

Kurds for the Empire: “The Young Kurds” (1898-1914)

Djene Rhys Bajalan

107671001

İSTANBUL BİLGİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
TARİH YÜKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMI

Tez Danışmanı Prof. Dr. Christoph K. Neumann

2009

Kurds for the Empire: “The Young Kurds” (1898-1914)
Osmanlıların Kürd Taraftarları: “Jön Kürdler” (1898-1914)

Djene Rhys Bajalan

107671001

Tez Danışmanı Prof. Dr. Christoph K. Neumann :

Jüri Üyesi Yrd. Doç. Dr. M. Erdem Kabadayı :

Jüri Üyesi Yrd. Doç. Dr. Ahmet Kuyaş :

Tezin Onaylandığı Tarih :

Toplam Sayfa Sayısı:

Anahtar Kelimeler (Türkçe)

- 1) Kürtler
- 2) Milliyetçilik
- 3) Osmanlılık
- 4) Kürtçülük
- 5) Jön Türkler

Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce)

- 1) Kurds
- 2) Nationalism
- 3) Ottomanism
- 4) Kurdism
- 5) Young Turks

Abstract

Kurds for the Empire: “Young Kurds” (1898-1914)

During the final years of its existence, the Ottoman Empire witnessed the proliferation of so-called “ethnic” journals and associations. That is, journals and associations which sought to represent and promote the interests of particular ethnic communities residing in the vast domains of the Sultan. While these journals and organisations entertained the broader socio-political objective of ‘awakening’, by means of education, their community, this invites the question: to what ends?

In traditional historiography, the presence of such journals and associations has been taken as a sign of the historical obsolescence of the ‘multi-ethnic’ state. This point of view holds that the formation of these journals and organisations was the first ‘proto-nationalist’ stage in a progressive development which ultimately culminated in the formation of fully fledged nationalist movements and new nation-states. Indeed, at the more conspiratorial end of Turkish historiography it is alleged that such groups harboured clandestine separatist agendas from their inception. Certainly in hindsight such a teleological view is attractive given not only the history of the Ottoman Empire but also the fate of other ‘multi ethnic’ states such as Austria-Hungary or in more recent times Yugoslavia and the USSR. However, it is exactly this teleology that this thesis will attempt to challenge via the assessment of the activities of those I would describe as the ‘Young Kurds’ between the foundation of the first Kurdish journal in 1898, through the Constitutional Revolution of 1908, and up to Ottoman entry into the Great War in the autumn of 1914.

It will be argued that the generation of Kurdish activists operating before the Great War, while demonstrating a keen interest in the welfare of their community, saw this interest as part of a process of strengthening the Ottoman Empire and sought to reconcile their ethnic identity with Ottomanism. As such rather than regarding their ideology as ‘proto’ Kurdish nationalism, I will argue that it would be far more meaningful to describe them as “Ottoman Nationalists with Kurdish colours.” On a theoretical level this study will attempt to disentangle to concept of ethnicity and nationalism. By disentangling these two concepts, not only will it be able to understand the ideology of the ‘Young Kurds’ but also perhaps challenge generally held yet fallacious view that multi-ethnic states are historically doomed.

Hülasa

Osmanlıların Kürd Taraftarları: 'Jön Kürdler' (1898-1914)

Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun son dönemlerinde “etnik” dergiler ve cemiyetlerin sayısında kayda değer bir artış görüldü. Padişahın geniş topraklarında ikamet eden belli bazı etnik cemiyetlerin çıkarlarını temsil eden dergiler ve dernekler “etnik” olarak adlandırılıyordu. Bu dergiler ve dernekler eğitim yoluyla cemaatlerini “uyandırmak” gibi geniş kapsamlı bir siyasî ve içtimaî hedefe hizmet ediyorlardı ki bu da akla, bunu yapmaktaki amaçlarının ne olduğu sorusunu getirir.

Geleneksel tarih yazımında, bu gibi dergilerin ve derneklerin varlığı “çok-uluslu” devlet yapısının eskidiğinin göstergesi olarak kabul edilir. Bu görüşe göre, bu dergilerin ve örgütlerin oluşumu, nihai olarak milliyetçi hareketler ve yeni ulus-devletlerle sonlanacak “ulus-öncesi” aşamaydı. Türk tarih yazımının komplo teorisine daha yatkın ucunda ise bu grupların başlangıcından beri bünyelerinde gizli ayrılıkçı gündemleri barındırdığı iddia edilir. Kuşkusuz, sonradan bakıldığında çok daha iyi anlaşılacaktır ki bu gibi bir teleolojik bakış açısı sadece Osmanlı tarihi için değil aynı zamanda Avusturya-Macaristan İmparatorluğu ya da daha yakın dönemlerde Yugoslavya'da ve SSCB gibi diğer ‘çok-uluslu’ devletlerin kaderine bakıldığında da çok cazip görünür. Bu tezin sorgulamaya çalıştığı tam da bu yaklaşımdır. 1898'de ilk Kürt dergisinin neşredilmesinden 1914 sonbaharında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun I. Dünya Savaşı'na girişine kadar ve 1908 Hürriyet'in İlanı'nın ardından geçen süre içinde 'Jön Kürdler' olarak adlandırdığım kişilerin faaliyetleri incelenerek bu yaklaşım mercek altına alınacaktır.

Büyük Savaşın öncesindeki Kürt eylemciler bir yandan kendi cemaatlerinin refahıyla ilgilenirken diğer yandan da bu ilgiyi Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nu güçlendirme sürecinin bir parçası olarak gördüler ve kendi etnik kimliklerini Osmanlıcılıkla uzlaştırmaya çalıştılar. Bu sebeple, 'Jön Kürtler'in ideolojisini Kürt milliyetçiliğinin başlangıcı olarak adlandırmaktansa onları "Kürt rengi taşıyan Osmanlı milliyetçileri" olarak tarif etmenin daha anlamlı olduğunu öne sürüyorum. Kuram düzeyinde bu çalışma etnisite ve milliyetçilik kavramlarını birbirinden ayırmaya çalışacak. Bu iki kavramı birbirinden ayırarak sadece 'Jön Kürtler'in ideolojisini incelemekle kalmayacak, aynı zamanda çok-uluslu devletlerin tarihin akışında yok olmaya mahkum olduğu görüşüne bireleştiri sunmaya çalışacaktır.

Acknowledgements

In the preparation of this thesis I have received much help from my teachers, my colleagues, my students and my friends. Of course, these categories are not mutually exclusive. Thus, as is customary, I would like to mention those whose help has been invaluable to me over the last year and without whom I would never have been able to complete this thesis. First of all, I must thank Thomas Berchtold, who has helped me take the first tentative steps into the sea that is the Ottoman language (and at the same time displaying the patience of a saint). I also must thank Batmanlı Ahmet Alış for all his help with the translations of the Kurdish texts used in this thesis and Pelin Ünsal for putting up with all my annoying questions about Turkish over the last few years (and suffering through *Şark ve Kürdistan* in Ottoman class). Scott Rank also should be mentioned for sticking with me as we struggled to learn Ottoman Turkish! Another long suffering friend also needs to be mentioned, that being my flatmate Zach “little dog” Barnett-Howell who never failed to liberate books from Boğazici library when I required them liberating. A special mention should also go out to Zeynep Kaya whom I met in London and who has provided me with much food for thought when I have been back in the Capital. I am also indebted to the *Babanzâdeler* who have helped me in my research; Ayşe Baban and Ayad Baban both of whom allowed me access to their personal libraries, Janet Klein for sharing her notes with me and my dear friend Azad Aslan whose friendship and ideas have greatly influenced me.

I would also like to thank my teachers and colleagues at İstanbul Bilgi University who have put up with over the last two years; Aslı Odman, Mete Tunçay, Sara-Nur Yıldız, Bülent Bilmez and Suraiya Faroqhi. Most of all I would like to thank my supervisor Christoph K. Neumann for his advice regarding my thesis and for being an inspiration to all of us on the

History masters program. Also I must note my appreciation to Ahmet Kuyaş of Galatasaray University and M. Erdem Kabadayı for agreeing to be on my jury and for all their helpful comments.

I would like to mention those friends who helped me since I arrived in Turkey and who have made my stay here so much fun: Norman Stone, Abbas Vali, Yücel Terzibaşoğlu, Selim Deringil, Josh Brown, Zach “big dog” Richer, Hazan Hayaloğlu, Chester Nagle and Fırat Bozçalı.

Last but not at all least, I must also thank my family. My father Dr. Ahmad Abdullah Aziz Bajalan for helping me with the difficult Kurdish and encouraging me so much over the years, my mother Janet Linda Bajalan for imbuing me with a love of history and my brothers Dara and Barzan for being good brothers!

Notes on Transliteration

Throughout the thesis modern Turkish orthography has been used for the transliteration for Ottoman Turkish. However, Arabic names such as Abdülhamid have been rendered Abd ül-Hamid (and not Abdülhamit, Abdülhamid or ‘Abd ül-Hamīd).

For the transliteration Kurdish the modified Latin script has been used:

A, B, C, Ç, D, E, Ê, F, G, H, I, Î, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, Ş, T, U, Û, V, W, X, Y, Z

It should be noted that this script is used for the Kurmanci dialect spoken in present day Turkey, Iran, Syria and Iraq. This form of transliteration has also been used for the Sorani dialect as opposed to using the *Yekgirtû* (“Unity”) Latin based script which is currently finding favour amongst Sorani speaking intellectuals.

Names of people and places that possess an anglicised version are not transliterated: e.g. Istanbul, Baghdad and so on. For place names without a commonly accepted anglicised version the Turkish spelling has been used.

For terms such as Shaikh/Sheikh, Pasha and Ulama the Turkish rendering has been used: *Şeyh*, *Paşa* and *Ulema*. The adjective form *Şeyh*, “Shaikly” has been used. Spelling conforms to British (i.e. proper) English.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Hülasa.....	v
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Notes on Transliteration	ix
Introduction: The Kurdish Question Revisited.....	1
Chapter I: The Nationalism Debate.....	6
Notes on Nationalism	7
Definitions.....	13
Chapter II: Empire to Nation	15
The vicissitudes of Ottoman “Official Nationalism”	17
Reactions to Ottomanism	18
The Kurdish case: Historiography and the Kurdish movement of 1898 to 1914.....	20
Traditional Notables.....	26
The Greater Notables (A).....	27
1. The Beys	28
2. The Ulema (Şeyhs)	30
The Lesser Notables (B).....	34
3. The Urban Notables	34
4. The Tribal Leaders.....	36
The intellectuals and professionals.....	38
From Princes to Lawyers: the new Ottoman-Kurdish elite.....	39
Chapter IV: Abd ül-Hamid II and the Birth of the Kurdish Question.....	41
The state of affairs in Kurdistan and the Şeyh Ubeydullah Revolt	43
Abd ül-Hamid II, Autocracy and Islamic Ottomanism.....	46
<i>Bavê Kurdan</i> (“Father of the Kurds”)	49
Chapter V: Kurdish opposition to Abd ül-Hamid	58
Young Turks and Young Kurds.....	61
<i>Kürdistan</i> : Ottoman Patriotism and Kurdish Enlightenment.....	65
Chapter VI: The Proclamation of Freedom, Old Kurds and Young Kurds	73
Trepidation in Kurdistan: Old Kurds.....	75
Young Kurds 1908-1909.....	78

<i>Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti</i> (“Kurdish Solidarity and Progress Society”).....	78
<i>Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi</i> (“The Kurdish Solidarity and Progress Newspaper”)	81
Young Kurds in Power?	86
Chapter VII: Hope in Hard Times.....	89
Enlightenment in practice: <i>Kürd Neşr-i Maarif Cemiyeti</i> (“The Propagation of Kurdish Education Society”) and <i>Kürd Meşrutiyet Mektebi</i> (“The Kurdish Constitutional School”).....	92
The New Generation	95
<i>Kürd Hevî Cemiyeti</i> (“Kurdish Hope Society”)	97
Education and activism	98
<i>Hevî</i> ’s Congress of 1913	100
Towards decentralisation but ever loyal	101
The Social origins of <i>Hevî</i>	104
Conclusion.....	107
The Young Kurd movement assessed: A question of scale.....	107
The Young Kurds and Nationalism	108
Bibliography	112
Appendices.....	122

“Bir *Şerefnâme* ile bir millet şeref-i tarihisini ve yahud tarih-i şeref tasarruf ve muhafaza edemez.”

Dr. Abdullah Cevdet *Roj-i Kurd* 1913

“Kitab û defter û tariq û kaxid
Bi Kurdi ger binusraya zimanî”

Haci Kadir-i Koyi

To my mother

Introduction: The Kurdish Question Revisited

It is inevitable that contemporary political concerns and issues will affect historical studies. Granted this truism may manifest itself in more or less obvious ways, but it is a point that should always be kept in mind. This work on the Kurdish politics between 1898 and 1914 is no exception. Indeed, any study of Kurdish history is bound to be regarded as overtly political given the current significance of the so-called “Kurdish question.”

The term the “Kurdish question” refers to the problematic relationship between those defined as or defining themselves as Kurds and the states in which they reside. At its core, it is a question about how the Kurds should be incorporated in the nation-states of the region and on whose terms. In the post Ottoman world, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey which host the majority of the Middle East’s Kurdish population have struggled to solve this seemingly intractable issue. Likewise, the leadership of the Kurdish movement have adopted various strategies in their struggle for ‘Kurdish rights.’ Yet, a long term solution still remains elusive.

To the state orientated elites in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey, the Kurds are a constant source of anxiety. The perception that any concession to Kurdish ‘demands’ might be a step on the road to division and dismemberment is palpable, nowhere more so than in Turkey which is home to the Middle East’s largest Kurdish population. As one high ranking Turkish official succinctly put it:

The openly expressed ultimate aim of major Kurdish leaders is the establishment of a Greater Kurdistan that would eventually swallow major areas of Turkey. Even this solution would not put an end to Kurdish ambitions. Kurdish nationalists might very well next demand an outlet to the Mediterranean.¹

¹Altemur Kılıç, “Kurds are Turks too” *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 4 (Sep-Oct 1993), pp. 190-91. Altemur Kılıç served as the Deputy Chairman of the Turkish Supreme Council of Radio and Television and Deputy Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations.

Unsurprisingly, this perception is not entirely unfounded. For instance, in Turkey the Workers' Party of Kurdistan, founded in 1978 and better known by its Kurdish abbreviation PKK ("Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan"), for much of its existence followed a separatist agenda. It theorised that "Kurdistan with all four of its segments, controlled by Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria, represented the weakest link in 'capitalism's chain' and [that] the fight against imperialism was a fight to save Kurdistan's natural resources from exploitation." As such, the PKK asserted that its goal was the creation of a pan-Kurdish state incorporating parts of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria.²

Consequently, it is easy to visualize the Kurdish questions as being a conflict between nation-states eager to maintain their territorial integrity and a separatist Kurdish nationalism bent on creating a separate Kurdish homeland. However, this binary interpretation of the Kurdish question belies the complex relationship between expressions of ethnic identity and separatism.

Indeed, at times, expressions of Kurdish politics have strongly identified with the state. A prime example of this can be found in Iraq during the giddy days that followed Brigadier-General Abd ül-Kerim Kasim's overthrow of the pro-British Hashemite regime in 1958. During the revolutionary honeymoon, the Kurdish-language press showed complete support for the new government's interpretation of the revolution as being against "the 'dirty, stinking regime of criminals [the monarchy] now overthrown' with the 'colonizers, blood-suckers and Anglo-American imperialists' who had imposed that regime on the country..."³ In its journal *Hiwa* (Hope), the Kurdish Club in Baghdad ran front-page pictures of anti-imperialist heroes such as Josef Stalin and Mao Tse Tong. In Süleymaniye, a city in the prominently Kurdish

² Henri J. Barkley and Graham E Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), p. 23.

³ Cecil J. Edmonds "The Kurds and the Revolution in Iraq" *Middle East Journal* 13, no. 1 (Winter 1959), pp. 1-10, p. 3.

north of the country, crowds demonstrated in favour of the new republic and expressed their hopes that the new government would usher in a new age of Arab-Kurdish brotherhood.⁴

In more recent years, even the PKK has hinted at a softening of separatist line and reduced its demands. The PKK's now incarcerated leader Abdullah Öcalan stated in an interview to an Arabic language newspaper that he envisaged the solution of the Kurdish question through a series of federations: Turkish-Kurdish, Arab-Kurdish in Iraq, and Persian-Kurdish in Iran.⁵

The broader theoretical observation to be made here is that expressions of ethnic particularism need not go hand in hand with demands for the creation of a separate nation-state. This point has implications for the study of non-dominant ethnic groups and multi-ethnic states. With regards to the Kurdish nationalism, any serious study necessarily involves understanding its intellectual progenitors in the late Ottoman period. However, a nuanced and contextualized understanding of Kurdish political activities between 1898 and 1914 must avoid projecting back the later historical reality of the struggle between Kurdish nationalism and the nationalising states of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Such an anachronistic reading of events would inevitably lead to a fundamental misunderstanding of the aims and objectives of the majority of Kurdish activists during the late Ottoman period. As such, what will be attempted in this work is a re-evaluation of the Kurdish movement starting in the latter years of the Hamidian Regime, through 1908 Revolution and up to the Ottoman entry into the Great War. I shall endeavour to move away from concepts of Kurdish nationalism (or even proto-Kurdish nationalism) towards a perceptive which characterises Kurdish activism within the boundaries of Ottoman patriotism; in short, Ottoman nationalism with Kurdish colours. This study does not pretend to offer an exhaustive history of the Kurdish movement during in the late Ottoman period. Such an undertaking is beyond the scope of this study. As such, my

⁴ Ibid., p. 2.

⁵ Barkley and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, p. 25.

source base will be limited to those self-proclaimed Kurdish journals published between 1898 and 1914. A more extensive study might have also included a more comprehensive overview of Kurdish writers in the Ottoman press in general.

Consequently, the principal focus will be the activities and ideology of Kurdish intellectual vanguard— those who participated in the foundation of the first Kurdish journal, *Kürdistan*, in 1898 - those who continued the quest for Kurdish “enlightenment” in Istanbul after the 1908 Revolution period - whom I will term the ‘Young Kurds’.

In terms of structure, this study will attempt to avoid a simple chronological narration of the ‘events’. Such a history of events has been written before and need not be repeated.⁶ Instead, this study will endeavour to offer a thematic examination of the Kurdish press in an attempt to unlock the ideological framework in which these ‘Young Kurds’ operated.

The first chapter will look in general terms at the theoretical debates that have shaped the study of nationalism. The second chapter will continue by examining the specific case of nationalism within context the late Ottoman Empire and evaluate the existing historiography relating to the evolution of Kurdish nationalism. The third chapter will look at the structure of the Kurdish elite and the effects of Ottoman reform on its structure during the 19th century. Chapter four will deal with Abd ül-Hamid II’s Kurdish policy and his attempts to cultivate an Ottoman-Islamic nationalism. Chapters five, six and seven will constitute the main body of the thesis regarding the Young Kurds and their politics between 1898 and 1914. These chapters will assess this group’s conceptions of the Kurdish identity and Ottoman patriotism

⁶ For instance see David McDowall, *A modern History of the Kurds*, (London; New York: I.B.Tauris, 1997). Also see Wadie Jwaideh, *The Kurdish nationalist movement: Its origins and development* (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1960).

respectively. This will be followed by a conclusion which it is hoped will draw together the main points raised in this study.

Chapter I: The Nationalism Debate

At the dawn of the twentieth first century, nationalism continues to be a subject which attracts a great deal of scholarly interest. Indeed, since the 1980s, there has been somewhat of a blossoming in academic studies relating to nationalism. Scholars from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds have sought to understand and theorise this most thorny of subjects. The increased interest in nationalism seems only natural given the persistence of national and ethnic conflict in the modern world. Violent and seemingly intractable conflicts that have taken places in such diverse locations as the former Yugoslavia, Georgia, Tibet, Rwanda and East Timor are part of the story. Yet, the significance of nationalism is not confined to the 'barbaric' orient as much as European polite society might wish to imagine. Even amongst the 'Old Nations' of Europe such as Britain, France and Spain, governments have been forced to confront new conceptions of nationalism and the nation. Be that the rise of peripheral nationalism amongst the Welsh, Scots, Basques, Catalans and Corsicans, social tensions brought about by mass immigration from the Third World (multiculturalism) or many citizens' the day to day reaffirmation of 'nationness' (banal nationalism).⁷ As a consequence, a multitude of explanations have been put forward in order to explain, understand and categorise nationalism and its origins. In turn, these debates have begun to influence the study of late Ottoman history as Ottomanists have attempted to apply models developed by the theoreticians of nationalism to the Ottoman context.

⁷ See Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995). One of the more peculiar attempts of recent times to deal with ethnic diversity and peripheral nationalism in Europe was an effort to foster a greater sense of "Britishness." Faced with emboldened Scottish nationalism and increasing ethnic diversity was Prime Minister Gordon Brown suggested the creation of a 'Britain Day' to celebrate 'British values'. Of course there was no agreement on what a British value was. Cads at the time joked at the time that the only values that could be universally agreed on were 'invading and colonising other people's countries' and 'behaving badly at football matches'.

Notes on Nationalism

The 'nationalism debate' is a debate that has spawned thousands of books and articles.

Therefore, a comprehensive review of this debate would be impossible within the space allowed. However, for the purpose of this study it is necessary to elaborate on the discussions surrounding one of the key questions that have occupied scholars of nationalism: What are the origins of nations and nationalism?

By and large, it is possible to divide theories as to the origin of the nation and nationalism into three broad categories: Primordialism, Modernism and Ethno-symbolism.

The primordialist view embraces a vision of nations as natural and given units. While a nation may lay dormant, experience "golden ages" or "declines", it remains an ever present performer in the historical process. Naturally, this is the view adopted by most nationalist and presupposition on which numerous 'patriotic histories' are written. Apart from the nationalist version of primordialism, more sophisticated forms of primordialism have been forwarded by academics such as the socio-biologist Pierre van den Berghe who has argued a biological necessity behind nationalism.⁸ In short, "[for] the primordialist, the past determines the present: nations have existed since time immemorial and they are a natural part of human existence, as natural as sight or speech."⁹

It would seem pertinent to note that primordialism remains a very powerful in the popular imagination. However, within academia primordialist approaches have been thoroughly displaced by modernist theories. The modernist school was pioneered by scholars such as Hans Kohn, Ernest Gellner and Elie Kedourie in the 1960s and 1970s and taken up during the 1980s and 1990s by the likes of Eric Hobsbawm, Tom Nairn, John Breuilly and Benedict Anderson. In contrast to primordialists, modernists have asserted that nations and nationalism

⁸ See Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 146-151.

⁹ Umut Özkırımlı, *Theories of nationalism: a critical introduction* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2000), p. 35.

have only existed for the last 200 years and are products of specific processes related to modernity: industrialism, secularism, capitalism, urbanisation and the bureaucratic state.¹⁰

Unsurprisingly, individual writers have stressed particular aspects of modernity when analyzing the creation of nations and nationalism; industrialism for Ernest Gellner, uneven economic development for Thomas Nairn, the modern bureaucratic state for John Breuilly and, in the case of Benedict Anderson, a combination of factors including print capitalism and a revolution in the conception of time. Yet, the common denominator amongst these thinkers is their assumption of the *historical novelty* of both nations and nationalisms.¹¹ Any apparent connections to earlier ethnic communities are merely a *tromp d'oeil*. As such, for the modernists, many of the supposed 'national traditions' are in fact unrelated to the rites, rituals and customs of the past but rather "responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition."¹²

Therefore, for modernists, nationalism ought to be envisaged as a peculiarly modern political doctrine based on a conception of society and politics founded on the doctrines of popular sovereignty and citizenship, concepts that only fully emerged in the aftermath of the French revolution. John Breuilly has highlighted three main points as defining this nationalist political argument; (a) there exists a unique nation, (b) its interest and values take priority over all other interests and (c) it must be as independent as possible.¹³ As such, nationalism is *qualitatively* different and *discontinues* from pre modern forms of ethnic identity.

Still, despite the popularity of modernism, its hegemony has not gone unchallenged. Scholars such as Anthony D. Smith, John Armstrong and John Hutchinson have attempted to offer a

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 85.

¹¹ For an excellent summary of the theoretical debates surrounding nationalism see Özkırımlı *Theories of nationalism*. Also see Smith *Nationalism and Modernism*.

¹² Eric Hobsbawm "Introduction," in eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Granger *The Invention of tradition* (London: Canto, 1992), pp. 1-15 , p. 2.

¹³ John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p.2.

compromise position between radical modernism and primordialism; the so-called ethno-symbolist approach. While the ethno-symbolists accept the modernist argument as to the modernity of nations and nationalism in the sense of a community based on the doctrine of popular sovereignty and citizenship, they seek to uncover the relationship between modern nations and nationalisms and the pre modern *ethnie*.¹⁴ The partisans of “ethno-symbolism,” have argued that earlier myths, symbols and ethnic traditions have been overlooked by the modernists and accordingly have endeavoured to focus on *la longue durée* character of modern nations. As a result, ethno-symbolists have postulated that “a greater degree of continuity exists between ‘traditional and ‘modern’ ... eras.”¹⁵ Smith summarised this approach as follows:

[E]ven if nations and nationalism are temporally and *qualitatively modern* they draw much of their content and strength from pre existing *ethnies*... Hence, the study of the components of ethnies (myths of descent and election, attachment to homelands, shared memories of ethno-history, various symbols of identity, etc.) has become an important focus for illuminating the origins and persistence of nations.¹⁶

In short, a central premise of the ethno-symbolists is not that the past *dictates* the present but that the past *influences* the present. The capital of myths, symbols and rites inherited from past effect how the modernity is experienced and negotiated.

Ethno-symbolism is certainly attractive when one considers the development of nationalism amongst groups, such as the Kurds, with ethnic traditions predating the emergence of nationalism. However, while ethno-symbolists might be correct in pointing out that concepts of nations and nationalism are not created *ex nihilo*, their approach fetishises the pre-modern ethnic community as the principal symbolic resource on which modern conceptions of nationality are built. Certainly, some nationalism have mobilised the idiom of ethnicity to

¹⁴ Smith defines the *ethnie* as a “named human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity” See Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* p.191.

¹⁵ John Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 7.

¹⁶ Montserrat Guibernau and John Hutchinson “Introduction: History and National destiny,” *Nations and Nationalism* (Jan-Apr 2004) pp. 1-8, [emphasis added] p. 2.

define the nation (what might be termed ethno-nationalism). However, two major objections can be raised to this overemphasis on ethnicity in the construction of nationality.

First of all, as Umut Özkırımlı has suggested, identity is often a vague and shifting matrix over which not final consensus can be achieved.¹⁷ In particular, John Hutchinson has highlighted that the concept of the nation as a *zone of conflict* within which there are a multitude of interpretations and definition of who is a member of the national community. As such, nations are “riven by embedded culture differences that *generate rival symbolic and political projects*.”¹⁸ Most modern nationalist movements contain political trends that have radically different conception of who is (and is not) a member of the national community. These usually range from those advocating a civic-voluntarily notion based on conceptions of citizenship and shared political values to interpretations with religious, territorial, ethnic and racial components. For instance, the debates over concepts of *Türklük* (“Turkishness”) during the first half of the twentieth century spawned in radically difference interpretations of the Turkish nation ranging from the culturalist position of Mehmet Ziya Gökalp to the racialised perspective of *Milli İnkılap* (“National Restoration/Revolution”).¹⁹

Furthermore, religion, often seen as antagonistic to the ideology of nationalism, has in many cases proved central how nationalist movements have defined their nation. It has been argued that in Asia the ethno-linguistic model of nationality is only of limited relevance. Indeed, one “result of Asia’s greater cultural variety [in contrast to Europe] is that religious factors have

¹⁷ See Özkırımlı, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*.

¹⁸ John Hutchinson, *Nations as zones of conflict* (London: Sage, 2005), [emphasis added] p. 3.

¹⁹ Mehmet Ziya Gökalp who is often regarded as the father of Turkish nationalism, argued that "a nation is not a racial or ethnic or geographic or political or volitional group but one composed of individuals who share a common language, religion, morality, and aesthetics, that is to say, who have received the same education.", cited in Jacob Landau. *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation* (London: Hurst & Company, 1995), p. 38. This was quite opposed to the line taken by the writers in the journal *Milli İnkılap* [National Restoration/Revolution] who rather bluntly described Turkishness as “a matter of blood and character.” *Milli İnkılap*, 1 Mayıs 1934.

played much the same divisive role that vernacular languages have played in Europe.”²⁰

Moreover, with the exception of Bangladesh, modern Asia has rarely seen ethno-linguistic mobilisation save when such fault lines have coincided with religious divides as in the case of Tamils in Sri Lanka, Karens in Burma and the Moros of the Southern Philippines. As such it is possible to speak of religious or even, in the cases of India and China, civilisational forms of nationalism. That is to say, nationalisms in which ethnicity *does not* play a major role in the definition of the nation.²¹

A second major objection that may be raised relates to expressions of ethnic particularism and their relationship to nationalism. At this point it is necessary to elaborate on the theoretical model put forward by the Marxist historian Miroslav Hroch. In his comparative study of ‘small nations’²² in Europe he identified three stages in the process of ‘national revival’;²³ A, B and C. Phase A denotes a period of scholarly interest in the ‘nation’ (ethnic group) prompted “by a patriotism of the Enlightenment type, namely an active affection for the region in which they [the would be patriots] lived, associated with a thirst for knowledge everything new and insufficiently investigated phenomenon.” Phase B refers to the transition

²⁰ Stein Tonnessen and Hans Antlov “Introduction” in eds. Stein Tonnessen and Hans Antlov, *Asian Forms of the Nation* (London: Curzon, 1996) pp. 1-39, pp. 23-24. However, it is important to note that the Middle East, which Tonnessen and Antlov do not seem to include in their definition of Asia, since 1918 has seen a significant degree of ethno-linguistic mobilisation amongst co-regionalists. This is particularly pertinent to note with regards to the Kurdish movement in Turkey and Iraq where adherence to the Sunni Islam is a commonality between the majority of Kurds and the state elites in Ankara and Baghdad. In contrast, in ethnically diverse Iran seems to fit more readily into Tonnessen and Antlov’s framework in that Kurdish and Baluch militancy has at least in part related to the fact that while Kurdish and Baluchi speakers are generally Sunni, most Persian speakers are Shi’i.

²¹ For an interesting study on the role of religion in the construction of nationalism see Mark Juergensmeyer, *The new Cold War: religious nationalism confronts the secular state* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1993).

²² Hroch points out that his use of the term ‘small nations’ is not a quantitative measure. Rather, it is used in order to distinguish them from ‘ruling/great nations’ (i.e. France, England, Germany, Denmark and so on). He identified three criteria for identifying ‘small nations’ “(a) did not possess ‘their own’ ruling class, i.e. a ruling class belonging to them ethnically, but were dominated by a ruling class of more or less alien nationality... (b) admittedly formed an ethnic (and sometimes even historical) unit, but never an independent political unit; (c) lacked a continuous tradition of cultural production in a literary language of their own, or had once possessed one, which was subsequently obliterated or underwent serious degeneration.” Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 8-9.

²³ Hroch uses the term national and ethnic interchangeably.

point from scholarly interest to organised “patriotic aggregation”. The final stage, phase C, marks the point when “national consciousness has become the concern of the broad masses (even if it still by no means the whole of the nation’s members) and the national movement has a firm organizational structure extending over the whole territory.”²⁴

In its unmodified version, Hroch’s theory seems teleological. However, Hroch himself notes that movements that are labelled nationalist may not be nationalist “*stricto sensu*”, and that labelling them as such may lead to “serious confusion”. That is to say that when examining ‘ethnic revivalist’ movements, even ones with significant organisational bases (Hroch’s phase B), we must be careful not to assume an *ethno-nationalist* dimension to their activities. It is possible to be committed to the salvation of one’s own ethnic group while simultaneously regarding its fate connected to the fate of other ethnic groups (even the dominant group) within a multi ethnic polity.²⁵ Ellen Comisso raises a similar point in which she argues that modernisation did result in increasing ‘national’ (i.e. ethnic) consciousness and political activities by groups claiming to speak in the name of their particular ethnic constituency. However, this did not progress ‘inevitably’ to demands for an independent nation-state. “In short, once individuals come to feel that they are Polish, Czech, Hungarian, German, what have you is ‘nationalism’ (... the demand for a state of one’s own or redrawing borders to join a state outside one’s current polity) is by no means the automatic outcome.”²⁶

In reality there are multiple paths open to the ethnicity aware members of non dominant ethnic groups within a multi-ethnic polity. These, of course, include the ‘nationalist’ (i.e.

²⁴ Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* p. 23.

²⁵ Miroslav Hroch “From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation,” *New Left Review* I/198(Mar-Apr 1993), pp. 3-20, p. 6.

²⁶ Ellen Comisso “Empires as Prisons of Nations versus Empires as Political Opportunity Structures: An Exploration of the Role of Nationalism in Imperial Dissolution in Europe” in eds. Joseph W. Esherick, Hasan Kayali and Eric van Young *Empire to Nation* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), pp. 138-167, p. 144.

separatist) option. However, they also include strategies of ethnic accommodation, defection and assimilation.

Definitions

With these points in mind, this study will operate with the following definitions:

1. *Nationalism* is a modern doctrine that argues that there is a 'natural' unit (i.e. the nation) for the exercise of popular sovereignty and citizenship. As such, it is mobilised by a number of different actors; the existing state (Official Nationalism), those wishing to reform the state (Reform nationalism), those wishing to unify several states (Pan/Unification nationalism) and those wishing to separate from an existing state (Separatist/Secessionist nationalism). As such, a *Nation* is an ideological construct which nationalist movements claim to struggle in the name of. There is no definitive definition of any particular nation and even within ostensibly the same nationalist movement there are assortment of definitions of whom and who do not constitute the nation. In the 'imagination/construction' of nations, there are often civic, ethnic, religious and territorial components. However, it is ultimately impossible to arrive at an objective list of the criteria for what constitutes a real nation.²⁷
2. *Ethnic groups/Ethnicity* refers to cultural groups envisaged as having certain degree of cultural commonality such as a shared history, homeland, customs and language.

²⁷ For instance, William Haddad noted that "The term nationality, as commonly used today, denotes citizenship. However, nationality, as it was originally envisaged in Western Europe, carried with it certain characteristics that defined a group of people. These characteristics including the belief in common decent, the same language, the same territory, a political entity, religion, customs, and traditions. Such a conglomerate of people possessing the same nationality was called a *nation*. [original emphasis] This group of people did not have to possess all the characteristics that defined a "nationality" in order to call themselves a "nation." Thus, one may speak of the United States of America as a nation, though it is not racially homogeneous..." William Haddad, "Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire" in eds. William Haddad William Ochsenwald *Nationalism in a non-national state : the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire* (Columbus : Ohio State University Press, 1977), pp. 3-34, p. 7.

This category is as constructed as the concept of nation. In many cases 'members' of the ethnic group do not realise that they are part of such a group or if they do, do not see their ethnicity as of any importance. Ethnicity may be, under certain conditions, mobilised in conjunction with a nationalist political argument (i.e. ethno-nationalism). However, expressions of ethnic particularism do not have a *necessary or automatic relationship with ethno-nationalism*. Indeed, it is quite possible for self-aware members of a particular group to envisage the future of their ethnicity as linked with a supra-ethnic political movement (i.e. a class based ideology or a non-ethnic form of nationalism).

Chapter II: Empire to Nation

With the development of new theoretical models in the study of nationalism and the proclivity of historians for iconoclasm, there has been a significant revision of the role of nationalism in the ‘decline’ of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, before proceeding to look at the existing work on the Kurdish movement during the late Ottoman period, it would be beneficial to briefly discuss the development nationalism in the Ottoman Empire in general terms.

During the 19th century, and for much of the 20th century, to most educated Europeans eastern realms, such as the Ottoman Empire, “which had parallels in European history but were clearly not territorial states (‘nation-states’) of the nineteenth-century type... were very obviously (it seemed) obsolescent.”²⁸ With the rise of nationalism, it was argued, the age of the multi ethnic polity was over. Those multi-ethnic states that did manage to survive into the 19th and 20th centuries were living on borrowed time because they were simply unable to cope with the ‘national question’ (i.e. ethnic diversity). Behind this argument is the assumption that the national question is somehow resolvable.²⁹ However, it is questionable whether the division of multi-ethnic states in Eastern Europe and the Middle East into ethnically defined nation-states has solved the ‘national question’. Territorial disputes, ethnic conflict, population exchanges and genocide continue to this day with alarming regularity.

Therefore, rather than judging multi-ethnic states by their ability to solve an intractable problem, it is more useful to compare and contrast different strategies used by these states to manage ethnic diversity. Furthermore, the difficulties sometimes faced by states attempting to mould culturally and ethnically diverse populations into a ‘nation’ should not be seen as a

²⁸Eric Hobsbawn, *Age of Empire* (London: Abacus 1989), p. 23.

²⁹Comisso, “Empires as Prisons of Nations versus Empires as Political Opportunity Structures,” p. 138.

purely 'eastern' problem. Even the seemingly unproblematic 'old nations' of western Europe such as Britain and France had to come to terms with this reality in the process of nation building.³⁰ As such, although the question of ethnic and cultural diversity facing states such as Austria-Hungary, Russia and the Ottoman Empire where perhaps greater in scale than those faced by Western European states, they were not qualitatively different.

