FEMININITY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF KURDISH NATIONALIST DISCOURSE IN THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

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Thesis Abstract

Emine Rezzan Karaman, "Femininity within the Context of Kurdish Nationalist Discourse in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries"

This thesis discusses femininity within the context of Kurdish nationalist discourse developed in the late Ottoman and early Republican period. A significant part of the study concentrates on the analysis of four Kurdish-Ottoman publications (*Kurdistan, Jîn, Hetaw-i Kurd, Roj-i Kurd*); each being representative of contradictory political stances and displaying the fragmented nature of the Kurdish intelligentsia who played an important role in the center-periphery relationship. My objective is, firstly, to deconstruct the meta-narratives imposed by traditional historical understanding by looking at history from below, by looking at the center from the periphery, from the perspective of a marginalized community which was deprived of being the subject of history and left in the shadows; and secondly, to adopt an approach which calls us to see the relationship between power and representation and accordingly, how those who hold power became the main historical actors while those deprived of power were turned into objects without a history to speak of.

With the same motivation, the thesis also examines how the Western/non-Western societies put the other(s) under erasure when they constructed concepts like nationalism, feminism or human rights; how the West assumed its constructions as "universal" and the critiques raised against this assumption from different parts of "the Third World", particularly India; how the Kurds who lost their autonomy exteriorized the state and its discourses to make comparisons, putting a distance between themselves and Armenians, Turks, Arabs and Greeks; how different and peculiar the Kurdish nationalist discourse was from the Western-oriented "universal" nationalisms; and how the active/passive roles taken by Kurdish women as "the symbols of the nation and modernization" were developed.

Tez Özeti

Emine Rezzan Karaman, "Ondokuzuncu Yüzyıl Sonu – Yirminci Yüzyıl Başında Gelişen Kürt Milliyetçi Diskurundaki Feminen Unsurlar"

Bu çalışma, Osmanlı son döneminde ve Cumhuriyet' in kuruluş yıllarında gelişen Kürt milliyetçi söyleminde Kürt kadınına biçilen rol dolayısıyla yer etmiş feminen unsurları tartışmaktadır. Tezin önemli bir kısmı, merkez-çeper ilişkisinde kilit rol oynayan Kürt entelijansiyasının parçalı yapısını, birbiriyle çelişen politik duruşları temsil eden makaleleriyle gözler önüne seren dört Kürtçe-Osmanlıca yayının (*Kürdistan, Jîn, Hetaw-i Kürd, Roj-i Kürd*) analizine dayanmaktadır. Amaçlanan; tarihin öznesi olmaktan uzak kalmış, marjinalleştirilmiş, gölgede bırakılmış bir cemaatin tarafında durarak ve aşağıdan yukarıya, çeperden merkeze doğru bakıp geleneksel tarih anlayışının dayattığı metaneratifler ezberini bozmak; güç ve temsiliyetin arasındaki paralelliği görerek iktidara sahip olanın tarihte aktör oluşu ve bu iktidardan yoksun olanın tarihsizleştirildiğinin farkında olmaya çağıran bir yaklaşımı benimsemekti.

Bu tez aynı motivasyonla; Batı ve Batı dışı toplumların milliyetçilik, feminizm, insan hakları gibi kurgularında kendi dışında kalan "diğer-ler-i"ni sessiz bir referans noktası haline getirişini, özellikle Batının kendi kurgularını evrensel kabul edişi ve öncelikle Hindistandan sonrasında Üçüncü Dünyanın farklı noktalarından yükselen eleştirileri; sahip oldukları otonomiyi kaybeden Kürtlerin devleti ve devletin ürettiği söylemleri dışsallaştırarak Ermeniler, Türkler, Araplar ve Rumlardan kendilerini uzaklaştırıp karşılaştırmalar yapmasını; Kürt milliyetçi söyleminin Batı-merkezli, "evrensel" milliyetçiliklerden farkını-öznelliklerini; Kürt kadınlarının "ulusun ve modernleşme düzeyinin sembolü" haline getirilişi sürecinde üstlendikleri aktif ve pasif rolleri tartışmıştır.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

The last few decades have witnessed a feminist "knowledge explosion" in the West with the spread of feminist scholarship. As Klaus Kreiser[1] puts it, although the history of Ottoman women has started to be explored very recently, an important literature has been created.[2] Even though these stories of "chaste wives", of "obedient daughters- in-law", of "honorable daughters", of "chaste sisters" and of "loyal-to-husband/father/brother = loyal-to-nation" women are very similar for Kurdish and other Middle Eastern women, the Kurdish part of the story has always remained in the shadows.

Though the period of dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and the roles women had to shoulder during this period have been studied extensively by historians in Turkey, there is still a

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[1] Klaus Kreiser, "Women in the Ottoman World: A Bibliographical Essay", *Islam and Christian- Muslim Relations*, 13, no.2 (April 2002), pp. 197-206.

[2] For some examples see Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi,* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1993), Aynur Demirdirek, *Osmanlı Kadınlarının Hayat Hakkı Arayışının Bir Hikayesi* (Ankara: İmge Yayınevi, 1993), Zehra Toska, Serpil Çakır, Tülay Gençtürk, Sevim Yılmaz (Önder), Selmin Kurç, Gökçen Art ve Aynur Demirdirek, *İstanbul Kütüphanelerindeki Eski Harfli Türkçe Kadın Dergileri Bibliyografyası* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1993), Emel Aşa, 1928'e Kadar Türk Kadın Mecmuaları *(*Master's Thesis, Istanbul University,1989), Elizabeth Brown Frierson*,* Unimagined Communities: State, Press, and Gender in the Hamidian Era (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1996), Ayşe Koçoğlu, The Practice of Everyday Identity Formation: The Case of Magazine İnci (Master's Thesis, Ohio State University, 1995), Tezer Taşkıran, *Cumhuriyet'in 50.Yılında Türk Kadın Hakları* (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1973), Şefika Kurnaz, *Cumhuriyet Öncesinde Türk Kadını (1839–1923),* (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Aile Araştırma Kurumu Başkanlığı, 1991), Meral Altındal, *"*Kadın Birinci İşçi Taburu Tarihçesi", *Toplumsal Tarih,* 7, no. 41 (1997), pp. 14-16; Serpil Çakır, "Bir Osmanlı kadın örgütü: Osmanlı Müdâfaa-ı Hukuk-u Nisvân Cemiyeti", *Tarih ve Toplum*, 66 (1989) pp. 16-21; Serpil Çakır, "Osmanlı Türk Kadınları Esirgeme Derneği", *Toplum ve Bilim*, no. 45 (1989), pp. 91-7; Serpil Çakır, "Osmanlı Kadın Dernekleri", Toplum ve Bilim, no. 53 (1991): 139-57; Rahmi Çiçek, "Asker Ailelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti'nin Faaliyetleriyle İlgili Bir Belge", *Tarih ve Toplum,* 20, no. 116 (1993), pp. 14-15; Yavuz Selim Karakışla, "Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti Himayesinde Savaş Yetimleri ve Kimsesiz Çocuklar: 'Ermeni' mi, 'Türk' mü?" *Toplumsal Tarih*, 12, no. 69 (1999), pp 46-55; Yavuz Selim Karakışla*,* "Çerkez Kadınları Teâvün Cemiyeti (1919)", *Toplumsal Tarih*, 15, no. 88 (2001): 39-41; Yavuz Selim Karakışla, "Osmanlı Ordusunda Kadın Askerler", *Toplumsal Tarih*, 11, no. 66 (1999): 15-20; Yavuz Selim Karakışla*,* "Şişli Cemiyet-i Hayriye-i Nisvâniyesi 1915", *Tarih ve Toplum*, 35, no. 210 (2001): 5-12; Yavuz Selim Karakışla, "Varolmamış bir Osmanlı kadın örgütü: Sâde Giyinen Kadınlar Cemiyeti (1919)", *Tarih ve Toplum*, 35, no. 207 (2001): 30-5; Tiğince Oktar, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Kadının Çalışma Yaşamı: Osmanlı Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslâmiyesi,* (İstanbul: Bilim Teknik Yayınevi, 1998); Tiğinçe Özkiper Oktar, "Osmanlı Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi 1920 Senesi Raporu", *Toplumsal Tarih,* 9, no. 54 (1998): 19-22; Tülin Sümer, "Türkiye'de İlk Defa Kurulan Kadınları Çalıştırma Derneği", *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi 2*, no. 10 (1968): 59-63; Zafer Toprak, "İttihat ve Terakki ve Teali-i Vatan Osmanlı Hanımlar Cemiyeti", *Toplum ve Bilim*, no. 43-44 (1989): 183-90; Zafer Toprak, "Osmanlı Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti: Kadın askerler ve Milli Aile", *Tarih ve Toplum*, 9, no. 51 (1988): 34-8. Zafer Toprak, "Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkasından Önce Kurulan Parti Kadınlar Halk Fırkası*" tarih ve toplum*, cilt IX, no:51, Mart 1988, ss30-31.

lacuna in the studies concerning the Kurds at this time[3]. This situation originates from the lack of analysis of the period from a Kurdish perspective that requires a comparative study of the primary sources written in Kurdish, which has been neglected in Ottoman and Turkish historiography. Apart from this, there might be a tendency to reconstruct women's history, paying attention to their "Ottomanness" rather than their ethnic identities.

Of course, there are some other and more important reasons for this lacuna. As Shahrzad Mojab puts it, when Kurds appear in literature, generally, Kemalist politics determines the range of debate, and its shadow falls onto the terms, concepts and problematizations of researchers[4]. For this reason, many feminist historians have chosen to ignore ethnic identities when they wrote Ottoman women's history[5]. Furthermore, as it is expected, most women organizations follow the politics and ideology of the Turkish state and do not admit the existence of Kurdish women as distinct from Arab, Turkish or Persian women.

Obviously, most of the feminists have followed the denial of the ethnic and national diversity of Turkey. One of the most significant results of this attitude is the process of Turkification of the history of late Ottoman women's movement[6]. There is no doubt that some feminist historians, such as Aysegul Berktay, criticize this "state fetishism" of historians which leads them to treat "the state as a God in Turkish nationalist historiography"[7] These critiques have unmasked the state's omnipotent status over history-writing. The nation state's power, which determines who is normal / abnormal, who is productive / unproductive, who is worthy to

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[3] Rohat Alakom, "Araştırmalarda fazla adı geçmeyen bir kuruluş: Kürt Kadınları Teali Cemiyeti", *Tarih ve Toplum, 29, no. 171 (1998): 36-40*

[4]http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=bzXzWgVajnQC&dq=encyclopedia+of+women,+najmabadi&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=ApoWSwtdEs&sig=PGNeSEAhoDN5erXbXwfAfLJ3Eyc&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result#PPA158,M1

[5]*See* Şefika Kurnaz, *Cumhuriyet Öncesinde Türk Kadını (1839–1923),* (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Aile Araştırma Kurumu Başkanlığı, 1991), Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayınları, 1993), Aynur Demirdirek*, Osmanlı Kadınlarının Hayat Hakkı Arayışının Bir Hikayesi* (Ankara: İmge Yayınevi, 1993)

[6] Zehra Arat, *Deconstructing Images of "the Turkish Woman"*, (New York : St. Martin's Press, 1998)

[7] Fatmagül Berktay, *Tarihin Cinsiyeti,* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2003) p. 111.

live/who is waste body, decides whose history is worth remembering and whose history must be forgotten. In other words, the nation-state's policies shape both the present world's contours and the written past. Thus, the "sacredness" of the Turkish state and its power over history-writing in Turkey result in the loss of a past for ethnic minorities.

While in Turkey we face such scarcity of historical works on ethnic groups, in the West, there is a recent tradition of research on the Kurds. Missionaries, travelers, diplomats and army officers loom large in Western studies, especially after the Gulf War, the emergence of a Kurdish federal government in northern Iraq and the failure of Turkey to suppress the Kurdish nationalist movement. During this century, social scientists, especially a number of anthropologists like Lale Yalcin Heckman, Martin van Bruinessen, Henry Field, Edmund Leach, Fredreick Barth and Henny Herald Hansen conducted important field work. I benefited from most of these works in this thesis. Again it should be remembered that these researches were shaped by their historical and intellectual contexts, thus, in spite of references to women, the theory and methodology of these works is male gendered.

Only the work of Danish anthropologist Henny Hansen, *Kurdish Women's Life (1951),* was entirely devoted to Kurdish women, maybe thus, it became a landmark in the study of Kurdish women[8], though it is not informed by a feminist perspective. Obviously, when Hansen wrote this book, the social sciences were not yet touched by feminist theory and methodology. Indeed, until feminists began to raise new kinds of questions, the literature only examined the unequal distribution of gender power in the family or kinship in the absence of feminist theoretical and methodological frameworks.

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[8] Henny Hansen, *Daughters of Allah, Among Muslim Women in Kurdistan*, trans. R.Spink, (London:Allen&Udwin, 1960), Henny Hansen, *The Kurdish Women's Life*. Field Research in a Muslim Society, Iraq, Copenhagen 1961

Apart from abovementioned works, Rohat Alakom's, Handan Çağlayan's, Janet Kleins's and Shahrazad Mojab's informative and analytic books have helped me to reconstruct feminine aspects of Kurdish nationalist discourse developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

My motivation to study Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish women's position within late Ottoman Kurdish nationalists' discourses came from my interest in marginal and subaltern groups and communities who remained in the shadows of history, such as Ottoman women within the context of honor crimes, ethnic minorities, peasants or homosexuals. I believe that scholars speaking from subaltern, local, fragmentary, gendered, or other perspectives break away from established interpretations. Thus, looking at history from below provides important insights that destabilize meta-narratives and the mainstream understanding of power and temporality. Such insights also have relevance in how we conduct politics at the present and imagine the future.

Moreover, I have always been curious about what conditions and movement strategies make women more or less powerful and how to define political power in the Middle East at different historical moments. My interest in Kurdish women's history within a comparative framework derives from my belief that the women's question is not "one" of the many perspectives that need attention or analysis, but, in contrast, that no historical rethinking can take place without a gender analysis. Though mostly excluded from mainstream histories of the nationalist movements, women's involvement has been written in several texts. Feminist scholars, including Joan W. Scott, Afsaneh Najmabadi, Shahrzad Mojab, Nira Yuval-Davis, Floya Anthias, Kumari Jayawardena, Begona Aretxaga, Julie Peteet, Kamala Visweswaran, Zarana Papic, Margaret McClinton and Nükhet Sirman, have critically explored nationalism,

revealing its gendered assumptions, discourses and practices. Insights offered by this analytical, comparative literature are suggestive of new ways of approaching and assessing the experiences of Kurdish women in Kurdish nationalism. By traveling to the Kurdish women's past in order to see the factors that also determined my personal history and exploring the use of women's bodies to establish the connection between the women's experiences and the politics of the Kurdish nationalist movement, I aim to contribute to Middle Eastern feminist theory, which is an attempt to raise women's voices by historicizing their lives, contextualizing their agency and legitimizing their own perceptions of experience and struggle.

Thus, my MA thesis, which aims at analyzing the role of Kurdish women in the Kurdish nationalist discourse developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, heavily relies on the extant archival documents and eighty volumes of Kurdish journals from the late Ottoman period; namely, *Kurdistan* (1898-1902), *Roj-i Kurd* (1913), *Hetaw-ı Kurd* (1913-1914), *Jîn* (1918-1919) as well as secondary sources written on Kurdish nationalism.

This thesis begins with an introductory chapter on the theoretical, conceptual, and historical background of nationalism (Chapter 2) followed by discussions of the evolution of Kurdish rebellions and a brief history of the Kurd under Ottoman rule (Chapter 3); and the emergence of Kurdish "nationalist" discourse and the role of journals which deals with the politics of the nobility in the Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan (Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti, founded in 1918), a "political organization that was actively involved in defining and promoting Kurdish identity" (chapter 4). The roles Kurdish women played within this "nationalist" discourse are covered in chapter 5. The last chapter offers conclusions and suggestions for further research.

My focus, in general, is the transformation in the Ottoman center/Kurdish periphery relationship. In the early twentieth century, the Ottoman Empire under the influence of pressures for political modernization, applied several policies to centralize its rule and exercise direct power over the Kurdish territories. Nevertheless, the loss of autonomy on the part of the Kurdish intellectuals and leaders was experienced as a challenge to their authority. In return, they struggled with these policies by exteriorizing the state and the discourses that the state represents. In other words, for the first time in Kurdish history we see the development of ideas comparing Turks, Armenians and Kurds, Turkish women and Kurdish women as well as Turkish and Kurdish power and culture. Moreover, I examine the emergence of Kurdish nationalist discourse and nationalists' techniques with special attention on the importance of the Kurdish press and its contribution to an "imagined national community" among the Kurds. My attempt is to elucidate, on the one hand, the linkage and resemblance of the "local" historical perspective of Kurdish nationalism with the "universal" history of nationalism following Benedict Anderson and on the other, following Partha Chatterjee's objections to Eurocentric approaches, to emphasize the constructed peculiarities of Kurdish nationalism, which was defined by tribalism, ethno-religious inspired claims and nationalist sentiments.

This study made me realize that even though the Kurds did not experience a direct colonization, the path they followed was very similar to the model posed by Partha Chatterjee. Kurdish nationalists tried to create their own domain of sovereignty within Ottoman society before they appeared in the international political arena claiming national autonomy. Kurdish nationalist intellectuals strove to carry out this objective by dividing the world of social institutions and practices into two domains, "inner/spiritual" and "outer/material". They imagined a Kurdish constituent untouched by the material domain and composed of language,

history, folklore, legends, stories and folk songs. These were indeed marked by the journals as the innermost Kurdish domain within which Kurdish nationalist discourse must be developed. Kurdish intellectuals established their hegemony within this inner realm by standardizing the Kurdish language, reviving traditional literature, animating heroic ancestors through epics and poems, establishing organizations and using journals as an instrument for the circulation of nationalist ideas. Apart from reconstructed histories, literatures and traditions, the mother tongue became an essential instrument to distinguish the Kurdish nation from the Turkish, Arabic, and Persian speaking Muslim constituents of the Ottoman Empire as well as to create an imagined community among Kurdish people. The contextual rhetoric of the building and emergence of the Kurdish nation subsumed the location and identity politics of the "woman." In this respect, Kurdish women were accepted as the pure and historical symbols/conveyors of Kurdishness since it was their language and culture that was thought to be the purest and most Kurdish. This suggests that despite their symbolic role as mothers of the nation, women are subordinated in actual political processes.

My objective is to apply Benedict Anderson's concept of "nation" and "identity" as "imagined" constructs in order to explore how it was possible for the Kurdish nationalist elite to achieve both the "imagined" patriarchal constructions of women as passive signifiers of national cultures and the rise of new national women figures as active political agents thanks to the nationalist discourse. I aim to explain the convergence and divergence of gender and national discourses in the Ottoman Middle East and to analyze the ways in which sex-gender roles were articulated in nationalist discourses and symbols keeping the following questions in mind: How are representations of Kurdish masculinity and femininity articulated within the framework of Kurdish nationalism? Do Kurdish women and men have equal opportunities to become agents

within nationalist movements? Which political setting, historical exigency or ideological imperative helps the discourse of Kurdish nationalism to become the overarching umbrella which includes and embodies other different political temporalities? I also aspire to analyze the way in which Kurdish women become “passive” symbols of “liberation”, “modernity” and “progress” within the discourse of modern nationalism because of the fact that they were at the center of a representation but yet did not participate in the construction of that representation. Finally, I also aim to scrutinize the rise of “new” Kurdish women figures as active political agents thanks to the Kurdish nationalist discourse.

CHAPTER TWO:

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF NATIONALISM

Despite its short and "modern" history, nationalism has been tremendously significant in forming the ties that keep modern nations together and apart. In the present world, nationalism functions with the legal structure and supplements the formal institutions of societies in providing much of the order for the existence of the modern nation-state.

The development of nationalism has gone hand in hand with another modern phenomenon; popular sovereignty. When strong centralized monarchies were constructed from the ashes of feudalism, when vernaculars evolved, and when local-domestic economies widened, popular identification became increasingly strong. This development can be observed in Niccolo Machiavelli's work, *the Prince*, where the author advocates a national political federation against recurring invasions in Italy, which was not yet a single nation[9].

The emergence of "nationalism" was interconnected with the newly-emerging middle class which had a desire for political power, and with the consequent development of democratic political theory. The followers of the French Revolution supported the establishment of the government of equality and liberty for every people. According to them, the nation that the people and the general will must be thought together, and it was the first time in history "a people" could create a government in accordance with the nation's general will. Even though their objectives were "universal", they advocated that the nation should establish their own aims, and thus, nationalism found its initial political orientation.

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[9] Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince,* (Oxford; New York : Oxford University Press, 1984)

The French Revolution itself was a response to and a rebellion against the ideology behind the ancient regime, which devalued the multitudes and common people. It was from that time that “nation” and “masses”, and “individual’s liberty”, “happiness” and “equality” became central themes in the writings of authors, poets and philosophers**.** The masses, which were called “multitudes”, came to be called “people” who were “ideally” accepted as the agents, citizens and as those to whom the rulers were responsible for their acts.

Liberty and equality, which the authors of the “Declaration of The Rights of Man and the Citizen” claimed to have brought as a gift for mankind, in themselves did not recognize any boundary or nationality. It was due to this “universality” that the light of the French Revolution, engulfed the whole of Europe and particularly affected Germany, where political philosophers and writers became so enchanted with the ideas of freedom and liberty that they devoted all their energies exclusively to propagate those ideas. Fichte, the German philosopher, is among the forerunners of this new spirit.

Hereafter, the period starting from the early nineteenth century and extending to the early twentieth century was marked as the age of the emergence of nationalism and nationalist ideologies in Europe. Obviously, despite all of the claims for freedom and equality, the same nationalism of Europe paved the way and justified the colonial exploitation of Asian, African and South American countries. The Western countries were united together to exploit other nations and imposed their power and cultural, political and economic domination on the subordinated ones. Moreover, they homogenized these dominated cultures and countries by uniting them with all their “inadequacies” and with all their political, cultural and economic

"backwardness", thus, the Western countries could pursue separate paths, isolating themselves from the Rest and constructing their own national identities.

The Construction of "the West" and the Role of "the Homogenous Rest"as a Referent

In order to express nationalism it was necessary for people to identify themselves as belonging to a nation, a common history, territory/geographical boundary, religion, traditions, culture, language, or race. Accordingly, as Renan puts it, these connective items make the members of the nation "friendly" and "one of us", and all the rest is treated as "alien" and "hostile".

In his writing, Stuart Hall offers us an analytical ground through which to see the similarities between the construction of Western nationalism and the construction of colonial Europe's self-image as a united entity against the colonized world. Stuart Hall argues that national cultures obtain their strong sense of identity by contrasting themselves with other cultures. Therefore, the "Western identity" was formed partly through Europe's sense of its difference from the rest of the world; it came to represent itself in relation to "others".

In his article, "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power", by looking at the relationship between discourse and power, Hall argues that meaning always relies on the relations that exist between the different terms in a meaning system. He conceptualizes these differences as binary opposition. Hall claims that the West is not a geographical but a historical construct and in order to construct its identity, Europe creates a binary opposition between "us"

and "them". And this opposition, for Hall, is fundamental to all linguistic and symbolic systems and to the production of meaning itself[10].

Hall's article is about the role of "the Rest" in the development of the idea of "the West". While the West constructed itself by making references to its "other/non-Western", separate and distinct worlds became related elements in the same discourse or way of speaking. The discourse of the West and the Rest constructs and shows two groups of "us" and "them" as if both groups are homogenous and very different from each other. The text articulates that according to this binary opposition, these different non-Western cultures are united on the basis that they are all different from the West[11]. Steadily, although there were plenty of internal differences, the countries of Western Europe started to envision themselves as part of a united and single entity, "the West".

The situation is also very similar in the construction of national identities in Europe. The Rest is not only a constitutive element of the imagination or a construction of the West but also it is a counter category for the national identities of western nationalism. As argued above, the pseudo-sameness of the West embraces many internal differences. One of the grounds on which these differences come on the scene is the national differentiation of western countries. At that point again, The Rest is still a category through which each single western national country constructs its own identity. Every single western nation exteriorizes "The Rest" to construct its own identity as a part of the West while differentiating itself from the others on the basis of its nationalist claims.

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[10] Stuart Hall, "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power", in Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben, eds. *Formations of Modernity*. (Cambridge: Open University/Polity Press, 1992) p. 279.
[11] *Ibid*, p. 280

The Construction of the Sense of Nationhood

The sense of nationhood relies on "a common feeling"; a collective consciousness among a group of people bound together in a political unit forming a nation. This collective consciousness generates a well-built inner bond and unity among the members of a society as well as their ancestors and predecessors, determines the character of relations and associations among themselves as well as with other nations, and brings about a harmony in their aspirations and hopes. According to the traditional Western explanation, regional and racial characteristics, a common language, specific traditions, historical heritage and a common culture produced this collective consciousness. However, it can be said that these aspects do not have such a vital role in the origin of collective consciousness and are incapable of serving permanently as a cementing force or bond of integrity among the members of a nation.

It is apparent that at the early phases; territory, language, race, history and traditions had roles in bringing individuals together, inculcating in them a sense of shared identity, and serving as the channel that interconnects their hearts and feelings, and consequently led to the emergence of a collective and national consciousness. But if we study the past of nations, we find that a common language, race or traditions were not eternal; on the contrary, they have been constructed and they underwent many changes and continuously evolved into new forms until they acquired their present shapes [12]. However, as it can be observed from Kurdish nationalism, Indian or Western nationalism, during the period of a nation's struggle for freedom, language or traditions find more forceful expression, becoming the symbol of its national inspirations. Hindu was used as an instrument to motivate the Hindus to act tightly in the Indian Freedom

[12] Renan, "What is Nation?" in Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny eds. , *Becoming National: A Reader*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) pp. 41-55

Movement. The same is valid for Arabic in the Algerian nationalist struggle or Kurdish in the Kurdish nationalist movement.

On the other hand, in the present world, there are many states and nations in the same territory living under similar physical and geographical conditions that do not form a single national entity. In the Indian Subcontinent, for instance, the Hindu and the Muslim communities, despite living in similar physical and environmental conditions, do not share similar national feelings, and lack the bond of cohesion essential for a nation's solidarity. A similar example is that of the English and the Irish, who in spite of sharing the same historical, social and linguistic heritage; do not nurture the spirit of harmony and understanding that can make them a single nation. On the contrary, again in our age we can find examples like the Jews, living thousands of kilometers apart and in different physical and environmental conditions, with considerably vast differences of language, and historical heritage, who have a profound sense of solidarity.

When Frantz Fanon, an African writer and sociologist, researched the development of national consciousness among various African peoples by analyzing the role of class, race, national culture and violence in the struggle for national liberation, he arrived at the conclusion that the factors of common history, language and cultural traditions, along with geographical conditions, play only a transitory role in the birth of national awareness; these factors are not of permanent significance[13]. He cites the examples of nations engaged in the struggle for freedom and independence from imperialism, and points out that in these countries the really basic human ideals and aspirations sometimes find expression in such commonly shared factors as tradition, history and language. But these are means only of attaining the desired goals. With the dawn of independence, the points of division and conflict appear again. While a nation's elites take the

[13] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth,* (New York : Grove Press, 1968)

course of occupying positions of power in order to consolidate their political and economic privileges and to cash in on their deprivations and sufferings borne during the freedom struggle, the masses of the nation take the path of resistance and struggle against the elites in order to attain their rights. Ultimately these divergent paths divide them, causing a new social stratification and class conflict. As a consequence of this conflict, the nation is again divided into two or more classes pursuing conflicting ideals, though its members have a common language, common customs, culture and history. There is abundant evidence of class conflicts and religious discords within present day Turkey, which is sufficient to show that the factors of common language, history, culture and tradition do not have a permanent basis.

While primordialists insist on the language, cultural heritage, historical background and race, modernists do not consider them to be essential. The people who once fought together against foreigners for independence and dignity were, after reaching this goal, divided again into rulers and the ruled, into privileged and underprivileged, in accordance with their expectations, claims, interests and objectives. As a consequence of this, the national struggle against alien domination is transformed into an internal class struggle. The people sharing a common culture, language and race become divided and wage war against one another. The same people and the same individuals who were earlier united by a collective awareness now lose the sense of togetherness due to changed social relations. Then, what is the real basis and source of the formation of a national unit or a nation? What is the nature of the bond that cements together the hearts and feelings of various individuals, as a consequence of which common aspirations and ideals emerge?

