

Nelida Fuccaro

ETHNICITY, STATE FORMATION, AND CONSCRIPTION IN POSTCOLONIAL IRAQ: THE CASE OF THE YAZIDI KURDS OF JABAL SINJAR

In modern Iraq, processes of state formation and national integration have been consistently affected by a number of ethnic issues and concerns. This became particularly evident in the decade after the country became independent from British Mandatory control in 1932. First, in the immediate postcolonial period ethnicity became central to the development of Iraqi national and international politics. Second, ethnic specificity emerged as a major factor in the shaping of postcolonial Iraqi society, despite the continuous attempts at enforcing a new national identity on the part of a still fragile state. This article discusses the important role played by ethnicity during the first stages of Iraqi national development by focusing on the impact of conscription on the Yazidi Kurds of Jabal Sinjar.¹

The enforcement of “universal” conscription in Iraq in 1934, two years after the termination of the British Mandate, lay at the root of a number of disturbances that occurred in Jabal Sinjar in northwestern Iraq between 1935 and 1940. Some sections of the local Yazidi population, a Kurdish heterodox group long settled in the area, repeatedly took up arms against the state authorities and the government officials in charge of assembling the Yazidi recruits from the Sinjari villages. In 1935, the government was compelled to send a major military expedition to restore peace in the area, and this culminated in the imposition of martial law. In 1939, Jabal Sinjar was again placed under the control of the military authorities, together with the district of Shaikhan, which was also inhabited mostly by Yazidis.

The Sinjari Yazidis represented a compact group of sedentary and semi-nomadic agriculturalists and cattle breeders who played a major role in the development of ethnic politics in northern Iraq. First, the Yazidis of Jabal Sinjar constituted the majority of the Iraqi Yazidis, the second-largest non-Muslim community and the largest heterodox Kurdish group settled in the Mosul province.² Second, the Sinjari Yazidis occupied an area on the borders with Syria and Turkey, and the control of this area became strategically and politically vital for the Iraqi state in order to safeguard and guarantee its position in the new regional order created by the colonial powers after 1918.

Nelida Fuccaro is Research Fellow at the Centre for Arab Gulf Studies, University of Exeter, Old Library, Prince of Wales Rd., Exeter EX4 4JZ, United Kingdom.

In the second half of the 1930s, Yazidis' responses to the enforcement of conscription clearly indicated the persistence of old loyalties that opposed the emergence of national solidarities. In the first decade after Iraqi independence, this Kurdish community was still an extremely marginalized group vis-à-vis state power. As an indication of the Yazidis' lack of integration in an increasingly centralized political system, the influence of Yazidi lay and religious leaders did not extend beyond the sphere of inter-tribal and inter-communal politics. Despite a brief but intense colonial experience, community–state relations had not changed substantially in comparison with the late Ottoman period. In modern Iraq, Yazidis' resistance to conscription had symbols of ethnic solidarity centering on religion and tribal affiliation that did not differ substantially from those displayed by the community during the conscription campaigns undertaken by the Ottomans in the second half of the 19th century. However, in the 1930s communal strategies were consciously adopted against a new state propaganda that focused on national integration and paved the way for the group's membership in a national community. In this context, the Yazidi Kurds of Jabal Sinjar reconstructed their ethnic solidarities as a political, cultural, and social resource within the newly created arena of a modern national state. Undoubtedly, the changing political circumstances resulting from the integration of modern Iraq into an international state system played a determining role in the process.

The issue of Yazidi conscription and its repercussions at both the national and regional level highlight particularly well the strained dynamics of state formation that developed in Iraq and other Middle Eastern states in the inter-war period. Events that occurred in northwestern Iraq between 1935 and 1940 illustrate the ways in which ethnic concerns affected the course of nation-building. Furthermore, the effects of the application of the 1934 Conscription Law on the Yazidi community of Jabal Sinjar clearly indicate the extent to which primordialism had become instrumental in channeling group resistance against new types of political and social control.³

STATE AND SOCIETY IN MONARCHICAL IRAQ

Like all other colonial nation-states in the Middle East that came into existence in the aftermath of World War I, monarchical Iraq (1921–58) was not a homogeneous socio-political system.⁴ The modern state of Iraq was an artificial creation of Great Britain, the Mandatory power between 1920 and 1932. In theory, British colonial supervision guaranteed the development of a modern nation-state in a new entity that united the former Ottoman provinces of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul. In practice, it supported state building only when that was consistent with British colonial and imperial interests. During the years of the Mandate, Great Britain established a new political regime that operated within the institutional frame of a parliamentary monarchy. In 1921, King Fay-sal, son of Sharif Husayn of Mecca, became the first ruler of modern Iraq. By and large, the new ruling elites belonged to the entourage of the king and, because of this, had a very tenuous power base in the country. Understandably, the Hashemite monarchy and its supporters faced the arduous task of legitimizing their authority vis-à-vis the local population, especially after the departure of the British in 1932.

The ways in which state institutions created by the British continued to affect the politics and society of monarchical Iraq is still an under-researched and controversial

issue. However, for the purpose of this enquiry, it suffices to point out that relations between the new state administration and the Iraqi population were complicated by the fact that the latter was particularly heterogeneous. In spite of the overarching framework of Ottoman rule, the majority of the Iraqi people had responded for centuries to a range of diverse sources of power and authority that were usually local and generally operated in the context of a “traditional” society. Among these, the most important were local notables, tribal shaykhs, and religious leaders.

Independent Iraq inherited from the Ottoman and British administrations a long-standing conflict between the cities and the countryside, which reflected a dichotomy between the sedentary and tribal worlds. Ottoman Iraq, as Hanna Batatu remarked, was composed of “plural, relatively isolated, and often virtually autonomous city-states and tribal confederations.” During the Mandate period, the British laid down a tribal policy whose general aim was to stop the process of detribalization initiated by the Ottoman government in the second half of the 19th century. This policy succeeded in reinstating the power and authority of many tribal leaders, who were allotted substantial subsidies by the government and benefited from the existence of separate legislation for the tribal areas—to the extent that, by the mid-1920s, tribal shaykhs had become the major political and administrative forces outside the cities. By the mid-1930s, especially in southern Iraq, some of them had become powerful landowners and had entered national politics as members of the Iraqi Parliament. As such, until the 1958 revolution, the shaykhs of southern Iraq were increasingly associated by the young Iraqi educated classes with the reactionary pro-British regime of Nuri al-Sa‘id.⁵

The existence of a marked cultural pluralism among the Iraqi peoples added a crucial dimension to the basic dichotomy between tribal and sedentary social groups. Religious, ethnic, or linguistic specificity often coexisted with tribal identity in the rural areas of Iraq. Although in the post-independence years a number of socio-economic transformations had the effect of modifying group relations, to a great extent tribal status and cultural specificity tended to strengthen primordial solidarities among these communities. Religion was still a powerful form of communal identification and permeated manifestations of popular culture, especially in the more remote areas of the Iraqi countryside. In this context, many cultural themes and practices were widely shared by neighboring groups.⁶ In many instances, religion still functioned as a powerful symbol for group mobilization, as the widespread Muslim response to the Assyrian Christians’ quest for autonomy in 1933 was to demonstrate.

In the urban milieu, people’s awareness of belonging to different religious, ethnic, and linguistic groups was slowly being eroded by the gradual emergence of a new class consciousness (as Hanna Batatu has shown), and by the growing impact of the new ideologies that gained ground between the 1920s and the 1940s. Among these was Arab nationalism, which became the official ideology of the Sunni-controlled Iraqi state; Kurdish nationalism, which had an increasing impact on the policies implemented by the government vis-à-vis the Kurds; and communism, which entered Iraqi national politics in the late 1930s, and especially after Rashid ‘Ali’s coup in 1941, drawing support from many members of minority groups.

When Britain left Iraq in 1932, the process of national integration was at a very early stage of development, and the unity of the Iraqi state was very fragile. Certainly,

in the first decade of Iraq's independence, inter-ethnic relations were still very much affected by the artificial hierarchical power structure created by Great Britain, which had emphasized the diversity of the Iraqi people and consequently had strengthened old community boundaries or constructed new communal identities. As a result, tribes, religious groups, and wider ethnic or religious communities occupied different places in the political order and developed diversified and often ambivalent relations with the Iraqi state. These depended on a number of factors, among which the most important were: the political role played by these groups in the nation-building process; their links with the former Mandatory power; their internal socioeconomic divisions; and various strategic, economic, and political factors that increased or decreased the importance of certain groups in local, national, and international politics. In modern Iraq, the formation of wider ethnic communities as opposed to the existence of local religious and tribal groups became evident under the influence of British colonialism, when Sunni–Shi'i, Kurdish–Arab divisions started to play a major role in the arena of Iraqi politics and prominent groups such as Christians, Jews, and Turcomans were denied access to political power.⁷ However, the existence of a national political arena that accommodated both organized oppositional politics and old political loyalties based on patronage and clientism allowed the mobilization of large sections of the population. Many Iraqis attempted to express their particular solidarities in new ways consistent with the new political developments.⁸

Clearly, many factors constrained the formation of a cohesive national community within a state system that was not yet consolidated. Therefore, at least concerning the immediate postindependence period, the ethnic issue should be analyzed through the lens of conflict and power struggle rather than viewed as a function of the degree of the integration of the various groups. This inevitably places much emphasis on the persistence of old values in the context of the changes that occurred in the political order.