During the 19th century, faced with the reality of cultural diversity and the increased potency of the principle of nationality, the typical response of dynastic states, ranging from Britain and Germany to Russia and Austria-Hungary was the development of an official nationalism. Official nationalism sought to naturalise the state and dynast's rule over their multi-ethnic and multi-confessional domains which they had inherited from the pre-nationalist era. In short, they endeavoured to shore up the ideological foundations of the state through "stretching the short, tight skin of nation over the gigantic body of empire."³¹

In this respect, the Ottoman Empire did not differ from its counterparts to the west.

Certainly, at the turn of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire was both economically and politically backwards in comparison to states such as Britain, the Netherlands and France.³²

However, from the reign of Selim III (r. 1789-1807) onwards, the Ottoman state elite engaged in a concerted effort at modernisation.³³ These reforms included measures directed at bureaucratic reform, administrative centralisation and military reorganisation. However, there was also a realisation that the Ottoman Empire needed to secure the loyalty of "what

³⁰ See for example, Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976). In more general terms the Irish, Scottish and Wales questions in Great Britain and the Bretagne question in France cast doubt on the unproblematic nature of the 'Old Nations' of Europe.

³¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 86.

³² By politically and economically backwards what is referred to is the fact that the Ottoman Empire had an extremely decentralised political structure and modern capitalism was yet to develop.

³³ For studies that have examined the Ottoman modernisation process see Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964); Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

was coming more and more to be considered an extremely volatile and combustible entity - the people. Police measures and naked coercion were no longer sufficient by themselves, even if the means to enforce them were available, which often they were not.”³⁴

The vicissitudes of Ottoman “Official Nationalism”

Attempts at reforming the ideological structure of the Empire began in earnest during the Tanzimat period (1839-1876) under the leadership of the reformist grand viziers; Reşid, Âli, Fuad and Midhat. The state attempted to rally the loyalties of the people through an official Ottoman civic nationalism which, they hoped, could unite the Empire’s religiously and ethnolinguistically heterogeneous population. One aspect this civil nationalism was the equality of all of the Sultan’s subjects which it was believed would undercut the appeal of separatist nationalism to the Balkan Christians. In practice this involved the progressive legal emancipation of the Empire’s non-Muslim population. Christians and Jews gradually acquired *formal* legal equality through a series of imperial edicts; the 1839 *Hatt-i Şerif-i Gülhane*, 1856 *Hatt-i Hümayun*, the 1869 Nationality Law and Constitution of December 1876. As Âli Paşa put it, in order to save the empire “the fusion of all subjects... with the exception of purely religious affairs... is the only means.”³⁵ In short, the statesmen of the Tanzimat felt that to halt imperial decline a new egalitarian citizenship and concept of patriotism were necessary; *Osmanlılık* (“Ottomanism”).³⁶

This did not mean, however, that Ottoman official nationalism remained stable ideological trend. The reign of Abd ül-Hamid II (r. 1876-1909) saw Ottomanism take on an increasingly

³⁴ Selim Deringil, “The Invention of Tradition as Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1808 to 1908,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35, no. 1 (1993) pp. 3-29, pp. 3.

³⁵ Quoted in Roderic Davison, “Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian and Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century,” in ed. Roderic Davison *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish history, 1774-1923 : the impact of the West* (Austin: University of Texas Press: 1990), p. 117.

³⁶ This principle gained its clearest expression in the Constitution of 1876 in which all peoples of the empire were described as Ottoman (*Osmanlı*). The implication was that primarily loyalty should be towards the state and that religious divisions were purely a private affair. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

Islamic character.³⁷ In addition to establishing an autocracy, the Hamidian regime actively sought to present itself as “indigenous, tradition loving, Islamic, and free of the worries and discomforts of change”³⁸ in order to cultivate Muslim support. The destruction of the Hamidian autocracy after 1908 Constitutional Revolution resulted in a plethora of interpretations of Ottomanism coming to the fore. Initially, the revolution’s makers, the *İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, (“Committee of Union and Progress”– CUP) opted for a return to the civic interpretation of Ottomanism as upheld in the Constitution. However, continued territorial decline in the Balkans and North Africa helped to undermine the viability of civic Ottomanism in the minds of state elites. The result was a drift towards Islamism and Turkism at the expense of the civic notions of Ottoman patriotism.³⁹

Reactions to Ottomanism

Naturally, Ottoman population, especially non-Turkish ethnic groups, were not passive in the face of state efforts to mould an Ottoman nation through the propagation of an official nationalism. However, their reactions were far from uniform.

Despite the hopes of the Tanzimat reformers, civic Ottomanism failed to arrest the development of separatist nationalism amongst the Christian populations of the empire.

Although the initial revolts against Ottoman rule by various Christian groups often had very little to do with nationalism, the creation of nation-states (often thanks to European pressure) in Greece, Serbia, Rumania and Bulgaria led many Christians to began to see their future not

³⁷ Deringil, “The Invention of Tradition as Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1808 to 1908,” p. 12.

³⁸ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, pp. 255.

³⁹ Even so it is important not to exaggerate the influence of Turkism in *state policy*. Certainly, there were influential advocates of Turkism in the CUP such as Ziya Gökalp. However, radical Turkism was generally only promoted especially by Turkic émigrés from Tsarist Russia such a Yusuf Akçura and Hüzeyinzâde Ali. Another Russian Turk, İsmail Gasprinski, also played an important in promoting Turkism in both Russia and the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman Turkists including Gökalp and Fuad Köprülü generally advocated measures to strengthen the Ottoman state and as such their Turkism was *supplementary* to their conception of Ottomanism. See for example Masami Arai, *Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), see Chapter 4. Islamism remained a central component of state ideology see Halidé Edib, *Memoirs of Halidé Edib* (London: John Murray, 1926), see Chapter 13: Also see Chapter 7.

in a reformed Ottoman Empire but in their own 'nation-states.'⁴⁰ There were of course exceptions such as the Greek Cléanthi Scalieri who was active in the Comité Libéral Ottoman.⁴¹ However, the overall tendency towards separatism amongst the Christian peoples of the Balkans in the early 20th century was clear, as one Greek deputy elected to the Ottoman Parliament after 1908 declared "I am as Ottoman as the [French owned] Ottoman Bank."⁴² However, in the case of the Jewish and Muslim populations of the empire the relationship was more complicated. Despite expressions of ethnic particularism, most remained committed to Ottomanism in one form or another. Jews, for instance, generally preferred a continuation of empire rather than life under the rule of new Christian nation-states. Although many Jews opposed the autocracy of Abd ül-Hamid II, they reacted favourably to Constitutional Revolution of 1908. Jews even served in the *Hareket Ordusu* ("Action Army") of *Mirliva* ("brigadier general") Mahmud Şevket Paşa that put down the attempted 1909 'counter-revolution.' Later during the negotiations that followed the fall of Salonika to the Greek army in October 1912, the city's influential Jewish community lobbied in favour of a continuation of Ottoman rule.⁴³

In a same vein, Arabs generally remained committed to the continuation of the Ottoman polity. Certainly, Arab nationalists have attempted to develop a narrative of an Arab struggle for freedom from Turkish yoke.⁴⁴ However, recent studies on Arabism amongst the notables

⁴⁰ See Davison, "Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian and Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century,"

⁴¹ Şukru Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press: 1995), pp.33-41.

⁴² Quoted in Feroz Ahmad, "Unionist Relations With the Greek, Armenian, and Jewish Communities of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1914," pp. 89-140 *From Empire to Republic Vol. I* (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2008), p 103.

⁴³ Rifat Bali, *Musa'nin evlatları Cumhuriyet'in Yurttaşları* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2001), pp. 53-76.

⁴⁴ For example, in a memorandum to the Allies by the Foreign office of the Arab government of the Hijaz in 1917, the author claimed: "For generations now, the Arab nation has been suffering under Turkish yoke. History has not recorded an instance of a people who have suffered the kind of enslavement and torture which this nation has endured, though it is guilty only of constitution the majority in the Ottoman Empire the Turks have, in consequence, looked upon it as a danger to the dominance of their race... When the European war was declared [World War One]... the Turks gave full rein to their hatred and anger; they began to implement an orderly plan to annihilate the Arabs." Arab government of the Hijaz "Vindication of Arab Rights" reproduced

of the Arab provinces have demonstrated that while there was an increasing emphasis on the Arab identity, the vast majority of politically aware Arabs remained committed Ottomanists right down to 1918.⁴⁵ Of course, this did not mean that Arab political activists slavishly followed the state line. After 1908 many Arabs were dismayed at what they saw as the CUP's Turkification. However, their response was generally to advocate more autonomy for the Arab provinces and greater public use of the Arabic language but not separatism. Many Arab deputies, for instance, joined the *Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası* (Liberal Entente – HİF) which advocated policies of decentralisation.⁴⁶ As one scholar of the Ottoman Palestine put it (and it is a point that is pertinent in other Arab provinces);

During this era [1908-1914], Palestinian Arabs were not alienated from imperial political developments. Local politics were structured more in conformity with Young Turk policies than in reaction to them. Palestine prospered during the decade following the revolution... Although there was opposition to some of the policies adopted by revolutionary leaders, most Palestinian Arab political figures behaved as if they could influence the course of events in the empire.⁴⁷

The Kurdish case: Historiography and the Kurdish movement of 1898 to 1914

Scholars of Kurdish history have often gravitated towards the question of identifying the roots of Kurdish nationalism. In this quest they have often been drawn to developments amongst the Kurdish elite during the final years of the Ottoman Empire's existence. Of particular interest are the publication first Kurdish newspaper, *Kürdistan*, in Cairo in 1898 and the foundation of the first modern Kurdish political organisations in Istanbul during the years between the Constitutional Revolution of 1908 and Ottoman entry in to the Great War

in ed. Sylvia Kedourie. *Arab nationalism and Anthology* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1964), pp. 94-102 p. 94.

⁴⁵ William Cleveland, *The making of an Arab nationalist : Ottomanism and Arabism in the life and thought of Sati` al-Husri* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971); Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks : Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1997). Also see Haddad "Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire,."

⁴⁶ For example, Arab politicians such as the Damascus deputy Şükrü el-Aselî, the Jerusalem deputy Said el-Hüseynî and the Mosul deputy Davud Yusufânî played important roles in the HİF's party leadership; see Tarık Zafer Tunaya *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler Vol. I İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2007), pp. 294-295

⁴⁷ Donna Robinson Divine, *Politics and Society in Ottoman Palestine: The Arab Struggle for Survival and Power* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), [emphasis added] p. 145.

in 1914. The most significant of these were the *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (“Kurdish Solidarity and Progress Society” - KTTC) and the *Kürd Hevî Cemiyeti* (“Kurdish Hope Society” – *Hevî*).⁴⁸

Some scholars have traced the origins of Kurdish nationalism back to periods before 1898.⁴⁹ However, most historians recognise the importance of *Kürdistan* and the Kurdish organisations set up in Istanbul after the constitutional revolution. To Kurdish academics and researchers these organisations represented (and were praised) as the first manifestation of *modern* Kurdish nationalism.⁵⁰ Similar views have also been expressed by some western scholars. For example, the French Kurdologist, Joyce Blau noted:

As in the case of Arab patriots and the Young Turks, it's around a newspaper [referring to the journal *Kürdistan*], there is contact between the pioneers of the Kurdish national movement and a crystallized desire for emancipation.⁵¹

From this perspective, the journals and organisations founded between 1898 and 1914 were conceptualised as part of a progressive nationalist revival amongst Kurds. The participants in this revival were pioneers of the Kurdish national movement, a movement which would

⁴⁸ The KTTC was active between 1908 and 1909 and *Hevî* between 1912 and 1914. Other less significant Kurdish organisations established during this period included the Society for the *Kürd Neşri Maarif Cemiyeti* (“Propagation of Kurdish Education Society” - KNMC), the *Kürdistan Muhiban Cemiyeti* (“Friends of Kurdistan Society” -KMC) and The *Kürdistan Teşri'i Mesai Cemiyeti* (“Kurdistan Legal Work Society” - KTMC -). For a list of Kurdish societies active in Istanbul between 1908 and 1914 see Rohat Alakom, *Eski İstanbul Kürtleri 1453-1925* (Istanbul: Avesta, 1998), pp. 95-101.

⁴⁹ For example Robert Olson claims that the roots of Kurdish nationalism can be found in the 1880-1881 Şeyh Ubeydullah revolt. See Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880-1925* (Austin: University of Austin Press, 1989), see Chapter 1. Others such as Celile Celil argue that the revolts of the Kurdish Beys in the early to mid 19th century were ‘nationalist’. See Celile Celil, *XIX. Yüzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Kürtler* (Ankara: Özge, 1992), and Kaws Kaftan, *Baban, Botan, Soran* (Istanbul: Nûjen, 1996). Amir Hassanpour has gone so far as to claim that the writings of the Kurdish Bey Şerefhan-i Bitlisi in the 16th century and Ahmed-i Hani represented a form of ‘feudal nationalism.’ See Amir Hassanpour, “The Making of Kurdish Identity: Pre-20th Century Historical and Literary Sources” in d. Abbas Vali e*Essays on the Origin of Kurdish Nationalism* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers 2003), pp. 106-162.

⁵⁰ Celile Celil, *Kürt Aydınlanması* (Istanbul: Avesta, 2000), pp. 55-95. Also see Alakom, *Eski İstanbul Kürtleri* p. 96 and Kemal Madhar Ahmed, *Kurdistan During the First World War* (London: Saqi, 1994.) Chapters 1 and 2.

⁵¹ (“Comme dans le cas des patriotes arabes et celui des Jeunes Turcs, c'est autour d'un journal que s'instaura le contact entre les pionniers du mouvement national kurde et se cristallisèrent les aspiration à l'émancipation.”) Joyce Blau, *Le problème kurde* (Brussels: Centre pour l'Étude des Problèmes du Monde Musulman Contemporain, 1963), p.30. Also see Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion* pp.15-16. Jwaideh *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Its Origins and Development*.

eventually achieve mass support in the post Ottoman world. Ironically, this view is also shared by Turkish nationalists. In a recent book entitled “*Kürtçülük 1787-1923*” (“Kurdism 1787-1923”), former Turkish diplomat Bilâl N. Şimşir claimed:

Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Cemiyeti did not openly defend the partition of the Ottoman homeland or Turkey, but in the separatist understanding they did carry out Kurdism. They developed projects and programs for only Kurds [apart] from Ottoman society. From this perspective, they were separatists.⁵²

However, fresh research into the development of the Kurdish identity politics has challenged this view.⁵³ These studies reject the description of organisations such as the *Kürdistan*, KTTC and *Hevî* as nationalist. Hakan Özoğlu, author of an influential book on the Ottoman Kurds, argued:

From the declaration of the Second Constitutional Period to the end of World War I in 1918, the Kurds formed several societies, a majority which stopped short of making political demands. They could not go beyond functioning essentially as cultural clubs for the Kurdish nobility. Therefore, although these pre-1918 Kurdish societies were a prime example of Kurdish cultural efflorescence, they should not be seen as nationalist organisation. [Kurdish] Political organisations that pursued an openly nationalist agenda [i.e. they called for Kurdish national self-determination] emerged only at the end of World War I... The comparison [between the pre and post World War One] is fruitful in that we can observe the critical process in which ‘proto-nationalism’ became Kurdish nationalism.⁵⁴

Remarkably, of late some Kurdish nationalist intellectuals have also picked up on this point. In an article entitled “The shallowness of Kurdish intelligentsia and the crisis in Kurdish nationalism” one Kurdish intellectual, a historian at Erbil Salahaddin University lambasted the Kurdish elite, retrospectively, for their lack of (Kurdish) nationalist aspirations.

Reading the early Kurdish publications of the leading Kurdish intellectuals, such as *Kürdistan* (1898-) and *Kürdistan Teaviün ve Teraqi Gazetesi* (KTTG-1908) indicates the shallowness of the Kurdish intellectual thought. Despite the awakening of national consciousness among the ethnic groups of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious empire, the Kurdish elite operated within the political boundaries of Ottoman Empire and allied

⁵² (“Kürt Teaviün ve Terakki Cemiyeti Osmanlı ülkesini veya Türkiye’yi bölmeyi açıkça savunmamıştır, ama bölücülük anlamında kürtçülük yapmıştır. Kürtler, Osmanlı toplumundan yalnız Kürtler için projeler, programlar geliştirmiştir. Bu açılardan ayrılıkçılık yapmıştır.”) Bilâl N. Şimşir, *Kürtçülük 1787-1923* (Ankara: Bilgi 2007), p.259.

⁵³ For example see Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State* (New York: Suny, 2004); Martin Strohmeier, *Crucial Images in the Presentation of a Kurdish National Identity* (Leiden: Brill 2003).

⁵⁴ Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State* pp. 77-78.

themselves with the Young Turks to reform the decaying empire rather than develop national politics and political organizations to lead Kurdish people for self-determination.⁵⁵

Certainly, these recent studies have much to recommend them. They base themselves on a much closer reading of the journals and documents produced by the Kurdish movement of the period. As such, they do not assume an *ethno-nationalist* dimension to the Kurdish movement prior to the Great War. However, the label of ‘proto nationalist’⁵⁶ although attractive, fails to fully capture the character of the Kurdish organisations of this period. Unquestionably, in a certain way they were proto-nationalist. Many of those who played leading roles in the ‘proto-nationalist’ KTTC and *Hevî*, such as Şeyh Abd ül-Kadir Efendi, Emin Ali Bedirhan and Dr. Abdullah Cevdet later went on to found the *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti* (“Advancement of Kurdistan Society” - KTC) in 1918 which entertained openly nationalist objectives.⁵⁷ Equally, these pre war associations helped develop and propagate concepts of Kurdish culture and community that would later provide the basis of the Kurdish nationalist *Weltanschauung*.

However, this characterization gives only a partial picture of the Kurdish journals and associations prior to 1914. Many of the supporters of the pre-1914 Kurdish movement did not go on to become Kurdish nationalists. A prime example was Fevzi Piriniçizâde. After 1908 he was associated with the KTTC. However, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the Great War, rather than becoming a Kurdish nationalist, he was co-opted into the Anatolian Resistance movement.⁵⁸ Others had a more complex relationship with Kurdish nationalism possibly the most interesting of whom was Dr. Şükrü Sekban. Sekban had been involved in the pre-war Kurdish associations and later the Kurdish nationalist movement. However, he ultimately abandoned Kurdish nationalism, made peace with Turkism and

⁵⁵ Kurdish Globe “The shallowness of Kurdish intelligentsia and the crisis in Kurdish nationalism” 2 May 2006.

⁵⁶ This term is used by Özoğlu to describe the Kurdish movement before 1918. See Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman state* p. 79.

⁵⁷ See the article “Kürd Kulübünde bir Musahabe” published in *Jîn Jîn* 18 Haziran 1335.

⁵⁸ Kadri Cemil-Paşa [Zinar Silopi], *Doza Kurdistan: Kürd Milletinin 60 Yıllık Esareten Kurtuluş Savaşı Hatıraları* (Ankara: Özge, 1991), p. 53.

returned to Turkey.⁵⁹ It is easy to label such individuals as ‘traitors’ and ‘turncoats.’ History tends to glorify the pioneers of the national movement. However, categorising those Kurds who participated in the pre-1914 Kurdish movement but later did not heed the *Kurdish* nationalist call with such derogatory labels misconstrues the objectives of the pre-1914 ‘Kurdism’.

For most Muslims such as the Kurds, in the early 20th century the Ottoman Empire was still envisaged primarily as an Islamic state. More practically, many Kurds were part of the state elite which makes regarding the Kurds as an “oppressed minority” problematic.

Consequently, Kurdish activists did not generally see a conflict of interest between loyalty to Ottomanism and an expression of their ethnic identity. Indeed, Kurdish intellectuals were very much engaged in the central question that pre-occupied the Young Turk movement: ‘*Bu devlet nasıl kurturulabilir?*’ (“How can this state [the Ottoman state] be saved?”).⁶⁰ As such, expressions of Kurdishness for the majority of Kurdish activists were seen as part of an effort to strengthen the Ottoman Empire and not as a precursor to leaving it. Of course, in the post war environment and the new Turkish Republic, these two principles became increasingly incompatible and, as a consequence, Kurdish intellectuals were compelled to decide which principle was more important; their loyalty to the state or their ethnic identity. However, during the Ottoman period this choice was simply not relevant.

⁵⁹ Martin Strohmeier *Crucial Images in the Presentation of a Kurdish National Identity* pp.77-85 and pp. 116-127

⁶⁰ This question was once described by the late great Turkish historian Tarık Zafer Tunaya as the “Big Question” of the era. Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Hürriyet’in İlamı* (Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2004), pp. 51-53. The desire to save the state was a key motivation behind the Ottoman modernisation process. This being said, the question of saving the state was in the final analysis a profoundly conservative and elitist question. However, just because a question is conservative, it does not mean that reforms were only seen as instrumental. Furthermore, it did not mean that the Young Turk movement was not capable of fairly radical changes to the regime. Conservatism should not be confused with ideologies that reject any change to the status quo.

In short, what this study will attempt to demonstrate is that, the journal *Kürdistan* published between 1898 and 1902 and the Kurdish associations founded between 1908 and 1914 were in fact, for the most part, mobilising the Kurdish ethnic identity in *defence of the Ottoman Empire*. And so consequently, the ideology of these ‘Young Kurds’ can perhaps best be described as *Ottoman nationalism with Kurdish colours*.

Chapter III: The Kurdish elite

It has often been noted by theoreticians of nationalism that the role of the intellectual and social elite in the construction and articulation of nationalism cannot be underestimated.⁶¹ It is generally amongst social and intellectual elites that concepts of patriotism are first articulated⁶² and so in order to understand this rise of ethnic and nationalist politics it is imperative to gain an understanding of the structure of a particular ethnic group's elite. In the case of the Kurds in the late 19th century and the early 20th century, these elites can be split into two groups; the traditional notables and a new class of modern intellectuals and professionals.

Traditional Notables

Albert Hourani famously defined the notables within the Ottoman Empire as intermediaries between the central state and the people. The Ottoman notables, he further surmised, could be subdivided into three groups; the ulema (religious functionaries), the local military leaders and secular traditional notables.⁶³ It has been since argued vigorously that these notables played a key role in the development of Arabism. A similar argument can be made for the Kurdish notables in regards to the development of Kurdish ethnic awareness. This is due to the fact that many Kurdish activists during the late 19th and early 20th century originated from notable families.

As a working definition, notables were those who had the “minimum quality of exercising political authority in and collecting respect from their communities due to their genealogical

⁶¹ See for example Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*; Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*; Anderson *Imagined Communities*.

⁶² Smith *Nationalism and Modernism* p.56.

⁶³ Albert Hourani, “Ottoman Reform and Politics of Notables,” in eds. W.R. Polk and R.L. Chambers *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1968), pp.41-68.

and religious background... [and] functioned at various degrees as intermediaries between the state and the people.”⁶⁴ However, Özoğlu has correctly argued that Hourani's classification refers specifically to the Arab provinces and so “in the Kurdish context ... Hourani's categories of the ayan [notables] require a slight modification.”⁶⁵ Therefore, any discussion of Kurdish notables must take these specificities into account. It is this modification that this chapter will focus on.

For the purpose of this study, the Kurdish notables can be divided into two sub-categories (A and B). These two subcategories can be again subdivided into two further categories (1, 2, 3 and 4);

Greater Notables (A)

1. Beys
2. Ulema (Şeyhs)

Lesser Notables (B)

3. Urban notables
4. Tribal leaders

The Greater Notables (A)

The term “greater notables” is not used to imply moral superiority of this group over other notables (although, of course, members of this group might regard themselves as superior). Instead, it is meant to denote those Kurdish notables which enjoyed broad social influence amongst the Kurdish population. The groups under discussion, the beys and the şeyhs, are great in that they could garner support from large sections of Kurdish society in both a trans-tribal and a geographical sense. To put it another way, they formed the *crème de la crème* of the Kurdish 'leading classes'.

⁶⁴ Hakan Özoğlu, “Nationalism and the Kurdish Notables in the late Ottoman-Early Republican Era” pp. 383–409 *International Journal of Middle East Studies* no. 33 (2001) p.385.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.384.

1. The Beys

The beys formed an important military-bureaucratic section of the Kurdish elite. Prior to the 19th century, the beys had ruled large parts of Kurdistan as autonomous hereditary principalities (“*Kürd hükûmeti*”). Their legitimacy was derived from their genealogies which they traced back to important Islamic dynasties.⁶⁶ These genealogies meant they commanded broad respect amongst the Kurdish tribal chiefs allowing them to act as mediators in tribal disputes. Within their personal domains, the beys were largely exempt from any form of central control, including taxation. Their primary responsibility to the Istanbul government was to provide military and logistical support for Ottoman campaigns in the East.⁶⁷ Before the 19th century, this system of autonomy, actively cultivated by the Ottomans, remained more or less intact.⁶⁸ Indeed, this form of decentralised administration was not uncommon in other parts of the Ottoman Empire, in particular in border regions.⁶⁹

However, the policies of centralisation pursued by Istanbul during the 19th century and the concurrent desire of the Ottoman administration to replace hereditary rulers with appointed imperial functionaries radically altered the relationship between the imperial government and the Kurdish beys. The result of this shift between the decentralised imperial organizational structures of the past to a modern centralised administrative arrangement was a series of

⁶⁶ For instance, the beys of Hasnkeyf claimed descent from the Kurdish Eyyubi dynasty of Salah ad-Din. The princes of Hakkâri traced their lineage back to the Abbasids and the princes of Cizire-Botan claimed ancestry from the Umayyad general Walid. See Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State* (London: Zed, 1992), pp. 145-146 and p. 208.

⁶⁷ For a detailed discussion of Ottoman administrative practices in Kurdistan see Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State* pp. 158-159.

⁶⁸ Hakan Özoğlu noted the importance of the Ottoman policy in helping the Kurdish Beys re-establishing their pre-eminence after their decline under the Akkoyunlu and the Safavids. This policy has aptly described Ottoman policy as “unite and rule” see Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State* p. 53.

⁶⁹ As Alan Fisher quite eloquently put it: “Almost everywhere one looks in the Ottoman Empire, relationships between a province and the centre were different – the Danubian principalities, the North African amirates, the Egyptian Mamluks, the Anatolian derebeyliks, the Caucasian shaykhdoms, and the Crimean Khanates. Where one finds voevodas, amirs, sultans, beys, shaykhs, and Khans, one also finds different sets of ties between province and center.” Alan Fisher, “Crimean Separatism,” in eds. William Haddad William Ochsenwald *Nationalism in a Non-National State* pp. 57-58.

uprisings against Istanbul led by scions of the Kurdish princely dynasties. The last and most significant of these revolts occurred in the early 1840s and was led by Bedirhan bey, the prince of Cizre-Botan.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, despite resistance, by 1850 the Ottoman government had successfully removed all hereditary Kurdish beys from Kurdistan (and in many cases exiled them to distant parts of the Empire) and established a system of direct rule through centrally appointed officials.⁷¹

Yet, exile did not imply dispossession; rather in practice meant integration imperial administration. For example, after the failure of his revolt, Bedirhan was appointed as *Kadi* in Crete and in 1858 awarded rank of *mîr-i mîran*.⁷² Therefore, although on one hand, the Kurdish princely class was stripped of its domains, its independent military power and exiled from Kurdistan, on the other, they continued to constitute an important section of the Kurdish-Ottoman elite through their integration into the Ottoman bureaucracy. In particular, two princely families, the Bedirhanzâde (the descendants of Bedirhan) and the Babanzâde (descendants of the Beys of Süleymaniye) continued to play a significant role in Kurdish and Ottoman politics in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

⁷⁰ For a detailed description and analysis of the revolts against Ottoman centralisation led by the beys see Mehmet Alagöz, *Old Habits Die Hard: A Reaction To The Application of Tanzimat: Bedirhan Bey's Revolt* (M.A. diss., Boğazici University, 2003), see Chapters 4 and 5. Other important revolts include the revolt of Mîr Muhammad-i Ravanduz in the 1830s. This revolt occurred at the same time that the Ottoman army was engaged in warfare against the governor of Egypt, Mehmet Ali. The government attempted to make peace with Mîr Muhammad. He was brought to Istanbul and obtained high honours from the Sultan. However, he was apparently murdered on his way back to Kurdistan.

⁷¹ On 14th December 1847 the Ottomans official newspaper [or government gazette] *Takvim-i Vekâyi* carried an official communication [Resmi Teblîgat] announcing the defeat of Bedirhan and the reconquest [bu kerre yeni başdan feth] of Kurdistan. *Takvim-i Vekâyi Gazetesi* 5 Muharrem 1264 (14th December 1847). The prince of Bitlis Hakim Idris and the Babans of Süleymaniye were removed a few years later, thus liquidating the last of the hereditary Kurdish principalities. Derk Kinnane, *The Kurds and Kurdistan* (London: Oxford University Press), pp. 24-25.

⁷² Şimşir, *Kürtçülük* p.103.

2. The Ulema (Şeyhs)

A second important segment of the Kurdish elite was constituted by the ulema. These religious functionaries also figure in Hourani's conception of the notables. However, in the Kurdish context the concept of ulema needs a slight modification. Specifically, it is necessary to take account of the extreme prevalence of Sufi orders (*Tarika*) in Kurdistan and the dominant role played by the şeyhs. Thus, "contrary to the suggestion by Hourani, in some cases the distinction between the traditional notables and the Sufis was not very clear."⁷³

Martin van Bruinessen noted that the şeyh often combined a number of roles which included in some cases taking on the role of an *âlim* by acting as *müfti* or a *mulla*.⁷⁴ However, he argued that the şeyhs primary function was "that of a holy man, an object of popular devotion, and that of leader-instructor in mystical brotherhoods [Sufi orders]." As such, due to the respect they garnered as spiritual mentors they were "ideal mediators in conflicts, which in turn, gives [gave] them political leverage."⁷⁵ A Kurdish observer, Mella Mahmud Beyazidi, writing in the 1860s, indicated high level of spiritual prestige the şeyhs carried amongst the tribes, attributing it with their supposed spiritual abilities;

Every tribe and clan has a special şeyh. Supposedly, the şeyhs' fathers and forefathers were blessed people. Amongst the Kurds they are much respected people. If someone's house is near the şeyhs' house, others do not approach the house with bad intentions. And in that house thievery is not done. If someone becomes ill or mentally impaired, they take him to the şeyh's house and present the şeyh with sheep and goats. They leave the patient at the şeyhs house for a few days. The şeyh ties the patient to a tree and hits him a few times with a crook, in this way, they believe, the patient is cured. If the patient's illness is grave he dies. If the patient survives, he becomes the şeyh's derviş and stays there. Every year offerings are brought to the şeyh. Children along with the youth do not go to another şeyhs and all are under the protection of that şeyh. In this way every tribe has a greatly respected şeyh.⁷⁶

⁷³ Özoğlu, "Nationalism and the Kurdish Notables in the late Ottoman-Early Republican Era," p.385.

⁷⁴ A Müfti is a religious functionary appointed by the government to act as the supreme interpreter of Islamic law in any given area. A Mulla operates as a clergiman in the European sense. He leads prayer in the mosque and performs marriage ceremonies.

⁷⁵ Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State* p. 210.

⁷⁶ ("Her aşiretin ve kabilenin özel bir şeyhi vardır. Guya [Güya] bu şeyhlerin baba ve ataları mübarek insanlarıymış [insanlarıymış]. Bunlar Kürtlerde çok saygı gösterilen insanlar [insanlar]. Eğer birisinin evi bu şeyhlerin evine yakın ise bu eve kötü niyetle yaklaşmazlar. Ve o evde hırsızlık yapmazlar. Eğer birisi hastalanır

Furthermore, unlike offices such as that of the müfti or the mulla, the position of şeyh was hereditary and the respect accorded to them was related to their genealogies which linked them to the Prophet Muhammad (in this case they were seyyids) as well as other Islamic saints. Consequently, spiritual authority was monopolised to a certain extent by a number of shaikly dynasties connected to one or other of the two Sufi brotherhoods (*Kadiri* and *Nakşibandi*)⁷⁷ that proliferated in Kurdistan.

This being said, it is important to historicise the şeyhs rise to *political prominence* which was a phenomenon specific to the 19th century and the result of two interrelated processes: Ottoman attempts at centralisation and increasing European penetration into Kurdistan.

On the first account, the overthrow of the beys and their replacement with central appointed functionaries left a power vacuum in Kurdistan. During the mid-19th century the Ottoman state seems to have been unable to fulfil the role of mediator in tribal disputes. The new Ottoman governors neither possessed the traditional legitimacy of the Kurdish beys nor had a sufficient grasp of local affairs to assert their authority. Therefore, in Kurdistan generally, and the former territories of the beys more specifically, lawlessness became a major issue.⁷⁸ This state of affairs did not escape Kurdish observers. Beyazidi noted:

ya deli olursa onu şeyhin evine götürürler ve hediye olarak şeyhe koyun ile keçi sunarlar.. Hastayı bir kaç gün şeyin evinde bırakırlar. Şeyh de hastayı bir ağaca bağlar ve asayla birkaç kere hastaya vurur. bu şekilde iyileşeceğine inanır. Eğer hastalığı ciddi ise ölür, eğer iyileşirse onun dervişi olup orada kalacaktır. Her sene şeyhe hediye getirilir. Çocuklarla gençler de başka bir şeyhe gitmezleler [gitmezler] ve hepsi bu şeyhin himayesi altına girerler. Bu şekilde her aşiretin çok saygı gösterdiği bir şeyhi vardır.”) Mella Mahmudê Beyazidi, *Kürtlerin Örf ve Adetleri* (Istanbul, Pêrî 1998), p.56.

⁷⁷ See Bruinessen *Agha, Shaikh and State* Ch. 4

⁷⁸ McDowall, *A modern History of the Kurds* p. 47; Also see Bruinessen *Agha, Shaikh and State* p. 229.

In the provinces of Botan, Hakkâri and Behdînan [former domains of the beys] most of the time there is not a day that goes by without a hullabaloo. Between two villages or two towns or in a single neighbourhood, everyday there are two or three altercations.⁷⁹

Secondly, with the advent of European style reform and the penetration of European imperialism into Kurdistan, including the growth of western missionary activity, tensions increased between the Muslim Kurds and their Christian neighbours. For instance, attendant on the Bedirhan revolt of the 1840s was a massacre of Christians apparently incited by Şeyh Taha of Nehri;⁸⁰ an event that was widely reported in the West.⁸¹ Bruinessen has argued that “both Kurds and their Christian neighbours were very much aware of the growing influence of the European powers, especially Britain, France and Russia, on the Ottoman government. They saw this in terms of a confrontation between Christendom and Islam.”⁸² Thus, as well as increased inter-Kurdish strife, Muslim tribes also adopted a more predatory stance towards their Christian neighbours.⁸³

It was under these conditions that the şeyhs were able to acquire political role to match their spiritual stature. In an atmosphere of increasing inter-tribal conflict, the şeyhs capitalised on this religious prestige and genealogical legitimacy to act as arbiters in tribal disputes. This in turn allowed them to build up large tribal followings and formidable economic power.

⁷⁹ (“Botan, Hakkari ve Behdînan vilayetlerinde çoğu zaman kargaşalıkların olmadığı gün yok gibidir. İki köy veya iki kasaba arasında ya da bir mahallede her gün iki üç defa kavgalar olur.”) Beyazidi, *Kürtlerin Örf ve Adetleri* p.32.

⁸⁰ In 1846, the British archaeologist and diplomat Austen Henry Layard mentioned a ferociously anti-Christian şeyh near the village of Kuremi. Layard claimed that this şeyh “had been the chief cause of massacres of the unfortunate Christians; and that, at that moment his son Sheikh Tahar [who was in fact most likely the blind şeyh he had previously encountered] was urging Beder Khan Bey prove his religious zeal by shedding anew blood of the Chaldeans.” Austen Henry Layard, *Nineveh and Its Remains* (London: John Murray, 1849), p. 183.

⁸¹ See for example *Times* 26 December 1843.

⁸² Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State* p. 229.

⁸³ Kurdish beys had generally acted as protectors to Christian communities aware that they were a useful source of tax revenue. However, without the beys’ restraining hands, tribal exploitation of the Christian peasantry went unchecked. One Assyrian priest in the predominantly Christian boarder district of Navçiya (present day Dağ İçinde near Şemdinli in the province of Hakkari) reflected during the 1890s that “in olden days it [Navçiya] was under the expensive protection of the Kurdish chiefs... In recent times the Turks have asserted their authority, and by destroying the Kurdish protection have changed their powerful neighbours into oppressive robbers...” F. N. Heazell and Mrs Margoliouth, *Kurds and Christians* (London: Wells, Gardner, Darton & Co, 1911), p. 64.

Furthermore, şeyhs were able to take advantage of the increasing anti-Christian and anti-foreigner sentiment amongst the Muslim population to present themselves as the protectors of the traditional order. As such, by the second half of the 19th century, the şeyhs had come to occupy a preeminent position in Kurdistan combining spiritual authority with worldly economic and military power.