Renan, who makes a subjective definition of nation and describes a nation as a construction by the desire of a people to live together, answers this question as follows:

> (...) to have suffered, worked, and hoped together; that is worth more than common taxes and frontiers conforming to ideas of strategy... I have said 'having suffered together'; indeed, common suffering is greater than happiness. In fact, national sorrows are more significant than triumphs because they impose obligations and demand a common effort. .. A nation is a grand solidarity constituted by the sentiments of sacrifice which one has made and those that one is disposed to make again.[14]

Eternal vs. Constructed Nations

Most essays on nationalism and the nation start with an acknowledgement of the difficulty of giving a brief definition of these concepts. According to Partha Chatterjee, these two concepts are among the most untheorized concepts of the modern world. A student of Ernst Gellner, Anthony Smith, bases his theory of nationalism on *"ethno-symbolism*"and considers nationalism as a particular ideology of solidarity which is based on pre-industrial roots[15] while Gellner considers nationalism as a distinctly industrial principle of social evolution and social organization[16]. As for Benedict Anderson, he defines nationalism with manufactured linguistic identity[17].

Did "Nation"Exist in the Time of Our Fathers and Will It Exist for Our Children?

According to primordialists, "nation" always existed and expressed itself by actions and intentions from which comes the importance of origin, which then is identified with ethnicity.

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[14] Renan, "What is Nation?" in *Becoming National: A Reader,* edited by Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p.44

[15] Antony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism,* (London; New York : Routledge, 1998) chapter 8.

[16] Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 1983)

[17] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities :Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London ; New York : Verso, 1991)

Ethnicity is related to the certain meanings intrinsic to a certain community which are defined as the myths of origin, symbols of significations, sets of cultural beliefs and practices. The primordialists believe that throughout history, language, religion, race, ethnicity, territory serve as the basic organizing principles of human interactions. For them, nation and nationalism are not modern phenomena; rather they are continual, eternal and natural; thus, nationalism builds on pre-existing kinship, religious and belief systems and the pre-existing history of a particular group. As we know, many nationalisms are based on historically inconsistent interpretations of past events and have a tendency to overly mythologize small/inaccurate parts of their history.

"No Nation Traces its Origin Back to Alexander the Great's Momentous Adventure"[18]

Attempts to establish "objective" criteria for nationhood and to explain why certain groups have become "nations" and others have not have often been based on a common language or ethnicity or a combination of criteria such as language, common territory, common history, cultural traits. According to Eric Hobsbawn, all such objective definitions have failed, for the obvious reason that since only some members of the large class of entities which fit such definitions can at any time be described as 'nations,' exceptions can always be found.[19]

As a reaction to primordialists' conception of nation as an eternal entity, modernists argue that the nation is a modern phenomenon and a product of modern developments like capitalism. For example, Gellner argues that the necessity of a trained workforce in order to achieve industrial economic growth led to the modern state and to homogeneous education

[18] Renan, "What is Nation?" In *Becoming National: A Reader,* edited by Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p.42

[19]E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 5-6.

systems which disseminated “high culture”and standardized language, creating the ideal conditions for the development of nationhood[20].

Benedict Anderson built his nationalism theories on the work of Gellner and Hobsbawm, who most usefully noted that those practices that seek to inculcate norms through reputation, and automatically imply continuity with the past, may be of quite recent origin or even invented. While for Gellner, the word invent meant fabricate or falsify, for Anderson, nations were “created”, “thought out”or “imagined”communities. Anderson identifies the nexus of market capitalism and the print industry as the institutional space for the development of modern, national languages.

Being a modernist like Hobsbawn and Gellner, Benedict Anderson examines the creation and function of “imagined communities”. For him, pre-national culture was religious culture and nations/national cultures replaced these religious cultures. The main importance of Anderson’s theory of nationalism is his emphasis on the constructed nature of culture/nation and on the role of print capitalism, nation-states, and the birth of vernacular languages in early modern Europe. Nations/nationalisms are products of modernity and have been created as means to political and economic ends.

Benedict Anderson emphasizes two important developments in modern world history that contributed to a situation in which communities could be developed along national lines. First, the institution which he calls “print-capitalism” came to create an actual marketplace for ideas that would change not only the nature of economic relations in a given society, but also their

[20] Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 1983), p.1

ways of conceiving time and space and their positions in this new temporal and spatial organization.

Related to this, the second development was the rise of the novel and the newspaper, which, in addition to being printed in vernaculars that would later become "national" languages, helped to change the concepts of time and space for readers, with the introduction of, what Anderson calls, homogenous, empty space, or the concept of "meanwhile."[21]

Readers of novels found that they could follow the events of the novel's characters, in the capacity of bystanders, and see that characters within the novel, while perhaps never connecting with one another in the storyline itself, were connected by virtue of their being in the same novel, and the readers could witness the events happening to one character, and see that in the meantime events were also happening to another, and these events were connected somehow, whether the characters themselves knew it or not. This new temporal dimension of the "meanwhile" contributed to the preparation of a mental space through which an imagined national community would emerge. In other words, individuals on the stage of life believed that they were connected to people they had never seen before by virtue of belonging to the same community.

The newspaper contributed to this feeling by discussing events in a trope which were relevant to some, and not to others. Furthermore, newspaper readers were connected to each other by virtue of the fact that they were all reading the same paper, and were somehow or another affected by, or interested in, those very events. Thus, print-capitalism played a central role in the development of nationalism on a global level, and helped provide a space in which

[21]Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities :Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London ; New York : Verso, 1991)

readers (and gradually non-readers) could easily imagine a national community they themselves belonged to.

Singular Universality of the West vs. Peculiarities of the Rest: If the Rest of the World Had No Choice But to Follow the West, What was Left for it to Imagine?

The fact that the Western nation-state is said to embody the character of a people, represent their interests on all sorts of issues, and even help them define the salient characteristics of a shared national identity results in a cleat set of limiting consequences for any nation-state, in Asia or elsewhere, following the Western model. As John Breuilly puts it, "First, there is the notion of a unique national community. Second, there is the idea of the nation as a society which should have its own state. Finally, the nation is thought of as a body of citizens—that is a wholly political conception—and nationalism is justified in terms of universal political principles"[22].

The acceptance of this logic in the existing nation-states of Asia and among the various nationalistic movements throughout that broad region shows that they have accepted certain defining characteristics of what is a universal and Western-derived set of ideas about society and the state. In *the Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Post-Colonial Histories*, Partha Chatterjee asked that if the rest of the world had no choice but to follow the West, what was left for it to imagine. "If this was the case" he says "even our imaginations must remain forever colonized".[23] He rejects this suggestion. In his view, Asian and African nationalism was based on "difference".

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[22]John Breuilly, *Nationalism and The State*, (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1994) p. 342

[23] See also Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press 1993)p.5

Partha Charterjee's above-mentioned book opens with ringing condemnation and aptly sets out the charges brought against modern, Western rationality:

> By now knowledgeable people all over the world have become familiar with the charges leveled against the subject-centered rationality characteristic of post- Enlightenment modernity. The subject-centered reason, we have now been told, claims to itself a singular universality by asserting its epistemic privilege over all local, plural, and often incommensurable knowledge; it proclaims its own unity and homogeneity by declaring all other subjectivities as inadequate, fragmentary, and subordinate; it declares for the rational subject an epistemic as well as moral sovereignty that is meant to be sell-determined, unconditioned, and self-transparent. Against this arrogant, intolerant, self-aggrandizing rational subject of modernity, critics in recent years have been trying to resurrect the virtues of the fragmentary, the local and the subjugated in order to unmask the will to power that lies at the very heart of modern rationality.[24]

As a response to Western theorists, Partha Chatterjee notes that European history was not that of the rest of the world. Chatterjee sees the creativity and strength of African and Asian nationalism to lie in an earlier phase of cultural contestation and identity formation, and this he demonstrates through a finely nuanced and culturally sensitive discussion of nineteenth century Bengal. While the outer, or material, world of public and political life was dominated by the colonizing West, the Bengal middle class drew strength from an inner domain, a cultural and spiritual world that could not be annexed to Western hegemony.[25]

Chatterjee pursues this thesis through a series of case studies: he looks in turn at the spiritual world of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples[26], at the evolution of history writing and the creation of a suitable Bengali/Indian past[27], at the lives of middle class women and the nationalists' determination to remove the "women's question" to the domain of the state and colonial politics[28]. In seeking to establish how the nation came into being in the specific context of

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[24] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press 1993)p. xi
[25] *Ibid.* pp.116-120
[26] *Ibid.* pp.42-55
[27] *Ibid.* pp.76-115
[28] See also Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press 1993) pp.116-157

mid-twentieth century India, he also takes a brief and critical look at the role of national planning[29] and the place of communities within the modern state[30].

Chatterjee's critique may remind us of a long-standing discussion on the representation of the Rest by the powerful West. The relationship and direct proportion between representation and power leads us to think about Western-constructed binary oppositions as civilized/savage or modern/primitive which were indebted to the authority of modern nation-states in Europe. The West has always believed that the non-European world needs to follow the developments of European countries. This belief was immortalized with the Social Darwinist ideology of modernity which claims that the West is racially, culturally, politically and technologically superior to the rest and in order to catch up with "the most modern" and "most civilized" West, the non-Western countries should follow the traces of Western imperialism, capitalism, nationalism or feminism. No need to say that dividing the world as "the West" and "the Rest"; differentiating itself from this homogenized "other/non-Western" by ignoring its peculiarities are reflections of the relationship between representation and power. Although a Western nation state separates itself from other Western nations by defining its rigid boundaries, it identifies itself by making references to the dichotomy of European civilization versus the savage non-West. Thus, a Western nation state places itself in the world of this civilized, progressive, modern Westerner world and by doing so, it reproduces its own and the West's superiority over the Rest.

Partha Chatterjee identifies three "moments" for nationalist thought: the first, the moment of departure, is predicated on essential differences between the West and the Rest, noting that

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[29]Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press 1993) p.200-219
[30]*ibid.* pp. 220-239

while those not living in Europe or North America are deficient in European modernities, the lack is compensated for with spiritual gifts. The second, the moment of maneuver, described as the embrace of modernities and antitheses as the national culture, may lie closest to Franz Fanon's ideals for postcolonial intellectuals. In the third, the moment of arrival, nationalist thought is phrased in its own vocabulary of modernist order.

Asymmetric Ignorance

As mentioned before, hegemonic Western rules decreed that all civilizations, all nations, all individuals, all peasants, all women or all workers have had the same "experiences" on the same progressive line.[31] Non-Western histories have been written in terms of failed transitions. According to this Western thesis, the non-West is stable, it is not progressive; this homogenized non-West failed to catch the West on the progressive line whose necessities are standardized by the West. Such images of failed transitions reinforce the subalternity of non-Western histories and the dominance of Europe as History.

However, Chatterjee claims that historians should challenge this Europe/India hierarchy and try to write the history of India through an "Indian"not Western perspective.[32] The place of Europe as a silent referent works in many ways. As Chakrabarty suggests, Europe is the theoretical subject of all histories. This universalization of Europe works through the reconstruction of histories as universal History with a single main actor.[33]

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[31]Michael Stanford, *A Companion to the Study of History,* (Oxford, Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1999) p. 20
[32]Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press 1993)pp.76-115.
[33]Dibesh Chakrabarty, "Post-coloniality and the artifice of history: Who speaks for 'Indian' pasts?", *Representations,* 37, (1992), p.18

Following the critiques of Chatterjee, the rest of the thesis will be an attempt to read Kurdish "nationalist"discourse within these theoretical frameworks. I will try to scrutinize Kurdish nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by making references to the Western modernist theorist Benedict Anderson's evaluations of print capitalism, the role of newspapers and national elites, while keeping in mind Partha Chatterjee's objections which invite us to think about the peculiar characteristics of the non-Western nationalisms.

CHAPTER THREE:

REBELLIONS

> "We are in a period in which the nationalities are being decided and recognized"[34]
>
> "Today our nation, just like many other Muslim nations, needs to be recreated. Your most important and most sacred duty, for this reason, is to equip your nation with the requirements of this century. (..) This struggle, as the means of survival, can be overcome through the weapons of ideology and economy. Those nations whose members are well-equipped with these weapons will maintain their existence, progress, and prosperity. However, those who do not possess these weapons, will always be defeated in the struggle, and fall under their victors ideologically and economically. They will remain a miserable element and lose their moral and material characteristics."[35]

The aim of this chapter is, firstly, to describe Kurdistan as a part of the Ottoman historical context; the first division of Kurdistan with the Treaty of Qasr-ı Şirin, the effects of the Ottoman centralization/modernization period on the relationship between Kurdistan and the Ottoman state and both parties' initial reactions to the changing status quo[36], the policies the Ottoman state developed to control Kurdish rebellions and to keep the Kurds under its rule, and secondly, to explain the dynamics behind the emergence of Kurdish nationalism as an idea raised by Kurdish intelligentsia and the Kurdish press in the late Ottoman period. At this point, one should keep in mind that because these Kurdish intellectuals were, at the same time, Ottoman intellectuals, the

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[34] Dr.Abdullah Cevdet, "*Bir Hitab"(*An Adress) Roji Kurd, No. 1, 6 Haziran, 1329 (19 June, 1913), p.3.

[35] Bulgaristanlı Doğan, *"Milletinize Karşi Vazifeniz*" (Your Duty Towards Your Nation), Roji Kurd, No. 2, 6 Temmuz, 1329(19 July, 1913), p.2.

[36] To understand the mutual relationship between the Ottoman state and Kurdistan is important because Kurdish nationalism was (is) not only a story of "an explosion of a passive and helpless periphery reacting against authoritarian/suppressive policies of their state". On the contrary, it can be read as a consequence of a dynamic relationship between the center and the periphery and as a sum of the constant reactions of responsive, dynamic and diverse periphery to the economic, political, social and militaristic policies of the Ottoman state. As it can be understood from the examples given in this chapter, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed manifold relationships between the state and the periphery ranging from cases of the state having a good relationship with various groups among the Kurdish tribes at the one end to the individual Kurdish tribes' rebellions against the state policies on the other hand.

ideas they supported and the agenda they followed can only be understood when placed against the larger Ottoman background.

Kurdish nationalist discourse and the first Kurdish journal, *Kurdistan,* appeared during the reign of Abdülhamid II, as a direct reaction to the state policies; thus, the most important period to be discussed in this chapter is the reign of Abdülhamid II. This chapter will conclude with a brief analysis of the importance of the Kurdish press and its contribution to an "imagined national community" among the Kurds.

It should be added that because it is hardly possible to present every detail in such a loaded and interactive history, "mechanisms of reproduction"[37] or the decisive moments are regarded as leading forces of Kurdish history from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Needless to say, at this point, the stance of the researcher becomes a determining factor; though she cannot determine the existence and sequence of events, while creating "her" narrative she herself has a critical role in reconstructing the history of Kurdish nationalism. Then, it will be valuable to pen down the initial motivation of the researcher. This chapter is an attempt to elucidate, on the one hand, the linkage and resemblance of the "local" history of Kurdish nationalism with the "universal" history of nationalism following Benedict Anderson. On the other hand, the peculiarities of Kurdish nationalism in the Ottoman context, which was defined by tribalism, ethno-religious inspired claims and (in some cases) nationalist sentiments, tracing Partha Chatterjee's objections to Eurocentric approaches.

[37]Paul Pierson, *"Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics*", in *American Political Science Association* 94, 2 (June 2000): 251-267.

A Brief History of Kurds under Ottoman Rule:

Serefhan Bitlisî describes the boundaries of Kurdistan in his renowned book *Serefname*; "The boundaries of the Kurdish land begin from the Sea of Hürmüz (the Gulf of Basra) and stretch on an even line to the end of Malatya and Maraş. The north of this line includes Fars, Iraki Acem (the Khuzistan region of Southwest Iran), Azarbeycan, Little and Great Armenia. To the South, there is Iraki Arab, Musul and Diyarbakır"[38] As it is known, this geography; Kurdistan, witnessed the political unity of Kurds neither under Persian nor Ottoman rule. This failure in achieving political unity is mostly attributed to Kurdish tribal organization and its geopolitical position between two powerful empires.

In the early sixteenth century, the greater part of Kurdistan came under Ottoman rule. Kurdish subjects living near Ottoman-Safavid borderlands were used as fighting units throughout the power conflicts between the Persian Safavid and Ottoman Empires[39]. In the seventeenth century, boundaries between the two rival empires were drawn and most of the Kurds came to live under Ottoman authority. Finally, after World War I, which had a catastrophic end for *l'homme malade de l' Europe*, Kurdistan was once more divided between today's Iraq, Turkey, and Iran.

In 1639, the Treaty of Qasr-ı Sirin was signed by the Ottoman and Safavid Empires. This treaty put an end to more than one hundred years of sporadic conflicts and finally established a permanent Ottoman-Safavid border. Partners to the treaty recognized that the Ottoman Empire would control Baghdad, Basra, Kirkuk and Eastern Anatolia and the Safavid Empire would be

[38]For Şerefhan Bitlisi's perception of 'Kurd and Kurdistan' see Mehmet Emin Bozarslan, *Şerefname* (Istanbul: Yöntem, Yayınları, 1975), p. 29.
[39]Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Sheikh and the State: The Social and political Structures of Kurdistan*, (New Jersey, Zed Books Ltd. 1992)pp.142-145

the only power in Revan.[40] The treaty and its forthcoming results had deep-rooted influences on Kurdistan, which was divided between two powerful empires, becoming the border march.

Due to Ottoman administrative policies which tolerated the periphery to be reactive to the center, Kurdistan enjoyed semi-autonomy after its integration to the Ottoman Empire.[41] However, the westernization/centralization attempts of the Ottoman Empire brought the effect of repressing the periphery. Centralization efforts and military reforms carried out during the reigns of Mahmud II (1808-1839) and Abdulmecid (1839-1861) heralded the end of the last autonomous Kurdish emirates. Emirs were replaced by the governors sent from the Ottoman center and these new governors could not fulfill the crucial role of emirs, who successfully acted as mediators among the Kurdish tribes. The new governors were unsuccessful because they lacked the traditional legitimacy they needed to keep the notables and tribal chiefs under control. This situation created opportunities for individual tribes to extend their power and influence at each other's expense[42].

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Kurdish notables, tribe chiefs, aghas, religious leaders as well as ordinary people were discontented with the new politics of the Ottoman state. It is certain that the removal of Kurdish emirates as a direct consequence of the state's centralization/modernization policies destroyed political and administrative structure in Kurdistan because as mentioned before, these emirates were working as a bond connecting Kurdish people and Kurdish tribes together under particular rulers. Martin van Bruinessen

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[40] Suraiya Faroqhi, Bruce McGowan, Donald Quataert and Sevket Pamuk, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, Volume Two, 1600-1914, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997)pp.421-422

[41]For further information for semi-autonomous feature of Kurdistan, see Martin van Bruinessen, *Evliya Çelebi Diyarbekir'de* (trans. Tansel Güney), (İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2003), Robert Dankoff, *Evliya Çelebi in Bitlis : the relevant section of the Seyahatname*, (Leiden, New York, E.J. Brill, 1990)

[42]Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Sheikh and the State: The Social and political Structures of Kurdistan,* (New Jersey, Zed Books Ltd. 1992), pp. 175-182

clearly explains how rulers sent from the central government could not carry out this critical role of "emirs"; the mediators amongst tribes' members and their leaders[43]. It is known that at the end of the story, it was sheiks, not government officials, who could fill the political vacuum left by the emirs. They had legitimacy among Kurdish people and the loyalty of Kurdish tribes, which in return brought power to sheikhs and persuaded the Kurds to follow them[44].

This discomfort led the Kurds to get organized under provincial or Istanbul-based associations and also opened the way for rebellions[45]. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed a series of Kurdish uprisings triggered by the sheiks or the Kurdish rulers; the latter's power gradually diminished as the Ottomans sought to reorganize their empire and place the Kurdish areas under more direct rule[46]. Three well-known examples for these uprisings were led by Bedirkhan Beg, Sheikh Ubeydullah and Sheikh Said.

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[43]Martin van Bruinessen, *The Agha, Sheikh and State; the Social and Political Organization of Kurdistan* (London and New Jersey, Zed Books, 1992). Also see, Martin van Bruinessen, "Kurdish Society and the Modern State: Ethnic Nationalism versus Nation-Building", in *Papers on Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity: Kurdistan in Search of Ethnic Identity*, (Uthrect, Houtsma Foundation Publication Series, No.1, 1990), pp. 27-28

[44]After the removal of strong tribal leaders and emirs, religious leaders held the power and the role of mediation amongst the tribes. In *Religion and Change in Modern Turkey*, Şerif Mardin perfectly portrayed this situation through the example of Said-i Nursi. See Şerif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989)

[45]It should be reminded that there were several rebellions in Kurdistan before the nineteenth century. See İsmet Şerif Vanlı, *Batılı Eski Seyyahların Gözüyle Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, (İstanbul, Avesta Yayınları, 1997); for Abdal Khan's rebellion (Bitlis) against Melek Ahmed Pasha see, Robert Dankoff, *Evliya Çelebi in Bitlis : the relevant section of the Seyahatname*, (Leiden, New York, E.J. Brill, 1990)

[46]Mehrdad R. Izady, *A Concise Handbook: The Kurds*, (Washington, D.C.: Taylor & Francis, Inc., 1992), pp. 55-59. Some important rebellions took place in late nineteenth and early twentieth century can be counted as "1806, Baban Tribe, Abdurrahman Pasha Rebellion; 1833-1837, Mir Muhammed (Soran) Rebellion; 1843, Bedirkhan Rebellion; 1855, Yazhan Şer Rebellion; 1878-1881, Şeyh Ubeydullah Nehri Rebellion; 1919-22, Simko (Ismail Agha) Rebellion; 11 May 1919, Ali Batı Rebellion; 21 May 1919, Mahmut Berzenci Rebellion; 6 March 1921, Koçgiri Rebellion; 4 September 1924, Beytüşşebab Rebellion; 13 February 1925, Şeyh Sait İsyanı; 10 June 1925, Nehri İsyanı, 7 August 1925, Reşkotan-Raman Rebellion, November 1925, 1st Sason Rebellion; 16 May 1926, 1st Ağrı Rebellion; 21 January 1926, Hazro Rebellion; 7 September 1926, Koçuşağı Rebellion; 26 May 1927, Mutki Rebellion; 13 September 1927, 2nd Ağrı Rebellion; 7 Ekim 1927, Bıcar Rebellion; 6 Temmuz 1929, İt Resul Rebellion; 20 September 1929, Tendürek Rebellion; 26 May 1930, Savur Rebellion; 20 Haziran 1930, Zilan Rebellion; 21 July 1930, Oramar Rebellion; 7 September 1930, 3rd Ağrı Rebellion; 24 September 1930 (See Albert Howe Lybyer, The Near and Middle East, *Current History* (New York), 33:1 (1930:Oct.) pp.97-160), Pülümür Rebellion; September 1930, 2nd Mahmut Berzenci Rebellion; November 1931, Şeyh Ahmed Barzani Rebellion; January 1937, 2nd Sason Rebellion; 21 March 1937, Dersim Rebellion"

Two influential Kurdish leaders; Bedirkhan Beg of Botan[47] and Muhammed Pasha of Rawanduz[48], rebelled against Ottoman rule in the 1830s as a direct response to the modernization/ centralization efforts of the center. Bedirkhan Beg rebelled with a need to regain his power. At this time, Turkish troops were preoccupied with the Egyptian invasion of Syria and were unable to suppress the revolt. As a result, *Bedirkhan* Beg extended his authority to Diyarbakır, Siverek, Viranşehir, Siirt, Suleymaniye and Mahabad. He established an independent Kurdish emirate in these regions until 1845. He issued his own coins and had the khutba read in his name[49]. These are the ceremonies which represent the emirate's independence and power. In 1847, the Ottoman forces turned their attention toward this area, defeated Bedirkhan Beg and exiled him to Crete. He was later allowed to return to Damascus, where he lived until his death in 1868[50]. After him, there were further revolts of Bedirkhans in 1850, 1852 and even later[51]. For Kurdistan, the most critical result of the abortive rebellion was the replacement of mîrs by Ottoman governors appointed by the center.

As the following pages will show, members of the Bedirkhan family would interact with the Union and Progress Party, publish journals and become important actors of the Kurdish

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[47]Botan Emirate was centered on Cizre and contained mainly Mardin, Şırnak, Siirt and Eruh. In 1821, "Azizî" Bedirkhan Beg became the mîr of the emirate. The relationship between Ottoman government and Botan Emirate was founded on mutual interest; when Bedirkhan Beg needed help to eliminate rival principalities in the region he got support from Ottoman government and when Ottoman rulers needed to control Kurdistan, they got the assistance of Bedirkhan Beg. Mîr Muhammed's Rebellion can be a good example for this interest-based relationship. Bedirkhan Beg stood alongside with Ottoman government during Mîr Muhammed's abortive rebellion. This supportive attitude and his alliances with the Porte gave Bedirkhan Beg a free space to increase his political power in Kurdistan. As it can be guessed, the heyday of the relationship ended in 1830s when Bedirkhan Beg eliminated all of his powerful rivals and rebelled against Ottoman rule.

[48]*Muhammad Pasha* of Rawanduz rebelled in the east and established his authority in Musul and Erbil. Wadie Jwaideh*, Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi: Kökenleri ve Gelişimi,* (İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1999), pp.106-119

[49]See, Chris Kutschera, *La Mouvement National Kurde*, (Paris : Flammarion, 1979), p.15 and Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Sheikh and the State: The Social and political Structures of Kurdistan,* (New Jersey, Zed Books Ltd. 1992), pp.177-180

[50]Martin Strohmeier, *Crucial Images in the Presentation of a Kurdish National Identity*, (Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2003) p. 12

[51] For the rebellion of Osman and Hüseyin Bedirkhan (1878), see Y. PRK. BŞK. 1/58 His telegram dated 11 Teşrinsani 1894 (November 27). Also see, Malmisanij, Cizira Botanlı Bedirhaniler, (İstanbul, Avesta,2000) pp. 164-184.

nationalist movement in later periods. This gives us some clues about how Kurdish nationalism emerged as a system of empowerment when some Kurdish notables lost their traditional power and needed to find other means to power.

The second example is Sheikh Ubeydullah's Rebellion. The war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia (1877-1878) paved the way for many calamities for the local population and these disasters showed themselves in demonstrations[52] and rebellions in some provinces. Those post-war traumas along with the taxes levied on the extremely poor population increased resentment among Kurdish people. At that time, some Ottoman tribes led by Sheikh Ubeydullah –an influential Naqshibandi leader- attacked Persian lands and created problems between Persia and the Ottoman Empire. The attacks extended to the city of Tabriz. The movement expanded with the participation of Kurdish tribes. According to Sami Pasha, some Ottoman auxiliary troops took their place alongside with the Sheikh Ubeydullah [53]

At the first stage, the Ottoman government did not suspect the loyalty of Sheikh Ubeydullah. This can be understood from the communication between the state and the sheikh[54].However; certain documents demonstrate that Sheikh Ubeydullah's movement can be considered as the first Kurdish uprising that had national aspirations because Sheikh Ubeydullah strove to create an autonomous Kurdish emirate under Ottoman rule. At this point, it will be

[52] For demonstrations against the lack of bread see Yıldız Sadaret Hususî Maruzat Evrakı 164/199, Yıldız Sadaret Hususî Maruzat Evrakı 164/122 and 165/40.

[53]Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Askerî Maruzat. 4/72. (November 6, 1879) According to Sami Pasha' report, some auxiliary soldiers from the Ottoman army who were close to Sheikh Abdullah, the son of Sheikh Ubeydullah, participated in the movement without any permission.

[54]According to documents from Yıldız Sadaret Hususî Maruzat Evrakı , the sultan sent gifts with his envoys to the sheikh (Y.A Hus. 162/73, October 15, 1879) and in return he received a letter which offered the sheiks' loyalty (Y.A Hus 162/36, Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Mabeyn Başkitabeti 4/18). In this letter, the Sheikh portrayed the miserable situation of Kurdistan after the war; the unfair rule of Christian rulers-with his complaints about the Ottoman rulers' tolerant attitude towards these Christians' violence against Muslim Kurds which distgrunted the Kurdish society and fed Christian enmity; resisted the Armenian annexation to Van; criticized Ottoman rulers' blindness.

helpful to quote some passages from Sheikh Ubeydullah's letter to William Abbot, the British consul-general in Tabriz[55]:

> The Kurdish nation, with more than 500,000 families, is a people apart. Their religion is different, and their laws and customs are separate. The chiefs, rulers and the inhabitants of Kurdistan, one and all are united and agreed that matters cannot be carried on in this way with the two Governments (Ottoman and Qajar Governments), and that necessarily something must be done, so that European Governments will understand the matter and shall inquire into our state. We also are a nation apart. We want our affairs to be in our own hands.[56]

There is an argument which advocates that the Ottoman government supported the rebellion when it burst because Russia supported "the Armenian project"due to the tension that emerged after some articles of the Treaty of Berlin (1878). When the Treaty of Berlin was signed at the end of the Russian-Ottoman War, one of its articles included provisions to guarantee the safety of the Armenians against the Circassians and Kurds, and to comply with Armenian demands for reform[57]. After the treaty, stories circulated across the region that if an Armenian state were to be established, it would overlap with Kurdistan.[58] As Wadie Jwaideh has observed, "fear of the Armenian ascendancy in Kurdistan appears to have been one of the most powerful reasons behind the sheikhs' attempt to unite the Kurds".[59]

At later stages of the movement, the Ottoman government planned to interfere with the event and to eliminate the sheikh's influence among the tribes before he conclusively damaged

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[55] Although this passage cannot prove that Sheikh Ubeydullah's Rebellion is fully nationalist, it shows the reader that nationalist rhetoric was used as a sign of, what Martin van Bruinessen calls, "proto-nationalism", fostering a common sense of identity and forming a basis for the later Kurdish nationalism. Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Sheikh and the State: The Social and political Structures of Kurdistan,* (New Jersey, Zed Books Ltd. 1992)

[56] John Joseph, *the Nestorians and Their Muslim Neighbors*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961) pp. 109-10.

