

Russian Imperial Ambition and Jaff Counter ambition

The Russian Imperial Army crushed the Persian Army in the Russo-Persian war of 1828-1829 in the Caucasus. Most of the fighting had been in Armenia. The Imperial Russian white coats decimated the Pro-Napoleonic armies of Persia. Qajar Persia signed the Treaty of Turkmenchay with Russian Empire, gaining all of what is now Armenia. Russia would then go onto fight the Ottomans from 1828 to 1829. They would come into the Ottoman Empire to subdue rogue Muslim pro Ottoman forces like the Circassians, which were a threat to their territory in the regions of Georgia all the way to Kars. The Imperial Russian Army would attack the Ottomans and sieze Kars, Akhalkalaki, Akhaltsikhe, Borjomi Gorge, Saganlug, and Erzerum from the Ottomans. The Treaty of Turkmenchay would be the beginning of Armenian nationalism as the Russians would encourage Armenian seperatism in the Ottoman Empire to further destroy their main Muslim rival to the Caucasus, the Ottomans.

A great General from Poland would rise to lead the great Imperial Russian army of the Caucasus, distinguishing himself in both the Russo-Ottoman war 1828-1829 and Russo Persian wars of 1826-1828. General Ivan Paskevich was a seasoned general in the Napoleonic wars, and defeated Napoleon's allies the Persians in Russo Persian war 1828-1829. He was one of the Tsar's Cossacks. He would sieze all of Armenia, and the Tsar in gratitude would proclaim him the Count of Yerevan of Armenia. He would also recieve from the Tsar a million rubles and a diamond encrusted sapor. He would be behind the growing Armenian nationalist insurrectionism within the Ottoman Empire. He wished to foment insurgency in many of the minorities of Ottoman Empire. He would conscript many Armenians into the Russian Imperial Army, and train them in soldiery.

General Ivan Paskevich began to look to many of the other minorities of the Ottoman Empire, and foment revolution among them. One of his targets was the Kurds. Their already Kurds in Yerevan, and the began to flock to Count Paskevich for aid. One of his great allies in Yerevan was the leader of the Yerevan Kurds, Husayn Agha. Husayn Agha would be armed by the Imperial Russian Army, and would launch a campaign against all other Kurds, who remained loyal to the Ottomans. His campaigns would, however, would gain Kurdish respect of the Imperial Russian Army. The Pasha of Moush would enter into the a treaty of nuetrality with the Imperial Russian Army out of fear of Husayn Agha and his forces. Soon Count Paskevich counted on many Kurdish allies from Agri Dagh to the Bingol regions, entering into alliances with their chieftans.

Count Ivan Paskevich would leave a legacy of seperatism within the Ottoman Empire, as

insurgencies would rise over those minorities, who had been most loyal to the Sultan, and were his main supporters he could count on for the security of his empire. The Kurds, Armenians, and even the Georgians would rise in revolt against the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman state institutions were slowly starting to decay from the inside. It had placed too much confidence in its minority groups, which were more aligned with a now rising Imperial Russia. Kurdish nationalism would continue to align itself with Imperial Russia. Imperial Russian hegemony over the Kurds would reach deep into Ottoman Mesopotamia. The Kurds of the region of Bohtan would revolt under Emir Izz Al Din Shir. The Hamavands, who migrated annually between the Caucasus and Mesopotamia, would also become allies of the Imperial Russians. These Kurds would come to Russia's aid at a very convenient time for Imperial Russia's would be war with the Ottoman Empire, where the Armenians would be at Imperial Russian Armies spearhead against the Ottoman Empire from 1877 to 1878.

