of this made Obaidullah willing to protect his Kurdish nationalism, and a reason for uniting the Kurds in an independent state, and this idea took over his mind.

The revolution broke out in October (1880) and was led by Sheikh Obaidullah al-Nahri, in the Chemdinan region, affiliated to Hakkari state, south of Van state on the Ottoman-Iranian border in northern Kurdistan, in which most of the Kurdish tribes participated. The revolution lasted for two months, during which, the leader was unable to achieve the goals he sought and set his sights on, which is the unification of the two parts of Kurdistan, the Ottoman and the Iranian, and the establishment of a Kurdish national state under his leadership. However, the joint military intervention of the Ottoman and Iranian states put an end to the activity of that revolution and its leader, as Al-Nahri returned to Chemdinan; from there he was sent to Istanbul. He soon managed to escape from the capital and returned to Chemdinan through the Caucasus Road, and was arrested again and exiled to Makkah, and died there in (1883). With his death, the dream of Kurdish independence was put to end. It is enough that Obaidullah stood against injustice in both countries, and it is also credited to him, that he was the first to establish the idea of a Kurdish national state.

References:

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