[57]Article 61 in François Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid,* (İstanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2006), p. 121

[58]Paul White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers: the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey*, (London, Zed Books, 2000), p.59, Reşat Kasaba*, Dünya, İmparatorluk ve Toplum,* (İstanbul, Kitap Yayınevi, 2005), p.123

[59]Wadie Jwaideh*, Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi: Kökenleri ve Gelişimi,* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999), p. 171.

the relationship between the Ottoman and Persian states[60]. Also, the Ottoman government should have been aware of the fact that this border chaos could give one more reason to the Great Powers, especially Britain and Russia, for interference.

Britain urged the Ottoman government to carry out the requirements of the articles of the Treaty of Berlin and thus, it became an obligation for Ottomans who had surrounded him on his retreat to bring Sheikh Ubeydullah to Istanbul. However, after staying a year in Istanbul, he returned back to his home in Kurdistan. When Ottoman rulers realized that he was gathering soldiers for a second attempt, they were no longer as tolerant as they had been earlier and they set in motion to stop the sheikh[61]. The Ottomans finally exiled him to Mecca in 1882, along with some of his family members[62], where he died in 1883. Thus, the new Kurdish "nationalist"movement was left without a leader.

After the failed Sheikh Ubeydullah Rebellion, Sultan Abdulhamid II aimed to reintegrate the Eastern periphery into the state system following a different path; the path of Pan-Islamism and "social engineering". While his efforts received respect among some Kurds who called

[60]Hakan Özoğlu, *Osmanlı Devleti ve Kürt Milliyetçiliği,* (İstanbul, Kitap Yayınevi, 2005), pp. 95-101. Also see articles in New York Times to have an idea of the echos of the rebellion in the international agenda; "Turkey's Foreign Relations", *New York Times*, Nov 18, 1880, p. 1; "Fruit of Turkish Obstinacy", *New York Times*, Nov 21, 1880, p.1; "Horrors of Kurdish Warfare", *New York Times*, 28 November 1880; p.9, "The Foes of the Porte", *New York Times*, Dec 7, 1880; "Current Foreign Topics" , *New York Times*, April 8, 1881; "Kurds Again Restless", *New York Times*, November 25, 1881, p.3; "The Invasion of Persia", *New York Times*, November 8, 1880.

[61]Royal Secretary Kamil Beğ was entrusted with a task of finding the sheikh.Y.PRK.BŞK.6/49, August 22

[62]His son Seyyid Abdullah was also with him. After his father death, Seyyid Abdullah returned to Istanbul with the heralded new regime (1908); he became one of the founding members of the Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti (Association for Kurdish Mutual Assistance and Progress); entered the Turkish Parliament as a Hakkari deputy and he was executed after Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925.

Abdulhamid II the "Bave Kurdan"[63], these efforts were inveighed by others who called Abdulhamid II an "authoritarian/cruel" ruler.[64]

In 1890, Abdulhamid II and one of his advisors, Zeki Pasha were able to create a special Kurdish-dominated militia known as *Hamidiye Alayları* (the Hamidiye Light Cavalry). Its ostensible *raison d'être* was to police the frontiers against possible (especially Russian) attacks or boundary conflicts. However, they were used to smash the Armenians[65], and later (under different names) to repress the Kurds as well[66]. According to documents in the Prime Ministry Archives, the Hamidiye Cavalry, which was established on the model of Russian Cossacks, consisted of fifty-two regiments in 1892[67]. The chiefs of the Cavalry chosen from among Kurdish tribes gained damaging power and prestige and this situation created resentment among local people, tribal leaders and Ottoman officials. Although their violent activities (murders or

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[63]"Father of Kurds" see, Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Sheikh and the State: The Social and political Structures of Kurdistan,* (New Jersey, Zed Books Ltd. 1992), p.186

[64] For an example for this harsh criticsm see Unsigned, "Alayen Siwarên Hemîdî" (the Hamidiye Cavalry), *Kurdistan*, No: 28, 1 Cemazeyilahir 1319/ 15 September 1901, pp.1-2. The author of "Alayen Siwarên Hemîdî" wrote the reasons behind the establishment of the Hamidiye Cavalry and denounced the Hamidiye as a "corrupt institution" and continued "these regiments ever since they were established have been indescribably harmful to the country and the nation."

[65] The authors of Kurdistan Newspaper criticized the Hamidiye Cavalry and their Kurdish members because of their violent attitude towards Armenians. For some examples see, Unsigned, "Kurdler ve Ermeniler"(Kurds and Armenians), No: 26, 22 Ramazan 1318/ 13 Ocak 1901, pp. 3-4, Abdurrahman Bedirkhan, "Kürdlere", Kurdistan, No: 27, 22 Zilkade 1318/ 13 March 1901, pp.2-3, "Alayen Siwarên Hemîdî" (Hamidiye Cavalry), *Kurdistan*, No: 28, 1 Cemazeyilahir 1319/ 15 September 1901, pp.1-2, Unsigned, "Wezîyeta Hazir û Mustaqbel a Kurdistan" (Present and Future Situation of Kurdistan), *Kurdistan*, No: 29, 2 Recep 1319/15 October 1901, pp. 1-2. In his article; "Kürdlere", Abdurrahman Bedirkhan cried: "(...) Kurds! Recently, there are many new-born, little states which gained their independence from brutal empires in return for their constant resistance and efforts. Instead of following these examples, you are killing each other and decreasing your power, thus you are creating good reasons for the sultans' cruelty. You are stabbing yourself in the heart! You killed Armenians! (...) Are you not ashamed in front of your ancestors who got along well with their brothers (Armenians) for centuries? How could you answer when they ask: "Why did you hurt our brothers?" Don't you blush?" Abdurrahman Bedirkhan, "Kürdlere", *Kurdistan*, No: 27, 22 Zilkade 1318/ 13 March 1901, p.3

[66]The Hamidiye Cavalry consisted of Sunni Kurdish subjects alongside a few Arab tribes. However, as John Guest puts it; Ottoman government sent General Omer Vehbi Pasha to convert as many Yezidis as possible to Islam, with the eventual aim of instituting companies of Yezidi Hamidiye irregular cavalry. (123-134) According to Nelida Fuccaro, while some Yazidi chiefs and religious leaders were converted into Islam, many Yazidi people were killed during this conscription and conversion period. See Nelida Fuccaro, "Yazidi Tribes, Religion and State in Early Modern Iraq", in *Tribes and Power; Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East*, (London, Saqi Books, 2003) p. 188

[67] Başbakanlık Arşivi Yıldız Arşivi Mülenevvi Malumat, (from now on, BBA Y Mtv) 73/69, 30 December 1892)

plundering etc.) were not ordered by the state, the Ottoman government nevertheless could not / did not prevent the chiefs from committing these crimes. [68] Thus, it can be said that in the nineteenth century, Kurdistan was in a state of chaos and tribal conflicts which fractionalized the society. When the new regime took power in 1908, the first thing the Committee of Union and Progress did was to show how successful they were in correcting the wrongs of the old ruler. The government disbanded the Hamidiye Regiments[69], increased crackdowns on Hamidiye chiefs, confiscated their weapons, forced them to leave the land they had taken from the Armenian peasant by force and thus, brought order to Kurdistan.[70]

Apart from the *Hamidiye Light Cavalry*, there was *Asiret Mektebi* (Abdülhamid II's School for Tribes) founded in October 1892 as a social engineering project of the Ottoman state[71]. Abdülhamid II's School for Tribes provided an Ottoman education for the sons of leading tribal notables, mostly, members of the *Hamidiye Cavalry*. Just like *Hamidiye Cavalry*, *Asiret Mektebi* received not only children of Kurdish notables, but also Albanian and Arab children. According to Eugene Rogan, fifty students (between 12-16 years old) were to be accepted in the first year.

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[68] This new institution overpowered previous Kurdish notables, aghas, tribe leaders and the new strong chiefs of the Cavalry misused the power they gained. For further discussion about the Cavalry's wrongdoings see, G. R. Driver, Studies in Kurdish History, *Bulletin of The School of Oriental Studies, University of London*, Vol. 2, No. 3. (1922), pp. 491-511. Also, see Janet Klein, Power in the Periphery; the Hamidiye Light Cavalry and the Struggle over Ottoman Kurdistan, 1890-1914, (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2002).

[69] The Hamidiye Regiments were disbanded in 1909. After a few years, the regiments were reorganized under Aşiret Alaylar;"Kurdish Tribal Regiments" and disappeared after World War I. At that point, it can be argued that similar types of organizations have existed in Turkey under the name of Village Guards (Köy Koruculari/Local defense units). Village Guards; Kurdish militia recruited from Kurdish tribes, were created as a direct response to Partia Karkare Kurdistan/ the Workers' Party of Kurdistan, PKK. For further discussion see Martin van Bruinessen, "Kurds, States and Tribes", in Tribes and Power, eds. Faleh A. Jabar and Hosham Dawod, (London, Saki Books, 2003), pp. 174-175 and Selim Deringil, "Self Image and Social Engineering in Turkey", in *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States*, ed. Dru C. Gladney, (Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1998) especially pp. 221-226

[70]The government announced its rightening policies on Takvim-i Vekayi, For an example see *Takvim-i Vekayi*, No: 47 (11 Teşrin-i Sânî, 1324/ November 24, 1908)

[71] Selim Deringil*, İktidarın Sembolleri ve İdeoloji,* (İstanbul, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2002)p.109.

The expenses of the students, including room, board, tuition and traveling, were to be paid by the government. Apart from these, each student was to receive 30 piasters financial aid[72].

The initial aim was to disrobe the students from their tribal/backward identities and transform them into educated, loyal and reliable Ottomans[73]. This transformation was a crucial necessity if the rulers wanted to integrate the periphery to its modernizing center. This intention shows itself in Abdullah Frères' (photographers of Abdulhamid II) album; "imperial self-portrait" prepared for the national libraries of the United States, Britain and France. These albums were created to show the Europeans how far the Ottoman Empire achieved progress during the reign of Abdülhamid II. In one of the photos in the album, a student in his national (Arabian, Kurdish or Albanian) costume is standing in front of a rural scene and the next photo shows a group of students in European-style school uniforms standing in front of Asiret Mektebi. In fact, these images can be read as the illustration of an Ottoman center which created its own "oriental periphery" with the aim of demonstrating the mystery of modern-European style-education on these tribal, backward Kurds, Arabs or Albanians.

The rules of the game were clear; if the Ottoman rulers could achieve to modernize their own Orient through several social engineering projects, then they would gain momentum in their race to catch up with the Western countries. Besides, the effective implementation of the

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[72] Eugene L. Rogan, Asiret Mektebi: Abdulhamid II's School for Tribes (1892-1907), *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1. (Feb., 1996), p.5

[73] The ninth and tenth articles of the school's regulations (nizamname) show the aims of the Aşiret School clearly. "The principal aim for the founding of the school is to enable the tribal people to partake of the prosperity that emanates from knowledge and civilization, and to further augment their well-known natural inclination towards and love for the Great Islamic Caliphate, and the Sublime Ottoman Sultanate, as well as to strengthen and confirm earnest loyalty to the state and religious duties incumbent on them by the Şeriat and civil laws (..)" and "Upon completion and receipt of diploma, when the students return to their tribes, they will work as teachers in schools which are intended to be opened in their environs, or in some other appropriate service and will be hired by the state civil service." See, Eugene Rogan, *ibid, p. 6*

modernization project would be a good indicator of the Ottomans' ability to internalize European discourse and to act as Europeans or become Europeans.

For this reason, Asiret Mektebi can be interpreted as a part of a broader social engineering policy of Abdülhamid II, which aimed at the full integration of the Kurdish and Arab periphery to the imperial center. The school was planned to have a long-term "modernizing/civilizing influence" on Kurdish society through Kurdish children, however, neither the Asiret Mektebi nor the Ottoman Empire could maintain their existence long enough to reap the matured fruits of the project. The former was closed in February 1907, eleven years before the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire.

Another significant Kurdish uprising coming forty years after the Sheikh Ubeydullah Rebellion happened in the Shiite Kızılbaşî Dersim region in 1920. The rebellion failed for many reasons, but the most important reason was its Kızılbaş identity. In the minds of most Kurmancî Kurds of the time, the rebellion began as an Alevi rebellion and this prevented them from taking part in the uprising[74].

The idea of Kurdish autonomy fed by the Wilsonian principle of self-determination was also foretold in the Treaty of Sevres in 1920, only to be replaced by disillusionment created by the Treaty of Lausanne (1923)[75]**.** The latter disregarded the question of Kurdish autonomy with respect to the new nation state's Kemalist doctrine, claiming that all citizens in Turkey were to create a homogeneous nation. The Kurds lost their most important chance hitherto for autonomy, and in its place they found themselves living in Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria as minorities.

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[74] *Koçgiri Halk Hareketi : 1919-1921,* (Ankara, Komal Yayınları, 1976)

[75]For Sevres Treaty's Section III : "Kurdistan"; Article 62, 63, 64, see The Turkish Peace Treaty (Text and Map) Official Text of Terms Imposed on Turkey by the Allies in the Treaty of Sevres, *Current History* (New York), 13:2:1 (1921:Jan.) p.164.

The next major rebellion was the Sheikh Said rebellion of 1925. Before the rebellion, the new-born nation-state had already begun espousing an ethno-nationalist ideology, inspired mostly from the European nation-state experience. What this period witnessed was the process whereby the Ottoman Empire was constructed as *persona non grata* by the Turkish Republic. It was clear that *l'homme malade d'Europe* had sunk into deep oblivion. This ideology took it for granted that people of the modern Turkish state abandoned their previous religious, ethnic, Ottoman, pre-modern identities and voluntarily united under the roof of the Turkish identity. This assimilative Turkish nationalist discourse regarded all nationals as "Turk", ignoring the separate languages, ethnic backgrounds, religious belongings they possessed. The ideology was crowned with credos like "Citizen, speak Turkish!"or "How happy is s\he who says 'I am a Turk."As Mesut Yeğen argues, Kurdishness and the Kurdish question were reconstructed within this particular discursive formation which was constituted by the Turkish nationalist and secular discourses. Thus the Kurdish question was conceived as the indispensable outcome of the tensions between the Islamic/traditional backwardness of the past and the secular/modern novelties of the present[76].

The Plan for Reformation of the East (Article 14, 1925) listed the cities and towns where Kurds live and announce that Kurdish was banned in these area:

> People who speak a language other than Turkish in state and municipality institutions, and other organs and administration, in schools, at the marketplace in the district and regional centers of Malatya, Elâziz, Diyarıbekir, Bitlis, Van, Muş, Urfa, Ergani, Hozat, Erciş, Adilcevaz, Ahlat, Palu, Çarsancak, Çemişgezek, Ovacık, Hısnımansur, Behisni, Arga, Hekimhan, Birecik, Çermik, will be brought before the courts for committing a crime against the state and the local authorities.[77]

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[76] Mesut Yeğen, "The State and the Exclusion of Kurdish Identity in Turkey" in ed. Sylvia Kedorieu, *Identity, Democracy and Politics*, (London, Frank Cass&Co Ltd., 1996), pp. 216-230

[77] Bayrak, Mehmet, Kürtler ve Ulusal-Demokratik Mücadeleleri: Gizli Belgeler- Araştırmalar-Notlar, Öz-Ge Yayınları, Ankara, 1993, p. 486-487

The names of Kurdish places were changed into Turkish ones; people could not call their children with Kurdish names; Kurdish songs, books, journals were banned. The names "Kurd", "Kurdistan", "Kurdish" became taboo. Under these circumstances, Kurds were categorized as "Mountain Turks" living in "Eastern Anatolia / 'the East" and their distinct identities were rejected. Measures such as banning the traditional Kurdish costume, the Turkification of village names and various restrictions on the use of the Kurdish language were introduced.[78] Therefore, from the inception of the Turkish Republic until the end of the 1980s, it was thought that there was no Kurdish constituent in the Turkish nation state[79]. Although the Kurds have always been forced to forget their own culture, language, literature, symbolic capital, social memory, Hamit Bozarslan is right when he claims that rebellions and resistances kept this memory alive[80]. My aim in this thesis is not to deconstruct the grand narratives of Turkish nationalism or the Kemalist secular program of modernization with its economic policies and ethno-nationalist

[78]As İsmail Beşikçi clearly explains in International Colony; Kurdistan, even the word "Kurd" was not used in offical documents, the newspapers, in politics. See İsmail Beşikçi, *International Colony; Kurdistan*, (England, Garod Books, 2004) pp. 29-32. Kurdish language was banned in 1924; and in the 1930s, people who spoke Kurdish in public were fined five kurus per word. In response to these measures, sporadic Kurdish revolts broke out during the period from 1924 to 1937. See David McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denie*d (London: Minority Rights Group, 1992) pp. 199-201.For a broader discussion, see A. Blaustein and G. Flanz, *Constitutions of the Countries of the World - Turkey*. Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., August 1994, p. 13; Skutnabb-Kangas, T. and Bucak, S. 1994 "Killing a mother tongue - How the Kurds are deprived of linguistic human rights" in Skutnabb-Kangas, T. and Phillipson, R. (eds.), Linguistic Human Rights: Overcoming Linguistic Discrimination, Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 347-(sayfa aralığını bul), Ismail Beşikçi: *State Ideology and the Kurds*, *Middle East Report*, No. 153, Islam and the State. (Jul. - Aug., 1988), p. 43. Jenny B. White, *Islam and Democracy: The Turkish Experience ,* Current History, 94:588 (1995:Jan.) p.7. Dwight James Simpson, *Turkey: Shadows Of Conflict,* Current History, 72:423 (1977:Jan.) p.11, Megan Clark, Making Kurdish Visible: Orthography, Emblematicity and Linguistic Disobedience", Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago, workshop paper: http://cas.uchicago.edu/workshops/. Sibel Bozdogan and Resat Kasaba (eds.) Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey, (Seattle : University of Washington Press, c1997)pp. 9-12.

[79] Lucian Rambout quotes Minister of Justice, Mahmut Esat Bozkurt's sentences in Çağdaş Kürdistan Tarihi, he says "The only master, the sole lord in this country is the Turks. Those not of Turkish descent have only one right in this country - the right to be servant or slaves. All friends, all foes, even the mountains, are to know this truth." See. Lucian Rambout, Çağdaş Kürdistan Tarihi, (İstanbul : Aydınlar Matbaası, 1992.) p. 41

[80]See Hamit Bozarslan, *Violence in the Middle East : from political struggle to self-sacrifice,* (Princeton, NJ : Markus Wiener, 2004) and also see, Kendal Nezan, "The Kurds: Current Position and Historical Background", in Kurdish Culture and Identity, eds. Philip Kreyenbroek and Christine Allison, (London and New Jersey, Zed Books, 1996) pp. 7-15

foundations, but to understand the complex background of Kurdish rebellions and nationalist movements which are important parts of Kurdish history[81].

Subsequent to these new policies of the state, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, after securing power, abolished the caliphate, which had been the only remaining ideological connection linking (Sunni) Kurds to their Turkish compatriots. The abolition of the caliphate on the path towards the establishment of a secular Turkish Republic changed the entire future for the Kurds. In the late imperial Qajar and Ottoman Empires, it was religion, not ethnicity, that determined the identity of communities through a simple binary distinction of Muslims and non-Muslims.[82] Relying on this religious fraternity, some Kurds kept their loyalty to their co-religionist Turks in the post-war period.[83] Now, the abolition of the Caliphate was as a destructive policy as the removal of emirates in Kurdistan; the latter completely disrupted Kurdish political-administrative structure and the former removed the last remaining bond between Kurds and Turks.

It was under these conditions that in 1925 there began a series of Kurdish uprisings in southeastern Turkey led by Sheikh Said[84]. The *Azadî* (Freedom) organization, which had been founded in 1921, now set about recruiting and spreading its ideas in Kurdistan, especially

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[81]For further discussion on the evolution of Kurdish identity in the Turkish Republic see Mesut Yeğen, *Müstakbel Türk' ten Sözde Vatandaşa,* (İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2006)

[82] Because Qajar Empire is not one of the focuses of this thesis, I will not get into the details of this totally different story of the center-periphery relationships between the Kurds and the ruler in the Qajar Empire. For further discussion on this subject, see Denise Natali, *The Kurds and the State*, (New York, Syracuse University Press, 2006) especially pp. 14-25

[83] According to Bilal Şimşir's work, *İngiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk, 1919-1938*, Atatürk stated "As a coreligionist, I pray that you must not heed the strife stirred amongst us and which has separated us. (..) Our initial objective is to save the country and Islamism from the hands of enemies who think that our lands - our country is a digestible mouthful!" See Bilal Şimşir, *İngiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk, 1919-1938,* (Ankara : Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1973-1984) p.215 Moreover,İsmet İnönü wrote in his memoires that Kurds fought with Turks bravely and he added that Lousanne was an achievement that Kurds and Turks gained together. See. İsmet İnönü, *Hatıralar*, Vol. 2. (Ankara : Bilgi Yayınevi, 1985-1987), p. 202 These two examples can clarify important role of Islam in Kurdish loyalty to their coreligionists Turkish siblings.

[84]Albert Howe Lybyer, Turkey and the Near East, *Current History* (New York), 22:3 (1925: June) p.501. Prof. Albert Howe Lyber, Turkey and the Near East, *Current History* (New York) , 22: 4 (1925; July)p. 672,

through Sufi networks. Being mostly "religiously motivated"[85], Sheikh Said, an influential Naqshibandi sheikh, led the rebellion against the state. He wrote to the Kurdish ulema and tribes lamenting about the Turkish betrayal to the Kurds and Islam. He was to issue a fatwa in order to criticize the "wrongdoings" of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's new regime.[86]

The rebellion was destined to fail from the start. According to *Current History*'s news, the budget of the committee of the Republic allocated $ 5.000.000 and three battalions to suppress the rebellion. In March, several newspapers were silenced in order to placate the general discontent and suppress the religious enthusiasm. After suppressing the rebellion, Independence Tribunals (İstiklal Mahkemeleri) were set up to try the members of the uprisings. Dervish lodges were closed[87] and numerous Kurds were deported from the Kurdish regions to other parts of Turkey[88].

The uprisings led by Sheikh Ubeydullah and Sheikh Said were made possible, in part, by the power vacuum created in Kurdistan following the removal of traditional ruling elites, *mirs*, after the establishment of Ottoman central control in Kurdistan in the nineteenth century. Sheikhs could easily gain power, prestige, and followers compared to Ottoman officials since loyalty to these religious leaders would naturally outweigh loyalty to the imperial center. Furthermore, the foregoing could be interpreted as an indicator of the fact that establishing relationship with a sheikh meant transcending the boundaries of one's village. Thus, if the sheikh supported any

[85]While many who were involved in the Sheikh Said rebellion participated for "Kurdish national" reasons, it should also be noted that the rebellion also drew participation from non-Kurds, such as Turks or Armenians, and was motivated for many by religious and/or economic (class-based) interests. For further information on the multifaceted nature of the rebellion itself see Farhad Kazemi, "Peasant Uprisings in Twentieth- Century Iran, Iraq, and Turkey," in Farhad Kazemi and John Waterbury, eds., *Peasants and Politics in the Modern Middle East,* (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991)

[86] See Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey,* (Leiden, E.J.Brill, 1981) pp. 64-65

[87]Albert Howe Lybyer, *"Turkey and the Near East", Current History* (New York), 22:2 (1925:May) p.325

[88]Martin van Bruinessen, "Kurdish Society and the Modern State: Ethnic Nationalism versus Nation-Building", in *Papers on Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity: Kurdistan in Search of Ethnic Identity*, (Uthrect, Houtsma Foundation Publication Series, No.1, 1990)pp. 45-46

nationalist ideas, as Sheikh Ubeydullah and Shiekh Said are said to have, then the idea of an imagined “national” or “religious-national” community could swiftly spread among these people.

CHAPTER FOUR:

KURDISH NATIONALIST DISCOURSE

The Role of the Kurdish Nationalist Elite

The Kurds were a minority in a multi-ethnic and centralized Ottoman Empire. Religion was a defining marker of community and played a significant role in the emergence of Kurdish nationalism. Peasants and nomads constituted the majority of the Kurdish population which was largely dependent on animal-raising and agriculture. Thus, most Kurds were rural and deeply attached to their traditions and religion. This life-style may be one of the reasons for a slow change and the resistance to social, political and economic transformation when compared to urban centers. However, the Kurdish intellectual elites, the majority of whom lived in cities, were receptive to new ideas and other influences coming from the outside, especially from Europe[89].

These well educated, Western-inspired, nationalist elites took the lead in nation-formation. Under the light of aforementioned information, it can be said that the motive behind the rise of Kurdish nationalism was not the discovery of a primordial Kurdish national identity; on the contrary, the rise of Kurdish nationalism was a direct consequence of the desire to construct a Kurdish national identity. Kurdish nationalist intellectuals played a crucial role in this nation-building process.

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[89]As Rohat Alakom puts it, it was no accident that Kurdish nationalism arose in this European metropolis rather than in the isolated Kurdish areas of eastern Anatolia. In Istanbul, the sons of the Kurdish upper classes came into contact with other burgeoning national-minded elites. Rohat Alakom, *Eski İstanbul Kürtleri(1453-1925),*(İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 1998)

However, after reading Kurdish-Ottoman journals published by Kurdish nationalist intellectuals, several archival documents and secondary sources, it becomes apparent that before World War I, Kurdish intellectuals did not create a common understanding of concepts like "Kurdish nationalism", "Kurdishness"or "independence". As it can be inferred from the excerpts quoted in this dissertation, even the most excited writers' debates in journal articles could not create a heated nationalist rhetoric to evoke a popular response. In other words, although Kurdish intellectuals dedicated themselves to the Kurdish national movement, they kept on believing that their own destiny was related to Ottoman Empire's destiny.[90] For this reason, on the one hand, they continued to maintain their own movement but on the other hand, this never created a conflict with the desire for the preservation of the Ottoman Empire. However, it can be observed from Jîn Journal (1918-1919) that with the dismemberment of the empire after the Great War, Kurdish intellectuals reconsidered their political identities and most of them disrobed from their Ottomanist attitudes.

In the initial phase of their emergence, the Kurdish leaders came from great aristocratic families such as the Bedirkhans and Babans.[91] Some took official posts in the army or the government,[92] while others became sheikhs such as Sheikh Ubeydullah and Sheikh Said. They all had a high and, to some degree, cosmopolitan education. Many spent time in Europe and

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[90] The best illustration of this situation can be seen in Kurdish journals. The authors of these journals paid special attention to Ottoman territorial integrity and lamented for political disasters in the Balkans. (Abdullah Cevdet lamented for the situation of *l'homme malade* in one of his poems - *The Country with Deep Grief*, 30 May 1915-; "Why did you sink in isolation and ruins?/ why did you wear mourning of any kind?/ Yemen bleeds. The Balkans drank red blood/ Nightingales are miserable, roses are hopeless." (Abdullah Cevdet, *Karlı Dağdan Ses*, (İstanbul, Orhaniye Matbaası, 1931). Apart from these, if their primary aim was to elevate Kurdish people's situation, their secondary aim was to be beneficial for the Ottoman Empire while they were trying to make Kurds "more" educated, "more civilized" and more modern"

[91]Writers and editors of *Kurdistan* were from Bedirkhan family while many writers of Roji Kurd were coming from Baban family.