THE ISSUE OF CONSCRIPTION

The introduction of conscription represented a very important step in the consolidation of the Iraqi national army, whose development was closely connected to the presence of Great Britain. The nucleus of the Iraqi army was created as early as 1920–21 under the aegis of the British authorities, with the ultimate goal of gradually building up a military force that would allow Great Britain to cut down its military expenditure in Iraq. The implication was also that the formation of a national army would allow the modern state of Iraq ultimately to become responsible for defense, as stated in the Anglo–Iraqi Treaty of 1923. However, it is well known that until 1932 the defense of Iraq as regards both internal security and the protection of the national borders was firmly under the control of the British Royal Air Force and the Assyrian Levies, the latter recruited from the minority communities (mainly Assyrian Christians and Kurds) but led by British officers. Until October 1929, the British garrison also included a number of battalions of the British Army in India as a result of the military occupation of Mesopotamia–Iraq during World War I, when the War Office conducted military operations against the Turks from India.⁹

During the Mandate, recruitment into the Iraqi army was voluntary, although the introduction of conscription had featured regularly on the agenda of a number of

Sunni politicians since the early 1920s. By and large, the British Mandatory authorities maintained a declared attitude of noncommitment regarding the enforcement of universal conscription in the country. At the same time, they did not encourage the government to frame a conscription law, because they feared the negative repercussions it might have among the tribes and their leaders, on whose support Great Britain had largely relied for the maintenance of public security in the countryside.¹⁰ Furthermore, it was rightly perceived that unless the government was able to create widespread support for conscription among the population, any attempt to enforce it would have been unsuccessful—not to mention threatening to the stability of the government.¹¹

After the termination of the British Mandate, the death of King Faysal in 1933 deprived the pro-conscription movement of a precious ally. However, the perceived necessity to strengthen the national army increased dramatically because the Iraqi government could no longer rely quite so heavily on the military support of Great Britain. In the Anglo–Iraqi Treaty of 1930, which defined future relations between the two countries, provision was made to assure the Iraqi government of British military help only in case of external aggression or when British strategic and economic interests were directly jeopardized. After 1932, Great Britain retained a limited number of RAF bases in Iraq, where the Levies were employed merely as guards.¹²

With no British military support and an urgent need to cut down defense expenditures and maintain an efficient peace-keeping force in the country, which would also serve as the seat for transmission of an Arab nationalist ideology, the Iraqi government was forced to introduce the National Service Law in early 1934, which was made operative in June 1935.¹³ An initial conscription bill was first proposed in 1926 and in 1928, and then pursued by Rashid ʿAli’s government in 1933. The 1934 National Service Law required all Iraqi men of nineteen years of age to join the army for eighteen to twenty-four months of compulsory service, plus a period of reserve service of approximately eight years.¹⁴

The growing and threatening repercussions of confessional and tribal cleavages also featured in the decision of the government. The repression of the Assyrians in 1933 by the army and police forces undoubtedly enhanced the image of the army as a focus for national unity. Further, it seems to have created some sort of pan-Muslim feeling among Sunnis and Shiʿis alike, who had marked anti-British tones, as the Assyrians were traditionally British protégés.¹⁵ In addition, at the end of the Mandate the tribes owned large quantities of arms and ammunition, which had by and large been given to them by the British authorities in an attempt to counterbalance the influence of the king and of the Sharifians. In contrast, the Iraqi Army and Air Force were rather weak.¹⁶

The application of conscription encountered widespread opposition throughout the countryside, although in the aftermath of the Assyrian repression many Muslim tribal and nontribal Iraqis joined the national army. However, at the end of 1935 it seems that the government was compelled to enforce very strict measures along the borders to stop the flow of both tribesmen and members of the urban middle classes who attempted to avoid conscription by seeking refuge abroad. During 1935, a number of tribal revolts broke out in the north and south of the country, which prompted the intervention of the army and the imposition of martial law in a number of tribal areas.¹⁷ As a result of these rebellions, the government increasingly required the intervention

of the army to maintain its legitimacy among the rural population. Thus, the army became an indispensable part of the government's nation-building policies and started to enter the political arena. In October 1936, the commander in chief, General Bakr Sidqi, who had led the campaigns against the Assyrians and the tribal insurgents, led a military coup d'état that overthrew the government. It is within this context that the tribal rebellions in Sinjar became particularly relevant to Iraqi national and international politics. The present discussion will focus on issues strictly connected with conscription and the implications of its application to Jabal Sinjar between 1935 and 1940.

RELIGION AND IDENTITY AMONG THE KURDISH TRIBES OF JABAL SINJAR

The majority of the Iraqi Yazidis live in the Jabal Sinjar, a mountainous area rising in the upper northern Jazira plateau some ninety kilometers southwest of Mosul. Other Yazidis live in the Shaikhan district, located between the Mosul plain and the Kurdish mountains, and in the Kurdish districts of Zakhu and Dohuk. Outside Iraq, groups of Yazidis live in Syria, Turkey, Iran, and the former Soviet Union, predominantly in areas of Kurdish settlement.¹⁸

Northern Iraq has been considered the heartland of the Yazidi people at least since the 12th century, when Yazidism started to revive among sections of the Kurdish population of the Shaikhan district. Yazidism is an ancient indigenous Kurdish faith influenced by Zoroastrianism. The Yazidi religious revival was led by ʿAdi ibn Musafir (ca. 1075–1162), an Arab Sufi shaykh whom the Yazidis consider the saintly founder or, according to a different tradition, the reviver of their religion. In the early 14th century, Shaykh ʿAdi's shrine in northern Iraq became the religious center of the group. For this reason, the Iraqi Yazidis occupy a special place among the Yazidi communities, and they are still regarded as the guardians of the Yazidi religious tradition and the keepers of the main Yazidi places of worship.¹⁹

Yazidism is an orally transmitted religion, and as such it is a manifestation of Kurdish folk culture, as all Yazidis are Kurds and Kurdish-speakers. Although their religious tradition is oral, various written versions of Yazidi sacred texts started to appear around the end of the 19th century. Although the influence of pre-Islamic Zoroastrian beliefs can explain much of Yazidi doctrine, especially Yazidi theology and cosmogony, the influence of popular Islam and the interaction with Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities accounts for many Yazidi rituals, practices, and religious institutions.²⁰

It is likely that Yazidism has provided a fairly rigid socioreligious organization for sections of the Kurdish rural population since the early 13th century. It was a theocratic social order in which a clear division existed between the lay and religious members, who were mutually linked by spiritual and economic affiliation. While the lay members of those rural communities who converted to Yazidism continued to be nomadic or seminomadic, the Yazidi priests became grouped in a number of endogamic holy lineages. These lineages claimed to have Shaikhanli origin, and their authority was extra-territorial.²¹

The Yazidi religion expanded considerably in the tribal society of Kurdistan between the 13th and 15th centuries. However, in the 16th century it lost much of its

popularity as a result of the growing influence of the Ottoman sultans and the Safawi shahs in Kurdistan. Under these circumstances, many Yazidi tribes embraced Sunni or Shi'ī Islam. At the beginning of the 20th century, almost all the Yazidi tribes experienced the general process of detribalization that affected the Kurdish areas. In fact, the only Yazidi tribal groups that survived were integrated into Kurdish tribal confederations such as the Heverkan and the Miran, which also included Sunni and Christian tribesmen. Even with these substantial changes, many Yazidi cultivators and cattle breeders retained various degrees of kinship ideology.²²

In Jabal Sinjar, blood ties were crucial to the identity of the Yazidi community, which was organized along tribal lines. Although the majority of the tribesmen were sedentary agriculturalists and seminomadic cattle breeders in the 1920s and 1930s, they were named after their tribal groups rather than identified with their villages. Similarly, in cases of internal disputes, they usually mobilized as members of a particular tribe or tribal section rather than taking up arms as part of a village community. In Jabal Sinjar, tribesmen and men of religion maintained close relationships to a great extent. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that at the beginning of the 20th century, some Yazidi priests became the temporal leaders of the Fuqara², the Qiran, and the Haskan tribes, thus breaking a long tradition of lay tribal leadership. The Yazidi tribesmen identified with moral and social values that were specifically Yazidi. Food taboos prescribed by the Yazidi religious tradition, religious festivals, rituals, and pilgrimages to Yazidi shrines were part of the communal ethos of the tribes. However, tribesmen also shared some of their religious practices with members of other communities living in Sinjar, especially Christian and Shi'ī.²³

