

THE FORMATIONS OF THE KURDISH MOVEMENT(S) 1908-1914:  
EXPLORING THE FOOTPRINTS OF KURDISH NATIONALISM

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“The Formations of the Kurdish Movement(s) 1908-1914: Exploring the Footprints of Kurdish Nationalism,” a thesis prepared by Gülseren Duman in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in History degree from The Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University. This thesis has been approved and accepted on June 2010 by

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Title: The Formations of the Kurdish Movement(s) 1908-1914: Exploring the Footprints of Kurdish Nationalism

This thesis scrutinizes the Kurdish movement(s) between the re-proclamation of the constitutional regime in 1908 until the outbreak of First World War in 1914 and problematizes the periodization of Kurdish movement(s) with an emphasis on their heterogeneity and diversity. The 1908 Revolution created an impression among the Kurdish intelligentsia, like their contemporaries in the Ottoman Empire that a regime based on democracy, equality, liberty and the rule of law had been inaugurated. With this belief Kurdish intellectuals, who came from Kurdish notable families, opened many organizations in Istanbul to revive Kurdish culture, language and history, upon two of which this study focused. The journals of these two organizations together with archival documents were utilized to understand the agendas of the Kurdish intellectuals of the era. The first organization after the revolution, *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* was opened in Istanbul in 1908. As this organization was founded immediately after the 1908 revolution, it depicts not only the program of Kurdish intellectuals for the development of Kurdish people, but also their agendas developed for “Ottoman citizenry” as it is called in this study, which was appropriate to the atmosphere of the era. The circle of this organization on the one hand, by opening branches in Kurdish provinces worked for the reception of the new regime by the local Kurds, which was not a smooth process. On the other hand, they collaborated with some Armenian organizations in Istanbul to achieve a reconciliation between Kurds and Armenians in the Anatolia. The second main organization this study focuses on was opened in 1912 and proposed a more compact agenda for construction of a Kurdish national identity, which released in a set of parameters like emphasis on language, culture, history and historical figures as a way of creating a common bond among Kurds. Therefore a discursive analysis between the *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* and *Kürd Talebe Hêvî Cemiyeti* portrays the shifts between the two organizations; a discursive shift from “Ottoman citizenry” to “Kurdism,” which this study finds very important for the periodization of Kurdish Movement. Based on this analysis, this thesis argues that the first seeds of Kurdish nationalism can be traced in this discursive shift.

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Başlık: 1908 ve 1914 arası Kürt Hareketi(leri)'nin Oluşumları: Kürt Milliyetçiliği'nin İzlerini Sürmek

Bu tez, 1908'de Meşrutiyet'in yeniden ilânından, 1914'te I. Dünya Savaşı'nın başlangıcına kadar olan dönemdeki Kürt Hareketi (leri)'ni, heterojenliği ve çeşitliliğini vurgulayarak incelemekte ve Kürt Hareket(ler)inin dönemselleştirilmesini sorunsallaştırmaktadır. 1908 Devrimi Kürt aydınları arasında, diğer çağdaşlarında olduğu gibi, demokrasi, eşitlik, özgürlük ve hukukun üstünlüğüne dayalı bir rejimin başladığı izlenimini uyandırmıştır. Bu inançla, Kürt ilerigelen ailelerinden olan aydınlar, Kürt dilini, kültürünü ve tarihini canlandırmak için İstanbul'da birçok cemiyet kurmuşlardır, ki bunlardan ikisi bu tezin odaklandığı cemiyetlerdir. Bu cemiyetlerin dergileriyle birlikte arşiv belgeleri dönemin aydınlarının gündemlerini anlamak için kullanılmıştır. Devrimden sonraki ilk örgüt olan *Kürt Teaviün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* 1908 yılında, İstanbul'da kurulmuştur. Bu cemiyet, 1908 devriminin akabinde kurulduğu için Kürt entelijensiyasının Kürt halkının gelişimi için sundukları programın yanısıra, bu tezde adlandırıldığı gibi dönemin ruhuna uygun olan 'Osmanlı vatandaşlığı' için de gündem oluşturmuştur. Bu cemiyet çevresi, bir taraftan, yeni rejimin yereldeki Kürtler tarafından kabul edilmesini sağlamak için, ki bu hiç de kolay bir süreç olmamıştır, Kürt illerinde şubeler açarken, diğer taraftan Anadolu'da Ermenilerle Kürtler arasındaki ilişkilerin düzelmesi için İstanbul'daki bazı Ermeni örgütleriyle işbirliği yapmıştır. Bu tezin odaklandığı ikinci cemiyet ise 1912 yılında açılan *Kürt Talebe Hêvî Cemiyeti*'dir ve bu cemiyet, Kürt ulusal kimliğinin oluşumu için daha planlı bir program sunmuştur; bu oluşum dil, kültür, tarih ve tarihsel figürler üzerindeki vurgu gibi Kürtler arasında ortak bir bağ oluşturmayı amaçlayan bir dizi etkende açığa çıkmıştır. *Kürt Teaviün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* ve *Kürt Talebe Hêvî Cemiyeti* arasında yapılacak olan bir söylem analizi, iki cemiyet arasındaki değişiklikleri sergilemektedir: 'Osmanlı vatandaşlığı'ndan 'Kürtçülüğe' giden bu söylemsel farklılığı bu çalışma, Kürt hareketinin dönemselleştirilmesi için oldukça önemli görmektedir. Bu incelemeye dayanarak bu tez, Kürt milliyetçiliğinin ilk nüvelerinin bu söylemsel farklılıkta incelenebileceğini ileri sürmektedir.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

When I read the memoirs of the Kurdish intellectuals who were engaged in the political and social activities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ottoman Empire, one common portrait is drawn about their return in Istanbul upon the 1908 Revolution: they were welcomed with cheers by a huge crowd on the dock. The political figures, the journalists and the people who had been concerned with what was going on in the empire from the different peoples and religious communities and had been in opposition to the Hamidian Regime and so had been exiled were able to return to the capital of the empire thanks to a general amnesty upon the proclamation of the constitutional regime. Those people were greeted with great joy as they were regarded as the signs of the liberty, equality and justice, three notions of constitutional regime inspired from the French Revolution.

In the Ottoman historiography the studies on the 1908 Revolution generally agree that this was a relatively “free” atmosphere of this era which enabled the non-Muslim and non-Turkish communities under the Ottoman Empire to be engaged in cultural and political activities. As Tunaya points out, in the Ottoman history the beginning of a constitutional regime was celebrated for the first time with the name of “the proclamation of the freedom” and it was also the first step of the multi-parties regime. With the amendments in the constitution the range of freedoms was widened and the rights of assembling and founding societies were provided.<sup>1</sup> With this kind of amendments different ethnic or religious communities in the Ottoman Empire

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<sup>1</sup> Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler* vol. 1 (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1984), p.3. For further readings depicting the peculiarities of the era, see Aykut Kansu *The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey* (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997); Ferdan Ergut ed., *II. Meşrutiyet’i Yeniden Düşünmek* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2009).



believed for a while that a fair and equal mode of governing had started and that as the “citizens” of this new regime they felt responsible for the well-being of their own communities in particular and Ottoman society in general.

It is the aim of this thesis to describe and analyze the circumstances, the activities, the expectations and disappointments from the side of the Kurds, specifically Kurdish intellectuals, within the context of the constitutional regime. While doing this, the thesis will introduce the diversity in the agendas of the Kurdish movement(s). Nevertheless, two main aspects of the atmosphere of the era are also cases for the Kurds. First, like other constituents in the Ottoman Empire, the Kurdish intelligentsia also welcome the new regime enthusiastically and they believed that new regime was different from the “tyranny” they identified with the reign of Abdülhamid II. Second, like other social and political movements of the period, rather than being organized from the bottom-up, the Kurdish movement was also led by a group of Kurds who were socially and politically in an upper position.

Therefore as will be emphasized in many places through this thesis, the unit of analysis of the study is a group of Kurdish intellectuals with their thoughts and activities. However the expression of “Kurdish intelligentsia” or intellectuals is not deemed to give a static attribution to them, rather it is the main concern of the study to emphasize the variety among them; it is possible to observe that during the same years they were tended to seek for different goals.

The activities of this group of Kurdish notables and intellectuals, who were able to return from exile with the 1908 Revolution, incorporated in a number of Kurdish organizations and publications. Influential figures from the families of Bedir Khan and Babanzade who were the princes of the last Kurdish emirates that had been liquidated in the mid of the nineteenth century by the Ottoman governments

within the framework of the centralization policies and were the actors of the Kurdish rebellions against these policies; and Sayyid Abdülkadir, the son of prominent sheikh Ubeydullah of Şemdinan, were able to meet some other notable Kurdish figures in Istanbul and founded societies and published periodicals. As they had been in opposition to the previous regime and had supported the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) against Abdülhamid II, they were advocates of the constitutional regime.

Regarding the constitutional regime as a chance both for their own people, the Kurds, and for the big family they lived with which, the Ottomans, the above mentioned Kurdish figures founded *Kürd Teaviün and Terakki Cemiyeti* (Society for Mutual Aid and Progress) (the KTTC, henceforth) in the autumn of 1908. This society is important as it was founded immediately after the 1908 revolution. It provides a good picture of how the constitutional regime was a hope for the Kurds and how it became a missed opportunity. The ideas discussed by the circle of this society reveal how an “Ottoman citizenship” was imagined. Furthermore this society had branches in the Kurdish provinces the acts of which did not always correlate with those of the main branch. At this point, to understand the different tendencies it is necessary to reconsider the different power dynamics and historical power negotiations in Kurdish history which deeply influenced the course of the Kurdish movement(s).

As mentioned above, the KTTC was a concrete example of how the constitutional regime was a hope and a new beginning for the Kurds, at least for the intelligentsia. However, the political developments that happened after the Balkan Wars ruined all the ideals and put an end to all attempts. Keeping the expectations from the new regime in mind, its failures can be traced in another organization, *Kürd*

*Talebe Hêvî Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Student Hope Organization) (Hêvî, henceforth) was founded in 1912, by Kurdish students in Istanbul and supported by Kurdish elders. Actually this society thoroughly illustrates how the focus on “Ottoman citizenship” shifted to a more emphasis of Kurdishness. Although there are many Kurdish organizations during this period<sup>2</sup> this thesis will analyze the ideas and activities of the KTTC and Hêvî, as only scarce information exists about others and what is known is that they did not exist for a long time.

The thesis will be based on giving an account of the Kurdish movement(s) between 1908 and 1914 in the Ottoman context through analyzing the ideas, writings and deeds of the Kurdish intellectuals who had been on the scene of the developments for two generations. Thereby the thesis will question how the activities of this period contributed to what can be called a “Kurdish renaissance.” The parameters of this kind of renaissance can be understood from the focus on Kurdish language/literature/culture/history/economy which together composes an idea of “Kurdishness,” and will be approached in the framework of a “Kurdish renaissance.”

In addition such an inquiry gives also important clues about how these people defined being “Ottoman” and about the nature of their concerns about the “salvation of the empire.” What were their programs for an Ottoman citizenship? However, the thesis will not be based on a dichotomy of Kurdistan versus Ottomanism as such. Rather, the motivation behind this thesis is the lack of emphasis on the diverse nature of the agendas of this movement which remains in the shadow of that dichotomy. As

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<sup>2</sup> A list of Kurdish organizations during this period: *Kürdistan Muhibban Cemiyeti* (Society for Friends of Kurdistan, 1912). *Kürdistan Teşrik-i Mesai Cemiyeti* (Society for Cooperation of Kurdistan 1912) and *Kürt İrşat ve İrtika Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Guidance and Advancement Organization). *Osmanlı’da İlk Yasal Kürt Cemiyeti Kuruldu*. Available [online]: <http://www.kurdistantime.com/?p=301> [20 December 2009].

the “Kurdish Question” is still a hot debate in Turkey, the literature related to this era focuses too much on the nature of Kurdish nationalism, sometimes it is too confined to the discussion of whether it is “separatist” or not, to see the diversity both in the ideas and the activities during the early twentieth century. Therefore the thesis will also problematize the periodization of Kurdish movement(s) and so question the dichotomy of pre-WWI and post-WWI Kurdish movements, which is a dominant tendency in the literature.

Going beyond the clear cut dichotomy between the cultural nationalism of pre-World War I and the political nationalism post-WWI, which like all dichotomies also undermines discontinuities, and by taking into the consideration that the activities during this period is far away from homogeneity, this thesis will try to show that Kurdish “national” focuses start to be seen in the pre-1914 era. The best way to understand this discursive shift is detailed analyses of the publications of the organizations under consideration in this thesis.

### The Research Methodology

This study bases its discussions and draws its conclusions from the detailed analyses and cross-readings of first hand documents, journals of the KTTC and Hêvî. Furthermore these journals will be more meaningful when interpreted with the documents from the Ottoman Archives mainly related with the KTTC which will be discussed for the first time in this thesis. In the following lines the nature of sources will be introduced briefly.

## The Primary Sources

*Kürd Teaviin ve Terakki Gazetesi (KTTCG)*: The KTTC published a journal named after the society. The journal contains both Kurdish and Turkish parts, in nine issues. In the ninth issue, as there is no sign which points out that the periodical would end its publication life, it is probable that they did not know the organization would be closed sooner or there are some other issues of the periodical which have been still uncovered. It was a weekly periodical.

As the KTTC was the first legal organization upon the 1908 Revolution, the journal contains many articles telling Kurds about the nature of the new regime. Thereby the articles repeatedly compare the previous regime, which they defined as having been “tyranny,” with the new regime, which is introduced as an equal and fair way of governing. Furthermore, the journal concerns itself with the long-lasting problems of Kurdish society such as ignorance, poverty and disunity. Therefore, the writers analyze the reasons behind these problems and give some advice. At the end of the newspaper there are telegraphs from the Kurdish tribes who either stated their problems or concerns about new regime which give important insights into the situation of Kurdistan. The relations of the Kurds with other constituents, especially with Armenians, are among the topics of the journal. Furthermore, in the each issue there are some parts which analyze the political situation of the empire. Apart from these political parts the journal also has literary parts presenting Kurdish and Turkish poems.

*Roj-i Kürd* (The Sun/Day of Kurd): It was the monthly periodical of Hêvî, published in four issues before it was closed down. Each issue is about thirty pages. In this journal, intellectuals like Abdullah Cevdet and Mehmed Salih Bedirxan

wrote articles which discuss the necessity of studies related to Kurdish language, history, and literature. There is an emphasis that the age is the one of “nationalities,” so Kurds should develop to comply with the necessities of the age. In line with these the victories of Kurds, their services to Islam and Islamic states, and the accounts of famous Kurds are often given places. Modernity and the European enlightenment were taken as a model and at this point the prosperous neighbors, the Armenians, also were shown as models. Again the relations with Armenians and especially the land issues among them were also among the topics of the journal. In addition there are some articles which problematize the socio-economic conditions of Kurdish geography, give suggestions on how to improve agriculture by using modern techniques and the importance of agricultural education. Apart from these, even the problems between the urban Kurds and the rural Kurds are problematized. The journal also gives news about some facilities for Kurds living in Istanbul such as free medical treatment and opening a law office which help Kurdish people in official issues. The last issue of the *Roj-i Kurd* was published on 12 September, 1913.

*Hetaw-i Kürd* (The Sun/Day of Kurd): After *Roj-i Kürd* was closed down, Hêvî started to publish this newspaper. The first, second, third, fourth-fifth and tenth issues of the periodical are extant. The first three issues were published monthly and then it was published biweekly. Each of first three issues was about thirty pages and the last two ones twenty pages. Like *Roj-i Kürd* this periodical also gives place to articles concerned with Kurdish enlightenment. It proposes agendas to open primary/secondary/higher schools and the schools of arts and agriculture in the Kurdish geography. For realizing these aims they mainly rely on the unity and solidarity among the Kurdish tribes which solve their conflicts and unite against a common goal which they name as revival of the Kurdish nation. Different from other

journals during this period, and as a way introducing the history, geography and socio-economic conditions of the Kurdish provinces through letters from the locals or journalists of the periodical the information about Kurdish places is given under the title of “Letters from Kurdistan.” The geographical peculiarities, the growth of the Kurdish population and also the Armenian population (how Kurds are growing at a rate faster than the Armenians), the number of Kurdish-speakers, the situation of Kurdish women, the conditions for education and subsistence, the fertility of the earth and the technical absences, the issue of irrigation and the most common diseases experienced, and the name of the dominant Kurdish tribes, so on, constitute the issues of these letters. Apart from the Kurdistan there are articles which analyze the situation of the Kurds in Istanbul, who are especially workers and porters.

*Yekbûn* (Unity): The issues of *Yekbûn* are still missing. Malmisanij was able to locate an article by Mehmet Salih Bedirkhan which had been published in *Yekbûn*

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Related archival documents: There are many documents in the Ottoman archives which give important clues about both the deeds and ideas of Kurdish organizations and intellectuals. Both the telegraphs between the main branch and their local branches and the ones between organizations and governments are crucial for this thesis. These documents contain beneficial points not only about the nature of power relations in Kurdistan during the constitutional regime, but also about the publicity of the agendas of the Kurdish organizations. Besides as revealed from some documents which will be discussed in this study and informs the deeds of some influential Kurdish figures portray the heterogeneity among Kurdish intelligentsia and challenged the belief that they were only engaged in “cultural” activities.

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<sup>3</sup> Malmisanij, *Kürt Talebe-Hêvî Cemiyeti: İlk Legal Kürt Öğrenci Derneği* (İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2002), pp. 243-244.

Apart from the journals of the organizations and archival documents, there are many memoirs of Kurdish intellectuals who were both witnesses to and actors in the developments in the Ottoman and Kurdish history from the late nineteenth to the first three decades of the twentieth century. For instance, the memoirs of Kadri and Ekrem Cemilpaşa, Mehmed Salih Bedirkhan, Nuri Dersimi, Lütfi Fikri, Mevlanzade Rıfat and Refik Hilmi, and Abdürezzak Bedirkhan are significant as they reflect the ideas and experiences of those figures that were effective during the period in which the thesis locates itself.

### The Outline of the Thesis

In the second chapter for the historical contextualization of the Kurdish societies I will discuss the developments which occurred mid-nineteenth century in the Kurdish geography. A brief review of Ottoman-Kurdish relationships is also vital to comprehending the atmosphere in which the first legal Kurdish organizations emerged, as the oppositions and power contentions had crucial effects on the movements of the early twentieth century. The Kurdish geography, on the borders of Iran and Russia, was great importance for the Ottoman Empire. Thus power relations between the Ottoman sultans/governments and Kurdish chieftains had always been the most determinant factor in Kurdistan. This kind of relationship had become very contentious, especially with the centralization policies of the Ottoman governments. In reaction to centralization policies there emerged many Kurdish rebellions, which resulted in the liquidation of the Kurdish emirates. This development had two main important results for my thesis. First of all, the liquidation of the Kurdish emirates led to vacuum in the power, which would be filled with new kind of power relations. With the emergence of aghas and sheikhs led to a multi-fragmented politics in the



Kurdish geography and this would have great effects on the later Kurdish movement. Secondly, the nature of these revolts and the leading figures in them are significant for my thesis, as the founders of Kurdish organizations are the second generation of the Kurdish *mîrs* who revolted in the nineteenth century and the exiles they experienced and encounters with the official authorities would influence their further acts.

In the third chapter I will analyze the agendas of the Kurdish notables and intellectuals after the 1908 Revolution within the context of what can be called an “Ottoman citizenship.” In order to understand what led those intellectuals to come up with such an agenda I will first discuss how the Kurdish intelligentsia imagined the constitutional regime and what they expected from it through an analysis of the KTTC’s discourse as the KTTC was the first organization founded immediately after the proclamation of the constitution and so bears the footprints of the atmosphere. This chapter is mainly based on the ideas and activities of the circle of this society. The importance of the KTTC also stems from the existence of its local branches in many Kurdish provinces. Through the activities of these local branches second I will illustrate the replies to the new regime from Kurdistan, which actually were shaped by the historical power relations which were partly discussed in the second chapter and will need more elaboration within the context of the early twentieth century. In spite of being far away from homogeneity, the historical leaders of the Kurdish people, especially those who had enjoyed the privileges thanks to the Hamidian Regime and did not welcome the 1908 revolution. However there are also some other tribes who welcomed the constitutional period. As will be discussed in the thesis, these attitudes varied greatly.

In the last part of this chapter I will introduce how the Kurdish intellectuals took social responsibility for the other people who lived side by side with the Kurds. The concerns of these people for the Armenians, Kurds, Yezidis and Nestorians can be seen especially in the archival documents. These documents are crucial to substantiating the framework of this chapter which contextualizes these activities as a part of “Ottoman citizenship.”

In the fourth chapter I will analyze the ideas and activities of Kurdish intellectuals in the name of “Kurdishness” around the concept of “renaissance,” which is borrowed and adapted from the concept of ‘revival’ in the Balkan context; the parameters of which reflected in cultural, national and socio-economic senses.<sup>4</sup> After a brief debate on the related literature, I will discuss the peculiarities of the “Kurdish renaissance” and locate it in a place between phase A and phase B of the periodization of Miroslav Hroch of the “National revival”, which corresponds to a stage when the activities of a group of intelligentsia, who took upon the mission of raising “self-consciousness” among a community, started to give its first fruits.<sup>5</sup> Thereby this chapter tries to show that the attempts of intellectuals between 1908 and 1914 had provided bases, by realizing a “national renaissance” on which the later Kurdish movement would develop. In line with this, for the clear dichotomy cultural nationalism before WWI and political nationalism after it, in this part I will present an alternative which tries to read the discontinuities between 1908 and 1914, revealing the discursive shift between the KTTC (1908) and Hêvî. I will discuss how focus on “Ottoman citizenship” on the agenda of the KTTC slightly gave its place to more emphasis on “Kurdism” and “Islamism” in Hêvî, the programs of which

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<sup>4</sup> Roumen Daskalov, *The Making of a Nation in the Balkans: Historiography of the Bulgarian Revival* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

provide more detailed agendas for the Kurdish renaissance which bore not only cultural, but also socio-economic and political connotations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR THE KURDISH MOVEMENTS AND NOTABLES

A brief look at the pre-1908 atmosphere in the Ottoman Empire is necessary for a good understanding of the first legal Kurdish organizations at the beginning of twentieth century, as the main actors in the twentieth century were the descendants of important figures of Kurdish rebellions in the nineteenth century. For these reasons a brief look at the power relations in the Kurdish geography of the nineteenth century will be helpful in the contextualization of Kurdish legal societies as with the scrutiny of the first legal Kurdish organizations in understanding of the activities of the second generation of powerful Kurdish actors. In this chapter first a brief account of Ottoman-Kurdish relationships will be presented in order to depict the picture of the socio-economic and political dynamics behind the Kurdish movement of the early twentieth century. Particular attention will be given to the reign of Abdülhamid II, as the nature of the confrontations of Kurdish aristocrat families, especially Bedirkhans with the Hamidian policies, were influential in their future deeds. Next the publication of the first Kurdish newspaper outside the Ottoman Empire will be discussed so as to introduce Kurdish press life and its contributions to Kurdish intellectualism and nationalism. Finally snapshots from the lives of the Kurdish notable families, the Bedirkhans, Şemdinans, Cemilpaşazades and Babanzades, and intellectuals as members of these families, who were representatives of the Kurdish political and religious authorities as the leading actors of the Kurdish movement will be discussed.

A good understanding of the types of identifications the Kurds made with the Ottomans and of their relations before the proclamation of the second constitutional

period is essential to comprehending the nature of the first Kurdish organizations. As the scope of the thesis is too narrow to deal with four-hundred years of Kurdish-Ottoman relations, particular focus will be given the politics (re)changed especially with the modernization and centralization policies of the Ottoman governance, which started with the Mahmud II (1808-1839). The response of the Kurdish traditional leaders, who saw the centralization policies as a challenge to their powers, was a series of rebellions, which were used as a means to negotiate power.

So, how did the Kurdish chieftains position themselves in the power relations? The Kurdish geography had a great importance as it was the field on which Ottoman and Persian empires had clashed during the sixteenth century. Thereby, the Kurdish tribes played crucial roles in the balance of power between two empires. However, Kurds were troubled especially with the policies of Shah Ismail, the leader of Safavids. As discussed by Bruinessen the governing policy of Shah Ismail in Kurdistan was twofolds: He either displaced the Kurdish leaders by killing them and replacing them with his own men, or he chose the ones with lower statuses among the Kurdish leaders, so creating a rivalry amongst them. The attempts of resistance to this policy and at independence were suppressed in a bloody way. Thereby the annihilation of Kurdistan in the sixteenth century by the Ottoman Empire was a result of the quest of the Kurdish emirs who desired to get rid of the dominion of Shah Ismail.<sup>6</sup>

The loyalty of the Kurdish emirs and tribe leaders hovered between the Ottoman and Safavid sultans according to their privileges. This knowledge informs us that the Kurdish tribe leaders were not passive actors in their relations with the sultans and governments. Their roles in bargaining influenced the balance of power. When

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<sup>6</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1992), p. 140.

compared to the other eras under the Ottoman domination, the Kurdish tribe leaders enjoyed much more autonomy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Hakan Özoğlu writes that when the Agreement of Kasr-ı Şirin was signed between the Ottomans and Safavids in 1639, there was no longer a struggle between two empires. Thereby the Ottoman Empire found a chance to integrate the Kurdish geography into its political and administrative system.<sup>7</sup> It would not be wrong to say that it was the time when the “Kurdish Question” started and developed interactively. On the one hand the centralization policies and the liquidation of the emirates by the governments and on the other hands disobediences and uprisings of the Kurdish *mîrs*.

The main aspect of Ottoman administration in Kurdistan was to apply policies according to the powers of the emirates. In other words, if the place of a tribe was strategically critical, it was bestowed with much more autonomy.<sup>8</sup> However, the autonomy of Kurdish emirates decreased gradually towards the end of the seventeenth century. Özoğlu pays attention to the changing terminology in the Ottoman sources related to the administrative units in Kurdistan. When a document related to the early sixteenth century talks about Kurdish emirates as districts, another one belonging to the end of century refers to it as the “Ekrad Region.” The use of the term “Ekrad Region” instead of “Kurdish emirates” signifies, as Özoğlu rightly states, the decrease in the autonomy of the Kurdish tribes.<sup>9</sup> Actually the Empire’s policy was to increase its authority in the periphery, and the first way to do this was to diminish the power of the Kurdish emirates which gradually led to their abolition. The stories of the last

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<sup>7</sup> Hakan Özoğlu, *Osmanlı Devleti ve Kürt Milliyetçiliği* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2005), p. 69.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 75

<sup>9</sup> Both Bruinessen (1992) and Özoğlu (2005) discuss the administration of the Ottoman Empire in Kurdistan in a detailed way. Both of them made use of classical texts such as the *Şerefname* and *Seyahatname* of Evliya Çelebi. For the scope of this thesis, I have just mentioned the main logic behind it.

Kurdish emirates and the power which filled the vacuum left by them are very much related to the concern of this thesis, as the destinies of these families would have some effects on the twentieth century Kurdish movement. Because of the fact that the exile which Bedirkhan, Babanzade and Şemdinan families experienced would create not only their opposition to the Sultan but also lead them to find ways to channel their opposition at the beginning of the twentieth century.

### The Liquidation of the Last Kurdish Emirates and the Rebellions of the Kurdish Aristocrat Families

There were a few great emirates in Kurdistan at the beginning of the nineteenth century: Baban, Soran, Bahdinan, Hakari and Bohtan. Initiated during the reign of Mahmut II (1808-1839) centralization policies mark the nineteenth century Ottoman administration, which Nadir Özbek interpretes as the “‘governmentalization’ of the Ottoman state.”<sup>10</sup> Centralization aimed to establish state authority in the periphery, and Kurdistan was no exception. On the contrary it was among the first places because of its strategically critical position, being at the border of Iran and Russia. According to this aim, the “Kurdistan Region” was established, so Kurdistan was not just a geographical term, it has now an administrative unit.<sup>11</sup> This also means that there remained no emirates in Kurdistan by the middle of the nineteenth century, except for the emirates of Soran and Bohtan and their liquidations were replied with a series of revolts.

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<sup>10</sup>According to him, “the extension of central government administrative apparatuses into provinces and rural district,” “the ‘governmentalization’ of Ottoman state,” “could, from another perspective, be conceptualized as a kind of ‘colonization’ of the countryside, especially in view of the deeply rooted and often resistant local traditions of social organization and governance.” Nadir Özbek, “Policing the Countryside: Gendarmes of the Late-Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire (1876-1908).” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 1 (2008), p. 49.

<sup>11</sup> Özoğlu, p. 80.

### Muhammad Pasha of Rawanduz

Known as *Mîri Kor* (One-Eyed Pasha), Mîr Muhammad of Rawanduz became the prince of Soran Emirate in 1814 and he conquered all the area which known today as Northern Iraq. At first, the Ottoman government showed a lack of interest in this expansion and the governor of Baghdad gave Mîr Muhammad the title of “pasha,” expecting that he would be loyal to his orders. During this time, the Ottoman government had a struggle with Muhammad Ali of Egypt. The information that *Mîri Kor* had a contact with İbrahim Pasha, the son of Muhammad Ali, alerted the government to act against Muhammad Pasha. The sultan deployed Rashid Muhammad Pasha, and governors of Mosul and Baghdad also joined his forces to take action against Pasha of Rawanduz. However, the Pasha came to terms with the Ottoman government: he would remain governor of Rawanduz, but he had to go Istanbul and declare his loyalty to the Sultan (Mahmut II). In Istanbul he was welcomed with imperial favor. Yet on his way of home he disappeared. His brother, Rasul, was appointed the governor of Rawanduz, only a few years later, in 1847, he was sent into exile, too. This event marked the end of the Soran emirate.<sup>12</sup>

### The Bedirkhan Beg of Bohtan

The collapse of the Bohtan emirate and the deeds of its charismatic leader Bedirkhan Beg are significant for two reasons. First of all, the second and third generations of the Bedirkhan family would have lived through first decades of the Turkish Republic. The second point stems from the fact that his rebellion in 1846

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<sup>12</sup> Bruinessen, pp. 175-177; Waide Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origin and Development* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), pp. 54-61.



would be considered a “national independence revolt” by later Kurdish nationalists and scholars of Kurdish nationalism.<sup>13</sup>

In 1821 Bedirkhan Beg became the *mîr* (prince) of the Bohtan region, which was highly fragmented in terms of tribal power relations. He achieved little during the first years of his reign.<sup>14</sup> Then he became the most powerful leader in the region. Jwaideh states that the circumstances of the era of his reign affected his life; he came to power thanks to developments that took place as a part of the Ottoman centralization policies. The end of the Soran principality and of Muhammad Pasha of Rawanduz and the other reforms deployed seeking to suppress the semiautonomous Kurdish emirates in the region created a lacuna of power.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, as Safrastian writes, Mîr Bedirkhan managed to bring most of the tribal chiefs in the north of Mosul under his authority.<sup>16</sup> Bedirkhan Beg deployed other means to consolidate his power. For instance, the leader of the Mîran tribe, İbrahim Pasha, was killed as he had not accepted the Bedirkhan’s authority and had not paid him taxes. The result was bloodshed, many people died, yet Bedirkhan Beg was able to make his authority accepted.<sup>17</sup> Interestingly, during this time there were observed some developments which can be seen as signs of independence: he refused to send the local troops to the 1828-9 Ottoman Russia War.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> For instance, Chris Kutschera argues that Mir Bedirkhan was “the father of Kurdish nationalism,” as his revolt, besides its feudal side, had also a nationalist character. Chris Kutschera, *Kürt Ulusal Hareketi* (İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2001), pp. 23.

<sup>14</sup> Jwaideh, p. 64.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>16</sup> Arshak Safrastian, *Kurds and Kurdistan* (London: The Harvill Pres Ltd., 1948), p. 55.

<sup>17</sup> Bruinessen, pp. 178-179.

<sup>18</sup> Safrastian, p. 55.

Mîr Bedirkhan was able to sustain his power while the Ottoman government had trouble with Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt. In 1839 the Ottomans were defeated by the Egyptian army. Regarding this development as a chance, Mîr Bedirkhan consolidated his power by taking the support of not only the Kurds but also the Armenians from Van, Mosul, Urmiye and Diyarbekir.<sup>19</sup> As rightly emphasized by Van Bruinessen, this development was regarded by Kurdish nationalists as an attempt by the Mîr to gain the independence of Kurdistan. Yet there is no source to prove or refute this assertion.<sup>20</sup> On the contrary, there exist some Ottoman resources which demonstrate that there were some other reasons underlying the revolt of Mîr Bedirkhan. According to some of the administration plans of the Ottoman reforms, the Bohtan region would be divided between Diyarbakır and Mosul districts. This was perceived by Bedirkhan Beg as an attempt to challenge his authority. With this concern and thanks to the conditions created because of the Ottoman government's trouble with Egypt Bedirkhan Beg conquered the areas around Bohtan. By 1845 he was able to control the areas between the borders of Diyarbekir, Mosul and Iran.<sup>21</sup> However, during the same years he made a mistake which led to his own downfall. The invasion of the Nestorians of Kurdistan by Mîr Bedirkhan and the massacres against them, with the insistence of great powers, enabled the Ottoman government to take action against the Bohtan emirate, which it had long before contemplated.

Mîr Bedirkhan's actions against Nestorians were tragic events that reveal power struggles among the different historical actors in the region. As Hans Lukas Keiser discusses the Nestorian patriarch, Mar Şimon, wanted to take advantage of the

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<sup>19</sup> Dr. Bletch Shirguh (Celadet Bedirkhan) *Kürt Sorununun Kökeni ve Nedenleri in Açık-Gizli/ Resmi-Gayrresmi Kürdoloji Belgeleri*, ed. Mehmet Bayrak (Ankara: Öz-Ge Yayınları, 1994), p. 69.

<sup>20</sup> Bruinessen, p. 179.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

power vacuum after the liquidation of the Kurdish emirates. His aim was to be recognized as the leader of the Nestorians of the Hakari region by the Ottoman authorities.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, Jwaideh also states that the Kurdish chieftains in the region had been struggling for the establishment of their authority over the Nestorians.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, as Keiser writes in 1840 American missionaries appeared in Kurdistan. This development both disturbed Mar Şimon and the Kurds of region and also the Ottoman authorities. For instance, a big building was constructed in Aşita, a Nestorian village, by those missionaries. Yet this building was regarded by the Ottoman authorities as a “castle,”<sup>24</sup> namely as a challenge to their power. The result was a set of bloody acts against the Nestorians. The first one happened in 1843 against the Tiyyari Nestorians, who lived in the region under the control of Mar Şimon by Nurullah Beg of Hakari with the support of Bedirkhan Beg. In 1846 another attack happened, which also resulted in great devastation.<sup>25</sup>

When it comes to the role of the Ottoman authorities in the slaughter of Nestorians there are some interesting arguments. Jwaideh puts forward that the governor of Erzurum approved the action.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, using missionary sources, Keiser argues that the silence of Ottoman government stemmed from the fact that it wanted neither a strong Nestorian community nor an autonomous Kurdistan and so the deed of the Kurds gave it a chance to act against them.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, as the mass murder of Nestorians created reactions in the Christian world, the Ottoman

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<sup>22</sup> Hans-Lukas Keiser, *İskalanmış Barış: Doğu Vilayetleri’nde Misyonerlik, Etnik Kimlik ve Devlet 1839-1938*, trans. Atilla Dirim (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005), p. 95.

<sup>23</sup> Jwaideh, p. 67.

<sup>24</sup> Keiser, p.97.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 95-98.

<sup>26</sup> Jwaideh, p. 72.

<sup>27</sup> Keiser, p. 100.

government sent a huge number of troops to the Mîr Bedirkhan,<sup>28</sup> which seems to prove the arguments that the Ottoman authorities made use of the issue of the Nestorians as a pretext to eliminate the Bohtan emirate. At first mîr defended his cities, and there were some rumors that he had cut off all relations with the Ottoman government and proclaimed the independence of his state.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, in the end he had no choice but to make peace with the Ottoman authorities. First he was sent to Istanbul then sent into exile to Candia on Crete, with his all family and relatives.<sup>30</sup> This marked the end of the Bohtan Emirate.

There are some important anecdotes in the literature related to the time when Bedirkhan Beg consolidated his power. In the literature the information related to the time of the mîr reign is usually taken from some missionary reports, from Dr. Austin Wright and Mr. Edward Breath, who themselves were in his presence.<sup>31</sup> These two missionaries talked about the charismatic leadership of Mîr Bedirkhan, how he managed to exert authority all over the region and what his reign was like. This is crucial as all of these pieces of information inspired the Kurdish nationalist and has led to the mîr's being regarded as one of the most respected actors in Kurdish history.

After the abolition of the semi-independent Kurdish emirates, the politics in the Kurdish geography became contentious and conflicts between the small tribes destroyed the order. As described by McDowall, Kurdish emirates although they were "eager to aggrandize themselves, they were also vital mediators between the tribes and

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<sup>28</sup> Kutchera, p. 26.

<sup>29</sup> It is claimed that he coined his own money with the inscription "Bedir Khan, the Emir of Bohtan." Jwaideh, p. 73.

<sup>30</sup> Safrastian, p. 60.

<sup>31</sup> Dr. Austin Wright, Edward Breath, *Missionary Herald* 42, no. 11 (Nov., 1846), pp. 378-383 quoted in Bruinessen, p. 179 ; Jwaideh, pp. 65-66.

tribal sections within the territory, and between these and outside world.”<sup>32</sup> The result was lawlessness and from then on, no big power like a principality emerged that could unite the Kurdish tribes. As van Bruinessen states when the administration power of the “state” was increased, the structure of the tribes became simpler and smaller.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to the abolition of the emirates, the Land Law of 1858 was important for Kurdistan’s economic and social organization. This law guaranteed the right of disposition of a piece of land with registration at a land office. Actually the purpose of this law in Kurdistan were to provide the settlement of the Kurdish tribes and also to break the communal nature of the tribal relations and make them more individual. However, in the end, this disposition right passed into the hands of a small group, namely the aghas and sheikhs, who were able to form good relations with the civil servants of the land registry office.<sup>34</sup> It can be said that this reform also strengthened the hands of the power units that filled the vacuum after the liquidation of the emirates.

Another development in the late nineteenth century enabled the Ottoman governments to intervene more deeply in the affairs of the Kurdish tribes and changed their structure. The foundation of the Hamidiye Cavalry in 1891 changed the power balance in the region. The following lines will try to explain implications of this development and the peculiarities of Hamidian policies regarding the Kurds.

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<sup>32</sup> McDowall, David, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997), p. 49.

<sup>33</sup> Bruinessen, p. 182.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 182-184. One of the significant studies to analyzing the Ottoman state’s ways of governance in the Kurdish and Arab provinces was that of Gökhan Çetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890-1908* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

## During the Reign of Abdülhamid II

A few significant developments occurred during the era of Abdülhamid II, who came into power in 1876, which are crucial for both the comprehensions of the nature of Kurdish publications and of Kurdish-Ottoman historiographies. One of them is the establishment of the Hamidiye Cavalry in 1891, as an expression of the imperial center-periphery policy that also gives significant clues about the Armenian issue of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The other one is the revolt of Sheikh Ubeydullah in 1880, which is important both for the consequences of the power vacuum with the liquidation of Kurdish emirates, and for its connotations for Kurdish nationalism. Furthermore, one of the sons of Sheikh Ubeydullah, Abdulkadir Beg, would be a prominent figure in the early twentieth century Kurdish legal societies. Apart from these developments, in 1898 two sons of the Bedirkhan family who were in conflict with the sultan published the first Kurdish periodical, *Kürdistan*, in 1898 outside the imperial borders. Finally the Bedirkhan family was sent to exile into 1906, marking the last significant development for the Kurdish aristocracy just before the proclamation of the constitution in 1908.

### The Revolt of Sheikh Ubeydullah of Nehri

In the above lines the power vacuum in the Kurdish geography after the abolition of the hereditary semi-independent Kurdish emirates was discussed. This lacuna was filled during the late nineteenth century by religious leaders, sheikhs. Naci Kutlay focuses on the point that why not the aghas or begs but the sheikhs fulfilled the former places of mîrs: he argues that religious leaders were more respected and strong in the eyes of the Kurdish people. The aghas and begs were not semi-independent like the former mîrs, they were more dependent on the government, yet the sheikhs

became more strong by gaining vast lands with the land reform of 1858. Furthermore, the Pan-Islamist policy of Abdülhamid II contributed to their political power.<sup>35</sup> It seems that this notification portrays the landscape of how the sheikhs of Şemdinan gained power during this period. They dominated the areas that formerly had been under authority of the mîrs of Bohtan, Bahdinan, and Hakari in the Ottoman Empire and also Ardalan in Qajar Persia.<sup>36</sup>

Sheikh Ubeydullah also came from the respected religious family of the Naqshbandi order of Şemdinan. With both his family's prestige and the circumstances of the era he rose as a leader among Kurds. His rebellion has been considered one of the early Kurdish nationalist revolts. In order to understand the motivation behind the sheikh's rebellion in 1879, a comprehensive analysis of the historical conjecture is essential.