Those shaikhly dynasties that rose to occupy prominence during this period included the Talabanis of Kirkuk, the Berzincis of Süleymaniye and the Barzanis of Bahdinan,⁸⁴ However, the greatest of all şeyhs during this period originated from amongst the Şemdinan şeyhs of Nehri; Şeyh Ubeydullah.⁸⁵ Şeyh Ubeydullah, son of the above mentioned Şeyh Taha, rose to prominence during the 1870s attracting followers from across both Ottoman and Iranian Kurdistan. Indeed, during the 1877-1878 Russo-Ottoman War, after the failure of attempts by the regular army to organise irregular cavalry,⁸⁶ the Ottoman central government appointed Şeyh Ubeydullah commander of Kurdish tribal forces.⁸⁷ The fact that the Ottoman government was forced to utilise Şeyh Ubeydullah as an intermediary between itself and the Kurdish tribes is an indication of the worldly power that şeyhs had accumulated. The power and influence of the şeyhs amongst the Kurds would continue to be a central feature of Kurdish politics well into the 20th century and beyond.

⁸⁴The Talabani and Berzinci şeyhs are both connected Kadiri Sufi order while the Barzanis are Nakşibandi şeyhs.

⁸⁵ The Şemdinan şeyhs of Nehri claimed descent from Prophet Mohammad through Abdülkadir Geylani, the supposed founder of the Kadri Sufi order. However, during the 19th century they switched their allegiances to the Nakşibandi order.

⁸⁶ According to Mehmet Arif, a Major in the regular army [nizamiye askeriye miralayı] Ahmed Bey was assigned to organize the irregular cavalry at the Eleşkirt but failed to report for duty. Mehmed Arif, *Başımıza Gelenler* (Istanbul: Tercüman, 196?), p. 396.

⁸⁷Jwaideh, *The Kurdish Nationalist movement: Its origins and development* p. 217.

The Lesser Notables (B)

As with the term “greater notables,” the term “lesser notables” is not intentioned to imply any normative judgement. It denotes a class of notable that maintained a more localised degree of authority and influence. In the case of the urban notables, their influence was usually restricted to a particular town. For the tribal elites, the influence, however great in a particular tribe, did not extend beyond their own community. Therefore, although they did fulfil the role of notable in the sense that they were intermediaries between the state and their followers, they lacked the broad recognition of the greater notables.

3. The Urban Notables

The term urban notables in the Kurdish context, is a catch of for the urban elite of the towns of Kurdistan which was made up of a layer of secular officials, religious functionaries and merchants. However, unlike other Ottoman territories such as Syria or the Balkans, Kurdistan generally lacked major urban centres. One exception was Diyarbakir. Although Mosul, Aleppo, Erzurum and Baghdad might also be regarded in some sense as having a strong Kurdish component, they were geographically peripheral to the Kurdish heartlands and included a majority of non-Kurds.

At the same time, in many of Kurdistan’s towns, Kurds (or those who might describe themselves as Kurds) only made up a minority of the urban population. Other ethnic elements such as Armenians, Assyrians, Arabs and Turks, also present amongst the rural population, seem to have figured more prominently in the urban population in many of the region’s towns. During his travel in Eastern Anatolia, Lieutenant J. Shiel, observed that in Van:

The population, including the suburbs, which are placed in the gardens outside the walls, is said to consist of 12,000 people, of whom 2,000 are Armenians, who are very numerous in this Pâshâlik. The other inhabitants of the town are chiefly Turks, *the Kurds being few*.⁸⁸

He further noted that the population of Kirkuk included no Kurds and consisted entirely of Arabs, Christians, Jews and “Osmânlî”!⁸⁹ Another European traveller, who traversed Kurdistan in the 1860s, stated that the town of Midyat was “inhabited exclusively, with the exception of course of the Turkish officials, by Christians of the Jacobite persuasion.”⁹⁰ Owing to the multi ethnic nature of region, Ziya Gökalp concluded that while the rural population Kurdistan was predominantly Kurdish, the population of the towns was in actuality Turkish.⁹¹ Evidently, Gökalp, as an ardent Turkist, may have exaggerated the situation.

These two factors perhaps explain the limited influence of the urban elite over Kurdish society which was largely rural. However, there were certain urbanite families that seem to have regarded themselves as being of Kurdish origin. For instance, in March 1899, the newspaper *Kürdistan* carried a letter applauding the publishers for producing a Kurdish newspaper apparently from “*Eşrafên Dîyarbekrê* [the notables of Diyarbakir]”⁹² As such, although the Kurdish urban elite may have lacked traditional authority over large sections of

⁸⁸ J. Shiel, “Notes on a Journey from Tabriz, Through Kurdistan, via Van, Bitlis, Se'ert and Erbil, to Suleimaniyeh, in July and August, 1836,” *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* no. 8 (1838), pp. 54-101, p. 63.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 100

⁹⁰ J. G. Taylor “Travels in Kurdistan, with Notices of the Sources of the Eastern and Western Tigris, and Ancient Ruins in Their Neighbourhood,” *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* no. 35 (1865) pp. 21-58 p. 35

⁹¹ Ziya Gökalp claimed that he had scientifically proved that the population of Diyarbakir was Turkish. He argued that although the population of the town spoke Kurdish, they only spoke it when speaking to Kurds. Their primary dialect was a form of Oğuz Turkish. Furthermore, he stated that the Diyarbakirli dialect of Kurdish was “the Kurdish of Turks”. This was based on the fact that the the Kirmanci dialect of Kurdish spoken by the Kurdish population of the region contained gender but the Diyarbakir dialect did not. As such, Diyarbakir Kurdish was a corrupted form of Kurdish Ziya Gökalp “My nationality,” in ed. and trans. Niyazi Berkes *Turkish nationalism and Western Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p.43-45. p. 43. It is worth noting that not all dialects of Kurdish contain gender. The Sorani (also known as Babani) dialect of Kurdish spoken in parts of northern Iraq and western Iran also lacks gender.

⁹² *Kürdistan* 20 Mart 1315

Kurdish society, their role in Kurdish activism cannot be ignored. Numerous Kurdish intellectuals originated from urban families. In particular, the Piriñçizâde and the Cemilpaşazâde of Diyarbakir came to play a significant role in the Kurdish activism in the late 19th and early 20th century.

4. The Tribal Leaders

The final group that might be usefully included in the category of notables are the tribal leaders; the beys⁹³(leaders of tribal confederations) and ağas (clan leaders). Tribally organised Kurds most likely formed the majority of Kurdish society in the 19th and early 20th century and, therefore, the political disposition of the tribal leadership is essential to understand. In general terms; “the Kurdish tribes as social and political and territorial units based on descent and kinship, real or putative, with a characteristic internal structure. It is naturally divided into a number of sub-tribes, each in turn again divided into smaller units: clans, lineages, etc.”⁹⁴ The role of the tribal leadership was extremely important in that a tribesman’s loyalty was more often focused on the personage of a particular leader rather than the abstract concept of the tribe. Indeed, it has been argued that the Kurdish tribesmen displayed a great degree of obedience towards their chieftains.⁹⁵ Accordingly, both the beys, the leaders of the tribe, and the ağas, the clan chieftains, enjoyed great deal of political authority.⁹⁶

⁹³ This class of tribal bey should not be confused with the great beys.

⁹⁴ Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State* p. 51.

⁹⁵ Jwaideh, *The Kurdish Nationalist movement: Its origins and development* p. 83; Bruinessen *Agha, Shaikh and State* p.147; E.B. Soane, *Administrative Report of Sulaymaniya for the Year 1919* (Baghdad: 1920), p.40; This observation also explains the rapid growth of tribes under powerful leaders and their subsequent decline after a particular leaders disappearance.

⁹⁶ However, the *eşevîns* [the elders; lit. white-beards] had a major influence on the decisions of tribal leaders. When the Bey died his eldest son succeeded him, or, if there was no male descendant, the “white beards” elected a new leader. Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou “Kurdistan in Iran” pp. 95-121 in eds. Gérard Chaliand, Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, Michael Pallis *A People without a Country: The Kurds* (London: Zed, 1993) p.101. In a few rare cases even a woman could become the tribal chief. For instance, just prior to the Great War, Adilla Hanım was elected to lead the important Caf confederation (her rise to prominence apparently stemmed not only from her noble lineage but also her sexual prowess!).

As a result, tribal chiefs of all levels played an important role as intermediaries between the tribal population and higher authorities. Amongst their immediate followers they were responsible for arbitrating in disputes and allocating resources. Beyond their immediate following, the chief would mediate between his fellow aḡas, the paramount chief (the bey) or the state. Chiefs guarded their monopoly on relations with the outside world jealously. Consequently, tribal leaders would generally resist state efforts to extend its direct authority over the tribal population (which of course would render the position of the tribal leadership obsolescent). In the same measure, tribal leaders were not generally predisposed to concepts of patriotism (either ethnic or non ethnic) in that again the concept of belonging to a nation constituted an ideological assault on the legitimacy of the tribe. Moreover the divisions amongst tribes segmented Kurdish society. One British traveller reported:

The Kurds are divided into several large divisions, with countless subdivisions, or tribes, under petty chiefs, or aghas. They are a quarrel- some lot, perpetually at war with each other on account of raids or blood-feuds, and in their utter want of cohesion lies their weakness.⁹⁷

This is not to say that forms of separatist nationalism did not sometimes fulfil a co-ordinating function amongst tribal elites angered by state attempts to extend its control. However, such an adherence would generally be motivated by local dynamics. Furthermore, importance of the tribe in the Kurdish movement was product of the post Ottoman era.⁹⁸ Thus, the role of the tribal elite in the actual construction of vocabularies of nationalism (both Kurdish and Ottoman) can be regarded as of secondary importance. However, given the large Kurdish

⁹⁷Bertram Dickson, "Journeys in Kurdistan," *The Geographical Journal*, 35, no. 4 (Apr 1910) pp. 357-378, p. 361.

⁹⁸ During the late Ottoman period Kurdish tribal leaders played a marginal role in the Kurdish organisations set up. However, during the post Ottoman era in Iran, Iraq and Turkey large numbers of tribes joined the nationalist movement.

tribal population, questions relating to their political orientation loomed large on the agenda of Kurdish activists.

The intellectuals and professionals

In contrast to traditional notables, the intellectuals and professions were a peculiarly modern phenomenon. In terms of the development of patriotism these groups fulfil an essential function. As Smith pointed out:

Beyond the immediate needs of propaganda, advocacy and communication, *the intellectuals and intelligentsia are the only stratum with an abiding interest in the very idea of the nation*, and alone possess the ability to bring other classes onto the platform of communal solidarity in the cause of autonomy. Only they know how to present the nationalist ideal of auto-emancipation through citizenship so that all classes will, in principle come to understand the benefits of solidarity and participation. Only they can provide the social and cultural links with other strata, which are necessary for the ideal of the nation to be translated into a practical program with a popular following. This is not to deny the importance of other elite or strata like bureaucrats, clergy and officers, who can exert a powerful influence on the cultural horizons and political directions of particular nationalisms. But, whereas such "leading classes" may vary between and even within movements at different times without endangering the success of the movement, *the pivotal role of professionals and intellectuals must remain constant or the movement risks disintegration.*⁹⁹

In the Ottoman context, the modern professional and intellectual class was the product of western orientated reforms pursued during the Tanzimat. It refers to those that had received some form western style education and assumed themselves as “Europeans in spirit, dress, and ideal.”¹⁰⁰ Many of this new class found employment in the modernised Ottoman bureaucracy, state education-system and army. However, this group also included those not directly working for the state but in professions such as medicine, journalism and the law. Evidently, the development of such a class did not only affect Kurds. The new professional and intellectual classes also included Arabs, Turks, Armenians and others ethnic groups resident in the empire. Therefore, when hyphenating the terms profession and intellectual with

⁹⁹ Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* [emphasis added] p.57.

¹⁰⁰ Stanford Shaw, “Some Aspects of the Aims and Achievements of the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Reformers,” in W.R. Polk and R.L. Chambers eds. *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968) pp.29-39, pp.33-7.

the adjective Kurd, this study will be specifically referring to those who while members of these classes, laid claim, in one way or another, to a Kurdish identity.

From Princes to Lawyers: the new Ottoman-Kurdish elite

Hitherto this chapter has divided the Kurdish elite into a number of different sub-categories and sections. This is important to appreciate in order to understand the various personal rivalries that permeated the Kurdish movement. However, it would be wrong to regard these distinctions as clear cut and the various groups as being hermetically sealed off from one another. For example, in some cases şeyhs also operated as important tribal leaders. This was the case for Berzincis of Süleymaniye who through marriage gradually gained control of the Hamavand tribal confederation and the Barzanis whose followers gradually coalesced into something akin to a tribal confederation.

However, what is perhaps more important to note is the overlap between the traditional Kurdish notables and the new middle class of intellectuals and professionals. As will be demonstrated in the upcoming chapters, in the late 19th and early 20th century many members of the Bedirhanzâde and Babanzâde dynasties received modern education, learned European languages and either took up posts in the Ottoman bureaucracy or engaged in modern professions such as the law or journalism. Others active Kurdish intellectuals, such as Dr. Abdullah Cevdet and Dr. Şükrü Sekban, came from humbler backgrounds. Nevertheless, they could hardly be described as being of proletarian origins.¹⁰¹ As such, it is crucial to emphasize that the Kurdish intellectual class generally originated from the pre-existing Kurdish notable classes.

¹⁰¹ Dr. Abdullah Cevdet was born in the town of Arapkir in 1869. He was the son of a minor Ottoman military official [birinci tabur kâtip]. See Şükrü Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal düşünür olarak Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve dönemi* (Istanbul: Üçdal 198?), p.5. Dr. Şükrü Sekban who was born in the town of Ergani in 1881 was the son of a First Lieutenant [Mülâzim-i evvel]. See Şükrü Mehmet Sekban, *Kürt Sorunu* (Istanbul: Kamer 1998), p.11. As such, both can be regarded as having come from the lower echelons of the urban notable class.

These developments had the effect of creating a new urbanised Ottoman Kurdish elite which while being notables also doubled as modern intellectuals. It is from this Ottoman-Kurdish elite that the 'Young Kurds' emerged. As will be shown in the following chapter, the Kurdish intellectual elite's level integration into the Ottoman system would have a deep impact on their posture towards and conception of nationalism. However, this new class should not be seen as synonymous with the term 'Young Kurds' (which will be elaborated on in the next chapter). The term 'Young Kurds' is as a political designation while this new urbanised Ottoman Kurdish elite represents a more objective social classification. That is to say, just because a Kurd was an intellectual and/or member of the Ottoman-Kurdish elite, it did not automatically mean that he would become a Young Kurd, enter into Young Kurd politics or even attach any value to their Kurdish identity.

Chapter IV: Abd ül-Hamid II and the Birth of the Kurdish Question

Rumeli'nde ve bilhassa Anadolu'da Türk unsurunu kuvvetlendirmek ve herşeyden evvel de içimizdeki Kürtleri yoğup kendimiz mâetmek şarttır. Attributed to Abd ül-Hamid II 1893¹⁰²

The reign of Abd ül-Hamid II could hardly have had a more inauspicious start. He ascended the throne on 31 August 1876 amidst a social and political crisis which had seen his uncle Abd ül-Aziz I and brother Murad V both dethroned within the space of four months. The 1870s were a time of profound crisis in the Ottoman Empire. As Bernard Lewis concisely put it:

After the death of Âli Paşa in 1871 the condition of the Empire deteriorated rapidly. The mad extravagance of the Sultan [Abd ül-Aziz], the reckless borrowing of his ministers, combined to bring the finances of the state into complete chaos. In October 1875 the Grand Vezir Mahmud Nedim Paşa announced the suspension of interest payments on the Ottoman Debt -- in effect a declaration of bankruptcy, with catastrophic effects on the standing and credit of the Ottoman government in Europe. Nor was the situation in the provinces such as to give hope of improvement. In July 1875 an insurrection had broken out in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This had spread to Bulgaria, where its bloody repression by Ottoman irregular forces led to a cry of outrage all over Europe. The murder, on 6 May 1876, of the French and German consuls at Salonika by a mob further embroiled the Porte with the European powers, leaving it bankrupt, discredited, and alone to face the war that was looming on the northern horizon.¹⁰³

On becoming sultan, Abd ül-Hamid found that his powers to influence the government were extremely limited. The reformist grand vizier Midhat Paşa and his allies amongst the military who had orchestrated the coups against Abd ül-Aziz and Murad obliged the Sultan to grant the empire a constitution. The empire's new basic law was promulgated on 23 December 1876 just as the European diplomatic community congregated in the *Tersane* ("Shipyard") to discuss reform of the empire's Balkan provinces. The Great Powers, however, regarded the

¹⁰² Ali Vehbi, *Sultan Abdülhamit Siyasî Hatıratım* (Istanbul: Dergâh, 1999), p. 51. It is highly probable that these "Political Memoires" were made up by Ali Vehbi. See Hakan Erdem, *Tarih-Lenk* (Istanbul: Doğan, 2008), pp. 289-292.

¹⁰³ Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* p.156.

constitution as a ruse concocted by Midhat Paşa to pre-empt European intervention into Ottoman internal affairs. *The Times* correspondent dismissed it as being simple “a bad copy of various charters which have been or are on their trial throughout Europe, the copy being so contrived as to take whatever is bad, leaving out whatever is good in those very indifferent models.”¹⁰⁴

However, the European Powers were unable to cudgel the Ottomans into accepting their ‘advice’ on imperial reform. Subsequently, taking advantage of the empire’s extreme diplomatic isolation, on 24 April 1877 Russia declared war. Despite the heroics of Osman Paşa at Plevne, the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878 (known to Turks as the ‘93 War) proved disastrous. The Treaty of San Stefano imposed by Russia in March 1878 would have seen Ottomans possessions in Europe truncated by the presence of a vast Bulgarian state with outlets in both the Aegean and Black Seas. The Treaty was later overturned by the Great Powers during the Berlin Conference of June-July 1878, where, acting in their own self-interest rather than out of any affection towards the Turks, they restored Ottoman rule to the southern Balkans. Commenting on the situation, the Marquis of Salisbury, Robert Cecil, wrote at the end of 1878: “We shall set up a rickety sort of Turkish rule again south of the Balkans. But it is a mere respite. There is no vitality left in them.”¹⁰⁵

Internally, the war left the empire in a shambles with large swathes of Ottoman territory in a state of disorder. Moreover, the catastrophic nature of Ottoman defeat had a traumatic effect on the Muslim population. Most immediately, huge numbers of Muslims were forced to flee from their homes in areas of the Balkans occupied by Russian forces and their Bulgarian

¹⁰⁴ *Times* 30 December 1876.

¹⁰⁵ Cited in A.J.P Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1914-1918* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 253.

allies, bringing with them stories of dispossession, rape and murder at the hands of the Christians.¹⁰⁶

These events had the effect of delegitimizing the Ottoman government. When the empire was forced to sign away parts of Thessaly to Greece in 1881 and the Muslim population was promptly ejected, the French consul at Salonika observed:

Neither this emigration of their coreligionists, nor the fact that it has a serious consequence, has excited the passions of Turks against the Greeks or foreigners. The effect was different, that is to say, it deeply discredited, in their eyes, their own government.¹⁰⁷

At the same time the Muslim population became more sensitive of its identity. Acutely aware that the war had brought about the near collapse of the last bastion of independent Muslim power helped to create “self-awareness and popular self-defensive mobilization.”¹⁰⁸

Muslims had to look after their own interests since that the Great Powers would not and the Paşas were unable.

The state of affairs in Kurdistan and the Şeyh Ubeydullah Revolt

In the Kurdish east, one of the crucial questions that faced the Ottoman central government was the revolt and invasion of Iran that took place between 1880 and 1881 under the leadership of Şeyh Ubeydullah.¹⁰⁹ As noted in the previous chapter, the centralization of the Tanzimat had failed to produce stability. In fact, rather than empowering the centrally appointed governors, it was the şeyhs that had risen to pre-eminence in Kurdish society. Under these conditions, Ottoman rule was fragile at best. However, the events of the Ottoman-Russian War conspired to make the Ottoman hold on the east even more tenuous.

¹⁰⁶ Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995), pp. 65-90.

¹⁰⁷ (“Ni cette émigration de coreligionnaires, ni le fait grave dont elle est la conséquence, n'ont excité les passions des turcs soit contre les hellènes ou les étrangers; l'effet a été autre, c'est à dire de discréditer profondément à leurs yeux leur propre gouvernement.”) AFFM, CPC, Salonica, vol. 6, p. 135, report of Consul Dozon, 12 October 1881 quoted in Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 151.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 149.

¹⁰⁹ In 1878 the Ottoman government also had to deal with an attempted revolt in Cizre-Botan led by two of Bedirhan's sons: Osman Bedirhan and Hüseyin Kenan Bedirhan. See Altan Tan, *Kürt Sorunu* (Istanbul: Timaş: 2009) p. 94; Celil, *1880 Şeyh Ubeydullah Nehri Kürt Ayaklanması* pp. 59-62.

The most immediate threat was the terms of the 1878 Berlin Agreement which for the first time explicitly internationalized the issue of Armenian-Kurdish relations. Article LXI of the treaty stated:

The Sublime Porte undertakes to carry out, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and Kurds. It will periodically make known the steps taken to this effect to the Powers, who will superintend their application.¹¹⁰

This agreement seems to have had the effect of destroying what little faith the Kurdish tribes and the shaikly elite had left in the Ottoman government. While the tribal ağas and şeyhs may not have been aware of the precise stipulations of the agreement, they certainly seem to have been aware that some reform plan was about to be foisted on the empire's Eastern provinces. In 1880 Şeyh Ubeydullah remarked: "What is this I hear, the Armenians are going to have an independent state in Van, and the Nestorians are going to hoist the British flag and declare themselves British subjects?"¹¹¹ It therefore seems likely that concern about the future status of a 'reformed' (i.e. reformed in favour of the Christian population) Eastern Anatolia provided the trigger for Ubeydullah's revolt. The Ottoman government initially supported Ubeydullah's actions as they provided a counter balance to Armenian demands.¹¹² However, events soon spiralled out of control. In autumn 1880 Ubeydullah's forces crossed into Iran, seized a number of border towns and attacked the city of Urmiye. In the end, they were defeated by an Iranian column after which they attempted to regroup in Ottoman territory. However, Ubeydullah was forced to surrender to the Ottoman army and was taken to

¹¹⁰ "The Treaty of Berlin" pp. 413-414 in ed. Jacob C Hurewitz *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1975) p. 414.

¹¹¹ Clayton to Trotter, Bashqala, 11 July, Inclosure in No. 70 (PP, Turkey No. 5 1881).

¹¹² Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion* pp. 6-7.

Istanbul. Despite this set back, in July 1882 Ubeydullah escaped and returned to the Lake Van region after which the Ottoman army was again forced to mobilise against him.¹¹³

It has been postulated that this revolt was motivated by nationalism, nevertheless, this seems unlikely. Certainly Ubeydullah was shrewd enough to use the vocabulary of nationalism when legitimating his actions to the Europeans.¹¹⁴ However, it would be more accurate to describe the revolt as being an expression of Muslim conservatism and “self defence” mobilisation rather than a nationalist anti-Ottoman revolt *per se*.

First of all, Ubeydullah, due to his religious prestige as a Nakşibandi şeyh and a seyyid, provided the necessary form of trans-tribal and even messianic leadership with which to channel discontent amongst the tribal population. Indeed, according to Russian sources, his prestige was so great that around 5,000 Arabs from Mosul and Baghdad entered his service.¹¹⁵

Secondly, it seems Ubeydullah’s anger was primarily directed at the perceived failures and incompetence of the Paşas rather than the Ottoman dynasty. As one British official noted; “I believe, the Sheikh to be more or less personally loyal to the Sultan; and he would be ready to submit to his authority and pay him tribute as long as he could get rid of the Ottoman officials...”¹¹⁶ Indeed, when asked about his intentions Ubeydullah apparently replied “that

¹¹³ See Fırat Kılıç, *Sheikh Ubeydullah Movement* (M.A. diss., Bilkent University, 2003), Chapter 5; MacDowell, *A modern History of the Kurds* pp. 53-59. Also see Celil, *1880 Şeyh Ubeydullah Nehri Kürt Ayaklanması* pp. 89-123. According to Celil the Ubeydullah attempted to gain Russian support for his revolt.

¹¹⁴ He apparently stated in a letter to the British consul in Tabriz “The Kurdish nation, consisting of more than 50,000 families, is a people apart. Their religion is different and their laws and customs are distinct...” Correspondence Respecting the Kurdish invasion of Persia, Sheikh Obeidallah to Dr. Cochran 5 October 1880, Inclosure in Abbott to Thomson (PP, Turkey No. 5 1881)

¹¹⁵ AVPR f. “Glaviy arhiv 1-9”, 1880-1882 g., d.29.I.103 Saray Danışmanı Kamsarakan’ın Raporu 13 January 1881, Van reproduced in Turkish translation in Celil, *1880 Şeyh Ubeydullah Nehri Kürt Ayaklanması* pp. 146-147.

¹¹⁶ Trotter to Goschen, Therapia, 20 October 1880, Inclosure in Goschen to Granville, Therapia, 24 October 1880 (PP, Turkey No. 5 1881)

nobody ever doubted his loyalty to the Sultan, but he had a very poor opinion of the Pashas.”¹¹⁷

The insurrection was evidentially put down by Ottoman forces and Ubeydullah was exiled to the Hicaz where he remained until his death.¹¹⁸ However, the fundamental issue of how to deal with the rebellious Kurdish tribes remained unanswered.¹¹⁹

Abd ül-Hamid II, Autocracy and Islamic Ottomanism

As Sir William Ramsay, a long time follower of Ottoman affairs, observed:

The old Sultan [Abd ül-Hamid] had certainly a difficult problem to face in the earlier years of his reign. In 1880 and 1882 a hopeless despondency about the future of the country reigned everywhere in Turkish society. Prophecies were current that the end of Turkish power was at hand... Abd-ul Hamid had to create a feeling of hope among his Moslem subjects.¹²⁰

However, for Abd ül-Hamid, who had been constricted by an overbearing wing of the Sublime Porte early in his reign, the answer to the empire’s troubles did not lie in Midhat’s constitution. At the first opportunity he set about re-establishing the authority of the palace over the bureaucrats of the Porte. The parliament, opened in March 1877, was subsequently closed by Abd ül-Hamid less than a year later in February 1878. In fact, just prior to parliament’s dissolution the Sultan expressed contempt for constitutionalism:

I made a mistake in wishing to content myself with the example of my father, Abd ül-Mecid, who sought to carry out reform by persuading the people and creating liberal institutions. From now on, I shall follow the example of my grand father Sultan Mahmud.

¹¹⁷ Abbott to Granville, Tabriz 1 October 1881 (FO 248/382)

¹¹⁸ According to Said Paşa, it was only at his continued insistence that the necessary military forces were despatched to the east in order to suppress the revolt. See Said, *Sadrizam Sait Paşa Anılar* (Istanbul: Hür, 1977), p. 29.

¹¹⁹ After the defeat of Ubeydullah, many of his former followers seem to have looked towards Şeyh Muhammad Barzani to provide leadership. He was apparently declared the *mahdi* (“the messiah”) by his followed who urged him to march on Istanbul and assume the role of Caliph. He was reluctant to take on the title and an indecision that proved hazardous to his health (he was apparently beaten up and thrown out of a window by his flock who were convinced that as *mahdi* he would be able to fly!) Consequently, tribal forces seized the towns of Akre and Rovandiz and prepared to march on Mosul. However, they were defeated by a ruse orchestrated the Ottoman governor of Mosul. Bruinessen, *Agha Shaikh and State* p. 151.

¹²⁰ William Ramsay Mitchell, “The Intermixture of Races in Asia Minor,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1915-16) p. 408.

Like him, I now understand that it is not possible to move the peoples whom God has placed under my protection by any means other than force.¹²¹

In Europe the establishment autocracy was not seen in a favourable light. Sir Charles Eliot, a not all together unsympathetic spectator of Turkish affairs, remarked “the reign of Abd-ul-Hamid, is probably the nearest approach which the world has ever seen to real autocracy- that is, a state where *everything* is directed by the pleasure of the ruler.”¹²² To the reporters of the *Times* the Sultan’s rule was that of an “Oriental Despot” entirely alien to the European mode:

For while the European ideal of an administration is that of a machine, so perfectly coordinated in all its parts as to accomplish automatically its regular work, and so provided with supplementary gear as to be able to bear any extra strain which unforeseen circumstances may throw upon it, such is not the Hamidian ideal. A machine of that independent character would be a perpetual terror to Abdul Hamid; the efficiency of the machine is a matter of quite secondary importance provided the absolute control of it is in the hands of the Sovereign.¹²³

However, this assessment of the Hamidian system was to some extent unjust. Abd ül-Hamid was not a throwback to an earlier age. In fact, his brand of autocratic modernisation was quite in keeping with the times. During the last quarter of the 19th century, regimes that were both ‘conservative’ and at the same time ‘modernising’ were in vogue: from Alexander III’s Russia to Bismarckian Germany and the Mexico of Porfirio Díaz.

In reality, Abd ül-Hamid took a keen interest in the modernisation and progress of the country. One American journalist, after a face-to-face meeting with the Sultan, commented that “he [Abd ül-Hamid] is favorable to progress, education, science, and mechanical invention...”¹²⁴ Numerous studies have shown that far from being a period of regression, during Abd ül-Hamid’s reign major progress was made in the fields of education,

¹²¹ Quoted and translated in Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic reform in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 221.

¹²² Charles Eliot, *Turkey in Europe* (London: Odysseus, 1900), p. 130.

¹²³ *Times* 12 January 1897.

¹²⁴ *New York Times* 14 October 1900.

communications and administration.¹²⁵ Naturally, some modernisation was particularly self-serving. Sir Charles Eliot observed that:

[Turks] are great patrons of the telegraph, because it is the most powerful instrument for a despot who wishes to control his own officials... With the telegraph one can order him about, find out what he is doing, reprimand him, recall him, instruct his subordinates to report against him, and generally deprive him of all real power.¹²⁶

However, a political leader acting to increase his or her powers is not entirely unheard of; even in our own benevolent age. Therefore, it has been argued, the Hamidian regime continued the dominant trends of the Tanzimat in terms of bureaucratic reforms (i.e. the creation of a modern bureaucratic machine) with the Sultan considering himself at the pinnacle of a modern bureaucracy constituted of experts and technocrats.¹²⁷

On the ideological level, the regime's conservatism was expressed in what was represented as a return to 'traditional' Islamic values: Islamism (or in its more bellicose configuration pan-Islamism). This included reemphasis, or more accurately a reinvention, of the Sultan's title of Caliph, and spiritual head of all Muslims.¹²⁸ At the same time, the western style state school education was mobilised in order to infuse young Ottoman subjects with a common set of Islamic values and political attitudes: Ottomanisation.¹²⁹

The regime also sought to foster a sense of "Muslim unity" by perusing a more conciliatory policy towards the Muslim notables in the empire's provinces.¹³⁰ This final aspect is particularly significant with regard to the present study. With the loss of large areas of the

¹²⁵ See for example Ben Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, state and Education in the late Ottoman Empire* (London: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹²⁶ Eliot, *Turkey in Europe* pp. 158-9.

¹²⁷ Şükrü Haniolğu, *A brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 125. For a detailed examination of Ottoman bureaucratic reforms under Abd ül-Hamid II see Findley, *Bureaucratic reform in the Ottoman Empire* Chapter 6.

¹²⁸ Deringil, "Invention of tradition as Public image in the late Ottoman Empire, 1808-1908," p. 21.

¹²⁹ See Ben Fortna, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman 'Secular Schools,'" *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 32 no. 3, pp. 369-393. Fortna has argued that although the Ottoman school system has generally been regarded as 'secular' it, in fact, was mobilised under Abd ül-Hamid to deliver an 'Islamic' message.

¹³⁰ Stephan Duguid, "Politics of Unity: Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia," *Middle Eastern Studies* 9 no. 2 (1973), pp. 139-155, pp. 140-141.

Balkans, the Asiatic portions of the empire with their large non-Turkish Muslim populations assumed a new degree of importance and their integration into the Ottoman system became a priority. Engin Akarlı, for instance, as demonstrated that the Hamidian regime not only brought an unprecedented number of Arabs into the imperial administration, but also explicitly favoured the Arab provincial notables to the extent of undermining the authority of centrally appointed officials.¹³¹ Therefore, although the Hamidian regime saw the continuation of the development of formally bureaucratic structures, it was also marked by a rejection of centralisation in the sense of administrative standardisation.

To western observers, Abd ül-Hamid's Islamism was intrinsically oriental and foreign;

At the Palace [in contrast to the Europeanised Porte] things are very different. On entering you may meet servants dressed like those at the Porte, Imperial aides-de-camp in European uniform, and, a certain number of officials whose duty is to entertain relations with the external world of unbelievers; but if you can contrive to pass this outside barrier, you will find yourself in a genuinely Oriental world of the most varied kind. Here may be met Turkish Ulema in flowing robes and white turbans, mysterious Arab sheikhs, khans from Central Asia, Circassians from the Caucasus, learned men from Egypt, Tunis, or Morocco, eunuchs from the Soudan, Kurdish chiefs from the Persian frontier, Albanian Beys from Dibra or Gussinje; and non-descript adventurers from every Mussulman country from the west coast of Africa to the Straits of Malacca.¹³²

However, far from being a form of hysterical 'eastern obscurantism,' these policies had an impeccable secular logic. In an ever hostile political environment, Abd ül-Hamid sought to coalesce Islamic sentiment into a form of state centred Ottoman-Muslim patriotism to defend the state from both external aggression and internal Muslim activism.

***Bavê Kurdan* ("Father of the Kurds")**

As noted above, in the immediate aftermath of the Ottoman-Russian War the Ottoman government's room for manoeuvre in the eastern provinces was limited. Furthermore, alongside the burgeoning Kurdish question, Istanbul also had to contend with the rise of

¹³¹ Engin D. Akarlı 'Abdülhamid II's Attempt to Integrate Arabs into the Ottoman System,' in ed. D. Kushner *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), pp. 74-89.

¹³² *Times* 19 January 1882.

Armenian nationalism and the actions of Armenian revolutionary federations. As early 1878 the Armenian patriarch, Nerses Varjabedian, had approached the Great Powers at Berlin in order to secure Armenian autonomy in the East.¹³³ Between 1885 and 1890 a number of Armenian groups emerged including the *Henchak* (est. 1887) and *Dashnaksutiun* (est. 1890). Although initially their activities were limited, they gradually developed the capability to wage a low level guerrilla war against Ottoman authorities.¹³⁴

Part of Hamidian response to these developments was to assert the Kurdish and, therefore, *Muslim* character of the Eastern Anatolia. Sir Charles Eliot observed that “all maps marking any district as Armenistan are confiscated...”¹³⁵ And that, despite the fact that “in many parts of Asia Minor the population is mixed... the Turks prefer to call such districts Kurdistan...”¹³⁶ The use of the word Armenia was clearly disturbing for the Ottomans. Again Eliot noted: “Foreigners were talking of Armenia as they had once talked of Bulgaria. The Turks thought that there was a clear intention to break up what remained of the Ottoman Empire and found an Armenian kingdom.”¹³⁷ In 1890 the First Chamberlin wrote to the Grand Vizier’s office to explain the Sultan’s perception of the situation which seems to confirm Eliot’s assessment:

It is needless to declare that, with the exception of the Hejaz, in all localities of the Glorious Ottoman Lands Armenians can be found. Of a certain locality, whose inhabitancies are predominantly Kurdish, and whose name came to be known as Kurdistan since ancient times, some malignant mouths have been talking [describing] as Armenia. Though these ill intentions are cast with the purpose of creating an Armenia, just the way used in earlier formations of the Danube, i.e., a certain principle was established to determine the boundaries; the locality known as Kurdistan is there today, and the Muslim folk inhabiting its is [are] incomparably more numerous than Armenians. Consequently it is not at all right to change the name of the locality to Armenia, and furthermore, it is not at all possible to

¹³³Stanford Shaw & Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey Vol. II* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 204.

¹³⁴ Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997), Chapters 3 and 4.

¹³⁵ Eliot, *Turkey in Europe* p. 383.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 384.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 401.

draw boundaries that would include Armenian localities, under the heading ‘vilayets inhabited by Armenians’¹³⁸

The second aspect of the response was an attempt to ‘civilise’ the Kurds. This, it was believed, could be achieved through the settlement of nomadic tribes. A document produced in 1880 noted that: “Due to the fact that it is understood that the Kurdish community can only be brought into the circle of civilisation through settlement and sedentarisation...”¹³⁹

This policy obviously involved changing many aspects of traditional nomadic Kurdish life and increasing the level of state supervision in more remote villages. The indomitable British traveller Harry Finnis Blosse Lynch noticed that:

In the village of Patnotz, the principle seat of the notorious tribe of Haideranli, a solid stone structure, which has been built by order of the government to the serve several purposes of a mosque, a school, and a residence for the chief, stands out from the usual clutter of mud hovels...¹⁴⁰

Allied with settlement, education was also seen as a panacea for seemingly unending Kurdish disorder. As such, the state promoted the expansion of the state education system in the East. Selim Deringil astutely pointed out: “As in other imperial states, the main aim was to produce a population which was obedient, but also trained into espousing the values of the centre as its own.”¹⁴¹ By the mid 1890s this process had affected even the remote city of Van.¹⁴² In 1896 Lynch noted: “Of official primary schools not one existed prior to the arrival of the Mudir, only a few months before ourselves...” However, with the arrival of the “Mudir” six primary schools were set up. The city also had acquired three *rüşdiye* (“secondary schools”)

¹³⁸ First Chamberlain signed as Süreyya to Prime Ministry, August 1, 1890. [BBA: Carton 86, Section 31, Envelope 158, Document 1727 (Armenian Question, Vol. III Document No.17)] reproduced in English in ed. Ertuğrul Zekâi Ökte *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi. Osmanlı Arşivi, Yıldız tasnifi, Ermeni meselesi: Ottoman Archives, Yıldız collection, the Armenian question*. (Istanbul: Historical Research Foundation, 1989).