One of the most interesting features of Kurdish tribalism as it developed in Jabal Sinjar was the extreme flexibility of the internal structure of the Yazidi tribes. Tribal membership was not exclusive to Yazidis, as it was also extended to Sunni and heterodox Shi'ī Kurds who were grouped in separate tribal sections. However, tribal leaders were Yazidi, as the Yazidis constituted approximately 85 percent of the total tribal population of Jabal Sinjar. Tribal leadership was usually transmitted from father to son and, as noted earlier, at least until the beginning of the 20th century was in the hands of families of lay origin. The Yazidis of Jabal Sinjar recognized themselves as members of different tribes on the bases of blood relations: kinship in smaller units (households and lineages) and real or fictitious common descent in the largest groups (clans). The clan (*bav*) rather than the tribe (*ashira*) represented the primary political unit of the mountain and included members sharing a religious affiliation. Thus, the Yazidi tribes of Jabal Sinjar were veritable mini-confederations divided along confessional lines. In this connection, it is understandable how the authority of Yazidi tribal leaders was challenged on many fronts: the *bavs* of the Yazidi tribes could join different tribal groups according to a number of political and socioeconomic circumstances. Undoubtedly, the mobility of the Sinjari clans created extreme political fragmentation in the Yazidi Mountain. However, the *bav* system responded to an important feature of the socioeconomic and demographic development of Jabal Sinjar. From the 16th century to the late 19th century the area had progressively become an important immigration unit that sheltered many Kurdish groups coming from Iraqi and Turkish Kurdistan. The existence of semi-independent clans provided a model for the relatively easy integration of new tribal communities into the local tribes. Once grouped in new *bavs*, these communities were able to maintain their specificity while

acquiring full tribal membership. Although tribal clans developed into discrete social and confessional units that separated Yazidis from non-Yazidis and old from new groups, thus minimizing the potential for conflict, Yazidi men of religion continued to play a determining role in the life of the tribes. Quite ironically, a strong sense of Yazidiness was maintained through an extremely fragmented tribal system.²⁴

Evidence shows that, at least until the late 1930s, the Yazidi Kurds of Jabal Sinjar were a pre-national community, as their group solidarity was based on primordial loyalties such as kinship, religion, and group endogamy. Although their tribal affiliations were fragmented, the maintenance of contiguous settlement within the boundaries of the mountain greatly reinforced group solidarity. Understandably, the Sinjari Yazidis, who were grouped in a distinct religious and racial enclave in a predominantly Arab Sunni area, had developed a clear perception of their diversity, which by and large acted as a powerful catalyst for group mobilization during the development of conflicts that involved external actors. Despite this, the Yazidis were integrated into the regional economy, especially with regard to their exchanges in the food market with bedouin tribes. They also played an important role in the development of tribal politics in the northern Jazira.²⁵

Another important aspect related to the development of Yazidi identity concerns the community's links to the Sunni Kurds living outside Jabal Sinjar. Although the Sinjari Yazidis shared many cultural traits and socio-economic and political structures with their Sunni counterparts living in southern Kurdistan, contact between the two groups was scarce, and their relations were somewhat strained. This was the result of both the Yazidis' physical isolation from the Sunni Kurdish areas of northern Iraq and the religious boundaries existing between the two groups. Before the downfall of the semi-independent Kurdish emirates, which occurred between 1834 and 1847, a number of Sunni Kurdish chiefs had made several attempts to subdue the Sinjari and Shaikhanli Yazidis and to force them to convert to Islam. Subsequently, when the Ottomans reestablished direct administration over the Kurdish areas, they often employed Sunni Kurds against the Yazidis, who continued to be reluctant to accept any outside authority.²⁶ It is therefore understandable that in the late Ottoman period the Yazidis increasingly resented a Muslim regime with which the Kurds were often identified. This resentment, which was perceived by the average Yazidi tribesmen as a Muslim–Yazidi antagonism, became deeply rooted in the tribal society of Sinjar and continued to affect relations among Yazidis, Sunni Kurds, and Muslim Arabs long after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

THE ENFORCEMENT OF CONSCRIPTION IN THE JABAL SINJAR

Although little is known about the relations between the Yazidi communities of Iraq and the Ottoman administration (c. 1516–1918), resistance to conscription seems to have been recurrent since the early years of the Ottoman occupation of the northern Jazira.²⁷ All the members of the Yazidi community under Ottoman rule were liable to military service, as they were not recognized as *ahl al-kitab* (Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians). The *ahl al-kitab* communities were in fact the only Ottoman subjects exempted from military service, provided that they paid a tax to the Ottoman government. Until the second half of the 19th century, this tax was considered part of the

capitation tax (*cizye*). Subsequently, following the reorganization of the Ottoman army during the Tanzimat period (1839–76) the *cizye* was replaced by a commutation tax (*bedel-i askeri*), which paid the cost of keeping one soldier for a year. In theory, if the Yazidis were not an *ahl al-kitab* community, they should have received the same treatment as the Muslims in matters concerning conscription. In practice, their position vis-à-vis military service was rather unclear, mainly because of their heterodox religious beliefs.

In the second half of the 19th century, the Ottoman authorities in Mosul intensified their attempts to collect recruits from the Jabal Sinjar as a result of the application of the Tanzimat reforms. In 1849, the British ambassador in Istanbul, Sir Stratford Canning, interceded with the Ottoman sultan on the Yazidis' behalf in an attempt to persuade the authorities to halt their conscription campaigns among the Iraqi Yazidis. These campaigns had provoked widespread terror and destruction in Jabal Sinjar and Shaikhan in the previous decades.²⁸ Probably as a result of Canning's intervention in the course of the 1860s, the Ottomans decided to impose on each Yazidi tribesman liable to military service the commutation tax (*bedel-i askeri*), which was usually levied on the members of the *ahl al-kitab* communities.²⁹ However, as is illustrated by a petition addressed by some Yazidi chiefs to the Sublime Porte in 1872, the government soon renewed its conscription efforts. This document, known as the "1872 Petition," clearly shows the religious nature of the Yazidis' refusal to serve in the Ottoman army, as it lists the reasons why any pious Yazidi should avoid conscription in the form of a religious code of conduct.³⁰ At the end of the 19th century, the issue of Yazidi conscription became increasingly linked to attempts to Islamicize the community as part of the pan-Islamic policy of Sultan ʿAbdul Hamid (1876–1909). The Ottoman authorities believed that if the Yazidis converted to Islam, the main obstacle to their enrollment in the Ottoman army would be removed. These attempts were largely unsuccessful, especially in Jabal Sinjar.³¹

It is understandable that conscription was generally perceived by the average Yazidi tribesmen of Sinjar as an attempt on the part of the Ottomans to interfere in the tribal affairs of the mountain by weakening the political, economic, and religious loyalties of the tribesmen. If conscription were rigorously applied, the tribes would have been deprived of their strongest, most capable, and most economically productive young men, who, once enrolled in the Ottoman army for minimum periods of as many as three years, were very likely to loosen their links with their families and villages. Moreover, young Yazidi recruits would also be exposed to pressure to convert to Islam, given the discriminatory treatment they usually received at the hands of the Muslims with whom they were compelled to share their existence in the army on a day-to-day basis. This view is confirmed by the contents of the 1872 Petition, which shows that the Yazidi leadership refused to enroll their tribesmen on the grounds that their religious tenets forbade Yazidis to have close contacts with Muslims.³²

As noted, there was no compulsory military service in Iraq during the British Mandate, although members of minority groups, such as Assyrians and Kurds, were employed widely in the Levies. In general, the Yazidis were taken into consideration as possible fighters only in emergencies, as in the mid-1920s, when schemes to raise Yazidi irregulars to strengthen the defense of the northern frontier with Turkey were put forward by the Royal Air Force. These projects were never implemented, and the

Yazidi tribesmen only occasionally took up arms, either against the government, as happened in 1925 during the revolt of the Yazidi chief Dawud al-Dawud, or in the course of their frequent intertribal quarrels.³³ In 1928, however, when the first conscription bill was proposed by Rashid ʿAli's government, the Yazidi leadership of Sinjar started to become increasingly aware of the threat that this represented. The Yazidi Chief Hamu Shiru, leader of the Fuqara² tribe, whom the British had appointed paramount shaykh of Sinjar in 1919, even refused to stand for election for the Mosul Municipal Council because he was convinced that the registration of voters was a pretext for making a census for the purpose of ʿaskariyya.³⁴

In June and August 1935, the authorities in Mosul notified the new paramount shaykh Khudaida, son of Hamu Shiru (who had died in 1933), that they were about to apply the National Service Law to his tribesmen. In August, Khudaida was asked to sign a formal agreement with the government, but he refused to cooperate with the authorities in the selection and call-up of Yazidi recruits. In this he was backed by a group of other prominent tribal chiefs, including the chief of the Mihirkan tribe, Dawud al-Dawud. In September 1935, under the command of Dawud, the inhabitants of the northern villages of Alidina, Zarwan, and Mihirkan, populated mainly by members of Dawud's tribe, started to sell their belongings and to purchase arms from the Shammar, hoping to make their way to the hills to avoid conscription. According to British records, Khudaida, fearing the possible consequences of an armed revolt in his relations with the government, tried unsuccessfully to persuade the authorities that conscription was feasible in Sinjar provided that exclusively Yazidi units were created. Iraqi sources emphasize the conciliatory attitude of the Iraqi government. According to these, the authorities were prepared to meet the Yazidis' requests at the very beginning of their recruitment campaign in the Jabal Sinjar.³⁵ However, as voiced by the British consul in Mosul, the formation of separate Yazidi contingents would have only partly solved the old problem of Yazidi–Muslim integration in the same army units:

Even so [i.e., if the government accepted Khudaida's conditions], . . . the unit would have non-Yazidi officers, the Yazidis being too illiterate to produce suitable men. Indeed, the Yazidis are scarcely suitable even for the rank and file of an army, and the best it could be done with them would probably be, as in the recent past, the formation of a Yazidi transport corps.³⁶