Sheikh Ubeydullah was appointed as the commander of the Kurdish tribal forces during the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian war. This imperial act together with his area of control which previously had been under the domination of the Kurdish emirates highlighted the fact that he was the first recognized Kurdish leader since the abolition of the Bohtan emirate in 1847. The defeat of the Ottomans by the Russians resulted in the Treaty Berlin of 1878 and the outcomes of this war affected deeply the revolt of the sheikh. Scholars of the Sheikh Ubeydullah Rebellion rightly have agreed that whether nationalist or not, one of the basic reasons behind the sheikh's revolt was the 61<sup>th</sup> article of the Treaty of Berlin related to the Armenians.<sup>37</sup> This article aimed to protect the Armenians' status; it was regarded by the Muslims as a step "towards the

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<sup>35</sup> Naci Kutlay, *21. Yüzyıla Giderken Kürtler* (İstanbul:Pêrî Yayınları, 2002), p. 49.

<sup>36</sup> Jwaideh, p. 76.

<sup>37</sup> Jwaideh, p. 83; Özoğlu, p. 97; McDowall p. 56.

emergence of an independent state.”<sup>38</sup> As written in a report by British vice-Consul Clayton, Sheikh Ubeydullah articulated his concerns to an Ottoman official in those words:

“What is this I hear, that the Armenians are going to have an independent state in Van, and that the Nestorians are going to hoist the British flag and declare themselves British subjects? I will never permit it, even if I have to arm the women.”<sup>39</sup>

As understood from these words, Ubeydullah was anxious about the help of the European powers to the Christians in Anatolia. The uneasiness of the Kurds against British consul’s appearance in Kurdistan is noted in the consul reports.<sup>40</sup> Obviously Ubeydullah was against the reforms, yet he found a solution by getting the local Christians’ support by accusing the misrule of the Ottoman and Persian authorities as evidenced by the lawlessness and disorder in the region.

It seems that with the aim of bringing order and law into the region and so preventing the support of the Europeans in the favor of the Christians, Sheikh Ubeydullah in 1879 revolted against the Ottoman government. Wadie Jwaideh, who gives the one of the most detailed accounts of Sheikh Ubeydullah and his revolt, rightly emphasizes that the revolt could have happened due to the weakness of the Ottoman administration in Kurdistan because of the consequences of the 1877-1878 war. Furthermore Ubeydullah revolted with the same weapons which had been provided for the war with Russia.<sup>41</sup> Due to the same conditions, Ubeydullah took up

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<sup>38</sup> McDowall, p. 56.

<sup>39</sup> Jwaideh, p. 83. The Turkish version: “*Bu duyduğum nedir; Ermeniler Van’da bağımsız bir devlet kuracaklarmış. Naturiler ise İngiliz bayrağı çekecekler ve kendilerini İngiliz vatandaşı ilan edeceklermiş? Buna kesinlikle izin vermeyeceğim, kadınları silahlandırmam gerekse bile.*” Özoğlu, p. 98.

<sup>40</sup> Jwaideh, p. 83.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 88.



arms against the Qajar state in 1880, although he was unsuccessful. In 1881 he came to terms with the Ottoman government and was first sent to Istanbul then to Hejaz.<sup>42</sup>

The attitude of Istanbul towards Ubeydullah was interesting. As understood from Ottoman archival documents the government was careful in “solving the problem without shedding blood.”<sup>43</sup> As narrated by Jwaideh *kaymakam* (district governor) of Geve, who attracted the displeasure of the sheikh for having punished a group of Herki tribe, was removed. Furthermore even after the suppression of the revolt, Ubeydullah was granted a salary of twenty thousand piaster a month. As pointed out by Jwaideh all of these developments support arguments that the Ottoman government was behind the movement of Ubeydullah.<sup>44</sup>

Nevertheless, in the Kurdish nationalism literature, the aims of Sheikh Ubeydullah are evaluated as the elimination of Turkish and Persian authorities in Kurdistan and the foundation of an independent Kurdish state. This opinion derives from some letters which are said to have been written by the sheikh to American missionaries in the region and to the consuls of Europe and America. Jwaideh is one of the scholars who believe that the sheikh Ubeydullah movement was nationalist.<sup>45</sup> Another scholar who emphasizes the nationalist nature of Ubeydullah’s revolt is Celîlê Celîl, who makes use of Russian and Armenian documents as well as some letters of the sheikh.<sup>46</sup> For the scope of thesis I will not give place to all of these letters, yet will just introduce a few important points of them.

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<sup>42</sup> BOA, Y..PRK. BŞK, 6/58/1299/L/20.

<sup>43</sup> BOA, Y..PRK.EŞA, 2/73/1298.

<sup>44</sup> Jwaideh, p. 90.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>46</sup> Celîlê Celîl, *Kürt Halk Tarihinden 13 İlginç Yaprak*, trans. Hasan Kaya (İstanbul: Evrensel Basım-Yayın, 2007), pp. 38-56.

As arising from the words of the sheikh, the Kurds wanted no longer to live under the authority of the Persians and the Ottomans and they aimed to be united and establish their own state. There existed no other people whose honor had been trodden like Kurds, who had been divided between the Persian and the Ottomans. Like other peoples on the earth they also deserved to establish their own authority.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, as put forward by Jwaideh, Sheikh Ubeydullah highlighted “racial, cultural, and linguistic similarity of Kurdish people, which marked them off as a separate nationality”<sup>48</sup>

At this point, contrary to Celîl and Jwaideh, Özoğlu is suspicious about the nationalist character of Sheikh Ubeydullah’s rebellion. He rightly emphasizes that whether the sheikh use the term ‘nation/millet’ or the missionary added it when translated into English is unknown.<sup>49</sup> In the same way, Celîl says in the introduction part that he gives place to the French version of the letter as he believes that it is “more correct” than the English version.<sup>50</sup> As the original versions of the letters are not available no definite comment about them can be made. Apart from these concerns regarding translations and primary sources, Özoğlu is on the opinion that maybe the sheikh did not use the term ‘nation/millet’ in the way as we understand today. As a final comment, Özoğlu thinks that the revolt was motivated by the personal aims, like gaining more authority rather than as a “nationalist movement.”<sup>51</sup> However in an archival document which contained the letter of Persian Empire to the Ottoman

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 40-42.

<sup>48</sup> Jwaideh, p.81.

<sup>49</sup> Özoğlu, p. 99

<sup>50</sup> Celîl, p.42

<sup>51</sup> Özoğlu, p. 101.

Empire, the fact that Sheikh Ubeydullah said his aim of unifying Kurds in the both empires to British Consul was stated.<sup>52</sup>

Whether nationalist or not, apart from the said letters of the sheikh, the “anxiety” apparent in the Ottoman official documents also contributed into the idea that the “real” aim of the sheikh was to unite the Kurds. It is stated in a document that “sheikh Ubeydullah is in contact with Persia and Russia against the Empire and wants to conquer Kurdistan.”<sup>53</sup> Furthermore Persian Empire was also afraid of this aim and sent telegraphs to Ottoman state in order to provide the sheikh’s punishment.<sup>54</sup>

It seems that the sheikh troubled Ottoman and Persian authorities a great deal and maybe his ultimate aims were to increase his authority against them. The sheikh died in 1883, in exile. His actions would inspire other generations in their movements and also his prestige was passed on to his son Seyyid Abdülkadir, who would become one of the significant figures in the Kurdish movement after 1908.

### The Hamidian Cavalry

The organization of a militia chosen among Kurdish tribes is a good representation of center-periphery relations in the Ottoman-Kurdish context. What was in this case was another mechanism of the control of the periphery by favoring some against others. Van Bruinessen put forward that what Abdülhamid II did with the Hamidiye Cavalry seemed contrary to the basic aims of the nineteenth century

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<sup>52</sup> “(...)Ve mumaileyh ekrad-ı Osmaniye ile ekrad-ı iraniye-yi birleştürub bir eyalet-i müstakile heyetine koymak efkarında bulunduğunu bil vasıta Tebrizde bulunan İngiliz konsolosuna bildirmiştir (...)” BOA Y..PRK.EŞA 2/73/1298/Z/29. See Appendix A.

<sup>53</sup> “(...)devlet-i aliye aleyhinde bulunmak üzere şeyhe İran’dan name ve adam geldiği ve Bağdad’a kadar Kürdistanı zabt etmek azminde bulunduğu ve bazı (...) dahile ile Rusya ile muharebesi istihbar kılındığı İmadiye Kaymakamlığının işar-ı mündericatından(...)” BOA Y..PRK. ASK, 14/38/1299/Za/05. See Appendix B.

<sup>54</sup> BOA Y..PRK.EŞA 2/73/1298/Z/29

reforms in Kurdistan. On the one hand, other reforms were introduced to provide the settlement and disintegration of tribal relations; on the other hand, founding militia unions among Kurdish tribes meant to strengthening them.<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, the mission of Abdülhamid II and his confident Zeki Pasha with the Hamidiye Cavalry, which was named after the sultan himself, was “manifold,” as Janet Klein emphasizes. In her doctorate dissertation, Klein argues that the motivation behind the Hamidian Cavalry was not just the protection of the border, or the suppression of the Armenians, or the reinforcement of “Islamic unity” within the empire “by creating a special bond” with Kurds. A mixture of all these factors composed the main logic of the Kurdish militia. The most significant one was to integrate the region, Kurdistan, into the empire.<sup>56</sup>

Certainly, as argued by these scholars, Abdülhamid II aimed to abide the Kurds to the Sultan/Caliphate, as the loyalty of Kurds also was suspected upon the revolt of Sheikh Ubeydullah.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, the selection of Hamidiye militias among the less powerful tribes is also thought-provoking, because the former less powerful tribes, with weapons and a salary gaining/prestigious job became strong against others, in this way challenging the balance of the power in the region, allowing the sultan to manipulate the power in Kurdistan.

### The Role of Kurdish Notables

The rest of this chapter will focus on the intellectual activities and leaderships of Kurdish aristocrats, especially the Bedir Khan family. This special focus stems from

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<sup>55</sup> Bruinessen, p. 186

<sup>56</sup> Janet Klein, “Power in the Periphery: The Hamidiye Light Cavalry and the Struggle over Ottoman Kurdistan 1890-1914.” (Ph. D., Princeton University, 2002), pp. 5-6.

<sup>57</sup> See Bruinessen, p. 185.

the fact that the first Kurdish newspaper, *Kürdistan*, was published by two sons of Mir Bedirkhan, Mikdat Mithat and Abdurrahman Bedirkhan brothers in 1898, outside borders of the empire. Thereby, the importance of the Bedirkhan family will be discussed in terms of Kurdish intellectualism, and the role they played in the first legal Kurdish organizations. Then the significance of other leading Kurdish families, Şemdinans, Babans and Cemilpaşazades will be examined within the same framework, looking chiefly at their role in the development of Kurdish nationalism in the early twentieth century. As discussed by Özoğlu, who evaluates the “role of preexisting ties in the emergence of Kurdish Nationalism,” the leadership of Kurdish nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century’s stemmed if not totally but primarily from:

(...) notables whose families once owned large estates in Kurdistan as *tımar* (fief holders) or *mültezims* (tax collectors). A significant portion of the notables were of Sufi, and more particularly Naqshbandi origin.<sup>58</sup>

Özoğlu examines the background of these leaders especially in regards with the post- First World War era; in other words through their activities in *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti* (Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan) in 1918. In this part the deeds of the Kurdish notables in pre-Constitutional period and the Kurdish societies between 1908 and 1914.

### The Bedirkhan Family

This part aims to contextualize Bedirkhan family’s story within the framework of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Kurdish movement, but not give a total account of them. In the part in which the liquidation of the Kurdish emirates was

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<sup>58</sup> Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and Otoman State; Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), p. 87.

discussed, it was stated that after the revolt Bedir Khan Beg was sent to Crete with his family and two hundred of his men. As understood from the diary of E.W. Charles Noel, in Crete the mîr took charge in the suppression of the revolt of the Greeks of Crete with his men (1856). Due to his success in this suppression, he was forgiven by the Sultan and allowed to return to Istanbul, and then to go to Damascus in 1866, where he lived until his death in 1870.<sup>59</sup> In this way, the Bedir Khan family returned to Istanbul, but was not allowed to go to Kurdistan. As stated by Malmisanij, whose work is one of the most detailed accounts of the Bedir Khan family, after the death of Bedir Khan Beg, the Ottoman government decided to appoint the older sons of Bedir Khan to the appropriate official posts, like *kaymakamlık* and the smaller ones were posted in the government offices with “appropriate” salaries.<sup>60</sup> It seems that this kind of information is the best example of how the Ottoman government(s) dealt with the leading Kurdish families in the second half of the nineteenth century. By appointing them to the governmental posts, by giving them salaries even after the suppression of the revolts were a new technique of governing which was an aspect of Ottoman modernization. This approach also explains partially the logic behind the Hamidian Cavalry, as was stated before Abdülhamid II aimed to make Kurdish tribes loyal to him by giving them military posts. This policy also was applied to the members of the Bedir Khan family. Nevertheless, this situation was not homogeneous. Some of the sons of Bedir Khan Beg had conflicts with the Sultan, quit their jobs and went to abroad. One of them was Abdurrahman Bedir Khan, who became the publisher of first Kurdish newspaper, *Kürdistan*.

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<sup>59</sup>E. W. Charles Noel, *Kürdistan 1919 Binbaşı Noel'in Günlüğü*, trans. Bülent Birer. (İstanbul: Avesta, 1991), p. 93.

<sup>60</sup> Malmisanij, *Cızıra Botanlı Bedirhaniler ve Bedirhani Ailesi Derneği'nin Tutanakları* (Spanga: APEC, 1994), p. 61.

The first Kurdish newspaper was published in Cairo, by a brother of Abdurrahman Bedirkhan, Mikdat Mithat Bedirkhan, in 1898. This was the first newspaper and it signified the start of the Kurdish press and publishing. It is argued by Abdurrahman Bedirkhan in the sixth issue of the newspaper that his brother had had to return to Istanbul because of the compulsions of Sultan Abdülhamid II. He further puts forward that they used force in Istanbul against his other brothers such as Emin Ali Bedirkhan, to make him, M. Mithat Bedirkhan, return.<sup>61</sup> Thereby after publishing the first five issues of the newspaper in Cairo, he had to go for Istanbul. Abdurrahman Bedirkhan took up the publication of the newspaper. It seems that the Sultan and government were very interested about the deeds of the Bedirkhan family and the publication of a Kurdish newspaper even outside of the borders of the empire disturbed them. Thus as will be shown in the following lines the official documents and the articles of Abdurrahman Beg in the *Kürdistan* point out how the during the reign of Abdülhamid rules were strict about publishing anything. Thus, it can help to portray the difference of the relatively “free” atmosphere of the Second Constitutional period and the “eagerness” with which the Kurdish intelligentsia welcomed the constitutional regime.

In *Kürdistan*, we came across some writings of first Mikdat Mithat and then Abdurrahman Bedirkhan addressed to Abdülhamid II, which contain important knowledge related to the perception of the Hamidian regime for a part of the Bedirkhan family. *Kürdistan*, the first Kurdish newspaper as understood from official documents, was not allowed to enter the Empire and the official perception labeled the newspaper as Kurdish *mel’ûn* (damned).<sup>62</sup> Mikdat Mithat Bedirkhan applied to the

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<sup>61</sup> Narrated by Malmisanij in *Cizira Botanlı...*, p. 169.

<sup>62</sup> BOA. DH.MKT 2473/ 105/1328/Z/27

authorities to have the ban lifted, but he received no answer. He stated that he had made his request via publishing it in *Kürdistan*, questioning whether his requests had reached to Sultan.<sup>63</sup> However, the ban was not lifted. On the contrary, as it was considered dangerous, people who were seen reading the newspaper were jailed and the Ottoman government forced M. Midhat Bedirkhan to return to Istanbul.<sup>64</sup>

After the departure of his brother the publication of *Kürdistan* fell to Abdurrahman Bedirkhan. In one of his writings addressed to Abdülhamid II, he stressed the reasons for leaving job and the country. As mentioned above, the sons of the Bedirkhan family had been posted in official jobs and Abdurrahman Bedirkhan also had been appointed to a job in the Ministry of Education: he was the head clerk in High Schools Administration and had worked there for “6-7 years.” He further stated that his only wish was to be beneficial to his people, yet the cruelties of the Sultan could harass the most dangerous and devious creatures in the world. So he had had to quit his job and left the country to be free and realize his aims.<sup>65</sup> Upon his departure, the Ottoman government implemented the official process regarding “civil servants who have deserted from the country.”<sup>66</sup> It seems that Sultan Abdülhamid II never allowed the access of *Kürdistan* to the Kurds in the Ottoman Empire. This situation contributed to the opposition of some members of the Kurdish notable families at the Sultan. Abdurrahman Bedirkhan was one of them. This helps us to understand the reasons behind the participation of some Bedirkhans into the Committee of Union and Progress. In Geneva, Abdurrahman both continued to publish *Kürdistan* and was

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<sup>63</sup> M.Emin Bozarslan, ed., *Kürdistan İlk Kürt Gazetesi (1898-1902)* (Uppsala: Deng Yayinevi, 1991), p. 154.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp. 466.

<sup>66</sup> BOA. İ.HUS. 83/ 1318 R-048.



involved in the activities of the Committee of Union and Progress with two other Kurds, Hikmet Baban, from the aristocratic Baban family, and Doctor Abdullah Cevdet. Furthermore Abdurrahman Bedirkhan was the Kurdish delegate in the 1902 Congress of the CUP.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, as Şükrü Hanioglu states after the 1902 Congress, the followers of Ahmed Rıza decided to “renew publication *Kürdistan* in Kurdish as an organ of the new union.”<sup>68</sup> It seems that the Kurdish intellectuals not only welcomed the Second Constitutional of 1908 but also were active in its preparation.

From an official document it is understood that Abdurrahman Bedirkhan was forgiven and allowed to return to Istanbul in 1905.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, about one year later, he was sent into exile with other members of his family, in 1906. The exile of whole Bedirkhan family in 1906 is an interesting story which depicts that how they were seen as potential “criminals” by the government and how they had always been suspected even if they worked in the palace or state offices. The event which led to the Bedirkhan’s exile actually happened between Ali Şamil Pasha, who was a son of the Mîr Bedirkhan and attained the rank of pasha in the Ottoman army; and Rıdvan Pasha, who was *şehremini*<sup>70</sup> of Üsküdar at that time. Ali Şamil Pasha was involved in the killing of Rıdvan Pasha, and probably he was guilty. Nazmi Sevgen, who gives a detailed account of this issue by using Ottoman archives, writes that Ali Şamil Pasha knew the ones who had killed Rıdvan Pasha, he had collected them and their weapons

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<sup>67</sup> Malmisanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetesi Kurdistan’ı Yayımlayan Abdurrahman Bedirkhan (1868-1936)* (İstanbul: Vate Yayınları, 2009), p.13, p.19.

<sup>68</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 29.

<sup>69</sup> BOA. DH.MKT 1005/92/1323/B/13.

<sup>70</sup> Means ‘mayor’ in Ottoman system

with his own car.<sup>71</sup> Upon that conviction of Ali Şamil Pasha, Sultan Abdülhamid II gave the order that all of the people who had relations with Ali Şamil Pasha and his nephew Abdürrezak Beg, in other words all the male members of Bedir Khan family, were to be jailed and then sent into exile. As far as understood from related documents there were some Armenians, Greeks and Turks who sent to jail for even the smallest contact with the Bedir Khans.<sup>72</sup> This remarks the last important and tragic exile of the Bedir Khans just before the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Period. All of this cannot be attributed only to the paranoid of the Sultan; it seems that Bedir Khans were seen as a potential threat due to the “historical experience.”

As seen, the Bedir Khan family was both an aristocratic and intellectual family who were influential actors in Kurdish politics, and in culture and literature. In what follows the story of another important Kurdish family, the Cemilpashazades, who were influential during the first legal Kurdish organizations after 1908 will be given.

### Cemilpashazades of Diyarbekir

Before giving the account of Kadri and Ekrem Cemilpashas, who were influential especially in the Kurdish Hope Student Organization (1912), the place of family will be examined. The name of the family came from Ahmet Cemil Pasha, who, according to Sicil-i Ahval records, was born in 1837 in Diyarbekir as a son of *Hafız*, one who has memorized Qur'an, Mustafa Efendi.<sup>73</sup> Deriving from the titles as “hafız,” Özoğlu argues that although there is no further information related to the

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<sup>71</sup> Nazmi Sevgen, *Doğu ve Anadolu'da Kürt Beylikleri; Osmanlı Belgeleri ile Kürt Türkleri Tarihi* (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1982), pp. 122-124; Malmisanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetesi Kurdistan'ı..*, pp. 38-41; BOA. Y.PRK. AZN 24/55/1324/Ra/25

<sup>72</sup> BOA. Y.PRK AZN 24/55/1324/Ra/25

<sup>73</sup> Malmisanij, *Diyarbakirli Cemilpaşazadeler ve Kürt Milliyetçiliği* (İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2004), p. 17.

origin of Cemilpasha family, it can be put forward that the family had a “religious charisma.”<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, it is obvious that Ahmet Cemil Pasha enjoyed official posts as he was at different levels of the Ottoman bureaucracy.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, he received the rank of “pasha” and became governor of Diyarbakir and there was given a large *has*, the highest amount in fief system.<sup>76</sup> An important anecdote related to Ahmet Cemil Pasha is that he sent both his sons and daughters to the school and many of his grandchildren were sent to Istanbul and Europe for higher education.<sup>77</sup> This highlights the source of inspiration for education and enlightenment the grandsons of Ahmet Cemil Pasha inherited. They would be leading figures in the Kurdish Student movement during their education in Istanbul.

The memoirs of Kadri Cemilpasha (Zinar Silopi) and his cousin Ekrem Cemilpasha introduce valuable knowledge related to both their personal deeds and the movement of which they were a part. Kadri Cemilpaşa was born in Diyarbakır and educated both in Istanbul and Europe. In 1911, he was a student at Halkalı Yüksek Ziraat Mektebi. He became active participant in the Kürt Talebe Hêvî Cemiyeti (Kurdish Student Hope Organization) of 1912.<sup>78</sup> Apart from his cousin Ekrem Cemilpasha, there were some other members of his family in Istanbul. Kadri and Ekrem Cemilpaşa went to Switzerland for education and there founded the Lausanne branch of Hope.<sup>79</sup> With the outbreak of the First World War, the activities of the Hope

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<sup>74</sup> Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables...*, p. 103.

<sup>75</sup> See Malmisanij, *Diyarbakirli Cemilpaşazadeler...*, p. 17-27 for a more detailed account of posts Ahmet Cemil Pasha had been.

<sup>76</sup> Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables...*, p. 104.

<sup>77</sup> Malmisanij, *Diyarbakirli Cemilpaşazadeler...*, p. 27.

<sup>78</sup> Kadri Cemilpaşa [Zinar Silopi], *Doza Kürdistan (Kürdistan Davası) Kürt Milletinin 60 Yıllık Esaretten Kurtuluş Savaşı Hatıraları*, edited by Mehmet Bayrak (Ankara: Öz-Ge Yayınları, 1991), p. 34.

stopped and Kadri Cemilpaşa also participated in the war, even he joined the Kurdish Hamidian Militias.<sup>80</sup> After the end of war, they continued their activities in *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti*.

#### Sayyid Abdülkadir of the Şemdinan Family

Sayyid Abdülkadir was the son of Sheikh Ubeydullah, who led a revolt in 1880 that troubled the Ottoman government, and for which he was sent into exile to Mecca/Medina.<sup>81</sup> A document from Ottoman Archives dated to 1883 is about the demand of Abdülkadir to return Istanbul.<sup>82</sup> We do not know whether he could return upon his request, yet as Özoğlu states his name was in the list of CUP's Istanbul branch in 1895.<sup>83</sup> And this means that Sayyid Abdülkadir was in Istanbul for some time during 1895. It is known that he was sent into exile to Mecca in 1896, yet the reason for this remains ambiguous. On the one hand according to Özoğlu, he was involved in the plot against Abdülhamid II. On the other hand, İsmail Göldaş states that as the idea of Kurdishness became popular, he was sent into exile.<sup>84</sup> The former reason seems more reasonable when the relations of Sayyid Abdülkadir with the CUP are considered. The name Sayyid Abdülkadir appears among members of the CUP in Istanbul according to Hanioglu's detailed work.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, what is clear is that he

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>81</sup> BOA, Y.PRK. BŞK, 6/58/1299/L/20.

<sup>82</sup> Y.PRK. UM 6/23/1298/R/14

<sup>83</sup> Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables...*, pp. 90.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. Özoğlu narrated from his own interview with the grandson of Abdülkadir; İsmail Göldaş, *Kürdistan Teâli Cemiyeti* (İstanbul: Doz Yayınları, 1991), p. 17. Göldaş takes this information from Garo Sasuni, *Kürt Ulusal Hareketleri ve 15. YY'dan Günümüze Ermeni Kürt İlişkileri*, trans. Bedros Zartaryan, Memo Yetkin, (İstanbul: Med Yaynevi, 1992), pp. 103.

was able to come back with the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Period. He was also a member of *Ayan meclisi*, the chamber of notables, between 1910 and 1920.<sup>86</sup> After 1908 he played a pivotal role in the Kurdish organizations. After the First World War he became engaged in the activities of *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti*. Sayyid Abdülkadir was executed during the suppression of the Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925.<sup>87</sup>

### The Babanzade Family

The emirate of Baban was founded in today's northern Iraq during the early seventeenth century. And as understood from the documents Nazmi Sevgen provided, it was like a *mutasarrıflık*, an administrative unit of districts.<sup>88</sup> Thereby it is known that Baban family remained influential in the politics of the region. The father of Şükrü Baban and İsmail Hakkı, two important figures in the Kurdish intellectual movement during the early twentieth century, Mustafa Zihni Paşa was also a *mutasarrıf*. Furthermore we came across the name of Babanzade Zihni Paşa in the founders list of *Kürt Teaviün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Society for Mutual Aid and Progress).<sup>89</sup> His son İsmail Hakkı Babanzade was among the writers of the periodical of the society. İsmail Hakkı Babanzade, the influential author of both *KTTG* and *Roj-i Kürd*, like many members of his family was graduated from *Mekteb-i Mülkiye*, and then became an instructor at it.<sup>90</sup> He also became *mebus*, representative, after the 1908

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<sup>85</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1989), pp. 216-218

<sup>86</sup> Özoğlu, *ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Göldaş, p. 19.

<sup>88</sup> Sevgen, p. 178.

<sup>89</sup> Malmisanij, *Kürt Teaviün ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Gazetesi* (İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 1999), p. 27

elections. During that time he went on with journalism and wrote for *Tanin*. He became Education Minister in 1910.<sup>91</sup> Şükrü Baban was also among writers of the newspapers of *İkdam* and *Tanin*. He studied law and economics abroad and was appointed to important positions of state offices.<sup>92</sup>

What was intended in this part was to give accounts of some of the important Kurdish notable-intellectual families, as their backgrounds will be helpful to understanding their political and social deeds of them in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Actually the number of people who engaged in the organizational activities during the second constitutional regime was not limited to these four families. In the next chapter the accounts of other influential figures will be discussed where their cultural and political deeds will be analyzed.

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<sup>90</sup> Ali Çankaya, *Yeni Mülkiye Tarihi ve Mülkiyeliler (Mülkiye Şeref Kitabı): Son Asır Türk Tarihi'nin önemli Olaylarıyla Birlikte* vol. 2 (Ankara: S.B.F Yayınları, 1968), p. 332.

<sup>91</sup> İsmail Hakkı Babanzade, *Beyrut'tan Kuveyt'e Irak Mektupları*, ed. Murat Culcu (İstanbul: Büke Yayıncılık, 2002), pp. 11-12.

<sup>92</sup> Göldaş, pp. 21-22.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE RECEPTION OF THE 1908 REVOLUTION BY THE KURDS AND THE PROGRAM OF THE KURDISH INTELLECTUALS FOR THE NEW REGIME

The reactions of the Kurds towards the new regime were not monolithic or static; they changed according to the different socio-economic backgrounds, and power relations. Despite this kind of differentiations it seems that the Kurdish intelligentsia who took upon “enlightenment mission” saw the constitutional regime at the beginning as a chance both for the development of their own people, the Kurds, and the salvation of the Ottoman Empire. Thereby in line with their agenda, especially in the first years of the new regime, it is possible to observe that the Kurdish intelligentsia was very concerned with the situation and the future of the Empire, in the name of which can be called “Ottoman citizenship.” The program for an “Ottoman citizenship” proposes equal living conditions for all the constituents of the empire and especially deals with the peoples who were neighbors of the Kurds, like the Armenians and Nestorians. Actually such a view can also give some clues about the nature of “Ottomanism” among the Kurdish intellectuals, which was different from that among their co-workers, the Young Turks. First I will briefly discuss the place of the Kurdish intellectuals in the Young Turk movement. This may help to shed light on the Kurdish intellectuals’ views of “Ottomanism” and so give us a channel to describe their programs for “Ottoman citizenship,” which was strongly related to their imaginations of the constitutional regime. After that a discussion of differentiations in reception of the new regime especially between Kurdish intellectuals and the Kurdish tribes who were more privileged during the Hamidian regime is essential to portray the atmosphere of the era.

## Relations with the Young Turks: Between the Conservatists and Decentralists

In this part it is beyond the scope of the thesis to give an account of the relations between Kurds and Young Turks with its all sides, yet some general information is indispensable to contextualize the programs of the Kurdish intellectuals during the constitutional regime. As discussed in the previous chapter persons from two influential Kurdish families, Abdurrahman Bedirkhan and Hikmet Baban were the Kurdish delegates at Congress of 1902 of the Committee of Union and Progress. It is necessary to give more general information about the wings of the Young Turks movement with which the Kurdish intellectuals allied themselves. In the first congress of the Young Turks in Paris, in the February of 1902, because of the debates on whether to accept the assistance of the Great Powers in bringing down Abdülhamid II or not there arose two main wings, one under the leadership of Ahmet Rıza, and the other under the leadership of Prince Sabahaddin's League of Private Initiative and Decentralization.<sup>93</sup> It seems that there were some differences among the Kurdish figures towards this division. For instance as understood from an article in the *Kurdistan* titled *Ahrar-ı Osmaniye Kongresi* (Ottoman Liberalists Congress), Abdurrahman Bedirkhan also opposed the idea of the intervention of foreign powers.<sup>94</sup> However, Abdullah Cevdet,<sup>95</sup> another influential Kurd in the Young Turk movement, was a proponent of the intervention of the foreign powers. Abdullah

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<sup>93</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution...*p. 4-5.

<sup>94</sup> Bozarslan, *Kürdistan...* vol. II., p. 562

<sup>95</sup> Abdullah Cevdet is an interesting figure. He was educated at the Royal Medical Academy, and influenced by the positive sciences. After the proclamation of the constitutional regime he did not immediately return Istanbul. As Hanioglu proposed he returned in 1910. M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Düşünür Olarak Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi* (İstanbul: Üçdal Neşriyat, 1981), pp. 229; 291 Maybe because of this we cannot see his articles in *KTTC*. As we later see he wrote many significant articles in *Roj-i Kurd* and *Hetaw-i Kurd*.



Cevdet was also in favor of Prince Sabahaddin and was an active member of the League of Private Initiative and Decentralization during his years in Egypt.<sup>96</sup>

Another important point between the two main wings of the Young Turks movement is the issue of decentralization which, as will be discussed later, had profound effects on the agendas of the Kurdish intellectuals. As Hanioglu puts forward, the Prince's "decentralists" view in the last analysis implies giving autonomy to the local authorities, which was opposed to the main aim of the cadre who composed the Progress and Union Party under the leadership of Ahmet Rıza upon the congress of 1902. The ultimate goal of this cadre was a nation-state like the European model, which would mean collapse of the local authorities.<sup>97</sup> It seems that Kurdish intellectuals like Abdullah Cevdet appropriated the Prince's ideas as they were in line with their own like granting more authority to the provinces.

However, as seen, Prince Sabahaddin while trying to make a coalition with Armenian organizations like Dashnaksutun, as a way to reach his ultimate goal was to secure the support of the Great Powers, he pointed out that both the Armenians and Turks suffered from the encroachments of Kurds, as they gave harm to Turkish villages. He also complained about the confusion of Turks with Kurds by the European powers in the attacking of Armenians.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore Sabahaddin rejected an article published in *Terakki (Progress)*, his own propaganda organ, which

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<sup>96</sup> Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Düşünü...*, p.196.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., pp. 200-201. However as would be later explained both by Prince Sabahaddin himself and also by some scholars who have studied his ideas, the Prince never intended to give autonomy to the ethnic groups. It was only an administrative policy. For instance, S. Akşin Somel, "Osmanlı Reform Çağında Osmanlıcılık Düşüncesi," in *Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birkimi*, edited by Mehmet. Ö. Alkan (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), p. 109; Aykut Kansu "Prens Sabahaddin'in Düşünsel Kaynakları ve Aşırı-Muhafakâr Düşüncenin İthali," in *Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birkimi*, ed. Mehmet. Ö. Alkan (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), pp.156-165.

<sup>98</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution...* pp. 84-85.

includes positive comments about Kurds and put forward that as the Kurds and Arabs were nomadic people, he was against the granting autonomy to them.<sup>99</sup>

Despite this, as Kutlay writes, the fourth and fifth articles of the program of League of Private Initiative and Decentralization was significant. “For preventing fights and disputes which separate different people from each other, each people will take precautions to elect their own representatives” was the fourth article. In line with this the fifth article states “regardless of their origins, all the citizens of the empire have equal rights and duties and again in the same way all the higher schools, including military ones, are open to everyone.”<sup>100</sup>

These two articles were the sources of inspiration for Kurdish intellectuals as such views would be reflected in the programs of the organizations they would establish. Before passing into the details of the activities of Kurdish intellectuals, I will introduce a brief background for the notion of “Ottoman citizenship,” upon which this part will be based.

#### The Notes on “Citizenship” in the Late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century Ottoman Empire

Fikret Adanır, who pursues the development of the notion of citizenship through a comparative study of Russian, Habsburg and Ottoman empires, highlights the fact that the transformation from “being subject” to citizenship stemmed from the need of modernization and rationalism, which was similar both in the Austria-Hungarian and Ottoman empires. However in the background of the Ottoman Empire

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<sup>99</sup> Hanioğlu, *Bir Siyasal Düşünür...* p. 201.

<sup>100</sup> Naci Kutlay, *İttihat Terakki ve Kürtler* (Ankara: Beybun Yayınları, 1991), p. 118.

it seems that this need was the result of the decrease in the power of the central state in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.<sup>101</sup>

In addition to this, according to Cihan Osmanağaoğlu, although the term “citizenship” is very complicated and affected from many dynamics, it is generally defined with three key elements, “rights and freedoms of individual,” “principle of equality,” and “belonging (to a nation-state)” in the Ottoman context, citizenship generally means “the legal and political bond between the individual and state.” Through these three elements, Ottoman citizenship can be traced back to the 1839 *Tanzimat Fermanı* (The Rescript of Gülhane) as it contains the individual rights of equality and despite being theoretical, an “Ottoman nation.”<sup>102</sup> With the *Islahat Fermanı* (Rescript of Reform) in 1856, it was aimed to remove the differences between Muslims and non-Muslims and to create equal Ottoman citizens as far as possible. Then with an article in the first constitution of the empire (1876), citizenship was defined. This term included each individual in the empire regardless of religion and sect.<sup>103</sup>

The steps taken for the unification of the empire resulted in a legal form with the 1869 *Tabiyet-i Osmaniye Kanunnamesi* (Code of Ottoman Nationality), the aim of which was the creation of a bond between the state and the people and so prevent their mixing with the neighbor Balkan subjects. In 1908 when the CUP took the reins

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<sup>101</sup> Fikret Adanır, “Karşılaştırmalı Bir Değerlendirme: Çarlık Rusyası ve Habsburg İmparatorluğu Arasında Osmanlı’da Vatandaşlık” *Toplumsal Tarih*, no.182, (2009), pp. 59-60. With the uprisings and after the capitulations given to the foreign countries, there arose the possibility that the minorities in the empire would have the citizenship of or at least the protection of other countries. These developments triggered the necessity of creation of a standard citizenship.

<sup>102</sup> Cihan Osmanağaoğlu “Tanzimat Fermanı’ndan II. Meşrutiyet’e Osmanlı Vatandaşlığı” *Toplumsal Tarih* no. 182, (2009), p. 87.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 88 “Devlet-i Osmaniye tabiyetinde bulunan efradın cümlesine herhangi din ve mezhepten olur ise olsun bilâ istisna Osmanlı tabir olunur ve Osmanlı sıfatı kanunen muayyen olan ahvale göre istihsal ve izae edilir.”; Üstel argues that thus Ottoman citizenship on the one hand contractarian constitutionalism, *de jure*, on the other hand *de facto* nature of communitarian belonging, proceeded on slippery as well as dangerous base. Füsun Üstel “Makbul Vatandaş”ın Peşinde: II. Meşrutiyet’ten Bugüne Vatandaşlık Eğitimi (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), p. 27.

of the state, they proposed a constitution which based on the domination of the *millet*,<sup>104</sup> the primary education accordingly native language of a region, compulsory military service without privileges and a kind of land reform in its program.<sup>105</sup> This process as Füsün Üstel argues that was the legal background of the prevention of the collapse of the empire by creating “a community of citizens.”<sup>106</sup>

During the era of the Second Constitutional regime a series of legal and political regulations were promulgated to shape the relations between the state and its citizenship. The promulgation of *Cemiyetler Kanunu* (Law for the Associations) of 16 August 1909 and *Tatıl-i Eşgal Kanunu* (Strike Law) of 30 July 1909 regulated the rights of assembling and association, which were not defined in Constitution. These kinds of regulations opened the way for organized society and political and civil participation of the citizens, yet the aims and natures of the associations also were restricted.<sup>107</sup>

In line with this process of key factors for the evolution of Ottoman citizenship, Hacısalihioğlu proposes that when discussion on the citizenship in the Ottoman Empire being held, the question of how the representatives or the intellectuals of different ethnic groups perceived “Ottoman citizenship” has great importance. The fact that the same persons have the loyalty to the different identities,

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<sup>104</sup> *Millet* does not mean “nation” as we used it today, rather it referred to religious communities.

<sup>105</sup> Üstel, pp. 60-61. Yet even in 1909 constitution the phrase of “domination of the millet” is not stated.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 25. However, as understood from the 18<sup>th</sup> article of the Constitution, which prescribes the obligation of knowing the official language of the state for being employed in the state offices, the critical point of ideal of unity of the constituents was the *cujus region, ejus lingua*. Ibid. p. 27.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 27. With remarks like “*asayış-i memleket ve tamamıyet-i mülkiyeyi ihlal ve şekl-i hükümet-i tağyir ve anasır-ı Osmanıyeyi siyaset tefrik maksadına müstenid.*”

which can be seen as a contradiction today, was a reality of the Empire<sup>108</sup> and valid for the Kurdish intellectuals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the light of these discussions I will characterize the views and activities of the Kurdish intellectuals especially during the first two years of the constitutional regime in terms of “Ottoman citizenship” in the societies they founded.

The Proclamation of the Second Constitutional Regime and the *Kürt Teaviin ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Society for Kurdish Mutual Aid and Progress)

The most appropriate way of comprehending the expectations from the 1908 revolution is to look at the ideas and deeds of the Kurdish intelligentsia in Istanbul which were incorporated in the first legal organizations within the boundaries of the empire.<sup>109</sup> *Kürt Teaviin ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (KTTC) is the best example to display the affiliations of the Kurds with the new regime and their vision related to the position of Kurds in the Ottoman Empire. The members of the class of Kurdish intelligentsia, the backgrounds of some of which were introduced in the previous chapter, were stronger proponents of the constitutional regime as they were opponents of the tyranny. An analysis of both the regulations of the organization and the newspaper of it will portray this situation more clearly. Besides, this will help us

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<sup>108</sup> Mehmet Hacısalıhoğlu, “19. Yüzyıldan 20. Yüzyıla Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Vatandaşlık Kavramının Gelişimi,” *Toplumsal Tarih* no. 182 (2009), p. 53.

<sup>109</sup> Although the first legal Kurdish organization, *Kurd Azm-i Kavi Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Strong Determination) was founded in 1900 in Istanbul, we do not know information about it except that one of its founders, Kürdizade Ahmed Ramiz had to leave Istanbul upon its closure. K. Cemilpaşa, pp. 31. Furthermore Hanioglu also mentions an Ottoman intelligence report dated to July 1906 which informs about the efforts of Dashnaksutiun, the Armenian Organization, calling the Kurds to revolt against the Ottoman government. Yet, “the only positive response came from a Kurdish society named Azm-i Kavî, which merely asked for Kurds to treat Armenians well and not to obey the sultan.” Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution...*, p. 96. From this information it is understood that Azm-i Kavî survived until sometime before 1906.

to understand better the disappointments of the Kurdish intelligentsia and the shifts in their identifications of themselves as “Ottoman.”