¹³⁹ (“Tâife-i Ekrâdın tavattun ve iskânlarıyla dâire-i medeniyete idhâlleri hakkında olan lüzûm ve ehemmiyetin taâzzumuyla ol babda...”) Fi 1 Safer 1297 (14- 01- 1880) A Meclis-i Vükela Mazbatası Ya-res(Yıldız Sarayı Arşivi Sadaret Resmi Maruzat Evrakı)5/17

¹⁴⁰ Harry Finnis Blosse, *Armenia Travels and Studies* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1901), p.422.

¹⁴¹ Selim Deringil, *The well-protected domains : ideology and the legitimation of power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909* (London : I. B. Tauris, 1998), p. 94.

¹⁴² Although Van was geographically remote, it was strategically important and was one of the last major Ottoman centres before the Iranian frontier.

and “[the] Mudir was in hopes of opening an Idadiyeh [college] during the following summer.”¹⁴³

Another educational policy directed at securing the loyalty of future generations of tribal Kurds (and Arabs) and indoctrinating them with such desirable virtues as Ottoman patriotism and ‘civilisation’ was the *Mekteb-i Aşiret* (“Tribal School”). The school prove extremely popular. In Mamuretülaziz [Elaziğ], for example, competition amongst the Kurdish tribal elite for places for their offspring in the school resulted in six children being presented to the governor instead of the quota of three.¹⁴⁴ After receiving their education, Kurdish graduates from the school were given a year of cavalry training before attending military college. Furthermore, Abd ül-Hamid had an aid draft a letter to the graduates pointing out that they were to serve the government in their native lands and were to set an example to other Ottomans.¹⁴⁵

A final prong of Abd ül-Hamid’s attempts to integrate the Kurds in to the Ottoman body politic was to actively favour Kurds both at the imperial centre and in their home provinces. Under Abd ül-Hamid an unprecedented number of Kurdish notables were incorporated into the machinery of imperial administration.¹⁴⁶ Abd ül-Hamid followed a magnanimous strategy in regards to the progeny of the exiled Kurdish Beys; appointing many to high positions in the civil service. For instance, it was reported that approximately 200 members of the Bedirhan family were appointed to posts within the Ottoman bureaucracy and that one of Bedirhan's sons, Bahri Bey, was appointed *aide-de-camp* to the Sultan himself.¹⁴⁷ Indeed, the

¹⁴³ Lynch, *Armenia Travels and Studies* p. 100.

¹⁴⁴ Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains* p. 102.

¹⁴⁵ Eugene L. Rogan, "Aşiret Mektebi: Abdülhamid II's School for Tribes (1892-1907)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* no. 28 (1996) p. 85.

¹⁴⁶ This policy had begun under Abd ül-Hamid’s predecessors, however, under Abd ül-Hamid the rate and level of integration both accelerated and expanded.

¹⁴⁷ Kendal [Nazan], “The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire,” pp. 11-37 in eds. Gérard Chaliand, Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, Michael Pallis *A People without a Country: The Kurds* (London: Zed, 1993), p.25.

latitude granted the Bedirhanzâde in Istanbul even caught the attention of European observers. As Eliot noted “Here [in Istanbul] they [the Bedirhans] behaved much as they did in the wilds of Asia Minor, holding themselves above all law, and defying the representatives of the Government. If they ever obeyed the orders of anyone less than the Sultan, it was merely from diplomacy and politeness.”¹⁴⁸ Likewise the Babanzâde also achieved high office. Mustafa Zihni Paşa served as an Ottoman Governor in a variety of provinces including the Hicaz.¹⁴⁹ Another Baban, Babanzâde İsmail Paşa was promoted to the rank of *mirlivâ* and served in the Gendarmerie.¹⁵⁰ One relative of the Babanzâde, Kürd Said Paşa, even served Abd ül-Hamid repeatedly as Foreign Minister.¹⁵¹

The Shaikly elite were also favoured. Şeyh Ubeydullah’s son, Seyyid Abdulkadir Efendi was brought to Istanbul and appointed as a senior official. Another important Kurdish Erbilli Şeyh Esad Efendi of the Nakşibandi order was appointed to *Meclis-i Meşayih* (“Synod”). Other şeyhs still resident in Kurdistan were also courted. Şeyh Ahmad Berzinci or, as he is better known, “Kak Ahmad” of Süleymaniye was one şeyh who apparently had a particularly close relationship with the Sultan.

After earning a reputation as a miracle worker and on the recommendation of the Governor of Baghdad, Kak Ahmad was invited to Istanbul by Abd ül-Hamid. He, however, declined the invitation and instead sent one of his famed *gulebend* (“anti-bullet charm”) as a gift which the Sultan apparently tested out successfully on a bullock. According to the story, this success coupled with a handwritten letter warning against the frivolous use of the charm which miraculously appeared in the Sultan’s personal quarters convinced the Abd ül-Hamid of the

¹⁴⁸ Eliot, *Turkey in Europe* p. 416.

¹⁴⁹ Rohat Alakom, *Şerif Paşa: Bir Kürt Diplomatinin Fırtınalı Yılları* (İstanbul: Avesta, 1998), p. 19.

¹⁵⁰ “Babanzâde İsmail Paşa,” *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Dergâh, 1977).

¹⁵¹ Kürd Said Paşa was a member of the Handan family, a minor branch of the Babans. See Alakom, *Şerif Paşa: Bir Kürt Diplomatinin Fırtınalı Yılları* p. 16 According to Sinan Kunalp “Mehmed Said Paşa (Kürt/Süleymaniyeli)” was the son of Süleymaniyeli Hüseyin Paşa and lived between 1834 and 1907. Sinan Kunalp, *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricalı, 1839-1922: Prosopografik Rehber* (İstanbul: İsis, 1999), p.103.

mystical powers of the şeyh to whom he granted the income of five villages. Rumour has it that, the şeyh's *gulebend* even saved the Sultan's life. After a failed Armenian bomb plot against the Sultan which cost the lives of a number of bystanders, Abd ül-Hamid apparently boarded his carriage yelling: "I am wearing Kak Ahmad's *gulebend*; how can a bomb make any impression on me?"¹⁵²

The veracity of some of these events may be doubted. However, the practical outcome of the Sultan's esteem was that the descendents of Kak Ahmet gained enormous influence in the Süleymaniye region. Rafiq Hilmi, a contemporary of Kak Ahmad's great grandson Şeyh Muhmud Berzinci, reported that:

Abdul Hameed [Abd ül-Hamid], the Second, the Ottoman Sultan and ruler had invited Sheikh Sa'id, the grandson of Kak Ahmed i Sheikh, to Constantinople, *in accordance with a special policy which he had adopted towards the Kurds...* Abdul Hameed... had become even more enamoured with Sheikh Sa'id... and decided to forge even closer ties with the family. That is why, before the Sa'id entourage returned to Sulemani [Süleymaniye], he ordered that each and every one of his companions be given special remuneration and gifts. *In addition, he had handed him the secret communications code to be used in emergencies via the telegraph service.*¹⁵³

Hilmi went on to indicate the great sway that the Berzincis' held in Süleymaniye noting: "It was without doubt that the groups of minor civil servants had become totally subservient to the Sheikhs, and a large number of the population would follow their interest and requirements, and would, without pay, assume the role of servants of the Sheikhs."¹⁵⁴ This picture of Berzinci influence was confirmed by a British officer, Major Ely Soane, who claimed that:

Shaikh Sa'id, the Sultan, and Izzat Pasha¹⁵⁵ ... actually formed a ring for the exploitation of Sulainamia [Süleymaniye] district, a combination whereby the trio became enriched...

¹⁵² Cecil J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp.75-76.

¹⁵³ Rafiq Hilmi, *Kurdistan at the dawn of the century* (Greenford : New Hope, 1998), [emphasis added] pp. 29-30. According to Gökhan Çetinsaya this visit occurred in 1901. See Gökhan Çetinsaya, "II. Abdülhamid döneminde Kuzey Irak'da, tarikat, aşiret ve Siyaset," *Divan ilmi araştırmalar* no. 7 (1999/2), pp. 153-168, p. 165.

¹⁵⁴ Hilmi, *Kurdistan at the dawn of the century* p. 30.

¹⁵⁵ Izzet Paşa served as Abd ül-Hamid's Minister of Interior.

Shaikh Sa'id, without being in any way responsible officially for Sulaimania, was free to crush the people and squeezing the province till there remained but himself and his family, enormously enriched, contemplating an exhausted and ruined town and country.¹⁵⁶

The state also attempted to cultivate good relations with major tribal leaders. For example, in Hakkâri, Edhem Paşa followed a policy of compromise towards the major tribes in the region.¹⁵⁷ However, one of the most controversial policies adopted was the establishment of the Hamidiye regiments. These regiments were ostensibly set up, along the Russian Cossack model, to provide the Ottoman army with a pool of irregular cavalry. The regiments were under the command of Müşir Zeki Paşa; Abd ül-Hamid's brother in law. The regulations governing the Hamidiye provided that each regiment would consist of between four and six companies made up of between 512 and 1,152 men at arms. Large tribes were able to make up an entire regiment (and in some cases more than one) while smaller tribes were able to join by committing enough men to make up a company. The tribal officers were sent to Istanbul for training at the *Hamidiye Süvari Mektebi* ("The Hamidiye Cavalry School") and, although a Kurd could rise to the rank of colonel, his executive officer had to be an officer from the regular army.¹⁵⁸

The apparent duty of the Hamidiye was to guard the frontier against potential incursions from Russia or Iran and to act as an auxiliary police force to keep rebellious Armenian elements in check. However, Hamidiye tribes seemed to have seen this government recognition as an invitation to do as they pleased. Lynch observed at Akantz (Erciş) in the Lake Van region:

Several regiments of Hamidiyeh have their headquarters in the town. They are recruited amongst the Haideranli and Adamanli Kurds. Their enrolment has been attended by the

¹⁵⁶ Ely Banister Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise* (London: Cosimo, 2007), p. 188.

¹⁵⁷ Lale Yalçın-Heckman, *Tribe and Kinship amongst the Kurds* (Frankfurt: Pete Lang, 1991), pp. 64-65.

¹⁵⁸ Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880-1925* p. 9. For a detailed study on the Hamidiye which utilises both Turkish and European materials see Janet Klein, *Power in the Periphery* (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2002).

usual result- a general relaxation of the law. Robberies [against Armenians] are committed under the eyes of the Kaimakam, and stealing is scarcely considered an offence.¹⁵⁹

European distaste for the Hamidiye grew in particular after their involvement in the general massacre of Armenians that took place in the mid-1890s. The lack of government action against Kurdish excesses was seen as tantamount to complicity in the affair. As one report had it:

But that the Kurds had oral or written instruction-something more than mere permission-to pillage, burn and kill I have not the least particle of doubt. The fact is, the Government hoped to finish the business [the Armenian Question] by means of the Kurds, and in 1893 caused a body of Kurds to attack what it considered the centre of the trouble-Dalvorig [a valley near Sasun]. When that failed (though Tahsin Pasha received a high decoration for having restored order) it was determined in 1894 to clean out the whole region by bringing in hordes of Kurds. When these did not succeed in making proper headway, it was thought the thing might safely be done by troops, while Europe had its eyes fixed on China and Japan. Such is, I believe, the true explanation of the massacres.¹⁶⁰

However, while the government clearly did not step into save the Armenians, Abd ül-Hamid's leniency towards should be seen within the context of overall policy of "Muslim unity" and his unwillingness to alienate an important Muslim element of the Empire. Moreover, the formation of the Hamidiye did not simply represent a practical military strategy. Their actual military utility was somewhat dubious. After observing Russian troops in Kars, then under Russian administration, the Earl of Warkworth noted that "if ever Turkey has to meet such a force in the field with her undisciplined and ill-equipped rabble of Hamidieh cavalry, she may well be hopeless of the result."¹⁶¹ Rather, the Hamidiye represented an attempt to draw the Kurdish tribes more closely into the Hamidian system and "for the sultan... a parallel system of control of the East, independent of the regular bureaucracy and army, whom he did not fully trust."¹⁶² Janet Klein further pointed out;

¹⁵⁹ Lynch, *Armenia Travels and Studies* p. 26.

¹⁶⁰ "Times 30 March 1895.

¹⁶¹ Henry Algernon George Percy [Earl Warkworth], *Asiatic Turkey* (London : Edward Arnold, 1901), p. 93.

¹⁶² Martin van Bruinessen, "Kurds, States, and Tribes," in *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East* eds. Faleh Jabar and Hosham Dawod (London: Saqi, 2002), pp. 165-183, p. 174.

...tribal chiefs who were clients of the government were usually not unwilling parties to the deal... they derived extensive rewards for themselves from this mutually beneficial association between tribe and state. Hence, not only were the interests of the enlisted tribes *not* in opposition to those of the government, but they became intimately connected, especially to one part of the Hamidian regime, namely the sultan himself and his supporters, chief among them Zaki Pasha [original emphasis].¹⁶³

Consequently, in the hands of a foresighted tribal leader enrolment in the Hamidiye could aid in the formation of what Klein termed ‘neo emirates,’ a form of supra tribal statelet which while out of the control of centrally appointed officials, was directly loyal to the Sultan. Without doubt the most powerful ‘neo emirate’ formed around İbrahim Milli Paşa centred on the town of Viranşehir (between Urfa and Mardin). Through his enrolment in the Hamidiye, İbrahim Paşa was able to extend his influence from Diyarbakir in the north all the way to the Syrian Desert.¹⁶⁴

The great Kurdish *homme de lettres* Kendal Nazan once remarked of the Hamidian period, not without some bitterness, that:

Abdulhamid’s Kurdish policy was crowned with success. Shaikh Obeidullah’s [Ubeydullah] was the last major insurrection... Kurdish nationalism, which could easily have flourished during this period, remained confined to a few intellectual circles. People themselves blamed their woes not on the ‘good and pious Baba Hamid’ but on the worthless officials who failed to carry out his orders.¹⁶⁵

Certainly, although the mid-1890s were a time of great disorder, Kurdish unruliness did not coalesce in anything approaching an *anti-state* movement. However, this does not mean that Abd ül-Hamid’s policies were either an unqualified success or that they were not without opposition amongst sections of Kurdish society.

¹⁶³ Klein, *Power in the Periphery* pp. 125-126.

¹⁶⁴ See *Ibid.*, pp.195-210.

¹⁶⁵ Kendal [Nazan], “The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire,” p. 26.

Chapter V: Kurdish opposition to Abd ül-Hamid

Aynı şekilde Bedirhanoğlularını himaye ettiğim ve merkezde muhafaza ettiğim için, bunların memleketin huzurunu bozacakları söylenerek de tenkit ediliyorum. Tabii herkes istediği gibi düşünmekte serbesttir! Fakat ben kabul ettiğim Kürt politikasında doğru yolda olduğum kanaatındayım. Attributed to Abd ül-Hamid II¹⁶⁶

... İşte bakın ben Kürdüm, Kürdleri ve Kürdlüğü severim. Fakat madem ki hukuk ve vezaiğe mütesâvi Türkiye vatandaşlarındım, herşeyden evvel Türküm. Benim, şiliğim, sünniliğim, mütekidliğim, hürendişliğim, ırk-ı asfer veya beyazden oluşum hususî ve fennî işlerdir. Benim bu sözümden, ben madem ki Türkiye vatandaşım Kürd lisanı unutulsun, Kürdlüğüm unutulsun dediğim anlaşılmasın. Bilâkis, Kürk [Kürd] Kürdcesini, Ermeni Ermenicesini hars-ü-ihya etsin. Bundan Türkiye'ya mazarrat geleceğine zahib olan ancak bal kabak kafalı, yahud hain ruhlu kimselerdir... Dr. Abdullah Cevdet 1907¹⁶⁷

The fact that there was no general Kurdish uprising under Abd ül-Hamid may be taken as a sign of the success of his Kurdish policy. However, this did not mean that every scheme was an unmitigated success. For instance, the Sultan's strategy for dealing with the troublesome Bedirhanzâde dramatically backfired. In the summer of 1906, a petty quarrel over the poor state of a road in front of the home of Abd ür-Rezzak Bedirhan, an aid at the Palace, and Rıdvan Paşa, the governor of Istanbul, deteriorated into a blood feud verging on the bizarre. After Ahmed Ağa, an agent of Rıdvan Paşa, refused to give the order to repair the road, Abd ür-Rezzak "had him unmercifully thrashed, and kept him a prisoner in the water-closet."¹⁶⁸ Rıdvan Paşa then took the matter up with the Sultan and an *irade* ("decree") "of the usual kiss-and-be-friends kind was issued..."¹⁶⁹ However, this failed to resolve the dispute and a group of workmen, under the command of Ahmed Ağa, ostensibly sent to repair the road attacked Abd ür-Rezzak's home after which a fight ensued. Another imperial decree was

¹⁶⁶ Vehbi, *Sultan Abdülhamit Siyasî Hatıratım* p. 52.

¹⁶⁷ *İçtihad* 20 Mart 1907 quoted in Şükrü Hanioglu, *Siyasal Düşünür olarak Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi* p. 217.

¹⁶⁸ *Times* 23 August 1906.

¹⁶⁹ Edib, *Memoirs of Halidé Edib* p. 223.

issued removing Ahmed Ağa from the scene. However, this again failed to resolve the situation and events took a more serious turn when Rıdvan Paşa was murdered by a group of Kurds while on the way to his summer residence in Erenköy. The murderers were then arrested and promptly released by Abd ü-Rezzak's uncle, the commander of the Selimiye barracks, Ali Şamil Paşa. "This aroused the fears of the sultan, and that very night all the Bederhani family, of which Ali Shamil Pasha was the head, were arrested, packed into a boat and sent off to Tripoli in chains."¹⁷⁰

Nor were Abd ül-Hamid's policies popular amongst all sections of Kurdish society. Kurdish urban notables, in particular, harboured resentment towards the strategies pursued. In Süleymaniye the Berzincis' *carte blanche* to enrich themselves at the expense of the local population was the cause of some resentment. Rafiq Hilmi reported that "the merchant and trader classes and the Aghas were the enemies of this family, and were secretly trying to undermine them and the influence."¹⁷¹ In fact, Soane reports that in 1881 the town's people of Süleymaniye attempted to rid the town of the Berzincis by summoning the Hamavand tribal confederacy to eject them. However, this conspiracy ended in failure after the government sent a relief column from Kirkuk. In the aftermath of the failed *putsch* Şeyh Said apparently moved to secure his hold on the city. "Large sums of money were extorted from the merchants without any pretext whatever and the prompt murder of the few who resisted these demands effectually intimidated the others." Soane further reported that Şeyh Said established an effective network of spies and informants amongst the population while at the same time bring powerful the Hamavand under his control "by a series of judicious marriages..."¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 224.

¹⁷¹ Hilmi, *Kurdistan at the dawn of the century* p.30.

¹⁷² Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise* pp. 189-190.

While in Süleymaniye Şeyh Said was able to contain discontent, in Diyarbakir events took a more serious turn. As early as April 1899, complaints were voiced in the city over the maladministration of Abd ül-Hamid. In a letter printed in the journal *Kürdistan* the notables of the city complained: “Whether governor or head of the district, all those officials sent upon us are oppressors and without sense of justice; they are ruining Kurdistan.”¹⁷³ However, the expansive influence of the Hamidiye commander İbrahim Milli Paşa caused the most distress amongst the town’s folk and even inspired the young Ziya Gökalp to compose the poem *Şaki İbrahim Destanı* (“The legend of İbrahim the Bandit”). However, opposition did not stay confined to the pen. Said Paşa, Abd ül-Hamid’s long time Grand Vizier, reported that:

The Hamidiye commander Mustafa [İbrahim] Paşa, the leader of the Milli tribe who was found in the region of Diyarbakir was only in a so-called and superficial sense a soldier; he oppressed the people and upset the peace of the regions population. From the people of that place [Diyarbakir] and the governorship of Diyarbakir many complaint letters came. Due to the increase in complaints a report prepared by the *vükelâ meclisi* was forwarded to His Excellency the Sultan. It was declared necessary to question Mustafa [İbrahim] Paşa before a duly appropriate court. However, His Excellency did not accept this.¹⁷⁴

In August 1905, after the failure of the government to take action against Milli, crowds, including Ziya Gökalp, occupied the post office and sent a telegraph to the Sultan demanding the exile of İbrahim Paşa. However, the government was slow to take action. Fresh demonstrations occurred again in November the same year after which the above mentioned committee of enquiry was set up. However, as Said Paşa noted, the Sultan rejected their recommendations and İbrahim Paşa remained at liberty. Tensions exploded again in November 1907, when Diyarbakir crowds once more seized the post office and bombarded

¹⁷³ (“Lê ev wafî û qaîmmeqam û mudîr, hasilî çî qas me’ mûren rêdike li sere me, gelek zalim û bênsaf in; ewan Kurdistan xirab kir”) *Kürdistan* 20 Mart 1315

¹⁷⁴(“Diyarbakir dolaylarında bulunan Hamidiye Alayının kumandanı Mustafa [İbrahim] Paşa –ki Milli aşiretinin reisidir- sadece sözde ve dış görünüşte asker halkı birçok zulme alet ediyor ve çevre halkının huzurunu kaçıyordu. Bu konuda ora halkından ve Diyarbakir valiliğinden birçok şikâyet yazılar gelmiş... Şikâyetlerin çok artması üzerine padişah hazretlerine, vükelâ meclisince hazırlanan bir mazbata sunuldu. Mustafa [İbrahim] Paşa’nın, usulüne uygun olarak bir mahkemede sorguya çekilmesi lüzumu bildirildi. Fakat padişah hazretleri bunu kabul etmedi”) Said, *Sadrizam Sait Paşa Anılar* pp. 239-240. Said Paşa is almost certainly writing about İbrahim Milli Paşa and not Mustafa Paşa. He may have confused İbrahim Paşa’s name with another powerful Kurdish Hamidiye commander, Mustafa Paşa of the Mîran tribal confederation.

the central government with telegraphs complaining about the transgressions of Milli.¹⁷⁵ This time the government took action ordering İbrahim Paşa to be placed under house arrest in Aleppo. However, İbrahim Paşa evidently did not comply with the Sultan's orders and in early 1908 troops were sent to enforce the government's decision. Nevertheless, the wily paşa was again able to maintain his freedom and make good with the palace by offering to send troops to the Hicaz and to protect the Baghdad railway, something that made him, on the eve of the constitutional revolution, one of the most preeminent figures in Kurdistan.¹⁷⁶

As such, it is important not to overestimate the degree of popularity of Abd ül-Hamid's Kurdish policy amongst Kurds. Even so, outbreaks of protest remained on the whole isolated and related to specific local conditions.¹⁷⁷ However, localised protests were not the only form that Kurdish opposition to Abd ül-Hamid took. The Hamidian period also saw the emergence of a new form of Kurdish opposition: Young Kurd opposition.

Young Turks and Young Kurds

The term 'Young Kurd'¹⁷⁸ in the context of this study denotes those Kurds who while accepting and even cherishing the Kurdish identity, were involved in the 'Young Turk'

¹⁷⁵ Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 106-107.

¹⁷⁶ Klein, *Power in the Periphery* pp. 206-207.

¹⁷⁷ The same cannot be said of the disorders that took place between 1906 and 1907 in Erzurum and Van which to varying degrees had connections to both Armenian revolutionaries and fractions within the Young Turk opposition. However, if anything these revolts had an anti Kurdish character. See Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* pp.107-124. One exception seems to have been the movement in Bitlis in June 1907 against the governor Ferid Paşa. Aykut Kansu claims that the revolt was organised by a group of şeyhs with ties to the CUP. When the government threaten to use force against the protesters the şeyhs apparently claimed that they had fifteen thousand Kurds under arms which forced the government to rethink its strategy. Aykut Kansu, *The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 58-59.

¹⁷⁸ The Iranian Constitutionalist Ebulkasim Lahûfî seems to have been the first person to use the term. In a 1922 report in the Soviet journal Middle East, 'Young Kurd' was used to describe the Kurdish youth activists of the period between 1910 and 1914 (This group is also within my definition of "Young Kurds"). Lahûfî had been a supporter of the Constitutionalist movement in Iran and after the revolution of 1906 published a radical newspaper in Kermansah. However, he was compelled to leave the country and live in exile in Istanbul. Lahûfî was Kurdish himself and seems to have been involved in the Kurdish movement in Istanbul. Although there is no evidence that he was involved in the pre-1914 Kurdish movement, his poems did appear in the KTC journal *Jîn* ("Life") published in 1919-1920. Lahûfî later fled to the USSR. He went on to join the Soviet Communist party and served as Education Minister in the Tajik SSR. See Lahûfî "Kürd ve Kürdistan," in *Noviy Voskok*

movement. Therefore, before expanding on the development of Young Kurd opposition, it is necessary to briefly elaborate in general terms on the Young Turk movement.

Much has been written on the Young Turk movement which was in actuality a heterogeneous array of opposition groups formed in response to the despotism and neo-patrimonialism¹⁷⁹ of Abd ül-Hamid. Yet, while the movement shared a common enemy in the shape of a tyrannical Sultan, there was no common agreement on what was to be done. The movement included atheistic positivists, dissident members of the ulema, patriotic military officers and former high ranking members of the bureaucracy.¹⁸⁰ All these groups had different and contradictory political agendas and so splits were perhaps inevitable.¹⁸¹ However, it is possible to make a few general remarks about the movement's basic political outlook.

In many ways the Young Turk movement was remarkably conservative. Its central question was 'how to save the state?' Indeed the Young Turks were elitist although there was a fair amount of conflict over who exactly constituted the elite as the political divisions within the movement attest to.¹⁸² They generally viewed issues from a statist perspective and paid scant regard for the "will of the people" or the concept of "egalitarianism" (except as a tool of propaganda). Rather they defended "enlightenment from above" and because of their desire

[Middle East] (1922) pp. 172-183 reproduced and translated in Celile Celil, *Kürt Halk Tarihinden 13 İlginç Yaprak* (Istanbul: Evrensel: 2008), pp. 177-178.

¹⁷⁹ The term neo-patrimonial here refers to the fact that while there was a certain amount of nepotism and favouritism within the Hamidian bureaucracy, it was still organised along modern bureaucratic lines. Abd ül-Hamid's reign did not see a return to the patrimonial bureaucratic structures of the past.

¹⁸⁰ Without doubt the most detailed studies on the Young Turk movement prior to the 1908 revolution are the two written by Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* and *Preparation for Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908*.

¹⁸¹ The Young Turk movement formally split over the issue of soliciting Great Power intervention after the acrimonious 1902 Congress of Ottoman Liberals in Paris. On one side stood the 'majority' who were in favour of western support led by Sabahaddin Bey, who organised his followers into the *Teşebbüs-ü Şahsî ve Adem-i Merkeziyet Cemiyeti* ("The League for Private Initiative and Decentralisation"). Opposed to them and advocating independent action from within was the faction lead by Ahmet Rıza. This second faction evolved into the *Terakki ve İttihad Cemiyeti* ("The Committee for Progress and Union" – CPU) which became in the summer of 1908 the *İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti* ("The Committee for Union and Progress" - CUP).

¹⁸² For example, the faction of Sabahaddin Bey looked down on the Turkist CPU because they lacked a serious sociological theory. Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 146.

to maintain the empire “did not embrace any form of political radicalism.”¹⁸³ This included, for many members, any dogmatic adherence to ethno-nationalism, a principle which could prove explosive in a multi-ethnic empire.

In fact, the word ‘Young Turks’ can be somewhat confusing in that it might imply the movement was ethnically ‘Turkish’ or ‘Turkish nationalist’ from the outset. In actuality opposite is true; the initial ‘Young Turk’ cell formed in the Military Medical Academy in 1889 consisted of two Kurds, an Albanian and a Circassian. Moreover, rather than embracing Turkism, the movement initially rallied around the principle of *ittihad-ı anasir* (“unity of [ethnic and religious] elements”) which amounted to a form of civic Ottoman nationalism. Certainly, between 1902 and 1907, the leading faction of Young Turks, the *Terakki ve İttihad Cemiyeti* (“The Committee for Progress and Union” – CPU) developed strong Turkist proclivities. This apparently proved crucial in its appeal to young activist military officers in the Balkan. Nevertheless, Hanioglu notes that: “Despite their Turkist proclivities, the new leaders [of the Young Turk movement] viewed Turkism, like Ottomanism and Panislamism, useful tools to fulfil their supreme goal: the salvation of the empire.”¹⁸⁴ Thus Turkism was downplayed, at least in public propaganda, from late 1907 as the preparations for revolution matured and as such, another of the defining characteristics of the Young Turk movement might be said to be its “political opportunism.”¹⁸⁵

Despite the Turkist shift in the CPU between 1902 and 1907, Kurds played an important role in the opposition to Abd ül-Hamid. As noted above, two Kurds, İshak Sükuti and Abdullah Cevdet were amongst the founders of the Young Turk movements’ initial cell. In particular,

¹⁸³ Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* pp. 313-314.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

¹⁸⁵ See *Ibid.*, pp. 295-303.

Abdullah Cevdet¹⁸⁶ went on to become an important figure in the movement although he was sidelined after the Contréville agreement of 1897.¹⁸⁷ As the movement developed other Kurds became involved. Şerif Paşa, the son of Kürd Said Paşa, while serving as Ottoman Ambassador in Sweden, secretly supported the opposition sending the Young Turk leader, Ahmet Rıza, 100 francs a month.¹⁸⁸ Others took a more direct approach. Şeyh Abd ül-Kadir Efendi and his brother Şeyh Nailî, both sons of Şeyh Ubeydullah, were implicated in the 1896 “War Office” plot against the Sultan.¹⁸⁹ Some of the Bedirhanzâde also, despite the Sultan’s favour (and long before the Bedirhan’s dramatic fall from grace in 1906), joined the struggle. Osman and Hüseyin Bedirhan, who left the empire after their failed attempt to launch a revolt in Botan in 1878, were members of the Egyptian branch of the Society.¹⁹⁰ Two other sons of Bedirhan also played prominent roles in the opposition: Mikdat Bedirhan and Abd ur-Rahman Bedirhan. Abd ur-Rahman in particular seems to have been an active member of the Young Turk movement. This resulted in him, along with another Kurd, Hikmet Baban, being issued an invitation to participate in the 1902 Congress of Ottoman Liberals in Paris.¹⁹¹

These ‘Young Kurds’ were from notable backgrounds, had usually gone through a secular education and in many cases had been, at one time or another, employed by the state. As such, they formed both a social and intellectual elite amongst Kurds. However, they were at the same time estranged from traditional Kurdish society. On one hand, due to their

¹⁸⁶ For a detailed study on Abdullah Cevdet’s relationship with the Young Turk movement see Şükrü Hanioglu, *Siyasal Düşünür olarak Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi* Chapter 3.

¹⁸⁷ The Contréville agreement refers to the agreement made in the heady days following Abd ül-Hamid’s victory over Greece between Mizancı Murad Bey, the erstwhile leader of the Young Turk movement in Europe, and representatives of the Sultan. Murad Bey agreed to end his oppositional activity in Europe and to return to the empire in return for a promise of reform from the Sultan. Hanioglu *The Young Turks in opposition* pp.98-101 Abdullah Cevdet was one of those who followed Murad Bey’s lead and returned to the empire.

¹⁸⁸ Ahmed Rıza, *Ahmed Rıza Bey’in Anıları* (Istanbul: Araba, 1988), p. 19.

¹⁸⁹ Yuriy Aşatoviç Petrosyan, *Sovyet Gözüyle Jön Türkler* (Ankara: Bilgi, 1974), pp.200-201.

¹⁹⁰ Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in opposition* pp. 163-164.

¹⁹¹ *Kürdistan* 1 Nisan 1318; Also see Malmîsanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetesi Kurdistan’ı yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan* (Istanbul: Vate, 2009), p.14.

integration to the Ottoman system and, on joining the opposition, their subsequent exile, they were geographically distant from Kurdistan and the bulk of the Kurdish population. On the other, their lifestyles were often very different for those of traditional tribal Kurds. For example, Hasan Arfa, the son of an Iranian diplomat, remarked on Şerif Paşa:

I remember him well when he lived in Monte Carlo during the First World War, in his villa 'Mon Keif' not far from my father's villa 'Danishgah' ... He was a great friend of my father's, having been the Ottoman Minister at Stockholm in the late nineties [1890s], at the same time that my father was representing Iran at the Swedish court... He was a typical old Turkish grandee, easy-going, fond of champagne, night clubs and the good life in general, and appeared to have plenty of money to procure for himself what he wanted.¹⁹²

Perhaps not all the 'Young Kurds' were *bon vivants* of the calibre of 'Beau Cherif', but their westernised life styles certainly set them apart from the average Kurd.¹⁹³

A final point which it is critical to stress is that the Young Kurds sojourn into opposition was not motivated by 'ethnic' concerns in the sense that they regarded themselves as part of an 'oppressed nation'. Kurds were, if anything, favoured by the Sultan. Rather, as in the case of many Turks, Balkan Muslims and Arabs, they were alienated from the autocracy which they believed was undermining the viability of the empire. Indeed, due to the fact that Kurdistan constituted a borderland the issue of imperial decline was even more acutely felt.¹⁹⁴ This was reflected in ideology espoused by the Young Kurds which, while expressing an 'ethnic perspective' and catering to a Kurdish audience, could not be described in any way whatsoever as Kurdish nationalist.

Kürdistan: Ottoman Patriotism and Kurdish Enlightenment

One of the best sources for understanding the ideological perspective of the Young Kurds is the newspaper *Kürdistan*. *Kürdistan* was founded in Cairo 1898 by Mikdat Bedirhan, a

¹⁹² Hasan Arfa, *The Kurds* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p.31.

¹⁹³ For example, Abd ür-Rahman Bedirhan married a European.

¹⁹⁴ Eric J. Zürcher, "The Young Turks – Children of the Borderlands," www.letleidenuniv.nl/tcimo/tulp/research/ejz16.htm.

former official in the ministry of education. It initially featured only Kurdish¹⁹⁵ articles but after the fourth issue also included articles in Turkish. Its publication was supported by the Young Turk movement; issues appeared at intermittent intervals between 1898 and 1902.¹⁹⁶ After the sixth issue the editorship was taken over by Abd ur-Rahman Bedirhan and publication moved to Genève. Subsequent issues were both produced in Europe and Egypt. *Kürdistan*'s importance lies in the fact that it was the first Kurdish language newspaper and gives us an insight into the mind-set of the Young Kurd activists and their perception of the Kurdish question.

Intriguingly, the writers in *Kürdistan* viewed the Kurdish question through the lens of Ottoman patriotism. They identified the Ottoman Empire as their primary homeland of which Kurdistan formed an indivisible part. The writers in *Kürdistan* constantly stressed the strategic importance of Kurdistan to the defence of the Ottoman homeland. Mikdat Bedirhan wrote:

As it is known by your Highness, the Kurds are amongst the most distinguished nations that form the Eternal Ottoman State and Kurdistan is also a locality that shares borders with two neighbouring states and above all obstructs the attacks the enemy on Anatolia.¹⁹⁷

Abd ur-Rahman Bedirhan expressed a similar opinion. He besieged the government to conduct public works projects in Kurdistan on the grounds that: "For the continuation of the Ottoman government [state] the importance of the protection of Kurdistan as the only base

¹⁹⁵ The dialect of Kurdish used was Kirmanci, the dialect spoken in the Bedirhan's homeland of Cizre-Botan. However, reading *Kürdistan*'s Kurdish sections, one cannot help but notice the influence of Arabic and Ottoman vocabulary on the language used. As such, it is unlikely that *Kürdistan* would have been accessible to the average Kirmanci speaker or to speakers of the Sorani/Babani dialect spoken in Süleymaniye, Erbil and Kirkuk (as well as parts of Iran).

¹⁹⁶ After the 1902 Congress Abd ur-Rahman Bedirhan joined the minority faction of Ahmed Rıza. A commitment to continue the publication of *Kürdistan* was apparently made but does not seem to have been implemented most likely due the Turkist shift in the CPU. Hanioglu, *Preparation for Revolution* p. 29.