Since early September 1935, groups of Yazidi tribesmen had started to attack state functionaries and pillage caravans traveling in the proximity of the Yazidi Mountain. When the recruiting officers arrived in Sinjar in early October, the Yazidi revolt started, headed by Dawud al-Dawud and Rasho Qolo, *mukhtar* of the village of Alidina in northeastern Sinjar. The Iraqi army intervened on 7 October under the command of the *amir al-liwā*² Husayn Fawzi. Although the revolt remained confined to a limited part of eastern Sinjar, the government forces, which also included policemen, destroyed eleven villages in a single week, killing two hundred Yazidis and losing twenty of their own soldiers. Martial law was declared on 14 October and lasted for almost a month: 364 Yazidis were captured; 9 were condemned to death, 69 to life imprisonment, 70 to twenty years and 162 to fifteen years. Fifty-four were deported to the south of the country. The government seems to have achieved very little

with this first conscription campaign. Only 70 recruits were collected from Sinjar in February 1936, and only 4 of these were Yazidis, the rest belonging to the local Muslim and Christian communities.³⁷

The government's military intervention provoked the first substantial migration of Yazidi tribesmen to the Syrian Jazira, west of the Sinjari Mountain; between October and November 1935, some 70 Yazidis from the Mihirkan tribe set foot on Syrian territory. Among these refugees was Dawud al-Dawud, with some members of his family. It seems that Rasho Qolo, the other leader of the revolt, together with some of his followers surrendered to the army soon after the cessation of hostilities.³⁸ Dawud al-Dawud's escape to Syria left a power vacuum among the Mihirkan, one of the most powerful tribal groups in Sinjar. However, this had the immediate effect of extending Dawud's popularity to a large number of tribesmen, as he became a powerful symbol of Yazidi opposition to the government. Following his example, many Sinjaris became increasingly attracted to the idea of leaving Iraq in search of better living conditions and greater security elsewhere.³⁹

Attempts to avoid conscription by crossing the border continued in the following years, usually coinciding with the annual call-up of recruits. A major migration was planned in February 1936, when the Sinjari Yazidis made an appeal to Jamil Chamo, chief of the Yazidi community in the Syrian Jabal Akrad, who was asked to intercede on their behalf with the Syrian authorities.⁴⁰ In April, two prominent chiefs of the Qiran tribe, ⁵Atu and Shaykh Khidr, who were to play an important role in the major migration of 1940, settled in Syria. Later that year, 2,000 Yazidis reached al-Hawl and Khatuniyya in Syrian territory but were promptly pushed back to Iraq by the Syrian police. After this episode, the British embassy started to put pressure on the Iraqi government to pursue a more lenient policy towards the Sinjari Yazidis.⁴¹ This continued after 1938, when serious clashes between Iraqi policemen and Yazidi tribesmen threatened to develop into widespread hostilities. Local officials were immediately instructed to do as much as they could to alleviate Yazidi grievances, and steps were taken to change the system of recruitment of Yazidi tribesmen in order to make it more acceptable to their tribal chiefs, particularly by introducing the *nisbi* system, which was being already employed in other tribal areas where an accurate population census had not yet been completed. This allowed the tribal chiefs to select the new recruits according to a proportion of the estimated tribal population. Although these regulations were issued in June 1935, they could not be applied in Sinjar immediately, during the first call-up of recruits, because of the lack of cooperation on the part of the Yazidi tribal chiefs, and on that occasion the local *qaim-maqam* had to appeal directly to the rank and file.⁴² However, in October the situation appeared so critical to the Yazidis that two envoys left Sinjar, a Yazidi chief and a Kurdish agha of the Milli tribe, to meet the inspector delegate of the French high commissioner in the Jazira area. They asked his permission for the immediate settlement of 8,000 to 10,000 Sinjari Yazidis in Syria, a figure that included approximately half the population of the mountain.⁴³

Between 1939 and 1940, the government abandoned any attempt to "soften" the enforcement of conscription in Sinjar by employing the *nisbi*, largely because of the continuous resistance on the part of the Yazidi aghas, who feared losing popularity among their followers if they complied with the instructions of the government.

Without the support of the local leadership, recruitment operations were generally unsuccessful, although after the end of 1936 there must have been a more consistent group of Yazidi conscripts from Sinjar in the Iraqi army, because they started to be organized in small pockets of 15 to 20 men.⁴⁴ Migration continued throughout 1939: 245 families belonging to the Qiran, Samuqa, Haskan, Fuqara³, and Habbabat tribes crossed into Syria in February and March, although some of them started to drift back in May.⁴⁵ In April 1939, the situation in Mosul became very volatile: a new *mutasarrif* renowned for his religious fanaticism was appointed, and the British consul was killed following the death of King Ghazi. In July, martial law, which had been proclaimed in the town soon after the murder of the British consul, was extended to the Yazidi districts of Sinjar and Shaikhan presumably to facilitate the arrest of Yazidi deserters and to stop the flow of tribesmen across the border.⁴⁶

In April 1939, Shaykh Khalaf, a Yazidi religious leader who was also the head of the Haskan tribe, planned to take into Syria two entire tribes living in Sinjar—the Yazidi Haskan and the Muslim–Yazidi Mandikan—with the support of the French Mandatory authorities at Qamlishi, the Syrian town closest to the Yazidi Mountain. In early 1940, Shaykh Khalaf, who had escaped from prison, crossed the border with 1,500 Yazidi tribesmen who belonged to the Haskan, Samuqa, and Qiran tribes and came mostly from western Sinjar.⁴⁷

By 1942, the majority of the Yazidi refugees who had attempted to settle permanently in Syria had come back to Iraq—approximately 1,500 families, mainly followers of Dawud al-Dawud, Shaykh Khidr Qirani, and Shaykh Khalaf al-Haskani.⁴⁸ The Yazidis' attempt to escape Iraqi conscription was short-lived. To a great extent, this was determined by important political implications assumed by their migration to Syria at both national and regional levels.

SYRIAN–IRAQI RELATIONS AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF FRANCE IN YAZIDI AFFAIRS

During the Ottoman period, the Turkish authorities in Mosul and Baghdad did not succeed in establishing a permanent administrative presence in the Jabal Sinjar. The notion of “government” among the local Kurdish community was generally identified with tax farming and conscription. Given the fierce resistance of the Yazidis, the Ottomans were usually compelled to dispatch military contingents to the Yazidi Mountain to collect both taxes and young Yazidi recruits.

Unlike its Turkish predecessors, the Iraqi government established administrative and police posts in the mountain in the early 1920s. The Jabal Sinjar was divided into two districts, the Sinjar and Shimal *nahiyyas*. The former became the seat of an Arab *qaimmaqam*, who was in charge of the administration of the mountain, while the latter was under the control of an Arab *mudir*, who acted as representative of the *qaimmaqam* in the northern areas. The more substantial presence of the central administration was increasingly accepted by the tribes, as the development of inter-tribal and local politics during the Mandate indicates.

A long-standing dispute between the Iraqi and Syrian governments concerning the delimitation of the border between Syria and Iraq in the Sinjar area brought about the growing involvement of France, the Mandatory power in Syria from 1920 to 1946,

in Sinjari affairs. Since the early 1920s Syria had claimed that the western section of the mountain should be included *de jure* in the Syrian Jazira, although it had been administered *de facto* by the British and, later, Iraqi authorities in Mosul since 1919. In October 1932, the final delimitation of the Syrian–Iraqi border (implemented under the aegis of the League of Nations) awarded all of the Yazidi Mountain to Iraq in exchange for territorial concessions to Syria in the Abu Kamal area.⁴⁹ During the Mandate, chiefs and tribesmen, especially those living in western Sinjar, had frequent contact with local French officials, who naturally supported Yazidi claims against the Iraqi government with a view to extending their own influence in the mountain. It is often reported that French intelligence agents acted as advisers to tribal chiefs in western Sinjar, many of whom led the migrations to the Syrian Jazira after the enforcement of universal conscription.

After 1935, the Iraqi authorities started making official complaints to the French high commissioner in Beirut on the general subject of the consequences of the spontaneous migration of groups of Yazidis to Syria. These complaints implicitly underlined the responsibility of the French mandatory government in the Yazidis' harsh reaction to conscription.⁵⁰ Their migration added a further, controversial dimension to an ongoing political debate that had already created a great deal of friction between the Syrian and Iraqi administrations. The Iraqi government considered the French policy of resettlement of non-Arab elements—especially Kurds and Assyrians, both in the Syrian Jazira and in the *Bec du Canard*—detrimental to public security, given the attraction it offered to non-Arab minorities in Iraq. In Iraqi intellectual and nationalist circles, France was often accused of attempting to transform the Jazira into a second Palestine, comparing the settlement of non-Arabs to that of the Zionists. In 1940 the situation of the Arab population of the town of Hasaka, a Syrian settlement close to the Yazidi Mountain which was built as a military post in the early years of the French occupation of the Jazira, was reported by a Baghdad newspaper as being extremely precarious; they were very likely to be removed from the town to accommodate new Kurdish settlers.⁵¹