As understood from its charter, the KTTC was founded on 19 September 1324 (2 October 1908) in Istanbul, primarily aiming at completing of the constitutional regime in the eyes of the Kurds. The focus on the education and collection of any Kurdish work written or unwritten and the aims related to opening primary/ secondary/ higher schools in the places where the attempts of the education ministry remained insufficient were some of the outstanding ones among the articles.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore the regulations verify that Sayyid Abdülkadir was the life-long head of the organization.<sup>111</sup>

A concise version of the regulations was published in the first issue of the *KTTC* as the declaration of the organization.<sup>112</sup> It is important as it conveys the suggestions of this circle not only for the new regime and their expectations from the constitution, but also for an “Ottoman citizenship:”

#### The Views about the Constitutional Regime and the Appropriation of an “Ottoman Citizenship”

The declaration of the KTTC was published in the first issue of its journal, which first was published in 5 December 1908, defines itself as a “religious, scholarly, political, literary and social newspaper.”<sup>113</sup> The declaration of the KTTC

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<sup>110</sup> Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal...*, vol. I, pp. 409-413

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 413.

<sup>112</sup> “Cem’iyet’in Beyannamesi” [The Declaration of the Organization] no.1 22 Teşrinisani 1324 (5 December 1908), in M. Emin Bozarslan, *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi* (Uppsala: Deng Yayınevi, 1998), pp. 40-41.

<sup>113</sup> “Dinî, bilimsel, siyasal, edebî, toplumsal gazetedir,” ibid.

includes many points which can be explained as a wish for “democracy” and the reliance on the constitution as a provider of this wish.

The KTTC stated that its aim of the foundation was to find and complete the means by which noble Kurdish people would respond to the requirements of the new age and would increase their education levels and become a prosperous society via protecting the Constitution, which was based on the principles of shariah and as it is testimonial of the country’s salvation.<sup>114</sup> From this statement it was understood how the circle of the KTTC regarded the constitution as a mean for the development of the Kurdish people and it partly explains the reasons why they appropriated the new regime so eagerly.

In line with this issue, the declaration signifies that the protection of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire was based on the consolidation of the unity.<sup>115</sup> Furthermore the declaration points out that with the opening of the parliament this kind of organizations would go on with their activities and/or develop into political parties, in such a case, the Ottoman sultanate should not prevent their legitimate rights, which were protected in the constitution.<sup>116</sup> Especially this point touched upon the necessity of multi-party/organization in the Ottoman politics and demonstrates the possibility or the opinion about the evolution of the KTTC into a political party.

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<sup>114</sup> “‘Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Cemiyeti’ nin maksad-ı teşkili, nizamname-i dahilisinde beyan ve tasrih bulunduğu üzere, berat-ı selâmet-i mülk-ü millet olan ve ahkâm-ı şeriata müstenid bulunan Kanun-ı Esasînin muhafaza- ahkâmıyla, o sayede Kürd kavm-i necîbinin ihtiyacât-ı asriyece ve tahsîs-ı maârifce esbab-ı terakkî ve saadet-i halini istikmal (...)” ibid.

<sup>115</sup> “(...) tamamîyet-i mülkiye-i Devlet-i Osmaniye’nin muhafazası uğrunda îsar-ı nakdîne-i hayata olan azm-ü cezm-i millî ve dinînin bir nokta-i sabite-i ittihadı te’yîd- te’bîdî kazıyye-i mühimmiyesine ma’tûf(...)” ibid.

<sup>116</sup> “(...) Meclis-i Meb’usan’ın küşadıyla, bu gibi cem’iyetlerin devam-ı mevcudiyetleri halinde veyahud fırak-ı siyasiye inkılabında ta’kib olunacak meslek-i siyasî dahi makam-i celîl-i Hilâfet-i İslâmiye ve saltanat- ı muazzama-i Osmaniye’nin kanun-ı mezkûrde muayyen hukuk-ı meşruasına îras-ı nakîse etmeyecek(...)” ibid.

Apart from these issues, the declaration highlights two other fundamental points: providing equality among the people in the empire and also giving wider authority to the provinces.<sup>117</sup> These two points were important as the former frames ‘an Ottoman citizenship’ without hierarchy of any ethnic constituent and the latter was in favor of the “decentralization.” Moreover in an article in *KTTG* the author discussed the harm of the application of a central decision to all regions, the characteristics of which differ from each other. To substantiate his argument he states that because of the implementation of the taxes regardless of the region many revolts occurred.<sup>118</sup> As seen, they were also similar to the two mentioned articles of the program which Prince Sabahaddin proposed.

Furthermore, it seems that the KTTC believed that in order to provide the governance of the country to comply with the necessities of the era, the parliament should make changes in the constitution and so could complete it.<sup>119</sup> As a last point the KTTC declared that it based itself on the related articles of the program of the CUP, as it accepted all the ideas and the attempts for the development of the Ottoman State and as it took the responsibility for well-being of the country. It seems that opposing a common “enemy”, “tyranny”; and favoring the seemingly same goal, constitutional regime, the KTTC appropriated the related articles of the program of the CUP. Therefore, in later Kurdish organization such a term was not seen which is a significant point distinguishing the KTTC from the other Kurdish organizations of the era.

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<sup>117</sup> “(...) lâaletta’yîn bir kavmin diğêr bir kavm üzerine bir gûna imtiyazı haiz olmaması ve vilâyâta tevşî-i me’zuniyet i’tasî kaidelerine müsteniden (...)” *ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> Süleymaniyeli Seyfullah, “Telhîs-i Siyasî” [Political Summary], *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.4, 13 Kânun-i Evvel 1324 (26 Aralık 1908), in Bozarslan, pp. 187-189.

<sup>119</sup> “(...) mülk-i Devletin ihtiyacât-I medeniyece daha muvafık idaresini te’mîn eyleyecek surette Meclis-i Meb’usan’ın Kanun-I Esasîce lüzum göreceği her gûna ta’dilat ve tekemmülâtı (...)” In “Cem’iyet’in Beyannamesi”, [The Declaration of the Organization]....



In addition to its chart and declaration, the articles in the *KTTG* propose significant insights related to their comprehension of the constitutional regime which, I think, explains partially what they understood about being an “Ottoman.” From what were they inspired? Or why were they so hopeful? Or how can we explain the atmosphere of the era? A possible answer comes from Kadri Cemilpasha (who used the nickname “Zinar Silopi”): “everyone went to the head because of a freedom for which they had no efforts. Everyone became a patriot by saying long live liberty, justice and equality.”<sup>120</sup> Kurds, at least the intellectuals, also were among them, besides they regarded themselves as a part of the new regime. For instance, Mevlanzade Rıfat, a Kurdish journalist who also had been exiled during the Hamidian regime, describes how they were welcomed by a huge crowd during their arrival in Istanbul after the declaration of the constitutional regime.<sup>121</sup>

The KTTC was the fruit of the above depicted enthusiasm and in line with this the articles in the *KTTG* describes the constitutional regime as an “awakening.” Of the nine issues of *KTTG* on the covers of seven, pictures are related to the Ottoman parliament: the building of the parliament, and interestingly the opening remarks of the Sultan Abdülhamid II with a picture of him, his room in the parliament building, the welcoming of the Kurdish deputies (the ones of Mamuretülaziz) in Istanbul. Even this rate of covers symbolizes how the new regime was accepted. In addition, the pictures or the words of Abdülhamid II draw attention after the long years of opposition to him. This is more outstanding when we put it beside the words of Mevlanzade Rıfat, who notices that even in the way of return from the exile with the proclamation of a new regime, they were thinking of the

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<sup>120</sup> Kadri Cemilpaşa, p. 27

<sup>121</sup> Mevlanzade Rıfat, *Sürgün Hatıralarım* (İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2009), p. 20

dethronement of the Sultan.<sup>122</sup> Rather than being a contradiction, this situation is both a sign of the diversity in the ideas of the Kurdish intelligentsia of the early twentieth century and also of the attitudes of the KTTC towards the caliph/sultan, which reflected in their compare and contrast with the “previous” and “new” regimes:

Appropriate to the atmosphere of the era, there was a clear-cut dichotomy between the Hamidian regime and the constitutional regime. While complaining about how the previous regime led to the misery of the Kurds, fresh hope was presented for the new regime. The favor of the constitutional period was usually constructed with a discourse against “tyranny,” which was regarded with the reign of Abdülhamid II. For instance, Süleyman Nazif, who was in the circle of the CUP and would be later remembered for his ‘Turkist’ ideas, in an article points out that “how the previous regime saw Kurds as nothing but a crowd who paid taxes and performed military duties.” However, by describing the constitutional period as “awakening” he emphasized that the acceptance of new regime by Kurds was the sign of their knowledge about the value of equality and liberty.<sup>123</sup> This emphasis which highlighted that Kurds were by nature kind and smart people, yet corrupted governance that had led them to such a miserable situation is a common point in the articles in *KTTC*. In the same way, Ismail Hakkı Babanzade blamed the previous government:

Because previous regime did various cruelties and oppressions, destroyed the country, turned prosperous places into deserts, encouraged corruption and

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> “(...) Ümmet-i Osmaniye’nin ferda-yı intibahında, Kürdistan’dan-her zan ve tahmin hilâfına olarak- bir sada-yı şevk ve şükran yükseldi. O zeki adamlar, hürriyet ve müsavatın ne büyük nimet olduğunu, zekâ-yı fitrîlerini asırlarca tehyîc etmiş olan mezalimin lütf-ı ikazıyla bilirdi.(...) Kürdler nazar- idarede vergi vermekle mükellef bir sürüden başka bir şey değildi. Vergi verir ve askerlik eder bir sürü (...).” Süleyman Nazif, “Kürd ve Kürdistan,” [Kurds and Kurdistan], *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.2, 29 Teşrinisani 1324 (12 December 1908), in Bozarslan, pp. 83-84.

killing, and then in order to pull out of all of these doings it attributed everything to Kurds' violence, Kurds' bigotry, Kurds' bloodthirstiness and Kurds' bad tempers. And the world press confused the government and people, the bandits and the robbed suffering people. By saying Turks while talking about the Ottoman government and Kurds while referring to Kurdistan province they made louder the complaints and outcries and let the blameless and innocent people to be drowned under the flood of slanders. And the government remains silent, silence serves its purpose. And this silent shepherd of the crowd is the wolf, and so the result is no surprise.<sup>124</sup>

These remarks are interesting as they not only describe the previous regime but also give important clues about the views of the author on Kurdish-Ottoman relations in the international conjuncture. By drawing an analogy between the Ottoman government and a wolf Babanzade points out how the Kurds turned out to be the scapegoat of all the misdoings in the international arena and it was the "wolf" that was responsible for this situation of the Kurds. A similar argument made by Said-i Kürdî, who stated that the government, instead of taking a conciliatory role in solving the problems among Kurds had increased the conflicts and with this tried to get a legitimacy to carry out its cruelty against and oppression of them.<sup>125</sup>

Süleyman M. Tevfik, who is best known as "Pîremerd" (the courageous old), in a poem described how the regime of "tyranny" left the Ottomans in the darkness and how this situation was much worse for the Kurds.<sup>126</sup> For another author,

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<sup>124</sup> "(...) Zira Hükûmet-i sabıka, enva-I taaddiyât-ü I'tisafât icra eder, memleketi harab, ma'mureleri beyab eder, yağmakerliğe teşvîk, kıtala tahrîk eyler, sonar da işin içinden gûya saf ve nezîh sıyılmak isteyerek, bütûn cinayetleri Kürdlerin vahşetine, Kürdlerin taassubuna, Kürdlerin hunharlığına, Kürdlerin hasaset-i tab'ına atfederdi. Matbûât'ı-cihan ise, Hükûmet ile millet, eşkiya çetesi ile soyulup soğana çevrilen zavallı mazlûmîni karıştırmak, Hükûmet-i Osmaniyyeden bahsederken Türkler, Kürdistan vilâyetinden bahseder iken Kürdler diyerek feryad ve şikâyet ayyuka çıkardı; efrad-ı mâsûme-i millet tufan-müftereyât altında boğar idi. Hükûmet ise susar, susmak işine gelir idi. Susar çobanı kurd olan bir raiyyenin encamp-ı kârı, zaten başka ne olabilir? (...)" İsmail Hakkı Babanzade, "Kürdler ve Kürdistan," [Kurds and Kurdistan], *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.1, 22 Teşrin-i Sani 1324 (5 Aralık 1908), in Bozarslan, pp. 44-46

<sup>125</sup> Molla Seîd, "Bedüzzaman Molla Said-i Kürdî'nin Nasayihı," [The Advise of Bedüzzaman Molla Said-i Kürdî], *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.1, 22 Teşrin-i Sani 1324 (5 December 1908), in Bozarslan, pp. 54-55.

<sup>126</sup> Süleymaniyeli M. Tevfik, "Der'aguş", [Embrace], *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi* no.3, 6 Kânun-i Evvel 1324 (19 December, 1908), in Bozarslan, pp. 154-155.

Süleymaniyeli A. Hilmi, a people could develop by two main means. On the one hand was unity and coalition, and on the other was science and education. The era of “tyranny” sought to destroy these two values of the Kurdish people.<sup>127</sup>

Nevertheless, this opposition to the “former regime” was not homogenous; in other words, although there was a consensus in the evilness of the “despotism,” in some articles or telegraphs purposely or not a difference between the sultan himself and his civil-servants was made. For instance, in a Kurdish article the author aimed to tell people about the difference between tyranny and constitutional regime, as he believed that people might not understand it because of the fact that the old regime had destroyed not only lives and goods, but also their minds, tongues. However, while complaining about the deeds of the “tyranny,” he positioned the Abdülhamid II in a different place:

The tyrant and bribery officers saw the light of the justice of the new age and cannot do theft and malice and so they were surprised and started cheating and cunning. At the beginning they scared the followers of freedom with empty things by saying ‘we can do this, we do that,’ they failed. Then cast aspersions on the Sultan, said ‘Sultan Abdülhamid does not accept freedom, if he finds a chance he will remove the *Kanun-i Esasi* (the constitution).’ This lie did not result in anything other than the shame.<sup>128</sup>

What he identified as the “tyrants” were the corrupt tax collectors, gendarme and other official authorities. Such a notion seems sounder as the author was a

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<sup>127</sup> Süleymaniyeli A. Hilmi, “Kürt Vatandaşlarıma Hitaben Birkaç Söz,” [A Few Words to My Kurdish Citizens], *Kürd Teaviin ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no. 9, 17 Kânun-i sani 1324 (30 Ocak 1909), in Bozarslan, pp. 451-453.

<sup>128</sup> “(...) Ji wan zalimê mustebd û me’ûrên murtakib dîtin muqabilê ronahîya edaletê ra hêdî nikarin dizî, fisq û fucûra xwe bikin û bisitirînin, bi van texlît dest bi hîla û şeytanîya kirin. Ji sere ewilî gotin ‘emê ho bikin û ho bikin, bi zîrt û pîrta ehlê hurriyeta tirsandin; neçû serî. Paşê îftîra û bêbextî li Padişah kirin, gotin ‘Sultan Ebdulhemîd hurriyetê qebûl nake, hema fîrsetek bi destê wî bikevî, wê car dî Qanûna Esasî hilîne.’ Ew derewa wa jî ji xeyrê rûreşîya wa tiştek hasil nekir.” Mehmed Tahir Cezeri, “Gelî BîrakênEzîz û Gelî Kurmanca” [Dear Brothers and Dear Kurds], *Kürd Teaviin ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.6, 27 Kânun-i Evvel 1324, (9 January, 1909), in Bozarslan, pp. 296-298.

telegraph operator in Diyarbakır. What he encountered in his daily life was a tax-collector, and gendarme.

In addition, as mentioned above, the pictures of Abdülhamid II and his room in the parliament were displayed on the covers of some issues. Furthermore, the speech of the Sultan at the dinner with the representatives was given place in the fifth issue of *KTTG*.<sup>129</sup> It was the same dinner that Mevlanzade Rıfat said was one of the significant events of 1908 which surprised the people,<sup>130</sup> most probably because of the fact that people wondered that why a sultan gave a feast to the deputies as he had been so long regarded as the opponent to the parliament. In line with this it sounds so interesting to give place to the Sultan in a newspaper which was published by a group who had been exiled because of their oppositional activities to him. Such a view may offer insights into the importance of the caliph/sultan in that era, which differentiates the tyranny from the sultan with whom the tyranny had been long identified. Actually, the whole nature of it could not be understood. Yet what is known is that this behavior was not homogenous- a significant point that will be discussed later-. Nevertheless, a comparison-contrast between the previous regime and the new regime the former called as “tyranny” and the latter described as the “sun of liberties” took place. Such a view ascribes great importance to the constitutional regime, the propaganda of which is actually done by the circle of the *KTTC*. Thereby society also was regarded as a channel by the Kurdish people through which they were able to express their problems.

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<sup>129</sup> Nutk-ı Padişahî, [Speech of the Sultan], *Kürd Teaviin ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.5, 20 Kânun-i Evvel 1324 (2 Ocak 1909), in Bozarslan, pp. 230-231.

<sup>130</sup> Rıfat, *Sürgün Hatıralarım*, p. 37-38.

## The KTTC as a Channel for Looking for Rights

The KTTC was seen as an organization which was the representative of Kurds; such a pivotal role can be understood from the signs of reliance on society on issues related to the government. Actually this stems from the same belief that the government had changed, that it was more democratic and liberal. In a Kurdish article the author Seyyah Ehmed Şewqî addresses the Kurds and emphasizes that the era of “despotism” had closed and in this new period they had the right to seeking their rights:

From today if they harm or destroy you [wrote] to the organization of Kurdistan. If a civil servant does something bad to you, apply to the government. If they do not care about you, then write to the organization of Kurdistan in Istanbul. They will look for their rights. The organization is based on the ideology of the government, it does not accept badness. (...) God has blessed us for four months. (*Implying the constitutional regime.*) (...) It is necessary to forget the bad days and have good terms with the country, in case the cruelty on the Kurds removes.<sup>131</sup>

These remarks touch upon two important points. First, there was a belief and hope that there would be no violation of rights thanks to the new regime and second, that the “organization of Kurdistan” was the representative of the Kurdish people and if the people could not reach the government, it would take steps on their behalf.

Therefore, the organization was on the side of the Kurdish people in the provinces, who were exposed to lawlessness. For instance, as revealed by a document dated December 1908 the KTTC paid attention to the unlawfulness in the some parts of the Kurdish geography; regarding the examples of unlawfulness as the ones “in the era of the tyranny.” Two people named Hafız Eyüp and Mehmed Efendi

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<sup>131</sup> “(...) Ji îro paş eger zulm, xedir bi we kirin û talan kirin, Cem’îyeta Kurdistanê lewra. Eger me’ mûrekî xirab û xayin ji we ra şandin yan kesekî li we zulm kir, hun hale xwe erzê hukumetê bikin. Eger li hale we nepirsîn, wê weqtê binivîsîne İstanbulê bi nave Cem’îyeta Kurdan; ew’ê li hale we bipirsîn. Cem’îyet ji li ser fikra hukumetê yî ha, xirabîyê qebûl nake. (...) Xirabîya berê, bîrkinin lazim e, bi welatîye xwe ra qenc derbazkirin lazim e, ku nave wehşetê ser Kurda rabe(...)” Seyyah Ahmed Şewqî, “Ey Gelî Kurdan,” [All Dear Kurds], *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.1, 22 Teşrinisani 1324 (5 December 1908), in Bozarslan, p.56

in Siverek were taken to the city centre in the company of the gendarme “based on no legal ground.” This attitude was interpreted as being contrary to the “justice of the government,” “fair rule of the constitutional regime and the constitution” and the “individual freedom.” As understood the objection of the society was taken into consideration and an explanation was made stating that the said two people had insulted the *mutasarrıf* of Siverek in his office and so had been taken to the province by the Diyarbakır Governance.<sup>132</sup>

In line with this there are some other examples in which the KTTC takes a part in the name of Kurdish tribes, especially in the negotiation with the government authorities. For instance, the organization submitted a paper to the ministry of interior affairs about the inclusion of all convicts without any kind of discrimination in the scope of the general amnesty in Mamuretülaziz. Such a policy would help the appropriation of the constitution by the Kurds.<sup>133</sup>

As will be seen in the following lines this responsibility included not only the Kurds but also other people who were considered the “historical neighbors” of the Kurds, namely the Armenians.

### Responsibility Taken Up in the Name of the People of Anatolia

Among the outstanding articles of the program of the KTTC there stand the necessary ameliorations of the relations with the other constituents of the Ottoman Empire, particularly with Armenians and Nestorians; and also collaboration with

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<sup>132</sup> “Siverek livasında hala bazı malumat-ı istibdadiyeye tesadüf eylemekde olduğu muharereat-ı müsveddeden anlaşılıyor. Bu cümleden olmak üzere Meclis idare-i Liva azasına Hafız Eyüp ve Mehmed Efendilerin muhafazat-ı merkez vilayete ıgram oldukları suret-i hususiyede vaki olan müracatdan müsteban olmaktadır. Bu ise icraat-ı adalet-i hükümetin nazar-ı ahenkin hüsn-ü ceryan olan heyet-i resmiye azasında bulunan iki zatın hiçbir hükme müstenid olmaksızın bu suretli ıgramları hürriyet-i mukadese şahsiyeye kavaid-i adelet-i meşrutiyete ve kanun-u esasiye karşı gayr-ı caiz ahvalden bulunduğu (...)” BOA. DH.MKT 2683/28/ 1326/Za/20

<sup>133</sup> BOA DH.MKT 2791/ 3, 1327/Ra/19.

Armenian organizations to consolidate relations in Kurdistan. In line with this aim, a group made up of both Kurds and Armenians in Istanbul was composed.<sup>134</sup> In the articles of the journal this topic is dealt with in detail and developments related to this issue are stated:

Among the recent occupations of our society the rapprochement between Kurds and our Armenian citizens takes an important place and fortunately it has yielded some results; the telegraphs received by the Kurdish and Armenian notables together, which were published in our first issue of the newspaper<sup>135</sup> revealing the news of unity is pleasing.(...)<sup>136</sup>

In order to propagate and increase these rapprochements and harmony they reached a consensus with the Armenian Committees in Istanbul on constitution of a mixed council for giving advice and publishing declarations for the people in the provinces and in the case of necessity they would take a collective action to submit the issue to the government.

These remarks are also clear in reflecting the sensitivity of the issue and the special care towards the relations with the Armenians. The attacks towards the Anatolian Armenians in the late nineteenth century happened in places populated by Armenians and Kurds; and some Kurdish tribes were also involved in these terrible events. The issue became an international affair and thereby it was a sensitive issue and the KTTC seems have tried to take responsibility in the solution of such problems. As understood from the articles in its journal the society tried to “save the

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<sup>134</sup> Tunaya, *Türkiye’de...*, vol. 1, p 409-413

<sup>135</sup> As M.E. Bozarslan states these telegraphs were absent in the collection of the newspaper in his hands, probably they were lost. *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, p. 38

<sup>136</sup> “Cem’iyetimizin iştigâlat-I hazırası arasında mühim bir kısım teşkil eden Ermeni vatandaşlarımızla Kürdler arasında husûl-ı i’tilâf teşebbüsâtında, hamd olsun muvaffakiyât rûnûma olmuş ve gazetemizin bir numrol nüshasında derc edilen ve Kürdlerle Ermeni mu’teberanı tarafından müşerek keşide edilen telgrafnamelerin tazammun ettiği peyam-ittihad, mucib-I memnuniyettir. (...)” [Untitled] *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.2, 29 Teşrinisani 1324 (12 December 1908), in Bozarslan, p. 98.



honor” of the Kurdish people. In line with this, authors like Ismail Hakkı Babanzade, while emphasizing the “historical neighborhood” between the Kurds and Armenians blamed the government (the Hamidian regime) for what had occurred:

One of the heavy aspersions cast upon Kurds is that there has been, allegedly, Kurds’ enmity towards Armenians and that they were sworn enemies of the Armenians. If it were possible and if we could cut out the previous era (*implying the previous regime*) from the history of the humanity, there has been no example of such a people who have had so good relations and harmony with its neighbor people who have always been friends with each other. Before the previous era in which time have Armenians complained about Kurds? If the Kurds really wanted to kill the Armenians, could they have done those cruelties, for which they have been seen responsible, much before the 61th article of the Berlin Agreement had not even been thought! And did they a long time ago leave no trace of the Armenians whom they would make enemy by saying repeatedly enemy and enemy!<sup>137</sup>

As seen, Babanzade questions why it had not been until the Hamidian regime that the Kurds killed the Armenians. Except for that era, he emphasized that the Kurds and Armenians had been the best neighbors of all times without rejecting the role of the Kurds in those events.

In line with the opinions of Ismail Hakkı, Sayyid Abdülkadir, the head of the KTTC, also was of the opinion that because of the ill policies of the previous regime the relations between “some Kurdish tribes” and “non-Muslims” had deteriorated. Nevertheless, he also pointed out that the harm of tyranny was unique not only to only one constituent, all constituents and even the Muslims much more suffered from it. Thereby he believed that showing one constituent as a victim and all the others as

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<sup>137</sup> “(...) Kürdlere atılan galîz bühthanlardan biri, Ermenilere gûya minelkadîm udvanı bulunması, gûya Ermenilerin öteden beri düşman-I canileri olamsıdır. Devr-I sabıkı tarih-I beşerden tayyetmek mümkün olsa, hiçbir kavmin, komşusu, daîam refîki olan diğer bir kavim ile o derece hüsn-I imtizac ettiği görülemez. Devr-i sabık meydanı gelinceye kadar, Kürdlere karşı Ermenilerden ne vakit bir şikâyet sâdır oldu? Kürdler hakikatın Ermenilerin canına kastetmiş olsalar, daha evvel Berlin Muahedenamesinin 61’inci maddesi daha meşîme-I tefekkürden doğmamış iken, kendilerine isnad olunan bu vahşetleri icra etmezler, düşman diye d, ye etmelerine ramak bıraktıkları Ermenileri çoktan beri bîeser bırakmazlar mı idi? İsmail Hakkı Babanzade, “Kürdler ve Kürdistan” ...p. 45.

cruel would not yield any profit and would not sustain stability and justice.<sup>138</sup> This approach could be read in two ways. First there was a reaction to the consideration of the Kurds as the criminals of the attacks towards the Armenians at the international level.<sup>139</sup> Second this view may be an expression of considering the cruelties of the “regime of tyranny” was the case for all peoples and with the new regime it was best to forget those events and focus on the opportunities of the era. In line with these ideas, Sayyid Abdülkadir, as he also stated in the lines of this article, engaged in some attempts with the Armenian authorities to dissipate the conflicts and apathy between the two peoples.

In the practical sense, the most notable attempt comes from the archival documents. A document dated January of 1909 is about a memorandum of the KTTC and the declaration of Armenian Patriarchate submitted to the government in the terms of the necessity of the assessment of Anatolian peoples’ situations and the implementation of crucial amendments. The frame of declaration and memorandum is basically about the settlement of conflicts and agrarian problems between the Kurds and Armenians.<sup>140</sup> It is understood that the government took this issue serious and discussed it in the parliament.<sup>141</sup> Upon suggestions of the representatives of two

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<sup>138</sup> Merhum Şeyh Ubeydullahzade Abdülkadir, “Cem’iyetimizin Reis-i Fezail’eni Seyyid Abdülkadir Ubeydullah Efendi’nin Nümûne-i Fıkr-ü İrfanı” [One example from opinion and knowledge of the virtuous head of our society], *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.1, 22 Teşrinisani 1324, (5 December 1908), in Bozarslan, pp. 51-52. In this article, Seyyid Abdülkadir interestingly accuses non-Muslim groups, namely the Armenians, of exaggerating the events or showing the past events even if had they happened recently and evoked it in their private press.

<sup>139</sup> For instance Kadri Cemilpaşa in his memoirs mentions the dialogs which took place in Lausanne during their education. They were asked “why the Kurds are doing so many cruelties to the Armenians.” The answer of Cemilpashas emphasizes that the Armenians deliberately had made of this news for political reasons. And also he said that if Armenians had problems they should apply to the government, because the governance of the country is in the hands of the Turks.” Kadri Cemilpaşa, p. 38.

<sup>140</sup> BOA. DH.MKT 2716/65 1327/M/1. See Appendix C

<sup>141</sup> BOA. MV 123-13, 1326/Za/19

peoples and discussions in the parliament the government charges a delegate, composed of three government authorities, and a Kurdish and an Armenian delegates who had a good knowledge about the region, to investigate in Erzurum, Bitlis, Van, Sivas, Mamuretülaziz and Diyarbakır.

The Armenian Dashnaksutiun Committee collaborated with the KTTC during these years on the above discussed topics. With the reproclamation of the constitution, as noted by Avagyan, it had left their weapons and engaged in legal ways to seek their rights. Like the KTTC, they concentrated on education and cultural activities and sought decentralization. The most crucial issue for them was the settlement of the agrarian issue of the Armenian community.<sup>142</sup> Thereby they developed agendas for this aim with the KTTC. Another telegraph in the above-mentioned document is the one which was taken by the KTTC and the Dashnaksutiun, the context of which gave significant clues about the attitude of society for the citizenry of the Ottoman Empire. Referring to the equality and justice principles of the Constitution, it is declared that two organizations had decided to act together for the improvement of the coalition and harmony between the constituents of the Ottoman Empire. It was stated further that the attempts to reconcile the Armenians and Kurds was for the consolidation of the Constitution and for their “dear holy country.”<sup>143</sup>

Beside this, as understood, Sayyid Abdülkadir sent telegraphs to the tribal leaders in the Kurdish provinces that included the solution of the problems between Kurds, Armenians and Yezidis. The interior corresponding office took these telegraphs seriously as they stated that it would be beneficial for the stability of the

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<sup>142</sup> Arsen Avagyan and Gaidz F. Minassian, *Ermeniler ve İttihat ve Terakki: İşbirliğinden Çatışmaya* (İstanbul: Aras Yayınları, 2005), p. 80-81.

<sup>143</sup> BOA. DH.MKT 2716/65 1327/M/1. See Appendix C.

peace.<sup>144</sup> It seems that such attempts in 1909 also were appreciated by the government, which was reasonable as the conflicts in Anatolia became an international issue and the settlement of them by itself is a way of avoiding the intervention of European powers.

These kind of attempts were not unique to the center of the KTTC. The Bitlis branch of the society, which would be held thoroughly later, appointed two men to Garzan and Behistan in order to make marriages between Muslims and non-Muslims appropriate to the Muslim religious law (shariah),<sup>145</sup> which was of course not welcome and alerted the government to prevent such an attempt. In the same way, a letter from Diyarbakır signed by Kurdish, Armenian, Syrians and Chaldeans propose their gratitude to the justice of the constitutional regime as thanks to it they solved some tribal conflicts between Diyarbakır and Siirt which had brought commercial relations between two cities to a standstill and paralyzed the security.<sup>146</sup> This letter also demonstrates that there was still hope in the peoples of Anatolia to get along with each other, to keep diversity and live together.

In line with the attempts of reforms in Anatolia a committee of inspection was also composed. As understood from a piece of writing in the sixth issue of *KTTC*, the head of this committee proposed that the miserable and piteous situation of Anatolia was because of poverty. He further said that the committees which had been sent there until now had not yielded any profit. Thus, instead of sending another committee, the expenses could be spent for paths and public works of a city, which

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<sup>144</sup> BOA. DH.MKT 2636/67/ 1326/N/25; Garo Sasuni also notes that the telegraphs, which included advice to Kurds not to get into conflicts with Armenians, sent by Abdülkadir to the provinces in 1909 had been influential. p.227.

<sup>145</sup> BOA. DH.MKT 2839/69 1327/Ca/21

<sup>146</sup> Ermeni Murahhası Goybun, et.al. "Diyarbakır, 12 Kânunievvel 324 (Milâdi 25 Aralık 908) [Diyarbakır, 25 December 1908], *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi* , no. 5, 20 Kânun-i Evvel 1324 (2 Ocak 1909), in Bozarslan, p. 245.

would be more beneficial.<sup>147</sup> This piece of writing is significant in that it shows the insufficiency of the efforts of the committees sent to Anatolia and unfortunately these problems prevailed without being settled.

As appreciated, these kinds of efforts belonged to the era immediately after the proclamation of the constitution. They happened thanks to the atmosphere of and expectations from the new regime. In the history of the Ottoman Empire they were seemingly the last attempts to live equally under the empire as the citizens of it without any discrimination and without leaving their own identities.

The views of the KTTC on the constitutional regime and the expectations of both of them and people have been discussed. In the following lines the position of the Kurdish tribes, and the traditional Kurdish leaders will be introduced via both the articles in *KTTC* and its local branches.

### The Reactions of Kurdish Tribes to the New Regime and the Local Branches of the KTTC

In the seventeenth article of the program of the KTTC it was stated that there would be branches of the society in the provinces in which the population was made up of Kurds.<sup>148</sup> From the written sources it is understood that there were branches of the society in Diyarbakır, Mosul, Erzurum, Bitlis, and Muş. Malmisaniy also points out that the society opened branches also in Hınıs and Bağdat.<sup>149</sup> Like the head branch in Istanbul those local branches did not display a unique position. There happened some events which could be interpreted as pro-constitutional regime.

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<sup>147</sup> “Anatoli Heyet-i Teftişyesi” [Anatolia Inspection Board], *Kürt Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi* no.6, 27 Kânun-i Evvel 1324 (9 January 1909), in Bozarslan, p. 299.

<sup>148</sup> Tunaya, p. 411.

<sup>149</sup> Malmisaniy, *Kürt Teaviün ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Gazetesi* (İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 1998), pp. 45.

However, some other events are contrary to this, which were actually the results of different dynamics. Before going into the details of the multitude forms of reactions and the logics behind them, first I will explain the general aspects of these branches with a special focus on the Bitlis club as it was the most outstanding one.

The main function of the local branches, as reflected in the telegraph messages in *KTTG*, was to connect the centre of the society to the provinces. The journal contained news about the events in the Kurdish provinces. The best way to realize their aims like the spreading of education, reforms on Kurdish language, literature as well as the providing of peace was to opening of local branches. However, they did not last very long time and closed down within one or two years.<sup>150</sup>

The Bitlis branch took a relatively different place because of its impressive member numbers and the unique activities. As pointed out by Malmisanij, in Bitlis although the number of members of the Armenian organization was 50, the one of the CUP was 90 and the club of the KTTC had 680 members.<sup>151</sup> While allowing for some exaggerations these numbers give some clues about the club's effectiveness. As Celîlê Celîl writes that according to the Russian Consul of Bitlis, Akimoviç, the members of the Bitlis club "intended to open a factory by collecting 40 thousand liras among themselves."<sup>152</sup> Based on a Russian document, Celîl says that the Kurdish branch built up small groups of soldiers constituting of 10-12 men. Allegedly these kinds of activities of the club contributed to the peace of the city. As Celîl rightly notes that there was no representative of "the class of the enlightened,"

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<sup>150</sup> Yet they went on with their activities illegally. For instance, the club of Muş continued its activities in the religious schools and madrasahs after its closure. Celîlê Celîl *Kürt Aydınlanması* (İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2000 ), p. 69.

<sup>151</sup> Malmisanij, *Kürt Teaviin*..., pp. 46-47.

<sup>152</sup> Celîl, *Kürt Aydınlanması*..., p. 66.

it was composed of the socially and politically well-off of Kurdistan. Irritated by the developments in Bitlis and thinking that its own influence had decreased because of the existence of the Kurdish club the CUP closed it down in the May of 1909.

Various reasons have been proposed for the closure of the Bitlis Club, many of which are interrelated. The first one is that the CUP aimed to incorporate the club into its own organization as it wished for the material support of the Kurdish rich. The second reason is that the Turkish government saw it as a threat as the club unified the Kurds.<sup>153</sup>

Importantly a cipher telegraph, which could explain the reasons behind the closure of the Kurdish clubs, from Mosul notes the KTTC in Istanbul had a branch in Mosul, as well as in many places, and they worked to create an idea of nationness among Kurds.<sup>154</sup> This document is significant as it both reflects the concerns of the government about the “awakening” of Kurds and also how the KTTC and particularly its branches created an impression as such.

The connection between the KTTC and its branches has become a matter of debate. In recent years some scholars have proposed that those branches were not merely branches of the KTTC as they displayed different tendencies. For instance, Janet Klein draws a distinction between the head branch of the KTTC in Istanbul and its local branches in the Kurdish regions, arguing that these affiliates were more than mere branches. According to her, for the founders and members of these societies, who mostly had been educated in Europe, “nationalism” meant also being an “Ottoman.” In other words, for these intellectuals “nationalism” was necessary for all

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid. pp. 66-68.

<sup>154</sup> BOA. DH. MKT. 2718/36/1327/M/2 “*Dersaadet’teki Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Cemiyeti’nin her tarafta olduğu gibi burada dahi bir şubesi mevcut olup bunların umumi Kürdlerde kavmiyet iddası uyandırmağa haylice hizmet itmekte olması melhuz olup bu halin devamı etbaen birtakım mehaz yeri müstelzem olacağı derkar bulunduğundan(...)*”

Ottomans to be strong and this would be realized “through education and modernization of each of their constituent elements.”<sup>155</sup> They did not have any separatist aims at least until the First World War. However, she puts forward that the “branches” of these societies in the Kurdish provinces had different perceptions of “Kurdishness.” What they understand as by a “Kurdishness’ or “rights of Kurds” were the privileges which the tribal chiefs had enjoyed during the era of Abdülhamid II. Klein claims that although the “head branch” in the capital was pro-constitution, the activities of the provincial clubs were developed in response to the policies of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP).<sup>156</sup> To substantiate her argument she gives an example from a British Consul’s report about the inauguration of the Diyarbekir club:

(...)Speeches were made by prominent individuals, including the provincial governor, with a crowd of some 13,000 in attendance. But although the name of the club reflected a particular (read by some as national) identity – Kurdish – the discourse at the ceremony had little to do with nationalism of any kind. Rather, it was a statement against the new constitutional regime, which local Kurdish chiefs regarded as threatening. Indeed, at the end of the ceremony, a document protesting against the Constitution and favoring the application of Islamic law was reported to have been signed by some 3,000 of those in attendance. The dragoman (local guide/interpreter) at Diyarbekir also conveyed to the Consul the disaffection with which the Kurds of Diyarbekir regarded the new regime. The Consul feared that if these views were widely disseminated by Kurdish leaders, they would gain the support of the Kurdish masses. Although the local Kurdish club stated its intentions to uphold the wishes of its parent club, the Consul believed that the general tendency of the movement did not ‘seem to comply with such an attitude’. His report also reiterated his ‘general impression’ that the Kurdish club of Diyarbekir would be much stronger than the local club of the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which represented the new regime.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Janet Klein, “Kurdish Nationalists and Non-nationalist Kurdistans: Rethinking Minority Nationalism and the Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1909,” p. 137 in *Nations and Nationalism*, 13, no. 1, (2007), pp. 135-153.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p.140.



Although Klein rightly touches upon the diversity in reactions towards the new regime, I think this cannot be confined to the Kurdish intellectuals in Istanbul versus Kurds in the Kurdish region, as the groups were not homogenous, either. For instance, against this consul report, in the fourth issue of *KTTG* there was a telegraph message from the *mufti* of Diyarbakır dated 22 December 1908, declaring that they celebrated the foundation of their organization with a crowd composed of civil and military officers, the notables of the province, students and civilians.<sup>158</sup> Actually this point is significant as it shows two versions of the same event, the inauguration of the Diyarbakır Club, one by British consul, the other from the club itself.

It is not reasonable to expect that Kurdish tribal leaders in the Kurdistan welcomed the constitutional regime<sup>159</sup> in the same way as the Kurdish intellectuals who mostly had been educated in Europe, inspired by the principles of equality, justice and fraternity and more or less were in opposition to the Hamidian regime. However, it was not because the Kurdish region was socio-economically and politically backward, which is generally discussed, but due to the multitude power negotiations. In the previous chapter I discussed how the power vacuum was filled by small units, like tribal leaders, aghas, and sheikhs after the liquidation of the semi-autonomous Kurdish emirates which created a multi-fragmented power politics in the region. And later developments like the Hamidian regiments, which again were based on creating multi-sided power dynamics, had great impact on the acceptance of

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<sup>158</sup> Diyarbekir Müftîsi Subhî, "Diyarbekir, 9 Kânunievvel 1324, (Milâdî 22 Aralık 1908)" [Diyarbakır, 22 December 1908], *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi* no.4, 13 Kânunievvel 1324 (26 December 1908), in Bozasırlan, p. 205.

<sup>159</sup> Actually this was not unique to the Kurdish tribal leaders, either. As Hasan Kayalı, in his study on Arab movement between 1908 and 1918, explained that after 1908 in the Arab provinces, the local elites became anxious about loss of power which they had gained during the reign Abdülhamid II, which "was premised on patronage and personal ties to the local elites." Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley, L.A. London: University of California Press, 1997), p. 58.

the new regime. On the one hand, there stood some tribes which, as seen from the example of Klein, were against the new regime, on the other hand some tribes saw alliance with the new regime more reasonable and appropriate to their own interests. As a way of it they became members of Kurdish clubs in the provinces.<sup>160</sup> Nevertheless, the most important feature of the Kurdistan region was of course its being one of the places in which different power mechanisms were negotiated. Thereby while interpreting the atmosphere in Kurdistan upon the proclamation of the new regime it is important to consider this crucial point.