¹⁹⁷ ("Malum-ı Şahaneleri buyurulduğu vechiyle, Kürdler, Devlet-i Ebed-müddet-i Osmaniyelerini teşkil eden akvamın en güzîdelerinden ve Kürdistan dahi mevkian iki devlete [Russia and Iran] hemhudud ve alelhusus Anadolu tarafından tecavüz-i a'dayı mani...") *Kürdistan* 21 Mayıs 1314.

against Russia is of course absolutely apprehended by His Majesty as well...”¹⁹⁸ In a later article he stated:

Today for the territorial integrity and continued political life of our government whatever degree of need exists to keep Rumelia in hand, the region of Kurdistan feels the same degree of seriousness and need.¹⁹⁹

Kürdistan often also showed a strong identification with the Ottoman state. In an article written in Kurdish Abd ur-Rahman Bedirhan went as far as to state:

Every person who is a Muslim would want the continuation of the Ottoman state. As we have seen, the reason behind the illness of the state stems from the administration which needs to be cured and the reasons behind it [this illness] removed. The health of the state is our health and the demise of the state is our demise.²⁰⁰

However, *Kürdistan* separated the issue of loyalty to the Ottoman Empire, *as an abstract concept*, from the corrupt regime of Abd ül-Hamid. It severely criticised the Sultan’s policies in Kurdistan; especially the formation of Hamidiye regiments. Abd ur-Rahman claimed that “These Hamidiye Cavalry Regiments, as all innovations of the Emperor, were established with a corrupt purpose.”²⁰¹ Abd ur-Rahman recognised that: “In the conflict between Kurds and Armenians, I know that Kurds killed many innocent Armenians.”²⁰² Furthermore, the paper criticised the quality and character of the Hamidiye commanders. In particular, *Kürdistan* attacked Mustafa Paşa of the Mîran tribe who was a Hamidiye commander in the Bedirhans old homeland of Cizre-Botan. “In Kurdistan what other people are there applying force other than the Hamidiye Regiments... For example, in the province of Diyarbakir there

¹⁹⁸ (“Hükûmet-i Osmaniye nin bekası için Rusya’ya karşı yegâne istinadgâh olan hıttâ-ı Kürdistan’ın muhafazası lüzum-ı kat’î tahtında olduğuna, elbette Zat-ı Şahanelerince de kanaat-ı kâmile hasıl olmuştur.”) *Kürdistan* 20 Mart 1315.

¹⁹⁹ (“Bugün hükûmetimiz tamamî-i mülkiyesi ve idame-i hayat-ı siyasiyesi için Rumeli’nin elde bulundurulmasına ne derecelerde mübrem bir ihtiyac mevcudsa, Kürdistan mıntıkası için de aynı ehemmiyet ve ihtiyac mahsûstür.”) *Kürdistan* 1 Eylül 1317.

²⁰⁰ (“Heçîyê Musulman e, divê ku Dewleta Osmanîye baqî bimîne. Wekî me dît ku cîsme dewletê ji sê îdareyê merîz e, dive em wî cîsmî tedawî bikin, esbabê merezê îzale bikin. Saxîya dewletê saxîya me ye, mirina wê mirina me ye.”) *Kürdistan* 24 Temmuz 1315.

²⁰¹ (“Ev Alayên Siwarên Hemîdî, wek hemî îcaatên Xunkar, bi nîyetek fasid hatine danîn.”) *Kürdistan* 1 Eylül 1317.

²⁰² (“Şerê Ermenîya û Kurda de ez zanim Kurda gelek Ermenîyên bêguneh kuştin) 18 Teşrin-i Sanî 1314.

is the ‘Mîran’ tribal leader Mustafa Paşa. This man who is found at the peak of the tribe, ten or fifteen years before this was a shepherd who they called ‘bald Misto.’²⁰³

However, the writers in *Kürdistan* did not confine their critique of Hamidian maladministration to Kurdistan. They displayed concern for all parts of the Ottoman *vatan* (“homeland”). In a somewhat prophetic article Abd ur-Rahman expressed his fears about Italian intentions towards Tripolitania. He noted that Italy had sent troops and two warships to Naples without consulting the Ottoman government. He claimed this was: “Because the whole world knows that Abd ül-Hamid does not protect his nation or his nation’s homeland. Our government has no influence on the foreigners. For this reason the Muslims of Tripolitania are all alone and abandoned.” He further warned that: “At some point in the future, Italy will arrive there [Tripolitania] with its canons and rifles. Our Emperor, whom ignorant people regard as the Caliph, the Imam of Islam and the Shadow of God, will leave the defenceless people of Tripolitania to the cannons of Italy.”²⁰⁴

This concern for Ottoman territory as a whole and its Muslim inhabitants in particular is evident in the treatment of the Cretan question. In an article published in October 1898 the author mourned the state of the Muslims on the island and censured the government for its inaction:

Muslims can defeat infidels. However, how many states they have, they all help them [infidels]; they [Foreign states] send their soldiers, cannons and ammunitions there [Crete], kill Muslims and help infidels. Muslims in Crete are in a very bad situation. Our state does not send soldiers there or help its people. Muslims have become ruined and defenceless.

²⁰³ (“Kürdistan taraflarında İka-i mezalim eder, taraf-ı eşref-i Şahanelerinden teslîh olunmuş, nam-ı namî-i hümayunlarına intisabla mütefahhir Hamidiye Alayları efradından başka kimler var?! Meselâ Diyarbekir vilâyeti dahilinde »Mîran« aşireti reisi Mustafa Paşa var. Bu adam, müntesibi bulunduğu aşirette bundan on veya on beş sene evvel koyun çobanı idi, ki kendisine »Misto Keçelo« derleri.”) *Kürdistan* 1 Kanûn-evvel 1316.

²⁰⁴ (“Çünkî alem hemî zane ku Ebdulhemîd millet û wetenê milletî muhâfeze nake. Tu mehabeta hukumeta me li ser ecnebîya nemaye. Bînaen’aleyh, Musulmanên Trablusê hemî heçku bêkes û bêsaheb in... Paş muddetekî İtalya wê derê bide ber top û tifiŋga. Xunkarê me, ewê gelek xelqên cahil wî Xelîfe, İmamê Muslîmîn, Zillullah fi’l-erd tesewwur dikin, wê wan rebenên Trablusê binê topên İtalyayê bihelê”) *Kürdistan* 7 Nisan 1315.

Many of their men have been killed. Their wives and children have been violated and left hungry. Their houses have been burned. Their property and daughters were taken by infidels. Their wives become widows to serve infidels.

The article further urged the Kurds paid attention to the situation in Crete warning that: “One day this situation may befall you as well! Now, wouldn’t be a shame for Kurds to see their wives and children in the hands of Russian soldiers!”²⁰⁵ Another article laid the blame for the loss of Crete squarely at the feet of the Sultan stating that “their [Muslims of Crete] legacy and honour are victims of the tyranny of Abd ül-Hamid.”²⁰⁶ One of the most forthright criticisms in *Kürdistan* of Abd ül-Hamid’s Cretan policy came from Bahriyeli Rıza. He condemned the Hamidian *idare-i maslahat* (“[time mongering] management of affairs”) blaming it for the loss of *vatanımızın en mühim kısmı olan Girid adası* (“the island of Crete which is the most important part of our homeland”). He went on to write:

The Greek government sent troops to our borders and attacked. Our commander there reported the state of affairs [to the palace] and asked how to respond. The answer that came was to abstain from any aggressive action until the ‘final order’ [from the palace] was given. Two or three days passed and there was no sound of a ‘final order’ [from the palace]. However, [in the meantime] the enemy captured a few places on the border. Our soldiers who were prisoners of inaction to the ‘final order,’ [from the palace] those brave, those patriotic lions of ours’ patience now ran out. Breaking the bonds of the ‘final order’ they attacked the enemies; by being immune to the traitorous and criminal orders of the palace, they prove to the world that they prove to the world they are still the old Ottomans.²⁰⁷

What is remarkable is that the author not only identified with the Ottoman homeland and the Ottoman army but also with the Ottoman past. Furthermore, he perceived the secessionist

²⁰⁵ (“Musulman karin Fila. Lê çî qas dewletên Fila hene, arî Fila dîkin; eskerê xwe, top û cebilxaneyê rêdîkin wê derê, Musulmanên dekujin, arî Fila dekin. Halê Musulman Girîdê gelek xirab bî. Dewleta me eskerê xwe rênakin wê derê, arî mirovên xwe nake. Musulman gelek jar û reben bîne. Merîyen wan gelek hatin kuştin. Jin û zarûyên wan birîndar bîn, birçî man. Xaniyên wan şewitîn. Malê wan, keçê wan ketin destê Fila de. Jinê wan bêmêr man, xizmetbarîya Fila dîkin. . . rojek ê ev hal bê sere we jî! De vêca ne heyfa Kurda ye Kurd jin û zarûyên xwe binê destê eskerê Rûsî de bibînin!”) *Kürdistan* 23 Teşrin-i Evvel 1314.

²⁰⁶ (“îrz û namûsa wan [Muslims of Crete] qurbana zulma Ebdulhemîd bî.”) *Kürdistan* 28 Kânun-ı Sanî 1314.

²⁰⁷ (“Yunan hükûmeti hududumuza akser sevk ve tecavüz eder. Orada bulunan kumandanımız, vuku-u hali bildirerek nasıl hareket etmesi lâzım geleceğini sorar. ‘İş’ar-ı ahîre’ kadar tecavüzî hareketten kat’iyen mücanebet olunması’ diye bir cevap gelir. İki-üç gün geçer, ‘İş’ar-ı ahîr’den bir ses yok. Halbuki düşman huddudan bir kaç mahal zabt eder. ‘İş’ar-ı ahîr’ ile pabend-i sükûnet olan askerimizin, o seçî, o hamiyetli arslanlarımızın artık sabra takatları kalmaz; ‘İş’ar-ı ahîr’ rabitalarını koparak düşmana saldırırlar; ve kendileri, Sarayın hainane, canîyane emirlerinden masun bulunsalar, yine o eski Osmanlılar olduklarını ve olacaklarını bütün âleme tasdik ettirirler.”) *Kürdistan* 20 Kânun-ı Sanî 1315.

movements within the Ottoman Empire with hostility and implicitly justified their repression. Indeed, the solution for inter-ethnic conflict put forward by *Kürdistan* was *ittihad-ı anasir*. As an article on the Armenian issue put it: “Be they Armenians, be they Kurds, if they want to be liberated from this situation and this oppression, they can be successful with unity and alliance. Hand in hand and in brotherhood they [should] search for necessities of happiness.”²⁰⁸ The restoration of the constitution was also seen as a necessary precondition for the salvation of the empire. One article proclaimed:

In fact, the remedy of all is the Constitution [Qanunê Esasî]. When this Constitution is fully implemented, then people will be aware of their rights and the curse of a despotic emperor and his civil servants will vanish and thereafter missionaries will not find their way in the corruption of people, [and] even western states will not interfere in our affairs.

The same article offered up Japan as a model of what a constitutional government could achieve in the face of western imperialism:

Thirty five years ago, Japan was under the control of foreign states [Western states]. But from when they made their rule on organised base in that way they saved themselves from exposure to the foreigners. Today, from their emperor to the least of them, they are all equal before the law.

The article concluded by appealing: “We must do as they do...”²⁰⁹

A second aspect of *Kürdistan*'s discourse was its stress on the need for the propagation of education amongst the Kurds. The subtitle of *Kürdistan* hinted at this educational mission: “A newspaper now published every fifteen days in Kurdish in order to encourage the awaking

²⁰⁸ (“Ermeniler olsun, Kürdler olsun, bu hallerden, bu zulümlerden kurtulmak isterlerse, ittihad ve ittihak etmekle muvaffak olabilirler. El-ele verip kardaşcasına lâzime-i saadetlerini ararlar;”) *Kürdistan* 1 Kanûn-evvel 1316.

²⁰⁹ (“Hasilî, cara van bela hemîya Qanunê Esasî ye. Weqta hu welatê me de ev qanûn teessus kir, êdî wê hînge xelq hemî huqûqên xwe emîn dibê, teselluta Xunkarê mustebid û me’ mûrên wî namîne û êdî mîsyoner jî îfsada xelqê re tu çara nabînin, hetta duwelê ecnebîye jî mudaxele muamelatên me nakin... Berî sih û pênc sala dwleta Japonyayê jî marûzê mudaxelatên duwelê ecnebîye bî. Lakîn ji wê hînge ve îdara xwe kir binê întizamê û bi vî surety xwe ji teerruza ecaniba xilas kir. Îro ji xunkarê wan heta kêmtirê wan, hemî ber qanûnê wekhev, musawî ne... Berî sih û pênc sala dwleta Japonyayê jî marûzê mudaxelatên duwelê ecnebîye bî. Lakîn ji wê hînge ve îdara xwe kir binê întizamê û bi vî surety xwe ji teerruza ecaniba xilas kir. Îro ji xunkarê wan heta kêmtirê wan, hemî ber qanûnê wekhev, musawî ne... Divê em jî wek wan bikin...”) *Kürdistan* 1 Mart 1318.

and study of arts amongst the Kurds.”²¹⁰ This subtitle later became: “A Kurdish newspaper published every fifteen days which encourages scientific and artistic education amongst the Kurds and includes Kurdish literature and works.”²¹¹ Indeed, Mikdat openly stated his elitist “enlightenment from above” purpose of publishing the newspaper in an open letter to the Sultan:

“I, your slave, who is from the most distinct Kurdish princes with the objective of fulfilling the order of the Prophet that “A shepherd must attend to his flock;” have set up and published this Kurdish newspaper in order to encourage Kurds towards scientific and artistic education and in accordance to the seductive words of the time.”²¹²

A letter published in *Kürdistan* again hinted at the need for education amongst the Kurds:

“You know that Kurds by their manner [behaviour, the way they are] are an excellent kind of human beings, they are courageous, they are gallant; their shortfall is in knowledge and know how”²¹³ *Kürdistan* went on to publish a number of treatises on Kurdish history, biographies of famous Kurds and numerous Kurdish poems. The paper even praised some of the educational innovations of the Hamidian regime such as the *mekteb-i aşiret*:

A few years ago a school was established in Istanbul. The name of the school is the Tribal school [*Mekteb-i Aşiret*]. Except for tribal children, they do not accept other people’s children. From Baghdad and Damascus [or Syria] from Yemen, Shemmar and Anze, all send their children to Istanbul. In this tribal school they study, every year they go home for 2 months and afterwards they come back. In 6-7 years learned from among them graduate, afterwards they go back to their villages and towns. The state, gives them money every month. They become civil servants, step by step they become local governors and then regional governors. All you Mîrs [Beys] and Ağas! The sins of your children be on your shoulders! You too send your children to study! The rich build schools in your villages, for God’s sake hurry!²¹⁴

²¹⁰ (“Kürdleri îkaz ve tahsil-i sanayiye teşvik için şimdilik on beş günde bir neşrolunur Kürdçe gazetedir.”) See *Kürdistan* 9 Nisan 1314.

²¹¹ (“Kürdleri tahsil-i ulûm ve fûnûna teşvik eder nasayih ve edebiyat-ı Kürdiyeyi hâvî on beş gün bir neşrolunur Kürdçe gezetedir.”) See *Kürdistan* 7 Mayıs 1314.

²¹² (“Kulları, ümera-i Ekradın mümtazlarından ve »küllüküm raşn ve küllüküm mes’ûlün an raiyyetihi« emr-i nebevîsiyle me’mur ve mes’ûl bulunduğumdan, hisse-i abîdaneme düşen vazifeyi îfa maksadiyle, Kürdleri tahsil-i ulûm ve fûnûna teşvik etmek ve zamana göre ilkaatta bulunmak üzere Kürd lisaniyle şu gazeteyi ihdas ve neşrettim.”) *Kürdistan* 21 Mayıs 1314.

²¹³ (“Hun jî dizanin ku Kurmanc bi xilqeta xwe new’ek ji benî Ademên mumtaz in, şeci’in, ciwamêr in; kêmayîya wan ilm û marîfet e.”) *Kürdistan* 20 Mart 1315.

²¹⁴ (“Van salên ha de Îstanbulê mektebek hatîye çêkirin. Navê vê mektebê “Mekteba Eşîra” ye; xêrê zarûyên eşîra zarûyên kesê qebûl nakin. Ji Bexda û Şamê, ji Yemenê, Şemmer û Enze hemî zarûyên xwe rêdikin

In short, the writers of *Kürdistan* expressed views that were not too divergent from their Turkish compatriots. They showed the same identification with the state and concern for education and “enlightenment from above” that was common amongst other sections of the Young Turk movement. Expressions of Kurdish particularism were not seen as at odds with the ideology of Ottomanism (Ottoman nationalism). If anything, the Young Kurds regarded the enlightenment of Kurds and the modernisation of Kurdistan as a necessary step to defend the territorial integrity of the empire. Their opposition was to a despotic and autocratic regime that was failing to do its duty to defend the homeland. If that regime could be removed and the constitution restored, the road to felicity and harmony would be opened. Thus, when the Constitution Revolution of 1908 occurred, the Young Kurds identified with it and moved from unabashed opposition to enjoying a more complicated relationship with ruling elite.

Îstanbulê; vê mekteba eşîra de dixwînin, her sal du heyva diçin malên xwe, paşê dîsa tên. Şeş-heft sala de alimên qenc ji wan derdikevin, paşê duyîn diçin gund û bajêrên xwe. Dewlet her heyv pera dide wan. Dibin me'mûr, hêdî hêdî dibin muteserrif, dibin walî. Gelî mîr û axano! Gunehê zarûyên we wê stûye we be. Un jî zarûyên xwe rêkin bidin xwendin. Dewlemendên we bila gunda de mekteb çêkin, rîya Xwedê da xêra bikin.”) *Kürdistan* 9 Nisan 1314.

Chapter VI: The Proclamation of Freedom, Old Kurds and Young Kurds

Çok fena şeyleri işitiyoruz. Bâhusus gayr-ı müslimler de güya bir İslâm kızını almışlar, filân yerde böyle olmuş, diğer yerde şöyle olmuş. Olmuş, olmuş, olmuş, ilââhir...
Attributed to a group of Kurdish tribal leaders in 1910 ²¹⁵

Hemşehrilerim! Bugün hürriyet bayramıdır, haydi herkes barışın! Umum vatandaşlar, Türk, Arap, Kürt, Arnavut, Ermeni, Rum, Bulgar, Yahudi hasılı Müslüm ve gayr-ı Müslim bütün vatandaşlar birbirinizi kucaklayın. İlim, hüner, sanat tahsiline, şirketler te'sisine elbirliği ile ve mütekebil muavenetle çalışın. Birbirinizin lisanlarını öğrenin. Abdullah Cevdet 30 July 1908 ²¹⁶

They say that 'Progress' is to know about art and education; the literacy and welfare of compatriots. They say 'Unity' is an alliance with your compatriots, even if they are non Muslims. Ahmet Şevki 1908 ²¹⁷

On 3 July 1908 a junior officer in the Ottoman army with connections to the CPU, Ahmet Niyazi, took to the mountains of Macedonia alongside soldiers from the regular army and a group of Albanian irregulars. The group, which had been assembled under the pretext of pursuit a group of Macedonian-Bulgarian revolutionaries,²¹⁸ in actuality, had been formed with the aim of forcing the Sultan to restore the *Kanûn-i Esasî* ("Constitution/Fundamental Law"). Niyazi's revolt prompted other disillusioned officers in the Balkans to defect to the CPU and by mid-July the movement had gained so much momentum that it seemed if the Second and Third Armies were about to march on the capital and oust the Sultan. Faced with the choice of either being disposed or exceeding to the rebels demands, Abd ül-Hamid chose the latter and on July 24, 1908 issued a decree providing for the convention of a new *Meclis-i*

²¹⁵ Said Nursî [Kürdî], "Münâzarat," *Bediüzzaman Said Nursî'nin İlk Dönem Eserleri* (Istanbul: Söz, 2007), p. 473.

²¹⁶ Abdullah Cevdet *Bir Hutbe "Hemşehrilerime,"* (Mısır:Matbaa-i İctihad, 1909) 30 Temmuz 1908 reproduced in Mehmet Bayrak, *Açık-Gizli/Resmi-Gayriresmi Kürdoloji Belgeleri* (Ankara: Özge, 1994), pp. 14-18.

²¹⁷ ("Tereqqî" dibêjine zanîna sen'et û mearif, xwendin û xweş derbaskirina welatîya. 'İttihad' dibêjine ittifaqa bi welatîya xwe ra, bira File be") *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi* 22 Teşrin-i Sani 1324.

²¹⁸ Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* p. 267.

Umumi (“General Assembly”). Thirty years of autocracy had crumbled in less than a month.²¹⁹

The *hürriyet’in ilânı* (“declaration of freedom/the constitution”)²²⁰ or *Meşrutiyet* (“Constitutional monarchy”) raised hopes for a brighter future for the empire. The despotic regime of Abd ül-Hamid had been destroyed and the revolutionaries and their sympathisers hoped a new parliamentary regime headed by a responsible government, administered by a meritocratic civil service and free of European meddling would take its place. Furthermore, the CPU (who became the CUP in summer 1908) believed that ideal of *ittihad-ı anasir* was finally realisable and had apparently good reason to do so in light of the popular reaction to the coup d’état.

In Istanbul and the Balkans, the restoration of the Constitution was greeted by Muslim and non-Muslim alike with joy. Halide Edip described the situation as being as if the “whole empire had caught the fever of ecstasy.”²²¹ The *Times* reported that:

The publication of the Constitution and of a general amnesty today has caused universal satisfaction. A crowd of several thousand persons made a demonstration with flags and music at the Porte this afternoon to render thanks. The Press is jubilant and thanks the Sultan. Yesterday's news has been received by all classes in Constantinople with calm satisfaction. The Selamlık passed off without incident. The Sultan, who seemed aged and depressed, was loudly acclaimed by the soldiery. There was no demonstration on Friday, except that the troops returning from the Selamlık were cheered by a crowd, *mainly of Greeks*, collected at the Bourse.²²²

In Macedonia, the home of the revolution, some bands of Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian revolutionaries descended from the mountains and handed in their weapons.²²³

²¹⁹ For a good overview of the events leading up to the restoration of the Ottoman Constitution see Tunaya, *Hürriyet’in İlanı* Chapter 1. Also see Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* Chapter 8.

²²⁰ *Hürriyet* derived from the Arabic root *Hür* (“free”) took on a double meaning during the 2nd Constitutional period: the concept of political freedom and as a synonym for the constitution itself.

²²¹ Edip, *Memoirs of Halidé Edib* p. 258.

²²² *Times* 27 July 1908. [emphasis added]

²²³ A. L. Macfie, *The end of the Ottoman Empire* (London: Longman, 1998), pp. 39-40.

However, in the Asiatic provinces the reception was cooler. For example, one Baghdad chronicler noted that the news of the revolution came as a shock. People “on the whole new nothing about it, and gave it no other significant save that this freedom was putting them on an equality with non-Muslims. This they looked upon as an injustice...”²²⁴ In Mosul a similar mood was detected by the British vice-consul: “Far from being enthusiastic over the prospect of liberty, fraternity and a Parliament to redress their grievances the great majority are strongly opposed to a change in which they foresee a very real danger to Moslem supremacy.”²²⁵

Trepidation in Kurdistan: Old Kurds

In Kurdistan a similarly negative atmosphere prevailed. Those Kurdish tribal and religious leaders that had been favoured by the Hamidian regime were apprehensive and with good reason. The new government sought to strengthen central control over outlying regions and reign in the tribal Kurds. The crudest demonstration of this intent was the fact that within a year of the constitutional revolution two of the most powerful figures in Kurdistan, İbrahim Paşa Milli and Şeyh Said Berzinci, were dead.²²⁶ In Dersim which the state had never truly managed to impose its authority over, Nuri Dersimi reported that by July 1908 an army composed of 35 battalions and ‘Cibran tribe’ cavalry units (presumably Hamidiye units) entered the region.²²⁷ Furthermore, in the early days of the regime, the government moved to evict Kurds from lands that they had illegally seized from Armenians over the previous two

²²⁴ Elie Kedourie, “The Impact of the Young Turk Revolution in the Arabic speaking Provinces of the Ottoman Empire,” in ed. Elie Kedourie *Arabic Political Memoires and Other Studies* (London: Routledge, 1974), pp. 124-161, p.140.

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 142.

²²⁶ In June 1908 the constitutionalist government in Istanbul order the arrest of İbrahim Paşa. After evading capture, he eventually died of dysentery in September the same year while on the run. Klein, *Power in the Periphery* p. 210-212. Şeyh Said and his Hamavand supporters revolted against the new government and in favour of the Sultan. However, the new government induced the şeyh to come to Mosul where he was placed under house arrest and later killed during a riot apparently orchestrated the government in May 1909. See Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise* p. 80 and 191-192 Hilmi *Kurdistan at the dawn of the century* pp. 35-38. Also see Jwaideh, *The Kurdish nationalist movement: Its origins and development* pp. 308-310.

²²⁷ Nuri Dersimi, *Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim* (Istanbul: Doz, 2004), p. 97.

decades.²²⁸ The future of the Hamidiye regiments was also a source of worry for many. The government had initially hoped to disband the organisation, however, it was ultimately reorganised as the *Hafif Aşiret Alayları* (“Light Tribal Regiments”). Yet, despite the organisations survival, the position no longer carried the same degree of government protection. Indeed, the regiments were downgraded to the status of reserve regiments, which meant that they were to be henceforth subject to civilian courts.²²⁹

The once privileged Kurdish tribal elite clearly saw these developments as a threat to their interests and provoked a considerable response. Part of this response was the creation of ‘Kurdish Clubs’ in towns of Kurdistan which were supposedly linked to the *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* in Istanbul. However, as Klein has noted, rather than being the product of efforts on the part of the Istanbul branch, the impetus to organise these clubs was local and generally the product of “disaffected Kurdish aghas (tribal chiefs/notables), who were disgruntled with the new regime not merely for ideological reasons, but for material (mainly economic) reasons too.”²³⁰

Throughout 1908 and 1909, Kurdish Clubs were opened across the Kurdish inhabited regions of the empire.²³¹ According to a report from the British Consul in Diyarbakir December 1908, the “Kurdish Club” in Diyarbakir was opened with great pomp and ceremony and was attended by important government officials, including the provincial governor. However, rather than employing a ‘Kurdish’ discourse the ceremony was Islamic orientated and anti-

²²⁸ Klein, *Power in the Periphery* p.214 and Chapter 4.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 214. During the Hamidian period, the Hamidiye regiments had only been subject to military courts. As such, their raiding usually went unpunished.

²³⁰ Janet Klein, “Kurdish Nationalists and Non-Nationalist Kurds: Rethinking Minority Nationalism and the Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1909,” *Nations and Nationalism* (Jan 2007) pp. 135-153, pp. 140-141.

²³¹ Malmîsanij claims that ‘branches’ of *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* the Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Hınıs, Muş, Mosul and possibly in Erzurum and Baghdad. See Malmîsanij, *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Gazetesi* (Istanbul: Avesta, 1999), pp. 45-53. According to Klein’s research there was also a Kurdish Club in Van. See Klein, “Kurdish Nationalists and Non-Nationalist Kurds: Rethinking Minority Nationalism and the Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1909.”

constitutionalist. In fact, at the end of the festivities a petition against the constitution and in favour of “Sheriat” collected 3,000 signatures.²³² Indeed, just prior to the 12 April 1909 ‘counter revolution’ and dethronement of Abd ül-Hamid, the Bitlis Kurdish Club forced “under pain of death the Young Turk officers to sign a telegram addressed to the Cabinet of Tewfik Pasha demanding the full application of the Sheriat [Islamic Law].”²³³ These references to the *şeriat* seem to be a code word amongst the Kurdish provincial notables for the restoration of the Hamidian system and the provincial branches of the KTTC provided them with a vehicle to express this desire. In this sense, the provincial ‘branches’ of the KTTC were reactionary. However, this reactionary stance was quite logical given that they had benefited from the Hamidian regime. The new regime, with its penchant for centralisation, was a threat to their power. After the removal of Abd ül-Hamid in spring 1909, these ‘Kurdish Clubs’ were closed down and relations between CUP and the tribal and shaikly notables in the provinces continued to be strained.²³⁴

This is not to say that there was no ideological dimension to Kurdish objections to the constitutionalist regime. Said-i Kürdî (Nursî) a Kurdish religious scholar, activist and partisan of the constitution offers an interesting perspective in the mindset of the tribal Kurds. In 1910, he toured Eastern Anatolia apparently to explain the virtues of constitutional rule to the Kurdish tribes.²³⁵ His experiences with the tribes were published in 1911 under the title *Münâzarat* (“the debates”). This book seems to capture the state of mind of the tribal Kurds

²³² Mr. Mugerditchian, the Dragoman at Diyarbakir, Dec. 22 1908 (FO 195/2317)

²³³ Safrastian to Shibly, Bitlis, June 8, 1909 (FO 195/2317)

²³⁴ For a summary of the Kurdish revolts and disturbances between 1909 and 1914 see Jwaideh *The Kurdish nationalist movement: Its origins and development* Chapter 5. It is worth noting that most of these revolts seem to have been triggered by government attempts at tax collection and centralisation. The most important revolts were the Bitlis revolts of 1909 and 1914, the Abd ül-Salam Barzani revolt, the Caf revolt, the Şeyh Mahmud Berzinci revolt and the Mustafa Paşa Bajalan revolt.

²³⁵ Said-i Kürdî in fact stated. “Kurds and their alike are and have been of constitutionalist opinions.” (“Kürt ve emsâli, fikren meşrutiyetperver olmuş ve oluyor.”) Said Nursî [Kürdî] “Münâzarat,” *Bediüzzaman Said Nursî'nin İlk Dönem Eserleri* p. 441.

and their perception of the constitution. On soliciting questions from his audience he was immediately harangued:

“What is tyranny/absolutism? What is Constitutional Monarchy?” Another: “Armenians became ağas. We remained wretched.” A different person: “Is it not harmful to our religion?” Still another: “The Young Turks are like this and that, they will harm us.” Another: “How can Non-Muslims be soldiers?” and so on...²³⁶

Once order was restored, Kurdî was asked numerous questions about implications of the new Constitutional order including: “Armenians are *zimmî*.²³⁷ How can the *ehl-i zimmet* [Christians and Jews] be equal with the *zimmettar* [Muslims]?”²³⁸ And later: “Now Armenians are prefects and governors. How is this?”²³⁹ Clearly, the Kurdish notables equated the new constitutionalism with an end to Muslim superiority and, as such, profoundly negative.

Young Kurds 1908-1909

Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti (“Kurdish Solidarity and Progress Society”)

In contrast to their tribal cousins, the Young Kurds greeted the news of the reintroduction of the constitution with joy. In the euphoria that followed the revolution, the Young Kurds in Istanbul organised the first *legal* Kurdish political organisation:²⁴⁰ *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (which has already been mentioned in regards to its ‘local branches’).

On 15 September 1908 a group of 500 leading Kurdish figures, many of whom had been active in the opposition to the Hamidian regime, gathered at the *Vezneci klübü* (“cashiers

²³⁶ (“‘İstibdat nedir? Meşrutiyet nedir?’ Diğeri: ‘Ermeniler ağa oldular. Biz sefil kaldık.’ Başkası: ‘Dinimize zarar yok mu?’ Daha başkası: ‘Jön Türkler şöyledirler, böyledirler, bizi de zarardide edecekler.’ Diğeri: ‘Gayr-i müslim, nasıl asker olacak?’ İlâ âhir...”) Ibid., p. 442

²³⁷ *Zimmî* refers generally Jews and Christians. This ‘people of the book’ maintain a certain amount of legal rights under Islamic law. However, they are not equal to Muslims.

²³⁸ (“Ermeniler zimmîdirler. Ehl-i zimmet, zimmettarıyla nasıl müsâvi olur?”) Ibid., p. 470.

²³⁹ (“Şimdi Ermeniler kaymakam ve vali oluyor. Nasıl olur?”) Ibid., p. 478.

²⁴⁰ According to Cemalpaşazâde Kadri the first Kurdish political organisation was the *Kürdistan Azm-i Kavî Cemiyeti*. He claims that this underground organisation was active in Istanbul between 1900 and 1905. See Cemal-Paşa [Zinar Silopi] *Doza Kurdistan: Kürd Milletinin 60 Yıllık Esaretten Kurtuluş Savaşı Hatıraları* p. 31. Nuri Dersimi also claims that a Kurdish student organisation was set up in El-Aziz (Elazığ) during the later days of the Hamidian period. Nuri Dersimi, *Hatıratım* (Istanbul: Doz 1997), pp. 19-20. However, it would be safe to assume that these organisations were of limited influence.

club”) to announce the formation of the society to cheers of: “We all are supporting the Constitution and law for the brotherhood and the mutual aid of the Empire’s nationalities.”²⁴¹

Şeyh Abd ül-Kadir Efendi was elected as the Society’s president while Müşir Ahmed Paşa became his deputy.²⁴² The organisation’s *Heyet-i İdare* (“administrative committee”) was run by Babanzâde Naim Ahmed.²⁴³ Other noteworthy members included Emin Ali Bedirhan, Said Nursî, Babanzâde İsmail Hakkı, Süleyman Nazif, Süleymaniyeli Tevfik and Diyarbakirli Ahmed Cemal.²⁴⁴ However, despite its name and its identity as a ‘Kurdish’ association, the organisation did not espouse Kurdish nationalism.

Dr. Şükrü Sekban who also joined the organisation claimed:

Let me declare that from them [the members of the KTTC] they did not think of the smallest privilege for Kurds. However, all of us agreed on the issue of reforming the six eastern provinces [i.e. areas where Kurds lived]. The reforms desired were thus: The appointment of able and honourable governors, the construction of some main roads and in order that justice be dispensed in a correct manor a re-examination of the courts.²⁴⁵

This assertion is corroborated by the organisations *nizamname* (“bylaws”). This document was profoundly Ottomanist. In the section entitled *maksad-ı tesis* (“Purpose of Foundation”) the stated objectives were;

²⁴¹ Malmîsanij, *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Gazetesi* pp. 17-18. This cheer was rendered by Malmîsanij: “Hepimiz İmparatorluğun uluslarının kardeşliği ve ortak çalışması için yasa ve meşrutiyeti destekliyoruz!” Clearly this was not the original wording. It is based on reports from Armenian newspapers of the time. Clearly, Armenians followed the progress of the Kurdish movement with keen interest and reported on the foundation of a ‘Kurdish Club.’

²⁴² (“Cemiyetimiz merhum Şeyh Abdullah Efendizâde Seyyit Abd ül-Kadir Efendi hazretlerini riyaset-i ulûya ve Damad-ı Hazret-i Şehriyârî merhum İsmail Paşazâde Müşir Ahmed Paşa hazretlerini de riyaset-i saniyeye intihab etmiştir.”) Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler Vol. I İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi* p. 439

²⁴³ Sekban *Kürt Sorunu* p. 26.

²⁴⁴ The assertion that Said Nursî, Babanzâde İsmail Hakkı, Süleyman Nazif, Süleymaniyeli Tevfik and Diyarbakirli Ahmet Cemal were members of the organisation is based largely on the fact their articles appeared in the organisations newspapers.

²⁴⁵ (“Beyan edeyim ki, onlardan hiç biri Kürtler için en ufak bir imtiyaz düşünmüyordu. Fakat hepimiz, altı doğu vilâyetinde bir reform yapılması hususunda mutabık idik. İşte istedikleri reform: Muktedir ve namuslu valiler tayin edilmesi, birkaç ana yol inşası, adaletin iyi bir şekilde uygulanması için, mahkemelerin yeniden ele alınması.”) Sekban *Kürt Sorunu* p. 26.

- a- To introduce the Constitution which is in accord with the great Islamic law and bounded with [responsible for] the prosperity of the nation [i.e. the Ottoman nation] and the security of homeland [i.e. the Ottoman homeland], to Kurds who are not aware of it.
- b- To protect and defend the Constitutional Government and parliament which are the main paths of religion and progress.
- c- To intensify the link between the Kurds and the authority of the Caliphate and Sultanate;
- d- To further intensify the good relation between the Kurds and the citizens of the Ottoman elements such as the Armenians, Nestorians and the others.
- e- To eliminate the conflicts that arise from time to time between tribes and create an atmosphere where they can live within the unity of law;
- f- To publish about education, industry, trade agriculture. ²⁴⁶

These objectives clearly did not conflict with the CUP's objectives. If anything, the KTTC sought to assist in the modernisation of the empire through propagating "education, industry, trade and agriculture" amongst the Kurds. It even offered to assist the Ministry of Education in the construction schools.²⁴⁷ It also conformed to the concept of *ittihad-i anasir* in its intension to promote understanding with Armenians and Nestorians. One of the most interesting aspects of the KTTC's *nizamname* is its attitude to the language question. Article 11 stated that the organisation hoped to create a Kurdish language book, unify Kurdish in

²⁴⁶("Ahkâm-ı celile-i İslâmiyeye muvafık ve saadet-i milletle selâmet-i vatani mütekeffil olan Kanun-ı Esasi'nin kavaid-i muhassenatını bu hakâyika vakıf olmayan birtakım Kürtlere tefhim ve Osmanlılık sıfat-ı mübeccelesini daima muhafaza ile beraber din ve devletin yegâne medar-ı terakki ve hayatı bulunan usûl-u meşrutiyet ve meşveret muhafaza ve idame edildikçe makam-ı hilâfet-i kübra ve saltanat-ı uzmaya Kürtlerin revabıt-ı vesikasını tesyit eylemek ve vatandaşları olan Ermeni ve Nasturi ve akvam-ı saire-i Osmaniye ile hüsn-i imtizac ve muaşeretlerini bir kat daha takviye ve tezyid ve kabail ve aşair arasındaki bazı gûna münaferet ve ihtilâfi izale ile cümlesinin bir merkez-i meşru-i ittihadı hemdest-i terakki olmaları esbabını temin ve maarif ve sanayi ve ticaret ve ziraatı neşr-ü tevsî' etmek mekasıd-ı esasîyesi üzerine 'Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti' nâmıyla bir cemiyet-i hayriye tessüs edilmiştir.") Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti, "Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti Nizamnamesi," 19 Eylül 1324 reproduced in Tunaya *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler Vol. I İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi* p. 435. Due to the complex nature of Ottoman Turkish, it is not possible to directly translate this statement without producing VERY long sentences. Therefore, I have quoted, with some minor changes, the summary offered by Azad Arslan. See Azad Arslan, *The Clash of Agencies: The formation and failure of Kurdish nationalism, 1918-1922* (Ph.D. diss., Royal Holloway and Bedford Collage London, 2007), pp. 107-108.