The prospect of mass Yazidi migration from Sinjar posed problems for the Iraqi government, although it could certainly have opened the way for the definitive Muslim–Arab colonization of the mountain after centuries of Yazidi settlement. Yet apart from the loss of prestige that would have worsened the difficulties that the Iraqi administration was already facing in other tribal areas, a Yazidi diaspora might have negative repercussions on the feelings of other non-Muslim communities in Iraq whose relations with the administration were also strained. This was especially the case with the Assyrians and Christians of other denominations whose contacts with the Iraqi Yazidis had intensified during the Mandate. In the last years of the Mandate, some Sinjari tribal chiefs (especially the British protégé Hamu Shiru) joined an autonomist movement promoted by the Assyrian community temporarily settled on Iraqi soil. This movement claimed to represent all the Christians and Yazidis of northern Iraq and was led by the same Assyrians who were crushed by the Iraqi army in 1933.⁵² A substantial number of Assyrians who lived in Mosul province had already migrated to Syria following the tragic events of 1933. They settled permanently in the Khabur area, where they devoted themselves to agriculture.⁵³ After 1935, those Assyrians who were left in Iraq may have been encouraged

to attempt to reach Syria to join their coreligionists, following the example of the Sinjari Yazidis; this was also prompted by the widespread recrudescence of anti-Christian feelings among the Muslim population of northern Iraq in 1935–36. Interestingly, this recrudescence was directly connected with events that had occurred in Sinjar; two prominent Mosulawi Christians, the merchant ʿAbd al-Karim Qaraqulla and the lawyer ʿAbd Allah Faʿiq, who had been involved in promoting and defending Christian interests in Mosul province since the late 1920s, were accused of being involved in Dawud's rebellion in 1935 and subsequently publicly executed in Sinjar. Allegations were made that they were the leaders of a conspiracy engineered by the non-Muslim minorities against the government.⁵⁴

The French Mandatory authorities in Beirut found themselves in a rather embarrassing position vis-à-vis the new and substantial wave of Yazidi refugees, especially after 1937, when the Syrian government signed an agreement with Iraq that regulated border affairs in an effort to gain more control over the tribes moving around the Syrian–Iraqi border.⁵⁵ As the large-scale flow of clandestine emigrants across the border between 1935 and 1940 indicates, there were still no adequate security measures on either side of the frontier to prevent the infiltration of tribesmen from Sinjar across that section of the border closest to the mountain.

By contrast, the Franco–Syrian authorities based in Hasaka largely favored the settlement of Yazidi tribesmen in the area. They generally entertained friendly relations with the Yazidi chiefs, although it seems unlikely that they would actually have encouraged them to emigrate to Syria. The Yazidis were very much appreciated for the excellent agricultural skills that they had acquired cultivating the terraced slopes of northern Sinjar, which were obviously considered very precious in the surroundings of Hasaka, where the majority of the land was still unexploited. However, for political reasons those Yazidis who arrived in Syria between 1935 and 1940 received no land grants from the Syrian government and therefore had to rely on the support of their coreligionists or on occasional donations in money or in kind from the local population. In 1940, some Yazidi refugees in Hasaka even attempted to rent agricultural land from the Tayy tribe in the area southeast of Qamishli but were refused permission by the Syrian authorities. Even a powerful and respected chief such as Dawud lived in very straitened circumstances and in late 1936 was compelled to ask the local authorities for permission to settle among the Yazidi community of the district of ʿAmuda, where he would have more opportunities to make a decent living for himself and his family.⁵⁶ Matters for the Yazidi refugees were further complicated by the fact that those Yazidis who were semi-nomadic could not have their animals transferred from Sinjar to Syria because of the high customs duties. For example while Khalaf al-Haskani, the powerful chief of the Haskan tribe, was exempted from paying custom duties for the animals that belonged to his family, the rest of the Haskani refugees were refused exemption and were forced to leave their sheep and goats in Sinjar.⁵⁷

In the second half of the 1930s, Beirut was generally hostile to the establishment of a new minority group in the Jazira.⁵⁸ Before the October 1935 disturbances, the French consulate in Baghdad had already notified Paris of the possible repercussions of the enforcement of conscription on the feelings of the Sinjari Yazidis as well as on French–Iraqi relations, envisaging that the Yazidis might well attempt to settle

permanently in Syria to avoid conscription. The arrival of thousands of Kurdish people in northeastern Syria was likely to strengthen the power of the “regionalists” and of the Syrian Kurdish movement, which grew in strength in the second half of the 1920s under the leadership of Hajo Agha, a Yazidi chief of the Heverkan tribal confederation who had arrived in Syria from Turkey in 1926.⁵⁹ The government was therefore generally not inclined to accept Yazidi requests for asylum or to encourage the permanent settlement of those who crossed the border illegally, except in cases in which the denial of such requests for prominent Yazidi chiefs such as Dawud al-Dawud and Khalaf al-Haskani might have negative repercussions on the feeling of the Kurdish population of the area. This is one of the reasons that the Syrian government firmly refused a request from Baghdad for Dawud’s extradition five months after he had crossed the border, on the grounds of the political implications of his presence in Syrian territory.⁶⁰ The acceptance of groups of Yazidis who had left Iraq to avoid enrollment in the national army would also pose something of a dilemma for the Syrian government if conscription was ever to be enforced there at any time in the future. The Syrian authorities had no reason to think that such action would have not encountered just as much opposition on the part of the newcomers as it had done in Iraq.⁶¹

YAZIDI–SHAMMAR ANTAGONISM: LAND POLICIES IN SINJAR

The efforts of the government to apply the 1934 National Service Law had different repercussions on the population of Jabal Sinjar. The Yazidi tribes that were seminomadic and lived in western Sinjar (Haskan, Samuqa, and Qiran) migrated to Syria in small groups, encouraged by the proximity of the Syrian–Iraqi border. In eastern Sinjar, members of the sedentary tribes generally remained on their lands despite the threat posed by the military intervention of the Iraqi government or attempted to reach the tribes of the west. Various factors contributed to this: the lesser mobility determined by their sedentary lifestyle, which linked them more permanently to their lands and agricultural resources; the less favorable position of their villages, which were relatively far away from the Syrian border; and, most notably, the threat posed to their properties by the Iraqi Shammar led by Ajil al-Yawar, who was trying to extend his influence in eastern Sinjar. To a certain extent, the growing encroachment of the bedouin Shammar on the Yazidi lands represented an attempt on the part of the government to undermine the bases of Yazidi social cohesion, which rested on their control of land and resources.

Shaykh Ajil al-Yawar had acquired a very influential position vis-à-vis the Iraqi government and was trying to use his authority in order to occupy extensive lands on the fringes of the Yazidi domains.⁶² As early as May 1935, Ajil had acquired lands in Shimal *nahiyya* from the bedouin Juhaish who lived in eastern Sinjar among the Mihirkan tribe. Dawud al-Dawud, chief of the Mihirkan, bitterly refused to recognize the Shammari lordship over lands from which he used to collect his own *mallakiyya*, or landlord’s share. Although the lands inside Sinjar were traditionally considered the common property of the tribes, it seems that since the beginning of the 20th century Dawud al-Dawud had succeeded in establishing a quasi-feudal regime in Mihirkani tribal lands by hiring laborers who had recently settled in Sinjar.

Soon after the disturbances in October 1935, Ajil took over 1,000 faddans of Dawud's land and tried to push his way into the north to penetrate the lands controlled by Shaykh Khalaf al-Haskani.⁶³ By February 1936, Ajil and his tribesmen succeeded in occupying the lands around the northern village of Quhbal, the headquarters of Shaykh Khalaf. Undoubtedly, the presence of Ajil played a determining role in Khalaf's decision to change his previously conciliatory attitude toward the government regarding conscription, culminating in his escape to Syria in 1940. Furthermore, in 1939 the government had started to exact the *mallakiyya* share on some villages that had been traditionally under Khalaf's control. Thus, taxes started to be collected on a regular basis by government officials.⁶⁴

After 1935, the British embassy in Baghdad became actively involved in a pro-Yazidi campaign, which aimed at stopping the advance of the Shammar into Sinjar. Great Britain's interest in developments occurring in Jabal Sinjar reflected its major concerns with the safeguard of minority rights in Iraq, which had constituted one of the main conditions for Iraq's admission to the League of Nations in 1932.⁶⁵ The involvement of the British embassy in Yazidi-Shammar disputes continued at least until the early 1940s and partially succeeded in preventing the government from giving open support to Ajil, although it did not stop his penetration into peripheral areas of the mountain. In January 1936, a proposal to give nine villages abandoned by the insurgent Mihirkanis to the Shammar was immediately put aside after the intervention of the British adviser to the interior (Edmonds), who watched Shammari-Yazidi land disputes closely over the following years, acting as an intermediary among the Yazidi chiefs, the bedouin, and the government.⁶⁶ Mainly for this reason, Shammari attempts to take possession of Yazidi lands were largely unsuccessful, although the Shammar did gain control of some villages in the southeast of the mountain inhabited by non-Yazidis, so that at the beginning of the 1940s these villagers became almost completely subjected to Shammari chiefs.⁶⁷ Despite Ajil's avowed intention to turn his tribesmen into peasants, they never became cultivators but instead hired local manpower, the population of the villages, as tenant farmers on the lands that they had previously cultivated as virtual freeholders. Sometime in the early 1940s, a former *qaimmaqam* of Sinjar reported that the Yazidi tribes were by and large firmly in control of their traditional lands. By contrast, the Arab inhabitants of the village of Sibahiya were being compelled to leave their houses and their property as a result of relentless extortion of agricultural produce carried out by the Shammari chief Nura al-Harush.⁶⁸

CONCLUSION

All available official sources concerning Yazidi migration to Syria (British, French, and to a lesser extent Iraqi) deal with the rural society of the Jazira in terms of the juxtaposition of ethnic communities (Yazidis, Kurds, Christians, Arabs) rather than in terms of coexistence of social groupings (nomadic, sedentary, tribal, agricultural). The policies advocated or adopted by the Iraqi and French Mandatory administrations reflected this major concern, which was to a great extent the result of more than a decade of colonial rule. In 1935, nation-building took its harsh course among the Sinjari Yazidis for the first time since the foundation of the modern state of Iraq, and the conflicting and contradictory nature of state formation at the local and regional

levels became apparent. On the one hand, the measures taken by the government to enforce conscription among the Sinjari Yazidis called for their integration in the Iraqi national community. On the other hand, Shammari–Yazidi relations would indicate that the government was actively supporting an Arab Muslim colonization of the mountain, which would eventually increase the friction between the Yazidis and the Arab Sunni ruling elite. Further, as the Yazidi affair shows, independent Iraq and Mandatory Syria had conflicting interests in matters concerning minorities settled in the Jazira, which often seemed to amount to interference in each other's affairs. This is partly a result of the different nature of the colonial rule experienced by two newly born states, and partly a consequence of the fact that in the 1930s independent Iraq and Mandatory Syria were at different stages of national development.