For the first group, which can be called generally Hamidian tribes, when we consider the background of their alliances, their reactions are not surprising. When the Young Turks came into power, as having proposed that the new regime would remove the injustices and inequalities of the previous regime, as a first step of this goal in the Anatolia the reforms related to the Hamidian Regiments was brought forward. As Klein notes they dismissed Zeki Pasha, the commander of the Hamidian militia, and start to arrest Hamidian chiefs. Furthermore there was the factor of the Armenian lands which had been usurped by those tribes. The return of lands to their former owners was also on the agenda of the government.<sup>161</sup> This created anxiety among the Hamidian tribes as a challenge to their privileges and the position and thereby they stood against the new regime.

Because of such factors, there happened some uprisings in the Kurdish geography in the first years of the constitutional regime. The most famous one was the uprising of Sheikh Said Berzenci in 1908.

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<sup>160</sup> Celil, *Kürt Aydınlanması...*, p. 67; Klein uses the term “bet-hedging” for this situation. “Bet-hedging refers to a time-honored practice of Kurds and other ‘borderland’ communities to preserve local autonomy by constantly reassessing and renegotiating their relationships with their neighbors and rulers.” See endnote 30 for this explanation, Klein, “Kurdish Nationalists...,” p. 150.

<sup>161</sup> Klein, p. 142.

## The Uprising and Murder of Sheikh Said Berzenci

The Sheikh triggered a revolt in the Hamavand tribe against the Young Turk regime and pro-Sultan in Suleymaniye. The government took action against this revolt and held the sheikh and some of his relatives in Mosul. However, the worst event happened when the sheikh was murdered in front of his house.<sup>162</sup> This news arrived to the KTTC via a telegraph from its Mosul branch dated to 13 January 1909.

It is important as it reveals the nature of the event:

To Istanbul Kurdish Mutual Aid and Progress Society,  
When the local soldiers joined in the quarrel between the people and the mule-cavalier regiment which was coming from Kerkük, 16 soldiers were killed from this regiment. Then, with the decision of collaboration to fight against the Kurds a huge crowd attacked the house of the sheikh. Although the sheikh held the holy book Qur'an in his hand to disperse them, they trampled on it and killed the sheikh opposite the government building. After that they went into his house and killed his son Ahmed and 40 from his followers and plundered most of his properties. We inform with great sadness that his brother Nakib and sons Mahmud and Abdülkadir are still been under custody in the government. / Mosul Branch of Kurdish Mutual Aid and Progress.<sup>163</sup>

The *KTTC* gave this news with the title of “Terrible Event in Mosul,” in which the society demanded from the government to find and charge the criminals and instigators of this event. It called the people to trust in the justice of the government and to keep quiet to avoid agitations and provide peace in the city. Furthermore, it was stated that the society had applied to the government for the implementation of the necessary procedures to shed light on this event.

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<sup>162</sup> Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement...*, p. 108.

<sup>163</sup> “Kerkük'ten gelen estersüvar müfreze efradıyla ahalî arasında vuku' bulan münazaa-ı lisaniyede yerli asker ile ahalî ile bil'istihak, estersüvardan on altı nefer telef, irtesi günü bil'ittifak cihad-ı Ekrada karar verilüp külliyetli izdiham Şeyh'in ikamtegâhına hücum ettiler. Dağılmaları için Şeyh'in elinde Kur'an-ı azîmüştan bulunduğu halde yalvarması ve te'sir etmeyerek, Kur'an-ı şerif ayaklar altında parça parça edildi ve Hükûmet kaşısında katlolundu. Hanesine duhûl ile oğlu Ahmed, müridlerinden kırk kadar eşhas mecruh ve maktul, birçok emvalı nehb, biraderi Nakîb ile oğulları Mahmud ve Abdülkadir Hükûmette hâlâ nezaret altında bulundukları müteessifen ma'ruzdur. Musul Kürd Teavün ve Terakkî Cem'iyeti Şubesi.” “Musul Hâdise-i Fecîası” [Mosul Terrible Event], *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.7, 3 Kânun-i Sani 1324 (16 January 1909), in Bozarslan, p. 339.

As seen, although the revolt of Sheikh Said Berzenci was regarded a pro-Sultan action, the bloody events after that deeply concerned the KTTC as some kind of unlawfulness was experienced. This demonstrates that the society played impartial role in those events, yet seemingly paid more attention to the implementation of the rule of law.

Thus, as noted above, the Kurdish tribes showed a variety of positions; among them were both supporters and detractors of the new regime. At this point the KTTC plays a crucial role. As expected the KTTC really was concerned about the acceptance of the new regime by the local Kurds. The dialogs between the head and local branches were displayed in order to make clear how the constitutional regime had been accepted by the people of Kurdistan. For instance, the newspaper gave to place the telegraphs from its branches of it in the Kurdish provinces which note the belief in constitution and happiness at opening of the parliament.<sup>164</sup> In line with this, a telegraph sent by Sayyid Abdülkadir to the government highlights that Anatolia did not resemble Istanbul and its special conditions had to be taken into consideration while expecting its inclusion in the new regime. Nevertheless to dispel the disagreements in the region, Abdülkadir pointed out that the existing civil and military officers who remained from the era of tyranny could not totally leave their previous habits, it was necessary to appoint new officers who had good knowledge of the peculiarities of the region.<sup>165</sup> As understood from the words of the head of the KTTC, on the one hand, he was concerned about the continuation of the previous regime in the Kurdish geography because of the corrupted officers. On the other

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<sup>164</sup> Actually this situation was far removed from homogeneity. Some tribes which were part of the Hamidian Cavalry had shown their discontent with the constitution, for example, in Bitlis. These multitude reactions to the constitutional era will also be discussed in the thesis.

<sup>165</sup> BOA. DH.MKT 2716-65 1327/M/1

hand, he expected a peculiar kind of governance which was appropriate to the different dynamics of the region.

Importantly, as mentioned above, the *KTG* regularly published local branches' telegraphs congratulating the new regime; the objective here, once again, was to highlight differences between the old and new regimes. For instance, a telegraph sent from Siirt stated that a Kurdish tribe (“Reşkotan”) which had troubled the government before had turned themselves in to the justice on their own will. This was regarded as a sign of how the regime of tyranny was hated so much and how well the constitutional regime was welcome.<sup>166</sup> In the same way, another telegraph from Diyarbakır signed by a number of Kurdish tribes again emphasized their belief in the fair governance of the constitutional regime and the cruelties to which they had been subjected during the “regime of tyranny.”<sup>167</sup>

In line with being a channel for seeking the rights of the Kurdish people, the organization also played important roles in tribal conflicts. They were in favor of punishing guilty tribal leaders. For instance, as understood from some news in the periodical, the organization applied to the government for the punishment of the leader of the Mîran tribe, Abdülkerim:

According to recent news although the arrest warrant was issued by the justice ministry about the said person it is said that some military officers have hesitated, for some reason, about the very important issue, his punishment.

The criminals like him, who do millions of harms to the state treasury, dare to kill lots of people and goes on with his cruelties the way he used to. Instead of being protected, he deserves to be punished by the high law of the right and justice which keeps the order. (...) In this issue we would like to draw attention of the ministries of interior affairs, war, justice and the treasury.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Kürd, (Untitled), *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.8, 10 Kânun-i Sani 1324 (23 January, 1909), in Bozarslan, p. 388.

<sup>167</sup> Pınçınar Rüesasından Abdullah, et al., “Diyarbakır, 15 Kânunievvel 324, (Milâdî 28 Aralık 1908)”, [Diyarbakır, 28 December, 1908], *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi* no.6, 27 Kânun-i Evvel 1324, (9 January, 1909), in Bozarslan, pp. 302.

What arises from these lines is that the organization as a protector and believer of the justice of the new regime focuses on the implementation of the rule of law in the Kurdish provinces. The first step of this was to arrest the guilty tribal leaders. It seems that while the KTTC was in favor of the punishment of the tribes which had been involved in the plunder and killings of the previous regime, they paid attention to the situation of other tribes which either had not been involved in these kinds of events or had been damaged in the punishment of the guilty chieftains. For instance, in a telegraph from the chieftain of the Karakeçi tribe, Halil stated that because of some events in 1904, 120 villages and 5000 houses of their tribe had been destroyed. When they applied to the government they did not get an answer. However, he points out in this era of revivalism and development they had been appointed to the mission of arresting the Milî leader İbrahim<sup>169</sup> and lost many young people in pursuit of him and while waiting for an award, he was arrested by *mutasarrıf* of Siverek without any civil or military arrest warrant. Halil regarded this policy as against the principles of the constitution and like a policy from the regime of tyranny. It is understood that the KTTC took place in the settlement of this issue and applied to the concerned authorities.<sup>170</sup> As seen, the main concern of the organization was to eliminate the impacts of the regime of tyranny. As a step, while

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<sup>168</sup> “(...) *Mustahberât-ı ahîreye nazaran merhum hakkında bu kere cihet-i adliyeden ahz-ü girift müzekkeresi sudûr ettiği halde, her nedense bazı zabitan-ı mahalliyece emr-i ehemmi te’ dîbinde tereddüd olunmakta imiş. Hazîne-i Devleti milyonlarca ızzar ve bir hayli nüfusu katle ictisar ve mezalim-i me’lûfesinde hâlâ da devam eden bu gibi canîler himayeye değil, ancak kanun-ı münîf-i adl-ü hakkın sille-i intizambahş-ı terhîb-ü te’ dîbine müstehaktır. (...) Bu babda, Dahiliye, Harbiye, Adliye ve Maliye Nezaret-i celîlelerinin enzar-ı dikkat-i mehamperverîlerini celbederiz.*” “Mîran Reisi Abdülkerim” [Mîran Leader, Abdülkerim], *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.3, 6 Kânun-i evvel 1324 (19 December 1908), in Bozarslan, p. 159

<sup>169</sup> İbrahim Pasha was the chief of the Milî confederation and the commander of the Hamidian regiments. After the fall of Abdülhamid II in April 1909, he occupied Damascus with fifteen hundred men in the name of the Sultan. Then he was forced to withdraw and was killed near Viranşehir. Jwaideh, p. 109.

<sup>170</sup> Karakeçi Aşiret Reisi Halil, “Siverek, 22 Teşrinisani 324 (Milâdî 5 Aralık 1908)”, [Siverek, 5 December 1908], *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.2, 29 Teşrin-i Sani 1324 (12 December 1908), in Bozarslan, pp. 130-131.

punishing the Hamidian tribes they followed closely the implementation of the rule of the law and justice.

In addition to this, as revealed in some archival documents people from the Kurdish provinces informed the center of the KTTC about the developments which they regarded as not complying with the constitutional regime. The content of this correspondence is interesting as it contains some points related to the acceptance of the constitutional regime in the Kurdistan. Thanks to the freedom and constitution, it is stated that they have lived peacefully and far away from corruption. Nevertheless, some people were complained to the KTTC as they were disturbing the security and harmony in the city as they were working in favor of the autocracy. Because of such ideas and actions there happened murders and injuries in the region. They demanded from the organization that those people be taken away as they afraid of spreading the events to other places.<sup>171</sup>

The same approach is observed *vis-à-vis* the reforms or abolition of the Hamidian regiments. Sayyid Abdülkadir, for instance, although he strongly suggested the precautions necessary for the reforming of the Hamidian cavalries, he was strictly against their abolition as he believed that such a step would be politically wrong. Abdülkadir further was of the opinion that the reforms would be carried out slowly and under the supervision of experts. Only after that would they be sound and serve for peace and security.<sup>172</sup>

In addition to this, some other comments came from Said-i Kürdî on the issue of tribal cavalry, which he regarded as a way to learn modern techniques. He discussed the importance of the tribal cavalry for Kurds. On the one hand, because of

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<sup>171</sup> BOA. DH.MKT 2706/128/1326/Z/21.

<sup>172</sup> Merhum Şeyh Ubeydullahzade Abdülkadir, “*Cem’iyetimizin Reis-i Fezail’ enîsi Seyyid Abdülkadir Ubeydullah Efendi’nin Nümûne-i.....*”, pp. 51-52

the nomadism, bigotry, the absence of government or the cruelty of the governments' poverty and desperation were widespread in Kurdistan. This led to conflicts among the Kurdish tribes. Said saw tribal cavalry and soldiery as a way to create intimacy among the tribes, and he is in favor of appointing the ones who were not tribal cavalry as national soldiers. On the other hand, the tribal cavalry would be a means of access to modern techniques, and modern education. It emphasized that Kurds were afraid of modern education and the techniques which are the spirit of modern ways of life, as they believed that modernity came from foreigners, as the Islam is misunderstood and as they were contrary to the way of teaching of the madrasahs. This fear will be overcome with the help of tribal cavalry and soldiery which will be channels to deliver education and open schools and to revitalize madrasahs.

Said-i Kürdî was not alone in his comprehension of the Hamidian Cavalry as a means of education. Süleymaniyeli Fethi also believed that if the Hamidian Cavalry was strengthened with education and the indoctrination of the necessary theories and practices, they would be great use, as he believed that the Kurds were very capable of being soldiers.<sup>173</sup>

So far the multi-sided reception of the constitutional regime by the Kurds, both intellectuals in Istanbul and in Kurdish geography was discussed. These receptions had profound impacts on the programs of the first legal Kurdish society, the KTTC. Although seemingly greater focus was given to the situation and development of the Kurds the KTTC was interested in other constituents living in the Ottoman Empire. In line with this there also arose many significant topics related to views on "Ottomanism" which was constructed around the notion of "Ottoman citizenship" and seemingly differed from the ones of the Young Turks of the era.

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<sup>173</sup> Said-i Kürdî, "Kürtler Neye Muhtaç ?" [What Kurds Need for?], *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.2 29 Teşrin-i Sani 1324 (12 December 1908), in Bozarslan, pp.92-93.



## The Discourse of Ottomanism among the Kurdish Intellectuals

Bülent Bilmez, in an article on Ottoman citizenship in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, writes that Ottomanism had different meanings in different times, different contexts and for different people.<sup>174</sup> On the one hand, it served as an ideology which sought to melt all other groups in a common collective identity. On the other hand, for some others it proposed a multi-culturalist agenda which regarded the Ottomanism as an umbrella under which different cultures, groups, ethnicities could live.<sup>175</sup>

Looking at the agendas of the Kurdish intellectual that were formulated around the new expectations for the constitutional regime the nature of their being Ottoman can be comprehended partially. Akşin Somel pursues the development of the Ottomanism which accepted different religious and ethnic groups living in the Empire as an “Ottoman nation” and aims to unify these constituents around the ideal of a common empire, into four phases.<sup>176</sup> The last two phases formulating the Ottomanism among Young Turks and during the Second Constitutional Regime, successively are important for shedding light on the Ottomanism among Kurdish intellectuals. Although the Young Turks agreed upon the constitutionalist Ottomanism, what they understood by “being an Ottoman” was different. For instance, as Somel says, “Ottoman” was understood as “Turkishness” by Ahmed Rıza and his proponents. However, Ismail Kemal and Dashnaksutian saw

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<sup>174</sup> Bülent Bilmez, “Modern ve Geleneksel Kollektif Kimlikler ile Osmanlı Vatandaşlığı Arasında: Osmanlı Aydını Üzerine Notlar,” *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 182 (2009), p. 79.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Authoritarian-Centralist Ottomanism (1839-1875), Constitutionalist Ottomanism and First Constitutional Period (1867-1878), Ottomanism of Young Turks (1889-1908), and the last phase Ottomanism during the Second Constitutional Regime. S. Akşin Somel, “Osmanlı Reform Çağında...,” p. 88.

Ottomanism as a means for minority nationalism. Prince Sabahaddin and Abdullah Cevdet stood in different position in terms of their views on Ottomanism.<sup>177</sup>

Hanioğlu says Abdullah Cevdet's Ottomanism prescribed the protection of different ethnic groups and equality among them without any privilege or superiority granted to any of them. Thereby he differed from the ones like Tunalı Hilmi who attributed more importance to the Turkish language.<sup>178</sup>

Besides this, as mentioned before, Prince Sabahaddin's Ottomanism, which prescribed decentralization, drew the attention of the people from different ethnic and religious groups. However, this decentralization did not mean giving autonomy to ethnic groups and the Prince's Ottomanism meant the fraternity and equality of all the constituents with the principle of the "Ottoman State belongs to Ottomans."<sup>179</sup>

Nevertheless, as Somel rightly says, during the second constitutional period Ottomanism served as a means for the opposition to defend pluralism against the CUP's increasingly centralist, Turkist and oppressive policies.<sup>180</sup>

In the light of this brief background where do we place the Kurdish intellectuals? Actually it is difficult to give a definite answer to this question, yet it is clear that they saw Ottomanism as a Muslim state, in which each ethnic group could improve itself, yet it also could be read as an attitude against the Turkist policies of the central government. In line with this, most of the Kurdish intellectuals who were considered "Ottomanist" were also different in their views on being an Ottoman. For instance, Mevlanzade Rıfat was a proponent of the *Ahrar Fırkası* (The Party of

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p.108.

<sup>178</sup> Hanioğlu, *Bir Siyasal Düşünür Olarak...* pp. 212-213.

<sup>179</sup> Somel, pp. 108-109.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

Liberals), the party of Prince Sabahaddin founded in 1908, which included Ottomanism in its program against the strict policies of the CUP. However, as he stated in his memoir although their program, the one of *Fedakâran-ı Millet Cemiyeti* (The Devoted of the Nation)<sup>181</sup> was similar to the Ahrar, they were in favor of giving more freedom. Interestingly he was more radical in his view of the new regime. He complained about that how it could be said that the regime had changed although the previous men were still in the regime, which he saw as the reason for failure of the constitutional regime. Thereby he proposed a radical transformation in the regime with a fundamental change in governance and laws.<sup>182</sup> Furthermore, rejecting the centralist governance, he suggested that the laws should be regulated according to the peculiarities, and customs of the nations. As understood he saw “Ottomanism” as an supra identity which prevented the conflicts among the different peoples. Thereby, each people had to be given freedom and be allowed to improve themselves in their own social realms.<sup>183</sup>

In addition to Mevlanzade Rıfat, Mehmed Salih Bedirkhan, who were among the author of the *Roj-i Kürd* (the journal of Hêvî), and arrested many times because of his articles, stated in his memoirs that since his childhood he had imagined ways not to be the servant of the Sultan,<sup>184</sup> which reflected fondness of liberty, according to his opinion.

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<sup>181</sup> This organization was founded in August of 1908, opposed to the CUP. Furthermore the society published the journal *Hukuk-u Umumiye*, the responsible person of which was also Mevlanzade Rıfat. Tunaya, *Türkiye’de....* vol. 1. pp. 131-141.

<sup>182</sup> Mevlanzade Rıfat, p. 29. Mevlanzade Rıfat was sent to exile during the reign of Abdülhamid II as he was opposed to him. Then after the *31 Mart Vakası* he was again exiled this time by the CUP. Then we saw Mevlanzade Rıfat in *Kurdistan Teali Cemiyeti* in 1918 and later he would be among the proponents of an independent Kurdistan. Göldaş, *Kürdistan Teâli....* p. 42.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>184</sup> Mehmed Uzun, Rewşen Bedir-Han, *Defter-i Amalım* (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1999), p. 38. Mehmed Salih Bedrikhan was also arrested in 1906 because of the Rıdvan Pasha Event, kept in

Contrary to the examples of Ottomanism among the Kurdish intellectuals there were some other influential Kurds who were totally and since the beginning had been against Ottoman domination during the Second Constitutional Period. Perhaps the most significant example of this is Abdürrezzak Bedirkhan. A brief account of him is necessary for highlighting the variety in the views on “Ottomanism.” Abdürrezzak Bedirkhan was the grand-son of Mîr Bedirkhan and he spent his life in a way more radical contrary to that of his contemporaries. Upon the proclamation of the constitutional regime and despite the general amnesty, Abdürrezak and some other members of the Bedirkhan family, who had been exiled and imprisoned in 1906, were not allowed immediately. Realizing the difficulties for the Kurdish notables living under Ottoman-Turkish domination Abdürrezzak Bedirkhan tried to find ways for living under the authority of Russia. Abdürrezzak, upon his arrival in Istanbul in 1910, saw how their families were treated like “bought and purchased African slaves.”<sup>185</sup> In another place he emphasized that he much earlier had realized that Turkey would be not the place for the Kurdish *mîrs* and children to live, because the governments always followed and tried to kill them. In addition to emphasizing the distrust of the Ottoman-Turkish authorities towards Bedirkhans, each educated Kurd and so his family reached the idea that “it is necessary to strive for getting rid of Ottoman-Turkish domination.” So Abdürrezzak, stating that he much earlier had realized that Ottoman-Turkish governance would not meet Kurdish needs, he had believed since his childhood that Russia would help the

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Akka. Despite the general amnesty after the proclamation of the constitution regime, he was not freed. This information is understood from a telegraph received by his father and by a nephew of Bedirhan Beg to the Beirut governor and Beirut Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress. p. 99.

<sup>185</sup> Abdürrezzak Bedirhan, *Otobiografya (1910-1916)*, trans. Hasan Cunî (İstanbul: Perî Yayınları, 2000), p. 17.

Kurds build their future.<sup>186</sup> In line with his aim, to free the Kurds from Ottoman domination and establish an autonomic Kurdistan under Russian governance, he got in contact with Russian authorities.<sup>187</sup> In 1910 he went to Tbilisi and never returned to Istanbul. He tried to spread propaganda among the Ottoman and Iranian Kurds. Yet he was captured by Ottoman-Turkish authorities and executed in 1918.<sup>188</sup>

Besides figures like Abdürrezzak Bedirkhan, as revealed from the most “Ottomanist” Kurdish association *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, Ottomanism among the Kurds was a result of the constitutional regime, as they wished to rubbing out the bad experiences of the previous years. Nevertheless, what is observed from the writings *KTTG* is that the borders between Islamism, Kurdism and Ottomanism were blurred. I think there arise two main reasons for this, being Muslim and a strong belief in constitutional regime. For instance, İsmail Hakkı Babanzade, in an article titled “Kurds and Kurdistan,” said that the Kurds were firstly Muslim, secondly Ottoman and thirdly Kurdish and so regarded Kurds as one of the important parts of the Muslim and Ottoman community.<sup>189</sup> These remarks illustrate how the being Muslim, Kurd and Ottoman intertwined. According to him, Turks were “another Ottoman people” who had advanced more as they had an official language, schools and governance authorities, as he stated in an article on Kurdish language. So he perceived an equality among the constituents of the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, it was the same article in which he emphasized that against the possible idea of the assimilations of the Kurds (and Albanians and Laz) such a thing had not even

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>189</sup> İsmail Hakkı Babanzade, “Kürdler ve Kürdistan” ...,pp. 44-46.

happened during the times when ignorance was so high. No nation in the Ottoman Empire had lost its existence or identity. The Kurdish language had not become alien in the times of the Iranians, Romans, Arabs, Tatars or Turks.<sup>190</sup> This again substantiated the Ottomanism as a supra identity and assured that it did not contradict Kurdishness.

Being a Muslim also profoundly affected the alliances of the Kurds with the Ottoman state. One of the mostly emphasized issues was the Kurds' great services to Islam and to the state of Islam, to the Ottoman Empire. It is argued that without the Kurds, Ottoman Empire would not have survived until then, which proved by the Kurdish martyrs from Vienna to Crete.<sup>191</sup> Seemingly this point reflected the contractarian or mutual relations of interest between the government and the Kurds.

The focus on Ottomanism in *KTG* may be better understood when read with the strong belief in the constitutional regime, as within the same lines the authors talk about how the Kurd was an important part of the Ottoman family, they heavily criticized the previous regime, which they usually referred as "the regime of despotism." For instance, in the same article in which Süleyman Nazif talks about the Kurdish corpses from Vienna to Crete, he also emphasized that how the four hundred years of Ottoman rule had brought destruction to the Kurds and Kurdistan. Kurdistan was deprived of all of the signs of prosperity; it had no doctors, judges, schools, hospitals, or roads. The government had always approached Kurds as a "crowd" which paid taxes and performed military duty. Nevertheless, he emphasized that with the "awakening" of the Ottoman community (the proclamation of the constitutional regime) Kurdistan had accepted it with eagerness and happiness, because the Kurdish

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<sup>190</sup> İsmail Hakkı Babanzade "Kürdçeye Dair" [About Kurdish], *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.3, 6 Kânun-i Evvel 1324, (19 December 1908), in Bozarslan p. 141-143.

<sup>191</sup> Süleyman Nazif, "Kürd ve Kürdistan",...pp. 83-84.

people knew the meaning of the equality and freedom as they had long been deprived of them.<sup>192</sup> Furthermore, in another article Said-i Kürdî, while talking about the conflicts among the Kurds, highlighted the role of the Ottoman government in the acceleration of these conflicts.<sup>193</sup>

Apart from this, Süleyman Nazif's article "İzmir is not Kurdistan" is a reply to the speech of the İzmir deputy in the parliament. In that speech, the deputy, while complaining about the lack of services in İzmir, said that "İzmir is not Kurdistan," implying the inured indifference to Kurdistan. Nazif reminded the deputy that he was the deputy all of the Ottoman provinces not just İzmir, so instead of such bitter comparison, he should have asked "why there is so much cruelty in Kurdistan." Interestingly, he pointed out when the Sultan Selim I had annihilated Kurdistan, it had been much more prosperous than then and it had experienced 40000 years' corruption and destruction in the 400 years. This state, this government which he described as "an intruder force which captured the entire world," should cry for the situation of the present Kurdistan.<sup>194</sup> These remarks are also interesting as they, on the one hand, reminded the deputy of İzmir that he was the deputy of all Ottomans, on the other hand, he described the Ottoman states as an intruder.

Furthermore in a Kurdish article in the second issue, Seyyah Ehmed Şewqi stated that Kurdistan was better than the "money printing house" (*darphane*) of the state, yet he complained that they had not founded a state because they had not unified and not ended the struggles among themselves.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Molla Seîd, "Bedüzzaman Molla Said-i Kürdî'nin Nasayihî" ...,pp. 54-55. The Turkish translation of this article is in no.2, p. 91.

<sup>194</sup> Süleyman Nazif, "İzmir Kürdistan Değil" [İzmir is not Kurdistan], *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.7, 3 Kânun-i Sani 1324 (16 January, 1909), in Bozarslan, p.330.

The variety discussed above shows the constraint in the views of regarding the Kurdish intellectuals pre-WWI era as “Ottomanist.” However, what is intended in this part was to show the various agendas of Kurdish intellectuals during the first two years of the constitutional regime which served to the notion of an Ottoman citizenry. As a new and democratic regime, they saw the constitutional governance as a chance for the Kurdish people who had been deprived of all the means for development and prosperity, a deprivation which stemmed from the misrules of the previous regime. Thereby the contents of the program for “Ottoman citizens” prescribed the wider authority to the provinces, the characteristics of which differed from each other, and also equality among Ottoman constituents, the rule of law and granting opportunities to each constituent to develop. Such a program would help the solution of the conflicts both among the Kurdish tribes themselves and with other Anatolian peoples like the Armenians and such a situation in the last analysis would help development of the Kurds.

However, the various reactions to the new regime, especially by the traditional Kurdish leaders showed once again the multi-fragmented power relations in the region. Nevertheless the main contribution of this study is to show despite the reactions against the constitutional regime, some tribes also welcomed the new regime with actually the assistance of the local branches of the KTTC, which aimed to create a Kurdish space in terms of the opportunities given with the new regime.

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<sup>195</sup>Seyyah Ahmed Şewqi, “Gelî Welatîya” [All Country], *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi* no.2 29 Teşrin-i Sani 1324 (12 December 1908), in Bozarslan pp. 99-100



## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE KURDISH RENAISSANCE 1908-1914

*“(...) by this means you  
would revive not only Kurdish  
people but also could create  
one.”<sup>196</sup>*

The period between the 1908 Revolution and the breakout of the First World War (1914) witnessed an increase in the cultural and political activities of the ethnic minorities within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire, and Kurds were no exception. In this chapter the footprints of the Kurdish movement, which will be defined as a “Kurdish renaissance” and pioneered by the Kurdish intelligentsia during the second constitutional period will be discussed. How can we characterize the “Kurdism,” “*Kurdayetî*” or “Kurdishness” following the first legal Kurdish associations between 1908 and 1914? First of all, a brief focus on the way of dealing with the subject in a few recent studies is required in order to characterize in which literature the present thesis locates itself. Secondly, it is essential to explain the conceptions which the literature of nationalism allows and will shed light on the construction of ‘Kurdish identity/ies’ during the early twentieth century. Then a historical contextualization of the ruptures and discontinuities, such as the series of wars inaugurated with the Balkan Wars, increased the focus on the Turkish identity of the empire, rather than cosmopolitanism, and is necessary for understanding the impressive shifts of focuses from Ottoman citizenship to Kurdism and Islamism. Lastly in light of the above-mentioned discussions, this chapter will scrutinize ideas

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<sup>196</sup> “(...)bu suretle Kürd milletini yeniden hayata getirmek değil hiç yoktan bir Kürd milleti imal etmiş olursunuz.” Bulgaristanlı Doğan, “Milletinize Karşı Vazifeniz: Kürd Münevver Gençliğine” [Duty to Your People: To the Kurdish Intellectual Young People], *Roj-i Kürd* no.2, 6 Temmuz 1329 (19 July 1913), pp. 2-3

and activities through the analysis of the primary publications of Kurdish intelligentsia in Istanbul which characterize their positions vis-à-vis the Kurdish renaissance.

### The Related Literature Review

Although there is an immense literature on the evolution of Kurdish nationalism, the period of the emergence of the first legal Kurdish organizations has not been dealt with except in a few studies. Furthermore in many of the works, even the names of these associations are confused or mixed with each other. There may be several reasons for this situation. Access to the primary sources, like the journals of these organizations has been possible for three decades or a bit more. Furthermore, maybe “the accounts of revolts” in Kurdish history seem more interesting and also in the case of Turkey, the highly politicized radical Kurdish movement required the issue to be dealt with different dynamics. Nevertheless in the recent years some studies have focused on this period in detail. Some of them give a close look at the publishing organs of these associations, yet none of them has brought the documents related to the KTTC and Hêvî in the Ottoman archives into the discussions. Yet the common point of these studies is to distinguish the Kurdish movement before the First World War as cultural and after the war as political. As emphasized before, the aim of the thesis is to go further from this dichotomy, yet as the main framework of the present chapter is about the Kurdish renaissance, in the following lines a brief discussion will be put forth on the main themes in the recent debates.

On the contrary to scholars like Chris Kutschera<sup>197</sup> and Wadie Jwaideh,<sup>198</sup> who actually show a tendency to date the emergence of Kurdish nationalism to the

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<sup>197</sup> Chris Kutschera, *Kürt Ulusal...* Kutschera who traces to the origins of Kurdish nationalism in the revolt of Mîr Bedirkhan, argues that Kurdish leaders who saw that revolts were fruitless, felt the necessity of the politicization of the masses and so in 1908 they established first Kurdish political organizations. p. 30.

revolts in the nineteenth century, some recent studies, like that of Hakan Özoğlu, challenge this situation, arguing that even the Kurdish organizations in the early twentieth century cannot be regarded as “nationalists.” Thereby the term “proto-nationalists” is problematic, as it attributes “nationalism” to those organizations.<sup>199</sup> Seemingly Özoğlu, regarding the activities of those societies before 1914 as cultural, yet to avoidance of attributing “nationalism” to them, does not use the term “cultural nationalism”, or “proto-nationalism.”

At this point it is necessary to discuss the meanings and boundaries of “cultural nationalism” which are agreed upon in the literature. The term cultural nationalism, for Kurdish nationalism, is used by Hamit Bozarslan in an article which evaluates Kurdish nationalism from the first Kurdish newspaper *Kurdistan* to the early twenty first century. He also regards the KTTC as the first fruits of the Kurdish cultural nationalism by arguing that overt expressions of independence did not come out until after the First World War.<sup>200</sup> Bozarslan does not mention Hêvî, the student organization of 1912, yet it seems that he regards the activities of the pre-1914 era as “cultural nationalism.”

In line with Özoğlu, in a recent thesis, Djene Rhys Bajalan, who actually takes a much closer look at the publications of Kurdish societies, argues that it is more appropriate to define the Kurdish intelligentsia, which he calls the “Young Kurds” between 1898 and 1914 as “Ottoman nationalists with Kurdish colors” and

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<sup>198</sup> Wadie Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National....* Jwaideh also believes that the nationalistic ideas were the impetus behind the revolt of Sheikh Ubeydullah.

<sup>199</sup> Hakan Özoğlu, *Osmanlı Devleti ve...* p. 92. In his study, Özoğlu makes a compare with the *KTTC* and *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti* which was founded in 1918, after the Mondros Armistice, and expresses a clear demand for independence.

<sup>200</sup> Hamit Bozarslan, “Kürt Milliyeçiliği ve Kürt Hareketi (1898-2000),” in *Milliyetçilik*, eds. Tanıl Bora, Murat Gültekingil (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), pp. 841-870.

he clarifies his position that the activities and ideas during that era can be called Ottoman nationalism rather than Kurdish nationalism.<sup>201</sup>

Contrary to such opinions which argue that the Kurdish movement before WWI was not nationalist, in her master's thesis Janet Klein evaluates the Kurdish press in the Ottoman Empire, both before and after war, as the attempts of the Kurdish intellectuals "claiming their nations," arguing both the existence of their people "as a nation in the community of the other nations" and politically, which means either "demanding autonomy or independence". Last they also "claimed the leadership of their nation."<sup>202</sup>

However, the studies of Bajalan and Klein, especially a recent article of latter<sup>203</sup>, and also the book by Özoğlu are significant as they have contributed to the argument that the dismemberment of the empire was not due to the separatist activities of the ethnic minorities in the empire,<sup>204</sup> which challenges the idea that it was the nationalism which caused the "collapses" of the empires in the early twentieth century.

In such a context, a few remarks are needed to make clear the point of departure. The present thesis argues that, via analyses of primary sources and

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<sup>201</sup> Djene Rhys Bajalan, "Kurds for the Empire (1898-1914): The Young Kurds" (Unpublished M.A Thesis, İstanbul Bilgi University, 2009).

<sup>202</sup> Janet Klein, "Claiming the Nation: The Origins and Nature of Kurdish Nationalist Discourse: A Study of the Kurdish Press in the Ottoman Empire" (M.A. Thesis, Princeton University, 1996). However, it seems that she was unable to access the newspaper of *the Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, in her thesis Klein bases her argument on the analyses of *Kurdistan* (1898), *Roj-i Kurd* (1913) and *Hetaw-ı Kurd* (1913); also and *Jîn* (1918), *Kurdistan* (1919) the publications of Second Term Hevî and Kurdistan Teali Cemiyeti, successively. Besides this, in a later article, as discussed in the previous chapter which can also be seen as a revision of her thesis, she made distinction between Kurdish nationalists and non-nationalist Kurds. See. second chapter of the present thesis, footnote 55.

<sup>203</sup> Klein, "Kurdish Nationalists.....

<sup>204</sup> Also Ohannes Kılıçdağı, in his thesis, contributes to the this argument from the side of non-Muslim communities, in his case that of Armenians. "The Bourgeois Transformation and Ottomanism among Anatolian Armenians after the 1908 Revolution" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2005).

archival documents, it would obscure the diversity and contradictions among the Kurdish intelligentsia to call them either “Kurdish nationalists” or “Ottoman nationalists.” In the same way, to call Kurdish nationalism cultural before 1914 also overlooks the discontinuities between 1908 and 1914 in the Kurdish-Ottoman interactions. This does not mean an ignorance of the “big blow” of the First World War. Nevertheless, in this chapter by focusing on the shifts from “Ottomanism” to “Islamism” and “Kurdism” via comparing and contrasting both within and between the articles of the journals of the KTTC and Hêvî, I will try to show that the first seeds of indifference to and neglect of Ottomanism or as called in this thesis Ottoman citizenship began much earlier than First World War.

What is aimed at in this chapter is to show how the activities during the second constitutional era strongly contributed to what can be called as a “Kurdish renaissance,” which in turn contributed to the idea that what occurred during this era affected the later Kurdish nationalism. Thereby in what follows after introducing the conceptions and theories which will be utilized in this chapter I will discuss the nature of the Kurdish renaissance, which is revealed in the sense of education, literature, and language and also socio-economic.

#### The Relevant Theoretical Tools: “Revivalism,” “Renaissance,” or “Awakening”

A detailed discussion on nationalism has come forth only in the last few decades, as Özkırmılı argues for two main reasons: the “general indifference of social scientists to investigate nations and nationalism,” and the fact that nationalism is equated with “its extreme manifestations, that is with separatist movements that threatened the stability of existing states or with right-wing politics.”<sup>205</sup> For the

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<sup>205</sup> Umut Özkırmılı, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 2-3.

period which is under consideration in this study, the overtly separatist aims are not the case; yet in this thesis it will be regarded as a significant era in which the “Kurdish national consciousness” was shaped and which provided the base for the later Kurdish movement, which actually adapted an overt separatist agenda towards the end of WWI. Therefore, it is essential to introduce some theoretical tools which characterize the developments that shaped Kurdish nationalism at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, as it is impossible to give all debates on nationalism in the space allowed, for the scope of the thesis, only some crucial debates which can shed light on the Kurdish movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries will be explicated.

Miroslav Hroch in his study examining the peculiarities of the nation-building process in Europe focuses on the “smaller nations,” by which he implies not a qualitative but quantitative connotation, which he in a –thirty- year edition redefines as “a development that started under conditions of a non-dominant ethnic group and proceeded toward a modern nation.” Namely, he focuses on the “national movement of nondominant ethnic groups.”<sup>206</sup> He distinguishes the nondominant ethnic groups from what he calls state-nations with three deficiencies:

“[I]t lacked “its own” nobility or ruling classes, it possessed no state, and its literary tradition in its own language was incomplete or interrupted. Sooner or later a group of educated members of such an ethnic community reached the conclusion that their group also belonged to the category of the “nation,” but that it was still an “unconscious” nation that needed to be awakened, revived, and made aware, and also required recognition from other, already established nations. They began a purposeful activity aimed at achieving all the attributes of a fully formed nation: they began “national movement.”<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Hroch, *Social Preconditions of...*, p. xiii.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., pp. xiii-xiv.

Thereby as Hroch's approach deals with the epoch when the class of intelligentsia tried to "awaken" their people, it is also relevant for the Kurdish revivalism in the early twentieth century, when the Kurdish intellectuals became aware of the fact that the time was an era of nationalities and that their people should fulfill the necessities of being a nation.

In addition, the periodization of Hroch for the national revival was also inspiring although the borders among them were fluid. As for phase A, which was the beginning of the revival, when "a passionate concern on the part of a group of individuals, usually intellectuals, for the study of the language, the culture, the history of the oppressed nationality" occurred. In this phase, the attempts of this group of intellectuals did not diffuse in the social realm. As Hroch further explains "the period of scholarly interest," was followed by "a period of political agitation" which was Phase B, and lastly Phase C, in which "a mass national movement" arose. The vital importance for the goal of Hroch was the phase B, in which the transition from political agitation to mass national movement could both be successful and fail.<sup>208</sup>

Is it possible for us to consider the Kurdish revival during the second constitutional period between Phase A and Phase B?<sup>209</sup> A close reading of the publications of the era can give influential clues for such an argument. However, Hroch's discussion on nationalism in another article also gives insight to this issue:

"(...) [T]he onset of the modern stage of nation-building can be dated from the moment when selected groups within the nondominant ethnic community started to discuss their own ethnicity and to conceive of it as a potential

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<sup>208</sup>Ibid., pp. 22-24.

<sup>209</sup>Kayalı, discusses that first phase of Arabism, Phase A predated the Second Constitutional Period, beginning from the late nineteenth century there was "an increasing consciousness of an ethnic community among the Muslim groups," and as he further explains Phase B of Arab movements began in the Second Constitutionnal Period. Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks..*, p. 11.

nation-to-be. Sooner or later, they observed certain deficits, which the future nation still lacked, and began efforts to overcome one or more of them, seeking to persuade their compatriots of the importance of consciously belonging to the nation. The current tendency to speak of them as ‘nationalist’ leads to serious confusion. For nationalism *stricto sensu* is something else: namely, that outlook which gives an *absolute priority to the values of the nation over all other values and interests*. It was far from being the case that all the patriots in the national movements of Central and Eastern Europe in the nineteenth or early twentieth century were nationalists in this, accurate sense of the word.”<sup>210</sup>

In above-mentioned words, Hroch rightly points out that with the present notion of nationalism which belongs to the present day and in its strict sense we cannot understand the program of the national movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Nevertheless, the process of nation-building begins, when a community starts to think about developing their language, culture, history and customs, which, as he argues, “became the critical ingredient in the first phase of patriotic agitation.”<sup>211</sup>

Along with Hroch, also in the periodization of Ernest Gellner, what Gellner calls as “third time zone” is also significant for the characterization of the nation-building process, despite his approach which argues that only in industrial societies could nationalism emerge.<sup>212</sup> Nevertheless, in the “third time zone,” there exist cultures without political units, or states. As Gellner further argues, in this time zone, although the distinction between “historic” and “non-historic” nations is common, the former need “a rebirth of political unit” and the latter require a creation of it, a distinction which remains insignificant as what both kinds require is the same. In both cases, what is needed is “awakeners,” “activists- propagandists-educators,” who

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<sup>210</sup> Miroslav Hroch, “From National Movement to the Fully-Formed Nation: The Nation Building Process in Europe.” *New Left Review* no. 198, [March-April 1993] (PDF version of the document downloaded March 10, 2010 from <http://www.newleftreview.org/?view=1702> ).