²⁴⁷ Tunaya *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler Vol. I İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi* p. 437.

order to help with basic education in Kurdish. It further hoped to create a book of religious teaching as well.²⁴⁸

However, at the same time Article 13 stated that “The Society shall work to the up most degree for the education of Kurds in schools in Turkish which is the official language”²⁴⁹

Furthermore, in the articles governing the organisation of the *Heyet-i İdare* (“Administrative Committee”), it was stipulated that while a knowledge of Kurdish and Turkish was preferred; “In the case where Kurdish is not known good knowledge of another language is necessary.”²⁵⁰ This ideology of Kurdish Ottomanism becomes more apparent when we survey the KTTC’s publication the *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi*.

***Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi* (“The Kurdish Solidarity and Progress Newspaper”)**

The *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi* constituted the propaganda arm of the KTTC. Between 22 Teşrin-i Sani 1324 and 17 Kanûn-i Sani 1324 nine issues were published. The publication of the newspaper was entrusted to Süleymaniyeli Tevfik (“Cemiyet tarafından müntahab Sahib-i İmtiyaz ve Müdür ve Muharriri”) and the *Sermuharrir* (“Head writer”) was Diyarbakirli Ahmed Cemil. It was published with the subtitle: “Now to be published weekly religious, scientific, political, literary and social newspaper.”²⁵¹ As with *Kürdistan* a decade earlier, it was characterised by a deep sense of Ottoman patriotism.

²⁴⁸ (“Cemiyet Kürtçe lisanı üzere tedrisat-ı ibtidaiyeyi teshil için lisan-ı Kürdîyi tedvin ve Kürtçe sarf ü nahvı mükemmel bir kamus tertîb ve temsîl ve akaid-i diniye ve fûnûn-u mütenevviaya dair âsâr tahrir eyleyecek veya ettirecektir. Kürtçe en güzel ders kitablari telife muvaffak olanlara heyet-i umumiyenin tensibi ile munasib ikramiyeler itasıyla icra-yı teşvikat edecektir.”) Ibid., 437.

²⁴⁹ (“Cemiyet lisan-ı resmî olan Türkçeyi mekteplerde Kürtler arasında talim için son derecede çalışacaktır.”)Ibid., 437.

²⁵⁰ (“Kürtçe bilmediği takdirde elsine-i saire-i mütedavileden birine güzelce vâkıf olmak lâzımdır.”) Ibid., 436.

²⁵¹ (“Şimdilik haftada bir def’a neşrolunacak dinî, ilmî, siyasî, edebî, ictimai gazetedir.”) This subheading appears on all nine issues of the paper.

Babanzâde İsmail Hakkı, writing in the first issue, stated that Kurdish identity was *herşeyden evvel İslamdır* (“before everything Islamic”) then Ottoman and *derece-i salisede de Kürddür* (“in the third degree Kurdish”). He went on to:

It is not possible to contemplate any power in the world that could be successful in dissolving the ancient connection, this truthful and honourable bond between Kurdisness and Ottomanism. Ottomanism and Kurdishness and reciprocally Kurdishness and Ottomanism are connected, these two words are conjoined. If, God protect, Ottomanism was destroyed, Kurdishness would be left scarred. If, God forbid, Kurdishness became rotted and diminished, Ottomanism would become weak and sad.²⁵²

The primacy of the Ottoman identity over the Kurdish identity was a common theme. In an article published in Kurdish the author asserted that:

Our nation’s name is Kirmanc [Kurd]. All Kirmanc [Kurds] are the same. Our cities are blessed. Our country is subjected to the government of the sublime Ottoman state. We are Ottoman subjects too. Turks, Kurds, non Muslims, Jews, Yazidis, Nestorians we all are equal since we live within Ottoman territory, we are together/united; among us there is no difference. Our names and the name of other blessed nations is always Ottoman and our country is the Ottoman country.²⁵³

Süleyman Nazif claimed that: “Since the day that Kurds joined the Ottoman Empire of their own free will, they have not seen a good administration...” However, he went on to argue that despite this the Kurds had remained loyal. Indeed, he stressed the Kurdish service to the Ottoman Empire in the past:

I heard from the most valuable commander of our soldiers the Ottoman fifth army quartermaster general İstanbullu Ali Rıza Paşa that while a Major with a Kurdish battalion during the '93 War [The Russian-Ottoman War of 1877] they stood for thirty hours against a Russian division and in the final battle, The regiment which was made up of one thousand two hundred individuals – due to the fact that so many were injured - it [the battalion] was reduced to one hundred and fifty... In front of the ramparts of Vienna and the castles of

²⁵² (“Dünyada hiç bir kuvvet tasavvur edilemez ki, Kürdlük ile Osmanlılık arasındaki bu imtizac-ı kadîmi, bu habl-ı kavîmi izaleye muvaffak olsun. Osmanlılık Kürdlük ve Kürdlük de bi’l-mukabele Osmanlılığı cem’etmiş, bu iki kelimenin medlûlü birbirine bir hülûl-ı mutlak ile hülûl etmiştir. Osmanlılık maazallah mahvolursa Kürdlük bî-nişan kalır; Kürdlük. Huda nekerde muzmahil ve kemnam olursa, Osmanlılık zayıf ve perişan olur.”) *Kürd Teaviin ve Terakki Gazetesi* 22 Teşrin-i Sani 1324.

²⁵³ (“Navê mileta me Kurmanc e. Kurmanc hemû yek in. Bajarê me muqeddes e. Memleket me tabiê Hukümet û Dewletê Elîyyeê Osmanîye ye. Em jî tabiê Osmanli ne. Tirk, Kurmanc, File, Yehudî, Êzîdî, Nestûrî, ji wan xeyrê, yekûne mileta ke milkê Osmanli de rûdine, giş em bi hev ra beramber in, yek in; mabeyna me da ferq tunîne. Navê me û nave mileta xeyr tu car Osmanli ye û memleketa me memleketê Osmanli ye.”) *Kürd Teaviin ve Terakki Gazetesi* 6 Kânun-ı Evvel 1324.

Crete you find the graves of Kurds. These ill-treated heroes at no time gave up their desire to be good Ottomans.²⁵⁴

Moreover, the paper showed complete identification with the Ottoman Empire as a whole and adopted a political line very much in step with the state's interests. This is particularly evident with regard to the line the paper took over assaults on Ottoman sovereignty such as the Bulgarian declaration of independence (5 October 1908), the Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (6 October 1908), and ongoing Greek efforts to gain control of Crete. An article published anonymously under the title *Girid Mes'alesi* ("The Cretan Question") noted:

That the declaration of independence of Bulgaria, the annexation of Bosnia Herzegovina had with the most deep hurtful memories upset the great Islamic community... This time Greece's annexation policy towards Crete awoke holy feelings and righteousness amongst every upstanding Ottoman individual. In order to protest Greece a meeting was held and everyone took an oath in the name of God, their honour and their conscience that they would sacrifice their lives in this cause.²⁵⁵

In the same issue a summary of a speech given at the demonstration by Süleymaniyeli Paşazâde Süleyman Beyefendi was published. Again the sense of Ottoman patriotism was palpable:

We in the name of Kurdish people declare and swear before you that we, Kurds, like our ancestors, we would not accept that even one stone of the island of the Crete to be surrendered to the enemy without making hills made by our bones beneath the Castle and Walls of the Crete and we would like to declare and proclaim our sympathy with our fellow Cretan citizens. Long live national unity, long live Crete.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴ ("Kürdler, bi'l-ihthiyar idare-i Osmaniye'ye iltihak ettikleri günden beri hiç bir idare-i müşfikaya mazhar olamadılar... En değerli ümera-yı askeriyemizden Beşinci Ordu-yı Osmanî Levazım Reisi İstanbullu Ali Rıza Paşa'dan işittim Doksanüç Muharebesinde binbaşı bulunduğu bir Kürd taburuyla tam otuz saat Rus fırkasına karşı durmuş ve hitam-ı muharebede, bin iki yüz mevcudlu taburun efradı – o da birçok mecrûh olmak şartıyla – yüz elliye tenezzül etmişti... Viyana surlarının, Girid kalelerinin önünde Kürd cenazelerini bulursunuz. Bu kahraman mazlûmlar, iyi bir Osmanlı olmak emelini ta' kibden hiçbir vakit vazgeçmediler.") *Kürd Teaviin ve Terakki Gazetesi* 29 Teşrin-i Sani 1324.

²⁵⁵ ("Bulgaristan'ın istiklâl-i nâgihanîsi, Bosna-Hersek'in vuku'-ı ilhakı, bu ümmet-i muazzamayı en derin bir cerfîha-ı hatrât ile müteellim etmiş idi. ... bu def'ada Girid'in Yunanistan'a ilhak şayiası, her ferd-i necîb-i Osmanînin hissiyât-ı mübareke ve tayyibesini uyandırmış. Yunanistan'ı protesto için bir miting akdedilmiş, herkes îcabında bu uğurda feda-yı can edeceğine Allah'a, namusuna, vicdanına kasmeye te'mîn etmiştir.") *Kürd Teaviin ve Terakki Gazetesi* 27 Kânun-ı Evvel 1324.

²⁵⁶ ("Biz Kürdler, ecdadımız gibi Girid'in burc ve barûları altında üstühanlarımızdan tepeler teşkil etmedikçe cezîrenin bir taşını bile a'dadiye [a'daya] teslim rıza göstermeyeceğimizi, huzurunuzda kavmimiz namına arz-ü te'mîn ve Giridli vatandaşlarımızın hissiyât-ü temenniyâtına tamamen iştirak etmiş olduğumuzu beyan-ü i'lân ederiz. Yaşasın ittihad-i millî, yaşasın Girid!") *Kürd Teaviin ve Terakki Gazetesi* 27 Kânun-ı Evvel 1324.

Similarly, as with *Kürdistan*, the paper also showed a concern with “enlightening from above” the Kurds through education and development. Said Nursî called on Kurds: “the last order; education, education, education and unity, unity, unity.”²⁵⁷ In another article he stated that the Kurds had a number of needs: “First national unity and second the diffusing of religious and scientific education...”²⁵⁸ Ahmet Şevki claimed that: “It is known in the world that the Kurds are wholesome, loyal and capable. [But] What is the use [if] there is no education; art and commerce are rare affairs. People cannot live with such poverty”²⁵⁹ Therefore, the education of Kurds was necessary. However, this point was again seen through the lens of Ottomanism, namely, to be good Ottomans the Kurds had to be educated. This is particularly evident in the debate over language. Babanzâde İsmail Hakkı in an article entitled *Kürdçeye Dair* (“About Kurdish”) advocated the propagation of Kurdish language education:

However retrograde, however without language, without literature, without art, and without educations Kurds, Albanians and so on remain; the Ottoman state too will be to that proportion impoverished. Strength and progress is education. Education is erected with language.²⁶⁰

He further claimed that there was no policy in the world that could alienate people for their mother tongue. He then continued by expounding the advantages of Kurdish medium education from an *Ottomanist* perspective:

Now, let’s take the example of a Kurdish child in hand. In this man’s village nothing other than his mother tongue is spoken. In this village a Turkish school is established and if after step by step the child is educated through in Turkish, the child will still become a man. If

²⁵⁷ (“Wesîyeta paşî: Xwendin, xwendin, xwendin û destê hev girtin, destê girtin, destê hev girtin”) *Kürd Teavûn ve Terakki Gazetesi* 22 Teşrin-i Sani 1324.

²⁵⁸ (““Birincisi ittihad-i millî, ikincisi ulûm-ı diniye ile beraber fûnûn-ı lâzime-i medeniyeyi ta’ mîm etmektir ...”) *Kürd Teavûn ve Terakki Gazetesi* 29 Teşrin-i Sani 1324.

²⁵⁹ (“Lê alemê dizanî Kurd qewmekî saxlem e, sadîq e, jêhatî ye. Çi faîde mearif tune, xwendin tune, se’et, tîcaret, karê hindê e. Mirov bi feqîryê tiştek zêde nake.”) *Kürd Teavûn ve Terakki Gazetesi* 29 Teşrin-i Sani 1324.

²⁶⁰ (“Kürdler, Arnavudlar ve saire ne kadar mütedennî, ne kadar lisansız, edebiyatsız, fensiz, ma’rifetsiz kalırlarsa, Devlet-i Osmaniye de o nisbette müteelim olur. Kuvvet ve satvet ma’rifettedir. Ma’rifet ise lisan ile kaimdir.”) *Kürd Teavûn ve Terakki Gazetesi* 6 Kânun-ı Evvel 1324.

he has brains, he will also find a good position. However, he most likely had to waste a lot of his valuable time learning language. This Kurd, if he could find a variety of works in about arts and science in his own language, if he could continue his education in Kurdish, without doubt would be raised much quicker, his education would be more complete and he would be a more valuable member of the Ottoman family.²⁶¹

İsmail Hakki's article elicited a remarkable response from Erzincanlı Hamdi Süleyman.

Süleyman was careful not to imply that Kurds should abandon their language and stated.

However, from a practical perspective he rejected that idea of Kurdish language education for a number of reasons including the fact that Turkish was the official language and knowledge of it was needed to defend ones rights, that knowledge of Turkish was needed for service in the Ottoman army and that Kurdish did not have a developed literary tradition. As such, he argued that Kurds should work towards the propagation of Turkish, concluding: In this way the value of education will be instructed to the children of the Kurds and it will serve for their security and safety.²⁶²

The above cited articles are indicative of the Ottomanist stance of the KTTC which in many ways was remarkably similar to *Kürdistan*. However, a key difference was that the Young Kurds now identified with the regime. Süleymaniyeli Tefik stated that: "Our society, our program, our aim is this; the governance of the constitution which with Islamic law must be

²⁶¹ ("Şimdi, faraza bir Kürd çocuğunu ele alalım. Bu adamın köyünde lisan-ı maderzadından başka bir şey konuşulmuyor. O köyde bir Türk mektebi küşad eder ve sonra çocuğu derece derece hep Türkçe tahsîl ile ileriye götürsek, vâkıa o çocuk sonradan yine adam olur; zekâsı varsa, mertebe-i kemali dahi bulur. Fakat herhalde sinîn-i kıymetdar-ı ömründen birkaçını, vasıta-ı vusûl-ı ulûm olan tahsîl-i lisan uğrunda izaa etmiş olur. Bu Kürd, kendi lisanında ulûm-ü fûnûn-ı mutenevviaya dair eserler bulsa, Kürdçe icra-yı tedrisât edilir bir mektebe devam etse, şübhe yoktur daha çabuk yetişir, tahsîli daha tamam olur ve aile-i Osmaniye'nin daha kıymetdar bir cüz'ü olur...") Ibid.,

²⁶² ("Evvelâ, lisan-ı umumî-i Osmanî Türkçe olup, her daim müdafaa-ı hukuk vesaire için müracaata mecbur bulunduğumuz Hükûmet-i Osmaniye'de bütün muamelât Türkçe lisanı üzerine cereyen eyliyor Türkçe bilmeyen bir şahıs, devair-i Hükûmetden birisine hîn-i cüz'î bir teemmül ile anlaşılır... Saniyen vazife-i vataniye îcabâtı herhalde zarûrî olan silk-i celîl-i askeriye duhûlda yine Türkçeye ihtiyac-ı şedîd duyacak birçok suûbetlere giriftar olacaktır. Salisen, Kürdçe ne bir sarf, ne bir lugat ve ne de sair kitabımız mevcut olmamakla beraber, bunları vücûda getirmekteki müşkilât-ı azîme dahi şâyân-ı teemmüldür... İşte bu sayede evlâd-ı Ekrada ni'met-i maarifin kadri anlatılır ve selâmetlerine hizmet edilmiş olur.") *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi* 10 Kânun-ı Sanî 1324.

protected.”²⁶³ Halil Hayali went so far as write an ode to the CUP in Kurdish praising it and the new constitutional regime:

With the effort of the CUP, with the military’s help, the Constitution emerged and all troubles we were wrestling with disappeared. Estimable deputies and the Ottoman Parliament are discussing the state of the Country. May God guide and assist them, and blind traitors.²⁶⁴

Similar praise was replete through the entire nine issues of the paper. In reviewing the KTTG one cannot help but come to the conclusion that for these Kurdish activists there was simply no contradiction between the expression of their Kurdishness and their sense of Ottoman patriotism.

Young Kurds in Power?

Cemilpaşazâde Kadri who at the time of the revolution was attending high school in Istanbul claimed that:

During this chaotic situation in Istanbul and in the whole Ottoman country, Kurdish Paşas and Commanders of the Palace, who were kept in Istanbul either by a post or paid by the Sultans, being confused over what to do as their base was collapsing [referring to the Young Turk revolution] found salvation in Kurdishness, and as a result of personal conflicts and enmity between them, these individuals, after the 1908 declaration of Freedom [Constitution], established... the Kürt Terakki ve Teavün Cemiyeti.²⁶⁵

This was perhaps an unfair assessment of the KTTC. Certainly, it was dominated by the very highest echelons of the new Ottoman-Kurdish elite.²⁶⁶ The Babanzâdes were the descendants

²⁶³ (“Cem’îyetî ême, nîzamnameî, meqsûdman eme ye hukmî Qanûnî Esesî ke legel şerîetdarî, dekrê muhafeze bikeyn!”) *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi* 22 Teşrin-i Sani 1324.

²⁶⁴ (“Bi hîmmeta Cem’îyeta İttihadê, bi muaweneteta eskerî, Qanûna Esasî derket, belayê zulmê ji ser me rabû. Meb’ûsa mehterema civîya û Meclisê Meb’ûsan û hale wetenî dê bêjin. Xwedê heman tewfîqa wan bide, cave xafînan kor bike.”) *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi* 10 Kânun-ı Sanî 1324

²⁶⁵ (“İstanbul’un ve bütün Osmanlı ülkesinin geçirdiği bu karışıklık dalgası esasına [esnasında] İstanbul’da Sultanlar tarafından birer görev veya maaşla alıkonan Saraya mensup Kürt ümera ve paşaları; dayanaklarının çökmesiyle ne yapacaklarını şaşırılmış durumda kurtuluşu Kürtlük’te bulmuşlar, kişisel kaygılarla birbirine zıt ve muhalif olan bu kişiler, 1908’de hürriyetin ilanından sonra bir Kürt derneği kurmayı aralarında kararlaştırarak... Kürt Terakki ve Teavün Cemiyeti [Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti] açmışlardı.”) Cemil-Paşa [Zinar Silopi], *Doza Kurdistan: Kürd Milletinin 60 Yıllık Esareten Kurtuluş Savaşı Hatıraları* p. 28.

²⁶⁶ Dr. Şükrü Sekban claimed that he lost the election to be on the administrative committee of the KTTC because he was not from an important family. This may be just sour grapes, however, it perhaps also shows that the KTTC was dominated by the large Kurdish notable families such as the Babanzâde (It should be remembered that Babanzâde Ahmed Naim became head of the KTTC’s Administrative Committee); See Sekban, *Kürt Sorunu* p. 26.

of the Beys of Süleymaniye while Şeyh Abd ül-Kadir Efendi was the scion of the immensely respected Nehri shaikly dynasty. At the same time they also formed an intellectual elite and cultural elite. Intellectuals such as Babanzâde İsmail Hakkı, Babanzâde Ahmed Naim, Emin Ali Bedirhan and Şükrü Sekban had received modern education in the empire's elite institutions, spoke European languages and practiced modern professions.²⁶⁷

However, as noted in the previous chapter, many Kurds had been part of the Young Turk movement during the reign of Abd ül-Hamid. As such when the regime was overthrown, a number of Kurds received posts in the new government. This included high ranking members of the KTTC. Şeyh Abd ül-Kadir Efendi was appointed to *Hey'et-i Meclis-i A'yan* ("Assembly of Notables, the Senate") while Babanzâde İsmail Hakkı was elected as the CUP deputy for Baghdad; news which were publicised in the KTTG.²⁶⁸ Furthermore, the new government allowed the return of high profile Kurdish exiles such as the Bedirhans who had been languishing in exile in Tripolitania since 1906.²⁶⁹ In this positive atmosphere and given their degree of integration into the new constitutional regime, the Young Kurds saw their participation in the KTTC as a demonstration of their patriotism towards the Ottoman state and loyalty to the new regime. Nevertheless, what might be inferred by Kadri's characterisation of the KTTC as an organisation of "Paşas and Commanders" is that a number of high ranking Kurds who had not been involved in the opposition to Abd ül-Hamid may have also joined the KTTC. However, it may have been that, from a perspective of opportunism, they saw the KTTC as a vehicle for expressing their loyalty to the new constitutional order rather than a form of "salvation."

²⁶⁷ Babanzâde İsmail Hakkı and Babanzâde Ahmed Naim were sons of Mustafa Zihni Paşa and attended both the Galatasaray imperial high school. İsmail Hakkı went on to teach Constitutional Law at Istanbul University and Ahmed Naim taught Arabic at Galatasaray and later philosophy at Istanbul University. Emin Ali also studied law and served as a public prosecutor in the Ottoman civil service. Şükrü Sekban came from a less prestigious background but graduated from the Military Medical Collage and became a successful doctor.

²⁶⁸ *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi* 6 Kânun-ı Evvel 1324.

²⁶⁹ Malmîsanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetesi Kurdistan'ı yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan* pp. 80-81.

Although we can regard the KTTC as an expression of Kurdish peculiarism, its ideology can be characterised as being pro-Ottoman and pro-CUP. However, according to a number of sources, the CUP shut down the KTTC in 1909.²⁷⁰ This is possible, especially due to the activities of the provincial branches.²⁷¹ However, again Kadri offers an interesting insight with regards to the breakdown of the organisation:

The rivalries which was amongst the Paşa and Princes [Paşalar ve Ümera] made it easy for the Unionists [CUP] to disperse them. With the disagreement between the late Abd ül-Kadir Efendi who saw himself as the spiritual leader of Kurdistan and the head of the Sufi order şeyhs and the Bedirhans like this it [the KTTC] ended.²⁷²

Therefore, it is also possible that the organisation came unstuck due to the rivalry over leadership. Indeed, the rivalry between the Bedirhans and the şeyhs of Nehri continued well into the 1920s.²⁷³ Whatever the reasons for its dissolution, the KTTC marked the high point in the relationship between the Kurdish movement and the CUP. Following the 13 April 1909 attempted counter revolution relations between Kurdish activists and the government became less amiable.

²⁷⁰ Cemil-Paşa [Zinar Silopi] *Doza Kurdistan: Kürd Milletinin 60 Yıllık Esaretten Kuruluş Savaşı Hatıraları* p. 29; Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion* p. 15. Dersimi, *Hatıratım* p. 25.

²⁷¹ The Bitlis branch of the Kurdish club, according the Russian sources, seems to have taken on a para-military role and, as will be remembered from their bullying of Young Turk officials, an anti-constitutionalist political stance. See Malmısaniş, *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Gazetesi* pp. 46-48; A great deal more research on the activities of the KTTC provincial branches needs to be conducted.

²⁷² (“Ümera ve paşaların birbirlerine olan zıdıkları, İttihadçılardan bunları kolaylıkla dağıtmasını sağladı. Kendisini Kürdistan’ın manevi babası ve tarika şeyhlerinin başında gören Seyyid Abd ül-Kadir Efendi merhum ile Bedirhanilerin anlaşmazlığıyla dahi bu suretle sona ermiş.”) Cemil-Paşa [Zinar Silopi], *Doza Kurdistan: Kürd Milletinin 60 Yıllık Esaretten Kurtuluş Savaşı Hatıraları* pp. 28-29.

²⁷³ For an extended discussion of the Bedirhan-Nehri rivalry see Özoğlu, “Nationalism and the Kurdish Notables in the late Ottoman-Early Republican Era.”

Chapter VII: Hope in Hard Times

Jön Türkler'in ırkçı Pan Türkçü siyasetleri Jön Kürt akımları doğurdu. Arnavut, Arap ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nin diğer milletlerindeki milli uyanışların nedeni de Jön Türkler'in bu tavrıdır... birçok gençleri bu akıma tepki yüzünden Kürtçü oldu... Kürt gençlerinin amacı İmparatorluktan otonomi talep etmektir. Ebulkasim Lahûti 1922²⁷⁴

Ne olmak istiyorlar? Yahud ne olmamak istiyorlar? Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda bir unsur mu? Unsur fakat nasıl unsur, çürüten ve çürüten bir unsur mu yoksa müteceddid ve müceddid, hay ve muhyi bir unsur mu? Abdullah Cevdet 1913²⁷⁵

The 1908 revolution had been seen by the CUP as the first step towards the salvation of the state. However, events conspired to destroy this illusion. If anything the revolution seemed to hasten the decline of the empire. In 1908 the new constitutionalist administration found itself powerless to prevent either the Bulgarian declaration of independence or the Austrian annexation Bosnia-Herzegovina. Furthermore, as the revolutionary honeymoon wore off, discontent grew. On 13 April 1909 a mutiny amongst the soldiery in Istanbul temporarily ousted the CUP from power. Mahmud Şevket Paşa's *Hareket Ordusu* ("Action Army") restored the CUP to power and Abd ül-Hamid was deposed but the party increasingly faced opposition both with the parliament and from outside. Perhaps most shocking of all was the 1910 revolt in Albania which was the first large scale *nationalistic* insurrection from a Muslim element. Worse was to come. In 1911 Italy, which had been eyeing up Tripolitania for a while pounced. After a year of inconclusive warfare whereby the Italians dominated the seas, while the Ottoman army in Tripolitania fought the Italians to a standstill, the Ottomans were forced to concede defeat.

Despite an election in January 1912 which the CUP rigged, by the summer they were again ousted from power, this time by a coalition of 'liberals' in the form of the *Hürriyet ve İtilaf*

²⁷⁴ Lahûti, "Kürd ve Kürdistan," pp. 177-178.

²⁷⁵ *Roj-i Kurd* 6 Haziran 1329.

*Fırkası*²⁷⁶, Porte bureaucrats and a group of discontent military officers known as the *Halâskar Zabitân* (“The Salvation Officers”). Nevertheless, the most traumatic shock was yet to come. In October 1912, sensing the weakness of the empire, the Balkan powers, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria managed to put aside their disputes and form a combination that managed to force the Ottoman Empire from its last remaining territories in Europe (save a small hinterland around Istanbul). This included the loss of Salonika, the organisational centre of the CUP. In the chaos of the Balkan war, the CUP was able to return to power on the back of a coup: the 23 January 1913 *Bab-ı Âli* coup. This was followed by the murder in June 1913 of Muhamud Şevket Paşa who had taken over the reigns of power after the coup. The CUP was able to regain some self confidence in 1913 after liberating Edirne which had been taken by the Bulgarians in March; however, this was no compensation for the loss of Tripolitania, Macedonia, Albania and much of Thrace.²⁷⁷

In response to these traumatic events, the CUP became increasingly centralising and authoritarian. It also turned away from *ittihad-i anasir* towards emphasising the Islamic identity of the empire. In October 1908 the CUP’s political program had announced;

Everyone possesses complete freedom and equality well as the same responsibilities without distinction of race or religion. All Ottomans are equal before the law as well as with regard to public rights and responsibilities. All subjects will be accepted to appropriate official duties according to their competence and abilities. Non-Muslims will also be subject to the Conscription Law.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ The *Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası* was constituted of ex-CUP deputies. In the European press it referred to itself as the ‘Liberal Entente,’ and has since been lionised by the ‘*liboş*’ (to use the derogatory name for liberals that is currently in favour with both the right and the left in Turkey). However, its economic policy was not substantially different from that of the CUP (the CUP favoured German capital while the *İtilafçı* were inclined towards Anglo-French capital). The primary fissures seem to have been over the *Osmanlıcılık* (“Ottomanism”) *Adem-i Merkeziyetçilik ve Teşebbüs-ü Şahsî* (Decentralisation and Private Initiative). However, these should be seen in the context of not a deep ideological debate but rather a reaction against the Turkist slide of the CUP and the increasing tendency for the CUP to monopolise power. See Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler Vol. I İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi* pp. 298-300. It is interesting to note that in the Syria the HİF was known as *lâ merkeziye* (“No centralisation.”). I would like to thank Ahmet Kuyuş for bring this point to my attention.

²⁷⁷ For a summary of the major events between 1908 and 1914 see Macfie, *The End of the Ottoman Empire* Chapters 3 and 4; Also see Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler Vol. I İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi* pp. 36-40.

²⁷⁸ (“Cins ve mezhep tefrik edilmeksizin herkes müsavat ve hürriyet-i tammeye malik ve aynı mükellefiyete tâbidir. Bircümle Osmanlılar huzur-u kanunda ve memleketin hukuk ve vezaifinde müsavi olup umum tab’a

However, as early as August 1910 the British consul in Manastır reported that Talat Bey, a leading CUP member, had stated at a secret meeting of the party:

We have made unsuccessful attempts to convert the *Ghiaur* [Unbeliever] into a loyal Osmanli and al such efforts must inevitably fail, as long as the small independent states in the Balkan Peninsula remain in a position to propagate ideas of separatism among the inhabitants of Macedonia. There can therefore be no question of equality, until we have succeeded in our task of Ottomanising the Empire – a long and laborious task, in which I venture to predict that we shall at length succeed after we have at last put an end to the aggregation and propaganda of the Balkan states.²⁷⁹

Moreover, in aftermath the 1910 Albanian uprising and the 1912 Balkan war, there was an increasing tendency towards mobilizing the Turkish element of the empire into an ethnic core. Roshwald noted “these experiences reinforced the sense that ethnic identity was a critical element in determining mass loyalties and that the future of the Ottoman Empire depended largely on the Young Turks ability to awaken nationalist passions among the Turkish populace... It is no coincidence, then, that the period of the Balkan wars marked the beginning of the CUP’s open sponsorship and encouragement of pan-Turkist propaganda.”²⁸⁰ Indeed, the organization *Türk Ocağı* (“Turkish hearths”), founded in 1911, was supported by Ziya Gökalp a leading Turkist and at the same time a senior member of the CUP.²⁸¹ From 1913 onwards Turkism became, if not an official policy, a trend cultivated by the CUP; “a school of thought dedicated to progress and, ultimately, the political supremacy of the ethnic Turk.”²⁸² The CUP’s Congress in 1913 provided the basic foundations of such policies

[taba’a?] ehliyet ve kabiliyetlerine göre münasip olan memuriyetlere kabul olunacaktır. Gayr-ı müslime [gayr-ı müslimler?] dahi ahz-ı asker kanununa tâbi tutulacaktır.”) Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler Vol. I İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi* p.99.

²⁷⁹ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* p. 214.

²⁸⁰ Aviel Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires: Central Europe, Russia and the Middle East, 1914-1923*, (London: Routledge, 2001), p.107.

²⁸¹ Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler Vol. I İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi* pp. 458-471.

²⁸² Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* p. 371 .

including decisions to settle nomadic tribes and to support the development of a “national” (Turkish-Muslim) bourgeoisie.²⁸³

This slide towards Turkism did not mean that Islamism had been abandoned. Indeed, Halide Edip noted: “Parallel to Keuk-Alp Zia’s [Ziya Gökalp’s] Pan-Turanism was the Pan-Islamic ideal of Enver Pasha and his followers...” The CUP was still officially tied to Ottomanism and Islamism.²⁸⁴ However, the trend towards Turkism amongst Turkish intellectuals and youth tacitly supported by the CUP became increasingly perceptible between 1911 and 1914; a trend which greatly affected the perceptions of Kurdish activists.

Enlightenment in practice: *Kürd Neşr-i Maarif Cemiyeti* (“The Propagation of Kurdish Education Society”) and *Kürd Meşrutiyet Mektebi* (“The Kurdish Constitutional School”)

Propagation of Kurdish Education Society After the dissolution of the KTTC, in 1910-11 a number of Kurdish former members such as Said Nursî and Emin Ali Bedirhan established a new society: *Kürd Neşr-i Maarif Cemiyeti*. In addition to former KTTC activists there were also a number of deputies representing Kurdish inhabited provinces and a number of former exiles who returned to the empire after 1909. These former exiles included the founders of *Kürdistan* Miktat Midhat Bedirhan and Abd ur-Rahman Bedirhan as well as the veteran CUP activist Dr. Abdullah Cevdet.²⁸⁵ The KNMC was an extension of the KTTC concern with

²⁸³ Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler: İttihat ve Terakki, Bir Çağın, Bir Kuşağın, Bir Partiinin Tarihi*, Vol.III, (Istanbul: İletişim, 2000), p.293. Also see Mesut Yeğen, *Devlet Söyleminde Kürd Sorunu* (Istanbul: İletişim, İstanbul, 1999) p. 74.

²⁸⁴ Eric J. Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor* (Leiden: Brill, 1984). p. 76.

²⁸⁵ A full list of founders is as follows: Bedirhanzâde Emin Ali Bey; Dr. Abdullah Cevdet Bey; Bedirhanzâde [Miktat] Midhat Bey; Erzurum Mebusu Seyfullah Bey; Hakkâri Mebusu Taha Efendi; Van Mebusu Tevfik Bey; Bedirhanzâde Kamil Bey; Bedirhanzâde Abd ur-Rahman Bey; Genc Mebusu Mehmed Efendi; Mir Seyf ed-Dinzâde Hüseyin Avni Bey; Miralay Mahmud Sami Bey; Diyarbakirli Mehmed Faik Efendi; Bedi üz-Zeman Said (Nursî) Efendi; Mutkaylı Halil Hayali Efendi; Kurdizâde Ahmed Ramiz. See Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiyede Siyasal Partiler, Vol. II Mütareke Dönemi* (Istanbul: İletişim; , 1999), p. 224 Tunaya states that this organisation was formed in 1919. However, this is most likely incorrect. Both the memoirs of a number of Kurdish activists (See Cemal-Paşa [Zinar Silopi] *Doza Kurdistan: Kürd Milletinin 60 Yıllık Esaretten Kurtuluş Savaşı Hatıraları* pp. 30-33 and Dersimi, *Hatıratım* p.25) and research conducted by the Kurdish historian Malmîsanij (See Malmîsanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetesi Kurdistan’ı yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan* p. 81) put the establishment of the KNMC prior to the First World War. The copy of the KNMC *nizamnamesi* published by

educational matters. The second article of the organisations *nizamname* stated that the Kurds were behind in education and so there was a great need for the education to be spread amongst the Kurds; a task which the society hoped to fulfil.²⁸⁶ It went on to state that its intentions were first to establish a school in Istanbul and to facilitate the construction of schools in Kurdish towns and villages as well as propagation of education amongst the Kurdish tribes and clans.²⁸⁷ It seems that the school was successfully opened under the directorship of Abd ur-Rahman Bedirhan and with the name *Kürd Meşrutiyet Mektebi* (“The Constitution Kurdish School”). It was initially supported by the government which is perhaps related to Babanzâde İsmail Hakkı’s brief tenure as minister of education.²⁸⁸

Given the name of the school and the fact that many of its supporters were involved in the Ottoman political system, the KNMC should be regarded as part of the Young Kurds project for Kurdish enlightenment rather than a Kurdish nationalist organisation. From the phrasing of the organisations *nizamname* there was a perception that the Kurds were behind the modern world and that there was a desperate need to catch up. However, this does not imply that they had nationalist objectives.

Emin Ali Bedirhan’s son, Süreyya, writing in 1917, seems to confirm this assessment. He states that Kurds had been willing to use their own money to set up private schools to assist with the education of Kurds. To this end the KNMC had been set up *Kürd nümûne mekteb-i ibtidâisi* (“a model Kurdish primary school”) and hoped after a few months of experience

İsmail Göldaş confirms that KNMC was a pre-war organisation and founded in 1326 (1910-1911). İsmail Göldaş, *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti* (Istanbul: Doz, 199?), p.285.

²⁸⁶ Tunaya, *Türkiyede Siyasal Partiler, Vol. II Mütareke Dönemi* p. 224.

²⁸⁷ (“Cemiyetin maksadı evlâd-ı vatan içinde en ziyade nimet-i maariften mahrum bırakılmış olan Kürtler arasında maarif ve sanayii neşir ve tamim etmektir.”) Ibid., p. 224.

²⁸⁸ It should be remember that Babanzâde İsmail Hakkı, a passionate advocate of Kurdish language education, was at the same time a committed member of the CUP. He was one of the first CUP members to hold a cabinet post and briefly served as Minister of Education between 1 March and 9 May 1911 Kansu, *The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey* p. 226 and p. 239. Malmîsanij published a document from amongst İsmail Hakkı’s private papers that shows that the school received 1,900 *kuruş* in government subsidies. Malmîsanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetesi Kurdistan’ı yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan* p. 86.

they would open up branches across Kurdistan. He claimed that the objective had been *milletin tenvîri* (“the nation’s enlightenment”). However:

The CUP which like a owl is dazzled wherever it sees a light and always wants to live in darkness started to plot in order to disperse the Kurdish Model Primary School and the Kurdish Society for the Propagation of Education with the pretence that the presence of the word Kurdish in the header was proof enough that the reason for the formation of this society and school was not the propagation of education but to prepare a Kurdish nationalist and separatist movement. The CUP government which could not dare to order their dispersal directly, succeeded in what it desired indirectly. This society which was not left in peace by the government’s thousand different forms of harassment finally could no longer endure and dispersed and so actually it was with its dispersal that it started to get involved in politics²⁸⁹

It seems from this description that the CUP did not overtly order the closure of the KNMC as is often claimed.²⁹⁰ Rather it was pressured into ceasing its activities because of increasing uneasiness on the part of the government over the activities of the empire’s non-Turkish Muslim elements.²⁹¹ It further seems that the closure of the KNMC resulted in a further of alienation from the CUP and a degree radicalisation of the Kurdish movement.²⁹² This radicalisation was perhaps also influenced by the coming of age of a new generation of Young Kurds. This generation reached political maturity in the period after the 1908 revolution.