The Yazidis responded to government attempts at conscription by adopting new strategies that necessitated the recognition of political realities unknown in their traditional tribal society. First, they acknowledged the authority of individuals empowered by the state (Iraqi, British, and Franco–Syrian officials), and second, they understood the significance and implications of the presence of an international border in the proximity of their lands. However, although they adopted some new strategies, they acted in line with traditional tribal custom: recognition of tribal–religious leadership, collective mobilization, resort to arms, flight, little political negotiation. In the 1930s and early 1940s, the Yazidi Kurds had not yet produced an educated class who could operate effectively outside the context of tribal and intercommunal politics and consequently provide new forms of political and ideological leadership for group mobilization. In addition, any reformulation of models for individual and group identification had to accommodate strong religious loyalties that still constituted the kernel of Yazidi identity. Mainly for this reason, Kurdish nationalism, which in the rural areas was still linked to the tribal milieu and had a strong religious component (mainly Sunni), largely failed to gather consensus among the Yazidis, at least in the period under consideration. In this connection, it is quite ironic that in the 1970s the Kurdish national movement started to promote the Yazidi religion as an essential trait of the Kurdish culture by presenting it as the original religion of the Kurds. Apart from implying the persistence of religious loyalties among the Iraqi Yazidis, this clearly shows the extent to which communal identity in Iraq continues to be reframed by primordial solidarities in the face of an Arab-Sunni–controlled state power.

NOTES

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¹I will use the name Yazidis as it is usually found in the European and Muslim sources which I employed in this article. "Yazidis" is the Arabic form of the Kurdish "Êzdîni." I shall use the term "ethnicity" as an analytical and descriptive category indicating subsocietal divisions in modern nation-states. These divisions usually correspond to prenational social groupings as suggested in M. J. Estman and I. Rabinovic, eds., *Ethnicity, Pluralism, and the State in the Middle East* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988). For a debate on the applicability of the concept of *ethnie* to tribal groups in the Middle East, see B. Tibi, "The Simultaneity of the Unsimultaneous: Old Tribes and Imposed Nation-States in the Modern Middle East," in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, ed. P. S. Khoury and J. Kostiner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 127–52.

²According to 1932 estimates for Sinjar, there were 17,550 Yazidi Kurds, 2,380 Sunni Kurds, 1,060 Ali-Ilahi Kurds, 6,675 Muslim Arabs, and 1,225 Muslim Turks. All the Muslim and Ali-Ilahi Kurds lived

integrated in the Yazidi tribes, whereas in Balad Sinjar, the local capital of the mountain, there were also 650 Arab Christians and 15 Jews. "Evidence regarding the Yazidis: Tribal" supplement D to n. 18, 22 April 1932, 13–14, incl. in Documents presented before the Syro–Iraqi Frontier Commission by British Assessors; "Balad Sinjar" supplement B to n. 18, 22 April 1932, incl. in Documents of the Syro–Iraqi Frontier Commission, C. J. Edmonds' Personal Papers, St. Antony's College, Oxford, box IV, file 1.

³Although the ethnic dimension in the development of Iraqi politics and society in the interwar period is generally acknowledged, it has not received much academic attention. See Esman and Rabinovich, *Ethnicity*, 11, and L. Lukitz, *Iraq: The Search for National Identity* (London: Franz Cass, 1995).

⁴The study of interethnic relations poses a number of methodological problems when dealing with postcolonial states such as Iraq. A holistic functionalist approach to interethnic relations (system analysis) requires the existence of a consolidated and pervasive state structure within which interethnic relations are clarified through the position occupied by each group in the wider sociopolitical system. A structuralist approach (power-conflict theory) is probably more appropriate in the Iraqi context. It places the emphasis on single social groups, which are studied on the assumption that their interaction with other groups is dictated by hierarchical power structures. R. A. Schermerhorn, *Comparative Ethnic Relations. A Framework for Theory and Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 20–62.

⁵Quote from H. Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 8. Batatu's excellent work on Iraqi society focuses on the transition from old status groups to new social classes whose identity rested on the acquisition of private property. Therefore, Batatu deals with the issue of ethnicity only marginally; *Ibid.*, 5–361. On British tribal policy in Iraq, see P. Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq* (London: Ithaca Press, 1976), 239–52. The interaction between state and tribes in the Kut and Amara provinces of southern Iraq is discussed in R. A. Fernea, "State and Tribes in Southern Iraq: The Struggle for Hegemony Before the 1958 Revolution," in *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958. The Old Social Classes Revisited*, ed. R. A. Fernea and R. Louis (London: I. B. Tauris, 1991), 142–53.

⁶See S. Zubaida, "Components of Popular Culture," in *Islam, the People and the State* (London: Routledge, 1989), 99–120. Zubaida stresses the importance of the instrumentality and solidarity of religion in Middle Eastern societies, which explains the fluidity of group and community boundaries.

⁷Hobsbawm has defined forms of supralocal identification as "proto-national," applying these to the European context. In the case of Iraq and, more generally, of the Middle East as a whole, the "proto-national" identification—quite ironically—does not favor national integration, partly because of the extreme multiethnic and multireligious composition of the local populations and partly because of the colonial experience. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 46–79.

⁸Sami Zubaida analyzes the issue of ethnic versus national solidarity as it affected the construction of communal politics in monarchical Iraq. He also highlights the diversified political affiliations chosen by members of larger ethnic groups. S. Zubaida, "Community, Class and Minorities in Iraqi Politics," in *Iraqi Revolution of 1958*, 197–210.

⁹In early 1921, there were 33 battalions in Iraq. These were progressively reduced to one in October 1928. The RAF presence steadily increased between 1921 and 1923 (from four to eight squadrons, with four supporting armored-car companies). When the Anglo–Iraqi Treaty was signed in 1930, four squadrons and one-and-a-half armored-car companies were still operating in the country. The Levies consisted mainly of cavalry and infantry units. The greatest number serving was 2,500 in 1923, which had been reduced to 1,500 by June 1932. *Special Report by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Progress of Iraq During the Period 1920–1931* (London: Colonial Office, 1931), 39, 47–48; P. P. J. Hempill, "The Formation of the Iraqi Army, 1921–1933," in *The Integration of Modern Iraq*, ed. A. Kelidar, 94; R. S. Stafford, *The Tragedy of the Assyrians* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1935), 72.

¹⁰Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 142–47, 259–70; M. A. Tarbush, *The Role of the Military in Politics. A Case Study of Iraq to 1941* (London: Routledge, 1985), 74–77, 86–91. During the Mandate, the Iraqi army grew slowly, from 3,500 men in 1921 to 12,000 in 1932; Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 260. In 1927, the nucleus of the Royal Iraqi Air Force was established. Between 1930 and 1936, the numbers of airplanes increased from five to fifty-six; Tarbush, *Role of the Military*, 78.

¹¹The Shi'is shared this view on conscription with the British. Shi'is tribes were generally unwilling to serve in a national army, as they had been able to buy off their exemption from Ottoman conscription

since the end of the 19th century. Shi'ī politicians saw conscription as a threat to their constituencies, which usually included large numbers of tribesmen. However, some of them supported the introduction of universal conscription to obtain larger political participation in the Parliament: Reeva S. Simon, *Iraq between the Two World Wars: The Creation and Implementation of a Nationalist Ideology* (New York: 1986), 118–19.

¹²Articles 4 and 5 of the Anglo–Iraqi Treaty of Alliance, 30 June 1930; appendix IV to Tarbush, *Role of the Military*, 200–201.

¹³See *ibid.*, 94–101. The National Defence Act was passed by the Parliament on 12 February 1934. Text included in Foreign Office correspondence, Public Record Office, London (hereafter FO), FO 371/17850 E 10.

¹⁴Simon, *Iraq*, 119; Article 3 National Defence Act, n. 9, 1934, FO 371/17850 E 10.

¹⁵Simon, *Iraq*, 120–21. The circumstances that led to the 1933 clashes between the Assyrians and the Iraqi army in Mosul are analyzed in great if somewhat partisan detail in K. S. Husry, “The Assyrian Affair of 1933,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5 (1974): 171–76, 344–60, and in Stafford, *Tragedy of the Assyrians*, 132–208.

¹⁶Simon, *Iraq*, 117.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 122. In May 1935, tribes of the districts of Rumaitha and Diwaniyyah rebelled against the imposition of conscription. The army put down the revolt and declared martial law. Similarly, in the summer the military authorities were compelled to impose martial law in the northern areas occupied by the Kurdish tribes of Barzan: E. Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version and other Middle Eastern Studies* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1984), 237.