<sup>211</sup> Hroch, “From National...”, p. 9.

<sup>212</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 62; p. 140.



either revive “the glories of the past,” or “bring the nation to consciousness simply by virtue of its cultural existence without blessings of the previous political history.”<sup>213</sup> Moreover, another crucial topic is that these awakeners need to act “freelance” and if they organize, their organizations are not granted opportunities by the existing political authorities.<sup>214</sup>

Besides Hroch and Gellner, the “print capitalism” of Benedict Anderson, who argues that nations are imagined “because the members of the even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion”<sup>215</sup> also enable us to evaluate the first footprints of the nation-building of the Kurds. As Anderson argues, with the help of print-capitalism, especially with the opportunity to diffuse ideas via printing commodities like the newspaper, the idea of nation-ness was able to reach a much wider audiences.<sup>216</sup> Thereby, as will be seen through analyses of the Kurdish journals in the era under consideration, Kurdish intellectuals were also aware of the role of the printing press in the creation of public opinion, which would be yielded in the creation of “self-consciousness,” in turn.

However, it is also necessary to remember the inspiring ideas of Hobsbawm, who argues that nationalism, which is “constructed from above cannot be understood also analyzed from below,” despite of the difficulty in discovery of the view from below, the object of national propaganda of the activists.<sup>217</sup> Nevertheless, despite its

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<sup>213</sup> Gellner, “The Coming of Nationalism and Its Interpretation: The Myths of Nation and Class,” in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. Gopal Balakrishnan (London and New York: Verso , 1996), p. 129.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, New York: Verso, 1991), p. 6

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

difficulty, as further explained by Hobsbawm, “there are three clear things.” First of all, the ideologies of the states or the movements do not demonstrate real ideas or feelings of even the most devoted “citizens or supporters.” Secondly, we cannot know whether “national identification” excludes or exceeds the “remainder set of identifications which constitute social being.” Actually, Hobsbawm stresses that national identification is always combined with the other identifications, even when it is superior to them. And third “national identification and what it is believed to imply, can change and shift in time, even in the course of quite short periods.”<sup>218</sup>

Now in the light of discussions above, I will introduce the details of the “revival,” in the terms of which I will contextualize this chapter. Within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire, the usage of notions like “revivalism,” “awakening” or “rebirth” first emerged in the Balkan nationalities. Borrowed from Bulgarian historiography, these terms will be employed to comprehend the Kurdish movement in the early twentieth century. How has “revivalism” been used in Bulgarian historiography and to what extent is it relevant for Kurdish historiography? In what follows, these questions will be discussed:

Roumen Daskalov in his valuable study on the historiography of the Balkan’s “nation-making” evaluates the literature on the “Bulgarian Revival” in which he elaborates the term revival, “which literally means “*rebirth*,” and the related terms, which were first employed metaphorically to designate the sudden and profound change experienced by the Bulgarian people, much like a magical return to life (after *having been asleep, or dead*).”<sup>219</sup> As further explained by Daskalov, in the Bulgarian

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<sup>217</sup> E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism, since 1780: Program, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: University Press, 1990), p. 10

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Roumen Daskalov, *The Making of a Nation in the Balkans...* p. 1 (Italics are mine.)

historiography “the Revival was thought of as a process with a certain duration, which led the Bulgarians to a state of being “awake,” “returned to its senses,” “alive again,” which corresponds to an epoch in Bulgarian history, to the last century of Ottoman rule in the Balkans.”<sup>220</sup>

As Daskalov explains further, in the Bulgarian context “revival” or synonyms such as “awakening,” and “resurrection” were thought of in the national sense, “as the coming of people to the self-consciousness.” Used first in the mid-nineteenth century these words implied both the revival of language and education and also the Bulgarian people.<sup>221</sup>

Such an idea of revival, in the Bulgarian case regarded people as if they “were “slumbering,” had “lost consciousness,” “lost memory,” “become numb” or even “died” and “until all of a sudden (and thanks to the efforts of “awakeners”) they were roused, awakened, and brought to their senses, recovered their amnesia, regained consciousness were resurrected, came to life, go up, etc.”<sup>222</sup>

Apart from this national sense, “revival” also implied spiritual and cultural senses, a transformation towards Modernity and as Hristo Gandev implies “the rationalization of the world-view and the emergence of an urban civic society, which resulted in the shaping of the Bulgarian people into an organized society and a cultural nation.”<sup>223</sup>

Scholars like Ramyona Radkova, in the literature of the Bulgarian Revival, searched “for traces of national self-consciousness, especially designations of origin, the use of the ethnic eponym, phrases such as “Bulgarian people,” “fatherland,”

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid., p.1.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

“native land,” and similar expressions of patriotism, descriptions of territory, praise for the Bulgarian language, pride in the historical past and advocacy of the historical right to national independence.”<sup>224</sup>

Besides this, another peculiarity of the Revival and also in the Bulgarian sense is the analogies with Enlightenment and Renaissance. As Daskalov explains, “in its first stage Bulgarian Revival juxtaposed with Enlightenment”; which was represented as propaganda for education and as a period in Bulgarian literary and cultural development.”<sup>225</sup> This period was also “characterized as a period of national awakening” and also “of the laying down of the organizational (institutional) foundations of the subsequent literary cultural developments-schools, education, printing presses, books and periodicals, all of which played a role in the formation of a literary language.”<sup>226</sup> Furthermore, as stated by Daskalov, some scholars like Emil Georgiev defined the Renaissance-Enlightenment era “as a period of “national awakening,” in which the national upsurge and struggles of later times were prepared.”<sup>227</sup>

Apart from these national and cultural senses, Balkan revivalism also has an economic meaning; which implies “a decay of feudalism and a prelude to capitalism, a ‘preparation of the preconditions’ for the victory of capitalism.” However, in another way, capitalism is identified as “the very economic upsurge and ‘commodity money (i.e., market)’ relations or the ‘accumulation of money.’”<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., pp. 33-37.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

To sum up, “revival,” which correlated with national awakening and is seen as a period for national struggles happens in multi-dimensional realms, from language to culture, from education to economic contexts. Taking into consideration the peculiarities of Bulgarian nationalism and being aware of its difference from the one of the Kurds, it is argued that the concept of “revivalism” can be safely adapted to study the Kurdish organizations and the activities of the Kurdish intellectuals under consideration in this thesis. Therefore the concept “revival” is not used directly taken from the Bulgarian context, so it has been adapted in this study. However, a main drawback is the possible “essentialist” connotation of the term “revival.” Thereby, I would prefer to use the concept “renaissance” in this study. When the term “revival” is used, it will be much more about the parameters of such an experience, rather than an essentialist attribute to it. In this study “revival” corresponds to a duration, the first seeds of which emerge in the era under the consideration in this thesis. Thereby, these first steps of the Kurdish movement gain importance, as they prepared the base for later Kurdish nationalism. The parameters of “revivalism,” such as in both the metaphorical and real sense, to awaken, come out of deadness, educational, cultural and national, and also in the socio-economical sense will be discussed step by step through a close reading of the first-hand materials of Kurdish intelligentsia of the early twentieth century Ottoman Empire.

Both the first association of the Kurdish intelligentsia in 1908, *Kürt Teaviin ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (KTTC) and the later student organization, *Kürt Talebe Hêvî Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Student Hope Society) (Hêvî, after that) which was established in Istanbul in 1912 put at the top of their lists the development of and reform related to the Kurdish language and spread of education in the Kurdish region so to enable Kurdish people to catch up with the requirements of the age. Thereby in the columns

of journals of both the KTTC and Hêvî, there are lots of articles related to this issue. With the focus on such elements, it seems that Kurdish intelligentsia in Istanbul worked for the awakening of the Kurdish people and to create a national awareness by stressing the common language, history, glories of the past and carrying concern about the situation of Kurds both in Istanbul and Kurdish provinces. The footprints of Kurdish renaissance will be scrutinized through the columns of Kurdish journals of the era.

### Education as a Means for Healing the Situation of the Kurds

The role of education in the renaissance of the Kurdish people is one of the most treated topics. For the awakening of the Kurds and for their getting out of darkness what was firstly to be done is to ameliorate and expand education. Ismail Hakkı Babanzade was among the writers who mostly discussed the importance of education for Kurds in the columns of *KTTC*. For instance, in one of his articles he argued that for the “eastern people and especially Kurds who are most underdeveloped among them” working day and night was a vital necessity and he drew the greatest attention to education.<sup>229</sup> His remarks are important as they also give some clues about the source of inspiration for the significance of education, or generally from which point the idea of Kurdish enlightenment was constructed. As understood, the term “eastern” was used not only as a geographical designation, but also for Muslim countries. This point would be discussed later thoroughly, while analyzing context in which the Kurdish intelligentsia located their enlightenment.

In the same way, Said-i Kürdî noted that education would be a means for Kurds to fight against three enemies: poverty, ignorance and disputes among

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<sup>229</sup>İsmail Hakkı Babanzade, “Kürdler ve Kürdistan”..., pp. 44-46

themselves. By drawing attention to the situation of the Kurdish porters in Istanbul, who numbered around 40000 people and even could not read a newspaper, Said argued that the first weapon was education. In the second line came unity and national love, and the third one was individual efforts for one's people. Kürdî expressed his will for Kurds as "study, study and collaborate, collaborate."<sup>230</sup>

In line with his great attribution to education, Said-i Kürdî developed some programs for the expansion of education before 1908. Under striking title in the columns of *KTG*, "The Memoirs of Mullah Said-i Kürdî from the Mental Hospital." Said-i Kürdî narrated his story about his arrival to Istanbul during the Hamidian regime and his proposal of a draft related for the spread of education in Kurdistan which was deeply deprived of it. Upon such a demand, he was put in a mental hospital.<sup>231</sup>

As a part of viewpoints about education, the debates on the Kurdish language, i.e. improvement, reading and writing, education in mother tongue, Kurdish, and its relation with the development of a people occupied a pivotal part in the agendas of Kurdish organizations. Language, which is the *sine qua non* of the "national renaissance" was the most crucial topic discussed in the journals under consideration. The Kurdish language, sometimes revealed with strong national connotations like in the anecdotes of Said-i Kürdî in the mental hospital, where to his doctor, he said that

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<sup>230</sup> Molla Seîd, "Bediüzzaman Molla Said-i Kürdî'nin Nasayışı" ....pp. 54-55 "*Wesîyeta paşî: Xwendin, xwendin, xwendin û destê hev girtin, destê hev girtin, destê hev girtin.*" Rohat Alakom says that 40 thousand was probably the number of the Kurds living in Istanbul; as the most Kurds in Istanbul were porters Said-i Kurd gives this number. Alakom, *Eski İstanbul Kürtleri; 1453-1925* (İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 1998), p. 143.

<sup>231</sup> Bediüzzaman-ı Kürdî "Molla Said-i Kürdî'nin Tımarhane Hatırâtı" [The Memoirs of Mullah Said- i Kürdî from the Mental Hospital], *Kürd Teaviin ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.5, 20 Kânunıevvel 1324 (2 Ocak 1909), in Bozarslan pp. 236-241. Said's closure into a mental hospital is also regarded as a sign of cruelties of the previous regime which was deemed to destroy valuable ideas and people.

a Kurd could explain his views in Turkish only to a limited extent.<sup>232</sup> Again, İsmail Hakkı Babanzade, who evaluated previous policies towards Kurds until the constitutional regime, by emphasizing that the previous regime, while cutting the heads off the people, cut both the ideas and tongues of the Kurds, stressed the importance of native tongue.<sup>233</sup>

Language was also seen as a way of development and being powerful. İsmail Hakkı Babanzade by arguing the difference in the opportunities both within the Muslim groups and the Non-Muslims, correlated prosperity and development to the having an official language; according to him, as Turks had schools with an official language and had the reins of the country, they were advanced in science compared to the Kurds, Albanians, Lazs and Circassians. İsmail Hakkı further argued that among the Muslim constituents of the Ottoman Empire, except for Turks and Arabs, the others did not have a collected literature, book and language. Furthermore, Non-Muslim constituents were also more privileged, as they had opportunities for developing their own languages. However, unlike Turks and non-Muslims, the native tongues of Muslim communities were not allowed and not given the chance to develop.<sup>234</sup>

In such a context, İsmail Hakkı discussed the possibility of the assimilation of minority languages in the lines of *KTTG*:

A thought or necessity of the Turkification or Arabication of Kurds, Albanians and Lazs might come to mind, yet the means for such a cruel and devastating policy has not been found in the world. Such an attempt would yield nothing except occupying time with a nonsense and fruitless thing. Even in the times when ignorance was so high any nation in the Ottoman Empire did not lose its existence and identity. Kurdish has been surviving like this for thousands of years. Neither in the times of Persians, Romans, Arabs, nor

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> İsmail Hakkı Babanzade, “Kürdler ve Kürdistan”..., pp. 44-46

<sup>234</sup> İsmail Hakkı Babanzade “Kürdçeye Dair”..., p. 141-143.



Tatars and Turks this language did not alienate; on the contrary the speakers of this language, a bigger ability than the invaders have diffused everywhere day by day. I mean that a language can keep its existence despite of depriving of grammar books and dictionaries.<sup>235</sup>

The remarks of Ismail Hakkı Babanzâde are interesting as they touched upon “the impossibility of assimilation of the languages.” Such an emphasis, I think, is important as it partially portrayed the atmosphere of the early twentieth century Ottoman empire. Furthermore these words when juxtaposed with the words in the same article, “if the Kurdish people, who are the most important column of the Ottomans, remain decayed and rusty, the Ottomans who are based on the Kurds, God forbid, would collapse,” is among the best examples to show the diversity of the thoughts as well as the deficits of today’s concepts to understand this variance.

In addition, as İ.H. Babanzade saw, the development in having schools with the mother tongue and/or being at the power, he noted that if a Kurdish child were educated in Kurdish, it would be more beneficial because the children could use its most valuable years in advancing in the science rather than wasting that time with learning a different language, namely Turkish. Thereby, Kurds should have a proper Kurdish first by writing a grammar book and a dictionary.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> “(...) Kürdleri, Lâzları, Arnavudları Türkleştirmek veya Arablaştırmak gibi bir lüzum ve mütalâa vârid-i hâtır olabilirse de, cihan cihan olalı bir kavmin böyle lisanını kökünden istîsal edecek henüz hiçbir usul- ne kadar zalimane ve kahharane olursa olsun- keşfedilememiş olduğundan, böyle bir teşebbüs, abesle iştigaldan başka bir şey-i müfîd olamaz. Ne hacet, cehaletin en keşif devresinde bile memâlik-i Osmaniye’deki milletlerin hiçbiri mevcudiyet ve hüviyetini zayi’ edemedi. Kürdçe binlerce seneden beri bu hal üzere devam edip gidiyor. Ne İranîler, ne Romalılar, ne Arablar, ne Tatatrlar, ne Türkler zamanında bu Lisan zıvanpezîr olamamış ve bilakis bununlar mütekellim oalnlar, yevmen feyevmen etraf-I erbaaya daha büyük bir isti’da-ı istîlâcûyane ile yayılmıştır. Demek istiyorum ki bir Lisan sarf-ü nahve, lugat-ü kamûsa malik olmasa dahi muhafaza-I mevcudiyet eder. (...)” Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> The other things came only after the creation of a proper language: Then a history of the Kurdish people should be written down. After that the literary pieces, poems should be collected and written down. Once these were realized, by creating the language of education they could easily become prosper and became advanced. Ibid.

Nevertheless, this issue was challenged by contrary arguments which were in favor of education in Turkish. For instance, Hamdi Süleyman from Erzincan argued that as Kurds did not have any material in their own language it would be useless to give education in Kurdish, favoring education in Turkish language. Nevertheless, he emphasized that this idea was not in contradiction with the ideas of Ismail Hakkı, those mentioned above. Emphasizing that his intention was not the destruction of the language of a courageous people he just wanted to discuss his ideas, as it was a part of freedom of expression. Hamdi Süleyman listed his reasons as follows: the official language of the Ottomans is Turkish, the absence of Kurdish grammar books and dictionaries, the requirement of knowledge of Turkish for the performing military service, etc. Thereby he proposed that learning Turkish was not a waste of time, rather it was a necessity and asset.<sup>237</sup>

It seems that the columns of *KTG* became a platform on which the deficiencies and suggestions related to the Kurdish language, literature and culture were discussed. Furthermore, as understood the efforts of society had some reactions from the Kurdish provinces, despite remaining at minimal size. For instance, the interested teachers from the provinces tried to share their knowledge and studies about the Kurdish language and literature, as understood from the reply of the organization to a teacher, Ömer Avni Efendi from Mamuretülaziz. The said teacher sent a telegraph to the organization and talked about his books *Kavaid-i Lisan-ı Kürdî* (The Grammar of the Kurdish Language) and *Edebî Tatbikat Örneği* (Literary

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<sup>237</sup> Erzincanlı Hamdi Süleyman, “Kürdistan’da Maarifin Tarz-ı Tensîkve İhyası” [The Regularization and Revival of Education in Kurdistan], *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.8, 10 Kânun-i Sani 1324 (23 January 1909), in Bozarslan, pp. 370-372.

Practice Sample). The newspaper explained that they had not yet received his mentioned books.<sup>238</sup>

In line with the role of education, the authors of *KTTC* also thought about the supplementary units for schools. These lines also reflected the role of the modern education for healing social problems and the nature of the education envisaged, which can be characterized as a collaborative and scholarly work. For instance, Diyarbakırlı Mazharzade Mazhar focused on the importance of libraries by again emphasizing the task of the notables and wealthy for financial support. The logic behind his suggestions lay in the fact that the aid of the government for the remedies related to the education would remain insufficient, as well as the inadequacy of qualified teachers. Furthermore he was in favor of putting every kind of books in the libraries except the ones full of praises which had come out during the period of “despotism,” which actually were full of praise to the sultan. Interestingly he saw the opening and expansion of libraries with the official and non-official schools as a remedy for poverty and precaution against the crimes.<sup>239</sup>

Actually such ideas which regarded the amendments and improvements of education became more planned and clearer in the publications of Hêvî, the student organization; yet another society, *Kürt Neşr-i Maarif Cemiyeti* (Society for the Propagation of Kurdish Education), which was founded by the members of the KTTC can be evaluated as a model which aimed to put the ideals into practice.

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<sup>238</sup> “Ma’muretul’aziz Mekteb-i Rüşdî-i Askerîsi Kavaid-i Osmaniye Muallimi Ömer Avni Efendi” [The Teacher of Ottoman Grammar, Ömer Avni Efendi of Mamuretülaziz Military Secondary School], *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi* no.6, 27 Kânun-i Evvel 1324 (9 January 1909), in Bozarslan, p. 303.

<sup>239</sup> Diyarbakırlı Mazharzade Mazhar, “Kütübhaneler” [Libraries] *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.6, 27 Kânun-i Evvel 1324 (9 January 1909), in Bozarslan, pp. 290-291.

### *Kürd Neşr-i Maarif Cemiyeti*

The first legal society during the second constitutional period did not last long and as understood it was closed down some time before or after the events of April 1909.<sup>240</sup> Although it failed to realize its aims, it managed to be successful, at least partially. For instance, in a news article in the seventh issue of the journal, the editor stated with pleasure that in the next issues they would give place the program of the bank, about the foundation of which the society had been thinking for a long time. Such an idea, although never realized, exemplifies the nature of the renaissance envisaged.

However, after its closure, the KTTC could succeed in realizing one of its main aims, carrying out tasks for the expansion of education. In the twelfth article of the charter of the KTTC, the society clarified that it would be engaged in some kind of activities which would function like an education ministry.<sup>241</sup> *Kürd Neşr-i Maarif Cemiyeti* (KNMC) became the main channel to accomplish this task after the dissolution of the KTTC. Opening a primary school for Kurdish children in Istanbul and also in Kurdish villages for the creation of awareness among the tribes that the foundation of schools was one of the main goals of the society.<sup>242</sup> In the pursuant of these aims the society founded a school, *Mekteb-i Meşrutiyet* (The School of Constitutionalism) for Kurdish students in Istanbul in 1910.<sup>243</sup> Malmisanij refers to a

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<sup>240</sup> Actually, in the ninth issue of *KTTG* was last issue and dated to 30 January 1909. As there are no remarks about the closure of the organization and the journal, it must have been closed down by the government. In addition, Kadri Cemilpaşa, in his memoirs, mentions an interesting point about the closure of the KTTC, arguing that the “Unionists,” (a metonym for the Committee of Union and Progress) “had easily dissolved as the founders have conflicts and personal oppositions among themselves.” Kadri Cemilpaşa, p. 28.

<sup>241</sup> “Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti Nizamnamesi,” in Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiyede...*, vol. 1, p. 411

<sup>242</sup> “Kürt Neşr-i Maarif Cemiyeti Nizamnamesi,” in *Açık-Gizli/ Resmi-Gayriresmi...*, vol. 1, ed. Mehmed Bayrak, pp. 546-549.

document belongs to İsmail Hakkı Babanzade, who was the minister of education for a while in 1911, about the financial aid given to schools. The name of “Kürt Meşrutiyet Mektebi” was also among them, with the mark of 1900 *kuruş* (piaster) aid.<sup>244</sup> Although there were some controversial remarks about the director of the school it is understood from an archival document that the director of the school was Abdurrahman Bedirkhan.<sup>245</sup> The financing of the Mekteb-i Meşrutiyet was mainly upon individual donations; which also served to aim to create a consciousness of collectivity among the Kurds. As understood from a document, the KNMC printed aid tickets which would be distributed both in Istanbul and in the provinces to finance the school.<sup>246</sup> Furthermore, as mentioned above, when İsmail Hakkı was the minister of education, the school also received financial aid from the ministry.

Unfortunately there is no further information about the program of this school, even about its language of education. Nevertheless, Kadri Cemilpaşa in his memoirs mentions that a printing house was founded under the KNMC yet again there is no traces of it.

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<sup>243</sup> BOA. DH.MUI 60-2 1328/M/19

<sup>244</sup> Malmisanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetesi Kürdistan'ı...*, pp. 81-82. Furthermore, Malmisanij states that in the document of the İsmail Hakkı Babanzade, the name of the school was *Kürt Meşrutiyet Mektebi* (Kurdish School of Constitutionalism), which means that it was the first and until now the last school with a designation of “Kurdish” in both Ottoman and Republican Turkey history.

<sup>245</sup> BOA, İ.MF, 15, 1328/M-1, 1328/M/12. “*Hoca Rüstem mahallesinde mekteb-i hukûk sokağında Nafiz Pâşânın hânesini merkez-i idâre ittihâz iden Kürd Neşr-i Maârif Cem‘iyyeti tarafından ( Mekteb-i Meşrûtiyyet ) nâmıyla Kürd çocuklarının ta‘lîm ve tedrîsine mahsûs olmak üzere bir mekteb-i ibtidâînin gûşâdına ruhsat (...) ve cem‘iyyet-i mezkûre tarafından müdürîyyetine Bedirhânzâde Abdurrahman Bey (...)*”; On the other hand, Kadri Cemilpaşa states that Kürdizade Ahmed Ramiz was also director of the said school. Kadri Cemilpaşa, p. 31

<sup>246</sup> BOA, DH.MUI, 127-19, 1328/Ş/29. “*Kürt Neşr-i Maârif Cem‘iyyetine merbût meşrûtiyyet mektebinin masârifine medâr olmak üzere cem‘iyyet-i mezkûre tarafından tab‘ ve temsîl itdirilûp cem‘-i iânât hakkındaki ta‘lîmât-nâmeye tevîkân li-ecû‘l-tahtîm ikinci dâire-i belediyyeye tevdi‘ kılınan (...)*”; Besides Kurdish notables like Abdurrahman Bedirkhan also supported the school financially at the beginning and gave the promise to give an amount of money each month. Malmisanij. *İlk Kürt Gazetesi Kürdistan'ı...* pp. 91-92.

In addition like the KTTC, among the goals of the KNMC was the opening of branches and clubs in the provinces, and even in towns.<sup>247</sup> As understood from some official correspondence, the members of the organization were inspired by these aims and they displayed some individual efforts. For instance, a letter of the governor of Erzurum is about a member of the KNMC who asked to open a club and school in Tercan, like the organization itself.<sup>248</sup>

Nevertheless, like the KTTC, the KNMC and the Kurdish school were also closed down. There are two main assumptions about whether they were closed down or dissolved themselves; actually both are not mutually exclusive. On the one hand, they might have been closed with the 13<sup>th</sup> article of the *Cemiyetler Kanunu* (Law for the Associations) of 1909, which prohibited the foundation of organizations with “ethnic” and “national” bases.<sup>249</sup> On the other hand both organizations and school might have closed themselves down because of the surveillance and the harassments of the government.

Malmisanij refers to an article by Süreyya Bedirkhan, the grandson of Mîr Bedirkhan, in the *Kurdistan*,<sup>250</sup> dated to 1917, in which he talks about the Kurdish school, its aims and the reasons behind its closure. Interestingly and actually as the year was 1917, Sureyya mentioned about how the Ottomans treated Kurdistan as a colony and even did not shy from saying “what is the Kurdishness?” , “are you also a

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<sup>247</sup> “Kürt Neşr-i Maarif Cemiyeti Nizamnamesi.” See Bayrak, *Açık-Gizli...*

<sup>248</sup> BOA, DH.İD 126/17, 1329/Ca/19. “*Dersâdetê giderek Kürd Neşr-i Maârif Cem‘iyyetine intisâb iden Tercânın ... karyeli Hasan Efendi hükûmet-i mahalliyeye mürâcaatla cem‘iyyet-i mezkûreye merbût olmak üzere Tercânda Cerbeze şu‘besi nâmıyla bir klûb ve bir mekteb te’sîs etmek üzere hükûmet-i mahalliyeye mürâcaat eylediği(...)*”

<sup>249</sup> Avagyan and Minassian , *Ermeniler ve İttihat Terakki...*, p. 79.

<sup>250</sup> Actually, this was the same *Kurdistan*, the first Kurdish newspaper published between 1898-1902 by Mikdat Mithat Bedirkhan and Abdurrahman Bedirkhan and as understood it started to published again in 1908 under the direction of Sureyya Bedirkhan. Hasan Duman, ed. İstanbul Kültüphaneleri Arap Harfli Süreli Yayınlar Toplu Kataloğu 1828/1928 (İstanbul: İslâm Tarih, Sanat, ve Kültür Araştırma Merkezi, İslâm Konferansı Teşkilâtı, 1986), v.1, pp. 494-495.

nation?”, “how many schools do you have?”. He noted that as the best reaction such an attitude would have been revolts, but the Kurds did not apply to this “last solution.” Instead, they opened schools with their own money in order to expand education and science in Kurdistan. A “Kurdish model primary school” as he called it was established for the exercise to open branches in the all places in Kurdistan. As for the reasons behind the closure of both the school and the KNMC, he states that the CUP, which was like “an owl which dazzled if sees light” and wanted to live always in cruelty, saw the designation of “Kurdish” in the names of the school and society as a preparation for the Kurdish national movement and so engaged in devious tactics to dissolve them. Bored with the harassment of the government, which did not dare to close them overtly, the organization and school dissolved themselves. Interestingly Sureyya Bedirkhan emphasized that it was actually after this event that the engagement in the politics started and Kurds began to take care of themselves.<sup>251</sup>

Those expressions of Sureyya Bedirkhan substantiate the argument that the first discourse of Kurdish political nationalism started before the end of WWI, and further what had been experienced during this era, despite its variety, composed the first phases of Kurdish renaissance and contributed into the politicization of the Kurdish identity. This point, the radicalization of Kurdism and its encounters with other movements at the beginning of the twentieth century, will be discussed later when the discursive shift between the Kurdish organizations between 1908 and 1912

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<sup>251</sup> “Kürdistan’ı eczâ-yı vatandan değil âdeta bir müstemleke –(sömürge)- addeden, sırası gelince de ‘Efendim! Bu Kürtlük de ne imiş, siz de bir millet misiniz? Kaç mektebiniz var?’ demekten utanmayan bu hükûmete karşı yapılacak işyândan başka bir şey yok idi. (...) Hükûmetin binbir türlü ta’cizâtıyla râhat bırakılmayan cem’iyyet, artık tahammül edemiyerek dağıldı ve işte bu dağılmaktan sonar siyasetle iştigale başladı. Mâzî ile hâl arasında hiçbir tebeddül görmeyen, binâenaleyh istikbâlden de bihakkın emîn olamayan Kürtlerin fîmâba’d kendi başlarının çâresine bakmaları (...)”, *Kurdistan*, Kahire Nr. 5 (15 Muharrem 1336 [1917]) in Malmisanij, *İlk Kürt Gazetesi Kürdistan’ı...*, pp. 90-91.

was analyzed. Nevertheless in what follows I will discuss another school, *Gehandîn* (Education), opened by Abdürrezzak Bedirkhan in 1912/1913.

### *Gehandîn* (1912/1913)

Before passing into the discourse of the *Kürt Talebe-Hêvî Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Student Hope Society) and its profound effects on the Kurdish renaissance, besides the *Kürt Meşrutiyet Mektebi*, another attempt to found a school was realized by Abdürrezzak Bedirkhan, who lived a opponent life, was introduced in the third chapter. The school was opened as a work of a larger culture-education organization, the name of which, as told by Celîl, was *Gehandîn*, which aimed to, besides opening school, publish Kurdish journals, reform the Kurdish alphabet and to send Kurdish students to Russia for education.<sup>252</sup> The attempts of Abdürrezzak Bedirkhan as such were followed cautiously by the government. As revealed by Ottoman archival documents, the relations of Abdürrezzak Bedirkhan with Russia were interpreted as the spread of Russian influence among Kurdish tribes at the border and it was also reported that the education language would be Russian.<sup>253</sup> As a precaution against the school founded by Abdürrezzak in Khoy, a region populated by Kurds at the Ottoman-Iran border, the Ottoman authorities felt the necessity to open schools for Kurdish tribes in the region, too. The document related to the necessity of opening both primary schools and five-year boarding high schools in the region by the

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<sup>252</sup> Celile Celil, *Kürt Aydınlanması...*, pp. 119-132. In addition to Celil, Kamal Madhar Ahmad gives further information about this first school in Khoy; it was funded by locals, and its education language was Kurdish with Cyrillic alphabet. Its first class was composed of twenty-nine pupils and also a small hospital was attached to it. In *Kurdistan during the First World War* (London: Saqi Books, 1994), p. 61

<sup>253</sup> BOA. MF.MKT 1187/63/1331/B/24 (29 June, 1913) “(...) *tedrisatın Rus lisanında icra edileceği anlaşıldığı Xoy ve Selmas şehbendirliğinin işarına atfen(...)*”.



government and its expenses and allocations is attached to the document about the school founded by Abdürrezzak Bedirkhan.<sup>254</sup>

As an opponent and marked man and due to his clear demands and works for Kurdish independence and in line with this aim of seeking Russian help, Abdürrezzak Bedirkhan's educational and cultural works were watched by the Ottoman authorities. However, the most important point is, in the Gramscian sense, the Ottoman government replied to the attempt of Abdürrezzak with a counter hegemony, with an education project to expand the realms where Abdürrezzak Bedirkhan was deemed to be influential.

Around the same years when Abdürrezzak laid the bases of Gehandîn, the Kurdish student in Istanbul founded another society, *Kürt Talebe-Hêvî Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Student Hope Society), (Hêvî). The discourse of the said society portrays the shifts of focus on key points like “Kurdism” and “Ottomanism” at a level of comparison with the discourse of the KTTC. In what follows, the discourse of the Hêvî will be analyzed to understand how it contributed to the Kurdish renaissance, which was envisaged as a preparation period for the later “Kurdish national movement” and its difference from the KTTC in terms of Hêvî's more planned agenda for a Kurdish renaissance as well as its being more “radical,” in its loose sense.

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<sup>254</sup> BOA. MF.MKT 1187/63/1331/B/24 (29 June, 1913) “*Bedirhanlardan Abdürezzak'ın İran aşairi ekrad evladını talim ve terbiye etmek üzere Xoy'da bir mekteb küşadı (...) Ruslarca matlub efkar ve hissiyatın aşair-i ... arasında revac ve intişarını tayin etmek olacağı derkar ve hükümet-i seniye ve canibinden dahi bu gibi tedabire ... olmasını lüzum ve fevaidi bedidar olduğu beyan-ı ... icra-i icaba hariciye nezaret-i celilesi ... işar buyurulmuştur. Vilayat ... münasib bir mevkiinde beş senelik idadi dereceside leyli bir mekteb edilmek üzere mesarif ... tedrisiye ve inşaat için (...).*”

### *Kürt Talebe Hêvî Cemiyeti* (1912)

Although the Kurdish societies between 1908 and 1910 did not last very long, they left a legacy. Kurdish students from famous Kurdish families, such as the Cemilpashazade family of Diyarbakır, whose stories were told in the second chapter, were among the leading figures of this society. Furthermore, some figures from the Babanzade and Bedirkhan families together with the influential actors like Memduh Selim<sup>255</sup> and Kemal Fevzi were also among the founders of Hêvî.<sup>256</sup> The society published two periodicals, *Roj-i Kürd* and *Hetaw-i Kürd* (both mean the sun/day of Kurd) and a newspaper called *Yekbûn* (Unity), through the columns of which the traces of the Kurdish renaissance can be pursued in the national, cultural/spiritual and economic senses.

### A More Planned Reform Package for Language

In the columns of *KTG* the focus on language and even the debate on whether the language of education would be Kurdish or Turkish were discussed. In line with this, Hêvî tried to fulfill the task in a more planned way. The necessity of the amelioration of Kurdish letters and the constitution of a standard Kurdish alphabet were the products of the question that why Kurdish scholars could write in Persian, Arabic and Turkish but not in Kurdish, as argued by Motkili Halil Hayali, a

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<sup>255</sup> Memduh Selim was from Van. He was an active participant of Hêvî, and as explained by İsmail Göldaş he wrote in *Roj-i Kürd* p.47. It seems that he used a pseudonym or maybe article with M. belongs to him.

<sup>256</sup> Malmisanij, *Kürt Talebe Hêvî Cemiyeti*..., pp. 71-72. Malmisanij lists the chairmen, members and supporters of the Hêvî as following: Ekrem Cemilpasha, Memduh Selim, Kemal Fevzi, Ziya Vehbi, Kerküklü Necmeddin Hüseyin, Babanzade Abdülaziz, Arvaslı Şefik, Müküslü Hamza, Harputlu Tayyip Ali, Süleymaniyeli Abdülkerim, Diyarbekirli Salih, Diyarbekirli Abdülkadir, Asaf Bedirkhan, Diyarbekirli Mustafa Reşat, Mehabadlı Dr. Mustafa Şevki, Sineli Mihri, Dr. Fuat, Hakkarili Abdürrahim Rahmi Zapsu, Diyarbekirli Faiz Bey. Ibid., p. 71-73.

Kurdish linguist,<sup>257</sup> who was among the writers of *Roj-i Kurd* who mostly focused on the issue of language and alphabet. In a Kurdish article he wrote that:

“There are lots of nations in the world who read and write in their own languages, publish books, educate their children in their own schools and why do not they say that “write and read in our languages is difficult?” I am ashamed of accepting the language of another nation. Today when English, German, French, Russian and Italians go somewhere why are they immediately opening schools? For practicing their languages. If it were useless, would they bay at the moon? Are they crazy and the only geniuses are us? (...) The first they have done is to protect their language and nationalities. (...) Our sheikhs and teachers should strive. We want read quickly and write to get out of the ignorance. Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri, Sheikh Ahmad Kakî (...) all wrote in Kurdish for Kurdishness. (...)”<sup>258</sup>

Completing his words with a Kurdish poem treating the themes like reading and writing in Kurdish from places of the Kurdish geography Halil Hayali addressed to Kurdish mullah, teachers from Kurdish regions to send their ideas about how Kurdish language would be ameliorated. As seen he referred to the figures like Sheikh Ubeydullah to emphasize the importance of reading and writing in Kurdish. In line with this in another article he accused Kurdish sheikhs, mullahs, *mîrs* and tribe leaders for not taking responsibility for the Kurdish language, education, Kurdishness, Islam etc. He listed what Kurds needed: a new alphabet for reading and writing, a dictionary, an *ilmihal* (book explaining Islamic rules), a history of Kurdish ancestry and culture, a grammar book for Kurdish, the biographies of important Kurdish figures, Kurdish literature and the names of Kurdish poets, the collecting of

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<sup>257</sup> Kadri Cemilpasha mentions that Halil Hayali prepared a Kurdish grammar book and dictionary together with Ziya Gökalp, yet Gökalp after his engagement with Turkist ideologies, admitted that he burnt the said studies, pp. 29-30.

<sup>258</sup> “(...) Çîra ku îro di dinyayê da hewqa millet û qewm heye ku hed û hesab’ wî tune bi zimanê xwe dixwînin û dinivîsinin, kitêban çê dikin û mekteb û medreseya xwe da talîmî zarokê xwe dikin. Yek ji wan ranebûye negoftîye ku zimanê me, xwendin û nivisandin zehmet e. Ez di bê şermim zimanê miletekî di qebul bikim. Îro Îngiliz, Fransîz, Elman, Moskof, Îtalya le ku dicing, heman mekteban vedikin. Zimanê xwe d’ûne te’lim kirin, sebebi wî çî ye? (...)” Modanî X. [Halil Hayali], “Ziman û Nezanîya Kurdan” [Language and the Ignorance of the Kurds] *Roj-i Kürd*, no.2, 6 Temmuz 1329 (19 July 1913), pp. 29-30.

Kurdish oral literature and he demanded that Kurds send *Hêvî* what they knew about these topics.<sup>259</sup>

Thereby in order to achieve the “revival of the language and realize the package proposed by Motkili Halil Hayali, they proposed to eliminate the obstacles in this path, namely they discussed the reform of the alphabet. The debate was about whether the acceptance of Arabic, Latin or Armenian letters. Actually a discussion as such also illustrates the inclinations of the authors, whether they were inspired by an Islamic point of view, or western, or merely from their allegedly ancient common origin. In the following lines about the discussion of Kurdish letters, the nature of a tendency as such will also be explained.

The propositions related to the Arabic letters expressed both overtly and covertly to keep relations strong with Muslim communities, besides the development of Kurdish existence. For instance, Mehmed Salih Bedirkhan, the nephew of *mîr* Bedirkhan and an influential author of *Roj-i Kürd* writing in both Kurdish and Turkish, proposed a new alphabet for Kurdish, which he adopted from an organization called “*Tamim-i Maarif ve Islah-i Huruf*” (Nationalization of Education and Reform on the Letters). He wanted to discuss the facility of these letters in the columns of *Roj-i Kürd* and after his prelude the said organization introduced the new letters. Arguing that, as a Muslim people, the improvement of Arabic letters would be more appropriate for Kurdish than Latin and Armenian letters which had been proposed before. It was stressed that it was the only way to keep both the connection between Muslim people strong and protect of their own nationalities.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> M. X. [Halil Hayali] “Ziman” [Language], *Roj-i Kürd*, no.3, 1 Ağustos 1329 (14 August 1913), pp. 20-22.

<sup>260</sup> M.S. Azizî [Mehmet Salih Bedirkhan], “Harflerimiz ve Teshil-i Kiraat” [Our Letters and Facility about Reading], *Roj-i Kürd*, no.2, 6 Temmuz 1329 (19 July 1913), p. 12

Contrary to this, people like Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, who was in favor of rationalization and influenced by European modernity did not support the usage of Arabic letters. Rather he focused on the necessity of the adaptation of another alphabet, Latin, which enabled a child to learn to read and write in Kurdish within a month.<sup>261</sup>

Again Mevlanzade Rıfat emphasizes that if the Kurdish letters could be ameliorated, the ways for rising above the ignorance would be opened. What he proposed for the Kurdish alphabet is the amendment of the Urartian letters, which were actually the claimed ancient letters of Kurds and also Armenians. He claims that Kurds and Armenians were of a common origin, from Urartian.<sup>262</sup>

As discussed above, three main viewpoints related to the letters also portray realms in which the Kurdish intelligentsia positions themselves and whether they were inspired by either the Islamic world, western modernization, or just their “ancient origin.” Actually, it is also possible they were influenced by all three sources at the same time.