²⁸⁹ (“Nerede bir nûr görse baykuş gibi kamaşan ve dâimâ zulmet içinde yaşamak isteyen İttihad ve Terakki, Kürt nümûne mekteb-i ibtidâisi ve Kürt Neşr-i Maarif Cem’iyeti levhalarındaki Kürt kelimelerinin vücûdundan bu cem’iyetin ve bu mektebin maksad-ı teşekküllerinin neşr-i maârif olmayıp Kürdlük hareket-i milliye ve iftirâkiyesini hazırlamak olduğunu istidlâl ettiği bahânesiyle bunları dağıtmak için a’mâl-ı desâise başladı. Doğrudan doğruya emrini vermeğe cesaret edemeyen İttihad ve Terakki Hükûmeti, bi’l-vasıta bu emeline muvaffak oldu Hükûmetin bin türlü ta’cizâtıyla râhat bırakılmayan cem’iyet, artık tahammül edemiyerek dağıldı ve işte asıl bu dağılmaktan siyâsetle iştigale başladı.”) *Kürdistan* No. 5 (15 Muharrem 1336 [1917]) reproduced in Malmîsanij Malmîsanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetesi Kurdistan’ı yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan* pp. 90-91. The *Kürdistan* newspaper referred to here is not the original *Kürdistan* (1898-1902).

²⁹⁰For example see Oslon, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880-1925* p. 15. Also see M.S Lazarev, Ş.X. Mihoyan, E.I. Vasiyeva, M.A. Gasratyan, and O.I. Jigalina. *Kürdistan Tarihi* (Istanbul: Avesta, 2007), p. 173.

²⁹¹ From March 1910 to September 1912 the Ottoman government was forced to contend with a revolt amongst Albanians who reacted unfavourable to government attempts to impose Turkish language education, a census and new taxes.

²⁹² It seems that after the closure of the KNMC a number of members of the Bedirhan family returned to their old homeland of Cizre-Botan. British and French reports state that they toured the area preaching modern ideas and attempted to set up a technical school in Cizre. Klein, *Power in the Periphery* pp. 249-251.

The New Generation

The rise of Turkism not simply as a state policy but also its increasing popularity amongst Turkish intellectuals and student deeply affected the new generation of Kurds who entered higher education after 1908. This is attested to in the memoirs of a number of Kurdish activists. Celadet Bedirhan, a student in 1910, recalled a meeting he attended in which the Crimean Tatar intellectual İsmail Gasprinski gave a seminar on Turkism:

Gasprinskij Efendi gave a long speech in a Turkish which only with difficulty could be understood by Istanbul Turks. He spoke continually of Turks and of people who were not Turks. Inasmuch I and my friends could understand, the meaning of his speech was: Everyone is a Turk; in Turkey there are only Turks and there ought not to exist another people than Turks. I do not know if it was mere accident that there were no Turkish students attending the lecture. Besides me, there was another Kurd, a Circassian, an Albanian, a Georgian and a Greek. When we met at school the next day, the lecture was our only topic of discussion... As young people, we had been confronted with the fast developing principle of equality in the second constitutional period. We could not accept Gasprinskij's opinion. We were dismayed and shocked...²⁹³

In response Celadet penned an article on Kurdish history refuting Gasprinski's assertions.

Nuri Dersimi who was also a student at the time claimed that after the Balkan war that CUP "Turkification" policies of the CUP and the increasing popularity of Turkism amongst the Turkish youth had a radicalising effect:

This policy [Turkifications] raised a great reaction amongst us Kurdish Youth. Even the Kurdish youth who up to that time had not carried Kurdism in their mind with great excitement began to know the Turks as their enemies. Now amongst the university students in Istanbul nation conflict raised its head. We saw, when we entered the classrooms, slogans written on the large black board in great big letters [such as] "Happy is he who calls himself a Turk" and "Long Live the Turks!" In opposition to this state of affairs we too found it necessary to write on the same board by during the break time entering the classroom; "Long live the Kurds and Kurdistan" and "Happy is he who calls himself a Kurd."²⁹⁴

²⁹³ Celadet Bedirhan, *Bir Kürt Aydınından Mustafa Kemal'e Mektup* (İstanbul: Doz, 1992), pp. 21-23 quoted and translated in Strohmeier, *Crucial Images in the Presentation of a Kurdish National Identity* p. 43.

²⁹⁴ ("Bu siyaset biz Kürt gençleri arasında büyük bir etki yaratmıştı. O zamana kadar Kürtçülük zihniyeti taşımayan Kürt gençleri bile çok büyük bir heyecana kapılarak Türkleri düşman bilmeye başlamışlardı. İstanbul'da üniversite gençleri arasında artık bir milliyet çatışması baş göstermişti. Okulda dershaneye girdiğimizde, dersane büyük siyah tahtasına tebeşirle çok büyük yazılarla, 'Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene', 'Yaşasın Türk' sloganlarının yazıldığını görüyorduk. Bu durum karşısında biz de teneffüs saatlerinde dershaneye girerek aynı tahtaya; "Yaşasın Kürt ve Kürdistan", "Ne Mutlu Kürdüm diyene" yazılarını yazmak zorunda kalıyorduk.") Dersimi, *Hatıratım* p. 31. It is worth noting the slogan 'Ne Multu Türküğüm diyene' was a later invention and most likely was not used at the time.

They were also influenced by informal discussion groups held with the older generation of Kurdish activist such as Halil Hayali who was the accountant at the Agricultural College and Şükrü Sekban who was a successful doctor.²⁹⁵ The product of such events was a decision to set up Kurdish students' organisation: *Hevî* ("Hope").

Even so, it is important not to overstate the Turkism of this period. Many of the memoirs written by the Kurdish activists were produced much later at a time when Turkish and Kurdish nationalism were in open conflict.

Certainly out of all the ethnic movements amongst the Ottoman population, Turkism was the one that found the most favour in the corridors of power. Yet, Turkism was also, in a way, a reaction to the development of ethnic consciousness amongst the other ethnic groups of the empire. Quite strikingly, in her memoirs Halide Edip's explanations for the development of Turkism amongst the youth were quite alike the those offered up by the Kurdish activists:

After 1908 all the non-Turkish elements in Turkey, Christian and Moslem, had political and national clubs. When the Turkish students of the universities saw their fellow students, whom they had so far identified with themselves, belonging to separate organizations with national names and separate interests, they began to wonder... For the first time reduced to his elements and torn from the ensemble of races in Turkey, he vaguely faced the possibility of searching, analyzing, and discovering himself as something different from the rest... Cast out and isolated in his own country, he not only saw himself as different, but he had also the desire to find the wherein lay the difference.²⁹⁶

Therefore, we must be careful about regarding Turkism in the Ottoman Empire as a fully formed nationalist ideology. Ottoman Turkists still envisaged Turkism as part of a movement to strengthen to Ottoman Empire rather than an ideology designed to replace the Ottomanist and Islamist ideals completely. In this respect they were much like their Kurdish brothers. Indeed, the most radical Turkists, that is those whose Turkism could be regarded as *Turkish nationalism*, were in fact foreigners such as the aforementioned İsmail Gasprinski.

²⁹⁵ Cemil-Paşa [Zinar Silopi], *Doza Kurdistan: Kürd Milletinin 60 Yıllık Esaretten Kurtuluş Savaşı Hatıraları* p. 34; Dersimi, *Hatıratım* p. 35.

²⁹⁶ Edib, *Memoirs of Halide Edib* p. 323

Kürd Hevî Cemiyeti (“Kurdish Hope Society”)

Hevî was founded by a small group of young students mainly from the Agricultural Collage in Istanbul: Cemilpaşazâde Kadri, Cemilpaşazâde Ömer, Fuad Temo²⁹⁷ and Diyabekirli Cerrahzâde Zeki.²⁹⁸ Cemilpaşazâde Ekrem also claims to have been amongst the organisations founders.²⁹⁹ After getting permission from the government to set up the organisation,³⁰⁰ they began to register members. According to Cemilpaşazâde Ekrem within a relatively short time they had signed up 200 members.³⁰¹ The association’s first general secretary was Cemilpaşazâde Ömer, a position that was later taken over by Memduh Selim, a student at the *Mekteb-i Mülkiye* (“Civil Service School”).

Hevî proved to be the most successful of all Kurdish organisations set up prior to 1914.

Between August 1912³⁰² and September 1914, it published three journals: *Roj-i Kurd*, *Hetaw-i Kurd* and *Yekbûn* (“Kurdish Day”, “Kurdish Sun” and “Unity”). It further organised branches in Lausanne and Erzurum³⁰³ and formed connections with Babanzâde Cemal’s Baghdad based *Bang-i Kurd* (“Kurdish Call”) newspaper.³⁰⁴ *Hevi* only ceased to exist with the outbreak of the First World War as almost all its active members were conscripted into the Ottoman army.³⁰⁵

²⁹⁷ Fuad Temo was the son of the Van Deputy Tevfik Bey.

²⁹⁸ Cemil-Paşa [Zinar Silopi], *Doza Kurdistan: Kürd Milletinin 60 Yıllık Esaretten Kurtuluş Savaşı Hatıraları* p. 34.

²⁹⁹ Ekrem Cemil Paşa, *Muhtasar Hayatım* (Ankara: Beybun, 1992), p. 18.

³⁰⁰ Cemil-Paşa [Zinar Silopi], *Doza Kurdistan: Kürd Milletinin 60 Yıllık Esaretten Kurtuluş Savaşı Hatıraları* p. 34.

³⁰¹ Cemil Paşa [Ekrem], *Muhtasar Hayatım* p. 20.

³⁰² According to the Kurdish historian Malmîsanij *Hevî* was founded on 27 Temmuz 1328 (9 August 1912) Malmîsanij, *Kürt Talebe, Hêvi Cemiyeti, İlk Legal Kürt Öğrenci Derneği* (Istanbul: Avesta, 2002), p. 50.

³⁰³ Although according to some sources there were also branches in Genève and Munich, Malmîsanij claims that these were marginal branches. *Ibid.*, pp. 133-137.

³⁰⁴ “*Hetaw-i Kurd* 10 Mayıs 1330

³⁰⁵ *Hevî* society was re-established after the First World War. It published several books including the epic *Mem û Zin* by Ahmad-i Hani and the Kurdish Study book by Ekrem Cemil Pasha. The society finally was closed in 1922 by the Ankara government. Malmîsanij, *Kürt Talebe, Hêvi Cemiyeti, İlk Legal Kürt Öğrenci Derneği* pp. 163-187.

Without doubt, *Hevî* as well as being the most active of the pre-war Kurdish organisations, was also the most radically ‘Kurdist’. Whereas Kürdistan and KTTC had stressed the Ottoman framework, *Hevî* focused much more specifically on ‘Kurdish interests.’

Education and activism

Hevî shared with its predecessors the elitist aim of “enlightening” and “educating” Kurds.

However, the tone adopted was more urgent. Diyarbekirli Fikri Necdet confessed: “Today many Kirmanc [Kurds] do not know how to read or write”³⁰⁶ Süleymaniyeli Abd ül-Kerim asked: “In the unfortunate Kurdish town, why children do not learn to read early and why do European children in six to seven days learn to read and write? What for our children walking away from school and not inclined towards learning?”³⁰⁷ In one of the most striking articles, Bulgaristanlı Doğan (almost certainly a pen name) went as far as to state: “Today, your nation, it is necessary, as with the majority of the peoples of the Islamic east, to bring them anew into the world... Be sure, it is not a case of bring the Kurdish nation back to life but constructing the Kurdish nation from nothing.”³⁰⁸

Numerous solutions were offered throughout the pages of *Roj-i Kurd* and *Hetaw-i Kurd* to the underdevelopment of the Kurds. One article stated that everyone ought to offer what they can to help with the progress of the nation (i.e. the Kurdish nation); be that with their pens or with their wealth. The article went on to list the priorities of the Kurds:

What Kurds are in need of are as follows 1) Swiftly to read and write 2) A new kind of alphabet³⁰⁹ 3) a comprehensive dictionary in order to learn the entire Kurdish language 4) an Islamic catechism [a book of Islamic learning] 5) a history of the ancestors of the Kurds

³⁰⁶ (“Îro gelek Kurmanc xwendinê nizanin, nivîsandinê nizanin.”) *Roj-i Kurd* 6 Temmuz 1329.

³⁰⁷ (“Le şarî Kurde bedbextekana mindal bo çî zû fêrî xwendin nabî û mindalî Freng bo çî be şeş be cot roj fêrî xwendin û nivîsîn dibî? Mindalî ême li ber çî le mekteb rêdike û meylî tehsîlî niye?”) *Roj-i Kurd* 6 Haziran 1329.

³⁰⁸ (““Bugün milletiniz, ekser-i akvam-i şarkiye-i islamiye gibi, yeniden dünya getirilmeğe muhtacdır... Emin olsun, bu suretle Kürd milletini yeniden hayata getirilmiş değil, hiç yoktan bir Kürd milleti i’mal etmiş olursunuz.”) *Roj-i Kurd* 6 Temmuz 1329.

³⁰⁹ The author of the article does not make in clear what type of alphabet should be adopted. During this period there were moves to adopt Latin, Cyrillic and a simplified Persian script.

and their culture 6) a collection of the names of places they live and numbers and customs of their tribes 7) a book of arithmetic 8) a grammar for Kurdish language 9) translation of Kurdish classics 10) and Kurdish literature and [their]poets' names.³¹⁰

Dr. Abdullah Cevdet urged the Kurdish youth to return to the villages to propagate education:

“O Kurdish Youth, at a time when you prefer to be appointed as the founders and teachers of primary schools in Kurdish villages instead of as prefects and officials, and only at that time will you be on the [right] path.³¹¹ Sometimes the solutions offered were radical. There was a proposal to adopt the Latin alphabet,³¹² calls for greater woman's rights,³¹³ and discussions on land reform.³¹⁴

For *Hevî*, unlike in *Kürdistan* or the KTTC, Kurdish “enlightenment” became an end in its self rather than a means for making the Kurds better Ottoman citizens. Their conceptualisation of the Kurds as a distinct ethnic group was much more defined. Indeed, when Hamdullah Subhi suggested that *Hevî* join the *Türk Ocağı*, this offer was flatly rejected.³¹⁵ It is this vision of Kurdish enlightenment that distinguished *Hevî* from of previous organisations. This more radical form of Kurdism ultimately led to a confrontation with the older generation.

³¹⁰(“Kurd îro muhtacê çi ne, em ewan bêjin: 1)Jibo zû xwendin û nivîsandin herfek 2)Ser terzek nû elifbayek 3) Jibo zanîna temamê zimanê Kurdîti qamûsek 4) ‘İlmêhalek 5)Tarîxê bav-kalê Kurdan û an’ane ya wan 6) Welatê Kurdan û ‘adet û teb’ê nave ‘eşîrêd wan 7) Kitêbê hesabê 8)Jibo zimanê Kurdan serf û nehwek 9) Tercumeyê mezinêd Kurdan û 10) Edebiyatê Kurdan û nave şa’îrê wan.”) *Roj-i Kurd* 1 Ağustos 1329.

³¹¹ (“Bir Kürd köyde bir mekteb-i ibtidaî müessis ve muallimi olmayı lâîl et-tayin bir yerde kaymakam ve müdir olmağa tercih edeceğiniz zaman, ey Kürd gençler, ve ancak o zaman düşülmesi lazim gelen yol düşmüş olacaksınız”) *Hetaw-i Kurd* 5 Teşrin-i Evvel 1329.

³¹² See “Harflerimiz teshil-i Kira’at,” *Roj-i Kurd* 6 Temmuz 1329. These proposals were opposed in an article written by Babanzâde İsmail Hakkı who augured that Kurds “cannot separate from the eastern family” (“Kürd şark ailesinden ayrılamaz”) and that it would be a “crime to follow the Albanian Latinisers” (“Arnavud Latincilerini taklid etmek cinayettir”) “Kürdlerin Tealisi” *Roj-i Kurd* 1 Ağustos 1329.

³¹³ See “Hetaw-i Kurd Risâlesine,” *Hetaw-i Kurd* 20 Haziran 1330.

³¹⁴ See “Toprak Meselsi,” *Roj-i Kurd* 30 Ağustos 1329.

³¹⁵ Cemil-Paşa [Zinar Silopi], *Doza Kurdistan: Kürd Milletinin 60 Yıllık Esaretten Kurtuluş Savaşı Hatıraları* p.43.

Hevî's Congress of 1913

In 1913 *Hevî* held its first (and it would seem only) annual congress. Unfortunately, we only have one account of the Congress's proceeding written by Cemalpaşazâde Kadri. According to Kadri's account alongside the members of *Hevî* also a number of parliamentarians were in attendance: the Diyarbakir Deputies Pirinççizâde Fevzi (independent) and Pirinççizâde Zülfü (CUP) and the Genç deputy Muhammed Bey (CUP). Dr. Şükrü Sekban who was close to the organisation was also present.

In the speech of the General Secretary Memduh Selim Bey, he complained that the elders did not show the necessary importance to the national question [i.e. Kurdish question]. Kemal Fevzi Bey gave a long and fiery speech and supported Memduh Selim's words. Ziya Vehbi Bey read Ahmed-i Hani's ode to the Kurds in his famous Mem û Zin epic. When the Diyarbakir Deputy Fevzi Bey said that the youth should not get mixed up in politics and it was necessary that they focus on their lessons, Memduh Selim refused the attack of the elders. He said that what had been read by Ziya Vehbi meant that the Kurds wanted independence. In objection to Fevzi Bey's explanation, Şükrü Mehmed Bey said that the fact that the elders had been disinterested in the national question had rendered in necessary for the youth to engage with politics. Halil Rahmi along with Şefik Arvas backed up Şükrü Mehmed Bey's words. Fevzi Bey left the meeting in a frightful mood.³¹⁶

Form this account it is possible to detect a clash of generations. Pirinççizâde Fevzi who had had relations with the KTTC, was critical of student activism (although interestingly, it is not recorded whether he criticised them on Ottomanist grounds). However, the members of *Hevî* felt that they were being betrayed by the lack of interest shown by the older generation in the 'national question'; especially at a time when Turkism was on the rise. Nevertheless, although Kadri claims that Memduh Selim made what can only be construed as a separatist demand, it is important not to overestimate the separatist/nationalist tenancies amongst *Hevî* supporters.

³¹⁶(“Genel Sekreter sıfatıyla Memduh Selim Bey yaptığı konuşmada; büyüklerin milli meseleye gerekli göstermedilerinden şikayet etti. Kemal Fevzi Bey, yaptığı uzun ve ateşli konuşmada; Memduh Selim'in sözlerini onaylamıştı. Ziya Vehbi Bey, Ahmedî Xani'nin [Ahmed-i Hani] Kürtlerin övgüsüne ilişkin Mem û Zin'deki meşhur kasidesini okudu. Diyarbakir milletvekili Fevzi Bey, gençlerin siyasi işlere karışmamasını, kendi dersleriyle uğraşmaları gerektiği söyleyerek Memduh Selim'in büyüklere yaptığı saldırıyı red; Ziya Vehbi'nin okuduğu Kürtler'in bağımsızlığı istemek anlamına geldiği söyledi. Fevzi Bey'in bu açıklamasına Şükrü Mehmed Bey itiraz ederek büyüklerin milli meseleye ilgisizliklerinden dolayı gençlerin siyasetle uğraşmaya mecbur kaldıklarını söyledi. Halil Rahmi Bey'le Şefik Efendi Arvas da, Şükrü Mehmed Bey'in sözlerini onayladılar. Fevzi Bey bu adeta dargın bir halde toplantıyı terketti.”)Ibid., 43.

Towards decentralisation but ever loyal

Despite this radicalism, overall *Hevî* seems to have on the whole remained within the boundaries of an Ottomanist world-view. An article *Hetaw-i Kurd* outlining the organisation's objectives stated:

Us, the Kurdish youth, who are in the schools and seminaries of Istanbul for scientific education, in order to fulfill our religious and nation duties, set up in compliance with the law a society under the name the Kurdish Student's *Hêvi* Society... Our Society is as follows [i.e. its objectives are]. 1) To work to unite and bring together Kurdish students by introducing Kurdish students to each other. 2) To develop Kurdish literature and language. 3) To open seminaries and schools in Kurdistan and to also construct mosques. 4) To teach poor Kurdish students in schools to read, to teach them science and arts; to help the poor ones; in short, to work for Kurdish welfare and happiness.³¹⁷

The objectives stated were largely social and educational rather than overtly separatist.³¹⁸

Although in the article one can detect a greater stress on Kurdish objectives, there is also a strong emphasis on the Kurds' Islamic identity. Another article published in *Roj-i Kurd* in the aftermath of the Ottoman-Italian War and the Balkan Wars highlighted Kurdish participation in the Ottoman army describing it as a *vediyayı namus* ("a debt of honour").³¹⁹

Indeed, while stressing their Kurdishness, the members of *Hevî* were aware that their activists could be misunderstood as separatist.³²⁰ An article in *Hetaw-i Kurd* went to great lengths to deny this and stress the compatibility of Kurdishness with loyalty to the Ottoman state:

³¹⁷ ("İstanbul'da medrese ve mekteplerde tahsil-i ilim için toplanan biz Kürd gençleri milletimize ve dînimiz olan vazîfelerimizi ifâ etmek için Kürd Talebe-Hêvi Cemiyeti nâmıyla ve ruhsat-ı resmîye ile bir cemiyet teşkil etdik... Cemiyetimiz ber vech-i âtîdir. 1) Kürt talebesini birbirine tanıtarak Kürdler için müştereken ve müttehiden çalıştırmak. 2) Kürd lisân ve edebiyâtını meydâna çıkarmak. 3) Kürdistan'da medreseler ve mektepler açmak, camiler yapmak. 4) Fakîr Kürd çocuklarını mekteplerde okutmak, onlara ma'rifet, san'at öğretmek; fakir olanlara yardım etmek. Hulâsa Kürdlerin refâh ve sâadetine çalışmak.") *Hetaw-i Kurd* 10 Mayıs 1330.

³¹⁸ The organisation seems had some success. For example, an office to help Kurds with their interaction with the state was set up. See "Osmanlı teshil-i mesalih idarehanesi," *Roj-i Kurd* 1 Ağustos 1329. Also see "Osmanlı teshil-i mesalih idarehanesi," *Hetaw-i Kurd* 20 Haziran 1330. The organisation also seems to have established a library. Malmîsanij, *Kürt Talebe, Hêvi Cemiyeti, İlk Legal Kürt Öğrenci Derneği* pp.131-132.

³¹⁹ *Roj-i Kurd* 30 Ağustos 1329

³²⁰ At the time *Hevî* members in Istanbul were under pressure from the government. According to Cemilpaşazâde Kadri after the congress of 1913 *Hevî* members were harassed by the police and the a legal action was taken in an attempt to close the organisation down. Apparently this case was still ongoing when the Great War started. Cemil-Paşa [Zinar Silopi] *Doza Kurdistan: Kürd Milletinin 60 Yıllık Esaretten Kurtuluş Savaşı Hatıraları* p. 43

Does not the youth whose only aim is to be loyal to the supreme Caliphate and the exalted Sultanate; and to serve in a self-sacrificing way for the formation of Kurdishness with pure and lofty intentions, deserve this protection and patronage?³²¹

On the whole, *Hevî* seems to have been more decentralist than separatist.³²² The group published several articles from leading advocates of decentralists policies including Lütfi Fikri³²³ and Abdullah Cevdet. The third issue of the news paper included a front page picture of Hüseyin Kenan Bedirhan and his obituary. Hüseyin Kenan had been a candidate for the HİF in the 1912 general election. However, he was prevented from taking his seat by the CUP.³²⁴ This decentralism was expressed most clearly in an article entitled *İttihad Yolu* (“The Unity Road”) penned by Dr. Abdullah Cevdet. He vehemently denied that *Roj-i Kurd* was separatist:

³²¹ (“Gençlik, hilâfet-i celîle ve saltanat-ı seniyyeye hizmet ve fedâkârlık gayesi içinde Kürtlüğü hazırlamakdan ibaret olan sâf ve bülemleriyle bu himâyet ve sahâbete pek müstahakk değil mi?”) *Hetaw-i Kurd* 20 Haziran 1339

³²² It is important to note that *Roj-i Kurd* and *Hetaw-i Kurd* published articles by Babanzâde İsmail Hakki who was a prominent member of the CUP and a leading writer in the CUP’s organ *Tanin* (“Echo”). His involvement in *Hevî* may also be linked to the fact that he was a lecturer in Constitutional Law at Istanbul University and that his relative Babanzâde Abd ül-Aziz was the head of *Hetaw-i Kurd*.

³²³ See “Kürd Milliyeti” *Roj-i Kurd* 30 Ağustos 1329 Lütfi Fikri was elected deputy for Dersim in 1908; however, he lost his seat in parliament in the 1912 election because of his opposition to the CUP. He was a founding member of the *Mutedil Hürriyetperveran Fırkası* (“The moderate Constitutionalist/Freedomlovers Party - MHF) and later was involved with the HİF. See Tarık Zafer Tunaya’s forward to Lütfi Fikri *Lütfi Fikri Bey’in Günlüğü: Daima Muhalefet* (Istanbul: Arma, 1991), pp. 5-12. Interestingly, Lütfi Fikri seems to have had an intense dislike for Babanzâde İsmail Hakki. He wrote in his diary after reading an article of Babanzâde’s in *Tanin*: “What for a shit of article that awful Babanzâde has written! That man is quite frankly an unsavoury lad.” (“Kepaze Babanzâde ne boktan bir makale yazmış. Şu herif doğrusu pek sevimsiz bir heriftir”) Lütfi Fikri, *Lütfi Fikri Bey’in Günlüğü: Daima Muhalefet* p. 60. Of Lütfi Fikri’s involvement in the Kurdish question Nuri Dersimi wrote: “Lütfü Fikri was a supporter of a Kurdish union under the administration of the imperial personage, however he was completely against the establishment of a separate state of Kurdistan” (“L. Fikri Bey, ‘Zati-Şahane’nin idaresi atında bir Kürt birliğinin kurulmasına tarftardı, ancak ayrı bir Kürdistan devlet’nin kurulmasına kesinlikle karşıdı.”) Dersimi, *Hatıratım* p. 35.

³²⁴ See “Bedirhani Hüseyin Paşa” *Roj-i Kurd* 30 Ağustos 1329. According to Malmîsanij both Hüseyin Kenan and his brother Hasan attempted to run for parliament for the HİF Malmîsanij, *Kürt Talebe, Hêvi Cemiyeti, İlk Legal Kürt Öğrenci Derneği* pp. 22-23 According to Martin Strohmeier Hüseyin Kenan was shot in 1910 while attempting to run for parliament. See Strohmeier *Crucial Images in the Presentation of a Kurdish National Identity* p. 46. If this is the case, this assault was not the cause of his death (also there was no election in 1910). According to the article in *Roj-i Kurd* he died of natural causes. Strohmeier may have been confusing him with Süleyman Bedirhan who according to Jwaideh was shot in 1910 in Botan while trying to reconcile “Kurdish nationalists” and the CUP. See Jwaideh, *The Kurdish nationalist movement: Its origins and development* p. 312. Klein states that although it is possible that Hüseyin Kenan was in Botan in 1912, it was his brother Hasan who ran for parliament. Klein *Power in the Periphery* pp. 250-251. There is also in existence a telegraph message in response to an article by Abdullah Cevdet published in the newspaper *Tecüman-ı Hakikat* signed by Süleyman, Kamil, Hasan, Emir Bedirhanzade Hüseyin sent from Cizre on 23 Kanun-i sani, 1328 (1913). This would prove that Hüseyin Kenan was in Cizre. See Milmîsanij, *Yüzyılımızın başlarında Kürt Milliyetçiliği ve Dr. Abdullah Cevdet* (Uppsala: Jina Nu, 1986), p. 59. It seems that the return of the Bedirhans to Kurdistan was part of an attempt to gain control of the ancestral homeland and to win more autonomy from the Ottoman state.

A respectable and dear friend who saw the journal [Roj-i Kurd] on the table suddenly said: What is this? I said a “Kurdology” organ that is to say [a magazine] published in relation to social and racial research about Kurdishness. My friend opened up the journal and when his eyes’ fell upon a Kurdish article he left it on the table saying: Considering that this is not Turkish, considering that this is Kurdish. That means that this is a ‘separatist’ journal.³²⁵

Abdullah Cevdet objected to this. He pointed out that “Even after the Ottoman loss in Europe, Turkey [i.e. the Ottoman Empire] remained a large empire formed out of many elements.”³²⁶

He further claimed: “I am not speaking with the name or label of Turk or Kurd but with the label of a free and freethinking citizen of Turkey.”³²⁷ And that argued that unity could not be achieved by over-centralisation and warned: “In an empire made up of many elements the way to those elements unity through a single language, a single law and a single method of application and implementation is a dead-end.”³²⁸ He went on to argue that while at a meeting of the Kadıköy CUP club two year before he had explained that:

I, at that time, said that the unity of elements was made up of the unity of interests. With saying that I said how the Turkish Empire’s unity was possible. Let us tie two men tightly to each other with the same rope. You put another two men side by side free and free to their own personal action. Which have the greater link, the men tied together or the last two are freely next to each other? Even to answer this dumb!³²⁹

He concluded by citing Switzerland as an example of a country where different confessional groups left to their own devices could live in harmony. It is a moot point whether if applied

³²⁵ (“Mecmua’nın yazı masanın üzerinde gören bir muhterem ve muazzez dostum birdenbire: Nedir bu mecmua? Dedi. Ben ‘Kürdölöciya’ organı yani Kürdlük hakkındaki tedkikat-ı ictima’iye ve ‘ırkıyenin vasita-ı neşri dedim. Arkadaşım mecmuayı açtı, gözü Kürdçe makaleye tesadüf edince: ‘madem ki Türkçe değil, madem ki Kürdçedür’ ‘tefrika’ gazetesini demektir diyerek ‘Roj-i Kürd’ masanın üzerine bıraktı.”) *Roj-i Kurd* 6 Temmuz 1329

³²⁶ (“Türkiya, Avrupayı Osmanînin zaya’ından sonra dahi yine muhtelif ‘unsurlardan müteşekkil ‘azim bir inparatorluk [imparatorluk] kalmaktadır!”) *Ibid.*,

³²⁷ (“Türk, Kürd nam ü sıfatıyla değil, Türkiyanın hür ve hürrendiş ‘bir vatandaş’ olmak sıfatıyla söyleyorum.”) *Ibid.*,

³²⁸ (“Muhtelif unsurlardan müteşekkil İmparatorluklarda bu unsurların ittihadı yolu münferid bir lisân, münferid kanunun, münferid tez-ı muamelenin istimal ve tadbiki olduğu zehabi zehab-i batıldır.”) *Ibid.*,

³²⁹ (“Ben o zaman tevhid-i anasir tevhid-i menafiden ibaretdir demiştim. Bunu demekle Türkiya İmparatorlukdan ittihadın nasıl hasil olabileceğini söylemiş oldum. İki adam birbirine sınıksız bağlayınız aynı ip bu iki adam yekdiğerine kıskıvrak rabt etsin. Diğer iki adamı da serbest kendi hareket-i zatiye serbest olarak yan yana koyunuz. Yekdiğerine sınıksız bağlı olan iki adam mi yekdiğerine daha ziyade merbutdur, yoksa serbest olarak yan yana bulunan bu son iki adam? Bu suale cevap vermek bile abesdir!”) *Ibid.*,

Abdullah Cevdet's advice would have stemmed the radicalisation of the Kurdish movement. However, what can be concluded about the activities and ideology of *Hevî* is that although it had a stronger sense of a separate Kurdish identity and even at times openly advocated greater decentralisation within the empire, it ultimately, remained loyal to the Ottoman system. Demands for greater ethnic recognition should not be confused with ethno-nationalist demands. Perhaps some *Hevî* members did long for an independent Kurdistan, but they would most certainly have been in the minority. As Dr. Şükrü Sekban put it:

I do not believe that the members of the Kurdish University Students Association which was established before the Balkan War "Hevi" (Hope) really wanted Kurdistan's separation [from the rest of the Ottoman Empire]. If there was such a thought, they did not hint at it to me. However, this is not to say that there was no Kurd who thought of the establishment of a Kurdish state. Perhaps there was, but they did not confess this, they did not openly declare this secret desire.³³⁰

This more decentralised view of Ottoman unity was similar to the ideologies expressed by certain Arab activists during the same period. In 1913, the Paris Arab Congress embraced a political line which advocated more self rule for the Arab provinces and an increased presence of Arabic in public life.³³¹ It would seem that Kurdish activists were embracing a similar ideological standpoint.

The Social origins of *Hevî*

As demonstrated above, the shift towards emphasising the Kurdish identity seems to have been brought about by the growth of Turkism in particular amongst the educated sections of Istanbul society where, it should be remembered, *Hevî* was based. However, this radicalism may also be partly explained by the youth of the *Hevî* members. Although this new generation of Kurdish activists had been socialised in the Ottoman world, received education in Ottoman institutions and lived in the Imperial capital, as young men they had not yet taken up

³³⁰ ("Balkan Harbi'nden önce kurulan Kürt Üniversite Öğrencileri Derneği "Hêvi" (Ümit) üyelerinin gerçekten Kürdistan'ın ayrılmasını düşündüklerine inanmıyorum... böyle bir düşünceleri olsa idi, bana imâ ederlerdi. Ama bu, bir Kürt Devleti'nin kurulmasını düşünen hiç bir Kürt yoktu, demek değildir. Belki vardı, ama bunu itiraf edemiyorlar, bu gizli emellerini açıkça beyan etmiyorlardı.") Sekban, *Kürt Sorunu* p. 27.

³³¹ See Tunaya *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler Vol. I İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi* p. 643-644

positions within the Ottoman bureaucracy or in the professions. Thus, although they were connected to the Ottoman system, they were not integrated into the machinery of the state. Nevertheless, this point should not be over played. Although important, if one looks at the social origins of the founders of *Hevî* it soon becomes apparent that the organisation was made up primarily of the children of the new Ottoman-Kurdish urban elite (See Table below).

The Social Origins of Hevi Founders, Sample of 31	
Social Origin	Number of Members (n=31)
Bey Families (Babanzade/Bedirhan)	3
Shaikly dynasties	1
Urban Notables: Cemilpaşazade	6
Other regional/urban notables	4
Non-Shaikly Ulema Families	3
Parliamentarian Families	1
Low level functionary “memur” families	1
Working class families	1
Unknown	6

Compiled from Malmîsanîj *Kürt Talebe Hevi Cemiyeti* p. 73

Therefore, once they graduated they could hope to be integrated into the Ottoman political system. This, alongside their continued commitment to Islam, may explain why the organisation did not develop along more nationalists lines. In the final analysis, *Hevî* like the KTTC before was an elite organisation. Its membership was both highborn, well educated and still saw its primary mission as an educating one. The Kurdish movement had not yet connected the desire to ‘save’ its people with the objective of creating a ‘Kurdish’ state.

Hence, although *Hevî* was certainly closer to nationalist discourse than previous organisations, it ultimately remained within the borders of Ottomanism.

Conclusion

Our examination of the Young Kurds ends with Ottoman entry into the Great War on the side of Germany and her allies in the autumn of 1914. When the dust settled in the early 1920s, three dynastic empires, the Romanovs, the Habsburgs and the Ottomans had been consigned to the ‘dustbin of history’. In place of these multi-ethnic empires a new political order was born; based on ‘ethnically’ defined nation-states.³³² In former Ottoman lands, British and French imperialism facilitated the formation of new Arab nation-states. At the same time, in Anatolia, Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) redefined the Ottoman rump, renamed Turkey, according to the dictates of Turkish ethno-nationalism. These developments greatly impacted on the Kurdish movement. It is in the chaotic post 1918 Middle East that we see the emergence of the first truly Kurdish nationalist organisation such as the *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti*. However, these developments lie beyond the scope of this study.³³³ Consequently, I will conclude by attempting to draw some general points from the study that has just been undertaken.

The Young Kurd movement assessed: A question of scale

A simple question that might be raised by this study is: What impact did the Young Kurds have on the Kurdish population in general? The simple answer is that we cannot know for sure. However, it is possible to make a few tentative assertions. Between 1898 and 1914, the Young Kurd movement certainly developed progressively larger social base; at least amongst the new Ottoman Kurdish elite. *Kürdistan* had been primarily the work of the Bedirhans (Abd

³³² For a broad comparative study of the rise of ethno-nationalism in post 1918 Eastern Europe, Russia and the Middle East see Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires*, .