¹⁸At present, the Yazidis number approximately 200,000: J. S. Guest, *Survival Among the Kurds. A History of the Yazidis*, 2nd ed. (London: Keegan Paul, 1993), xiii.

¹⁹The main contributions to the study of Muslim sources dealing with ʿAdi and his brotherhood are N. Siouffi, “Notice sur le Cheikh ʿAdi et la secte des Yezidis,” *Journal Asiatique* série 8/5 (1885): 78–98; R. Frank, *Scheich ʿAdi, der grosse heilige der Jezidis* (Berlin, 1911); M. Guidi, “Nuove Ricerche sui Yazidi,” *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 13 (1931–32): 408–25.

²⁰There is no comprehensive critical reference work on the Yazidi religion. Useful information can be found in G. R. Driver, “An Account of the Religion of the Yazidi Kurds,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 2 (1922): 197–213, 509–11; G. Furlani, *Testi religiosi dei Yazidi* (Bologna, 1930); S. Giamil, *Monte Singar: Storia di un popolo ignoto* (Rome, 1900); J. Jarry, “La Yazidiyyah: un vernis d’Islam sur une hérésie gnostique,” *Annales Islamologiques* 7 (1967): 1–20; P. G. Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism. Its Background, Observances and Textual Tradition* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995). For the publication of the Yazidi sacred books and the academic debate on their authenticity, see Guest, *Survival among the Kurds*, 141–58.

²¹Holy lineages had pious ancestors who were identified with legendary or historical characters closely related to Shaykh ʿAdi ibn Musafir. See Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism*, 101–7. Unfortunately, not much is known about the historical development of the Yazidi socioreligious establishment. See N. Fuccaro, “A 17th Century Travel Account on the Yazidis: Implications for a Socioreligious History,” *Annali dell’Istituto Orientale di Napoli*, 53/3 (1993): 241–53.

²²On Yazidi tribes, see F. B. Charmoy, trans., *Cheref-nameh ou Fastes de la Nation Kourde* (St. Petersburg, 1868); M. Sykes, “The Kurdish Tribes of the Ottoman Empire,” *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* 38 (1908): 451–86; G. R. Driver, *Kurdistan and the Kurds* (Mount Carmel: G. S. I. Printing Section, 1919).

²³N. Fuccaro, *The “Other” Kurds: Yazidis Under Colonial Rule. Tribe, Sect and State in Modern Iraq, 1919–1932* (forthcoming).

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶The most famous of these Kurdish chiefs was Kor Muhammad Beg Mir of Rowanduz, who slaughtered half of the Yazidi population of Shaikhan in 1832. A. H. Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains*, 2 vols. (London, 1849), 1:275–76.

²⁷There is no literature concerning the Ottoman period based on Ottoman archival sources. The most recent history of the Yazidis is largely based on travel accounts and European diplomatic correspondence. See Guest, *Survival among the Kurds*.

²⁸A. H. Layard, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon* (London, 1853), 4.

²⁹“Notice du Lieutenant Lohéac sur les Yezidis” (typescript 18 pp.), 10 December 1935, 15, Archives of the Dominican Mission of Mosul, Saulchoir Library, Paris: “Service Militaire” by J. Tfindji (typescript 4 pp.), 3 October 1930, 2, Archives Diplomatiques, Nantes (hereafter BEY), BEY 608.

³⁰This petition was drafted in Arabic, Turkish, and French. The first English translation was published by E. G. Browne in the appendix to O. Parry, *Six Months in a Syrian Monastery* (London, 1895), 372. See also Furlani, *Testi religiosi dei Yezidi*, 92–102, and F. Nau and J. Tfindji, “Recueil de textes et de documents sur les Yézidis,” *Revue de l’Orient Chrétien* 10 (1915–17): 168–71.

³¹In the 1880s, the Mosulawi authorities devised a major scheme to convert to Islam the Yazidis living under their jurisdiction. Guest, *Survival Among the Kurds*, 132–33.

³²Article IX of the 1872 Petition reads as follows: “If one of our sect go to another place and remain there as much as one year, and afterward return to his place, then his wife is forbidden to him, and none of us will give him a wife, that one is an infidel”; Article XII: “We may not comb our heads with the comb of a Moslem or of a Christian or a Jew or any other. Nor may we shave our head with the razor used by any other than ourselves [Yazidis]”; Article XIII: “No Yazidi may enter the water-closet of a Moslem, or take a bath at a Moslem’s house, or eat with a Moslem spoon, or drink from a Moslem’s cup, from a cup used by any one of another sect.” Quotes from I. Joseph, “Yazidi Texts,” *American Journal of Semitic Languages* 25 (1908–9): 246.

³³“Report on Tall Afar,” in *Monthly Reports of Political Officers in the Occupied Territories of Iraq for the Month January 1920*, London, India Office (hereafter IO) L-P&S-10/897. The project of raising Yazidi irregulars is included in the British Air Ministry Files (hereafter AIR) 23/423.

³⁴Secret memorandum from Administrative Inspector Mosul to Adviser Interior, 7 April 1928, no. S/502, AIR 23/155; secret memo from Special Service Officer Mosul to Air Staff Intelligence, 27 July 1928, no. I.M./10, p. 2, AIR 23/156.

³⁵Confidential correspondence from British Consulate Mosul to Chargé d’Affaires British Embassy Baghdad, 12 August 1935, no. 31 (5/3/1), FO 624/4/335; dispatch from British Embassy Baghdad to Foreign Office, 28 September 1935, no. 520 (335/20/35), FO 371/18948 E 6140. S. S. Ahmad, *al-Yazidiyya: ahwālūhum wa mu’taqadātuhum*, 2 vols. (Baghdad, 1971), 1:97; S. ‘Abd al-Razzaq al-Hasani, *al-Yazidiyyūna fi hādīrihim wa mādihim* (Sayda: 1951), 98–99.

³⁶Confidential correspondence from British Consulate Mosul to Chargé d’Affaires British Embassy Baghdad, 12 August 1935, no. 31 (5/3/1), FO 624/4/335.

³⁷C. J. Edmonds, *A Pilgrimage to Lalesh* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1967), 63; telegram from British Embassy Baghdad to FO, 9 October 1935, no. 25, FO 371/18948 E 6199; telegram from British Embassy to FO, 16 October 1935, no. 27, FO 371/18948 E 6294; Royal Air Force monthly intelligence summary, November 1935, Air HQ Hinaidi, FO 371/18949 E 7418; extracts Royal Air Force monthly intelligence summary, February 1936, FO 371/20002 E 2171. Ahmad, *al-Yazidiyya*, 1:97. Iraqi sources do not give precise figures for Yazidi and Iraqi losses but indicate that 389 Yazidis were put on trial by the military court: *ibid.*, 1:98, Hasani, *al-Yazidiyyūna*, 100.

³⁸Telegram from Délégué Adjoint Dair az-Zur to French High Commissioner, 29 October 1935, no. 300/Q; telegram from Délégué to French High Commissioner, 2 November 1935, no. 304/Q; telegram from Délégué Adjoint to French High Commissioner, 13 November 1935, no. 315/Q BEY 608. Hasani reports the text of a communique issued on 17 October by the Iraqi government concerning the end of the Yazidi revolt: Hasani, *al-Yazidiyyūna*, 99.

³⁹Since the early years of the Mandate Dawud al-Dawud had become a very significant figure for the inhabitants of Sinjar as he continued the tradition of militant resistance against the central administration which had made the Mihirkani tribe renowned throughout the mountain since early Ottoman times. In 1925, he had led an uprising against the local protégé of the British, Hamu Shiru, which had degenerated into an open rebellion against the government. The Mihirkan were a fairly heterogeneous tribe that included sections of Muslim Kurds. Fuccaro, *The “Other” Kurds*, 111–12, 187–99; S. Damluji, *al-Yazidiyya* (Mosul, 1949), 234–35.

⁴⁰At the same time, it seems that 58 Yazidi families belonging to the Samuqa tribe settled in western Sinjar managed to cross the border: Extract Royal Air Force monthly intelligence, February 1936, FO 371/20002 E 2171.

⁴¹Rapport Inspecteur Délégué Haute Djézireh au sujet des Yézidis du Djebel Sindjar, 21 April 1939, no. 597/DY, 3, BEY 608; telegram from Délégué Dair az-Zur to French High Commissioner, 2 May 1936,

153/Q, BEY 608; telegram from Délégué Dair to French High Commissioner, 12 May 1936, 132/Q, BEY 608; telegram from Délégué Dair to Délégué French High Commissioner, 21 May 1936, 141/Q, BEY 608. Correspondence from British Ambassador Baghdad to FO, 28 May 1936, no. 99/35/36, FO 371/20002 E 3340.

⁴²Edmonds, *A Pilgrimage*, 64–65. Confidential correspondence from British Consulate Mosul to British Embassy Baghdad, 2 March 1938, no. 54, FO 624/11/274; extracts from Mosul report, March 1938, no. 3/1938, FO 624/11/274; “Proportionate Recruiting Regulations no. 24 1935,” included in FO 371/18948 E 4201.

⁴³Rapport du Inspecteur Délégué, 3–4.