[92] Sherif Pasa is the first person one can remember as a government official, Kurdish nationalist. He dressed for the role of a Kurdish nationalist especially after World War I, for further information see Rohat Alakom, *Şerif Paşa: Bir Kürt Diplomatın Fırtınalı Yılları,* (Istanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 1998)

became familiar with Western liberal ideas or joined opponent Turkish and Armenian intellectuals in order to dethrone authoritarian Abdülhamid II.[93]

Shouldering the mission of leading their people, Kurdish intellectuals laid down the ideological and organizational foundations of nation-formation. Their primary task was to raise the level of education in Kurdish society, standardize and develop the Kurdish language, reconstruct Kurdish history and, following similar examples, they set out to spread enlightenment by establishing the first Kurdish newspaper and journals. By establishing journals and newspapers, they aimed at spreading the idea of a Kurdish nation and developing Kurdish consciousness of a shared history, culture, language, religion, values, ancestry and ethnic community. Apart from these printing activities, they also created political and cultural associations to coordinate all their activities.

First of all, nationalists claimed the very existence of the Kurdish nation, among a community of other nations.[94] Second, Kurdish thinkers wanted Kurdish autonomy-independence and outlined an idea of community that was based on ethnicity[95]. Third, they claimed leadership of this nation for themselves[96].

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[93]Dr. Abdullah Cevdet's biography gives the reader a good insight about the Kurdish intellectuals relating to Ottoman and Western intellectuals. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Bir Siyasi Düşünür Olarak Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönem*i, (Ankara, Üçdal Neşriyat, 1981)

[94]"The existence of Kurdish nationalism can be recognized and acknowledged after the Arabs and Albanians. Since Kurds live in remote parts of Anatolia, far from the centers of civilization, this delay can be understood; however, finally the time has come and it has begun action according to the social laws". Lutfü Fikri, 'Kürd Milliyeti" (Kurdish Nationality), *Roji Kurd,* No.4, 30 August 1329 (12 September, 1913), p.3

[95]Many articles in *Jîn,* (1918-1919) which will be discussed later in this chapter supported the idea of independent Kurdistan.

[96]Amir Hassanpour, *Kurdistan' da Milliyetçilik ve Dil (1918-1985*), (İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2005), p.131

The Kurdish elite carried out their nationalist tasks at a time of rising ferment among the diverse subjects of the Ottoman Empire; the Albanians in the Balkans[97] and the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia[98] had already claimed their rights to form distinct political communities. Indeed, after the turn of the century, the constitutional movement had gained strength in Iran[99]; in India the Muslims and Hindu resistance against British colonialism had intensified[100]; and in Central Asia Muslim intellectuals confronted Russian dominance and native despotism[101]. But above all, it was the Young Turk movement- within the Ottoman Empire and in Europe- which influenced Kurdish intellectuals to assert their identity and achieve some form of nationhood[102]. Thus, along with non-Muslim communities, Muslim Arabs, Persians and Turks who continued to identify themselves with Islam on the one hand and were stimulated by nationalist tendencies on the other affected the Kurds and helped them to get in motion.

In continuous dialogue with the above-mentioned nationalist movements and political activities, the Kurdish nationalist elite recognized the necessity for a permanent association that would assume a central role in organizing their activities. They, thus, founded the Kürt Teavün

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[97]A.L. Macfie*, Osmanlının Son Yılları*, (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2003) p. 70, Stavro Skendi, The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912, (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1967), George W. Gawrych, "Tolerant Dimensions of Cultural Pluralism in the Ottoman Empire: The Albanian Community, 1800-1912", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 4. (Nov., 1983), pp. 519-536

[98]Fatma Müge Göçek, Ethnic Segmentation, Western Education, and Political Outcomes:Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Society, *Poetics Today*, Vol. 14, No. 3, "Cultural Processes in Muslim and Arab Societies: Modern Period" (Autumn, 1993), pp. 507-538.

[99] Juan R. I. Cole, "Iranian Millenarianism and Democratic Thought in the 19th Century", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol. 24, No. 1. (Feb., 1992), pp. 1-26. Chris Paine; Erica Schoenberger, "Iranian Nationalism and the Great Powers: 1872-1954", *MERIP Reports*, No. 37. (May, 1975), pp. 3-28. Asghar Fathi, "Role of the Traditional Leader in Modernization of Iran, 1890-1910",*International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1. (Feb., 1980), pp. 87-98, Emmanuel Huntzinger. Politics of Cultural Change and Religious Discourse in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Empire and Qajar Persia, (Master's Thesis, Bogazici University. Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History, 2004)

[100]Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press 1993)

[101]Jacques Waardenburg, "Muslim Enlightenment and Revitalization. Movements of Modernization and Reform in Tsarist Russia (ca. 1850-1917) and the Dutch East Indies (ca. 1900-1942)", *Die Welt des Islams*, New Ser., Bd. 28, Nr. 1/4. (1988), pp. 569-584

[102]Wadie Jwaideh*, Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi: Kökenleri ve Gelişimi,* (İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1999), pp.196-197

ve Terakki Cemiyeti (Association for Kurdish Mutual Assistance and Progress) in Vezneciler (Istanbul) in September 1908. The founding members of the association were Emir Emin Ali Bedirkhan, Ferik Serif Pasha, Seyyid Abdülkadir, Damat Ahmet Zülkif Pasha, Halil Hayalî and Naim Baban and the chair of the association was chosen among them; Seyyid Abdülkadir.[103]

The immediate aim of the organization was to profit from the liberal atmosphere in the wake of the Young Turk Revolution by taking social and political action. They wanted to bring different Kurdish groups together with the representatives of leading families. The main objectives of the Association for Kurdish Mutual Assistance and Progress were to introduce the advantages of the Constitution to the Kurds; to support Ottomanism, the Constitutiton and the new regime; to strengthen Kurdish people's loyalty to the authority of rulers and the caliphate; to improve industry, agriculture and the education level in Kurdish society; to maintain cordial relationships with all Ottoman millets with special attention to Armenians and Nestorians and lastly, to solve lingering problems and distrust among Kurdish tribes.[104]. The association achieved some of its objectives.

The initial suggestions came from the Kurds who had recently returned from Europe and who were determined to turn their slogan, "Unity and Progress" into reality. Thus, it may be surmised that the Kurds were influenced by the Young Turks activities in Europe. In fact, the Kurds began advancing their own nationalist agenda within the Committee of Union and Progress context. Indeed, there had been Kurdish representation since the foundation of the CUP in 1889, as two of its founders, Abdullah Cevdet and İshak Sukuti, were both Kurds.[105]

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[103] Malmîsanij, *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Gazetesi*, (İstanbul, Avesta Yayınları, 1999), pp. 23-24
[104]Malmîsanij, *ibid,* p.19
[105]Wadie Jwaideh*, Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi: Kökenleri ve Gelişimi,* (İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1999), p.196. (The other two founders were Mehmet Reid, a Circassian, and İbrahim Temo, an Albanian.)The Kurds who later

Following in the footsteps of the Association for Kurdish Mutual Assistance and Progress, Heviya Kurd, founded in Istanbul in 1912, attempted to promote a Kurdish culture and construct Kurdish national feeling and, in effect, create a Kurdish national identity.[106]

Before making concrete political claims, nationalists had to show not only that the Kurds constituted a "national" identity, but also that they had been a nation since time immemorial[107]. To do this, they worked to establish the importance of Kurds in Islamic and Ottoman contexts and to write Kurdish history from a uniquely Kurdish perspective. History, and in addition, Kurdish literature, were included in these journals to substantiate the claims of the nationalists, and also to underline the Kurdish aspect of the Kurds' multifaceted identities[108]. They tried to demonstrate that the Kurds were a timeless nation through writing history and republishing literature in their journals and newspaper.

While the Kurdish elites were trying to create the sense of "Kurdishness"among people they faced a number of difficulties. One of the most important problems occurred in deciding who exactly was a Kurd. It should be noted that most probably, the same confusion occupied the minds of Turks, Tatars, Albanians, Arabs, Bosnians, Circassians or Lazs, who had identified themselves primarily as Muslims in the classical Ottoman millet system. In the Kurdish case, religion and language, which can be the primary elements of nationhood, were not helpful.

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joined the group seem to have been sons of ruling families of Kurdistan, who sought new means to power, as their hereditary rights as rulers in Kurdistan had been usurped by Ottoman officials, who had brought Kurdistan more tightly under the sultan's thumb, earlier in the century, and also under Sultan Abdulhamid II, with his creation of the Hamidiye Light Cavalry in 1891.

[106]Malmîsanij, *Kürt Talebe Hevi Cemiyeti*, (İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2002), p. 58

[107]The importance of history was emphasized from the beginning of publishing activities. For example Abdurrahman Bedirkhan wrote: "Despite the fact that Kurds possess special human qualities such as wit and mental acuity, courage and industriousness, are altruistic and sacrificing, and have a love for liberty as if they worshipped it, in world history, their name is not frequently mentioned, and in a century in which civilization has reached its peak, other nations do not really know much about the general history of this noble people". Abdurrahman Bedirkhan, "Kurdistan ve Kürdler" (Kurdistan and the Kurds), *Kurdistan,* No. 24, 19 Agustos 1316(1 September, 1900)

[108]Emphasis on history, language, literature and education will be discussed later in this chapter.

Although most of the Kurds in the Ottoman Empire were Sunni, there were also followers of the Hanefi and Shafi creeds as well as Alevis, whom many Shafi Kurds would not accept as Kurds. Moreover, apart from Sunnis, Shafis and Alevis who could be united under the umbrella of Islam, there were also Yazidis who made the religious heterogeneity much more visible. As for language, there were/are four major dialects in Kurdish. While the majority of Kurds spoke the Kurmanci dialect, there were some who spoke Zazakî, Soranî and Goranî. This linguistic heterogeneity was another factor keeping Kurdish groups separate. [109]

Although creating the idea of nationhood; a sense of "imagined community", a feeling of "belonging to a nation" among people of geographically, linguistically, tribally, religiously fragile territory was a difficult task, the national elite tried to carry out this objective as much as possible. Journals and newspapers, which created a bridge between the elites and the Kurdish population; both rural and urban population, were the most effective means.

The Role of Newspapers and Journals

> "A hundred epistles and odes are not worth a penny any more! Newspapers and magazines have (now) become valuable and respected,"[110]
>
> Hacı Qadirî Koyî

This part of the chapter is about the emergence of the Kurdish press in the late Ottoman period; the role the press played in the early decades of the Kurdish nationalist movement and the discourse developed by Kurdish nationalists in the late Ottoman period. The following questions

[109]For further discussion on Kurdish language and its dialects see, Amir Hassanpour, *Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan 1918 - 1985*, (San Francisco: Meilen Research University Press, 1992)
[110]Amir Hassanpour, "The Creation of Kurdish Media" *in Kurdish Culture and Identity*, eds. Philip Kreyenbroek and Christine Allison (London and New Jersey, Zed Books, 1996) p. 56

will be traced and answered: how did Kurdish intellectuals establish the bases of nationhood for Kurds? How did they work to disseminate their nationalist claims? How did the Kurdish thinkers address the problems facing their nation? How did they determine their roles of leadership and how did this nationalist intelligentsia first go about asserting the Kurds' existence as a distinct and important historic people in Ottoman and Islamic contexts? Then, how did the nationalist discourse turn to Kurdish history and literature to show that not only did the Kurds constitute a nation, but also that they had shown nationalist aspirations in the pre-modern era? Thus, the journals which represent the voices of the nationalists become one of the most important sources of this chapter. My primary sources are the extant Kurdish journals from the late Ottoman period to which I have had access. They include *Kurdistan* (1898-1902), *Roj-i Kurd* (1913), *Hetaw-ı Kurd* (1913-1914), *Jîn* (1918-1919), and *Kurdistan* (1919).

As discussed in the second chapter, Benedict Anderson emphasizes two important developments in modern world history that contributed to a situation in which communities could be developed along national lines. First, the institution which he calls "print-capitalism" came to create an actual marketplace for ideas that would change not only the nature of economic relations in a given society, but also their ways of conceiving time and space and their positions in this new temporal and spatial organization. The second development was the rise of the novel and the newspaper, which, in addition to being printed in vernaculars that would later become "national" languages, helped to change the concepts of time and space for readers, with the introduction of, what Anderson calls, homogenous, empty space, or the concept of "meanwhile."[111] This new temporal dimension of the "meanwhile" contributed to the preparation of a mental space through which an imagined national community would emerge. In other words,

[111]Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of* Nationalism (London; New York: Verso, 1991)

individuals on the stage of life believed that they were connected to people they had never seen before by virtue of belonging to the same community. The newspaper readers were connected to each other by virtue of the fact that they were all reading the same paper, and were somehow or another affected by, or interested in those very events. Thus, for Anderson, print-capitalism played a central role in the development of nationalism on a "global level", and helped provide a space in which readers (if we consider that newspapers were read aloud in coffeehouses in the Kurdish case, non-readers were also a part of this process) could easily imagine a national community they themselves belonged to.

While there were numerous journals in circulation in the late Ottoman period, there were others that spoke directly to Kurds[112] from *a Kurdish* perspective. The aforementioned journals provided a space in which both contributors and readers were linked to one another or shared Kurdishness. They created an imagined community with people whom they had never seen before, but whose existence they could imagine through the bond of Kurdishness established via the printed word. Thus, the journals took their places in print-capitalism; creating a link between readers and writers who knew that they were connected in this way because of their Kurdishness.

They duly constructed a nationalist discourse, as did other nationalists around Europe and in the Ottoman Empire, through which they strived to demonstrate how Kurds deserved the title "nation"as much as any group because of the primordial and unbroken history of Kurds. The Kurdish intelligentsia first tried to show how the Kurds possessed an uncontaminated history distinct from others. While this discourse tried to demonstrate how the Kurds were an important

[112] Although journals were written both in Turkish and Kurdish, the emphasis here is that these were the first Kurdish journals and their primary targets were Kurdish populations.

element in both Islamic and Ottoman contexts[113], it tried to underline the Kurdish aspect of the Kurds' multi-faceted identities. References to this multi-faceted Kurdish identity is frequently made in these Kurdish journals, even in the articles written by those who had differences in their Kurdish identity above all other things. In short, notwithstanding the degree of emphasis, ties to Islam, tribe, family, and the Ottoman Empire remain an important part of this discourse.

While each contributor to the Kurdish press was obviously attached to promoting Kurdish well-being on some level, the imagined entity or community within which this Kurdish welfare and progress was to be vitalized varied from one author to another. For some, an independent Kurdish state constituted the ultimate goal and was the recognition of the Kurdish entity within a greater, inclusive Islamic polity. Some wanted to achieve autonomy for the Kurds under the existing Ottoman state. Therefore, a number of contexts exist against which Kurds were shown to be an important element.

As a result of this national awakening numerous organizations flourished, namely cultural organizations and youth, student and women's organizations, and there was a multitude of books, magazines and newspapers being published. These were the methods which the peoples - including the Kurdish people - used in their national struggle. As mentioned above, writers of the early journals, on the one hand, paid special attention to the political unity, territorial integrity and preservation of the Ottoman Empire and on the other hand, they emphasized the elevation of Kurdishness, Kurdish culture and freedom. However, after World War I, many writers changed their political stances and followed more nationalist / Kurdist paths.

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[113]An example for the importance of Kurds in Islamic context, see Babanzade İsmail Hakkı, Müslümanlık ve Kürdlük, (Muslimness and Kurdishness/in Turkish), *Roji Kurd*, No:2, 6 Temmuz 1329 (9 July 1913), p. 5, Keküklü Necmeddin, Kürd Talebe Cemiyeti ve Kürdlerin Makam-I Hilafete Hizmetleri, (the Kurdish Student Society and Services of Kurds to the Caliphate), *Roji Kurd,* No:1, 2 Haziran 1329, (15 June 1913), p. 6. An example for the importance of Kurds in Ottoman context, Mikdat Midhat Bedirhan, Petition 2: Sultan Abdülhamid Han-I Sani Hazretlerine, *Kurdistan,* No: 4, 21 Mayıs 1314 (2 June 1898) p.1

The first newspaper in the Kurdish language was published during this period. It was called Kurdistan and was first published in Cairo on 22 April, 1898, by Mikdad Midhat Badirkhan[114]. Mikdat Mithad Bedirkhan and his brother Abdurrahman Bedirkhan were two of the most important figures in the period which gave birth to Kurdish awakening and nationalism. In the 1890s, the two brothers were living in Cairo as exiles and they published the first Kurdish newspaper, *Kurdistan,* firstly in Cairo. As the reader can understand from the newspaper, Mikdat Ali Bedirkhan had to return to Istanbul because of his health problems and the insistent orders of the sultan Abdülhamid II. After this compulsory departure of Mikdat Mithad Bedirkhan, his brother took charge of the newspaper and expanded its publication to Geneva, London and Folkestone. Between 1898 and the last issue in 1902, 31 issues were published. After Kürdistan, many new Kurdish newspapers and magazines were published, namely, *Roji Kurd* (later *Hetâw-î Kurd,* Istanbul 1913), *Yakbûn,*(Istanbul 1913), *Bâng-î Kurd* (Baghdad 1914), *Kurdistan* (Sabilâkh, today's Mahabad 1914) and *Wurme* (Wurme 1914), *Kurdistan* (Alippo 1915), *Jîn* (Istanbul 1918-19) and *Kurdistan* (Istanbul 1919)

As mentioned before, Mikdad Mithat Bedirkhan directed only the first five issues of *Kurdistân*. Then, he was forced to return to Istanbul for health reasons, besides; the sultan had already ordered him to come to Istanbul. From the sixth issue to its thirty-first and final issue, the publication of *Kurdistan* was left in the hands of Abdurrahman Bedirkhan[115]. Abdurrahman

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[114] It was from Cairo, a CUP center abroad, that Mikdad Mithat Bedirkhan founded the newspaper, *Kurdistan*. Sükrü Hanioglu. *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terraki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük (1889-1902),* (İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1986), p. 282, p.535 and p.632.

[115] It can be inferred from the reader-letters that it was not only the publishers who were subject to the sultan's suppressive policies. A reader lamented: "Government officials do not allow us to read the newspaper freely. If they find the journal on any person, they imprison and torture him. However, although there is such suppression, Kurds do want to read the newspaper." (Reader Letter, Kurdistan, No: 13, 2 April 1899, p. 2. After this letter, which was written in Kurmanci, the publishers sent many petitions to the Sultan Abdülhamid II asking for the free distribution of the newspaper.)The absence of Kurdish journals and the lack of modern education among Kurdish people were counted as the reasons for Kurdish backwardness. See, "A Petition", *Kurdistan*, 23 April 1899, No: 5, pp.1-2

Bedirkhan moved the head quarter from Cairo to Geneva and continued to transport the paper between Geneva, London, and Folkestone (in England), centers of CUP activity abroad. Outside the borders of the Ottoman Empire, it is clear from a number of sources that Abdurrahman Bedirkhan was an active member of the CUP, at least during the years in which he published *Kurdistan*[116]. There is evidence also demonstrating that this Kurdish newspaper was published in CUP presses[117], and was read by other CUP members[118].

Kurdistan did not represent any particular political organization and therefore offered intellectuals belonging to various ideological groups a forum for the exchange of ideas. In time, its publisher hoped, it might provide a base from which he and his colleagues could undertake sustained public initiatives. *Kurdistan* became a forum in which they advanced their nationalist agendas, criticized Hamidian policies, and worked to advance their own familial interests.[119]

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[116]The relationship between *Kurdistan* and CUP is explained briefly in Sukru Hanioğlu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terraki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük (1889-1902),* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1986). See also "Osmanlı Ozgürlükçüleri Kongresi," *Kurdistan*, No. 31, 1 Nisan 1318(14 April, 1902) In Kurdistan, Abdurrahman Bedirkhan devotes space to covering the activities of the CUP, and of several of the group's members. In the second to the last issue, for example, in an article entitled "A Great Loss," he published a eulogy for Ishak Suküti, one of the four original founders of the CUP. In the notice, Abdurrahman Bedirkhan informs his readers of Sükuti's death in San Remo, and he lauds Sukuti's work in the CUP and his dedication to Ottoman freedom. He writes; "Our dear and respected friend, ishak Sukuti Efendi of Diyarbekir, who was one of the greatest freedom fighters for the Ottomans...performed a truly important service in the Ottoman freedom organization [the CUP]... [His death] has been a true Loss for our people, and his likes cannot be easily replaced. He dedicated his life to the people. *Kurdistan*, No. 30, 1 Mart 1318 (14 March, 1902.) The coverage of CUP activities in Kurdistan surfaced especially in the latter issues, around the time of the First Congress of Ottoman Opposition, which was organized by the CUP, and which was held in Paris in 1902. The last issue of Kurdistan contains a lengthy article, which provides rich information regarding the Congress itself. However, there is no mention of Kurdish issues in the article; nor is there mention of how events that occurred or decisions made at the Congress may have impacted the Kurds. This may be due to the fact that while the intention of the Congress was to achieve representation of all ethnic elements in the empire, most delegates were invited for their participation in •the movement, and not for their ethnic origins. Abdurrahman Bedirkhan was one person who was invited for his role in the movement, and not for his Kurdishness.

[117] Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terraki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük (1889-1902),* (İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1986)

[118]For example, there are at least two articles about Kurdistan in *Osmanlı,* an official CUP paper founded in 1897. See Şükrü Hanioğlu, ibid. p.282, and footnote. 563

[119] Letters to Abdulhamid II show that the "nationalist" rhetoric of the two brothers was also a tool for regaining the power their family lost during the centralization period which brought the destruction of their emirate in the nineteenth century. Mikdat Midhat Bedirhan, "Petition 2: Sultan Abdülhamid Han-i Sani Hazretlerine", *Kurdistan,* No: 4, 21 Mayıs 1314 (2 June 1898) p.1, Mikdat Midhat Bedirhan, "Petition 2: Sultan Abdülhamid Han-I Sani

Kurdish backwardness, penury, deprivation and assailability were recognized and solutions were offered. The Bedirkhan brothers promoted cultural and educational policies through which their readers would be introduced to the accomplishments of contemporary European civilization and science in order to advance their general cultural level. The Bedirkhan brothers not only created the first Kurdish journals, but also the basis for Kurdish nationalist discourse for years to come.

They were especially trying to create a Kurdish national identity among their readership by frequently referring to history, language and religion. They tried to portray the Kurds as a distinct group with great heroes (like Salahaddin or Blacksmith Kawa), worthy epics (like Mem û Zin or Epic of Blacksmith Kawa), an ancient history, a separate culture and a distinct language. Eventually, *Kurdistan*, after brief stints in London and Folkstone in England, moved to Geneva, Switzerland. Its next and final editor, until the newspaper was closed in 1902, was the other son of Emir Bedirkhan, Abdurrahman Beg.

Kurdistan distinguished itself as being an opposition journal with a Kurdish perspective. The newspaper, in fact, carried out harsh critiques of the sultan, his policies as well as the actions of his "flattering" officials. These criticisms were conveyed in the form of petitions or open letters addressed directly to the sultan. However, what distinguishes *Kurdistan* from other CUP publications is that all the petitions to the sultan and all the denunciations of his policies somehow revolved around the plight of the Kurdish people. While other Young Turk journals of this period made similar critiques, they could be applied to all Ottomans, or at least to all Muslims, but they rarely advanced an "ethnic" or national agenda. *Kurdistan,* on the other hand,

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Hazretlerine", *Kurdistan,* No: 4, 21 Mayıs 1314 (2 June 1898) p.1, Abdurrahman Bedirkhan, "Sultan Abdülhamid Han-I Sani Hazretlerine", *Kurdistan*, No: 26, Kanun-i Evvel 1316 (14 December 1900), p.1

while working within the framework of Ottomanism on certain levels, spoke from a clearly "nationally-oriented" perspective.

From the third open letter to Abdülhamid II until the last, on a consistent basis, the Bedirkhan brothers made increasingly harsh criticism against the sultan's neglect of the Kurds and his despotic policies in Kurdistan. The petitions underscored the strategic importance of Kurdistan for the empire as a buffer zone between the two "enemy" states of Russia and Iran, and as the heart of the Ottoman Empire[120]. This point is reiterated throughout the petitions (and in other articles as well), and the strategic significance of Kurdistan is employed as a primary reason for the Palace to provide for the well-being of the Kurds. In one such petition, Mikdad Mithat Bedirkhan writes:

> My Sultan,
>
> As is known by your imperial majesty, the Kurds are the most distinguished of all the peoples [living] under the eternal Ottoman state, and Kurdistan as well, as positioned on the border of two neighboring states, is, on account of its unique location, the land which inhibits enemy aggression and enemy threats...Despite [Kurdistan's] occupying an important place, and despite our boasting of Ottoman nationality for a long time, until you, the sultan, ascended to the throne, the ways and means of improving [our situation] and education has been neglected. [121]

After concluding this passage with an appeal to the sultan to recognize the importance of allowing the circulation of *Kurdistan,* Mikdad Mithat Bedirkhan stresses once more the desire to have a just rule in the region:

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[120] Mikdat Midhat Bedirhan, Petition 2: Sultan Abdülhamid Han-I Sani Hazretlerine, *Kurdistan,* No: 4, 21 Mayıs 1314 (2 June 1898) p.1

[121] Mikdat Midhat Bedirhan, Petition 2: Sultan Abdülhamid Han-I Sani Hazretlerine, *Kurdistan,* No: 4, 21 Mayıs 1314 (2 June 1898) p.1

My Sultan,

This Kurdish newspaper will ensure and hasten the necessary reforms in the Kurdish region, and will also act as a primary tool for preventing the oppressive acts exercised by certain officials.

In a letter to the sultan, Abdurrahman Bedirkhan claims that he became a journalist in order to serve his nation by revealing the sultan's oppression carried out in the region:

> I, your humble servant, upon graduating from high school, graduated from the School of Public Administration and was then appointed to an office in the Ministry of Education, which dealt with high schools in the empire, and I worked there for six or seven years. My humble desire was to serve my nation. However, your unbearable oppression prevented me from carrying out our wish. When it became impossible to remain in Istanbul, I sacrificed my position and my salary for my sacred aim, and threw myself into the arms of liberty.[122]

Like CUP members, the Bedirkhan brothers wanted the deposition of the sultan and the creation of a new legal, social order in the Ottoman Empire. The rhetoric *Kurdistan* employed was designed to incite the people to rise up and to join the ranks of the opposition movement. Thus, in mediating between the message form and content of the newspaper, it is crucial to recognize that only on the surface level were the petitions addressed to the sultan. While the form of complaint is that of a petition to the sultan seeking him to pay attention to the oppression of state officials in the region, the actual message/ intention of the paper is directed to the Kurdish people, at least, to the Kurdish intelligentsia. Therefore, the petitions must be viewed not merely as a direct communication to the sultan, but rather as a forum in which corruption under the existing regime and the need for change is revealed and the Kurdish community is invited to recognize its importance within the empire by an appeal to Kurds' national pride.

For Kurdish intellectuals, who became relatively silent after *Kurdistan* ceased to be published, the 1908 revolution meant that they could now resume their activities more freely.

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[122]Abdurrahman Bedirkhan, Kurdistan, Sultan Abdülhamid Han-I Sani Hazretlerine, No: 26, Kanun-i Evvel 1316 (14 December 1900), p.1

Thus, Istanbul saw the proliferation of a number of Kurdish organizations and clubs, with their own newspapers. The elite increasingly felt the need for creating a permanent organization to mobilize their forces and coordinate their activities, which led to the foundation of *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Association for Kurdish Mutual Assistance and Progress) in Istanbul in September 1908. The first organization the Kurds established during this period was the *Kürd Terakki ve Teavün Cemiyeti* (Kurdish Society for Progress and Mutual Aid), also *Kürdistan Teali ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Society for the Elevation and Progress of Kurdistan), was founded in the Gedikpaşa neighborhood of Istanbul[123] The founders and members of the society included several Bedirkhans, Seyyid Abdulkadir of Nehri, Halil Hayalî, and several prominent figures from well-known Kurdish families. The societies established relations with Kurds in Kürdistan, where they set up branches leading to the rapid expansion of membership.[124] In 1909, however, the society was shut down by Young Turk authorities, when a law was passed ordering suspension of the activities of all ethnic organizations in the empire.