³³³ There are a number of studies that look specifically at the development of Kurdish nationalism in the period between the end of the Great War in 1918 and the abolishment of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924. See for example; Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*; Martin Strohmeier, *Crucial Images in the Presentation of a Kurdish National Identity*; Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880-1925*; Azad Aslan, *The Clash of Agencies*. For a detailed study on the KTC see Göldaş, *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti*.

ur-Rahman and Mikdat) and a few allied intellectuals such as Abdullah Cevdet. In the period of *Kürdistan*'s publication (1898 to 1902), the Young Kurd politics did not have a clearly defined organisation base separate from the Young Turk opposition as a whole;³³⁴ save, of course, the publication of a newspaper. However, the 1908 revolution marked the beginning of a new phase in the development of Young Kurd politics. The establishment of Kurdish associations in Istanbul such as the KTTC, KNMC and *Hevî* see the Young Kurd movement gain a separate organisation base. Certainly, there was an overlap in membership of and support for Kurdish associations and Ottoman political parties. Nevertheless, it is possible to talk about the Young Kurds as constituting a movement in itself; albeit one that was intimately connected with the Ottoman politics as a whole. Still, what percentage of the new Ottoman-Kurdish elite experienced the Kurdish 'enlightenment' cannot be known. It is simply not possible to work out an exact number of members of the new Ottoman-Kurdish elite and then cross check this with the number of members of groups such as the KTTC or *Hevî*. However, it does seem that towards 1914, Young Kurd politics was becoming increasingly attractive to the Ottoman-Kurdish elite; especially the younger generation. This being said, in the final analysis, prior to 1914, the Young Kurd movement remained an elite movement confined mainly to Istanbul and fundamentally detached from the majority of the rural Kurdish population.³³⁵

The Young Kurds and Nationalism

The key theoretical point that this study attempted to demonstrate is that the mobilisation of a separate ethnic identity on the part of a minority within a multi-ethnic state need not be

³³⁴ This stands in contrast to the Armenian movement of the time which while having connections with the Young Turk movement maintained a separate organisational base.

³³⁵ It might even be postulated that the Kurdish movement did not go to the 'people' (at least in Turkey) until the 1970s. One of the first organisations to systematically attempt to 'enlighten' the Kurdish population actually physically going to the villages was the *Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocağı* ("Revolutionary Eastern Culture Organisation" - DDKO). Rather than attempting to influence politics through parliament, this organisation sought to mobilise the peasant underclass by informing them of their rights as citizens. See Kendal "Kurdistan in Turkey" in eds. Gérard Chaliand, Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, Michael Pallis *A People without a Country: The Kurds* (London: Zed, 1993), p. 82.

congruent with *ethno-nationalism*. The case of the Young Kurds seems to amply demonstrate this. When one surveys the discourse of the pre-1914 Kurdish journals and organisations, it becomes abundantly clear that they did not advocate for the creation of a separate ‘Kurdish’ state. However, this does not mean that the Young Kurds were *not* nationalists or some how apolitical. A second aspect of the Young Kurd ideology that has been brought out in this study has been their deep commitment to the Ottoman Empire, not simply as an empire or a dynasty, but as a *nation* and a *homeland*.

Hence, I have been reluctant to describe the Kurdish movement prior to 1914 as *Kurdish* nationalist. Of course, from a certain perspective we could regard them as ‘cultural’ nationalists or proto-nationalists. Nevertheless, I would prefer to restrict the term nationalist to movements that aim at creating a state (or state like entity such as an autonomous homeland). The reasoning behind this is that in the Kurdish case, by terming the movement *Kurdish* nationalist, we risk eclipsing the Ottoman patriotism that has been highlighted in this thesis. At this point it would be prudent to add the following caveat. There is a certain amount of confusion over terms such as *millet* (“nation”) when used by the Young Kurd movement. On one hand, we see it used in the ‘civic’ sense of the Ottoman nation and on the other we see it used to speak about the Kurds as an ‘ethnic’ nation. This observation, however, re-enforces the point, looked at in the first chapter, that in the debate over what defines a nation there is no conclusive answer; there is not a shopping-list of qualities by which a nation (or even an ethnic group) can be objectively defined.

As such, we should not shy away from describing the Young Kurds as Ottoman patriots or even Ottoman nationalists. If we remember Hroch’s phase two, the period of “nationalist aggregation,” we see that the Young Kurds did mobilise their ethnic identity. Yet, this ethnic activism was not directed *against* the Ottoman Empire but rather in *favour* of it. Even *Hevî*

the most radical of the Kurdish organisations of this period, although rejecting the CUP centralising and Turkist tendencies did so from a position that that such policies were detrimental to the unity of the empire. It may be tempting to read into the more decentralising Kurdism of 1913-1914 a progressive shift towards Kurdish nationalism. However, it is important not to disregard ideals of decentralisation as insincere or as merely a stepping stone towards separatism.

In short, they were unionists (with a small ‘u’).³³⁶ Consequently, when we attempt to characterise Young Kurdish movement and the Kurdish ‘enlightenment’ we should be aware of its dual identity: on one hand ‘Kurdist’ and on the other ‘Ottomanist’. Thus, when we attempt to answer the question put forward at the start of this thesis with regard to the purpose of the Kurdish ‘enlightenment’: “To what end?” The answer must surely be the salvation of the Ottoman Empire and not its partition. The broader point that might be made is that so-called minority ethnic movements within multi-ethnic states might not always be nationalists in the separatist sense. This point should be remembered when regarding the history of other ethnic movements around the world. It is perhaps time we developed a new vocabulary for looking at movements that displayed ‘ethnic consciousness’ in multi-ethnic states; especially amongst so-called minority movements. The ethno-nationalist cum separatist road is only one form that that ethnic consciousnesses might take. By developing such as vocabulary to talk about expressions of ethnic peculiarism, it might just be possible to challenge the misguided view that any expression of cultural diversity along ethnic lines is a step along the path to division.

³³⁶ There is a tendency to use the term Unionist (“İttihadçı”) in Ottoman history as shorthand for members of the CUP (and rightly so). However, what I mean by unionist, with a small ‘u,’ is that they sought to maintain the Ottoman link.

Bibliography

Archival Sources

British (FO Foreign Office & PP Parliamentary Papers)

Correspondence Respecting the Kurdish invasion of Persia, Sheikh Obeidallah to Dr. Cochran 5 October 1880, Inclosure in Abbott to Thomson (PP, Turkey No. 5 1881)

Trotter to Goschen, Therapia, 20 October 1880, Inclosure in Goschen to Granville, Therapia, 24 October 1880 (PP, Turkey No. 5 1881)

Abbott to Granville, Tabriz 1 October 1881 (FO 248/382)

Mr. Mugerditchian, the Dragoman at Diyarbakir, Dec. 22 1908 (FO 195/2317)

Safrastian to Shibly, Bitlis, June 8, 1909 (FO 195/2317)

Ottoman

Fi 1 Safer 1297 (14- 01- 1880) A Meclis-i Vükela Mazbatası Ya-res (Yıldız Sarayı Arşivi Sadaret Resmi Maruzat Evrakı) 5/17

Journals and Newspapers

The Times

The New York Times

Kurdish Globe

Takvim-i Vekâyi

Bozarslan, Mehmet Emin, ed. and tran. *Jîn*. 5 vols. Uppsala: Deng, 1988.

—. *Kürdistan*. 2 vols. Uppsala: Deng, 1991.

—. *Kürd Teaviin ve Terakkî Gazetesi*. Uppsala: Deng: 1998

Roj-i Kurd No. 1-4 (1913)

Hetaw-i Kurd No. 1-10 (1913-1914)

Şark ve Kürdistan No.1 (1908)

Other Sources

Ahmad, Feroz. "Unionist Relations With the Greek, Armenian, and Jewish Communities of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1914." In *From Empire to Republic Vol. I*, by Feroz Ahmad, 89-140. Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2008.

Ahmed, Kemal Madhar. *Kurdistan During the First World War*. London: Saqi, 1994.

Akarlı, Engin D. "Abdülhamîd II's Attempt to Integrate Arabs into the Ottoman System ." In *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period*, by D. Kushner, 74-89. Leiden: Brill, 1986.

Aksoy, A. Şerif. *İttihat ve Terakki*. Istanbul: Noktakitap, 2008.

Alagöz, Mehmet. *Old Habits die hard: A reaction to the application of Tanzimat: Bedirhan Bey's Revolt*. M.A. diss.,: Boğazici University, 2003.

Alakom, Rohat. *Eski İstanbul Kürtleri 1453-1925*. Istanbul: Avesta, 1998.

—. *Kürdoloji Biliminin 200 Yıllık Geçmişi (1787-1987)*. Istanbul: Deng, 1991.

—. *Şerif Paşa: Bir Kürt Diplomatinin Fırtınalı Yılları*. Istanbul: Avesta, 1998.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso, 1991 .

Arai, Masami. *Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era*. Leiden: Brill, 1992.

Arfa, Hasan. *The Kurds*. London: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Arif, Mehmed. *Başımıza Gelenler*. Istanbul: Tercüman, 196?

Aslan, Süleyman Azad. *The Clash of Agencies: The formation and failure of Kurdish nationalism, 1918-1922*. Ph.D. Thesis.,: Royal Holloway and Bedford Collage London, 2007.

Baban, Ayad. *The Baban Family Tree*. Beirut: Unpublished, 2008.

Babanzade, İsmail Hakkı. *Beyrut'ten Kuveyt'e Irak Mektupları*. Istanbul : Büke , 2002.

Bali, Rifat. *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri: Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni (1923-1945)*. İstanbul: İletişim, 2001.

Bali, Rifat. *Musa'nın evlatları Cumhuriyet'in Yurttaşları*. Istanbul: İletişim, 2001.

Barkley, Henri J, and Fuller E Graham. *Turkey's Kurdish Question*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998.

Barzani, Massoud. *Mustafa Barzani and the Kurdish Liberation Movement*. New York: Palgrave, 2003.

- Bayrak, Mehmet. *Açık-Gizli/Resmi-Gayrivesmi Kürdoloji Belgeleri* . Ankara : Özge, 1994.
- Bedirhan, Celadet. *Bir Kürt Aydınından Mustafa Kemal'e Mektup* . Istanbul: Doz, 1992.
- Bedirhan, Celadet Alî. *De La Question Kurde* . Istanbul : Avesta, 1997.
- Berkes, Niyazi. *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* . Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964.
- . *Unutulan Yıllar*. Istanbul: İletişim, 1997.
- Beyazidi, Mella Mahmudê. *Kürtlerin Örf ve Adetleri* . Istanbul: Pêrî , 1998.
- Billig, Michael. *Banal nationalism* . London: Sage, 1995.
- Blau, Joyce. *Le problèm kurde* . Brussels: Centre pour l'Etude des Problèmes du Monde Musulman Contemporain, 1963.
- Blosse, Harry Finnis. *Armenia Travels and Studies* . London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1901.
- Breuilly, John. *Nationalism and the State* . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Bruinessen, Martin van. *Agha, Shaikh and State*. London: Zed Books, 1992.
- Bruinessen, Martin van. "Ehemdi Xani's Men u Zin and Its Role in the Emergence of Kurdish National Awareness." In *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism*, edited by Abbas Vali, 40-57. Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2003.
- Bruinessen, Martin van. "Kurds, States, and Tribes ." In *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East*, edited by Faleh Jabar and Hosham Dawood, 165-183. London: Saqi, 2002.
- Budak, Ömer. *Tarihî Süreç içinde Kürtler ve Kürtçülük* . Ankara: Işık, 2007.
- Celil, Celile. *1880 Şeyh Ubeydullah Nehri Kürt Ayaklanması* . Istanbul: Pêrî , 1998.
- . *Kürt Aydınlanması*. Istanbul: Avesta, 2000.
- . *Kürt Halk Tarihinden 13 İlginç Yaprak* . Istanbul: Evrensel, 2008.
- . *XIX. Yüzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Kürtler*. Translated by M Demir. Ankara: Özge, 1992.
- Celil, Celile, M.S. Lazarev, O.I. Jagalina, M.A. Gasaratyan, and Şakire Mihoyan. *Yeni ve Yakın Çağda Kürt Siyaset Tarihi*. Istanbul: Peri, 1998.
- Cemil-Paşa, Ekrem. *Muhtasar Hayatım*. Ankara: Beybun, 1992.
- Cemil-Paşa, Kadri. *Doza Kurdistan: Kürd Milletinin 60 Yıllık Esaretten Kurtuluş Savaşı Hatıraları*. Ankara: Özge, 1991.

Çetin, Mahmut. *Kart-Kurt sesleri*. Istanbul: biyografi.net, 2002.

Çetinsaya, Gökhan. "II. Abdülhamid döneminde Kuzey Irak'da, tarikat, aşiret ve Siyaset ." *Divan ilmi araştırmalar*, 1999: 153-168.

Cleveland, William. *The making of an Arab nationalist : Ottomanism and Arabism in the life and thought of Sati` al-Husri*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1971.

Comisso, Ellen. "Empires as Prisons of Nations versus Empires as Political Opportunity Structures: An Exploration of the Role of Nationalism in Imperial Dissolution in Europe." In *Empire to Nation*, edited by Joseph W Esherick, Hasan Kayalı and Eric van Young, 138-167. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006.

Crone, Patricia. *God's Rule: Government and Islam*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Dadrian, Vahakn N. *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*. Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997.

Davison, Roderic. "Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian and Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century." In *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish history, 1774-1923 : the impact of the West*, edited by Roderic Davison. Austin: Universty of Texas Press, 1990.

Dergâh. *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi* . Istanbul:: Dergâh, 1977.

Deringil, Selim. "The Invention of Tradition as Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1808 to 1908 ." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35 1, 1993: 3-29.

—. *The well-protected domains : ideology and the legitimation of power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909* . London : I. B. Tauris, 1998.

Dersimi, Nuri. *Hatıratım* . Istanbul: Doz, 1997.

—. *Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim* . Istanbul: Doz, 2004.

Dickson, Bertram. "Journeys in Kurdistan." *The Geographical Journal* 35, no. 4 (Apr 1910): 357-378.

Divine, Donna Robinson. *Politics and Society in Ottoman Palestine: The Arab Struggle for Survival and Power*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994.

Dündar, Faut. *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi*. Istanbul: İletişim, 2008.

Duguid, Stephan. "The politics of Muslim unity: Hamidian policy in Eastern Anatolia." *Middle Eastern Studies*, 139-56: 1973.

Edib, Halidé. *Memoirs of Halidé Edib* . London: John Murray, 1926.

Edmonds, Cecil J. *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*. London: Oxford University Press, 1957.

- Edmonds, Cecil J. "The Kurds and the Revolution in Iraq ." *Middle East Journal* Vol. 13, no. 1 (1959): 1-10.
- Eliot, Charles. *Turkey in Europe* . London: Odysseus, 1900.
- . *Turkey in Europe*. London: Edward Arnold, 1908.
- Erdem, Hakan. *Tarih-Lenk* . Istanbul: Doğan, 2008.
- Fany, Messoud. *La Nation Kurde et évolution sociale* . Paris: Librairie L. Rodstein, 1933.
- Fikri, Lütfi. *Lütfi Fikri Bey'in Günlüğü: Daima Muhalefet* . Istanbul: Arma, 1991.
- Findley, Carter V. *Bureaucratic reform in the Ottoman Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.
- Fisher, Alan. "Crimean Separatism." Edited by William Haddad and William Ochsenwald, 57-76. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1977.
- Fortna, Ben. *Imperial Classroom: Islam, state and Education in the late Ottoman Empire* . London: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Fortna, Ben. "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman 'Secular Schools'." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 369-393.
- Ghassemlou, Abdul Rahman. "Kurdistan in Iran" pp. in eds. (London: Zed, 1993)." In *A People without a Country: The Kurds*, edited by Gérard Chaliand, Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou and Michael Pallis, 95-121. London: Zed, 1993.
- Göçek, Fatma. "The decline of the Ottoman Empire and the Emergence of Greek, Armenian, Turkish and Arab nationalisms." In *Social Constructions of Nationalism in the Middle East*, edited by Fatma Göçek, 15-83. State University of New York Press.
- Gökalp, Ziya. "My nationality." In *Turkish nationalism and Western Civilization*, edited by Niyazi Berkes, translated by Niyazi Berkes, 43-45. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959.
- Göldaş, İsmail. *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti*. Istanbul: Doz, 199?
- Guibernau, Montserrat, and John Hutchinson. "Introduction: History and National destiny." *Nations and Nationalism*, 2004: 1-8.
- Haddad, William. "Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire." In *Nationalism in a non-national state : the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire*, edited by William Haddad and William Ochsenwald, 3-34. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1977.
- Hanioglu, Şükrü. *A brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

- . *Bir Siyasal düşünür olarak Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve dönemi*. İstanbul: Üçdal , 198?
- . *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- . *The Young Turks in Opposition* . New York : Oxford University Press , 1995.
- Hansu, Hüseyin. *Babanzâde Ahmet Naim* . İstanbul: Kaynak , 2007.
- Hassanpour, Amir. “The Making of Kurdish Identity: Pre-20th Century Historical and Literary Sources.” Edited by Abbas Vali, 106-162. Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2003.
- Heazell, F. N., and Mrs Margoliouth. *Kurds and Christians*. London: Wells, Gardner, Darton & Co, 1911.
- Hilmi, Rafiq. *Kurdistan at the dawn of the century* . Greenford: New Hope, 1998.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. “ Introduction .” In *The Invention of tradition* , edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Granger, 1-15. London: Canto, 1992.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. *Age of Empire* . London: Abacus, 1989.
- Hourani, Albert. ““Ottoman Reform and Politics of Notables”.” In *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East*, edited by W.R. Polk and R.L. Chambers. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1968.
- . *Ottoman Reform and Politics of Notables in the Emergence of the Modern Middle East*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981.
- Hroch, Miroslav. “From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation .” *New Left Review*, 1993: 3-20.
- . *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*. Translated by Ben Fowkes. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.
- Hutchinson, John. *Modern Nationalism*. London: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- . *Nations as zones of conflict*. London: Sage, 2005.
- Işık, Mehmet Kemal. *Ünlü Kürt Bilgin ve Birinci Kuşak Aydınlar* . İstanbul: Sorun, 2000.
- Juergensmeyer, Mark. *The new Cold War: religious nationalism confronts the secular state*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Jwaideh, Wadie. *The Kurdish nationalist movement: Its origins and development*. Ph.D. diss: Syracuse University, 1960.
- Kaftan, Kaws. “*Baban Botan Soran 19 Yüzyıl Bölgesel Kısa Kürt Tarihi*” . İstanbul : Nûjen , 1996.

- Kansu, Aykut. *Politics in Post Revolutionary Turkey, 1908-1913*. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- . *The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey*. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Karpat, Kemal. *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Kayali, Hasan. *Arabs and Young Turks : Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918*. Berkeley: University of California Press , 1997.
- Kedourie, Elie. “The Impact of the Young Turk Revolution in the Arabic speaking Provinces of the Ottoman Empire.” In *Arabic Political Memoires and Other Studies*, by Elie Kedourie, 124-161 . London: Routledge, 1974.
- Kendal. “The Kurds Under the Ottoman Empire.” In *A People Without A Country: The Kurds and Kurdistan*, edited by Gérard Chaliand, Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou and Michael Pallis, 11-37 in. London: Zed, 1993.
- Kieser, Hans-Lukas. *Türklüğe İhtida*. İstanbul : İletişim, 2008.
- Kılıç, Altemur. “Kurds are Turks too.” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 72, no. 4 (Sept-Oct 1993): 190-91.
- Kılıç, Fırat. *Sheikh Ubeydullah Movement*. M.A. diss.,: Bilkent University, 2003.
- Kinnane, Derk. *The Kurds and Kurdistan*. London: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Klein, Janet. “Kurdish Nationalists and Non-Nationalist Kurdistans: Rethinking Minority Nationalism and the Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1909.” *Nations and Nationalism*, 2007: 135-153.
- . *Power in the Periphery*. Ph.D. diss.,: Princeton University, 2002.
- Kuneralp, Sinan. *Son Dönem Osmanlı Erkân ve Ricalı, 1839-1922: Prosopografik Rehber*. İstanbul: İsis, 1999.
- Kutlay, Naci. *İttihat ve Terraki ve Kürdler*. Ankara: Beybun , 1992.
- Landau, Jacob. *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Cooperation*. London: Hurst & Company, 1995.
- Layard, Austen Henry. *Nineveh and Its Remains*. London: John Murray, 1849.
- Lazarev, M.S., Ş.X. Mihoyan, E.I. Vasiyeva, M.A. Gasratyan, and O.I. Jigalina. *Kürdistan Tarihi*. İstanbul: Avesta, 2007.
- Lewis, Bernard. *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Macfie, A. L. *The end of the Ottoman Empire*. London: Longman, 1998.

- Malmîsanij. *Diyarbakirli Cemilpaşazadeler ve Kürt Milliyetçiliği* . Istanbul : Avesta, 2004.
- . *İlk Kürt Gazetesi Kurdistan'ı yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirhan*. Istanbul: Vate, 2009.
- . *Kürt Milliyetçiliği ve Dr. Abdullah Cevdet*. Uppsala: Jina Nu, 1986.
- . *Kürt Talebe, Hêvi Cemiyeti, İlk Legal Kürt Öğrenci Derneği* . Istanbul: Avesta, 2002.
- . *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Gazetesi* . Istanbul: Avesta, 1999.
- . *The Past and The Present of Book Publishing in Kurdish language in Turkey and Syria*. Istanbul : Vate , 2007.
- Malmîsanij, and Mahmud Lewendi. *Li Kurdistana Bakur u li Tirkiye Rojnamegeriya Kurdi, 1908-1992*. Ankara: Özge, 1992.
- McCarthy, Justin. *Death and Exile* . Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995.
- McDowall, David. *A modern History of the Kurds* . London: I.B. Tauris, 1997.
- Mitchell, William Ramsay. ““The Intermixture of Races in Asia Minor” .” *Proceedings of the British Academy, 1915-16* 359-422.
- Nursî, Said. *Bediüzzaman Said Nursî'nin İlk Dönem Eserleri* . Istanbul: Söz, 2007.
- Ökte, Ertuğrul Zekâî. *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi. Osmanlı Arşivi, Yıldız tasnifi, Ermeni meselesi: Ottoman Archives, Yıldız collection, the Armenian question*. Istanbul: Historical Research Foundation, 1989.
- Olson, Robert. *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880-1925*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989.
- Özkırmı, Umit. *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.
- Özoğlu, Hakan. *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State*. Albany: The State University of New York, 2004.
- Özoğlu, Hakan. “Nationalism and Kurdish Notables in the Late Ottoman-Early Republican Era.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33 (2001): 383-410.
- Özüyılmaz, Ömer. *Gurmanç ve Kürtlerin Kökeni*. İstanbul : Karakutu , 2008 .
- Percy, Henry Algernon George. *Asiatic Turkey*. London: Edward Arnold, 1901.
- Petrosyan, Yuriy Aşatoviç. *Sovyet Gözüyle Jön Türkler*. Ankara: Bilgi, 1974.
- Ramiz, Ahmed. *Emir Bedirhan* . Istanbul : bgst, 2007.
- Rıza, Ahmed. *Ahmed Rıza Bey'in Anıları* . 1988: Araba, Istanbul.

Roshwald, Aviel. *Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires: Central Europe, Russia and the Middle East, 1914-1923*. London: Routledge, 2001.

Said. *Sadrızam Sait Paşa Anılar* . Istanbul: Hür, 1977.

Sekban, Şükrü Mehmet. *Kürt Sorunu* . Istanbul: Kamer, 1998.

Sevgen, Nazmi. *Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'da Türk Beylikleri* . Ankara : Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Estitüsü, 1982.

Shaw, Stanford. "Some Aspects of the Aims and Achievements of the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Reformers." In *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East*, edited by W.R. Polk and R.L. Chambers, 29-39. Chicago: : The University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Shiel, J. "Notes on a Journey from Tabriz, Through Kurdistan, via Van, Bitlis, Se'ert and Erbil, to Suleimaniyeh, in July and August, 1836, ." *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 8 , 1838 : 54-101.

Şimşir, Bilâl N. *Kürtçülük 1787-1923*. Ankara: Bilgi, 2007.

Smith, Anthony D. *Nationalism and Modernism*. New York: Routledge, 1998.

Soane, E.B. "Administrative Report of Sulaymaniya for the Year 1919." Baghdad, 1920.

Soane, Ely Banister. *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise* . London: Cosimo, 2007.

Strohmeier, Martin. *Crucial Images in the Presentation of a Kurdish National Identity* . Leiden : Brill , 2003.

Taylor, A.J.P. *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1914-1918* . London: Oxford University Press, 1954.

Taylor, J.G. "Travels in Kurdistan, with Notices of the Sources of the Eastern and Western Tigris, and Ancient Ruins in Their Neighbourhood ." *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 35, 1865 : 21-58 .

The Arab government of the Hicaz. "Vindication of Arab Rights." In *Arab nationalism: an Anthology*, edited by Sylvia Kedourie, 94-102. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964.

"The Treaty of Berlin ." In *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics*, edited by Jacob C Hurewitz, 413-414. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975.

Tonnesson, Stein, and Hans Antlov. "Introduction." In *Asian Forms of the Nation*, edited by Stein Tonessen and Hans Antlov, 1-39. London: Curzon, 1996.

Tunaya, Tarık Zafer. *Hürriyet'in İlanı* . Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2004.

- . *Türkiye 'de Siyasal Partiler: İttihat ve Terakki, Bir Çağın, Bir Kuşağın, Bir Partinin Tarihi, Vol.III*, . Istanbul: İletişim, 2000.
- . *Türkiye 'de Siyasal Partiler Vol. I İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi*. Istanbul: İletişim, 2007.
- . *Türkiyede Siyasal Partiler, Vol. II Mütareke Dönemi*. Istanbul: İletişim, 1999.
- Vehbi, Ali. *Sultan Abdülhamit Siyasî Hatıratım* . Istanbul: Dergâh, 1999.
- Weber, Eugene. *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* . Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976.
- Yalçın-Heckman, Lale. *Tribe and Kinship amongst the Kurds* . Frankfurt: Pete Lang, 1991.
- Yeğen, Mesut. *Devlet Söyleminde Kürd Sorunu* . Istanbul: İletişim, 1999.
- Zeki, Mehmed Emin. *Kürd ve Kürdistan ünlüleri (Meşâhirê Kurd û Kurdistan)* . Ankara : Özge, 2005.
- Zürcher, Eric J. *The Unionist Factor* . Leiden: Brill, 1984.
- . *The Young Turks – Children of the Borderlands*.
www.letleidenuniv.nl/tcimo/tulp/research/ejz16.htm (accessed March 15, 2005).

Appendices

Selected Pictures from KTTG, Roj-i Kurd and Hetaw-i Kurd

Appendix I (KTTG –A Picture of the Ottoman Parliament)



Appendix II (KTTG – A picture of Crete)

جمعه ایرتسی

۱۷ ذی الحجہ ۱۳۲۶

۲۷ کانون اول ۱۳۲۴

سر محرمی دیار بکرلی احمد جمیل

مردم ارباب فکر و قلمک محصول خانہ
عرفانہ دانما صحیفہ لرینز آچقدر

درج اولنجان اوراق و آثار اعادہ اولنجان

ادارہ خانہ سی وزنه جیلرده کرد تعاون
وزرق مرکز عمومی سیدر

کرید

تعاون و ترقی غزنیسی

۱۳۲۴

جمعیت واسطه نشر افکار بدر

ناریخ تاسیسی ۱۳۲۶ - ۱۳۲۴

جہت طرفدن منتخب

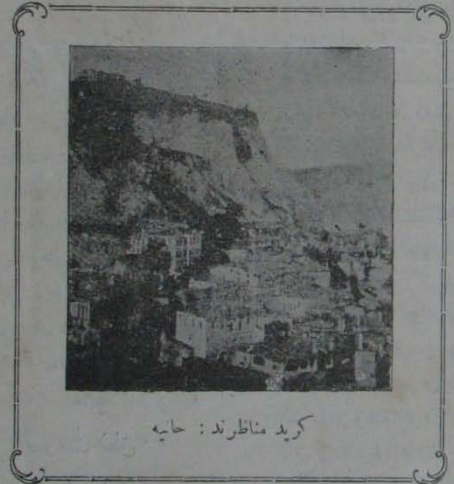
صاحب امتیاز و مدیری
سلیمانہ علی توفیق

شرائط اشترا

طشرہ ایچون سنہ لکی پوستہ اجر تیلہ
برابر ۸۰ ، والی ایلی ۴۵ غروشددر

نسخہ سی بر غروشددر

نومر ۶ شعلدیک هفته ده بردفمه نشر اولنه جق دینی، علمی، سیاسی، ادبی، اجتماعی غزنیسی جلد ۱



کرید مناظرند : حایه

مقاله مخصوصه

کرید مسئله سی

اوتوز ارج سنلک برتیب بیدای مام
واسارتمک ققهور طلام غول و حتی الان
مات بحیثه عنایسه ، فجز نوین حریتله هنرز
سرمد صہای مباحث اولمش ، بتون جهان
مدینک تبریکات و تقدیرات مخصوصه سیلہ
آقیقہ تلامش اکن باارسانک انتقال ناکھا
نیسی ، بوسنه هرسان وقوع الحقی بوامت
معظمہ سی الکردین رجیمہ خاطررات ایلہ
متسالم آتمش آیدی ، بولک چارہ التیسانی دھا
تجریدہ ایکن ، بودفمه ده کردک بونان سنہ
الحقی شایه سی هرترد نجوب عثمانیک حدیات
مبارک و طبیه سی ادا بدمش ، بونانسانی پروتستو
ایچون برمتبع عقد ابدلش ، هرکس ایچایدہ
بو اوغورد ، فدای جان ایدہ جکی اللہنہ ،
ناموسہ ، وجدانہ قلمله تأمین اتمشدر .

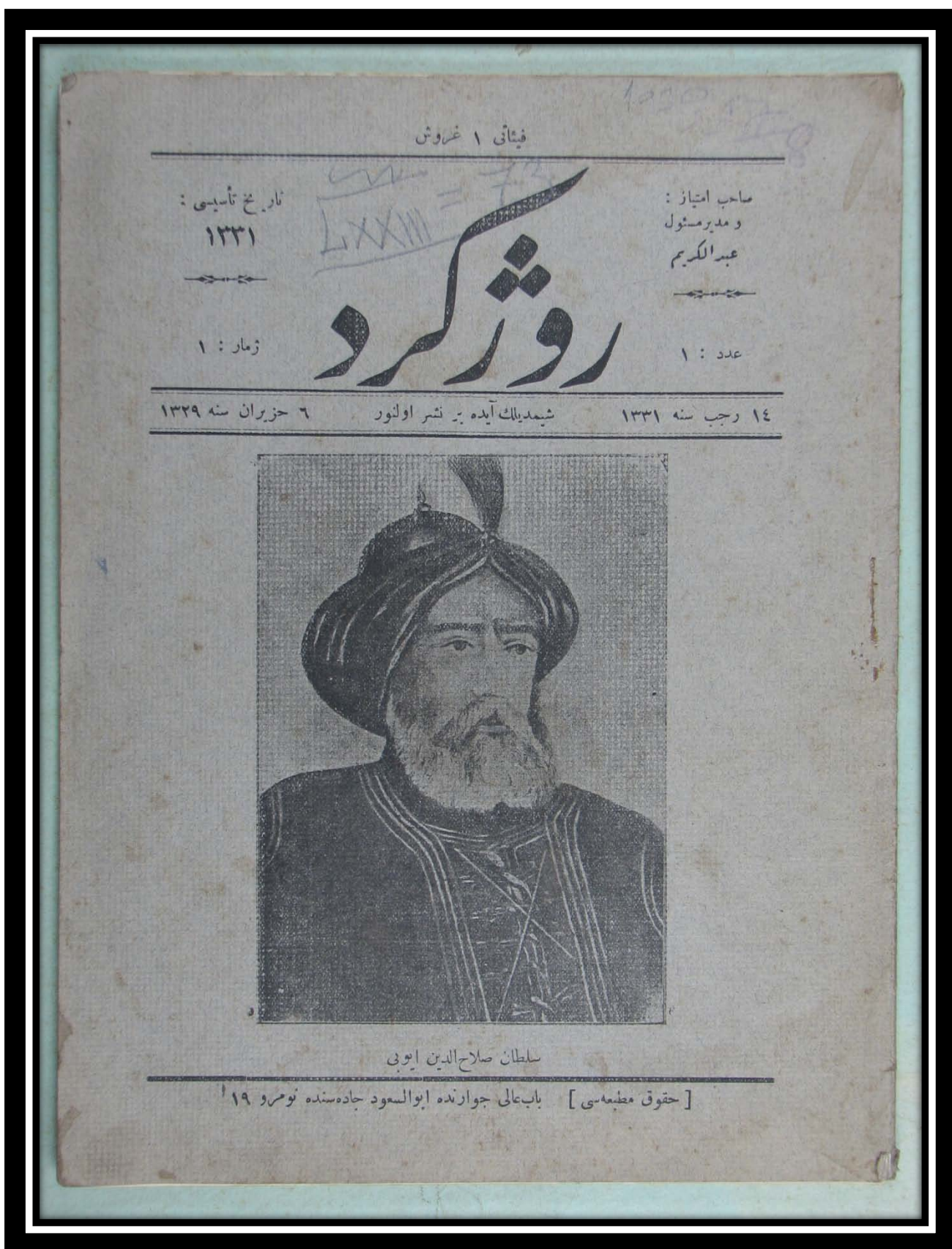
ایثار خون پاک حبشہ هر زمان آماہدر ؛ بو
دعایک اجتماعک الواح مقدسہ اتحادی ، بو
بایدہ کی عزم قلمی مجاہدانہ تک بربرات واضح
تأمینی در ،

ساعلان احد میدان تاریخیسی ، هیچ بر
زمان بو عظمتندہ ، بو کترندہ افواج متحده
احرارہ تجایکاه اجتماع اولماشدر ؛ جمہ ایرتسی
کونی عقد ابدلن متبغہ اشترک ابدن پوز

بیکار جه انسانک شوحدانہ اجنابیسندہ کی علویسی ،
قدسیسی ، شہنامہ معالی اتحادی ناریخ اقوام
مدنیہ ابدی تجیل ایدہ جک ، ارواح مبارکہ
اجدازم بو منظرہ بدیعہ دانما آقیسلایہ .
جقدر ،

اوکون طرف ، طرف او قوتان نطق لک
معانی آتشیسی ، اوتوز آتی میلیون عثمانیک
ترجمان بلیغ تحسسانی در .

Appendix III (Roj-i Kurd – A picture of Salah ad-Din Eyyubî)



Appendix IV (Roj-i Kurd – A picture of Hüseyin Kenan Bedirhan)



- ۱۲ -

رسوخ ایچین (علم چینه بیه اولسه آریبکنز) احتیاج ایله همه ملی بز، فولاق و کوزلر من یکر منجی حکمت چیلنه امتیالاً هر طرفه قوشدر معالی در . عصرک عوامل اساسیه سنه نفوذ ایچه لدر . هی دی ، کنجلی چالیشمه به ، متادیا سعه آتملی در ، بز کنجلر ایسه هیچده فضله تابه عرض

خر بو طلی
ح . ب

حروف و تسهیل قرائت

نی دایما دوشوندرن برمشه وارا یدی، که اطرافلیجه دوشونوب ایسه باشلار سه ق: ها خبرلی اوده کوردجه ایچین یکی بر شکل آسان قرائت و کتابت تجری واحضار ایتمک مشه سیدر؛ بن، نی جدا اشغال ایدن بودوشونجه ایله مشغول ایکن [تعمیم معارف واصلاح حروف] جمعیتک اولیابده کی الفای جدیدنه دسترس اولدم ؛ بو الفبایک هر کدن زیاده بز کوردلره اولور شلی اوله جفته قانع بولندیم ایچین بومجشده اجاله فکر وخامه ایدیورم: بز، ایسه شمعی بکیدن باشلابورز ویاخود باشلا به جغز: طریق سعی وعملده اوزون بر مسافه طی ایندکدن صوکره چیقمازه دوشوبده دونمکدن و بنا، علیه بر جوق أمک وزمان هدر ایتمکدنه مشله نی بدایتدن ،

بو نلرکده شکلی شودر :

1	=	اوستون و آ	(e)	۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵
۲	=	مد و آ	(a)	۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵
۳	=	ایره و ا	(i)	۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵
۴	=	اوتزه	(ou)	۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵
۵	=	و	(u)	۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵
۶	=	و	(eu)	۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵
۷	=	و	(o)	۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵
۸	=	کره ثقیله		۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵

[۱] اوزونجه اوقوعتی ایچون (و) ده بو اشارت قونور .


Appendix VI (Hetaw-i Kurd – A Kurdish family from Damascus ‘defending their nationhood’)

تاریخ تاسیسی :
غره ذی القعدة
۱۳۳۱
درج اولن بیان آثار اعاده اولمغز
ژمار : ۲

صاحب امتیاز
ومدیور مسئول :
باباه عبیر العزیز
آثار نه نویسی نادریتوه
عدد : ۲

هتا و کرد

۴ محرم الحرام سنه ۱۳۳۲ شمعدیلک آیده بر نشر اولونور ۲۱ تشرین ثانی سنه ۱۳۲۹



L'Une famille Kurde

شامده ملیتی محافظه ایدن کردلردن بر عااله

استانبول
رسلی کتاب مطبعه سی

۲۶

Appendix VII (Hetaw-i Kurd – Babanzâde İsmail Hakki)