The Imperial Russian army would launch a new war against the Ottoman Empire, and the Caucasus Russian army group would be led by Armenian Generals, who were General Mikhail Loris Melikov, General Arshak Ter Gukasov, General Ivan Lazerev, and General Beybut Shelkovnikov. The Imperial Russian Army would seize Bayazid, and then march into the region of Ardahan. They would also again besiege the city of Kars, which had fallen back into the hands of the Ottomans. It would be a seesaw battle for Kars, however the Russians would manage to seize the Fortress of Erzerum, which would weaken the Ottomans hold on the region. The Hamavands would fight for the Russians during the wars, gaining much combat experience, training, and arms from the Imperial Russian Army. The Ottoman Empire desperate to defend themselves against the rapidly advancing Russian Armies, would also begin enlisting men from the Kurdish population. One figure, who would play an important role in the defense of the Ottoman Empire, would be Sheikh Ubeidullah of the Urmia region. He was a follower of the Jaff Sheikh, Khalid I Baghdadi, whose sect of Islam encouraged a more militant practice of jihad. He and his army of Islamic militants would fight back against the crusading forces of the Imperial Russian Army and Armenians, who had done much atrocities against the Islamic Kurds. However, he soon would begin to turn against the very empire, which he defended. The war had already ended very costly for the Ottomans. The Russians would gain after the Treaties of San Stefano and Berlin from the Ottoman Empire, Kars, Batumi, Ardahan, Olti, and Sarakamish in exchange for Erzerum. The Ottoman state institutions in the Eastern regions had been left in complete decay, and were easy prey for Sheikh Ubeidullah, who would begin his revolt in 1880.

Meanwhile, the Ottoman's most valued provinces were in complete anarchy in the

Mesopotamian region. Mahmud Pasha Jaff was born in 1845. He had been the vessel in which his father Mohamed Pasha Jaff had fulfilled his lifetime quest, which was the destruction of the Baban clan and archrival to the throne of the Jaff clan, his cousin Aziz Bey Jaff, who was an ally to the Baban. This alliance had kept his father a refugee in Persia for most of his life. Fortunately, at this time, the Ottoman Sultan Abdulaziz was slowly beginning to turn against his former guardians of the Mesopotamian Northern border, the Babans. The Babans had begun to become insubordinate to the Ottoman Sultan's mandates, aiding in Persia's conquest of Sharizor. The Babans would hand Shahrizor to the Persian General, Abbas Mirza Qajar, in his devastating war against the Ottoman Empire in 1921.¹ The Babans were crushed in 1847 by the Sultan's armies in the battle of Koya in collaboration with the Jaff.

²The Baban Emirate would collapse as a whole in 1850.³ His father along with his tribe would then come under the protection of the Mamluk or Ottoman Military Dictator from the Ottoman Russian provinces, Daoud Pasha, who was the Vali of Baghdad. He would destroy all trace of the Baban in Shahrizor, and give Mohamed Pasha Jaff complete dominion over it.⁴ His father's army would then be proclaimed a part of the Ottoman Military by the Sultan, and they would crush all enemies who were opposed to his rule. His father would inherit a land full of many enemies. His father's cousin, Aziz Bey Jaff's reign would come to a swift end. Gulambar would be the new capital of the Jaff tribe and Shahrizor would be their new dominion. After the Mamluk Vali of Baghdad, Daoud Pasha, dealt a crushing defeat to the Persian occupation of Abbas Mirza Qajar of Northern Mesopotamia, and put to flight the Babans in 1850, Mohamed Pasha Jaff along with the Jaff nomads were allowed to dwell in the Shahrizor unharrassed by the Ottomans or Persians in any way.⁵ A golden age began for the Jaff as they became a major power in the region. ⁶Their nomadic caravans were allowed pasture from Khanaqin and Qizil Rubat to Panjwin in the Shahrizor region of Kurdistan. In these regions, Mohammed Pasha Jaff from his position of power began to crack down on all of his enemies from the Pro Baban Jaff under Aziz Bey Jaff, who was the son of Kai Khasrow Beg Jaff to the rival tribe of the Hemevand, who were anti Ottoman. He would erect a Fortress on the banks of the Shirwan river to guard against all of these foes in 1866.⁷ The name of this fortress is now known as the Shirwana fortress. In 1868, he would be appointed by the Mamluk Vali, Daoud Pasha of Baghdad. However, Daoud Pasha and Mohammed Pasha Jaffs' power would begin to weaken during the Russo Ottoman war around 1878. The Jaff's rivals, the Hamavands, would go to the Caucasus