Cultural developments occupied the center stage in the activities of the *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Gazetesi,* which was published according to most accounts, by Seyyid Abdulkadir. The association promoted education as an essential means for creating national unity and insisted that

[123] İsmail Göldaş, *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti,* (İstanbul, Doz Yayınları, 1991)

[124]Naci Kutlay notes that branches of this organization were opened in Erzurum, Mus, Musul, Bitlis. and Diyarbekir. (Naci Kutlay*, İttihat Terakki ve Kürtler*, Ankara, Beybûn Yayınları, 1992 .p. 41). On the other hand, Janet Klein claims that, these provincial organizations were not merely "branches" of the Association for Kurdish Mutual Assistance and Progress because although they had some kind of a relationship, their priorities could be different. For example, when CUP increased crackdowns on Hamidiye tribes and their chiefs, provincial organizations reacted against these applications. Besides, CUP chose important Kurdish leaders such as Sheihk Abdulkadir – a founding member of the Association for Kurdish Mutual Assistance and Progress- and Sheikh Said-i Nursi (well-known as Said-i Kurdi amnong the Kurds) as embassies to provide provincial chiefs' support and obedience for the new regime and the Constitution. After Sheikh Abdulkadir's travel, Kurdish chiefs delivered a document that stated a promise to "live in friendship with Armenian brothers, to work for the union of all elements and to help the government to punish wrong-doers".(Janet Klein, "Kurdish Nationalists and non-nationalist Kurdists: Rethinking Minority Nationalism and the Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1909", *Nations and Nationalism*, 13 (1), 2007, pp. 139-145) Thus, while the Association for Kurdish Mutual Assistance and Progress in Istanbul was supporting CUP-at least for the first years of its rule- provincial branches used nationalist rhetoric in order to protect the status quo before 1908 against CUP.

Kurdish children pursue their studies regardless of the subject in their own mother tongue /native language. The Kurdish elite made consistent efforts in the cultivation of the Kurdish literary language, a task they intended to fulfill by collecting folk stories and legends about the Kurdish past and by writing a history of the language[125].

As mentioned above, *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti* and its newspaper were closed down in 1909. For a while, its members carried on their educational activities in another association, *Kürt Neşr-i Maarif Cemiyeti* (Association for Kurdish Educational Publications), which founded schools and published books in Kurdish. However, it ceased its activities in 1910[126]. Subsequent associations were also short-lived. The most important of these was the *Kürd Talebe Hevi Cemiyeti* (Hope Society of Kurdish Students) which was founded in Istanbul in 1912[127]. It was a Kurdish student organization, under the direction of (Kadri) Cemil Pasha, who was a student in Istanbul. It also pursued cultural advancement in order to arouse and strengthen a sense of Kurdish identity and unity among the broader population. The mission of the group was:

> To work together and in partnership to introduce Kurdish students to one another for Kurds....to unearth Kurdish language and literature to open *medreses* and schools, and to build mosques in Kurdistan,...to send poor Kurdish children to school, to teach them arts and skills, to help those who are poor..(and) in sum, to work towards the prosperity and happiness of Kurds[128]

With the establishment of *Hevi,* the class composition of Kurdish nationalism began to change. Although still the elite, members were less of the traditional ruling elite, and more from those who, according to van Bruinessen, owed their position "to high Ottoman offices rather than

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[125] Malmîsanij, *Kürt Teavün ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Gazetesi*, (İstanbul, Avesta Yayınları, 1999)
[126] Malmîsanij*, Kürt Talebe Hevi Cemiyeti*, (İstanbul, Avesta Yayınları, 2002)
[127] It was found in 1911 and received official, legal permission to meet in 19l2
[128](Unsigned), "Kurd Talebe Hêvi Cemiyeti'nin Beyannamesidir" (Declaration of the Kurdish Students Hope Society), *Hetawi Kurd*, No. 4/5, 10 Mayis 1329 (23 May, 1914), p. 2.

to a more 'traditional' leading role in Kurdish society."[129] Whereas the Kurdish society of just a few years earlier was comprised largely of nobility, *Hêvi* managed to incorporate the Kurdish bourgeoisie and intellectuals into its ranks.[130]

Again, like its predecessor, *Hêvî* endeavored to extend its influence to the provinces by opening branches in Bitlis, Muş, Diyarbekir, and Erzurum, where members developed relations with sheikhs and tribal leaders. Another branch was also opened in Lausanne, Switzerland.[131]

The group founded the journal *Roj-i Kurd* (Kurdish Day), which changed its title to *Hetaw-ı Kurd* (Kurdish Sun), after the publication of its fourth issue.[132] Both journals promoted Kurdish education, literature, and language. Together, the publication of these journals lasted from about June, 1913 to July, 1914, when, with the outbreak of the world war, the society fell apart as its members were drafted into the military.[133].

Even if the organizations had been able to remain active, wartime shortages of paper would probably have prevented them from continuing the publication of their journals. The Ottomans entered the war in November, 1914, on the Austro-German side. The war had devastating consequences for the Ottoman Empire which became a major battlefront during the war.

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[129]Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Sheikh and the State: The Social and political Structures of Kurdistan,* (New Jersey, Zed Books Ltd. 1992), p. 276

[130]Naci Kutlay, *İttihat Terakki ve Kürtler*, (Ankara, Beybûn Yayınları, 1992).p. 44. Other members mentioned by Kadri Cemil Pasha include Dr. (Mehmed) Şükrü Sekban, Şükrü Mehmed Bey, Ekrem Cemil Pasha, Memduh Bey, Kemal Fevzi, Ziya Vehbi, Kerküklü Necmeddin Hüseyin, Babanzâde Aziz, Müküslü Hamza, Harputlu Tayyip Ali, Süleymaniyeli Abdülkerim, Diyarbekirli Salih, Diyarbekirli Abdulkadir, Asaf Bedirkhan, Diyarbekirli Mustafa, Mahabatlı Dr. Mustafa Şevki,, Dr. Fuad, Hakkârili Abdurrahim Rahmi, and Diyarbekirli Faiz Bey.

[131]See (Unsigned), "Kürd Talebe Hevi Cemiyeti Lozan Şubesi (Lausanne Branch of the Kurdish Students Hope Society) *Hetawi Kurd*, No.4/5, 10 Mayis 1329 (23 May, 1914), pp.5-7.

[132] Naci Kutlay *İttihat Terakki ve Kürtler*, (Ankara: Beybûn Yayınları, 1992).p. 44) Roji Kurd was directed by Abdülkerim, and Hetawi Kurd by Baban Abdülaziz

[133]Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Sheikh and the State: The Social and political Structures of Kurdistan,* (New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd. 1992), p. 276.

Kurdistan suffered enormously from the world war[134]. Kurdish assistance in the war effort was sought by several parties. On the one hand, the Unionist-German alliance worked to bring Kurdish forces, even those on the Iranian side of the border, into the battle on their side, by provoking among the Kurds the notion of jihad (holy war) in order to attract Kurdish support.[135] On the other hand, the Russians also tried to win over the Kurds to their side, and just as the Unionist-German alliance had done, they too contacted Kurdish leaders[136]. Furthermore, the British, especially in the later years of the war, also tried hard to attract Kurdish support for their designs on the region, especially in the *vilâyet* of Mosul. Kurds understood that Kurdistan would be an important part of the war, and that the region was desired by several parties.

After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the war the Kurdish educated elite of Istanbul −−high functionaries, military officers, academics, wealthy aristocrats, and some religious figures− once again became the guiding force. At the beginning they formed a coordinating committee, *Kurdistan Teâli Cemiyeti* (The Association for the Rise of Kurdistan) in Istanbul in December 1918 under the chairmanship of Abdulkadir Bey, which pursued policies directed at achieving cultural goals, as its predecessors had done. *Kurdistan Teali Cemiyeti* was the central organization under which several subsidiary clubs were founded.[137] In addition to branches of this society established in many cities and towns in Kurdistan, the *Kürd Tamim-i Maarif ye Neşriyat Cemiyeti (*Kurdish Society for the Diffusion of Learning*),* which existed under *Hêvi* until the outbreak of the war, was revived, and the first, a Kurdish women's organization was

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[134]James B. Macdonald, "The Invasion Of Turkey", *Current History* (New York), 5:3 (1916:Dec.) p.536
[135] Kamal Mahmad Ahmad, *Kurdistan During the First World War*, (London, Saqi Books, 1994)p. 36
[136] For Russian interest in Kurdistan see Kamal Mahmad Ahmad, *ibid,* especially pp. 25-30, pp. 93-95, pp. 129-130
[137]Members of this organization listed by İsmail Göldaş: Bediuzzaman Molla Said-i Nursi, Müküslü Hamza, and Halil Hayali (founders), and Seyyid Abdulkadir, Emin Ali Bedirkhan, Fuad Pasha, Hamdi Pasha, Seyyid Abdullah, M. Ali Bedirkhan, Suleymaniyeli Mehmed Emin Bey, Hoca Ali Efendi, Arvasli Şefik Efendi, Babanzáde, Babanzâde Fuad Bey, Fethullah Efendi, Dr. Sükrü Mehmed Sekban Bey and so on. İsmail Göldaş, *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti,* (İstanbul: Doz Yayınları, 1991) pp.39-45

established under the name *Kurd Kadinlari Teali Cemiyeti* (Society for the Elevation of Kurdish Women). The *Kurdistan Teali Cemiyeti* published two journals, *Jin* (Life)[138] and *Kurdistan*[139], that served as forums for the Kurdish-Ottoman intellectuals to disseminate their views on the Kurds' situation in the rapidly-changing international order with a new urgency.[140]

With the founding of *Hêvî Kurd,* it became clear that a number of Kurdish intellectuals were gradually becoming more aware of the fact that they were living in the age of nationalism.[141] One author contributing to a journal of this period wrote that he found it interesting that in the Ottoman Empire, non- Muslim people (such as Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, and Armenians) were recognized as "nations" long before Muslim elements:

> (T)he existence of Muslim Ottoman elements remained under suspicion until the constitution and even later. Many pious Muslims claimed that this [nationalism] would cause a rift among the believers of Islam. They said, 'should we argue over the fact that you are an Arab, I am a Turk, and he [or she] is a Laz, and this is a Kurd although we are all Muslims? What a shame, a thousand times shame...' These individuals (however), despite their good will and good intentions, were not aware of social laws. They do not know that we are living in an awesome century of nationalism and it is not possible to avoid nationalist movements both within and outside of Islam, and they will take place... The existence of Kurdish nationalism can be recognized and acknowledged after the Arabs and Albanians. Since Kurds live in remote parts of Anatolia, far from the centers of civilization, this delay can be understood; however, finally the time has come and it has begun action according to the social laws.[142]

One author wrote a lengthy article entitled "Nationalist Movements in the East and West,"and using Europe as an example to show how a national awakening was necessary to rejuvenate society, this author discussed the thoughts of Voltaire, and how nationalism

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[138] *Jîn* was established in Teşrin-i Sâni 1334 (November, 1918), and lasted at least until Teşrin-i Evvel 1335/ October, 1919. The last issue of *Jîn* is the twenty-fifth issue. There is nothing, in fact, in the "last" issue of Jîn to indicate that the journal was to cease publication.

[139] The second *Kurdistan* (1919) will not be discussed in this chapter.

[140]Josep R. Lobera, "The Role of the State and the Nation in Europe," in Soledad Garcia, ed., *European Identity: a the Search for Legitimacy* (London: Pinter, 1993), p. 65

[141]For example Dr. Abdullah Cevdet writes, "We are in a period in which the nationalities are being decided and recognized". Dr.Abdullah Cevdet, "Bir Hitab" (An Adress) *Roji Kurd,* No. 1, 2 Haziran, 1329 (15 June, 1913), p.3

[142]Lutfü Fikri, 'Kürd Milliyeti" (Kurdish Nationality*), Roji Kurd*, No.4, 30 August 1329 (12 September, 1913), p.3.

revitalized and served the progress and development of such nations as France and Germany, and how the Kurds could benefit from the same:

> This breath of life, this spirit caused the emergence of new ideas and feelings in the minds of Christians. Among them, the most important one is 'the nationalist movements'. Naturally, this feeling swiftly expanded. There is no doubt that what served the progress and development of France and Germany were the sentiments of Frenchness and Germanness. These two powers striving to always have the upper hand in science, at war, in industry, and in trade, grew with this above-mentioned sentiment. The same feeling showed its influence also on Eastern Christians. (..) It is certain that this innovation spreading from the West to the East will bring many changes to the Muslim world. Look at the Arabs in Egypt or Tatars in Russia; they elevate themselves with scientific organizations. I strongly hope that our present-day conditions will create a great awakening in the Islamic world, and especially among the Kurdish element, which is the farthest behind.[143]

Kurdish intelligentsia borrowed nationalist concepts from Europe, but they transformed them in their own peculiar ways, making them meaningful in their unique contexts. However, this borrowing only took place in what Partha Chatterjee has called the "outer domain"[144]. In the *Nation and Its Fragments*, Partha Chatterjee demonstrates that while the outer, or material, world of public and political life was dominated by the colonizing West, the Bengal middle class drew strength from an inner domain, a cultural and spiritual world that could not be penetrated by Western hegemony.[145] Chatterjee pursues this thesis through a series of case studies: he looks at the spiritual world of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples[146], the evolution of history writing and the creation of a suitable Bengali/Indian past[147], the lives of middle class women, and the nationalists' determination to situate the "women's question" at the domain of the state and colonial politics[148]. In seeking to establish how the nation came into being in the specific context

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[143]Harputlu H.B., "Garpla Şark Milliyet Cereyanlan" (Nationalist Currents in the East and West), *Roji Kurd*, No. 1, 6 Haziran 1329 (19 June, 1913), pp. 8-9

[144]Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories,"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993)

[145]See also Partha Chatterjee. *ibid.* pp.116-120

[146] See also Partha Chatterjee. *ibid.* pp.42-55

[147] See also Partha Chatterjee. *İbid.* pp.76-115

[148] See also Partha Chatterjee. *İbid.* pp.116-157

of mid-twentieth century India, he also takes a brief and critical look at the role of national planning[149] and the place of communities within the modern state[150]

The "inner domain" in the Kurdish case included "family, tribal relations, history, religion, language, and spirituality". These constituents of the "inner domain" became the driving force in the Kurdish nationalist movement between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Thus, while the vacuum left by the weakening religion and strong monarchies was filled by nationalism in the European experience, religion and strong tribal networks, family, reconstructed Kurdish history, and language became instruments of the Kurdish nationalist discourse. Kurdish nationalism shares this feature with other anti-colonialist nationalist movements.

The Role of History Writing in Kurdish Nationalist Discourse

> The meaning of history for a nation is very similar to the meaning of memory for individuals. Operability of memory gives a meaning and strength to human life and even to the life of animals. A person who has amnésie complete/ 'nisbanê' tam is nothing more than a plant or a tree in our gardens and mountains, which blows its leaves from one direction to another. If a nation does not have an excellent history it is as if that nation had never existed. Then, do the Kurds have a history? The century we live in is the twentieth century. In this century, a nation which does not possess its history of the past and its history of future does not have an identity. Nations and individuals who do not have their own identity will become slaves or the property of others. Yes, I said future history. Maybe, many readers will be surprised by this strange phrase but yes, nations must possess their past histories and more importantly their future histories. The future history of a nation is the ideals of this nation. (..)Then, what are the ideals of the Kurds? I want to ask Kurdish youth; "What do they want to be? Or what don't they want to be? An element of the Ottoman Empire? An element, but how? An element that perishes or an element that makes something perish? Or an element that revives and makes something revive?[151]

> A people become a nation when it arrives at a historical consciousness of itself; as such it is attached to the soil which is the product of past labor and where history has left its traces.[152]

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[149] See also Partha Chatterjee. *ibid.* p.200-219
[150] See also Partha Chatterjee.*ibid.* pp. 220-239
[151] Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, (Turkish)"Bir Hitab" (An Address), *Roji Kürd*, No. 1, 2 Haziran, 1329 (15 June, 1913), p. 3
[152] Hannah Arendt, "The Nation," cited by Ronald Beiner, "Arendt and Nationalism," in Dana Villa (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt,* (Cambridge University Press: 2000), pp. 44–56

> Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist[153]

> Mighty heroes of ancient India were '*our*' ancestor (…). That other ancient Indians conquered *other* countries or traded across the seas, or treated *other people* with contempt is a matter of pride for *us*. And it is *our* shame that *the descendants of Aryans* are today subordinated to and are the objects of the latter's contempt.[154]

> Every nation searches for traces of its ancestors in the dark paths of its prehistory. We too are in need of joining this caravan.[155]

In the Kurdish nationalist discourse, as with other nationalist movements, the role of history-writing served to present Kurds with a new, *Kurdish*, version of their past, so that the claims of the present and future would thus be linked and identities reconfigured. Kurdish history was, therefore, rewritten with a distinctly Kurdish, rather than Islamic or Ottoman, focus. Furthermore, the role of the newspapers themselves, their contents set aside, served the "print-capitalism"element that Benedict Anderson has shown to be so necessary for the creation of an "imagined community."

In the first established Kurdish journal, *Kurdistan,* this discourse was geared more towards the demonstration of loyalty, showing how faithful Muslims Kurds were and their important contributions to Islam. Later, in the journal *Roji Kurd,* an article penned by Babanzâde Ismail Hakki titled "Muslimness and Kurdishness,"likewise described how important an Islamic element the Kurds were:

> It is certain through the testimony of today and the past that the Kurdish nation is one of the most important pillars of the large family of Islam. The position of a noble nation, producer of very well-known rulers, administrators, *ulema,* and poets to Islam, throughout1300 years is by no means inferior to other Islamic nations...The historic position of the Kurds, who make their brains and biceps, their swords and pens,

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[153]Ernest Gellner, "Nationalism and Modernization," in John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith, eds., *Nationalism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 62.
[154]Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press 1993)p. 97
[155]Kurdiye Bitlisî (Halil Hayali), "Kürdler Iranî Değil midir?" (Aren't Kurds Iranian?), *Jîn*, No. 18,8 Mayis 1335(8 May, 1919), p

> servants of Islam within the Ottoman family is by no means less glittering than their position in the history of Islam[156]

The most important contribution that Kurds had made to Islam, according to Kurdish writers in these journals, was Selahaddin Eyyubi, whose name consistently comes up in the Kurdish press.[157] *"Kürdlük"* should be proud of this illustrious individual who rendered great services to Islam which are appreciated not only by the Kurds , but by the entire Islamic World.[158] In *Roji Kurd,* an article devoted to describing the services Kurds had rendered unto the caliphate produces an image of Selahaddin Eyyubi showing that Kurds always valued justice and education. After describing how Kurds desire knowledge of science and culture, and loathe ignorance, Kerküklü invokes the tradition of Selahaddin Eyyubi to drive his point home:

> As a clear proof of our claims put forward we can say that the greatest genius, . . .Selahaddin Ayyubi, turned the prisons and dungeons of the lands he conquered, which deserved the description of houses of oppression, into schools of knowledge, and he stripped the ignorance of the poor people and adorned them with the value of utmost knowledge.[159]

Kurdish journals also tried to show that the Kurds had constituted an important element in the Ottoman realm. Several references to Kurds in the Ottoman context aim to illustrate how strategically important Kurdistan was, and how the Kurds had, as a border population, acted as a buffer zone in protecting the rest of the empire from Iranian, and especially Russian, aggression. In the fourth issue of *Kurdistan,* Mikdad Mithat Bedirkhan, in a petition to the Sultan, writes about the Kurds' strategic geographic location in the Ottoman Empire:

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[156] Babanzade Ismail Hakki, "Müslümanlık ye Kürdlük" (Muslimness and Kurdishness), *Roji Kurd*, No.2, 7 Temmuz, 1329 (19 July, 1913), p.5.

[157]The first article devoted to this historical figure appears in the fifteenth issue of the first *Kurdistan*. The article firmly emphasizes his Kurdishness and his service to the Kurds and Kurdistan. See Abdurrahman Bedirkhan, Selahaddin Eyyubi, *Kurdistan*, No. 15, 22 Nisan 1315 (04 May, 1899)

[158](Unsigned), "Selahaddin Eyyubi*" Roji Kurd,* No. 3, 1 Agustos 1329 (14 August, 1913), pp. 13-14.

[159]Kerküklü Necmeddin, "Kürd Talebe Cerniyeti ve Kürdlerin Makam-I Hilafete Hizmetleri" (The Kurdish Student Society and Services of Kurds to the Caliphate), *Roji Kurd*, No. 1, 2 Haziran 1329 (5 June, 19I3), p. 6.

> As is known by your imperial majesty, the Kurds are the most distinguished of all the peoples (living) under the eternal Ottoman state, and Kurdistan as well, as positioned on the border of two neighboring states, is, on account of her unique location, the land who inhibits enemy aggression and enemy threats...)[160]

or

> It is requested that you, the Padishah, seek justice for Kurdistan and the Kurds, as they inhibit potential Russian aggression against Anatolia.[161]

After establishing that the Kurds were an important nation, whether on their own, or within Ottoman and/or Islamic contexts, the nationalist intelligentsia began looking for uniquely Kurdish signs of development and nationness. To do this, they delved into Kurdish literature and history to show not only that the Kurds were a nation, but also that they had already constituted a nation, or had aspired to nationhood, in the pre-modern era.

By reproducing great Kurdish literary works in their journals, the nationalists sought to root their claims to nationhood by projecting their present aspirations onto the past. Kurdish nationalists were not alone in this respect since using literature and history to project claims onto a bygone era is an important aspect of nationalism in general[162]. The nationalist discourse that often tries to show that it is merely *awakening* the nation from its deep sleep by "rediscovering something deep-down always known"must legitimize itself by bringing to surface these lost or forgotten national characteristics.[163] As a result, nationalists turned to history to show the antiquity, primordial nature of their nation, as well as its continuity into the present.

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[160]Mikdat Mithad Bedirkhan, Sultan Abdülhamid Han-I Sani Hazretlerine, *Kurdistan,* No.4, 21 Mayis 1314(2 June, 1898),p.1

[161]Abdurrahman Bedirkhan, Sultan Abdülhamid Han-I Sani Hazretlerine, *Kurdistan*, No. 13,20 Mart 1315 (April, 1899)p.1

[162]For the Indian case, see Partha Chatterjee *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993)

[163]Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of* Nationalism (London; New York: Verso, 1991) p.11.

Like other communities aspiring to the status of a nation, Kurdish nationalists wanted to make Kurds the subject of their own history. While drawing attention to the role of Kurds' in broader Islamic or Ottoman histories, they also emphasized the Kurds' own history. For example, *Serefname*, the first written history devoted to Kurds, written by Şeref Khan of Bitlis in 1596, was an extremely important text for the Kurdish nationalists because its very existence as a historical text devoted uniquely to Kurds showed not only the primordial quality and continuity of Kurdishness, but also the existence of a Kurdish national consciousness, in the pre-modern era. In addition to drawing attention to already-written Kurdish history, the Kurdish press sometimes produced accounts of Kurdish history, in which the writers presented different aspects of Kurdish history and argued for the importance of studying it.

An article by Bedirkhan "Kurdistan and the Kurds", traces the history of the Kurds from their descent from the ancient Medes to their present situation as Ottoman subjects. The author underscores the importance of studying Kurdish history and laments the fact that its study has been ignored for a long time:

> Despite the fact that Kurds possess special human qualities such as wit and mental acuity, courage and industriousness, are altruistic and sacrificing, and have a love for liberty as if they worshipped it, in world history, their name is not frequently mentioned, and in a century in which civilization has reached its peak, other nations do not really know much about the general history of this noble people.[164]

In *Roj-i Kurd,* the discussions of Kurdish history and its importance continued, and became more refined in terms of the role history played in nation-building. The Kurdish nationalist intelligentsia was becoming fully aware of the central significance of history in the nationalist project. One Kurdish intellectual wrote:

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[164]Abdurrahman Bedirkhan, "Kürdistan ve Kürdler" (Kurdistan and the Kurds), *Kurdistan* No. 24, 19 Agustos 1316(1 September, 1900)

> [Just] as an individual who does not possess a certain clearly-defined personality, a nation who does not possess a personality cannot be considered anything other than a group of speaking animals who are not called by a name...History plays the role for nations that memory plays for individuals. The human life and even the life of animals can be continued by adding memory. A person who has *amnésie complete* is nothing more than a plant in our gardens and mountains, [which] blows its leaves from one direction to another...If a nation does not have an excellent history it is as if that nation had never lived. Do the Kurds have a history?...The century we live in, it is no joke, is the twentieth century. A nation which does not possess its history of the past and its future history does not have an identity. Nations and individuals who do not have their own identity will become slaves--the property of others...I said future history...Many readers might be surprised by this strange phrase; yes, nations must possess their future history in addition to their past histories, and the former is more important.[165]

In sum, history-writing that took shape in the Kurdish-Ottoman press was designed by the nationalists to assure the Kurdish people and the world that the Kurds constituted, in fact, a people with their own history. The content of history shifted from Islamic or Ottoman overtones, to a Kurdish one, centering the Kurds as the subject of their own national history. Thus, with a past to look back to, the Kurds could have legitimate claims for a common future history.

Another important Kurdish text, *Mem ü Zin,* was one of the most famous Kurdish epics and was penned by Ahmade Xani in 1694. It is the story of two lovers (Mem and Zin) belonging to rival clans, whose union is obstructed by a figure named Bakir, himself of a different clan. After Mem's death, Zin, while mourning her lover's passing, dies of grief, and is buried next to Mem. When Bakir's role in the tragedy is discovered, Bakir takes sanctuary between the two lovers' graves, but fearing for his life is killed anyway. A thorn bush springs up from his blood, the roots of which separate the two lovers even after their death. According to Amir Hassanpour, *Mem and Zin* represent the two parts of Kurdistan divided between the Ottoman and Persian empires.

[165] Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, "Bir Hitab" (An Address), *Roji Kürd*, No. 1, 2 Haziran, 1329 (15 June, 1913), p. 3

Bakir personifies "the discord...and disunity...of the Kurdish princes which Xani considered to be the main reasons behind the failure of the Kurdish people to achieve sovereignty."[166]

Mikdad Mithat Bedirkhan was clearly aware of the nationalistic overtones of the text when he published *Mem ü Zin* in his newspaper.[167] In his introduction to the epic he wrote, "(T)he poem...appears on the surface to be the story of two lovers, but its ultimate meaning and goals are hidden. For this reason, it is important to read the poem carefully."[168]

Kurdish literature, like history, featured prominently in the Kurdish journal and became an integral part of the Kurdish nationalist discourse. The elite's interest in to history suggests a strengthened national consciousness and the perception of history as a valuable instrument for mobilizing public opinion. The printing of Kurdish literature and history served, on the one hand, to show other peoples that the Kurds were just as deserving of the title of "nation"as others groups, and on the other hand, to demonstrate for Kurdish people themselves that they had a

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[166]Amir Hassanpour, *Kurdistan' da Milliyetçilik ve Dil (1918-1985*), (İstanbul, Avesta Yayınları, 2005)p. 87.

[167]Apart from *Kurdistan*, the poem was published in *Jîn* and *Roj-I Kurd*. The Kurdish-Ottoman journal, *Jîn*, while reprinting a few passages from *Mem ü Zin* in the journal proper, also republished the entire work itself under the auspices of the Kürd Tamim-i Maarif ye Neşriyatt Cemiyeti, an organization under the larger society that published *Jîn*. Notices appear in *Jîn*, in both Kurdish and Turkish, from the eleventh issue forward that the society has just republished *Mem ü Zîn*, in Istanbul (1919), and that the work, which was advertised for sale in *Jîn*, was highly recommended to the journals' readers. One notice read: "With the help of God, the initiative has been taken for the publication of a book of verse called 'Mem Q Zin,' masterpieces which announce to the world of civilization that the Kurdish language is a language of pure eloquence arid rhetoric, which were the work of Mela Ahmad-i Hani hazretleri, who occupies an eternal place in Kurdish literature. Despite material obstacles such as the rising costs of paper and printing, it will be published in a way to complement its literary value, a decision made with the greatest of devotion. We announce this good news to our respected readers." The republished work itself appeared with an introduction written by Hamza of Muks, the general director of Jîn, and the same introduction was also published in Kurdish in the nineteenth issue of *Jîn*. This passage also clearly indicates the nationalists' awareness of the importance of literature in the nationalist project: "Literature and literary works are to every nation and every people what sturdy foundations are to high palaces. A nation who possesses literature, no matter how much it falls or how much its material power's palace decays, it can still be repaired with effort...According to this reality, the first task of a nation and people who want to possess their existence and national sovereignty,...[is] to place great importance upon [their] literature and literary works. Ahmad-i Khani hazretleri understood this reality four centuries ago and struggled in this direction...Especially in this age in the civilized world, a nation's proof and patent [of itself] is its language and literature. The case of a nation without proof and patent [of itself] is not listened to; nobody will [even] lend it an ear.*"(Jîn)*

[168] Mikdad Mithat Bedirkhan, (Untitled), *Kurdistan,* No.2, 23 Nisan 1314(5 May, 1898)p.4

proud and national past from which they could move into the future[169]. The discourse, thus, worked not only as a means for asserting the greatness of the Kurdish nation to Kurds themselves and to the world at large, but also as a powerful method to realign preexisting and coexisting allegiances toward nationalist goals.