The envisaged “revival” of Kurdish self-consciousness via the reform in the language becomes more meaningful when read together with the ideas about the printing. Mehmet Salih Bedirkhan discussed the role of publication in the creation of public opinion and the absence of it among Kurds:

It is the press which creates public opinion and gives it a determined way. In the nations which do not pay attention to the press, the public opinion is not inclined to a specific path. The natural powers of the nations which do not give a specific and solid way to their public opinion, would go waste like water diffused in a large field. And therefore those nations, who live without

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<sup>261</sup> Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, “Bir Hitab” [An Address], *Roj-i Kürd*, no.1, 6 Haziran 1329 (19 June 1913), p. 3

<sup>262</sup> Mevlanzade Rıfat “Muhterem ‘Hetaw-i Kürd’ Gazetesi Müessislerine” [To the Respected Founders of the “Hetaw-i Kurd” Journal, *Hetaw-i Kürd*, no.2, 20 Teşrinisani 1329 (3 December 1913), pp. 2-3.

organized because of this negligence, do not escape from the danger of dying out or being destroyed one day. (..)”<sup>263</sup>

Being aware of the role of public opinion for the results of the ideas Salih Bedirkhan argues that the symptoms of this illness, bringing the patient to verge of dying, were seen among Kurds, and had to be awakened and work.

Ahmed Rıfat also touched upon the difference between hand writing and printing and said he was also in favor of the spread of printing-houses in the Kurdish provinces.<sup>264</sup> In line with these viewpoints, which regarded printing as a way for the construction of public space and nationness, some other views, interestingly touched upon the role of print-languages for standardization in language. In an article in *Hetaw-i Kürd*, he complained about how the “the tower of Babel broke down in the place of Kurds, and so they cannot understand each other’s languages.” Touching upon the dialect differences in Kurdish, the author said that when the center of the Istanbul of Hêvî sent Kurdish journals to the region, people were excited to read it, yet they could not understand, either the Turkish or Kurdish articles. For the creation of a common language he proposed that a small journal should be published in both of the dialects<sup>265</sup> and be distributed to the people, who in return would present their

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<sup>263</sup> Salih Bedirkhan “Kılıçdan Evvel Kalem!” [Pen before the Sword!], *Roj-i Kürd*, no.3, 1 Ağustos 1329 (14 August 1913), pp. 6. “(...)Efkâr-ı umumiyyeyi husule getiren ve muayyen bir istikamet veren matbuattır. Matbuata itina etmeyen bir milletin efkar-ı umumiyesinde muayyen bir hedef olamaz. Efkâr-ı umumiyesine salim ve metin bir mecra veremeyen milletlerin kuva-i tabiyesi de vasi bir tarlaya dağılmış sular gibi heder olur gider. Ve binaenaleyh işte o milletler daima bu gaflet yüzünden camiasız yaşamak ve günün birinde kaybolup ortadan kalkmak ve kaldırılmak tehlikesinden kurtulamaz.(...)”.

<sup>264</sup> Babanzade Ahmet Rıfat “Kürd Gençlerine” [To the Kurdish Young People], *Hetaw-i Kürd* no.3, 29 Kânunievvel 1329 (11 Ocak 1914), pp.18-19.

opinions. In the light of these opinions a general language, that could be understood by all Kurds, could be constituted.<sup>266</sup>

The above-mentioned discussion on printing and its role in the creation of a standard language, public-opinion and self-consciousness can be read together with Anderson's idea of print capitalism, and especially the role of print-languages in the creation of "national consciousness." Through "print and paper," people "gradually became aware of hundreds of thousands, even millions of people in their particular language-field, and at the same time that *only those* hundreds of thousands, or millions, so belonged;" "the fellow-readers" of the "nationally imagined community."<sup>267</sup>

In addition to the sharing of these kinds of ideas in the public sphere, despite the audience being questionable, another significant step taken by the Hêvî was to go beyond the borders of the empire.<sup>268</sup> Kurdish students opened a branch of the organization in Lausanne.<sup>269</sup> As explained by Kadri Cemilpasha, he with his cousins Ekrem and Şemsettin Cemilpasha, Babanzade Recai Nüzhet, Selim Sabit from

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<sup>265</sup> Kurmanç is spoken in the northern Kurdish geography and Sorani is spoken in the southern region.

<sup>266</sup> T., "Kürd Gençlerimizden Bir Temenni" [A Request from Kurdish Youth] *Hetaw-i Kürd*, no. 1, 11 Teşrin-i Evvel 1329 (24 October 1913), pp. 8-10. The author is of the opinion that, only after that, with that language should they start analyze Kurdish history and socio-economic characteristics. Furthermore as understood from a article in *Hetaw-i Kürd* in line with the reforms about language, a library was opened at the center of Hêvî in Istanbul as a way of collecting any kind of study about Kurdish literature, culture and history. The organization relied upon the help of Kurdish people to collect any kind of work about Kurds and Kurdistan. *Hetaw-i Kürd* no. 4-5, 10 Mayıs 1330 (23 Mayıs 1914), p. 19.

<sup>267</sup> Anderson, p.44

<sup>268</sup> Within the empire there is information about only the branch in Erzurum. "*Der-saâdetde teşekkül ve Kürd lisânınca imdâd ve ümîd ma'nalarını mübeyyin Kürd Hefti [Hêvî] nâmındaki cem'iyyetin Erzurumda da bir şu'besinin küşâdına tevessül eylemesi talebeti hâvî olduğu görülmüş ve bu cem'iyyetin programı kendisine gönderildiği halde zâyî' ve cem'iyyetin merkez-i umûmisinin Der-saâdetde (...)*" BOA. DH. İD. 126/43

<sup>269</sup> Although Ekrem Cemilpasha talks about the Munich and Geneva branches of Hêvî there is no further information about the said branches. Ekrem Cemilpasha *Muhtasar Hayatım: Kemalizme Karşı Kürt Aydın Hareketinden Bir Yaprak* (Ankara: Beybun Yayınları, 1992), p. 22.

Dersim were among the founders of the Lausanne branch. He said that the aim of this branch was to collaborate with Kurdish students in Europe and so to spread the “Kurdish national thought” and to introduce Kurds to Europe.<sup>270</sup> The aim of this branch is to collect and give information about education in the Western countries. For instance there were announcements about the necessary information related to the departments of Lausanne University and they stated the address of the branch for further questions.<sup>271</sup> As proposed, they called on not only the rich families to send their children, but also aimed to encourage the Kurdish elders to provide education for smart but poor students.

In addition to the role of language and education, an article by Abdülaziz Baban gives significant insight related to the role of literature in the nation-building process. He argued that Kurdish literature was full of praise for the sultans and shahs and that this was the case for all the minority literature. However, he emphasized that art was for the benefit of society and there was nothing more influential than literature which penetrated into the souls of the people. By giving examples from Italians, Bulgarians, Serbs and Germans, he called for Kurdish poets and novelists to work for the benefit of their people.<sup>272</sup> Such a calling to poets and the novelists reminds the words of Robert J. Kaiser, who notes the role of poets, writers and artists

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<sup>270</sup>Kadri Cemilpaşa, p.35. The introduction of the Kurds to Europe stemmed from the necessity that during those times, Kurdish intelligentsia were disturbed because of the misrepresentation of Kurds in the international arena. Due to the events in Anatolia, were viewed as the actors of the Armenian massacres. Therefore the Kurdish intellectuals of the era took the representation of the Kurdish people as a part of their missions.

<sup>271</sup> “Kürt Talebe Hevî Cemiyeti Lozan Şubesi” [Lausanne Branch of Kurdish Student Hope Society], *Hetaw-i Kürd*, no. 4-5, 10 Mayıs 1330 (23 Mayıs 1914), pp. 5-7.

<sup>272</sup>Baban Abdülaziz, “Edebiyatımız ve Edibamızdan Bir Rica” [Our Literature and A Request from Our Scholars], *Roj-i Kürd*, no.4, 30 Ağustos 1329 (12 September 1913), p. 13.



in the “national territorialization projects” and how they are influential in creating nostalgia about “the land and the past.”<sup>273</sup>

Together with the “revival” of the language, literature and education, the uses of the history are also a significant dimension for the construction of nations:

#### The Focus on History: The Glorious Past

In the columns of *Roj-i Kürd* and *Hetaw-i Kürd* the importance of history is openly discussed vis-à-vis the “arising national consciousness.” The authors also seem to have been aware of this pivotal role of history. For instance, in an article addressing the Kurds, Dr. Abdullah Cevdet highlighted this point overtly while explaining that they were living in an era in which the nationalism had emerged:

Is there a history of Kurds? With a “Şerefname” a nation cannot save and protect its honor of the history or its historical honor. The century in which we live, seriously, is the twentieth century. A nation which does not have its past and future history does not belong to itself, either. Nations or the persons who do not possess themselves are condemned to be slaves; they belong to others. (...) <sup>274</sup>

Beside its role in the creation of a “national consciousness,” the importance of history was linked to its place in education. Kerküklü Necmeddin noted that children had to be told the biographies of prominent Kurdish people as it would be served to make them aware of and love their nations, by explaining that in the columns of the

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<sup>273</sup> Robert, J. Kaiser, “Geography,” in Alexander Motly ed. *Encyclopedia of Nationalism; Fundamental Themes*, vol. 1 (San Diego: Academic Press, 2001), p. 324; narrated by Umut Özkırımlı, *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism; A Critical Engagement* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), pp.180-181.

<sup>274</sup> Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, “Bir Hitab” [An Address]...p.3 “(...)Kürdlerin tarihi var mı? Bir “şerefname” ile bir millet şeref-i tarihiyesini veyahud tarihi şerefini tasarruf ve muhafaza idemez. Yaşadığımız asır şaka değil yirminci asırdır. Mazisinin tarihine müstakbelini tarihine malik olmayan millet kendisine malik değildir. Kendi kendisine malik olmyan milletler ve ferdler memluk olur, başkalarının malı olur (...)”

*Hetaw-i Kurd*, he would introduce the biographies of Kurds who were deeply concerned with Kurdishness and worked for its development.<sup>275</sup>

In line with the emphasized significance of the history, the references to the golden days of the past both via prominent persons, states, or emirates served the emergence of the self-consciousness of the Kurdish people in the periodicals of Hêvî. Such footprints can be read in the lines of the remarks of Anthony D. Smith, who argues that the “‘golden age’ of communal splendor, with its sages, saints and heroes,” is “the era in which the community achieved its classical form, and bequeathed a legacy of glorious memories and cultural achievements.”<sup>276</sup> For instance, contrary to *KTG* the covers of *Roj-i* and *Hetaw-i Kürd* featured with historical Kurdish figures. This choice was purposeful. For instance, the first issue of *Roj-i Kürd* was published with a picture of Selahaddin Eyyubi on its cover. Salih Bedirkhan interpreted this choice very appropriate by arguing that Eyyubi was the most significant designation of the Kurdish glorious past, as he, born in the Tigris valley, had founded a great empire in the valley of Nile.<sup>277</sup>

In line with this, Salih Bedirkhan again emphasized the vital significance of the history for Kurdish self-consciousness by explaining that although there had been great scholars, poets, genius people among Kurds, as the history of them had not been recorded, the Kurds did not know about them. Furthermore, he emphasizes that

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<sup>275</sup> Kerküklü Necmeddin, “Puşide-i Tarih” [The Cover of the History], *Hetaw-i Kürd*, no.1, 11 Teşrinievvel 1329 (24 October 1913), pp. 15.

<sup>276</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1986), p. 191.

<sup>277</sup> M. Salih Bedirkhan, “Hülya Hakikat Olur” [Dream Becomes Reality], *Roj-i Kürd*, no.2, 6 Temmuz 1329 (19 July 1913), p.10.

the greatest dangers of the absence of history were the loss of national existence and existence on the brink of perishing and dying.<sup>278</sup>

Apart from the important Kurdish figures, reminding readers of the notable Kurdish dynasties and previous emirates was also used as a way of telling Kurds how their history was glorious but how now they were in a destructive and miserable situation. A call was made to take up responsibility for the “memoir of the past.” For instance, İsmail Hakkı Babanzade stressed that as the honor of people like Ahmed Khanî, a seventeenth century Kurdish poet allegedly nationalist, was so great, Kurds were responsible for them.<sup>279</sup> Furthermore, Halil Hayali in a Kurdish article addressing to the elders, referred to Mervanîs, Eyyubîs; to the begs of Rewanduz and to the mîrs of Cizira-Bohtan, Soran and Baban,<sup>280</sup> the former were alleged Kurdish states and the latter were Kurdish emirates, all of which served the role of history in the Kurdish renaissance.

Another important point is the mystification of the era of the Kurdish emirates, which were semi-autonomous units. For instance in a Kurdish article of Ekrem (possibly Cemilpasha), the writer expressed nostalgia for the past by emphasizing that before a hundred years earlier, Kurdistan had been so beautiful, the youth had worked, their mîrs had still been ruling, their “country” had been prosper

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<sup>278</sup> “(...)Tarihsizliğimizden zararımız şudur ki milli mevcudiyetimizi kaybedip dağılmak, unutulmaya mahkum olmak arifesinde bulunuyoruz. (...)” Salih Bedirkhan, “Kılıçdan Evvel Kalem” [Pen Before the Sword]..., p.6. And he refers to the names of Shaky-al-Islam Ebus’Suud, historian İbnül-Esir and Ebussadr, the scholars Gorani, Sheikh Ahmed Ceziri, Hariri, and the poets Fuzulî, Nef’î, Ahmed Khanî, Mevlevî, Kurdî, Harîk, Nalî, Hacı Qadirî Qoyî. “

<sup>279</sup> Babanzade İsmail Hakkı, “Kürdlerin Tealisi” [The Progress of Kurds], *Roj-i Kürd*, no.3, 1 Ağustos 1329 (14 August 1913), p.2.

<sup>280</sup> M.X. [Halil Hayali], “Ji Mezîna Kurdan Ra” [For the Kurdish Elders], *Roj-i Kürd*, no.2, 6 Temmuz 1329 (19 July 1913), pp. 22.

and the *mîrs*, aghas, merchants, farmers had all been equal and they had been knowledgeable.<sup>281</sup>

In the context of the role of history in the Kurdish renaissance there are also references to the Kurdish people who were pursued by the Ottoman authorities as their activities were regarded as dangerous. One of them was Hüseyin Kenan Bedirkhan, the son of Mîr Bedirkhan. Hüseyin Kenan, and his brother Osman Pasha, during the time of the outbreak of war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia in 1877 went to Cizre and declared their independence. Upon this, via some diplomatic relations Ottoman government gave the promise of recognition of their independence, yet a troop was sent to arrest Bedirkhan brothers and they were brought to Istanbul. Although they were released after a while, they were forbidden to leave Istanbul.<sup>282</sup> In the columns of *Roj-i Kürd*, the news of the death of Hüseyin Kenan Pasha was given with great sadness and a biography of him was given. In his biography, his services to Kurdishness were praised and his return to Kurdistan was explained as it was his ‘native homeland’ (*vatan-ı asliye*). Like other members of his dynasty, as all of his inherited possessions had been seized in his native homeland, he had to go there.<sup>283</sup> The treatment of the “historical figures,” and the “golden ages” with their states and dynasties went hand in hand with a specific focus on “homeland” or “territory,” which was also a significant point for the legitimacy of “being a nation.”

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<sup>281</sup> Ekrem [Cemilpasha ], “Berê û Niha” [Past and Present], *Roj-i Kürd*, no.4, 30 Ağustos 1329 (12 September 1913), p. 32.

<sup>282</sup> M. Emin Zeki, *Kürdistan Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Komal Yayınları, 1977), pp. 144-145.

<sup>283</sup> [Unsigned], “Bedirkhanî Hüseyin Pasha”, *Roj-i Kürd* No.3, 1 Ağustos 1329 (14 August 1913), p. 5. “(..)Hanedanlığının diğer fertleri gibi vatan-ı asliyedeki mevrus- ecdadı ve emval ve emlakının gasp edilmesinden dolayı eli açık azminden başka yaşam sermayesi olmadığından kardeşi Osman paşa ile birlikte asıl vatanı Kürdistan’a geri dönmek zorunda kalmışlardır. (...)”.

## Homeland: The ‘Nationalization’ of the Territory

“The reconstruction of social space as a national territory” as explicated by Özkırımlı in his critical analyses of debates on nationalism, “is an essential component of the project of the nation-building.”<sup>284</sup> The nationalization of territory comes to its peak with nation-states in which states play a pivotal role, with the most significant denominators like maps, flags, and stamps.<sup>285</sup> Although, for the era under the consideration, this kind of reconstruction was just beginning, this does not undermine its value. In other words, although it was not revealed as a fully-planned project, the activities bore the first vestiges of utilizing territory for raising self-consciousness.

Thereby, a symbol of “homeland,” as also can be seen as “native homeland” in the account of H. Kenan Bedirkhan. The emphasis of “homeland” is also purposeful as it constructed an image of the “Kurdish nation” which had lived in a determined homeland from ancient times with its culture, language, history through the success of its ancient dynasties; during their eras Kurds had been richer and prosperous.<sup>286</sup> As put forth by Smith, the “nationalist spatial vision” is both “tangible” and “practical”; one the one hand, the homeland was a territory on which the nation could be built, on the other hand it contained an archaic “mystery” which bore the vestiges of antiquity.<sup>287</sup>

Nevertheless, as argued by the Kurdish intelligentsia of the era under consideration, for several reasons, like the absence of education, the disunity,

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<sup>284</sup> Umut Özkırımlı, *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism...* p. 180

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., pp. 180-181.

<sup>286</sup> As stated in the “homeland” article of the *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*: “The homeland is more than just the physical space over which the nationality exercises or wants to exercise political control. It is always a home, a place of origin and integrity; its members are imagined as sharing this home, as being part of the same family.” vol. 2, p. 217.

<sup>287</sup> Smith, p. 184.

conflicts among Kurdish elders etc., the Kurds were on the verge of vanishing. Thereby they proposed agendas to prevent it; one of which was the solution of conflicts and disunity among the Kurds:

#### Emphasis on Unity and Collaboration

As discussed many times by many authors in the columns of the Kurdish journals during the second constitutional era, the unity of the Kurdish people was seen as a vital step for modernity and progress. The first thing to be achieved is the elimination of conflicts among the Kurdish tribes. Together with this crucial point as revealed by a close look to the primary sources the modernization and progress of the Kurds were envisaged as a process in which the people themselves would act together; in other words a collectivity and collaboration was imagined. This collectivity can be seen both in learning, economic issues and in the name of solidarity.

For instance, in a Kurdish article, the thoughts of Abdülkerim from Süleymaniye, who was the editor of *Roj-i Kürd* and the author of the inspiring ideas for the Kurdish renaissance in the said journal, can be seen as a way of collective learning. Abdülkerim argued that if a hundred people studied a subject in a month it would be a hundred subjects at the end of the month. As a result, teachers, historians, geographers would grow up among the Kurds. Abdülkerim further explained that if the people did not know the meanings of state, government, absolute regime or constitutional regime; what was the benefit of history, geography, economy and law. If Kurdish intellectuals told them all about these, they would be enlightened and would not need “infidels/foreigners.”<sup>288</sup> Besides the ideas related to the role of the

collective learning in education these remarks by Abdülkerim are significant as they also point out his objection to the Western or Christian involvement in the issues of the Kurds, by designating the necessity of being sufficient for themselves.

In line with such ideas the importance of solidarity can also be read as a representation of the Kurdish renaissance. This implies social and economic assistance with each other, which again in turn would consolidate the “national” feelings, both in Istanbul and in the Kurdish provinces.

At the beginning of the twentieth century a great number of Kurdish porters lived and worked in Istanbul. The improvement of their situation was the part of the reforms Kurdish intellectuals aimed to accomplish. In an article signed by Harputlu H.B., the health conditions of the Kurds in Istanbul are discussed. As during that period the porters and workers made up the greatest group of the Kurds in Istanbul, he focused on their worst living conditions. He emphasized the difference between the Kurdish porters and the Kurdish rich in Istanbul and concluded that a nation could not be so indifferent to its own people. And he requested especially from the wealthy ones to come together and help to improve the situations of the workers.

According to him what was first to be done in order to save Kurds from the

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<sup>288</sup> Süleymaniyeli Abdülkerim “Tal û Şîrîn” [Bitter and Sweet], *Roj-i Kürd* no.1, 6 Haziran 1329 (19 June 1913), p.21. A similar article was also published in the journal of the KTTC which served the creation of a collective consciousness for learning: By showing examples from other peoples, like praising the expansion of primary education in Egypt, the writer Diyarbakırlı Sakin pointed out how the local people had managed this task by themselves. The people of Egypt, without asking for the help of government came together and opened schools in almost each village and the wealthy of the nation support them financially. As a product of this collaboration, the author celebrated the foundation of Cairo National University for which again the people had sent many students to various schools of Europe in order to educate qualified teachers. Another significant point is the emphasis on the fact that the idea of a national university firstly written down in an Egyptian newspaper, by an influential intellectual, which actually implied the role of the intelligentsia and publishing. Thereby the author highlights the role of the intellectuals and journals as a channel with which to spread their ideas in the enlightenment of a people. *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.2, 29 Teşrin-i Sani 1324 (12 December 1908), in Bozarslan, p. 97.

coffeehouses, where they were exposed to infectious diseases, was to build some hygienic places. And then doctors should control those places and examine the ill people. Furthermore those workers should attend lectures in the evenings which he regarded as a way of treating psychological uneasiness.<sup>289</sup>

In addition to the package for the situation of Kurdish workers in Istanbul another attempt was the opening of an office called *Osmanlı Teshil-i Mesalih İdarehanesi* (Office for the Facilitation of the Tasks) by Abdülaziz Baban, who was a lawyer in Istanbul. Its aim was to help Ottoman citizens and especially Kurdish people with official issues with the government and bureaucracy for a small fee, which was for unavoidable costs. In later announcements (in *Hetaw-i Kürd*) it was stated that as the people had shown great interest in it, Abdülaziz Baban had widened its scope of program and dealt with also issues related to insurance. For the businesses in the Kurdish provinces, if people sent letters to Istanbul and explained their tasks, it would be enough for the office to carry out them.<sup>290</sup>

In line with these examples of solidarity among the Kurds in Istanbul, letters from the Kurdish provinces served the aim of unity and self-consciousness as well. As a way of introducing the history, geography and socio-economic conditions of the Kurdish provinces through letters from the locals of those places or journalists of the periodical in the issues of *Hetaw-i Kurd* the information about Kurdish places is given under the title of “Letters from Kurdistan.” The geographical peculiarities, the

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<sup>289</sup> *Hetaw-i Kürd*, no.3, 29 Kanunievvel 1329 (11 Ocak 1914) pp. 16-18 ; no. 4-5, 10 Mayıs 1330 (23 Mayıs 1914), pp. 7-9.

<sup>290</sup> Furthermore, a doctor called Haydarizade Ahmed examined Kurdish poor in his clinic, free of charge, which was again a sign of solidarity. For instance, see *Roj-i Kürd* No.2, 6 Temmuz 1329 (19 July 1913), p.1 Apart from Hêvî, it seems that the KTTC also implemented such facilities, as it also informed that a law advisor took care of davas of Kurdish people free of charge, *Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Gazetesi* no.2 29 Teşrinisani 1324 (12 December 1908), in Bozarslan p. 109.



rate of Kurdish population and also Armenian population (how Kurds were greater in number than Armenians), the rate of Kurdish-speakers, the situation of Kurdish women, the conditions for education and subsistence, the fertility of the earth and the technical absences, the issue of irrigation channels and the most common diseases are experienced, the name of the dominant Kurdish tribes, and such composed the issues of these letters. All of this information both consolidated the unity, created a “national feeling and also contributed to the construction of an image of “motherland,” or “*vatan-ı asliye*.”

Another significant parameter of the Kurdish renaissance, which is argued in this thesis as a period in which Kurdish “awakening” was taken upon by a group of Kurdish intellectuals, was the economy:

#### Revival in the Economic Context

Although far away from a bourgeoisie transformation as in the Armenian example or a decay of feudalism as in the Bulgarian context, the Kurdish economic revival was more based on economic development and prosperity. The main suggestions for economic revival involved reforms related to the agriculture as it was so vital for Kurds. The absence of modern equipment for agriculture being the major problem. For instance, Diyarbekirî Necdet, in his Kurdish article on farming, discussed the machines used in agriculture in foreign countries. He talks about the need for the machines for Kurdistan, by also highlighting that machines were not contrary to the religious order which actually could be read as a rationalization policy. Furthermore, he touched upon the necessity that Kurdish tribes should send

their children to agriculture schools, so that the earth would be fertile and they could earn money.<sup>291</sup>

In the above, the importance of collectivity and collaboration was emphasized. In the same way, Süleymaniyeli Abdülkerim foresaw the same collective action also for financial issues. In one of his articles he talked about the collective company and advised that this helped not only the development of commerce, but also the collected money can be used for what was necessary: opening schools, helping students financially, meeting the expenses of teachers, and so on.<sup>292</sup> Therefore, as seen, the economic “revival” was envisaged in general terms; the richness and prosperity of Kurdistan, which had remained deprived of any kind of welfare policies from the governments. It was no coincidence that the organization called for the collaboration of local people to work for their people and homeland.

However, the problem with such renaissance and enlightenment movements is usually their being confined to the environment of a group of intellectuals, and the Kurdish case was no exception. In the history of “national movement,” this stage, can be categorized as part of Hroch’s Phase A of, remaining far away from social influences and being confined to the activities of the intellectuals. However, interestingly it seems that the intellectuals of the era were also aware of this fact and discussed the viability of activities in Istanbul for the people in the Kurdish geography. In what follows the debates on this issue are discussed.

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<sup>291</sup> Diyarbekirî Necdet, “Cotkarî” [Farming], *Roj-i Kürd* no.1, 6 Haziran 1329 (19 June 1913), pp. 24-25. Therefore it is not a coincidence that Kurdish students were organized in Istanbul Halkalı Agriculture School.

<sup>292</sup> Süleymaniyeli Abdülkerim “Hilatîni Roj-i İqbal” [The Rise of Lucky Day] *Roj-i Kürd* no.4, 30 Ağustos 1329 (12 September 1913), p.19.

## Living in Istanbul or in Kurdistan?

The requirement for Kurdish intellectuals to go to Kurdistan mostly was discussed in the periodicals of Hêvî; an issue that was far away from having a consensus about it. The most radical views belonged to Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, who argued that intellectual Kurdish youth should go to the villages of Kurdistan to be teachers or establish schools rather than be governors or managers in other places. If they could manage this, they would be on the right path.<sup>293</sup> Contrary to Cevdet's idea, Mevlanzade Rifat wrote that without determined goals and a planned agenda sending the Kurdish young people to Kurdistan would be fruitless. In this case, he designated Armenians as an example by arguing that they had not sent their young to the villages when they decided on a "national and social revolution." First, their scholars had gathered together in Europe and thought about the essential things to do and elaborated their programs. Later they returned to Anatolia to realize these goals. Kurds had to do the same thing. First a body of scholars should come together in Istanbul and determine their plans and only after that they could go to Kurdistan.<sup>294</sup>

In line with this, Bulgaristanlı Doğan discussed the pros and cons of the remaining in Istanbul via advising Kurdish youth that they should not fall into the mistakes which the Turkish intellectuals had who had remained far from their nation so that neither they nor their people could know each other:

(...) If you always remain far away from that place [from the homeland] and try to realize your duty of enlightenment out of there, be sure your labor will go to waste. It will not yield in any beneficial result for the nation. Your nation will not accept you, its class of intellectual, as a part of itself. They will always see you as foreign. Your enlightenment will not have any influence in that place. Always remember that the nations who have taken up

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<sup>293</sup> Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, "(Hetaw-i Kürd) Gazetesi Muharirlerine" [The the Authors of Hetaw-i Kurd], *Hetaw-i Kürd* no.1, 11 Teşrinievvel 1329 (24 October 1913), p. 2-3.

<sup>294</sup> Mevlanzade Rifat "Muhterem 'Hetaw-i Kürd' Gazetesi Müessislerine"..., pp. 2-3.

or are on the brink of awakening in this century are the nations which have their intellectuals with them and live in each other's arms. (...) <sup>295</sup>

Doğan states if the Kurdish intellectuals lived and worked side by side with their people, they “would revive not only Kurdish people but also could create a Kurdish people.” <sup>296</sup> With these remarks he showed how the “nation” was imagined and “constructed.”

All the enlightenment or national movements have some commonalities despite their peculiarities. Early twentieth century Istanbul became the source of those feelings; on the one hand there existed Balkan nationalism, which sought and gained independence, on the other hand, nationalism was seen as a means of progress and survival, especially for Kurds. This was especially because of the neighbor Armenian renaissance and nationalism. In this context, it is meaningful to ask where the source of motivation for Kurdish renaissance was.

#### The Source of Inspiration: Both as Enemy and Model

As revealed from the analyses of the primary sources, for the Kurdish intelligentsia, the west on the one hand was a point of reference for modernity and development and they took it as a model in such areas as education, publishing, industry, and governance. On the other hand, it was regarded as

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<sup>295</sup> “(...)Eğer siz o muhitten daima uzak kalır ve vazife-i tenviriye ve irşadiyenizi o muhit haricinden ifaya çalışırsanız emin olunuz ki mesainiz heder olur. Millet namına hiçbir semere-i müfide vermez. Milletinizi sizi, kendi sınıf-ı münevverini bir türlü kendisinden ad idemez.Sizi daima yabancı sayar. Sizin irşadatınızın o muhitte hemen hiç tesiri olmaz. Siz şurasını daima hatırlarda bulundurunuz ki bu asırda yeni uyanmış milletler veya uyanmak üzere bulunanlar sınıf-ı münevverini daima sinesinde yaşatan ve sınıf-ı münevveri kendisi ile aguş- ba-aguş olan milletlerdir. (...)”  
Bulgaristanlı Doğan, “Milletinize Karşı Vazifeniz: Kürd Münevver Gençliğine”, [Duty to Your People: To the Kurdish Intellectual Young People], *Roj-i Kürd* no.2, 6 Temmuz 1329 (19 July 1913), pp. 2-3.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid. “(...)bu suretle Kürd milletini yeniden hayata getirmek değil hiç yoktan bir Kürd milleti imal etmiş olursunuz.”

Christian/foreign/infidel vis-à-vis Islam. Thereby the Christian world was both an enemy and model with which to confront; the Muslim world should take its precautions in order not to fall behind. However, this attitude changed according to the inclinations of the individuals towards religion. All in all, for the twentieth century Kurdish intelligentsia, being a Muslim had profound impact. Nevertheless, the references to western classical thinkers like Voltaire and Montesquieu also displays how they regarded the enlightenment as universal, taking universal thoughts, yet protecting the cultural, Islam essences.

Another significant point is related to the neighbor Christians, the Armenians, being another controversial issue. The Kurdish word “*filie*” which means, Christian/infidel/foreigner, is an equivalent word used for Armenians, the best known *filie*. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the solution of the conflicts between the Armenians and Kurds, which were mostly agrarian, was at the top of the list especially of the KTTC. Yet in line with this, the Armenians also were taken as a model both for their enlightenment and “national movements.” At this point, the word *filie* became a tool for explaining covertly the danger of the expansion of the Armenian nationalism, in other words the possibility of foundation of an Armenian state in the regions which were assumed as the “historical Kurdish homeland.” For instance, in a Kurdish article titled “Our Land,” Fikrî Necdet designates this danger, by declaring that if the Kurds did not take care of their lands, the *filie* would take them from them.<sup>297</sup> In these remarks although there was no direct reference to a possible Armenian state, the author pointed out to this danger. Furthermore, in a part which described the peculiarities of the Kurdish province Malatya, how the Kurdish

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<sup>297</sup> Diyarbekirî Fikri Necdet, “Erdê Me” [Our Land], *Roj-i Kürd* no.3, 1 Ağustos 1329 (14 August 1913), pp. 22-24.

population was bigger than that of the Armenians was stressed.<sup>298</sup> These examples also consolidated how the construction of the image of a homeland, which has been discussed in this chapter, developed also against a possible Armenian state; as a precaution against it the Kurdish intellectuals both sought a common origin with Armenians, while referring to Kurdistan as the ancient homeland of Kurds.

Although all of these examples portray how the Armenian community was seen as a rival, on the other hand they were considered not only as a source of inspiration but also as ancient “sisters.” For instance, Dr. Abdullah Cevdet pointed out that Armenians had read the works of Shakespeare, as they had translated it into their own language. He wrote that the Kurds and Armenians are two neighbor people, as their developments are not equal, which he saw as the reasons for the conflicts among them.<sup>299</sup> In addition, Ahmed Refik Babanzade showed overtly Armenian intellectuals as example, who always worked for the development of their people.<sup>300</sup> It was also stressed that how the Armenians gave great importance to education and their notables supported education without seeking the help of the education ministry.<sup>301</sup> Their youth, after being educated in European countries, first came back to their homelands and worked for their people, rejecting the high salaries which they could have earned for themselves. They preferred first to work for their nation.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> [Unsigned], “Kürdistan Mektupları” [Letters from Kurdistan], *Hetaw-i Kürd* no.1, 11 Teşrin-i Evvel 1329 (24 October 1913), pp. 13-15.

<sup>299</sup> Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, “İttihad Yolu” [The Way of Unity], *Roj-i Kürd* no.2, 6 Temmuz 1329 (19 July 1913), p. 8

<sup>300</sup> Babanzade Ahmet Rıfat “Kürd Gençlerine”..., pp. 18-19.

<sup>301</sup> Mevlanzade Rıfat “Muhterem ‘Hetaw-i Kürd’ Gazetesi Müessislerine”..., pp. 2-3

<sup>302</sup> T., “Kürd Gençlerimizden Bir Temenni”..., pp. 8-10.

Mevlânâzade Rıfat took this fraternity further by claiming that the Kurds and Armenians belonged to the same racial family, the Urartians. As such, they should collaborate with the Armenians, it is certain that the Armenians would not refuse their sisters, either.<sup>303</sup> As seen, the thoughts about Armenians changed from regarding them as a possible intruder in their homeland, actually a thought which was not usually expressed overtly, to the ideal of common ancient origins, and a sister people should be taken as a model.

In line with the remarks of the authors about the Armenian movement, the debates on the parameters, i.e. national, cultural, economic, of the Kurdish movement, also portray how the Kurdish intellectuals were influenced by the Armenian intellectual movement. For instance, Kılıçdağı portrays the footprints of the Armenian bourgeoisie transformation in Anatolia during the second constitutional era, which was reflected in a set of factors from “entrepreneurship,” and “scientific advance” to “education” and “the emergence of public life.”<sup>304</sup> Furthermore, as discussed by Avagyan, the Armenian political parties, especially between 1908 and 1912, opened many Armenian schools even in the remotest areas of Anatolia. Missionary schools, private Armenian-Catholic, and Protestant schools, etc. became new forces for the education and development of the Armenian people.<sup>305</sup> During the same years, when the economic and educational development were witnessed among the Armenian community, this inspired Kurdish intellectuals as they discussed especially in the columns of the periodicals of *Hêvî* the importance of same topics for not falling behind in the new age.

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<sup>303</sup> Mevlânâzade Rıfat, *ibid.*

<sup>304</sup> Kılıçdağı, *ibid.*

<sup>305</sup> Arsen Avagyan and Gaidz F. Minassian, *Ermeniler ve İttihat ve Terakki...*, p. 81.

Until now the parameters of the Kurdish renaissance have been discussed from 1908 towards 1912, gradually a more planned agenda for “Kurdish renaissance.” Nevertheless another significant side of this evolution was the radicalization of “Kurdism”, the shifting of focus from Ottoman citizenship to Islamism and Kurdism. The reasons behind this shift were various, shaped partially by the policies of the CUP government. In what follows I will introduce the nature of this shift and a way of comprehension of it is a discourse analysis between the KTTC and Hêvî.

#### A Discourse Analysis between the KTTC and Hêvî

The common viewpoint regarding the pre-First World War era as cultural nationalists or even Ottoman nationalists, an idea homogenizing the era stemmed from the superficial and less focus on the differentiation between the discourses of the KTTC and Hêvî. Contrary to the common belief, which only highlights the difference just between the KTTC (1908) and *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti* (Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan) (1918) this part deemed to designate that, without rejecting the disastrous effects of WWI, the discourse and agenda of Hêvî were not similar to that of the KTTC, either; the former was more “radical” in the sense of being more “Kurdist,” and more planned for a “renaissance.” All of this change or shift becomes clearer when considered within the broader picture of the early twentieth century Ottoman Empire. As always noted, at the beginning of the century Istanbul had become the center of “nationalistic feelings” and all the communities in the empire influenced each other. Therefore, in order to evaluate the change in the discourse of the Kurdish intellectuals and so Kurdism, it is useful to look at the main dynamics it shared with the other movements of Turks, Arabs and Armenians. In the



following lines after introducing the analyses of the journals of the KTTC and Hêvî I will seek for the reasons behind their differences.

Even the quantitative data related to the articles in the journals of the KTTC and Hêvî signified the differences between them. For instance, although the number of Kurdish articles in the KTTC did not exceed three in contrast to eight Turkish articles, in *Roj-i Kürd* the number of Kurdish and Turkish articles were equal and sometimes the Kurdish ones were even more. Below two charts with different categories highlight not only the differences between the two organizations, but also the ruptures between 1908 and 1913. Because of the space allowed and also similarities among them, only one journal of Hêvî, *Roj-i Kürd*, was selected:

Table 1: The Distribution of the Articles in *KTTC*

<i>KTTC</i> /Issues	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
I	4 <sup>306</sup>	1	3	3
II	2	1	2	7
III	5	3	-	2
IV	3 <sup>307</sup>	4	-	1
V	4	4	-	1
VI	2	2	1	3
VII	3	3	-	-
VIII	-	4	-	2
IX	1	2	1	2

Source: Drawn by the author inspired from Masami Arai, *Jön Türk Dönemi Türk Milliyetçiliği* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003).

Group A: Includes articles are about the position of the Kurds within the Ottoman Empire; the comparison and contrast with the previous (Hamidian) regime and constitutional regime; and lastly articles which pay attention to the role of the KTTC.

<sup>306</sup> The declaration of the KTTC included.

<sup>307</sup> The article of Süleymaniyeli Seyfullah titled “Unity” included. *Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi*, no.4 13 Kânunu-I Evvel 1324 (26 December, 1908). The article focused on the importance of unity among religious community, (*ümmet*).

Group B: Includes articles about the internal and external issues of the Ottoman Empire.

Group C: Includes articles about the issues in the Kurdish geography, like the tribal issues and relations with Armenians.

Group D: Includes articles which peculiarly about the Kurdish characteristics, about issues related Kurdish language and education, collaboration among themselves.

-Numerals refer to the numbers of the articles under each category.

- These four categories do not represent all the articles in the journal. For instance there are almost in each issue, telegraphs from the branches of the society or Kurdish tribes. Furthermore, in each issue there is news both specifically of the Kurds and also Ottoman Empire's internal and external issues under the title of "Open Columns" or "Various" or "Events." In addition, there were also religious poems both in Turkish and Kurdish under the title of "Literary," and articles on philosophy and religion.

Table 2: The Distribution of Articles in *Roj-i Kürd*

Roj-i Kurd/Issues	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E	Group F	Group G
I	2	1	6	3 <sup>308</sup>	2	-	-
II	3	3 <sup>309</sup>	8	5 <sup>310</sup>	-	-	-
III	3	-	7	3	-	1	-
IV	3	2	8	2	-	-	1

Source: Drawn by the author inspired from Masami Arai, *Jön Türk Dönemi Türk Milliyetçiliği* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003).

Group A: Includes articles about Kurdish history, and about Kurdish famous people.

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<sup>308</sup> A Kurdish fable by Fuad Temo was included.

<sup>309</sup> The article of Abdullah Cevdet "İttihad Yolu" [The Way of Unity] was included. *Roj-i Kürd* no.2, 6 Temmuz 1329 (19 July 1913), p. 8 In this article Abdullah Cevdet opposed the centralism and proposed a way of governance which composed of autonomous groups. In line with this he emphasized that how it was the right of Kurds to learn and improve their language, history and literary.

<sup>310</sup> A Kurdish fable by Fuad Temo was included

Group B: Includes articles especially about the relations of Kurds with Islam, the Caliphate and Ottoman Empire.

Group C: Includes articles that evaluate the problems and peculiarities of the Kurds, which are about the nationality and Kurdishness and also emphasize the role of *Roj-i Kürd*.

Group D: Includes articles which are peculiarly about the Kurdish language and education.

Group E: Includes articles which are about the economy of the Kurds and Kurdish geography.

Group F: Although the theme of “motherland” was also a part of the articles in Group C, this article is particularly about the Kurdish native land so constituted a separate category.

Group G: Includes the article about land conflicts with Armenians, although, like the Group F, the relations with Armenians also discussed in the other Groups.

- Numerals refer to the numbers of the articles under each category.
- Apart from the categories above there are a few poems, announcements and articles on general enlightenment about social and political topics, like principle of separation of power.