⁴⁴Extracts from Mosul report, no. 8/1936, 10 August–10 September 1936, FO 371/20004 E 6547.

⁴⁵Monthly intelligence summary Royal Air Force February/March/May/June 1939, 10/13/12/7, FO 371/23213.

⁴⁶Edmonds, *A Pilgrimage*, 64–65. Dispatch from British Embassy Baghdad to FO, 29 July 1939, no. 413 (504/2/39), FO 371/23202 E 5573; dispatch from British Embassy Baghdad to FO, 7 August 1939, no. 430 (504/5/39), FO 371/23202 E 5721; Royal Air Force monthly intelligence summary, April 1939, FO 371/23213 E 6201.

⁴⁷Rapport du Inspecteur Délégué, 4–5; correspondence from Délégué Djézireh to French High Commissioner, 5 July 1940, no. 1294/P, BEY 608; translation of correspondence from Ministry of Foreign Affairs Baghdad to French High Commissioner, 12 June 1940, no. 0/803/803/8, BEY 608; Royal Air Force monthly intelligence summary, June 1939, 7, FO 371/23213 E 6201.

⁴⁸Secret correspondence from Assistant Political Officer Mosul to Political Adviser Kirkuk, 8 February 1942, no. n., FO 624/28/325.

⁴⁹For the fixing of the Syrian–Iraqi border, see *Report of the Commission Entrusted with the Study of the Frontier Between Syria and Iraq 10 Sept. 1932*, C. 578, m. 285 1932 VII.

⁵⁰The official communique issued by the Iraqi government after the repression of the 1935 revolt clearly hints at French intrigues in Sinjar. See al-Hasani, *al-Yazidiyyūna*, 99.

⁵¹Dispatch from Ministre de France en Iraq to Ministre des Affaires Étrangères Paris, 8 March 1940, no. 9 and enclosures (French trans): anon., “Karyo et Marcho sont libérés! Quant aux libéraux Syriens . . .” *al-Istiqlāl*, 6 March 1940; anon., “Situation des Arabes à Hasssetche,” *al-Istiqlāl*, 25 February 1940, BEY 608.

⁵²Evidence of the links between some Sinjari aghas and the Assyrian movement is to be found in file AIR 23/455. Christian–Yazidi relations had been very close, especially after 1915 when the Fuqara³ tribe led by Hamu Shiru sheltered Armenians and Christians, both Chaldean and Nestorian, who had escaped Kurdish and Turkish persecutions: “Les Chrétiens aux bêtes!” (anonymous written report in three notebooks, 1916 c.a.), cahier no. 3, chap. 15, pp. 243–45; 245bis; 245ter, Archives of the Dominican Mission of Mosul (Paris), colis n. 17.

⁵³According to Rondot 546 Assyrians settled in Syria in August 1933: P. Rondot, “Origine et caractère ancestraux du peuplement assyrien en Haute–Djézireh syrienne; esquisse d’une étude de la vie tribale,” *Bulletin d’Études Orientales* 41–42 (1989–90): 109. Files on Assyrian migrations to Syria, AIR 23/589–655–656.

⁵⁴No literature exists on this rather obscure episode of the post-Mandate history of Iraq, which is well documented in FO/371 files 18948, 18949, 18951, 20002, 20003, 20004.

⁵⁵Article 22 of the Agreement of Bon Voisinage of 24 April 1937 pledged the Franco–Syrian authorities to “ne pas chercher à attirer en Syrie les habitants de l’Irak, à quelque classe qu’ils appartiennent et à ne pas chercher à les encourager à émigrer par des présents, des concessions ou tout autre moyen de séduction.” Text of the agreement incl. in BEY 608.

⁵⁶Correspondence from Ministry of Foreign Affairs Baghdad to French High Commissioner, 26 October 1940, no. SH/619/619/8/18607, BEY 608; letter from Dawud al-Dawud to Inspecteur Adjoint Djézireh, 12 October 1936, BEY 608.

⁵⁷Correspondence from Délégué Adjoint Djézireh to French High Commissioner, 21 October 1940, no. 1942/A, BEY 608; reply from French High Commissioner to Délégué Adjoint, 31 October 1940, no. 10600, BEY 608.

⁵⁸According to an unofficial census taken in 1937, approximately 2,000 Yazidis lived in Syria: 1,082 in the Jabal Akrad, 87 in the Hasaka district, and 797 in Qamishli. “Population sédentaire de la République

Syrienne par rite et par caza au 31 Décembre 1937," incl. in BEY 567. It is quite curious that no Yazidis are mentioned in the Jabal Sim'an, which represented the most important Yazidi stronghold in Syria. In 1936 Lescot reported that 1,500 Yazidis were permanently settled there. R. Lescot, *Enquête sur les Yézidis de Syrie et du Djebel Sindjâr* (Beirut, 1938), 201.

⁵⁹Gérant du Consulat de France a Baghdad to Ministère des Affaires Étrangères Paris, 25 September 1935, no. 16/296, BEY 608; correspondence from Délégué Adjoint Euphrates to Délégué French High Commissioner, 25 April 1939, no. 438/F, BEY 608. The Kurdish colonization of the Syrian Jazira started in the second half of the 19th century. The greatest numbers of Kurds arrived from eastern Turkey in the 1920s, when the Turkish government implemented harsh and repressive policies against the Kurdish tribes. The fixing of the border between Syria and Turkey in 1924 undoubtedly played a major role in Kurdish migration to Syria: M. Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State. The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London: Zed Books, 1992), 94–105. N. Fuccaro, "Kurds and Kurdish Nationalism in Mandatory Syria: Politics, Culture and Identity" (forthcoming).

⁶⁰This refusal was based on article 4 of the Convention of Extradition signed between the two governments in May 1929, which sanctioned that extradition could not be granted in cases of political crimes: correspondence from French High Commissioner to French Diplomacy Baghdad, 6 March 1936, no. 233, BEY 608/Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Correspondance Diplomatique (hereafter MAE) 460; dispatch from Ministry of Foreign Affairs Baghdad to French Embassy Baghdad, 28 October 1935, no. S/2849, MAE 460; correspondence from French Diplomacy Baghdad to French High Commissioner, 29 October 1940, MAE 460; memo from French Chargé d'Affaires in Iraq to French High Commissioner (including evidence of Dawud's crimes committed in Sinjar), 5 February 1936, no. 35, BEY 608.

⁶¹Until 1925, 42 Yazidis had served in Les Troupes Spéciales, a Syrian military organization controlled by the French Mandatory power whose members were recruited from the local population. From 1925 to 1940, there are no traces of Yazidis being employed in the organization. This might have been a result of both the 1925 rebellion in Sinjar and the arrival in the Syrian Jazira in 1926 of the Kurdish nationalist chief, the Yazidi Hajo Agha of the Haverki tribe, which might have created a great deal of concern in the French local authorities about possible Yazidi antigovernment activities in the area: N. E. Bou-Nacklie, "Les Troupes Spéciales 1916–1946," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25 (1993): 653, Table 3 "Ethnic and Religious Composition of the Troupes Spéciales in 1925, 1930, 1944."

⁶²Ajil had been a British protégé since 1921, when he was appointed to the paramountship of the Iraqi Shammar with the support of King Faysal. In 1933, Ajil, described in a contemporary British report as "a fine man physically who has cleverly adapted himself to the changing political conditions which have followed the British occupation of Iraq," had signed a truce with his enemy, Daham al-Hadi, chief of the Syrian Shammar. He had then started to plan the settlement of his tribe in the northern Jazira and to encourage agriculture among his tribesmen. Quote from "Ajil al-Yawar," in *Records of Leading Personalities in Iraq*, 13 January 1936, 5, FO 371/20003.

⁶³Royal Air Force monthly summary, November 1935, Air HQ Hinaidi, 8, FO 371/18949 E 7418; secret correspondence from Assistant Political Adviser Mosul to Political Adviser Kirkuk, 19 June 1942, no. M/2/1100, FO 624/29/325. The Ajil–Dawud dispute over the lands of northern Sinjar was to continue for many years. While Dawud was in Syria, the Shammar regularly collected taxes from villages formerly controlled by the Mihirkani leader. When Dawud returned to Sinjar in June 1941, there was an escalation of tension between the two parties. By 1942, the dispute had still not been solved, although both the Iraqi government and the British were trying to find a suitable arrangement: correspondence from Adviser Interior to Political Adviser Northern Area, 28 June 1942, no. 826, FO 624/29/325.

⁶⁴Secret correspondence from Adviser Interior to British Embassy Baghdad, 19 April 1942, no. 538, FO 624/29/325.

⁶⁵See Text of "Iraqi Declaration of 1932" in League of Nations, Official Journal (1932), 1347–50.

⁶⁶Extract from Royal Air Force monthly intelligence, February 1936, FO 371/20002 E 2171; dispatch from Adviser Interior to British Embassy Baghdad, 14 January 1936, P S no. 30, FO 371/20004 E 478; dispatch from British Embassy Baghdad to FO, 4 February 1936, FO 371/20004 E 889.

⁶⁷The villages were mainly inhabited by sections of the bedouin Juhaish, the Arab tribe of the Albu Mutaywid formerly controlled by the Yazidi Fuqara³ and the Kurdish Ali-Ilahi Babawat group.

⁶⁸Ahmad Bek report on Sinjar (Arabic typescript, 29 pp., ca. 1944), 28, incl. in C. J. Edmonds' Papers, Box XIX, file 5.