First the discourse underlined the Kurds' important contributions to Islam and to the Ottoman Empire, but by the time that *Jîn* was published following the First World War when the nationality principle was becoming evermore apparent, the Kurds' *national* identity was much more emphatically asserted. Furthermore, while in some regards any piece of Kurdish history or literature could serve the purposes of the nationalist intelligentsia, other times they saw that it would be useful to use specific pieces, from which they could extract a nationally oriented, uniquely Kurdish perspective. Thus, as these intellectuals saw, Kurdish nationalism was developing into a strong phenomenon, and was increasingly active in the Ottoman Empire. Kurdish nationalists' activities increased and became more organized and membership to Kurdish organization, increased significantly.

Although the journals were primarily designed to give information to Kurds about their contemporary situation, they also published research conducted on various societies.

> *'Jîn'* is not being published for personal interests. Its goal is to publish about the Kurds' historical life, national rights, literature, and sociology, which have been neglected for many centuries. In our opinion, in order for the Kurdish nation to successfully find its place among the communities of nations, it is possible to do so [only] with work appropriate and catch to the standard of the [current] era. We comprehend that our initiative requires very hard work. However, while performing this duty, we have hoped that we justifiably depend on the help and facilitation of the Kurdish nation which is distinguished for always carrying out the greatest degree of sacrifice for the *vatan* [homeland] and nation."[170]

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[169]Amir Hassanpour, *Kurdistan' da Milliyetçilik ve Dil (1918-1985*), (İstanbul, Avesta Yayınları, 2005)p. 87.
[170] (Unsigned), "Maksadımız" (Our Aims*), Jîn,* No. 1, 7 Teşrin-i Sani 1334 (7 November, 1918)p. 5

Influenced by Western and local models, Kurdish journals were intent on raising their people to a high level of civilization. Indicative of their commitment to a Kurdish national consciousness was their sponsorship of the first printed edition of Xanî's *Mem û Zîn* in 1919. Their focus on it may also reflect the same anxiety that Xanî expressed for the Kurds' lack of unity and the need for a strong leader, a king, to liberate them from the domination of others. They thus seem to have accepted the principle that their own fledgling national movement had its roots in much earlier times, in this particular case, in the seventeenth century.

Their political awareness found expression, in particular, in their apparent authorization of Şerif Pasha, a liberal opponent of the former Ottoman government, to present demands for Kurdish independence at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919[171]. Like many other national groups, their hopes rested on Wilson's Principles. American President Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points," especially his twelfth point about the right to self-determination for all nations, which had been declared before the war ended, was now taken more seriously than ever by the Kurds, who wanted their piece of the pie in the post-war redrawing of the map of the Middle East. At this critical moment (1920) the Kurdistan Teali Cemiyeti, already divided between those who wanted an independent state and others who were satisfied with some form of autonomy and continued cooperation with reformist Turks, broke apart in a dispute over the recognition of an Armenian state.

In December 1919, the Kurds concluded an agreement of friendship and cooperation with Boghos Nubar Pasha, who represented the Armenians.[172] However, this agreement between

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[171] In order to see Kurdish leaders efforts to gain national autonomy before the Peace Conference see, *Turkey*, Current History (New York), 12:1 (1920:Apr.) p.63

[172]Rohat Alakom, *Şerif Paşa: Bir Kürt Diplomatın Fırtınalı Yılları,* (Istanbul, Avesta Yayınları, 1998) It seems that ideas about an Armenian-Kurdish alliance had been in the making for some time, although figures from both sides

Kurds and Armenians would not live long. Early on, certain Kurds such as Abdurrahman Bedirkhan had repeatedly warned Kurds in his journal *Kurdistan* (1898-1902) to treat Armenians better. On one occasion he wrote:

> What really irritates me in Europe, because of my nationality, of which I am a proud member, are the Europeans' reproachful comments on clashes with Armenians? What are the reasons for these lootings and plunder, making you {Kurds] guilty in the eyes...of Europe? Believe me that I know all of these reasons. I know everything about how Armenians desire to separate this holy land, Kurdistan, from the Ottoman body, and to make it a land for themselves...However all these events do not give you the right to clash with Armenians. It is never right to trust the policies of the government.[173]

In this article, as well as in others, Abdurrahman Bedirkhan urged Kurds to treat Armenians well, not for purely humanitarian reasons, but because he feared that such Kurdish aggression would offer the "Great Powers"of Europe another pretext to meddle in Ottoman affairs. At the same time, he foresaw what actually happened just a few years later, when Europeans sympathized with Armenians who were their coreligionists. Bedirkhan was aware that if the matter came to choosing one side over the other, Europeans would surely support the Armenians.

The Treaty of Sevres, signed in August 1920 between the Allied powers and the Ottoman Empire, incorporated the Covenant of the League of Nations and, among other stipulations, asked for the recognition of an Armenia, and Kurdistan which would include the Eastern

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who adopted such a view were in the minority. In the first Kurdish journal, *Kurdistan* (No. 13, 1315 (1899), a letter to the editor threatened that if Sultan Abdülhamid II did not do anything to correct the oppression that reigned in the region, then Kurds would have no choice but to ally with Armenians and create their own rule of justice.

[173]Abdurrahman Bedirkhan, "Kürdlere" (To Kurds), *Kurdistan*, No.25, 18 Eylül 1316 (01 October, 1900)

provinces of Turkey south of the Armenian border along with the Mosul province, then under British occupation.[174]

Owing to the rise of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the Treaty of Sevres was never ratified. Following the ensuring War of Independence and the defeat of the Allies, Serves was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), which did not include the setting up of Armenia or Kurdistan. Hence, Kurdish hopes raised by the Treaty of Sevres were frustrated by the Treaty of Lausanne, which contained no clauses relating to the recognition of Kurdish autonomy.

Numerous articles citing Wilson's "Fourteen Points"appeared in the Kurdish press during this period, showing the extent to which the faithful proponent of the nationality principle had abandoned the plight of the Kurds. In the third issue of *Jin,* Kâmrân Ali Bedirkhan wrote of horrors wreaked on innocent people in the recent war, and how "the general, specific, national, and social disasters born of the Great War were without borders."[175] After the war, the Kurds, like other groups, would pick up the pieces and go on, but this time in the national direction, which asked for the assistance of the Turks:

> In Wilson's fourteen principles, it is declared how the principle of each nation's self-determination in the world will now be accepted and it is made clear that humanity will] no longer be a toy for political purposes...In this most important period in world history, in the beginning of the establishment of a new order, now we want to assert our ideas as openly as possible...morally and materially with this living nation's individual appearance. Finally, the previous government which ruled our country and did not depend in any way upon the principles that knowledge has accepted, has fallen along with its program...Now, I am calling out to the Turkish government which is behind the regions of the Crimea, Georgia, and Armenia, whose people are adament about independence, who are far away from them, and who promises warm and friendly support for those nations whose rights have been seized: In these most crucial moments remember the cities of the east, some other regions, and Iran as well, in their entirety, and the traditions and national qualities of the Kurd and Kurdistan, who for the sake of religion and virtue, protecting all of their moral and material values, listen to the echoes of the voice of freedom from rough, rocky

[174] "The Turkish Peace Treaty", *Current History* (New York), 12:4 (1920:July) p.716
[175] Kâmrân Ali Bedirkhan, "Kurdistan İçin" (For Kurdistan*), Jîn*, No. 3, 20 Teşrin-i Sani 1334 (20 November, 1918),p.6

> mountains, and who do not hesitate to do anything to uphold their national dignity...Kurdistan, who [once] desired, with a religious ideology and in a national admiration, peaceful unification and obedience to Yavuz Sultan Selim, today also hopes to receive support from the Turkish nation...The Kurdish nation, in order not to meet this [negative] end, from falling into this dark situation, sees in itself the power and ability to hold itself together...Kurdistan is going to attend, n a way to advance the elevation and progress of all its national strengths, the Peace Conference, whose decisions and negotiations arc still unclear.[176]

In the sixth issue of *Jîn,* an article by Abdurrahim Rahmi cites Wilson's specific reference to non-Turks under the Ottoman Empire, where Rahmi claims that the only such group is the Kurds: interpreting this to be Kurds only:

> Yes, until now we Kurds have not felt the need to leave the government of the Turkish state, in other words; the Ottoman commonwealth. Now we see that Wilson is saying, 'We will not give non-Turks to the Ottomans.' However, they call our place Kurdistan; there, there are no Turks other than two or three who have come and settled as m*emurs* [government officials]...As for the Armenians, they do not amount to one fifth of us. Others only amount to two percent Therefore; there is no other nation other than the Kurds. Therefore, Kurdistan is the right of the Kurds, and is the right of no one else but the Kurds.[177]

The Role of Education:

> [J]ust as no individual can live without nourishment, no nation and no country can live without education.[178]

> Now we have two works before our eyes that prove that the Kurdish youth are considered as the torch of the Kurdish awakening; these two works are *Hévi* and *Roji Kurd,* two monuments of awakening...When we confess our primitiveness, what should be our aim? Without a doubt, in plain terms, [it is] the aim of progress in accordance with the needs of today...Nothing else! Now the Kurdish youth has this burden on their shoulders, and is responsible for carrying out this mission for Kurdishness and civilization.[179]

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[176]Kâmrân Ali Bedirkhan, "Kurdistan İçin" (For Kurdistan), *Jîn*, No. 3, 20 Teşrin-i SãnI 1334 (20 November, 1918),p.7

[177]Abdurrahim Rahmi, "Hale me ye Hazir" (Our Present Situation), *Jin*, No. 6, 25 Kânun-i Evvel 1334 (25 December, 1918),

[178] Bedirkhan Mehmed Osman, "Kürdlük ye Kurdistan' ı Yaşatabilmek" (Being Able to Keep KiirdIuk and Kurdistan Alive), *Kurdistan* (1919), No. 8,29 Mayis, 1335 (29 May, 1919), p.3.

[179] (Unsigned), "Gaye, Meslek", (Aim, Task), *Roji Kurd,* No. 1, 2 Haziran, 1329 (15 June, 1913), p.3.

Although there were many well-known Kurds among Ottoman intellectuals and Ottoman political institutions, in general, Kurds were regarded as "backward", "ignorant", "uncivilized" people. One of the most important aims of Kurdish intellectuals was to jettison these "fabricated features". The project was clear; they defined the problems, offered solutions, and dictated who should do the job. They had decided that the Kurds' so-called "wildness/vahşet" "ignorance/cehl", backwardness and illiteracy were the primary obstacles holding the Kurds back from "civilization" and achieving nationhood, the illiteracy of the Kurds would also act as an impediment for them to achieve their own goals, in extending their message beyond the elite, to the Kurdish people themselves. For this reason, they declared a war against ignorance and their initial objective was to elevate their people to the level of the "civilized"/"modern" world. They also called their readers, especially the youth, to aid them in this arduous task. Bulgaristanlı Doğan encourages his readers: "Believe me, only in this way, you can re-create Kurdish nation!"[180]

In the very first issue of the first Kurdish journal, *Kurdistan,* Mikdad Mithat Bedirkhan writes of the Kurds' ignorance and backwardness, arguing their ill-consequences on the Kurdish community, which he then compares to other more advanced groups:

> I have traveled to many places and now I am in Egypt; everywhere I see the children of Circassians, Albanians, and Arabs; their fathers and brothers give them an education...And nowhere did I come across any man from any Kurdish tribes [in school]; and however many times I did come across these men from tribes, they were all farmers, miserable, poor, and they did not know any crafts or skills.[181]

[180] Bulgaristanlı Doğan, "Milletinize Karşı Vazifeniz" (in Turkish) (Your Duty Towards Your Nation), *Roji Kurd,* No:2, 14 Şaban 1331/19 Temmuz 1913, pp. 1
[181] Mikdat Mithat Bedirkhan, (Untitled), *Kurdistan*, No. 1, 9 Nisan 1314 (21 April, 1898)p.3

Since the greatest problem the Kurds faced was ignorance, and since all other problems of backwardness, weakness, and poverty stemmed from this origin and deficiency of knowledge, the only solution or remedy was education:

> O Kurds! *Elhamdulillah,* all people know that Kurds are zealous, Kurds are courageous, and they shod their blood for their homeland. What a pity it is that they do not know the wealth of learning and are without *maarifet.*[182]

Without education, Kurds were doomed to live in poverty and slavery:

> I have seen many Kurds; all are farmers, and they are weak. You should get rid of this destruction, poverty, and misery...A Kurd should work in his *vatan* for himself and should not need to go outside and become a farmer, poor, and destitute, and do work in other villages[183]

He also spoke to the mirs and aghas of Kurdistan:

> O mirs and *aghas* of the Kurds! The world knows that the Kurds are generous. [But] in times like this, conflicts are not solved through generosity. Cannons and rifies...and other new things have surfaced..Without schools, men are not able to make those cannons and rifles. They cannot use them; therefore, without cannons and rifles, the bravery of men is handcuffed...[184]

The nationalist elites put forward the dangers of ignorance, especially on the battlefield, by citing examples of groups who were overpowered by others in war, due to their lack of technology:

> The governments of China and Japan have [recently] made wars. Chinese soldiers were ten times more [numerous] than the Japanese soldiers. Throughout the war, the Japanese overpowered the Chinese soldiers. Come, ask the reason for this. The Chinese are ignorant and do not know anything. The Chinese do not know about cannons and rifles. They are backward for this age. Japanese soldiers make their own cannons and titles. They know about trade. Therefore (...) they are safe in their home. Nobody can challenge them."[185]

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[182] Mikdad Mithat Bedirkhan, (Untitled), *Kurdistan*, No.2, 23 Nisan 1314(5 May, 1898),p. 4
[183] Mikdad Mithat Bedirkhan, (Untitled), *Kurdistan*, No.3,7 Mayis 1314 (19 May, 1898)
[184] Mikdad Mithat Bedirkhan, (Untitled), *Kurdistan*, No. 1,9 Nisan 1314(21 April, 1898)
[185] Mikdad Mithat Bedirkhan (Untitled) *Kurdistan* No 1 9 Nisan 1314 (21 Apnl 1898)

Similar themes about the Kurds' lack of education were repeated again, a decade later in *Roji Kurd* and *Hetaw-ı Kurd,* where writers lamented the ignorance and backwardness of their people and pointed to further problems that lay in store for the Kurdish people. An anonymous author wrote:

> Yes, I should acknowledge that Kurds are utterly ignorant; not how many in a hundred, but rather, how many in a thousand can you find who can read their Qur'an! The twentieth century resembles a turbulent flood and it is very difficult to challenge it. This challenge can only be possible if the challenger acquires the necessities of this new era. People cannot maintain their existence only because of their innate features, like courage or any other excellence. They should elevate themselves. In this century, even honor cannot rescue a nation from destruction. (..) Kurds have to strive if they want to be active and mature members in the body of Ottomanism and Islam; more accurately, if they do not want to be amputated because of their gangrenousness caused by ignorance.[186]

On the other hand, Kurds were capable of being civilized:

> The ability of a person emerges in the mother's womb and develops until the graveyard. This ability is under the effects of two things: race and nature, although these two things do not play an equal role. This strong ability during its long voyage, with the moral and material impact of necessities derived from nature and local conditions, develops various very important changes and alterations at the stops and stages of its voyage...The clear historical phases prove that a nation leaves its place to the new emerging nations who also develop their ability in civilizing themselves by...changing [their] soul, and appearance. An analysis of this natural historical law which has always prevailed in the life of humans, shows that the reason for the failure to emerge of such a power of civilization among the Kurdish nation is not their inability to [attain] civilization, but just the opposite, the lack of the development of the factors which cause nations to progress and to reach certain stages of civilization. However, if we think about it from the viewpoint of natural law, that in the case of the removal of the difficulties derived from local conditions...and the - introduction of new factors of progress, then we will see what kind of glittering future, a future of progress and uplifting that the Kurds could achieve...In addition to our above- mentioned comments, the working of thousands of Kurds at the present in European and American factories and workshops is clear enough to show us that the noble Kurdish people have been prepared to accept civilization by exerting efforts and with a great desire and curiosity.[187]

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[186](Unsigned), "Dert ü Deva" (Disease and Cure) Roji Kurd No 1, 6 Haziran 1329 (19 June 1913) pp 7-8

[187] Fahri, "Kürdlerde Kabiliyet-i Temeddiin" (The Ability of Kurds to Become Civilized), *Roji Kurd*, No. 1, 2 Haziran 1329 (15 June, 1913). pp. 11-12.

For these authors, Kurds had to be awakened from their current condition of ignorance as soon as possible, they screamed:

> Kurds! Is it possible to sleep in such a terrible period? I do not think it is necessary to shout. 'Hey Kurd, awaken!' Because if Kurds are still asleep, it means that they have died long and long time ago. Kurdish people are awake and those who made them sleep centuries ago will be awakened. Kurds will pay back the evil with beauty and goodness' Kurds! We are living in an era in which to sleep for one hour means the death of a nation[188]

Education occupied an important role in the awakening of Kurds. For instance, one of Kurdistan's stated missions was to ensure the enlightenment of the Kurds. In the first issue of the journal, Mikdad Mithat Bedirkhan explicitly expressed his desire:

> In this journal I will discuss *ilim, maarifet,* and the benefits of learning. I will let Kurds know wherever men of learning are and wherever *medreses* and schools exist; wherever there are conflicts happening, what the great powers are doing....how business is conducted; I am going to let them know about all of this. Until now, no one has written such a journal. This journal of mine is the first..."[189]

Although Armenians were considered by many Kurds, to be a rival community, they were sometimes viewed with admiration in the Kurdish-Ottoman journals, and were even seen as a source for imitation. The Kurds had to follow in the footsteps of Armenians especially in matters of education. On numerous occasions, Kurdish writers noted how Armenians established many schools and had translated European works into the Armenian language. Abdullah Cevdet, for example, wrote:

> Our Kurdish citizens live right next door to our Armenian citizens; Shakespeare's Hamlet, Macbeth, Julius Caesar, and King Lear are being read. In the Armenian villages, the works of Alfieri, Dante, Montesquieu, and Darwin had been translated into Armenian...and published...fifty years *ago--yes--fifty* years ago.[190]

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[188] Bir Kurd / A Kurd (Abdullah Cevdet), "Kürdler Uykuda Degil" (Kurds are not in a Sleep*), Jîn,* No. 1, 7 Teşrin-i Sâni 1334 (November 7, 1918), pp. 5-6

[189]Mikdad Mithat Bedirkhan, (Untitled), *Kurdistan*, No. 1, 9 Nisan 1314(21 April, 1898)

[190]Abdullah Cevdet, "Ittihad Yolu" (Path to Unity), *Roji Kurd*, No. 2, 6 Temmuz 1329 (9 July, 1913), p. 9.

Another important Kurdish author Mevlanzade Rıfat, husband of Ulviye Mevlan[191], wrote that

> As is known, Kurds and Armenians are grandchildren of the same Urdu people...Although our script, literature, language, and racial customs were the same, later the Armenians accepted Christianity and sought a separate existence from us. Recently, they advanced and began to pursue an unclear goal. It is these kinds of actions that put the Armenians on a different path from us Kurds. I wish these two racial brethren, Kurds and Armenians, would get together hand in hand, and work towards pursuing the same goals, and establish a basic mutual existence. Yes, Kurds are a little behind; Armenians are a little ahead; but do not assume that they will never accept this proposal of ours. Let us Kurds show who we are; without a doubt, time will bring them and us together."[192]

In *Hetawi Kurd,* author Abdullah Cevdet wrote that Kurds should learn more about themselves -the number of Kurds living in the world, their professions, and economic condition, the ratio of men to women, the rate of literacy, and what the situation of Kurds abroad was, as compared to their Armenian compatriots.[193]

Education would serve the accepted goals of progress and modernization. Emphasis was placed on education, specifically for bringing the Kurds to the level of other groups, especially in the fields of science and technology. Education would serve to teach their people, not only about technology and modern arts and sciences, but also about their own Kurdishness. The journals and the societies were designed to serve these ends, beginning with the Second Constitutional Era, and especially in the post-war period.

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[191]Ulviye Mevlan was an important figure for well known *Kadınlar Dünyası* Journal and the Declaration of Kurdish Women Association was published in the printing house of *Kadınlar Dünyası.*

[192] Mevlânzâde Rifat, "Muhterrem Hetawi Kurd Gazetesi Muessislerine" (To the Respected Founders of the Journal, Hetawi Kurd), *Hetawi Kurd*, No. 2, 21 Terin-i Sâni 1329(3 December, 1913), p.2.

[193] Doctor Abdullah Cevdet, "Kürd Gazetesi Muharrirlerine" (To the Editors of the Kurdish Newspaper), *Hetawi Kurd,* No. 1, 11 Teşrin-i Sani, 1329(24 November, 1913), p.2.

The Role of Language:

Language served as the nationalists' strongest link to the Kurdish people and Kurdish intellectuals were deeply aware of its importance. While the history and literature that was disseminated by the journals was always the history and literature of the elite, language was the possession of the masses.

Kurdiye Bitlisî wrote at length about the language question, especially about the Kurdish language's national need to be elevated to twentieth century standards and to correct its deficiencies. He praised the *Kürd Tamim-i Maarif ye Neşriyat Cemiyeti's* efforts regarding the language issue, and stated that he was glad that the society had placed primary importance on language as the basic pillar of the Kurdish nation. He asked:

> Can the Kurd have a standard language? It is known that language is the most living basis for nations. (...)The answer to the question, 'is it possible to create a standard language?' is in short 'yes,' with continuous effort and over a long period of time.[194]

In another volume, Bitlis claimed:

> [A]lthough there exist grammar books and one or two dictionaries prepared by old and new Kurdish writers, the benefit to be secured from them will remain limited. Also, there are *divans,* poems, and *beyrs* written or partially systematically compiled in book form by Kurdish literaires and poets. Although there exist exceptions, almost all of these *divans* and poems are far from the people's language, which is the real language of the nation, and depending on the era or period in which they were written, they are each a strange medley, with most of them being filled with Arabic and Persian words... [M]ost important is the treasure [of vocabulary] stored in the memory of the nation's commoners... There is a rule that is generally accepted in our day; that is the rule that "the nation's pure language is the language spoken by the non-intellectual masses, and especially by elderly women.[195]

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[194]Kürdiye Bitlisi (Halil Hayali), "Kürdçeye Dair" (About Kurdish), *Jin,* No. 14, March 1335/1919,

[195]Kürdiye Bitlisi (Halil Hayali), "Kürdçeye Dair II" (About Kurdish II), *Jîn,* No. 15, 30 Mart 1335 (30 March, 1919),

The language question came to be a central problem for the Kurdish nationalists for several reasons. First of all, it generated a sense of rootedness as did history and literature. As Benedict Anderson puts it,

> One notes the primordialness of language, even those known to be modern. No one can give the date for the birth of any language. Each looms up imperceptibly out of a horizonless past...Languages, thus, appear rooted beyond almost anything else in contemporary societies.[196]

As such the Kurdish language served the nationalists in a similar way as did history and literature-if Kurdish had "always" existed, then so had its speakers, the Kurds. The "prehistoric" existence of the Kurdish language proved the timelessness and continuity of the Kurdish people themselves. Furthermore, the Kurdish language, more than anything else, was the one entity that the nationalists could conceive as being truly and exclusively Kurdish. Thus, it constituted a major area in which nationalists aimed to gain sovereignty over their "not-yet-liberated"nation. As Partha Chatterjee asserted:

> [A]nticolonial nationalism creates its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battle with the imperial power. It does this by dividing the world of social institutions and practices into two domains--the material and the spiritual. The material is the domain of the "outside,"of the economy and of statecraft, of science and technology, a domain where the West had proved its superiority and the East had succumbed. In this domain, then, Western superiority had to be acknowledged and its accomplishments carefully studied and replicated. The spiritual, on the other hand, is an "inner"domain bearing the "essential"marks of cultural identity. The greater one's success in imitating Western skills in the material domain, therefore, the greater need to preserve the distinctness of one's spiritual culture...(Thus, there are) several areas within the so-called spiritual domain that nationalism transforms in the course of its journey...The first such area is that of language.[197]

Although Kurds were not directly colonized by Western colonial powers, and were not really a colony of the Ottomans either, Chatterjee's scheme outlined above, serves well to

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[196]Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of* Nationalism (London; New York: Verso, 1991) p. 144-145

[197]Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories," (*Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 6-7.

explain part of Kurdish nationalist discourse. Chatterjee's conceptualization of cultural identity as inner domain is very applicable to the process that Kurds went through. In the Indian context, the inner domain refers to the concept of the nation and the outer domain to the concept of the colonial or postcolonial state. Indian national identity should be constructed on this inner domain where the imperialist policies of British rulers did not penetrate. The project of creating an independent India from the ashes of what has left them untouched elevated the importance of this inner domain.

For Kurds, the inner domain also meant those pieces which must come together and construct the "most Kurdish"identity. However, these two perceptions of inner domain are different. Being a colony, India was under the domination of colonial Britain and we know that colonialism was not only about capitalist expansion. A colonizing nation did not only dominate the resources, labor, and markets of the colonial territory, but also imposed socio-cultural, religious and linguistic structures on the colonized people. Although the colonized people were affected differently depending on certain criteria like gender and class, the difference and inferiority were attributed to the colonized as a whole. While India was a colony and while Indian intellectuals perceived this inner and outer domain in the shadow of this experience, Kurdish people under Ottomans did not experience such intensive political, cultural or economic policies of the central state. As discussed in the third chapter, with the centralization efforts of the Ottoman government, the periphery became more dependent on the center while it enjoyed political autonomy which gave the people who lived there a chance of developing their own culture, language, traditions and as a whole their own identity independently. Although the state's "social engineering projects"like Tribal Schools or its centralization policies like appointments of rulers from the center or the emergence of the Hamidiye Cavalry changed the

status quo in Ottoman Kurdistan and limited to their independence, Kurds never experienced the cultural, political, economic domination of the Ottoman state as directly and as harshly as India experienced that of the British. When Kurds were disturbed by the changing status quo in Kurdistan, they began to make references to this inner domain; culture, language, common eternal history, myths, legends and women who carried all these items in themselves The inner domain of the Kurds came from their need to distinguish themselves further from their Muslim Ottoman compatriots by emphasizing their nationness and uniqueness on several fronts.

Although it will be discussed in more detail in the fifth chapter, it is necessary to touch upon the issue of pure language. I will touch upon "pure language" and its users. All the "purely" Kurdish elements shared by the Kurds and their language-folk songs, legends, and stories-belonged to that innermost, distinctively Kurdish domain that the nationalists sought to first protect from adulteration, and then to develop. It was the language of women that was thought to be the purest and most Kurdish, and therefore, women were the greatest protectors of Kurdishness. The attention given to women and language, often in similar contexts, seems to indicate that the nationalists, beginning with the Second Constitutional Period, and especially during the post-war period, strove to attain that "purity" and to maintain their sovereignty over the innermost Kurdish domains, which included women and the language they spoke.

The Kurdish journals collectively aimed at relating a belonging to Kurdish national community, a sense of simultaneity and community that would be inscribed on the minds of their readers. Moreover, the Kurdish press played an important role not only for Kurdish History but also for Ottoman History. Like Abdullah Cevdet, the Bedirkhan brothers, Halil Hayalî, and Sheikh Abdulkadir to name a couple, were a constant presence in the nationalist movement

throughout these years. Their expressions and actions, and their fears and hopes, contained in their discourse, set the tone for the subsequent Kurdish nationalist discourse in the years to come.

At the end of this chapter, there should be an answer for the question "Why could the Kurdish nationalist elite not carry out their objectives?"These nationalist elites failed because of many reasons. First of all, they were themselves "out of touch" with the Kurdish people, a fact Bulgaristanlı Doğan noticed when he issued a warning to the Kurdish Intellectual:

> You must return to the sincere bosom of the region from which you originated, and which is very pure, instead of settling in the centers of civilization far from your national environment forever. If you remain distant from this environment and try to achieve your task of enlightening from outside, be sure that your efforts will bear no fruit. It will not produce any positive results for the nation. Your nation can never regard you as its class of intellectuals, and will always consider you as foreigners. Your efforts toward enlightening will make almost no impact on that environment. You should keep in mind that in this century the awakened nations or the nations who are about to be awakened are those who have their class of intellectuals within their midst and whose class of intellectuals are bosom to bosom [with the people]...Be sure that by doing so you will not only give rebirth to the Kurdish nation, but you will 'invent' a Kurdish nation from scratch. You must not imitate the Ottoman Turkish youth in this. They always addressed the nation from the 'top.' They wanted to convey ideas that their nation could not comprehend via a language which [the people] could not understand. Therefore they never understood their nation and always viewed them as foreigners. As a result of this, the Turkish nation lacked the enlightening of its intellectual class for centuries and declined ideologically and economically. You must not make the same mistake. You should learn a lesson from the disaster of the Turkish nation.[198]

However, few intellectuals realized that they were out of touch with the realities of Kurdistan since they usually wrote from Istanbul. Even less realized how their lack of connectedness with the Kurdish people would prevent them from accomplishing their mission. Thus, after the Turkish Republic was formed in 1923, the Kurdish leaders who gathered support were neither the intellectuals, nor the traditional nobility, but the sheikhs, who were in Kurdistan,

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[198] Bulgaristanli Doğan, "Milletinize Karşi Vazifeniz"(Your Duties Towards Your Nation), *Roji Kurd*, No.2, 6 Temmuz 1329 (19 July, 1913), p.3.

and who were more in touch with the Kurdish people, which was illustrated in the Sheikh Said Rebellion of 1925.