These tables illustrate the differentiation in the discourse of the two organizations. When the categories taken into consideration, the KTTC with the belief in the new constitutional regime, represented not only Kurdish people but also Ottoman citizens, as discussed in the third chapter. In addition, especially the articles in Group B are the ones about the internal and external issues of the Ottoman Empire, which are usually titled “Political Summary” or “Politics”, include discussions about the current agenda<sup>311</sup> both in the empire and world. In line with this, the news under the titles of “Open Columns,” “Events” or “Various” also included not only the news about Kurdish geography and deputies but also other

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<sup>311</sup> These issues ranged from the separation of Bulgarians, the relations with Austria which annihilated Bosnia-Herzegovina and to the German influence on the Ottoman economy.

internal and external affairs.<sup>312</sup> As the details of the agenda of the KTTC for the Ottoman citizens was discussed in the previous chapter will not be discussed here further, yet what is significant is to comprehend the discursive shifts among the Kurdish intelligentsia between 1908 and 1912. Contrary to the KTTC the agenda of Hêvî did not include any suggestions for the Ottoman citizenry, rather it was more oriented to the creation of a consciousness of “Kurdishness”; a Kurdish renaissance with the focus on “the glorious” Kurdish past, the role of elders and intellectual youth, and the role of language and literature, the unity and collaboration among the Kurdish people.

Thereby it can be argued that *KTTC* is thematically broader than the journals of Hêvî which are in turn were more focused on the “Kurdish renaissance.” This shift although has been overlooked until now, I think is very crucial to understand the divergent tendencies and ideas between 1908 and 1912. In the following lines the main differences will be introduced and discussed.

A comparison between the KTTC and Hêvî could illustrate two main points from which the two societies differ from each other. First, the focus on being a part of Ottoman Empire, which was expressed as forgetting the past and trusting in the future with the new regime in the KTTC, generally disappeared in Hêvî, which had much more emphasis on Islamism rather than Ottomanism. Thereby, as demonstrated in *Roj-i Kürd* and *Hetaw-i Kürd*, the focus on being a part of the Ottoman Empire is portrayed within a broader picture of the Muslim world. For instance, stories of people from Kurdish history who served the Islam were frequently treated issues. Mehmed Salih Bedirkhan introduced how the Selahaddin Eyyubi, of whom the

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<sup>312</sup> These parts includes information ranging from the news about neighbor countries to the celebrations of Christmas.

Kurds are proud, won back the Jerusalem and was the guardian of it.<sup>313</sup> It seems that the service of Kurds to Islam which predated their subjugation by the Ottoman Empire is also emphasized.

In line with M. Salih Bedirhan, İsmail Hakkı Babanzade also emphasized how the place of Kurds in the Islam family was significant and in the Ottoman family, as well, highlighting being first Muslim and then Kurd.<sup>314</sup> In another article on Kurds in the columns of the *KTG* he had stated priorities with the sequence of first Muslim, second Ottoman and then Kurd.<sup>315</sup> In the *Roj-i Kurd* the priorities of the İsmail Hakkı decreased in being Muslim and Kurd, with an absence of Ottoman.

As mentioned above, the relation with the Ottoman Empire was placed much more in the big picture of the Islam family; depicted as the Caliphate and the strongest Muslim State. A significant dynamics that played a role at this point was the inclinations of the authors. For instance Kerküklü Necmeddin, whom the editor of the *Roj-i Kürd* resembled to Bediüzzaman Said-i Kürdî, was one of the authors who mostly emphasized the role of the Caliphate and Ottomans for the Kurds. In an article he discussed the services of the Kurds to the Caliphate, a notion which played a significant role for the alliance of Kurds with the Ottomans.<sup>316</sup> Furthermore in columns of the *Hetaw-i Kürd*, Necmeddin, by paying attention to the fact that the Kurds allied with the Caliphate against the Shiite Persian Empire, emphasized that

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<sup>313</sup> M. Salih Bedirhan, “Berî Şêr Qelem” [Pen Before the Sword], *Roj-i Kürd* no.3, 1 Ağustos 1329 (14 August 1913), pp. 24-25.

<sup>314</sup> İsmail Hakkı Babanzade, “Müslümanlık ve Kürdlük” [Muslimism and Kurdism], *Roj-i Kürd* no.2, 6 Temmuz 1329 (19 July 1913), p. 7.

<sup>315</sup> İsmail Hakkı Babanzade, “Kürdler ve Kürdistan”..., p. 44.

<sup>316</sup> Kerküklü Necmeddin “Kürd Talebe Hêvî Cemiyeti ve Kürdlerin Makam-ı Hilafete Hidmetleri” [Kurdish Student Hope Society and Kurds’s Services to the Caliphate], *Roj-i Kürd* no.1, 6 Haziran 1329 (19 June 1913), p. 5-6.

the aim of the progress of the Kurds was for Islam and the Kurds who had remained loyal to the Caliphate would be remain the same thereafter.<sup>317</sup> These words could be interpreted as the purposeful choice of the Caliphate instead of the empire in parallel with the absence of a clear separatism in the agenda of the Kurdish movement of the early twentieth century. However, the point that the Kurds were unable to found a political unit because of the conflicts among them was strongly implied by references to the destructive influences of the disunity about the existence of the Kurdish people. Therefore when these two sides were read together, the diversity among the Kurdish intellectuals and how their ideas were not confined to clear-cut borders could be observed.

The second significant point, besides the peculiar focus on Islam, was the overt debate on nationalism. Such a debate sometimes stemmed from a need for survival, being oneself and progress. Nevertheless it also resulted in proposals for the way of governance:

Xezal, in the columns of the *Roj-i Kürd*, while tracing the origins of the Kurds to the Assyrians –allegedly the common ancestors of Kurds and Armenians– explained that with the embrace of Islam, the Kurds resembled the Arabs, they only had been able to keep their language. After that, the Kurds, fallen under the domination of the *Romî* (Romans).<sup>318</sup> Xezal argued that they were also Muslim and so they got along well, yet Kurds had not been able to be themselves; they had neither improved their language nor learnt their history.<sup>319</sup> Thereby what she

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<sup>317</sup>“(…)Kürtleri hedef-i terakkileri İslamiye, İslamlık yalnız o cevheri mualanın terakkisidir. Şimdiye kadar halifelerine sadk kalan Kürtler minbaadda sadakatta sebat edeceklerini kemal-i emniyetle söylebiliriz. (...)” Kerküklü Necmeddin, “Puşide-i Tarih”..., p. 17

<sup>318</sup> A designation used for Turkish governance, interestingly it shows how the Turks were seen as the successors of the Byzantium Empire.

<sup>319</sup> Xezal, “Dema Kalê Me-Çaxa Me-Dema Tê” [The Time of Our Elders-Today-Future], *Roj-i Kürd* no.1, 6 Haziran 1329 (19 June 1913), pp. 26-28

proposed was to unify and to realize the necessities of being their own, the improvement of language, knowledge about history and about Kurdish prominent figures came at the top of the list.

As argued in the publications of the Hêvî, both in *Roj-i Kürd* and *Hetaw-i Kürd*, in contrast to *KTTC*, the authors were well aware of, as they generally expressed overtly, the era was that of nationalism and they deemed to create a national consciousness with a more planned program. To serve this aim, references to the famous Kurdish men of state, poets, scholars, and mullahs were in common usage. Interestingly among them references to poems, which were considered by some scholars later as the “nationalistic” were among them. For instance, Mehmed Salih Bedirkhan gave place to a poem of Ahmede Khanî, which is generally interpreted as a clear demand for the independence of the Kurds by some scholars of Kurdish nationalism.<sup>320</sup> In this article, Mehmed Salih Bedirkhan, while giving an account of Salahaddin Eyyubi, concluded his words with the poem of Ahmede Khanî, which together with another poem of Hacı Qadire Qoyi, he suggested to be learnt by heart by the Kurds. Such attributions to the national feelings of Kurds were the main peculiarity of *Roj-i Kürd* and *Hetaw-i Kürd*, as well as main dimension to portray the shift in focus between the *KTTC* and Hêvî.

In line with nationalistic attributes as above, nationalism as an ideology was also discussed in the columns of both journals of Hêvî; the debate frame in these journals verifies once more that the definition of nationalism changes accordingly social and political context, as argued by Hobsbawm.<sup>321</sup> Harputlu H. B., in the

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<sup>320</sup> Amir Hassanpour, “Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin İnşası: Yirminci Yüzyıl Öncesi Tarihsel ve Edebi Kaynaklar” pp. 135-198 in *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri*, ed. Abbas Vali, (İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2005).

<sup>321</sup> E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism...*, pp. 10-11.

columns of the *Roj-i Kürd* drew attention to the fact that in the Christian world the waves of nationalism were spreading and the nationalism, which was in the nature of the human, had contributed to the development of the German, French and English people and this would also affect the Muslim world. Apart from these European models, Harputlu also emphasized that the Arabs in Egypt and Tatars in Russia had aimed for the progress of their societies with organizational activities. He expressed his hope that this idea -nationalism- would help the awakening also of the Muslim world; especially that of the Kurds, who remained behind.<sup>322</sup> As understood from the remarks of Harputlu, he saw nationalism as a means for progress.

In line with Harputlu H.B., the ideas of Abdullah Cevdet, who emphasized that the era was the one of nationalism,<sup>323</sup> are significant as they give clues about the debates on nationalism in the period. A. Cevdet described a dialog that had passed between himself and one of his friends. His friend had seen *Roj-i Kürd* on the Cevdet's table and upon realizing that it was in Kurdish, said that "if it is in Kurdish not in Turkish, it is separatist." Highlighting the wrongness of an opinion as such that Abdullah Cevdet argued that the "union" of the constituents depended on the union of their interests, so it was necessary to accept the individuality of the constituents as well as their union. Interestingly what A. Cevdet proposed were autonomous political units, as he proposed that in a country like the Ottoman Empire with the various peoples it was wrong to support one language and one constitution. Thereby he presented Sweden as an example, the governance of which separate was made up of small republics which were constituted accordingly peculiarities of the regions. He wrote that if the if Sweden had had a centralized administration the relations would

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<sup>322</sup>Harputlu H.B. "Garble Şark Milliyet Hezeyanları" [West and East Nationality Movements], *Roj-i Kürd* no.1, 6 Haziran 1329 (19 June 1913), pp. 8-9.

<sup>323</sup> Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, "Bir Hitab"..., p.3.



have not been so sincerely. Thereby each nation had to be allowed to study its language, literature, history, and culture as nationalism was the strongest wave of the era even if the most radical and repressive governments could not stand against it.<sup>324</sup>

These remarks of A. Cevdet give significant clues about what the intellectuals of the era understood about nationalism. It would not necessarily yield separate nation-states, yet without rejecting both the Ottoman Empire and individual nation-groups, he proposed a political unit in which the governance of the country was based on autonomous groups, which constituted appropriately the needs and characteristics of a region and people.

In line with A. Cevdet, Lütü Fikri,<sup>325</sup> the deputy of Dersim, while discussing the waves of nationalism since the re-proclamation of the constitutional regime, designated two main tendencies in the Ottoman Empire: rejecting the variety in the constituents in the empire and, in the other way around, accepting their existences. Nevertheless the former tendency vanished in a few years; with no more supporters, as the nationalism was the most prevailing wave in the century. However L. Fikri paid attention to two main policies against nationalism within the borders of the empire, one the one hand, accepting the nationalities of the non-Muslim groups, and on the other hand, rejecting the ones of Muslims. Emphasizing that both within and out of the Islam, there was no power to stand against nationalistic feelings, he explained that even in the most remote areas of Kurdish geography which was deprived of any kind of transportation and infrastructure, the idea of nationalism

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<sup>324</sup> Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, “İttihad Yolu”..., p. 8

<sup>325</sup> Lütü Fikri was an influential opponent to the government of the CUP, he was a literary man, published many journals and wrote in many others. He was in the *Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası* and during the Republican regime he was among the *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası* (1924) the first opponent party in Republican Turkey, in Yücel Demirel, ed. *Dersim Mebusu Lütü Fikri Bey’in Günlüğü; “Daima Muhalafet”* (İstanbul: Arma Yayınları, 1991), pp. 7-12.

spread; although the Kurds, after the Arabs and Albanians, were *vis-à-vis* in the rising of national consciousness.<sup>326</sup>

However, Lütfi Fikri clarified his position that the Kurdish “revival,” which had started to fight with neighbor people like Armenians or sought to separate from the Ottoman Empire, could not survive in this era; abandoning peace would result in their extinction. Kurdish intellectuals who did not want another conflict in Anatolia should not and would not attempt such an aim. Rather Kurds might serve to be a part of the peace in the Anatolia. Only with this precondition, he says “I salute the awakening of Kurdish people.”<sup>327</sup>

Lütfi Fakir’s remarks, which again were in favor of the recognition of the existence of different nationalities in the empire, can be interpreted as a piece of advice or a warning for Kurdish intellectuals not to seek separation from the empire or open a fight against the Armenians, as the counter “national movement.” Such advice or idea is interesting as it illustrates the concern for both rising tendencies, which were actually envisaged as a result of the awakening of national feelings; seeking independence and/or a fight with neighbor nationalities.

In the above-mentioned debate on nationalism the issue of women also took its part as in the construction of national identities, the significance attributed to the women has a crucial part and the Kurdish case was no exception. In an article in *Roj-i Kürd* the position of Kurdish women, by drawing attention that how in Europe and America women were struggling for getting their rights and how their situations,

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<sup>326</sup> Lütfi Fikri got this impression when he stayed a night in a Kurdish village in his way to Xarput; the villagers brought him a journal in Kurdish, and told him that when they first saw the Kurdish journal they became so excited and had it read several times. Fikri emphasized that when he witnessed the excitement of the villagers and how they regarded the journal like a holy book, he realized that it is in vain to stand against this feeling of nationalism. “Kürd Milliyeti” [Kurdish Nationality], *Roj-i Kürd* no.4, 30 Ağustos 1329 (12 September 1913), pp.2-5.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid., p. 5

were improving. In line with this, the author discussed the situation and role of Kurdish women in Kurdish society. His conclusion was outstanding: “The women of a nation are the scale of its development.”<sup>328</sup>

In a nutshell, as partially argued in this part, although there was no clear demand of independence, which is actually not only difficult to see in the columns of a legal journal in the early twentieth century of the Ottoman Empire but also ideas diverged on this issue, the agenda of Hêvî, contrary to that of the KTTC was more communitarian, Kurdist and even “nationalist,” which altogether served to create a national consciousness with the references to the past, to the “racial” differences, motherland and ancient roots of the Kurds. Although independence was not discussed overtly, the debates, like that of Abdullah Cevdet, introduced proposals for the new ways of governance, a regime which prescribed decentralized autonomous units.

This account of discursive shift between two Kurdish organizations in Istanbul at the onset of the twentieth century could also be read in parallel to the changes, ruptures, and discontinuities in the capital of the empire; until after that it would be meaningful. Thereby, it is necessary to take a set of factors into consideration in order to understand the alteration in the ideas and especially agendas of the Kurdish intellectuals, who got excited about the new regime and founded an organization not only in the name of Kurdish people, but also of “Ottoman peoples” in 1908, left this agenda behind and focused their energies exclusively on the

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<sup>328</sup> “*Bir milletin nîsvanı, derece-i terakkiyesinin mîzânıdır.*” Ergani Madenli Y.C. “Kürdlerde Kadın Meselesi [The Issue of Women in Kurds] *Roj-i Kürd*, no. 4, 30 Ağustos 1329 (12 September 1913), p. 12. A significant recent study which scrutinizes the femininity in the Kurdish nationalist discourse of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is the one of Emine Rezzan Karaman, “Femininty within the Context of Kurdish Nationalist Discourse in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries” (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2008). For a detailed study on Kurdish women in nationalist discourse see Shahrzad Mojab, *Devletsiz Ulusun Kadınları: Kürt Kadını Üzerine Araştırmalar*, trans. Fahriye Adsay, et.al, (İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2005).

“revival” of Kurds. Seemingly “Ottoman citizenry” had failed in the eyes of the Kurdish intelligentsia, who were disappointed and had determined a different agenda, which will be discussed in what follows by the contextualizing Kurdistan after 1912 together with the nearby “national” movements in a broader framework.

#### Contextualizing Kurdistan in a Framework with Other ‘National’ Movements:

Although it bore its own peculiarities shaped by political, social and economic differences, the Kurdish movement at the beginning of the twentieth century developed in a mutually interaction especially with the Turkish and Armenian movements, both as model and a potential enemies. In the above, I presented how the Kurdish intellectuals demonstrated the common origins of the Kurds and Armenians; thereby, on the one hand, they took them as a model; on the other hand they saw them as rivals, because of the hot debates during the era related to land issues among them. The issue surfaced of usurped Armenian lands or a possible Armenian state in the areas populated also by Kurds. However, with the Turkish movement, the relations developed on a different base one is mostly shaped by the policies of the governments. In the eyes of the Kurds, the Ottoman Empire was Ottoman, not Turkish, and also it was a Muslim Empire. Furthermore as mentioned before, in the Kurdish articles, the word *Romî* is used to refer to the Ottoman Empire, which was envisaged as the successor of the Byzantium Empire. The emergence of Turkism as an ideology corresponds to an era in which the idea of Ottomanism was thought to have vanished, and the government of the CUP inclined more to Turkist policies. Thereby a brief look at to the Turkish movement during the same years and a discussion on the possible interactions also will shed light on the discursive shift of the two Kurdish organizations.

It will be more appropriate to look at the discourse of the organizations founded by Turkish intellectuals at the beginning of the twentieth century to compare their agenda with that of the Kurdish intellectuals. In 1908, *Türk Derneği* (Turkish Organization) was founded which, in the words of Yusuf Akçura, was “the first attempt of the organization of Turkism.”<sup>329</sup> As Füsün Üstel explains, although *Türk Derneği*, which deemed to spread “scholarly Turkism” in the cultural base, differentiated itself from later Turkist organizations like *Türk Yurdu* (Turkish Country) and *Türk Ocakları* (Turkish Hearths); defining its aims as “only scholarly,” still it is significant as it prepared the base for the later political Turkism. Furthermore, as figures from the CUP took part in the activities of the organization, the organization could not escape from being the target of political aims.<sup>330</sup>

Üstel, analyzing the declaration of *Türk Derneği*, explains that although the organization favored the “Ottomanism” as a political ideology, it was Turkist in the cultural realms, especially in the case of language, arguing that it was not a contradiction, rather it was the dualism in the Ottomans ideology.<sup>331</sup> At this point it is possible to make a correlation between the *Türk Derneği* and the KTTC. Both of them demonstrated the atmosphere of the era, and did not deviate from Ottomanism. Instead, they convened around the ideology of the Ottomanism while determining programs for their communities. Nevertheless, the reception of Ottomanism was not the same for Turkish and Kurdish intellectuals, Turkish intellectuals had a more

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<sup>329</sup> Füsün Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları (1912-1913)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1997), p. 15.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid., pp. 21-22.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid., pp. 25-26.

planned program than the Kurdish ones, at least for the case of Türk Derneği and the KTTC.<sup>332</sup>

The second organizational attempt of the Turkists was Türk Yurdu which was founded in 1911 and published a journal with the same name. The journal defines itself, as stated by Üstel, as “the sole Turkist nationalist journal.”<sup>333</sup> The journal later became the publication organ of Türk Ocakları (1912-1931). As stated by Üstel, the main aim of this organization was to spread Turkish education and to implement a policy against foreign schools which gave education in other languages than Turkish.<sup>334</sup>

It was the Türk Ocakları (1912), the preparations for the foundation of which dated to 1911, that Hasan Ferit Cansever<sup>335</sup> regards as the “first organization which includes the ideas of nationalities in a broader sense.”<sup>336</sup> As argued by Füsün Üstel, the date of its foundation gives it a specificity among other Turkist organizations as it corresponds to the date when the Balkan countries allied against the Ottoman

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<sup>332</sup> Ottomanism did not have same meanings for the Turkish and non-Turkish constituents in the empire. As Üstel argues for the non-Turkish it meant the being equal citizens in the empire and having the same rights, as verified with the example of the KTTC; yet for the Turkish constituent it was the compensation from the civil, bureaucratic, military privileges. Another specificity of the environment of Turkish organizations of the era, besides Türk Derneği, of Türk Yurdu and Türk Ocakları, is the composition of their members; besides the Ottoman intellectuals there were also influential figures which escaped from Russia, for the second groups their being immigrant was very influential for their reception of Ottomanist and Turkist ideologies.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

<sup>335</sup> Cansever was on the executive board of Türk Ocakları in the congress of the organization in 1913. He played crucial role for the election of the supporters of the CUP to the executive board and justifies his position with the claim that it is vital to seek the help of influential figures for the spread of nationalistic ideas. Gün Soysal “Hasan Ferit Cansever” in *Milliyetçilik*, eds. by Tanıl Bora, Murat Gültekingil, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002) , pp. 250-253. For related discussion on the role and effectiveness of the CUP in Türk Ocakları, see Füsün Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği...*, pp. 70-75.

<sup>336</sup> “...muasır milliyet fikirlerini geniş ve şamil bir tarzda ilk defa bir ideal bayrağı yaparak ortaya atılan,” Üstel, p. 51

Empire. With the Balkan Wars, the radicalization of Turkism was witnessed.<sup>337</sup>

Nevertheless, Yusuf Akçura states that when the Türk Ocakları was founded, “Arabs with Ahali’ül Arabi and Kurds with Hivi already started to pursue their national goals.”<sup>338</sup> In the same way, Kadri Cemilpasha stated that “when the Ottomanism evolved into Turkism, Arabs founded *Müntedi’ül-Edebi*, Albanians *Başkim* (Unity) and Kurds *Hêvî* (Hope)”.<sup>339</sup> Thereby it is appropriate to underline that neither Turkish nationalism nor Kurdish nationalism developed *per se*, it was a process of both interaction and reaction.

The foundation years and development of political Turkism corresponded to the years when *Kürt Talebe Hêvî Cemiyeti* was founded and aggregated with the closure of the KTTC, KNMC and the Kurdish school. Nuri Dersimi, in his memoirs emphasizing the acceleration of the Turkist policies of the CUP after the loss of Balkans, explains that in his school years in Istanbul, when the Turkish students wrote on the table “How happy to say I am a Turk” they would erase it in the break and wrote instead “How happy to say I am a Kurd.”<sup>340</sup>

The relationship between Kurdist and Turkist organizations did not develop on a friendly base. As described by Kadri Cemilpasha, Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver the head of Türk Ocakları, offered Hêvî to join Türk Ocakları, so they could have a room in the building of their organizations. However, they did not accept this offer as it was regarded it as an attempt to stop the Kurdist activities of Hêvî.<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> Üstel, “Türk Ocakları” in *Milliyetçilik...*, pp. 263-268.

<sup>338</sup> Narrate from Yusuf Akçura *Türk Yılı*, p. 435 Rıdvan Akın, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Dağılma Devri ve Türkçülük Hareketi 1908-1918* (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 2002), p. 52.

<sup>339</sup> Kadri Cemilpasha, p. 33.

<sup>340</sup> Nuri Dersimi, *Hatıratım*, (İstanbul: Doz Yayınları, 1997), p. 31

Although it does not sound appropriate to connect the radicalization or the evolution of the Kurdist discourse to the policies of the CUP, *per se*, the policies of the committee affected the discourse of the Kurdish intelligentsia, profoundly and irreversibly. Especially after dispossession of the Balkans, and with the Babîâlî Attack of 1913,<sup>342</sup> the repressive policies of the CUP were received as the silencing the non-Turkish elements in the empire. Nevertheless, such concerns were not groundless. For instance, Kadri Cemilpaşa wrote that after the first congress of Hêvî, which was held in 1913, the government sued Hêvî on the grounds that it was not appropriate to the law, and the head of the organization, Ömer Cemilpaşa was arrested many times.<sup>343</sup>

In line with this, it seems that the surveillance of the Kurdish intelligentsia was the case before 1913. For instance, a document dated to 1910 reports on the travel of Sayyid Abdülkadir to the Şemdinan. The report generally informs that the Kurds were in the pursuit of an aim, the content of which was not clearly known. And Sayyid Abdülkadir's travel in the Kurdish geography is connected to this aim,

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<sup>341</sup> Kadri Cemilpaşa, p. 42. In line with K. Cemilpaşa Refik Hilmi also emphasized that the Kurdish organizations in İstanbul were closed down because of the Turkist policies of the CUP. Refik Hilmi, *Anılar: Şeyh Mahmud Berzenci Hareketi* (İstanbul: Nûjen Yayıncılık, 1995), pp. 14-15. Contrary to the intellectuals like Kadri Cemilpaşa and Nuri Dersimi who emphasized the Kurdist activities of Hêvî, Mehmet Şükrü Sekban said that he does not believe that Hêvî aimed at the separation of Kurdistan. Yet he does not reject the idea that there were some Kurdish intellectuals who wanted independence of Kurdistan, although they did not express it overtly. M. Şükrü Sekban, *Kürt Meselesi* (Ankara: Kon Yayınları, 1979), p. 29. However, Kadri Cemilpaşa opposes the idea of Sekban and argues that Hêvî had the Kurdish nationalist feelings by drawing attention that although Sekban was also a enthusiastic member of Hêvî and influenced the people around him, during the early years of the Turkish Republic for return back to Turkey, he lied. Kadri Cemilpaşa, p. 27. Actually, in his book Sekban claimed that Kurds and Turks were from the same race, from Turans. He also argued that Kurdish was not enough for education and called all Kurds to the path of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Sekban, pp. 34-39.

<sup>342</sup> The CUP got the power from the reins of *Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası*, which came to power in June 1912, with coup in 1913; hereafter they strengthened their power.

<sup>343</sup> Kadri Cemilpaşa, p. 43.



by referring also to the aims of his father in 1880s, to found a Kurdish state or gain autonomy via joining the Kurds both in the Ottoman and Persian states.<sup>344</sup>

The above-mentioned document dated is to 1910, when the KTTC was closed down, and the KNMC and Kurdish school were either closed or on the brink of closure. The surveillance of Abdülkadir also can be interpreted as the distrust in and general policy against influential Kurdish figures, as the Bedirkhans also were not allowed to go to the Kurdish region, to prevent them from the preparation of possible actions against the Ottoman government via getting support of the people in the Kurdish region.<sup>345</sup> However, it is also stated in this chapter that KNMC and Kurdish school stopped their activities because of the harassments of the government. The persecutions of the founding members of the Hêvî were the further stages. In this context, the ideas of Şükrü Hanioğlu related to the rising of Turkish nationalism are important to understanding the policies against Kurdish organizations:

Long before the Balkan Wars, Turkism and Turkish Nationalism had taken root among prominent Ottoman intellectuals and the leadership of the main Young Turk political organization. First as a cultural concept, then as a political program Turkism gradually conquered the major Young Turk organizations and made a profound impact on their agenda. To be sure Balkan Wars were to provide a significant impetus to the rising tide of Turkish nationalism. They proved the CUP's long-standing assertion that with few exceptions, the non-Turkish communities of the empire inclined; towards separatism; demand for cultural rights and recognition were mere pretexts for dangerous nationalist agendas.(...)<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>344</sup> BOA. DH.MUİ 71/68/25/R/1328. “Kürtlerin birtakım maksad gayr-ı malume üzerine ötede beri de içtima ederek mahiyeti henüz meçhul bir fikrin tamim ve tevsiye çalıştıkları cümle-i istihbaratandır. (...)İran ekradıyla memalik-i osmaniyedeki ekradı birleştirerek fikr-i batılınca bir Kürdistan hükümeti veyahud muhtariyetle idare edülür bir Kürdistan kıtası teşkil etmek ve bittab riyaseti de kendüsüne olunmak gaye-i emelidir. (...)” See Appendix D.

<sup>345</sup> However it seems that these concerns were not groundless; together with the Hüseyin Kenan and Osman Pasha's declaration of independence in the Cezire (see p..in this thesis) Emin Ali Bedir Khan, who is among the founders of the KTTC, with his brother Mithat Bedir Khan, in 1889 attempted to start an upsurge via meeting with Kurdish leaders in Trabzon, yet they were caught and jailed. See M. Emin Zeki, *Kürdistan*...p. 145.

<sup>346</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, “Turkism and the Young Turks, 1889-1908”, pp. 3-19 in *Turkey Beyond Nationalism: Towards Post-Nationalist Identities* edited by Hans-Lukas Keiser, (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

The precautions against the activities of the non-Turkish elements also can be read from the viewpoint of Hanioglu; who emphasizes that the Turkism of the CUP did not occur as a sudden break with the Balkan War, yet in a process. On the other hand, the CUP cannot be imagined as a homogenous group; there were also divergences among them. In line with this, Avagyan argues that in the IV. Congress of the CUP which was held in 1911, the Turkism was adapted *de facto*, as three influential figures of the Turkist wave, Ziya Gökalp, Yusuf Akçura and Ismail Gaspiralı were elected to the central committee.<sup>347</sup>

For the scope of the thesis I will not explicate all the diversity among the CUP and its policies, yet it is more appropriate to argue that both the “nationalist” movements, Kurdism, Arabism or Turkism developed in an interactive process, influencing each other and creating their counter hegemonies.

#### In Lieu of a Conclusion

The early twentieth century was an era in which the Kurdish intelligentsia under consideration, like many of their contemporaries, was aware of the value of the times: nationalism was prevailing, and the Kurdish people needed to fulfill the necessities of the age. As far as understood from the primary sources, nationalism was seen as a way of progress and development. Accordingly, Kurdish intellectuals proposed an agenda composed of many parameters which were common with other “national” movements; from the importance of education to the usage of language, historical figures, old days and such for the construction of a “nation” via creating a

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<sup>347</sup> In line with this Avagyan also discusses that between the years 1910 and 1911 the divergences among the CUP came to the peak; especially because of the conflicts between the Istanbul and Salonica groups of the committee. When the oppositons to the central committee increased, in order to protect their power, the Salonica group searched for an assistance from which both the conservatists and military wing would refrain, and it was the Turkist group leading by Ziya Gökalp. Avagyan, pp. 88-89.

common bond. By this means, it could be argued that this era in Kurdish history corresponds to a time between Phase A and Phase B of Hroch's periodization.

The Kurdish intelligentsia's greater focus on "Kurdism" also signified the discursive shift between 1908 and 1912, which generally was undermined in the Kurdish case. Therefore the discursive shift between the KTTC (1908) and Hêvî (1912) portrayed both the disappointments about the "Ottoman citizenship" and the radicalization of "Kurdism." Nevertheless the "radicalization" of the Kurdist discourse did not envisage a clear demand of separatism; rather the propositions were more autonomists.

However, the said discursive shift occurred due to many factors. As mentioned, one of them was the great consciousness about the prevalence of the nationalistic ideas. Furthermore, the Kurdish movement was affected by other "national" movements, especially by the Armenian and Turkish ones. In the Armenian case, despite the fear of a probable Armenian state in the Kurdish geography, the Armenians were taken as a model and furthermore an allegedly common origin between the two peoples is emphasized.

For the Turkish case, the relations were shaped by the policies of the CUP government; the repression of Kurdish organizations and Kurdish schools, and the arrests of the managers of Hêvî. Most interestingly, as was seen in the example of *Gehandîn*, the government also implemented policies to create a counter-hegemony which was released in the aim of opening schools in the Kurdish geography.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

This study was the result of the concern about the deeds of the Kurds in the last century of the Ottoman Empire. As from the onset I decided to focus on the printed and published documents, I made my choice from the side of the Kurdish literate, from those who were culturally and socio-economically in a better position. This was a legitimate choice as the Kurdish intellectuals and notables under the consideration would later go on to further Kurdish movement which was succeeded by *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti* (1918)<sup>348</sup> and after the dismemberment of the Empire highlighted by the Sheikh Said Rebellion and the Khoybun<sup>349</sup> organization which was behind the Mount Ararat Rebellions in 1930s. Therefore, the ideas and deeds of these people in the early twentieth century could be considered as the ‘seed’ of the subsequent Kurdish movements, despite their peculiar conjunctures were taken into consideration.

Regarding the early twentieth century Kurdish movement as the ‘seed’ of the later Kurdish “radicalism” does not attribute a lineality and continuity to the Kurdish movements. Rather, as it was argued in this study that the activities of the Kurdish intelligentsia under consideration were the results of the peculiarities of the constitutional regime. Yet their experiences, the power negotiations and the relations with the official authorities had significant impacts on their ideas and agendas. A brief look at the pre-reproclamation of the constitution enabled us to see that the influential Kurdish figures who had been exiled both after the Kurdish revolts of the

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<sup>348</sup> The most detailed study on this organization, which aimed at the independence of Kurdistan is the one of İsmail Göldaş, *Kürdistan Teâlî*...

<sup>349</sup> For a detailed study on Khoybun, see Rohat Alakom, *Hoybûn Örgütü ve Ağrı Ayaklanması* (İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 1998).

mid of the nineteenth century and during the Hamidian regime participated in the opposition movement against the reign of Abdülhamid II, outside the empire.

Thereby, the sons of mîr Bedirkhan, Mikdat Mithad and Abdurrahman, while having published the first Kurdish journal, *Kürdistan*, in 1898, collaborated with the Young Turks to bring the constitutional regime back.

Therefore as discussed in the third chapter of this thesis, the Second Constitutional Period was an era for the preparation of which the Kurdish intelligentsia actively participated. In line with this, the main aim of the Kurdish intelligentsia by founding the KTTC, immediately after the reproclamation of the constitution, was to make the Kurdish people aware of the favors of the new regime. With the reproclamation of the constitution, the Kurdish intellectuals envisaged a new regime based on equality among the citizens, equality in opportunities, fraternity, liberty, implementation of rule of law and also a decentralist way of governance. Thereby, the Kurdish intellectuals under consideration not only developed agendas for the Kurdish people, their ideas also encapsulated other Ottoman “citizens”: as the primary sources, both the archival documents and the publications of the Kurdish intelligentsia enabled us to discuss that, regarding the new regime as an opportunity, the Kurdish intellectuals took upon the responsibility in the name of the peoples of Anatolia. At the top of the list was the reconciliation of the relations between the Kurds and Armenians which became worse because of the attacks against the Anatolian Armenians and the usurpation of the Armenian lands’ by some Kurdish tribes. At this point the circle of the KTTC bore two main concerns: one the one hand, they tried to solve the injustices against the Armenians; and on the other hand, while the government of the CUP tried to realize its promise given to Armenian organizations regarding the elimination of injustices and cruelties

against Armenians, the Kurdish intellectuals paid attention that the CUP's solution would succeed in an acceptable and just way. Therefore, this situation demonstrates that the Kurdish, Armenian and official authorities collaborated for a brief time, especially between 1908 and 1909.

In the Kurdish locality the replies to the constitutional regime were not homogenous and at first it was perceived as an "agrarian issue," in other words the confrontations with the Armenians on the usurped Armenians' lands. The Kurdish intelligentsia in Istanbul, who were aware of this core fact, in the first place, triggered their agenda for the resolution of this issue; so the reforms on Kurdish language, history, culture came in the second place. Therefore, apart from the reconciliation with the Armenians, the KTTC, in order to provide both the reception of the constitutional regime and the delivery of their voices in the Kurdish geography, opened many branches in the Kurdish provinces. However, the replies of the Kurdish tribes were not homogenous, they changed according to their previous relations and privileges. On the one hand, the solution of the Armenian question meant the punishment of Hamidian tribes and the obligation to vacate the lands they had taken from the Armenians. Therefore, the restlessness among the Kurdish tribes led to some uprisings in the Kurdish locality, some tribes, the ones whose privileges were threatened, took a pro-Sultan role. At this point, the effects of the branches of the KTTC was questionable; although they can be regarded as having been a mean for the KTTC to consolidate the support for the new regime, their influences might have been minimal when the effectiveness of the Kurdish leaders in the locality are taken into consideration. Yet the Kurdish intelligentsia were also careful about the sensitiveness in the region. The most outstanding example was the views on the reforms on Tribal Cavalry: Seyyid Abdülkadir, for instance, proposed that the

ameliorations must be carried out smoothly to prevent the dramatic changes in the power relations in the Kurdish region. Opposed to negative reactions to the new regime, as the primary sources demonstrated, many tribes found their privileges in the cooperation with it. Accordingly, the reception of the new regime by the Kurdish tribes and how they regarded it as an opportunity for the Kurdish people were highly emphasized in the columns of the *KTTC*.

The belief in the new regime did not last long. By 1909, as shown in this thesis based on archival documents, because of the possible threat of the branches of the *KTTC* in Kurdish provinces, the branches were closed down and the Istanbul center had to dissolve the organization. Yet they continued their activities by opening the *KNMC* for the expansion of education and a Kurdish school in Istanbul; however these were not long-lived, either. Actually, hereupon, as I explained through the fourth chapter, the discourse of Kurdism started to be highlighted. With the foundation of *Hêvî* in 1912 the discourse of “Ottoman citizenry” was left behind and a compact agenda for the Kurdish renaissance was developed. In the fourth chapter of the thesis the parameters of this Kurdish renaissance were discussed through the analyses of the primary sources. The aim of the standardization of language, the focus on the importance of the printing, the usage of historical figures and history itself for the creation of “national consciousness” the emphasis on unity and collaboration by creating and consolidating social networks both among the Kurds in Istanbul and in the Kurdish region, and a revival in economic context were interpreted as the construction of a Kurdish national identity. This program was overtly expressed by Kurdish intellectuals, too. Being aware of the fact that almost all peoples worked for their nationalities they consciously tried to create a “national consciousness” among the Kurdish people.

Contrary to the generalization in the literature which overlooks the changes between two main organizations between 1908 and 1914 and focuses on the transformation between pre-WWI and post WWI eras, this part also demonstrated that the pre-WWI era could not have been homogenized as the ideas and agendas of the Kurdish intellectuals changed between 1908 and 1912, too. Therefore, a discursive analysis between the KTTC and Hêvî enabled us to see the discursive shift between the two organizations which is a significant point which has been generally undermined in the literature on Kurdish nationalism. Therefore, a comparism and contrast between the two principal organizations between 1908 and 1914 proves the argument that the discourse of Kurdistan became organized and “radicalized” from 1908 to 1912/13. As also revealed from the discussions of Kurdish intellectuals in the columns of the *Roj-i Kürd* and *Hetaw-i Kürd*, by 1912 the idea of nationalism emerged among the Kurdish intelligentsia who with their pens tried to reach the Kurdish people to spread their ideas and feelings.

Although the discourse of the era under consideration was far from a clear demand for separatism, as understood from the discussion in the columns of the journals of Hêvî, a way of governance based on autonomous units was envisaged. In addition to this, remembering the days of semi-autonomous emirates, or the famous dynasties with a great nostalgia and regarding the disunity among the Kurds as the most deteriorating factor also could be interpreted as the footprints of the emergence of a “Kurdish” movement. This thesis argued that the first seeds of this process corresponded to the time when the KTTC and KNMC were closed down. With Hêvî in 1912, a compact program for “Kurdism” was started to be developed.

As I tried to show in this thesis, the formations of the Kurdish discourse, the shift of focus between “Ottoman citizenry” and “Kurdism” went along with many



developments: the centralization policies of the CUP's government and its pressures on non-Turkish activities, the emergence of Turkist organizations like Türk Ocakları, the conflicts between Kurds and Armenians in Anatolia, the Balkan Wars, and so on. Therefore both as a reaction to the neighbor nationalities and, in the words of Abdullah Cevdet, as "the era was that of the nationalities" the footprints of Kurdish nationalism can be traced at least to 1912, as far as the discourse analysis of Hêvî enabled.

The present thesis explored the nature of the Kurdish movement until 1914, when the World War I erupted, Hêvî had to stop its activities as most of its members were enlisted into the military services. The last issue of *Hetaw-i Kürd* is dated to 3 July 1914. As explicated by Malmisanij, Hêvî reopened in 1919 and went on with its activities with its former founders and members.<sup>350</sup> However, during these years they also collaborated with Kürdistan Teâlî Cemiyeti.

Although the first seeds of the Kurdish movement emerged during the era of the Second Constitutional Period, the movement did not reach Kurdish people. At least within the limits of this study it could be arrived to such a conclusion. Yet the archives which enables a social history by looking at Kurdish locality could provide more detailed answer to the question that to what extent the attempts of Kurdish intelligentsia reached to and appropriated by Kurdish people. Remaining in the capital of the Empire, despite seeming as the choice of the Kurdish intellectuals, as shown in this thesis, the attempts of Kurdish intellectuals to go to the Kurdish region were also suspected by the official authorities. They were followed and prevented when was possible.