and fight for the Russians against the Ottomans. The Russians would arm them and send them back to agitate the Shahrizor and create anarchy. They, in collaboration with the Aziz Bey Jaff faction, would launch an attack against Mohamed Pasha Jaff, killing him in 1880. Mahmud Pasha Jaff had inherited from his father, a great task of ending the insurgency of the Hamavand, who as allies were wreaking havoc all along the Mosul Vilayet, which the Imperial Russian Empire had the bold intention of annexing in their expansion into the Ottoman Empire from the Caucasus during the late 1870s. The Mosul Vilayet was rich in oil.⁸ The Ottoman Empire had every intention of keeping it. They no longer even trusted their own valis with the administration of the region, switching them out over short periods of time. The province was truly ruled by the new sultan, Abdul Hamid II himself, and he wished the Jaffs to be his allies and continue the legacy of Mohamed Pasha Jaff against the Hamavand threat. The Jaff had always hated the Hamavand, and this is why Sultan Abdul Hamid II trusted the Jaff above all other Kurdish tribes. The equally powerful Barzinjis of Suliamania were former allies of the Babans.⁹ The Ottomans, therefore, did not trust the Barzinjis. ¹⁰The Jaff were the most promising allies for Sultan Abdul Hamid II. Sultan Abdul Hamid II looked upon his alliance with the Jaff with a grand ambition, for the Kurds proved more reliable soldiers than his own Ottoman armies, wishing to model a Kurdish force after Tsarist Russia's Cossack units, which were trusted with the core securities of the state. The force would be named after him as the Hamidiye Cavalry.

The Hamavands had gone on a rampage. They would launch a campaign of mass extermination in the region to make living space for their tribes. Mosul itself, the center of the Ottoman administration for the Mosul Vilayet¹¹ and for the Chaldean Catholic church, would constantly come under attack by the Hamavand.¹² They would kill many, and cause disarray against the city. The Assyrian population would live in fear, as they did not have adequate forces to defend themselves against the Hamavand. Mahmud Pasha Jaff would come to the aid of the Assyrians defending them against the Hamavand armies. He would put up fierce resistance to the Hamavand juggernaut from Mosul to Gulambar to avenge his father. The Hamavand would eventually flee to Qasr-I-Shirin, where the Jaff would lay siege to them. The Ottoman administration and Assyrian population would award the Jaff army with 100 mares in gratitude for the defense of their city and their churches.¹³ The Ottoman Administration was still very weak in Mesopotamia. The Jaff would seize the Zohab region in Persia around Qasr-I-Shirin, and place it under their complete control. This region would become popular for their farming of dates and many other

crops. They would increase in trade with Persia, and become the wealthiest of all Kurdish tribes. They would enter into agreement with the Qajar government, who allowed them to stay on their land in exchange for paying taxes and tribute to Shah Fath Ali in Tehran. They payed to Qajar Shah in the Zohab lands they had occupied 20-50 Tuman. They also payed taxes in Sheep and cattle. However, the Shah would grow weary of the Jaff's presence, who had threatened war against other tribes of the region. They were spreading disorder in region. One tribe close to the Bistani killed one of the Jaffs. The Jaff declared war against the tribe as a result. The tribe offered a ransom of one woman and 5 livestock. The Jaff refused and wanted 10 of the tribe dead. This agitation of the Jaffs prompted the Imperial Russian Army to send a border commission to mediate in the disputes of the lands around the Zohab area. The border commission was led by Colonel I. E. Chirikov of the Imperial Russian Army. He and his troops stayed with the Jaff tribe, and he remarked that they were the most well-dressed of all Kurds. He went to the Shahrizor, and noted that the Jaff tribe had fallen into complete anarchy. He did not deal directly with Mahmud Pasha Jaff, but his siblings Ahmed Bey and Khasro Bey Jaff of the Suliamania faction of the Jaff. Mahmud Pasha Jaff had lost control of the Jaff tribe as Mahmud Pasha Jaff had become more anarchic. His forces in Shahrizor were in complete revolt against the Ottomans and engaged in a campaign of brutality against all other Kurds and Jaff factions, burning any of their villages that his forces came across. There was no hope for Mahmud Pasha Jaff, and the Ottomans and Persians wished to distance himself from him, finding an alternative in his brother Osman Pasha Jaff.