As a result, when the alluring smile of nationalism began to rise up to the leaden grey-heavy sky of the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century, Kurdish journals were still supporting the integrity of the Ottoman Empire on the one hand and on the other, they were trying to elevate the political, social and cultural significance of Kurdishness by emphasizing its central importance in both Ottoman and Islamic contexts; by creating a unified notion of "Kurdishness"and "Kurdish people"; by constructing "Kurdish history"upon myths, legends, poems or historical documents; by standardizing "Kurdish language and education"and by promising to bring all modern "things"to Kurdish society in order to make it more civilized and more educated. However, after 1918, when the Great War brought insurmountable obstacles to the Ottoman Empires and when the Kurds realized what history had for them in its pocket, Kurdish nationalist intellectuals intensified their nationalist activities. From this moment on, it was as a direct response to the results of the war that Kurdish intellectuals' diverted ideas about the future of the Kurdish nation came to gather under a common roof. In other words, many Kurdish nationalists continued to be Ottomanists until after the War but then, they jettisoned their Ottomanism in order to set their own Kurdish state according to *the Wilson Principles.*

In this chapter, I tried to elucidate how and why Kurdish leaders failed in reaching their objectives. It was a difficult task for the Kurdish nationalist elite to create an idea of Kurdish nationhood; Kurdishness among Kurdish people who linguistically, tribally, and religiously lived in a fragile geography. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the Kurds were (are) not just and simply composed of the ethnically Kurdish people, but of a whole range of heterodox identities. They had different faith systems, different languages and different lands to live on.

This heterogeneous structure of Kurdish identities contradicted the idea of a homogeneous Kurdish nation. Thus, it was hardly possible for Kurdish elites to create a common objective; the emergence of an independent Kurdish nation, as well as a belief in a common/national identity and common destiny. Besides, it proved to be a challenging phrase for every nation breaking away from the Ottoman *millet* system to determine who they actually were. Both Muslim and non-Muslim, these *millet*s of the former system set out to find themselves creating national sentiments by acquiring their "past/present history", standardizing their language, reviving traditional literature, animating heroic ancestors through epics and poems, using journals as a tool for the circulation of nationalist ideas. In other words, the Kurdish nationalist elites were not the only group that faced the questions "Who are 'we' (Kurds)?", "How can we define 'us'?"and "How can we make (Kurdish) people imagine this 'us'?"and "What makes 'us' different from our neighbors/rivals?

CHAPTER FIVE:

KURDISH WOMEN WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF KURDISH NATIONALIST DISCOURSE IN THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

Gender; which can be defined as "a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes" and "a primary way of signifying relationships of power"[199], is becoming a more prominent category as Ottomanists focus on cultural and political constructions and the ways in which gendered categories are enacted in Sharia court cases.[200] Having paid attention to the gendered history of the Empire, some Ottoman historians problematized the shade of Western concepts falling onto their work. It is known that the Western world has imposed on the Third World not only its own notions of time, history, geography, economic structures and culture but also its own conception of feminism.

Third World feminists' historical works on women's rights movements in Asia and the Middle East (in Egypt[201], Turkey[202], Iran[203], India[204], China[205]) from the 1800s to the 1980s show that feminism was *not* just a foreign ideology "imposed"on "Third World"countries. Challenging the above-mentioned interpretive frameworks and the power structures they support, Middle Eastern feminists, scholars and activists continue to negotiate women's relationship to

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[199] Joan Scott, *Gender and The Politics of History*, (New York : Columbia University Press, 1988)p.42

[200] For some examples, see Judith Tucker, *In the House of the Law: Gender and Islamic Law in Ottoman Syria and Palestine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); and Leslie Peirce, *Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). See also Deniz Kandiyoti, "Contemporary Feminist Scholarship and Middle East Studies," in *Gendering the Middle East: Emerging Perspectives*, ed. Deniz Kandiyoti (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 1–27.

[201] See Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam : Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*, (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1992)

[202] See Zehra Arat, *Deconstructing Images of "the Turkish Woman"*, (New York : St. Martin's Press, 1998)

[203] See Beth Baron, *Egypt As a Woman, Nationalism, Gender, and Politics*, (Berkeley : University of California Press, 2005)

[204] See Sangeeta Ray, *En-gendering India : Woman and Nation In Colonial and Postcolonial Narratives,* (Durham, NC : Duke University Press, 2000.)

[205] See Claudie Broyelle, *Women's Liberation in China,* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1977)

anti-colonial, nationalist and Islamic movements and the hybrid identities of Muslim women. Postmodern theories also enhance discussions of feminist difference in non-Western contexts by destabilizing conventional assumptions about the global category of women to widen the meanings of concepts such as gender and feminism, and to consider alternative sources of subjectivity and struggle.

An important Middle Eastern feminist, Leila Ahmed, worries that some Western feminists devalue local cultures by presuming that there is only one path for emancipating women by adopting Western models[206]. Thus, criticizing Western universalism for ignoring the peculiarities of political structures and functions of states in the Third World and, thus, for having failed in explaining the existence of Third World women's political participation and resistance, Third World feminists have wanted to demythicize Eurocentric Western feminists' approaches towards Third World womanhood and woman movements. Middle Eastern feminists have aimed to demonstrate the peculiar characteristics of Middle Eastern women movements and feminist struggle. They have insisted that women in the Middle East must be studied within the contexts of nation-states and their projects, taking into account their different histories, their relationships to the West/colonialism, their articulation of Islam as an ideology.

Trying to contribute to the above-mentioned meaningful efforts, and keeping in mind the fact that the concepts of nationalism and feminism have been potent resources for the construction of identities in the Middle East, this chapter will be on the development of Kurdish women's identity and its culmination in Kurdish nationalism; full-fledged Kurdish nationalism. My purpose is to explore the connections and ruptures among feminism and nationalism within the context of late Ottoman Kurdistan and Kurdish nationalist discourse.

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[206] Leila Ahmed, *ibid*, p.163

In order to discuss Kurdish women's role within the context of Kurdish nationalism, it is important to scrutinize how women in other parts of the world have supported, challenged, refused, and revised their "expected/idealized roles" in different historical contexts, as well as how variables like nationality, social class, and ethnicity have shaped their lives. The first wave feminists in Europe and the United States who initially dealt with *de jure* inequalities like gaining women's suffrage and the right of women for education and the Ottoman women who paid more attention to the social and legal rights of women will be the primary focus of this part of the chapter. These chosen cases show certain parallels and similarities of experience as well as some clear differences of strategy based on their specific historical backgrounds, and provide interesting material for comparative study.

First Wave Feminists

> To man belongs the kingdom of the head: to women the kingdom of the heart, in every pure and legitimate relation, as daughter, sister, wife, mother, and woman is the direct assistant of individual man.[207]

> Women, your country needs you. As long as there was any hope for peace, most members of the National Union probably sought for peace, and endeavored to support those who were trying to maintain it. But we have another duty now..Let us show ourselves worthy of citizenship, whether our claim to it be recognized or not.[208]

> In fact, as a woman, I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world.[209]

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[207] James McGrigor Allan, *Woman Suffrage Wrong in Principle and Practice: An Essay* (London: Remington and Co., 1890), p.3
[208] Millicent Fawcett of the NUWSS writing in *The Common Cause* August 1914.
[209] Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own ; Three Guineas*, (London : Penguin, 2000)pp.196-197

During and after the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, political, economic and social transformations occurred in Europe. These transformations were triggered by new concepts brought by Enlightenment and the French Revolution, by political mobilizations that resulted in a series of revolutions as well as by industrial and economic revolutions which, thanks to technological innovation, mechanization, large scale factory production and urbanization, led to changes in the social and economic roles of women within and outside the home and thus, resulted in changes in the idea that women were *by nature* gentle, emotional, and sensitive, and belonged in the private sphere.

The emergence of an increasingly organized working class who were coming together under the roof of labor unions and political parties to improve their economic conditions and to demand political rights; a growing middle class and an increased demand for labor took women from their traditional roles and placed them in the labor market. Now, women became more visible public figures who had a chance to meet in factory settings that permitted the exchange of ideas.

Within this context, middle class men of the industrialized European countries demanded political rights and access to political power commensurate with their economic power and status. Similarly, European middle class women's struggle to gain their political rights was on its way but their initial fight was carried out in another realm. In an increasingly developed capitalist world system, as opposed to land and title, property became the determining factor for gaining power and status. Fighting against *de jure* inequalities, middle class women articulated their desire for formal legal recognition of their right to an independent share in the newly-acquired riches of the bourgeoisie. Alongside the struggle for gaining the right for property, first wave feminists articulated their demands for equal social standing and opportunities, suffrage,

higher education, equal pay and equal opportunities in the workforce, legal rights in cases of marriage and divorce, reproductive rights, child custody.

As expected, these women whom we call the first wave feminists[210] were not a homogeneous group: there were upper-class philanthropists, professional women, middle-class and working-class women. However, although major figures of the European first wave feminism were upper and middle class women, they gave priority to proletarian women's demands as well. Though**,** for R.J. Evans, when middle class men gained their political rights in accordance with their economic and social status, many middle class women feared that working class men who organized under labor unions would gain their political rights before upper/middle-class women did. Thus, according to Evans, gaining political rights before the working class men and reasserting their politically and socially superior position over working class men were determining factors for the emergence of the first wave feminism.[211]

This claim belittles the whole struggle of European feminists against the patriarchal world system which was backed by many politicians and intellectuals who thought that a woman's education must be planned in relation to man; woman should be educated to win man's respect and love, to train him in his childhood, to tend him in his manhood, to make his life happy and pleasant. Women should learn how to carry out their expected/idealized roles properly when they are young[212]. Challenging their natural/idealized roles and demanding the adjustment of *de jure* inequalities, groups of predominantly middle class women across Europe began campaigning for

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[210] In her book, Kumari Jayawardena describes the term "feminism" as " an awareness of women's oppression and exploitation within the family, at work and in society and conscious action by women (and men) to change this situation (…) It embraces movements for equality within the current system and significant struggles that have attempted to change the system" (Kumari Jayawandena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, London, Zed Books Ltd. , 1986)Benefiting from Jayawerdena's *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, I use "feminism" in the sense that she explicates in *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* to define significant struggles against asymmetries and inequities predicated on race, ethnic group, and class differences.

[211] R J Evans, *The Feminists: Women's Emancipation Movements 1840-1920,(* London: Croom Helm, 1977) p. 30

[212] For further examples, see J.J.Rousseau, *Emile,* (London : J.M. Dent & sons ; New York : E.P. Dutton, 1911)

access to higher education and the professions, for married women's property rights, for improvement of working conditions for low-paid women workers, for the reform of (male) sexual conduct, for the abolition of white slave traffic, and, eventually, for the vote.

The abovementioned rights were gained after a long struggle in Europe. In 1789, a new governmental body called the National Assembly was created in France; however, the politicians in control were only interested in reforming and preserving the rights of male citizens. In 1789, the National Assembly passed a document called the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*. This document called into being an "imagined community" of equal (male) citizens endowed with extensive rights and a participatory political system meant to protect them. After the French Revolution which was escalating on all levels of public and private life, by the end of 1793, women suffered a definite setback in their efforts to become full citizens of the Republic. Against the newly written *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*, Olympe de Gouges wrote the *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and Citizen*, in which she based her arguments on Enlightenment's natural rights theory: Equality was not something to be granted, like a gift; equality was *natural* and had only to be recognized.

In the *Declaration of the Right of Woman and Citizen*, Olympe de Gouges emphasizes women's disappointment and anger after the French Revolution:

> Woman, wake up [...]Enslaved man has multiplied his strength and needs recourse to yours to break his chains. Having become free, he has become unjust to his companion. Oh women, women! When will you cease to be blind? What advantage have you received from the Revolution?...[213]

Olympe de Gouges' ideas on marriage and heritage demonstrate how she refused the expected roles of women:

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[213]Olympe de Gouges, "*Declaration of Women Rights and the Citizen"*, http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/americanstudies/lavender/decwom2.html

> Marriage is the tomb of trust and love. The married woman can with impunity give bastards to her husbands and also give them the wealth which does not belong to them. The woman who is unmarried has only one feeble right; ancient and inhuman laws refuse to her for her children the right to name and the wealth of their father; no new laws have been made in this matter.[214]

De Gouges asserts that women, as citizens**,** had the right to free speech and they had the right to reveal the identity of the fathers of their children. She also assumed the right of children born out of legitimate marriage to full equality with those born in marriage. For de Gouges, it should not only be men who have the freedom to satisfy their sexual desire outside of marriage, and if such freedom on the part of men could be exercised without fear of corresponding responsibility women could do the same. Furthermore, she implied that men were also part of the reproduction of society, and they were not just political, rational citizens. If men were both public/political/rational citizens while they were parts of the reproduction process, women could do the same: thus, women should be members of the political and public side of society besides their reproduction roles.

Olympe de Gouges, Queen Marie Antoinette, as well as some other women activists were sent to the guillotine. Women's clubs and societies were banned; and women were barred from fully participating in the revolutionary public sphere.[215]

A women's suffrage advocate, Hubertine Auclert, who was the first self-proclaimed "feminist" in France, used the term in her periodical, *La Citoyenne (1882)*, to describe herself and her associates. The words gained currency following discussion in the French press of the first self-proclaimed "feminist" congress in Paris, which was sponsored in May 1892 by Eugénie Potonie-Pierre and her colleagues in the women's group *Solidarité*, who shortly thereafter juxtaposed *féminisme* with *masculinisme*. By 1894-95 the terms had crossed the Channel to

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[214]Olympe de Gouges, *ibid*, http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/americanstudies/lavender/decwom2.html

[215] Joan B. Landes, *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 112

Great Britain, and before the turn of the century, they were appearing in Belgian French, Spanish, Italian, German, Greek, and Russian published sources. At the September 1896 women's congress in Berlin, Potonie-Pierre (in a report on the position of women in France) applauded the press for launching the word "feminism" after she and her friends had invented it and sent it into circulation. By the late 1890s the words had jumped the Atlantic to Argentina and the United States, though it seems they were not commonly used in the United States before 1910.[216]

Two telling examples within the Anglo-American tradition are provided by the late eighteenth-century British writer on women's rights, Mary Wollstonecraft, and the nineteenth-century American suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Wollstonecraft coupled her call in 1792 for the "Vindication of the rights of women" with a clear sense of women's role and responsibilities as mothers. British feminist Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), the author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), argues that women seem "inferior" to men not because women are "naturally" inferior to men but because of illiteracy[217]. For Wollstonecraft, women were imprisoned in their houses not because they were *by nature* gentle, emotional, and sensitive but because of the patriarchal world system; for this reason, the most important objectives of feminists must be the right to vote (suffrage), education and property!

Millicent Fawcett appeared approximately after a century from Olympe de Gouges. Fawcett joined the London Suffrage Committee in 1868 and became the president of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies in 1890. She accepted women's natural/idealized

[216] Karen Offen, "*Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach"*, *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1988, vol. 14, no. 1

[217] For Marquis de Condorcet see Sara E. Melzer and Leslie W. Rabine, eds. *Rebel Daughters: Women and the French Revolution* (New York:Oxford University Press, 1992), 108

roles as mothers or wives; however, she revised these roles by inviting these ideal mother/wife women to the political sphere:

> To women as mothers, is given the charge of the home and the care of children. Women are, therefore, by nature as well as by occupation and training, more accustomed than men to concentrate their minds on the home and domestic side of things. But this difference between men and women, instead of being a reason against their enfranchisement, seems to me the strongest possible reason in favor of it; we want the home and the domestic side of things to count for more in politics and in the administration of public affairs than they do at present. We want to know how various kinds of legislative enactments bear on the home and on domestic life. And we want to force our legislators to consider the domestic as well as the political results of any legislation which many of them are advocating. We want to say to those of our fellow-countrywomen who, we hope, are about to be enfranchised, `do not give up one jot or tittle of your womanliness, your love for children, your care for the sick, your gentleness, your self-control, your obedience to conscience and duty, for all these things are terribly wanted in politics. We want women, with their knowledge of child life, especially to devote themselves to the law as it affects children, to children's training in our pauper schools, to the question of boarding out, to the employment of children of tender years, and the bearing of this employment on their after life: to the social life of children and young persons of both sexes in the lower stratum of our towns and villages, to the example set by the higher classes to the lower, to the housing of the poor, to the provision of open spaces and recreation grounds, to the temperance question, to laws relating to health and morals, and the bearing of all these things and many others upon the home, and upon the virtue and the purity of the domestic life of our nation.[218]

For nationalism, it can be said that the first wave European feminists generally preferred to keep themselves away from nationalist discourses as an instrument for the emancipation of women. Virginia Woolf's sentences in *Three Geanas* demonstrates that Woolf would have agreed with what French Revolution victim Olympe de Gouges shouted in *the Declaration of Woman Rights and Citizen* about the enslaved men who multiplied their strength and needed recourse to women's power to break their chains:

> If you insist upon fighting to protect me, or 'our' country, let it be understood, soberly and rationally between us, that you are fighting to gratify a sex instinct which I cannot share; to procure benefits which I have not shared and probably

[218] Millicent Fawcett *Home and Politics* cited in Lewis, J. (ed) (1987) *Before the Vote was Won: Arguments For and Against Women's Suffrage*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 418-424

> will not share..... In fact, as a woman, I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world.[219]

This passage of Virginia Woolf shows a particular starting point to differentiate non-Western feminists from Western feminists. The merging of nationalism and feminism is an important feature of non-Western countries which experienced on the one hand, the "imagined" patriarchal constructions of women as passive signifiers of national cultures and on the other hand, the rise of new national women figures as active political agents thanks to the nationalist discourse. Virginia Woolf's sentence demonstrates a long-standing tendency of Western feminism which has rejected nationalism as an emancipatory framework. Woolf rejected nationalist discourses and declared that her sex and class had nothing to do with these nationalist projects of the "educated" men who were preparing for the Second World War in her country. On the contrary, feminisms in the Middle East have tended to consolidate through the politicization of women in anti-colonial and national liberation movements. In the Kurdish case, it can be said that although many Western feminists have argued that nationalism is incompatible with feminism, the nationalist struggle was seen as a necessity for the Kurds fighting for self determination and their survival as a people.

Ottoman Women Movement:

> Ladies, we are not courageous enough to demand political rights! Today, we can demand only civil justice, human rights and rights to life.[220]
>
> It can be observed that civilized societies took scientific and technological development of their male members as a priority while in these societies the female members were regarded as their obedient followers. In the beginning of

[219] Virginia Woolf, *ibid,* pp.196-197
[220] Aynur Demirdirek, *Osmanlı Kadınlarının Hayat Hakkı Arayışının Bir Hikayesi* (Ankara, İmge Yayınları, 1993) p. 117.

> their entrance to this treasure of science and technology, men try to deprive their female followers of precious pieces of this treasure out of jealousy. Things have always worked this way. When we say "things have always worked this way", we really mean they always did it like that. Nevertheless, since venerable and generous Allah; the ultimate owner of knowledge and virtue, bestowed them to his female and male subjects equally, can men claim any superiority to their women?[221]

When the first wave feminism began to spread within Europe just after the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, "the transformation in Ottoman women's social status" was on the way as well. However, Ottoman women experienced this story of the advocacy of women's rights a little bit differently.

The political, economic and social transformations Europe experienced during and after the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the emergence of the idea of "Ottoman backwardness" compared to the Western world forced the Ottoman Empire to implement social and legal reforms in order to re-organize its judicial system which was no longer applicable to various members of society depending on their status, gender or religion. In 1839, a series of new reforms were announced by Sultan Abdülmecid. After these reforms, the Ottoman Empire went through economic, social, political, judicial and ideological transformations.

As Abu-Lughod explains in *Remaking Women, Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, studying "woman question in the Middle East"requires the analysis of the (re)production of the notions of modernity[222]. The Ottoman intellectuals and bureaucrats compared the Ottoman state with its European counterparts and identified the empire with references to the West. These comparisons brought several models to the surface. These models developed as reactions to the

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[221] Fatma Aliye Hanim, *Fatma Aliye Hanım : Yaşamı, Sanatı, Yapıtları ve, Nisvan-ı İslam*, (Istanbul : Mutlu Yayıncılık, 1993)p.39

[222]Abu-Lughod, *Remaking Women, Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) p.7.

penetration of "modernity" into the Ottoman administrative, social and political spheres. The project of creating a "new"/ "modern" state/society from the ashes of ossified, traditional, imperial system brought the reconstruction of women with itself.

The "Ottoman backwardness" model, for example, suggests that by the nineteenth century, the empire, with its "obsolete" monarch, legal system, and culture, had fallen far behind the West and was hence doomed to failure. While *the West* constructed its identity by making references to *the Rest*, Ottoman intellectuals and politicians began to see themselves, depending on their class, education, and exposure, as "backward", in response to European and Social Darwinistic constructions of the Ottomans and their empire as backward. Those who just looked westward and saw great power explained what they could see only as their own backwardness. Within this model Ottoman males and especially females were construed as essentially trapped in their "traditional" social, political, and racial roles.

"We have progress too" was another model for this period, which focuses on Ottoman efforts to modernize and to "catch up" with Europe. This model may suggest that it was historical circumstance, rather than political, religious, or ethnic disability, that "afflicted" the Ottomans. It may also highlight the shared, baseline humanity of Asians and Europeans or their joint participation in a global modernizing process. In this model, Ottoman males and females are construed as essentially just like European males and females, exposed to a series of global modernizing ideas and forces in the long nineteenth century, which prompted them to re-craft their outlooks, governments, society, and culture. Autocratic government, lack of resources, religious ideology, or a slow start at modernization are all posited as reasons for the inferior position of the empire in comparison with certain European states.

Another model is the "Ottoman Turk is an exception"; a direct response to increasing Western power. This model was developed by intellectuals like Ziya Gökalp, who celebrates the "pre-modern spirit" of the "Turks" against the "degenerated Western spirit" and argues that the Ottomans had only to resurrect that spirit and recapture its ideals and power as an alternative to their late-nineteenth-century subordination to Europe[223]. This model may remind us of Chatterjee's concepts of inner/outer domains. In the Indian model posed by Indian nationalists it was claimed that the inner/spiritual domain was not touched by the colonialists while the outer domain was dominated by British imperialist policies. For Indian nationalists, it was the inner domain, on which the seeds of new national struggles could be implanted because this domain was the most Indian and most superior.

This "Being a Turk is an exception" model of Ziya Gokalp was taken up by many Ottoman intellectuals and was incorporated by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk into his construction of the Turkish nation[224]; it finds resonance in modern Turkish historiography. The Ottoman male and female (particularly the Ottoman female) were advanced as uniquely good and superior based on the "Eastern" and "imperial" qualities embedded in Ottoman society. This option did not present the empire as static; rather, it presented the empire as able to absorb the "new" elements of Western culture and government without sacrificing that which was true, good, and uniquely Ottoman. In the late Ottoman and Republican period, Ottoman identification with "Turkish" identity is often projected back, anachronistically, onto the new empire period.

In this last model, Ottoman elites were shown responding to the political, economic, and cultural challenge of European imperialism by elaborating a notion of the "Turkish"male and

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[223] K.E. Fleming, "Women as Preservers of the Past: Ziya Gokalp and Women's Reform" in *Deconstructing Images of "The Turkish Woman", pp.126-138*

[224] Ayse Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey" in Zehra Arat, *Deconstructing Images of "The Turkish Woman, pp.139-155*

female as uniquely good and inclined to progress based on a sense of the "democratic" and "egalitarian" ideals of classical "Turkish" societies. This option proposes that such notions predated the empire and were in the hands of the "Turks" long before Europeans came upon them. While as mentioned above this notion of exceptionalism is reminiscent of that posed by Partha Chatterjee, the Ottoman case does not compare well to that of British India, which articulated its identity as a colony rather than as an imperial center. The Ottoman Empire was not yet subjugated; although its sovereignty, Eastern identity, and "spiritual culture,"as depicted in the Ottoman satirical press, had been compromised.[225]

As it can be understood from these various models, the Ottoman Empire was in a transitory period. During the era between the Tanzimat and the second constitutional period in 1908, the dissemination of the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution was accelerated. This new wave of western ideas triggered not only the imagination of Ottoman intelligentsia but also different segments of society; women were one of these segments which were able to create a new space for themselves to articulate their rights. Although these reforms did not directly aim to change the status of women, the transformations that the Ottoman Empire faced affected the social and legal position of women in society. The voices of women started to be heard during the period between the reforms and the second constitutional period in 1908. Thus, the Tanzimat Era and the Second Constitution led to a new social, economic, cultural and political context in which Ottoman women engaged in cultural production and participated in public life. The press made noticeable contributions to the discussions of the women's movement during the same period.

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[225] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 117, 120-121, 143-144,

After the declaration of the Tanzimat, in the 1850s, a number of new exclusive organizations were formed by elite women and women's journals began to appear. These women were typically from urban upper class backgrounds, and unlike European first wave feminists, detached from the needs of the majority of women in the society. Scattered voices of elite women began to be heard firstly in these newspapers and journals such as *Progress of Women* (*Terakki-i Muhaddarat*, 1869-1870), as a supplement of the *Progress* (*Terakki*) newspaper, *Mirror* (*Āyine*, 1875), *Family* (*Aile*, 1880), *Flower Garden* (*Şűkūfezar*, 1883-1884), *Newspaper Particularly for Women* (*Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete,* 1895-1909), *Bouquet* (*Demet*, 1908-1909), *Things Beautiful* (*Mehāsin,* 1908-1909), *Woman* (*Kadın,* 1908), *Women's World* (*Kadınlar Dűnyası,* 1913-1921), *Womanhood* (*Kadınlık,* 1914), *Turkish Women* (*Tűrk Kadını,* 1918-1919), *Pearl* (*İnci*, 1918-22) and *Ornament* (*Sűs,* 1923).

The journals published during the Tanzimat Era primarily focused on education and women's tasks at home, such as better housekeeping, child care and cooking. Some articles include suggestions regarding the importance of being an "ideal Ottoman woman", who was a good housewife, a good mother and a good wife, while some others define these roles (motherhood, wifehood, housewifehood) as heavy burdens on women's shoulders and demands more respect for women who carry these burdens properly:

> It must be known that neither men were created as servant for women nor women as concubine for men. While men support both themselves and us with their knowledge and talents, why would not we do the same? What do we lack in terms of physical and mental abilities compared to men? Are not we also human being? Is it only our sex that makes us subordinate to men? It is not acceptable! If it was natural, then European women would be like us. If it is our headscarf which is shown as the reason for our deprivation, then, I would just recommend them to consider the lives of our rural women because they work together with their men in daily activities. Rabia,

At this point, it would be better to keep in mind that the debate about the economic and social function of housework and its relation to women's oppression is an old discussion that has

been a feature of both the first and second wave women's movements in the United States, Britain and Europe. In the Ottoman context, the "new/modern" wife/mother was now to be in charge of the scientific management of the orderly household of modern Ottoman society as well as the rearing and training of the children who were now seen as the future citizens.[226] The aim was to create a good wife to be the companion of the "new man" and to construct a good mother to rear good, healthy, educated "new generations" with a scientific manner. Afsaneh Najmabadi and Omnia Shakry highlight a very similar story of Iranian and Egyptian women's experiences of national modernization; the way that the new vision of wifehood/motherhood underwrote developments in the education of women and intersected with nationalist aspiration. Both writers concentrate on the ways such novel visions of child rearing/household management intersected with nationalist projects and articulated the national struggle in terms of a politics of modernity[227].

Similar to Middle Eastern women, Western middle or upper class women were busy with "the cult of true womanhood", purity/piety and "a discourse of scientific domesticity" which confirmed women's place in the home and tied women more tightly to newly redefined households. The debate centered on whether to keep housework in the private sphere yet make it more scientific and efficient[228] or whether to "socialize" it by bringing it into the public sphere, as socialist Charlotte Perkins Gilman advocated.[229]

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[226] For Republican period see Zehra Arat, "Educating the Daughters of the Republic", in *Deconstructing Images of "The Turkish Woman", pp.157-180.*

[227] Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Crafting an Educated Housewife in Iran" in *Deconstructing Images of "The Turkish Woman", pp. 91-125,* Omnia Shakry, "Schooled Mothers and Structered Play: Child Rearing in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt" in *Deconstructing Images of "The Turkish Woman", pp.126-170*

[228] Barbara M. Cross, *The Educated Woman in America: Selected Writings of Catharine Beecher, Margaret Fuller, and M. Carey Thomas*; (New York : Teachers College Press, 1965.)