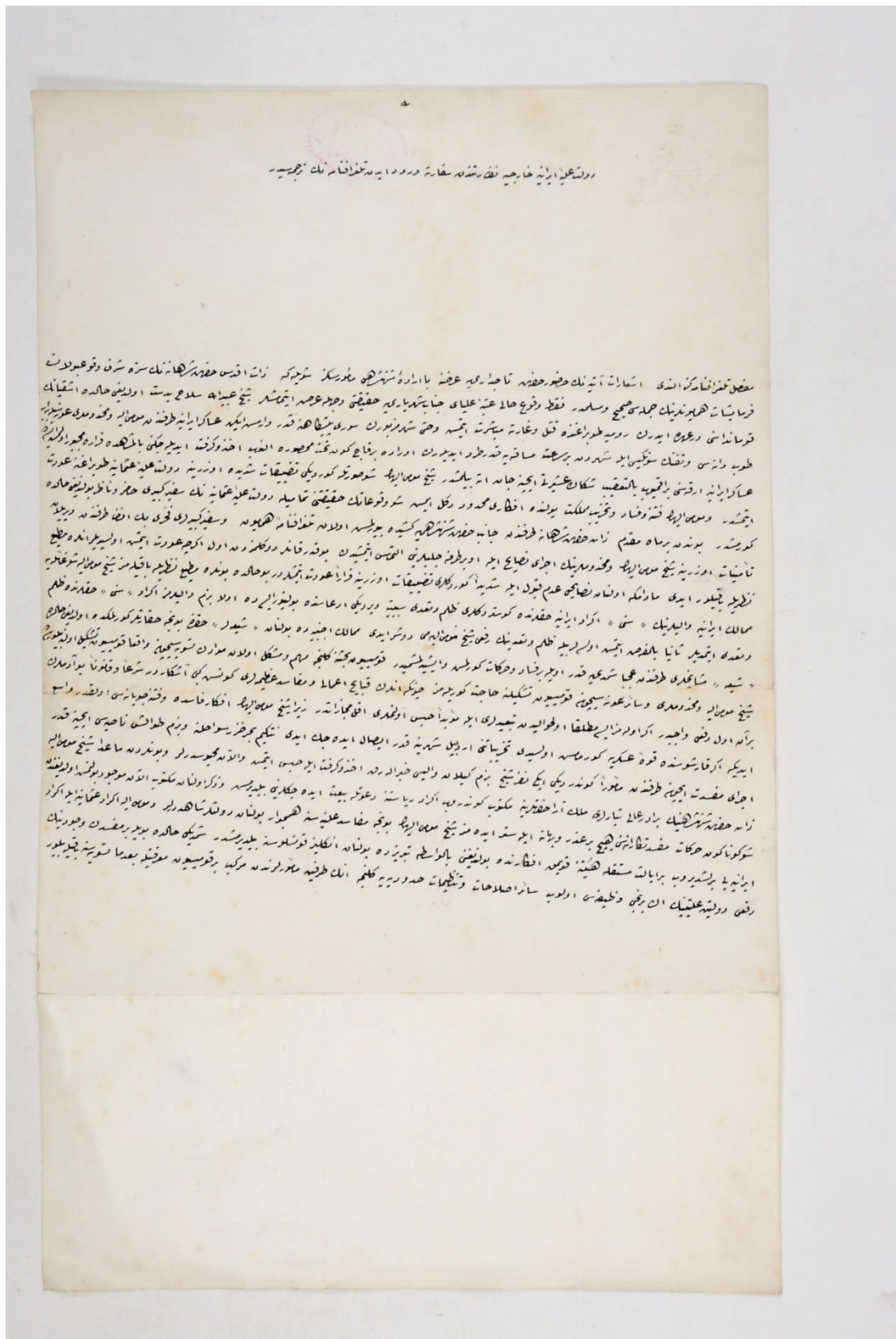
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<sup>350</sup> Malmisanij, *Kürt Talebe Hêvî Cemiyeti*...p. 63

As emphasized at the beginning this thesis explored the deeds and ideas of the Kurdish intelligentsia, its analysis was based on printed and published documents. Therefore, it did not have a much say about the daily encounters of Kurdish people; apart from the minute details in the journals under consideration and some archival documents which actually shed light on the micro encounters in the Kurdish locality I could not look at the broader picture of Kurdish region which depict opinion of common people on the issues which the Kurdish elite discussed. Therefore for future studies the archives present a manifold opportunities for researches in this issue.

# APPENDICES: SELECTED ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS

Appendix A: BOA. Y.PRK. EŞA 2/73/1298/Z/29 (22 November, 1881)



Devlet-i Aliyye-i İraniye'nin Hariciye Nezaretinden Sefarete vürud iden telgrafnamenin tercemesidir.

Mufassıl telgrafname (...) alındı. İşarat-ı Atiyenin huzur-u hazret tacdar (...) arzına ba-irade-i şahinşahi memursunuz. Şöyle ki zat-ı akdes hazret-i şahanemin şize şeref vuku' bulan ferma (...) hümayunlarının cümlesi (...) ve (...) Fakat vuku-u hal atıbe-i aliya-ı cenab-ı şehriyariye hakikati vechle arz etmişler. Şeyh Ubeydullah selah-ı bedest olduğu halde eşkiyanın kumandasını deruhde ederek Rusya toprağında katl ve garete mübaşeret etmiş ve hatta şehir-i mezburun sur-i (...) kadar varmış iken asker-i İraniye tarafından mumaileyh ve mahdumları (...) beraber top danesi ve tüfenk süngüsü ile şehirden bir saat mesafeye kadar tard edilerek orada birkaç gün taht (...) alınub ahz u girift edileceğini bilmişse de firara mecbur olmuşsa da asker-i İraniye arkasını bırakmayub bit-takib şikak aşireti içine can itebilmiştir. Şeyh mumaileyhin şu suretle gördüğü (...) şedide üzerine devlet-i aliye-i Osmaniye toprağına avdet etmiştir. Mumaileyh fitne ve fesat ve (...) memleket yolunda efkar-ı mahdud değil imiş. Şu vukuatın hakikatini tamamıyla devlet-i aliye-i Osmaniye'nin sefir ve kebir-i hazır ve nazır bulunduğu halde görmüştür. Bundan bir mah mukkadem zat-ı hazret-i şahane tarafından canib-i hazret-i şahinşahiye keşide buyurulmuş olan telgrafnameyi hümayun ve sefir-i kebirleri Fahri Bey efza tarafından verilen teminat üzerine Şeyh mumaileyh ve mahdumlarının icra-i fesaih ile öbür tarafa celblerini iltimas etmiştik. Bu kadar kanlar dökülmezden evvel eğerce avdet etmiş olsaydılar onlara (...) Nasturilere bakılır idi. Madem ki olunan fesaih adem-i kabul ile şediden gördükleri (...) üzerine firaren avdet etmişlerdir. Bu halde bunlara (...) Nasturilere bakılmaz. Şeyh mumaileyh ile şu gaileye Memalik-i İraniye valilerinin "Sene" ekrad-ı İraniye haklarında gösterdikleri zulm ve (...) sebebiyet verdiği idiasında bulunuyor ise de evvela bizim valimiz ekrad-ı "Sene" haklarında zulm ve (...) etmediler. Saniyen bi-l farz etmiş olsalar bile zulm ve teadinin defi' Şeyh mumaileyhe mi düşar idi? Memalik-i ecnebiyede bulunan "sayeler" hakkında bunca hakaretler görülmekte olduğu halde "saye" meşayihleri tarafından acaba şimdiye kadar öyle bir fesad ve hareket görülmüş ve işidilmiş midir? Komisyon tahtına gelince mühim ve müşkil olan (...) tesviyesince vaka-i komisyon olunabiliyor ise de Şeyh mumaileyh ve mahdumları vesair (...) komisyon teşkiline hacet görülemez. Çünkü onların (...) amalı ve mekasıd-ı azimleri güneş gibi aşikârdır. Şeriyen ve kanunen bu adamların biran evvel defi' vacibdir. Eğer olamaz ise mutlaka mutlaka olhavaliden tebidleri ile müebbeden habis olunmaları akl-ı mücazattır. Zira Şeyh mumaileyh efkâr-ı fesade ve fitne cevyanesi ol kadar vasi etdiği eğer karşusunda kuvve-i askeriye görmemiş olsaydı tahribatını Erdebil şehrine kadar isal edecek idi. nitekim bahr-ı hazar sevahiline ve Tevaleş nahiyesi içine kadar icra-i mefsedet için tarafından memuren gönderdiği iki Nehri şeyh bizim Geylan valisi haber alarak ahz ve girift ile habs etmiş ve alan mahpusdurlar ve bunlardan maada Şeyh mumaileyh zat-ı hazret-i şahinşahinin birader-i ali (...) mülk-ü ara hazretlerine mektub gönderub ekrad davetiyle biat edeceklerini bildirmiş. Ve zikr olunan mektub alan mevcud bulunmuş olduğundan şu güna gun hareket-ı mevsedetkarane (...) hiçbir özür ve bahane ile (...) edemez. Şeyh mumaileyh bunca mefased-i aleneye hembedar bulunan devletler

şahiddirler. Ve mumaileyh ekrad-ı Osmaniye ile ekrad-ı iraniye-yi birleştürub bir eyalet-i müstakile heyetine koymak efkarında bulunduğunu bil vasıta Tebrizde bulunan İngiliz konsolosuna bildirmiştir. Şimdiki halde böyle bir mefsedin vücudunun defî devletin aletinin en birinci vazifesi olub sair ıslahat ve tanzimat hududiyeye gelince anın tarafeyn memurlarından mürekkeb bir komisyon marifetiyle badema tesviyesine bakılabiliyor.

۴

از بمباده در دین اقلی الهیانه منبذ ناقض شده صریح نظرته وارد شده

۶ و در این باب ناکو شرفه با نظر اقلی منبذ صریح

صورت

شیخ آدمی محمود آرد که سیم کوار و حیوانه گرفته شده بر آرد علم نظره بجای درونه کیدارک شیخ جعفری  
ریخته تکیه اید که درنده مرمونه رفته اولیفته اکادمیقه ایملی جوی ادره عودت اید که در  
و ابراهیم ایل مصالحه ایملی و دولت علیه علیه جوی و دره شیخ ایلانده نام و آدم کلیدی و یفته قد  
کردستانه ضبط ایملی گرفته بولیش و یفته مظفری راهبر ایل روسیه ایل مجاهد سنجای قلیش همایه  
فاحفا ملینک انجاری مندر فاشده شیخ اولیده آدمی مرمونه کلین ایلده موافقه ایملی بولیده  
فاحفا ملینک انجاری مندر فاشده شیخ اولیده آدمی مرمونه کلین ایلده موافقه ایملی بولیده

فکاری و یفته شدی انجاری تفراف صورتی عیناً بالای یازدی شیخ بونده بایه اولانه افکار  
و معملات مقارنه ایملی اولیفته ملول ایلده ابراهیم و روسیه بولیده مجاهد سنجای قلیش اولو صحتی مقفیض  
ایلم کامل بکاف عودت درنده اکلاسیه صفتی و در حال محضره و بایه حقیقه حال قدر صفتی مرمونه

اصول و نظریه  
عمر و حیات  
حج

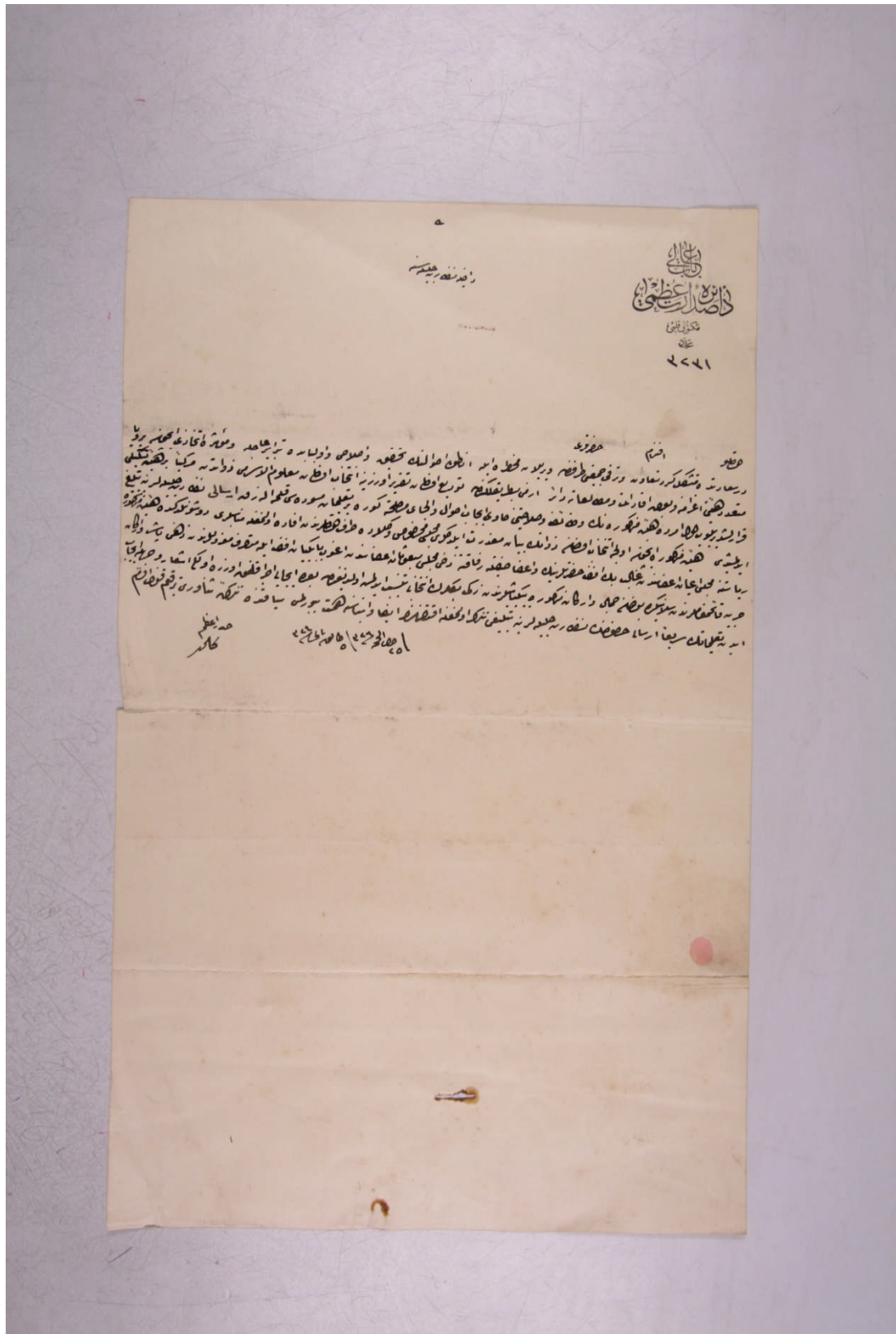
Erzincan'da Dördüncü Orduyu Hümayun Müşiri Nafız Paşa'dan Harbiye Nezareti'ne Varid olan Fi 6 Eylül 98 tarihlu telgrafnamenin suretidir.

#### Suret

Şeyh'in adamı Mahmud (...) Gevar ve Şemdinan taraflarından birer adamla Nasturi kabâili (...) giderek Şeyh'e ta'abiyetlerini reislerine teklif eylediklerinden, Mar Şamon reisleri olduğundan ana müracaat etmeleri cevabını alarak avdet eyledikleri ve İran ile müsalaha itmek ve devlet-i aliye aleyhinde bulunmak üzere şeyhe İran'dan name ve adam geldiği ve Bağdad'a kadar Kürdistanı zabt etmek azminde bulunduğu ve bazı (...) dahile ile Rusya ile muharebesi istihbar kılındığı İmadiye Kaymakamlığının işar-ı mündericatından ve Şeyhin o yolda adamları Mar Şamon'a gelmiş ise de muvafakat eylemediği Colemerik Kaymakamlığının işarından anlaşıldığı maruzdur. Fi 6 Eylül 98

Hakkari Vilayetinden şimdi alınan telgraf sureti aynen balaya yazıldı. Şeyhin bunda beyan olunan efkar ve muamelatı (...) olacağı memul ise de İran ve Rusyalularla muharebesi gayr-ı muhtemel olur. Sıhhati Mustafa Naim Paşa ile Kamil Bey'in avdetlerinde anlaşılacağı ve derhal arz ve beyan hakikat-ı hal kılınacağı maruzdur.

Document 1:





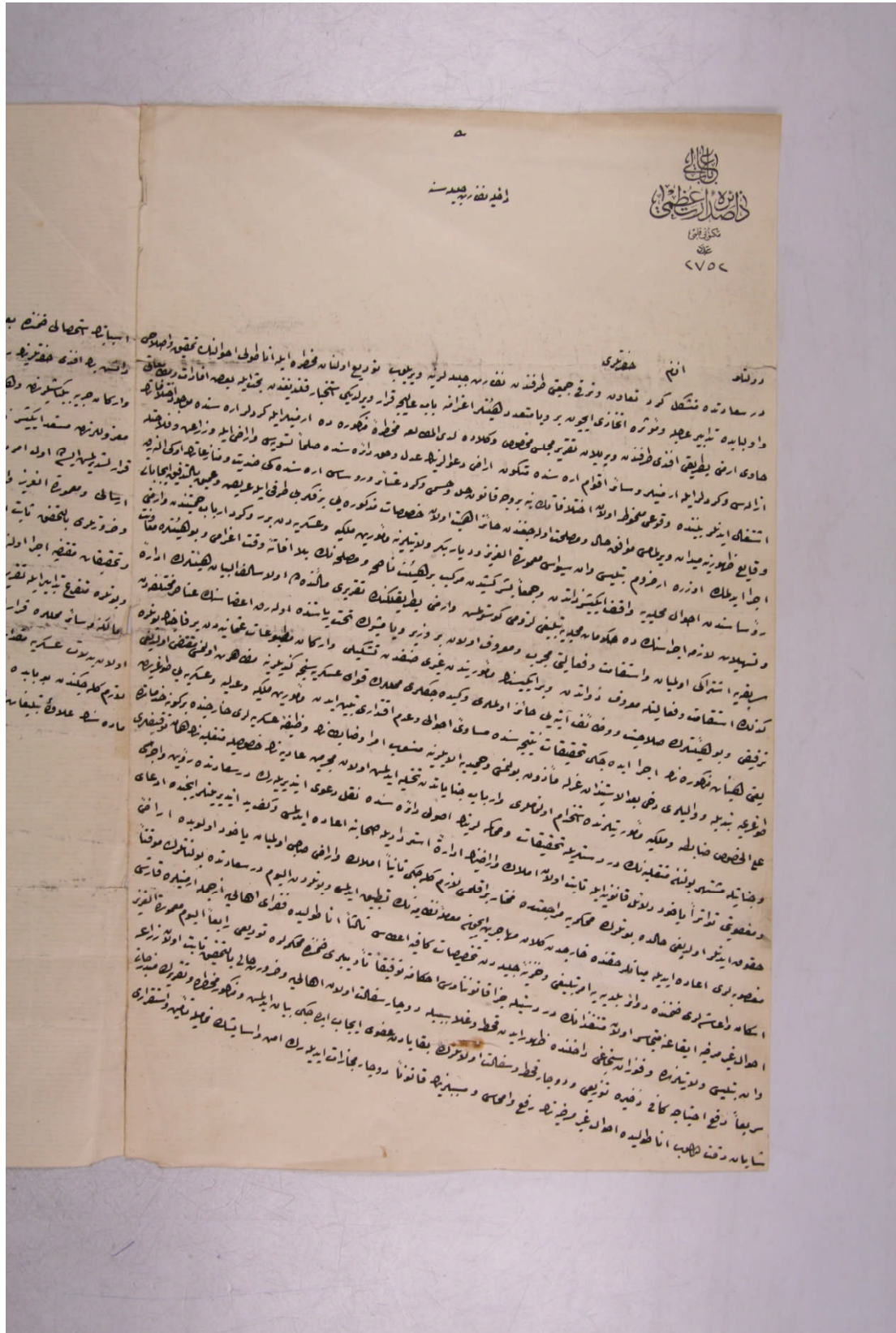
Dahiliye Nezareti Celilesine

Devletlü, Efendim Hazretleri,

Dersaadet'te müteşekkıl Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti tarafına verilen muhtıra ile Anadolu ahvalinin tahkik ve ıslahı ve ol babda tedabir-i acile ve müessere ittihazı için bir veya müteadid heyet iğramına ve ifadata ve müta'alata dair Ermeni patrikliğine tevdi' olunan takrir üzerine intihab olunan malum-ül esamı zevatdan mürekkeben bir heyet teşkili kararlaştırılub ol emirde heyet-i mezkurenin vezaif ve salahiyetine havi icab-ı ahval ve'l ca'yı (...) göre bir talimat müsveddesi kaleme alınarak irsali nezareti celilerine tebliğ edilmişdi. Heyeti mezkure için evvelce intihab olunan zevatın beyan-ı ma'zeret eyledikleri Meclis-i Mahsusa-i vükelada taraf-ı devletlerinden ifade olunmağla münasipleri düşünöldükte, heyet-i mezkure riyasetine Meclis-i Ayan azasından Galip beyefendi hazretlerinin ve aza sıfatıyla refakatine dahi Meclis-i Mebusan azasından Agop Babgiyan efendi ile mutasarrıf (...) Zihni paşa ve Erkan-ı Harbiye Kaymakamlarından Selanik'te bulunan Cemal ve Erkan-ı mezkure binbaşlarından Zeki beğlerin intihaba (...) idilmiş olduğunda badehû icab-ı icra kılınmak üzere evvelki işar vechiyle icab eden talimatın serîen irsali hususunun nezareti celilerine tebliği tezakir olunmağla akdolunan ifa ve ebnasına himmet buyrulması siyakatında tezakir-i senaveri terkım kılına efendim.

Fi 25 Zilhicce 326/ 5 Kanun-i sani 1324

Sadrızam, Kamil



[illegible]

## Dahiliye Nezaret -i Celilesine

Devletlü, Efendim Hazretleri;

Dersaadetde müteşkil Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti tarafından Nezaret-i Celilelerine verilip tevdi' olunan muhtıra ile Anadolu ahvalinin tahkik ve ıslahı ve ol babda tedabir-i acele ve müessire ittihazı için bir veya müteadid heyetler igrasına Bab-ı aliyece karar verildiği istihbar kılındığından bahs ile bazı ifadat ve mutala'ata havi Ermeni Patriki Efendi tarafından verilen takrir-i Meclis-i Mahsus-u Vükelada led-el müta'ala muhtıra-i mezkurede Ermeniler ile Kürdler arasında mevcut ihtilafatın izalesi ve Kürdler ile Ermeniler vesaire akvam arasında mütekevvin Ermeni davalarının adil ve hak dairesinde salimen tesviyesi ve arazi ile ve ziraat ve felahatla istifal edenler beyninde vuku' mahut olan ihtilafatın yine bit vech-i kanun-i hal ve hasmi Kürd aşair ve rüesası arasındaki zıddiyet ve münazaatın önü alınarak vakai' zuhuriyete meydan verilmemesi muvafık hal ve maslahat olacağından haiz-i ehhemiyet olan hususat-ı mezkureyi bir fıkır bi-tarifi ile ariz ve amik bit-tedfik icabatı icra edilmek üzere Erzurum, Bitlis, Van, Sivas, Mamuret'ülâiz, Diyarbekir vilayetlerine memuriyet-i mülkiye ve askeriyeden birer ve Kürd erbab-ı hamiyetinden ve Ermeni rüesasından ahvali mahalliye vakıf ikişer zatdan ve camian beşer kişiden mürekkep bir heyet nasiha ve maslaha bila ifate vakit igranı ve bu heyetlere muavenet ve teshilat-ı lazıme icrasının da hükümet-i mahalliye tebliği lüzumu görülmüş ve Ermeni Patrikliği'nin takriri mealinde olan salef'ül-beyan heyetlerin irade-i şerifiyye iştiraki olmayan ve istikamet ve faaliyeti mücerreb ve maruf olan bir vezir veya müşirin taht-ı riyasetinde olarak azasının anasır-ı muhtelifeden keزالik istikamet ve faaliyetle maruf zevatdan ve bir ikisinin memuriyetden gayri sınıftan teşkili ve erkan-ı matbuat-ı Osmaniye'den birkaçının bunlara terfiki ve bu heyetlerin salahiyet ve vezaif-i atiyeye haiz olmaları ve gidecekleri mahallerin kuvveyi askeriyesince kendilerine mezahiret olunması muktezi olduğu (...) Heyat-ı mezkurenin icra edeceği tahkikat neticesinde mesavi-i ahvali ve adem-i iktidarı tebeyyün eden memurin-i mülkiye ve adliye ve askeriyye (...) tebdil ve valileri dahi bade'l istizan gırla mezun bulunması ve Hamidiye Alaylarına mensub ümera ve zabitanın vezaifi askeriyeleri haricinde bir güne hidematda alelhusus zabıta ve mülkiye memuriyetlerinde istihdam olunmamaları ve erbab-ı cinayetden tahliye edilmiş olan mücremin-i adiyenin hususıyla mütekallibinin heman tevkifleri ve cinayetleri müştehir bulunan mütekallibinin derdestleriyle tahkikat ve (...) ahvali dairesinde nakl-i dava ittirilerek Dersaadet'de rüyet ve icrası ve (...) tevâtüren yahud delail-i kanun ile sabit olan emlakın ve arazinin idareten istirdad ile sahabete iade idilmesi ve kefil ittirenler içinde idia-ı hukuk idenler olduğu halde bunların mahkemeye müracatda muhtar bırakılması lazım geleceği saniyen emlak ve arazi sahibi olmayan yahud olubda arazi-i mağsube iade edilemeyenler hakkında hariciden kemalen muhâciret için muamele-i nizamiyenin tatbik idilmesi ve bunlardan elyevm Dersaadet'de bulunanların muvakkaten iskân ve aşarları hususunda devair-i belediyeye emr-i tebliği ve Hazine-i



Celileden tahsisat-ı kafiye itası. Sülâsen, Anadolu'da fukarâ-yı ahaliyi ezcümle Ermenilere karşı ahval-i gayrı (...) ikaza mütecasir olan (...) derdestle ceza kanununamesi ahkamına tevfikaten te'dibleri zımnında mahkumlara tevdi. Rabienel yevm Mamuretülaziz, Van, Bitlis vilayetlerinde ve Kozan sancağı dahilinde zuhur iden kaht û gala sebebiyle düçar-ı sefalet olan ahaliye ve zaruret hali bit-tahkik sabit olan zira'a seriyen def'i ihtiyaca kafi zahire tevzi' ve düçar-ı kaht ve sefalet olanların bakayadan affvı icab edeceği beyan edilmiş ve mezkur muhitde takririn mündericatı şayan-ı dikkat olub Anadolu'da ahvalı gayrı (...) refi' ve imhası ve müsebeblerinin kanunen düçar-ı mücazat edenlerin emin ve asayişin tamamıyla temin ve istikrarı esbabatın istihsalı zımnında bazı vilayata Heyet-i teftişîye ve ıslahiye tayin ve igrâmı zaten mutasavver bulunmuş olduğundan Selatin Vilayeti Valisi atufetlu Daniş Bey Efendi Hazretlerinin riyasetinde olarak azası Konya mektubcusu Süleyman Nazif Bey ile Beyoğlu bidayet Mahkemesi azası mahkemesinden Diran Efendiden ve erkan-ı Harbiye binbaşlarından Vehib Bey ile dördüncü orduda müstahdem Erkan-ı Harbiye kol ağalarından Fahredin Efendi'den mürekkeb olmak ve refakatlarında muhasebeci ve mal müdiri ma'zullarına müstaid ikişer zat bulunmak ve gittikleri mahallerde ahval-i mahalliyeye vakıf birer de katib istihdam olunmak üzere bir heyet teşkiliyle mahaline igrâmı kararlaştırılmış ise de evvel emrde heyet-i mezkurenin vezaif ve salahiyetini mübeyyen icab-ı ahval ve-l cay maslahata göre bir talimat müsveddesi kaleme alınarak (...) irsali ve Mamuretülaziz, Van ve Bitlis Vilayetleriyle Kozan sancağında kaht u gala sebebiyle düçar-ı sefalet oldukları mezkur takirde beyan olunan ahaliye ve zaruretlere bit tahkik sabit olan zirai zahire tevzii ve bunların bakayadan affvı madeleri muhtac-ı tahkik (...) görüldüğünden bu babda dahi mahaller ile muhabere ve tahkikat-ı mukteziye icra olunarak cidden muhtaç-i muavenet olanların tayin miktarı ile beraber bunlara ne suretle muavenet icrası mümkün ve muktezi bulunduğunun ve bunlara (...) tedabir ile takrir-i mezkurun memnu olduğu sair mevade mütealîk mülâhazatın ebnası hususlarının taraf-ı devletlerine tebliği mukadema-i malikine vesair mahallere karar ederek aff-umumiye üzerine memleketlerine avdet eden Ermenilere ait olub kendilerinin memleketlerinde bulunmamaları hasebiyle tahsil olunamamış olan bedelat-ı askeriye mikdar (...) istifasına teşbis olunması bunları (...) ziyade tazyik edeceği cihetle bundan dolayı kendilerinin sıkışdırılmaması lazımlı geleceğinden bu baba da dahi heyet-i mezkurece icab eden tedkifat ve muamelat ifa olunmak üzere kaleme alınarak talimata kuyud-u lazımlenin derci madesinin ilave-i tebligat edilmiş tezkir kılınmağla bir veche tezkir mukteziyatının ifa ve ebnasına (...) buyurulması siyakatda tezkire-i senaveri terkim kılına efendim.

Fi 13 Zilkade 326 ve fi 25 Teşrin-i sani 324

Sadrâzam

بنا در تمانده ه همدست اخوت اولين سلطت و سعادت آيت مرآت يکونه بر لایزاله الصم سلسله شرمالده اتحاد  
 جوييد جبهه مفرانه ه حکومت عثمانیه هم او مفرانه ه عامه اولين مملکت شرائط مجبوس کوزه دلتک شرط افکند  
 طرزه محلي صفوق استايزل محلي س نيله صورت اختلاف ايه بله هم بر حاله دکتدر بود قیفر کوزه دلتک  
 اميد و انتظار اولنه خانه لر برينه حصول مقصد محقق بر لونه شيخ سعید افندي و ديکاي اهرابري سونه ؛  
 بر صوفه نظر کرده حريت بر لفظي مال اولن اوزره تانق اولن شيخ سعید افندي عليه ه کی تصورانه فردا فکرم  
 موقع قبضه قوتونه عدالت هدف سوا نقیه اولن بر حسب اعتبار و برونه بره برقت اواره قارونه  
 معای مقبف حريت صورت اوزان انهمه اولن بر حسب اعتبار و برونه بره برقت اواره قارونه  
 بولند يری جائز اولن کرکدر حکومت سینه هم حاله و معلوم جاره شرط سلسله ساجه سوارده استه دار  
 قهرکه اولن سینه مه و لوتفا فدی بر سوسيه برود مری ازاله اسباب حسن اخوتی تانیه اقباله بر لوتفا  
 دار مطالع و اعیانه می کیه کونک عریفه مضموم عرصه و تشریح انهمه اولن فیه تکراری زاده در انجه  
 دورا سجاد و به بری او صوالیده بر نفعه اولن متصرف و قوه انزول حاله و حق ماضی تاثر لرنه به رعایا ب  
 اولر مه جفاری و توجیه به بله ه حرکات و مفرانه ه از صوفه بر ناظر طه فکری استار موجود بر لونه  
 لازم کله جان دار و طر اولن فیه تانیه بر تقیه میانده اولره و اولر الک امتزجه محلي سیر قابل  
 صن اختلاف اولر بله هم ماموریه سلسله و انضباطیه انتخاب و اساری لزوم و به بقدر لفظ اعطاء انشی  
 صرمالده مضموم ای زریه احاطه قریبه قیاب صدایا قهریدر تصدیق اوردن نامه عقیقه و لایزاله  
 الد محمد  
 حج علیه السلام زاده  
 سید محمد القادر

İttihad-ı Osmani'de hidmet-i ahvet olmak selâmet ve saadet artırmaz için bir lazıme-i ehemmiyet siyasetdir. şu halde ittihaz buyrulacak mukarreratda Hükümet-i Osmaniyece o mukarreratın aid olduğu mahalin şerait-i muhitiyesi gözetilmek şart-ı eazımdır. Taşra muhiti safveti İstanbul muhit-i medeniyetiyle henüz i'tilaf edebilecek bir halde değildir. Bu dakikalar gözetilmezse ümid ve intizar olunan faideler yerine husul muzıret muhakkaktır Bugün Şeyh Said efendinin dediği icra buyrulsun! Birçok nazarlarda hürriyet bir lafz-ı bi meal olmak üzere telaki olunur. Şeyh Said Efendi aleyhindeki tasvirat fırka-i muhtelif mevkî-i tatbîke konulsun. Adalet hedef-i sûi tefsir olarak bundan İslamiyetce de bazı sû-i tesirler ihtimali baş gösterir. Mânâ-i hakikat-ı hürriyeti henüz idrak etmemiş olan bir heyet-i ictimaiyenin böyle birdenbire bir teşettüt-ü idare karşısında bulundurulması caiz olması gerektir. Hükümeti seniyece halen ve müsalahat-ı çare-i şart-ı selamet ise mâ-sabık sû-i irade-i istibdadî herkese unutturmak ve bu nifakları, bu sevimsiz (...) izale ile esbab-ı hüsn-ü itilafı temin etmektir. Bu gibi hususata dair mutalaat daiyanemi geçen günkü arife-i mahsusada arz ve teşrih etmiş olduğundan tekrarı zaidir. Ancak devr-i istibdaddan beri o havalide bulunmakta olan mutasarrıf ve kumandanların halen dahi mazi tesirlerden rehayab olamayacakları ve şu halde bu babda hareket ve mukarreratda az çok bir tesir-i tarafgiri istibdad mevcud bulunmak lazım geleceği varid-i hatır olduğundan tedabir-i muktezai meyanında oralarda ve oraların (...) mahalliyesiyle kabil minitilaf olabilecek memurin siyasiye ve inzibatiye intihab ve (...) lüzumıda başka nazar-ı imane alınması her halde merhun rey-i rezin isabet-i karin cenab-ı sadaret penahileridir. Olbabda emru ferman hazretülelemrindir.

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Şeyh Ubeydeullah Efendizade Seyyid Abdülkadir





Kanun-i Esasinin hukukunca tehdid ettiği müsâvât ve adalet esasına istinaden sa'adeti umumiyeye bir devr-i cedid olan şu zamanda uhdemize müterettib vazife istibdadın (...) menafi' zatiye-i gayr-ı meşruiye mütenebbi bulunan (...) ve ihtilafatın bi'l külli ref'iyle Memalik-i Osmani'de mevcut bilcümle milel ve cemaat arasında muhadenet-i samimi ve hüsn-ü muaşeret-i kaviyyenin teyid olmasına (...) mesaidin ibaret olmasına ve cümle Kürdlerle Ermenilerin menafi min' el kadim yek diğerine merbut bulunmak hasebiyle bu iki kavim arasında her kötü menafenin izalesi ciddi bir muhazatın vücudu vatanın selametince ve her iki kavmin saadetince muktezi görülmesine binaen bu vucub ahiren Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyetiyle, Taşnakyun Fırkası tarafından nazır-ı imana ve ehemmiyete alınarak ve vezaif-i merbutenin mütehadden ve elbirliğiyle ifası, cemiyet-i mezkuriyetince yekdiğerine karşı kararlaştırıldı. Ve şu suretle iki kavmin menafi' müşterekesinin muhafazası ve terakiyat-ı medeniyelerine muhtaç oldukları esbab ve vesâilin istikmali (...) olmağla ve şu vezaifle mükellef olmak üzere vilayatü'l (...) kaza ve nevahide tarafından müntehib muhtelit cemiyetlerin teşkili dahi mutasavver bulunmağla hasıl olan şu itilaf ve ittihadın tamamıyla semere-i tahsin olması için senelerinde kemal-i safvet-i vicdan ile bit-terim şu mesaimizi teshîl için yekdiğere tearuzatdan ve'lhasıl Kanun-i Esasi ihkamete menafi hareketdan tevki eylemeleri sevgili vatan-ı mukaddesimiz namına olarak rica eyleriz.

Mühür: Kürd Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti



## Dahiliye Nezaret -i Celilesine

Devletlu, Efendim, Hazretleri

Kürtlerin birtakım makâsıd gayr-ı mâlûme üzerine ötede beri de ictimâ ederek mahiyeti henüz meçhul bir fikrin tamim ve tevsie çalıştıkları cümle-i istihbaratandır. Mübalağadan hatalı olmadığına kanaat mevcut olmağla beraber gerek hal-i firarda bulunan ve gerek vilayat-ı mâlûmede mevcut rüesa-ı aşâirin irade-i cedideye karşı bir hareket-i irticaiyeye yeltenmek arzusunda bulundukları his olunmaktadır. Vukudan korku bulan hareket Ermenilere karşı olmayarak sırf Hükümet-i Osmaniye'ye karşı bir kıyam şeklinde zuhur etmiş mütehammil görünmektedir. Bu maksadın mütereddib ve (...) mezunen Şemdinan'da bulunan ayandan Abdülkadir Efendinin olması edilen tahkikattan (...) istidlal olunmaktadır. Pederleri Şeyh Ubeydullah'ın vaktiyle takip eylediği meslek meydanda ve mesukda en ziyade bu Abdülkadir Efendi olduğu o zamanın ahvaline itilamı olanlarca malumdur. İran ekradıyla Memalik-i Osmaniye'deki Ekradı birleştirerek fikr-i batılınca bir Kürdistan hükümeti veyahud muhtariyetle idare edülür bir Kürdistan kıtası teşkil etmek ve bit-tab riyaseti de kendüsüne olunmak gaye-i emelidir. Buraya geldiğinde ittihad-ı anasıra hadim olmak üzere zat-ı devletlerinden almış olduğu talimat mucebince rüyesa-i aşâiri celb edilmiş ve suret-i zahirede meşrutiyetin mahasin ve kavaidiyetiyle ve ittihad-ı anasırın lüzum ve menafına dair ve haya-i icra itti ise de rüesa-i mezkure ile müzakerat-ı hafiyesi anlaşılınmamakla beraber gayretimizden sonra rüyesa-i efkarının husule gelen tebeddülât bu müzâkeratın bir maksud-u hayre matuf olmadığını göstermiş idi. Sıhhatinin pek de tasdik etmemek şartıyla İstanbul avdetini müteakip burada tevkil eylediği kendi akrabasından Şeyh Mahmud Efendizade Şahabeddin ve Mehmed Efendilerin müşarünileyten aldıkları talimat dairesinde hareket ederek bir fesad îkadına çalışacakları ve nevahi-i cedide ve Savuçbulaktaki ekrad-ı İraniyenin dahi kendilerine muzâherette bulunacakları muhtelif menabdan tersih eylemektedir. Şemdinan kaymakam ve naibi bu zatın tevsile ve iltimasıyla tayin idilmiş mensubiyetten olduklarından ve zaten kaza-i mezkurede bulunan memurinin cümlesi hevah ve na-hevah bu aileye (...) göstermeye mecbur olduğundan kaza-i mezkur ahvalinden hakkıyla haberdar olmak vilayetçe gayr-ı mümkündür. Şemdinan'da bulunduğu müddet zarfında İranda ve etraftan birçok rüesa ve meşayih nevidene gelerek müzakerat-ı hafiyede bulundukları ve dahi Barzan Şeyh Mahud ile öteden berü ailece beyinlerinde adavet olduğu halde o dahi hafiyen oraya gelerek musalaha eyledikleri ve İran'da bulunan firari paşalara da muhaberatta bulunarak ilticalarına muhanette bulunduğu söylenmektedir. Bura Kürdi (...) mübalağaya teba meyal olduklarından maruzat-ı çakeranemnin ve bu yolda ki bir çok işaat ve işaazatın tamamıyla (...) kanaat hasıl olmuyor ise de Abdülkadir Efendinin bir fikr-i selim eshabından olmadığını tatkike de tereddüde mahal göremiyorum. Vuku'u melhuz bu fenalıklara şimdiden tedabir-i seriye-i ittihazıyla fikirlerinin kuvveden faale çıkmasına (...) sed-i hail çekilmesi elzemdir. Nezd-i nezaretpenahilerinde (...) olduğu halde üç dört gün evvel Hakkari ve Gevara bir birlik sevk olduğu gibi Şemdinan'a da biran evvel elcay-ı mal ile münasib kuvve-

i kaffe-i askeriye gönderilmesi muvafak-ı musallahat olur. Mezunen Dersaadetde bulunan Şemdinan kaymakamıyla naibinin behem mal başka bir vilayete nakilleriyle oraya miktar(?), cesur bir kaymakam ile bir naibin tayini ve Civarolan kazasında ibraz-ı faaliyet edemeyen ve orayı idare edemeyeceği halinden anlaşılan Gevar kaymakamının da başka bir yere nakliyle kaza-i mezkure gayret ve meşrutiyete merbutiyeti (...) vilayat tahsilat müdürü Recep Efendinin tayinine müsaade buyurulmuş müsterhim. Vilayetin selamet ve saadet ve müstakbelesini her dürlü tehlikeden (...) bırakmak üzere ve civarları idare-i sabıkada birer bela ve idare-i celiledemizde birer çıyan olan birkaç reisin Kürdistan'dan (...) vilayetine maaleyh nakl ve iskanlarının hükümetçe taht-ı karara alınması derece-i vücubda bulunduğu maruzdur. Olbabada emr-ü ferman hazret-i min-el emrindir.

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