[229] Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation Between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution*, (New York : Harper Torchbooks, 1966)

In the United States, the "public housekeeping" aspect of the Progressive movement of the 1890s through the early 1900s advocated that women bring the positive values associated with motherhood into the public sphere — by obtaining the vote, cleaning out corruption in politics, creating settlement houses to educate and support immigrants, and forming the women's peace movement and so on[230]. Disagreements about whether to downplay or valorize the distinctive function and skills of motherhood as work in which women are naturally superior, or to see motherhood as restricting women's chances for economic independence and equality with men in the public sphere, were also evident in debates between Ellen Keys and Gilman. Keys represented the difference side, that women are superior humans because of mothering; while Gilman and Goldman took the equality side of the debate, that is, that women are restricted, and made socially unequal to men, by unpaid housework and mothering.[231] Although Ottoman women did not further their discussion on inequalities relating to motherhood or housework as their European counterparts did, they discussed and questioned this burden of housework for women.

The above-mentioned Ottoman women's journals aimed to dissolve men's beliefs that women were "useless" and unable to use their intellect. Just like Wollstonecraft, Ottoman writers believed that higher education would be enough for women to catch up with the men in terms of intelligence. The patriarchal system was criticized in some of these journals as some authors contemplated on women's rights, and debated inequalities in the family and in the home:

> Regarding the newly-married Turkish women, it can be seen that Turkish girls and women are far away from being the women of the twentieth century. Our women do not live even in the fifteenth century let alone twentieth century; their lives represent various phases of slavery. Their feelings and ideas are not any different from the ones of primitive communities.

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[230] Jane Addams, *Women and Housekeeping*, 1914, http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/hull/hull_house.html
[231] Allison Berg, *Mothering the Race: Women's Narratives of Reproduction, 1890-1930*, (University of Illinois Press) pp. 83-98

> In our society women call their husbands "master". Master is a word a slave use to address his/her owner. That is enough! It is time to destroy fallacious ideas of ignorant husbands. There is nothing to expect from these husbands since they themselves are not eminent enough to declare rights of women. They want to ignore even the rules established by religion, violate the rights, and exploite women as slaves. Let us raise our voice till women are recognized as human beings.[232]

In 1869, the first women's journal was published in Ottoman Turkish as a weekly supplement of the newspaper *Terakki* (Progress). Since schools for girls were not prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century and only the women of very specific strata in society had the opportunity to attain education, women's literacy rate was very low. Thus, the readers and the authors of the journal were elite women who were taught at home by tutors; went to schools in the houses of educated women; or were taught by a graduate of the female teacher's college which had opened in 1871. However, in time, the literacy rate of women began to increase with the rise in the number of public schools for girls. Thus, letters from Muslim women increasingly appeared in the newspapers and periodicals. Eventually, women started to publish their own newspapers and journals. Many of them were short-lived periodicals. Nevertheless, there was one outstanding exception; the longest living Ottoman Turkish women's journal, *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (*Journal for Ladies*) which started to appear in September 1895 and was closed down in 1908 after more than 600 issues.

Like many other journals published before 1908, women's journals did not demand structural social and political changes and they were not radical in content. Especially, when censorship was stringent during the Hamidian Era, the subjects of these journals were very limited, the discussion was generally based on how to raise children, on the relations between different members of the family (mothers-in-law, husbands), on Islam, on hygiene and health,

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[232] M. Zekeria in Muhaddere Taşçıoğlu, *Türk Osmanlı Cemiyetinde Kadının Sosyal Durumu ve Kadın Kıyafetleri,* (Ankara: Kadının Sosyal Durumunu Tetkik Kurumu Yayınları, 1958), pp.41-42

household tasks, and embroidery, but also on the lives of well-known Muslim and non-Muslim women.

After the Young Turk Revolution of July 1908, Abdulhamid II had to reinstate the Ottoman constitution, and annulled the censorship practices. Thus, after the proclamation of Second Constitution, a number of new periodicals started to appear, the number of women journals increased observably and the content of these journals also changed remarkably. In this relatively liberal atmosphere, both men and women writers of these women's journals had the courage to talk about the position of women in society more openly than before and in the wider national context. Before the Second Constitutional Era, the general structure of the articles was formed by topics like how to be good/healthy/educated mothers, spouses, housewives, Muslims, and Ottomans (or Armenians, Greek, Kurds or Turks depending on the political motivations of the journals), while some journals published after 1908 went a step further and wanted all Ottoman women to take an active part in their own "emancipation" and to struggle against patriarchal Ottoman men who may have tried to challenge the women's movement[233].

Thus, late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ottoman Empire witnessed the reconstruction of images of Ottoman women through connections of traditional values, nationalism, Western notions and modernization. As we can come across in some articles on "the question of Ottoman women" published in this period, it has variously been alleged by traditionalists and political conservatives that feminism is a product of "decadent"Western capitalism; that it is based on a foreign culture of no relevance to women in the Third World; that it is the ideology of women of the local bourgeoisie; and that it alienates or diverts women from their culture, religion and family responsibilities. In the West, also, there is a Eurocentric view

[233] "Kadinlar Dunyasi" can be a good example for the second group. See Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi,* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayınları, 1993),

that the movement for women's liberation is not indigenous to Asia or Africa, but has been a purely West European and North American phenomenon, and that where movements for women's emancipation or feminist struggles have arisen in the Third World, they have been merely imitative of Western models. However, Third World feminism had its own historical circumstances which produced important material and ideological changes that affected women, even though the impact of imperialism and Western thought was admittedly among the significant elements in these historical circumstances.

Throughout this reconstruction process, women gained a limited recognition in public space, while their bodies became a stage for politicizing national desire or the route of westernization/modernization. In other words, women's bodies turned into a particularly privileged sign of the contestatory meanings of modernity. Although Ottoman women did not have a chance of coming together in factory settings or in saloons, these women's journals/newspapers, women's organizations and nationalist movements created the ground for women to communicate with politics, challenge grievances regarding their inferior position and to exchange their ideas. As mentioned before, the primary argumentation in these female journals and organizations were to lead women to admire the idealized/natural women roles through their practices. In time, this argumentation of becoming good/healthy/educated Armenian/Greek/Kurdish/Turkish women in order to produce good/healthy/educated generations was backed by nationalist movements in which women became the symbols of their nations.

The most similar feature of women in Western and Ottoman context, is the fact that women, in various hierarchies of disfranchisement, along with subaltern groups, have been, as reluctant participants, instrumental to the agendas that sustain the patriarchal ideology underlying nationalist discourse, but their concerns have been secondary even when they have been movers

and shakers or an indispensable part of any national movement. Exploited by nationalist liberation movements, the goal of independence achieved, women are not central to nationalist patriarchal concerns. Nationalism elevated women's roles as mothers and wives and led to the emergence of a self-sacrificing, de-sexualized, patriotic image for women. For instance, a dominant and consistent version of femininity is that of woman as the repository of the nation's virtue. Virtue is defined as essentially domestic and private, bound to "family"ideals of affection, loyalty and obligation, to domestic production or housekeeping.[234] After national liberation, no longer diverted and distracted by nationalist pressures in the same way, women could look inward, highlighting the "woman question"in the political context of a colonial past and a neocolonial present in male-dominated societies. Turning their attention to themselves, women discovered that their lot in their life was unchanged, that they were basically still expected to adopt the traditional domestic roles of "wifehood, motherhood". In consequence to this and an increasing feminist awareness, women writers were more focused on concerns that touched their lives, on questioning cultural constructions of women.

The Role of Kurdish Women within a Transition from Pre/Proto-nationalist Group Identities into Full-Fledged Kurdish Nationalism

> [Women are] "victims of social backwardness, icons of modernity or privileged bearers of cultural authenticity"[235]
>
> Deniz Kandiyoti

Sixteenth century Kurdish prince Serefhan Bitlisî wrote that following Islamic tradition, the Kurdish men could be married to four wives. This regime of polygamy was practiced by a minority which included primarily the members of the ruling landowning class, the nobility and

[234] Ros Ballaster, *Women's World: Ideology, Femininity and Woman's Magazine,* (London: Macmillan, 1991), p. 10.
[235] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Identity and Its Discontents:Women and the Nation" in *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader.* Ed. Patrik Williams and Laura Chrisman. (New York: Columbia University Press,1994) p. 380

the religious establishment. Daughters or sisters could be given or exchanged in marriage as a means of settling wars and blood feuds. When one side was defeated the other side took over the women of the enemy as booty and as proof of the humiliating defeat of the adversary. Moreover, these women were not allowed to be visible in public places[236]. Evliya Chelebi confirms the picture depicted by Sherefhan Bitlisi. According to him, women were not allowed into the marketplace and would be killed if they went there.

After three centuries, by the mid-nineteenth century, Mela Mahmud Bayazidi provided the first Kurdish account of the life of Kurdish women in tribal nomadic and rural communities. In 1856, when the Russian academic *Dorne* asked the newly appointed Russian consulate in Erzurum for assistance in analyzing documents in the Kurdish language, the Russian consulate employed Mahmud Bayazidi in the field of Kurdish language, history and culture. With the assistance of Bayazidi, a number of Kurdish documents were sent to the Russian Academy of Sciences in Saint Petersburg, including some of Bayazidi's own writings. In 1858-1859, Mela Mahmud Bayazidi edited the Kurdish-Arabic-Persian grammar book by *Ali Taramokhi* (Kurdish writer of fifteenth-sixteenth century). Bayazidi also wrote another book called '*Adat u rasumatname-ye Akradiye* (Customs and Manners of the Kurds). In this, he noted that the majority of marriages were monogamous. The tradition of polygamy was followed only by a small group of land-owning aristocrats. Women did not veil, and together with men participated in production work as well as in singing, dancing and other entertainment. According to Mela Mahmud Beyazidi, nomadic women did all the work related to animal husbandry, which was the main source of livelihood. When the tribe was attacked the women took part in war alongside men. They were "wives, slaves, guards and fighters". Nomadic and rural women, as the women of Europe socialized with men. However, the family would kill them if they engaged in were

[236] Serefhan Bidlisi, *ibid,* pp. 33, 176, 184, 226, 228, 497, 508

suspected of extra- or premarital sexual relationship. Elopement was also punished by death, though compromise was usually reached[237].

Several primary and secondary sources show that the majority of Kurdish women lived in rural areas until the late twentieth century. Most probably, just like their Turkish, Armenian and Greek sisters, urban Kurdish women were confined to the domestic sphere while rural women had more of a chance to be visible in the public realm. It is not difficult to say that until the late twentieth century the majority of Kurdish women were illiterate. Women in the late nineteeth century could acquire literacy through private tutoring. Thus, it is not surprising that only a few female names appear in the list of Kurdish poets who lived before the First World War. The only well-known intellectual, Mah Sharaf Hanim (1805-1847), known as Mastura Kurdistani, was a member of the court of Ardalan principality[238]. A considerable part of her poetry laments the untimely death of her husband, the young ruler of the principality. In her work, there is no sign of gender inequality or women's rights.

Another important resource for Kurdish women is, no doubt, Western travelers' and researchers' notes. Many Westerners who visited Kurdistan after the seventeenth century have claimed that Kurdish rural women enjoyed more freedom than their Arab, Persian and Turkish sisters. The evidence cited in support of this relative freedom includes the absence of veiling, free association with males including strangers and guests, and a list of female rulers[239]. A traveler, G.K. Driver writes:

> An equally favorable point in the character of the Kurd is his high ideal of the sanctity of marriage, in which he stands on a higher plane than the Muslim. Kurdish women are comparatively free to come and go as they like; they are wooed and won by open courtship, for in almost all tribes they are unveiled. In the resulting union the wife plays no secondary part and is regarded as "the

[237] http://www.rojanu.org/orte-filer/edebiyat/edeb-klasik-filer/mela_mehmud_bazidi.htm
[238] Mah Sharaf Hanim (Masturi Kurdistan) *Diwan of Masturiyi Kurdistani*, ed. S.Safizadi, Tehran, 1998
[239] Galletti, "Western Images of the women's role in Kurdish Society", in Shrazad Mojab (ed.) *Women of a non-State Nation, The Kurds*, Costa Mesta, 2001, pp. 209-25

> pillar of the house". Most Kurds marry early in the hope, it is said, of living to enjoy the company of grown-up children, upon whom they look as the fruit of the house", according to a Kurdish popular saying. The morality of their women is famous, and almost all tribes punish adultery with death; prostitution is almost unknown, and it is even asserted that there is no word in Kurdish for a prostitute.[240]

These sentences of Driver may remind us what Middle Eastern feminist Leila Ahmed discusses in *Women and Gender in Islam* about Lord Cromer's (British governor of Egypt in the early twentieth century) emphasis on the importance of the emancipation of the Egyptian woman. Like this traveler, Lord Cromer regarded the veil as the quintessential sign of patriarchal Muslim repression and cultural authenticity. Undermining and ignoring the peculiarities of the local culture, Lord Cromer constructed womanhood on the basis of Western normality and through his ideas the division and representations of the West and the East were reproduced. He was obsessed with the unveiling of women because for him, the veil was the symbol of repression and the women must be rescued from this obsession. Similarly, Driver decided that Kurdish women were comparatively free because they were unveiled unlike their Turkish or Arabian sisters. This can easily be read as the low status the Westerners-Driver or Cromer-attributed to the local cultures. For them, women were victimized by patriarchal traditions and thus, these women were used for the justification of the colonial rule.

Driver also gives important information about the "privileged" positions of Kurdish women in Kurdistan:

> They are almost always unveiled, the use of the veil being exceptional and restricted to certain tribes; they are in the least degree cautions to hide themselves and even admit male servants into their houses, and, although some of the women wear veils of black horsehair, it is rarely pulled down over the face except by women of high rank or when it is desired to ignore anyone's

[240] G. K Driver, Studies in Kurdish History*, Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies University of London,* Vol 2, No. 3. (1922), pp. 502-503.

> presence. They are treated as equals by their husbands and regard with contempt the slavish estate of Turkish women.[241]

Despite these descriptions of Kurdish women's privileged social positions, we do not have any articles on the ways in which the women's social or political standing could be improved. The first known advocator of the education right of Kurdish women is Haci Kadir Koyi[242]. He encouraged the Kurds to embrace modern science and education and learn from the national liberation movements of the time. Part of his modernist politics was advocacy of women's education. Referring to Prophet Muhammed's saying that Muslims should search for knowledge by going as far as China, Koyi addressed the Kurds: "There is no difference between males and females in this saying, if the mullah forbids it (women's education) he is a non-believer."[243] The emerging modernist Kurdish intelligentsia developed this idea of gender equality into a full-fledged nationalist discourse on the women question between the 1908 constitutional revolution and the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923.

(Kurdish/Indian/Japanese/Turkish…) Women as Symbols of the Nation

> "One measure of civilization is the place of woman in society and the successes she has attained. In the civilized nations, woman is truly half of that nation; every kind of right and privilege, respect and importance possessed by men, is generously given to women, even more so. Women will lay the foundation for the future generations."[244]

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[241] G. K Driver, *ibid,* p. 505
[242] H.Q.Koyi, Diwan, collected poems of Haci Qadiri Koyi (in Kurdish), Baghdad 1986
[243] Koyi, *ibid*, 186-7
[244] Vanli M. C. Selimbegî, "Kürd Hanımı." (The Kurdish Lady), *Jîn,* No. 14, March 1335/1919, It should be noted that the idea of equating the level of progress of a nation with that of its women had been floating around intellectual circles for some time. In the article in *Roji Kurd* cited above, the author ended his piece with "[t]he balance of the degree of progress is the level of the women of a nation." (See Ergeni Madenli Y. C., "Kürdlerde Kadın Meselesi" [The Question of Women Among the Kurds], *Roji Kurd,* No. 4, 30 Agustos 1329 (12 September, 1913), p. 12.

All nations and societies that see themselves as subjects progressing or evolving through linear time need to constitute an "unchanging core" in order to recognize themselves in their ever-changing circumstances. What kinds of beings or objects are selected to represent the authentic? It is women who embody the purported authenticity of the nation. They have been associated with deep, although different, symbolic affects in various historical cultures including their ability to connote motherhood or virginity.

Recent studies of gender histories in the West have shown how women and their bodies, systematically excluded from the public sphere during much of the modern period[245], have served as a crucial medium for the inscription and naturalization of national power. "Explored, mapped, conquered, and raped, the female body and its metaphorical extension; the home, become the symbols of honor, loyalty, and purity, to be guarded by men."[246]

In Japan, the historical model of the self-sacrificing and frugal samurai woman became generalized as the model of feminine virtue in the Meiji era for the entire nation.[247] However, by the 1920s, "the Modern Girl", active in the public sphere of work and politics, came to threaten "the patriarchal family and its ideological support, the deferring woman who was presented in state ideology as 'the Good Wife and Wise Mother'.[248] According to Miriam Silverberg, she became the symbol of all that was non-Japanese and modern in contrast to the Meiji image of the

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[245]Joan Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of French Revolution* (Ithaca, N.Y, 1988). Anna Maria Alonso, 'Gender, Power and Historical Memory. Discourses of *Serrano* Resistance,' in *Feminists Theorize the Political,* ed. Judith Butler and Joan Scott (New York, 1992), Jennifer Schirmer, "The Claiming of Space and the Body Politic within National-Security States The Plaza de Maya Madres and the Greenham Common Women," in *Remapping Memory. The Politics of Time-space.* ed. Jonathan Boyarin (Minneapolis, 1994), 185-220.
[246] Schirmer. *ibid.* p. *196*
[247] Sharon H. Nolte and Sally Ann Hastings. "The Meiji State's Policy toward Women, 1890—1910," in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600—1 945*. ed. Gail Lee Bernstein (Berkeley, 1991).171-172.
[248] Miriam Silverberg, "The Modern Girl as Militant:' in *Recreating Japanese Women,1600-1945* ed. By Geil Lee Bernstein, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991)p. 263

woman who served as "'the repository of the past,' standing for tradition when men were encouraged to change their way of politics and culture in all ways."[249]

It can be said that nationalists and cultural essentialists tended to depict women as embodying the eternal national virtues of self-sacrifice and loyalty and to elevate them as national examples. In this part, keeping in mind the narratives of Partha Chatterjee, Miriam Silverberg, Sharon H. Nolte and Sally Ann Hastings and others, I want to focus on Indian women's role during and after the nation-building process**.**

There are several dichotomies in Indian society, such as inner versus outer, spiritual versus material, public versus private.[250] Who were in the outer or material, public domain (As is well known, men) and who were in the inner, in the spiritual and in the private domain? (Of course, women)

While the outer, or material, world of public and political life was dominated by the colonizing West, the Bengal middle class drew strength from an inner domain, a cultural and spiritual world that could not be captured by Western hegemony. On the one hand, Indian men changed while the public, outer, or material world around them was changing. However, on the other hand, women did not change but maintained their traditional lifestyle because the inner, spiritual or private domain could be saved.

Hindu nationalists came to define the domestic world as their own; this was to be an area over which they could achieve some measure of mastery and autonomous self identification. Long before the nationalists began their political struggle with British imperialism, Partha

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[249] *Ibid.,* 264.
[250]Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press 1993) pp.116-120

Chatterjee has argued, they had produced a domain of sovereignty within colonial society itself, a domain which included the domestic world of women and the family. Thus it was that the "women's question"came to dominate late-nineteenth-century discourse in Bengal, and its resolution to preoccupy so many Bengali writers of this period.

Within this inner realm Indian nationalists were unchallengeable, unlike their situation in the public realm of political and economic nationalism where they faced unequal competition from their British colonial masters.[251]

Of course these sentences should remind us of something we know very well. Male or female intellectuals maintained similar discussions on journals which were published during the late Ottoman period, and in the young Turkish Republic.[252] Progress on the way of modernization and Westernization could be observed through the situation of women. So, this "new woman" is the symbol of modernization and Westernization. So, on the one hand, she is the symbol of your development, your modernity. But on the other hand, she is the symbol of your cultural values. You should modernize her on the one hand, but you also should protect her "honesty"her *namus* (virtue), her *iffet* (chastity**)** because her *namus*, her "honesty"is your "honesty", your *namus*. Similarly, her "modernized", "Westernized"vision represents your modernized or Westernized vision.

As part of this process of domestic redefinition, Charterjee argues, anticolontal nationalists replaced older (Hindu) patriarchal traditions with a "new patriarchy of their own creation".[253] The "new woman" of nationalist construction was to be free from some of the

[251] Partha Chatterjee, *ibid,*p.118
[252] See Nukhet Sirman, "Kadınların Milliyeti"in T.Bora,ed. *Milliyetçilik: Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol 4, (İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2002)
[253]Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories,* pp. 135-157

constraints of the older patriarchal tradition: she would be able to move outside her home and she would be educated.

Women's education was important primarily because educated men wanted and needed educated wives. Moreover, women's education was also a significant measure of the level of civilisation in any society, and since women had an immense influence on the minds of children, educated mothers were essential for proper upbringing of children. [254]

Therefore, women had to be different both from the men within their own society and from women of the West. Women's "spirituality" was to be marked by their dress, eating habits, social demeanor, religiosity and level of education.[255] Women's education was only permissible to the extent that women, as the symbol of pure Hindus without any dirt of the colonial period, could carry out their "privileged" role in society and in their house.

Women in this period often had extraordinary struggles to break free of indigenous customs and the ban on literacy. Chatterjee gives some examples like the following: Some women learned to read in secret tutorials with their husbands; others by memorizing the syllable upside down as a brother was being taught or by stealing a sheet on which a child was practicing his letters.[256]

As mentioned above, all nations and societies need to constitute an "unchanging core"in order to recognize themselves in their ever-changing circumstances and it is Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Palestinian, Turkish, Kurdish or Italian women who represent the supposed authenticity of their nations. Nationalists and cultural essentialists are inclined to portray women as

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[254]Partha Chatterjee. *ibid.* pp.126-132
[255]Partha Chatterjee. *ibid*. ,p.130
[256]Partha Chatterjee*. ibid.* p.142, p. 144

embodying the everlasting national virtues of "self-sacrifice" and "loyalty" and to elevate them as national examples. After looking at the "privileged" positions of women within Indian nationalism, now we can turn our glance to the Kurdish case.

In the early twentieth century, the Ottoman Empire under the influence of pressures for political modernization applied several policies to centralize its rule and exercise direct power over the Kurdish territories. Nevertheless, the loss of autonomy on the part of the Kurdish intellectuals and leaders was experienced as a challenge to their authority. In return, they struggled with these policies by exteriorizing the state and the discourses that the state represents. That is, for the first time in Kurdish history, we see the development of ideas comparing Turks, Armenians and Kurds, Turkish women and Kurdish women as well as Turkish and Kurdish power and culture.

Western-educated Kurdish nationalist intellectuals were trying to adapt Western ideas, signs and discourses to Muslim Kurdish values in order to gain autonomy from Ottoman autocracy, especially after World War I. Some intellectuals thought that this liberty would be gained by elevating Kurdish culture, literature and civilization to a higher priority in the world agenda. Articles written by Kurdish intellectuals show this inclination, indicating that Kurdish written works could accomplish much the same political goals as public, armed struggle. They believed that literacy would lead to liberation and a nation's level of literacy and proliferation of literature on national issues signify this nation's advancement level.

As it can be remembered from the previous chapter, Kurdish intellectuals regarded themselves as the capable ones who could motivate, educate, direct and lead the other Kurds. They saw themselves as the only people who could define the problems facing their society and

offer solutions and take their society where they wanted it to go. One of the prominent figures of the journals, Halil Hayali wrote: "The duty falls upon the elite of the nations, who understand their defects and flaws to make these evil acts be corrected through explanations"[257] For this reason, the primary mission of the journals is to carry this message. They drew the ideal appropriate models for a nation, for a movement, for gender roles, for the youth and for womanhood.

They tried to create their own domain of sovereignty within Ottoman society before Kurds appeared in the international political arena claiming national autonomy. Kurdish nationalist intellectuals strove to carry out this objective by dividing the world of social institutions and practices into two domains, "inner/spiritual"and "outer/material". They imagined a Kurdish constituent untouched by the material domain and composed of language, history, folklore, legends, stories and folk songs. These were indeed marked by the journals as the innermost Kurdish domain within which Kurdish nationalist discourse must be developed. Kurdish intellectuals established their hegemony within this inner realm by standardizing the Kurdish language, reviving traditional literature, animating heroic ancestors through epics and poems, establishing organizations and using journals as an instrument for the circulation of nationalist ideas. Apart from reconstructed histories, literatures and traditions, the mother tongue became an essential instrument to distinguish the Kurdish nation from the Turkish, Arabic, and Persian speaking Muslim constituents in the Ottoman Empire as well as to create an imagined community among Kurdish people. The contextual rhetoric of the building and emergence of the Kurdish nation subsumed the location and identity politics of the "woman."In this respect, Kurdish women were accepted as the pure and historical symbols/conveyors of Kurdishness since it was their language and culture that was thought to be the purest and most Kurdish. This

[257] Halil Hayalî, *"Dert ve Deva"* (Disease and Cure), *Rojî Kurd*, No: 1, 2 Haziran 1329 (15 June 1913) p. 7

suggests that despite the symbolic female role as mothers of the nation, women are subordinated in actual political processes.

As discussed in the previous chapter, this intelligentsia believed that Kurds had constituted a nation since the beginning of time because they possessed a homeland, a distinct language, a literary tradition, and their own culture and history. My fourth chapter deals with Benedict Anderson's concept of nation and individual identity as "imagined" political and social constructs and in this part of the chapter, I want to explore how the patriarchal construction of Kurdish women in the articles from Kurdish journals is as much an imagined political and social construct. Furthermore, I aim to explicate the way in which "imagined"patriarchal constructions of women became signifiers of national culture.

Writing a primordialist version of Kurdish heroic history, Kurdish nationalists believed that rural Kurdish women were a good storage device to preserve the remnants of this heroic Kurdish history and culture, apart from being producers of brave Kurdish sons who constructed this past. For them, especially rural women were the bearers of Kurdish language and culture, which distinguished the Kurds from Turks and conferred on them national rights including self-determination. In other words, rural Kurdish women were the embodiment of a distinct nation in so far as they enjoyed more freedom than Muslim Turkish women, and at the same time were bearers of a pure language and culture not tainted by the Turkification rampant in the cities. However, women whose illiteracy and domestic life had protected them from assimilation into the dominant nation had to be educated so that they could contribute to Kurdish nation-building. At that point they argued that Kurdish women constituted half of the nation and had to be equal to men in rights-educational, social etc.- and privileges because as women became equal with

men, they would have a bigger chance to become good mothers, good wives, and thus, good nationalists.

Because women became the symbols of progress for a nation, this image of women signifies something Western and modern. Believing in the idea that Kurdish women were the symbols of the progressive Kurdish nation as a distinct entity, Kurdish nationalist intellectuals created the image of "modern" Kurdish women paying attention to local narrative traditions. Just like other Middle Eastern intellectuals, 'the Kurdish nationalist elite imagined a universal womenhood scheme in which each nation's women signified their nations' political, socio-economic and cultural situations. And they tried to position their women in a high place in this hierarchical scheme in order to demonstrate their difference from other Middle Eastern Muslim nations. By taking the Kurdish woman out of the private domain of traditional domestic relations and transposing her into the realm of the political, the public and the universal, Kurdish nationalism turned her into an agent politicizing love, loyalty and family bonds for the nation. In this way, the image of the loyal wife (or virtuous mother, chaste sister, honorable daughter) now depleted of any private, familial or "bodily"value, became connected to the universal myth of national liberation. Thus, "ideal Kurdish women"who were portrayed as "desexualized political bodies"have been cultural constructs which are continually being revised, rewritten and reappropriated.

In the third issue of *Hetawi Kurd,* for example, one contributor praises village women who maintain their Kurdishness, and comments on the differences between urban and rural Kurdish women, stating that the city women are Turkified**.**[258] In fact, those Kurdish women who

[258] See (Unsigned), *"*Kürdistan Mektupları III" (Letters from Kurdistan III), *Hetaw-i Kurd,* No.3,29 Kânun-i Evvel 1329 (10 January, 1914), pp. 15-16.

had lost their "Kurdishness" were, according to another author, to be re-Kurdified: "The reformation of the Kurdish urban women who have lost their regard and their original characteristics will be more difficult and requires great effort."[259]

Women were thought of as being the "purest" of Kurds, as they could not easily have been "contaminated" by foreign influences as easily as men who traveled, accepted official government positions, and served in the Ottoman military. Thus, women's Kurdishness needed to be guarded and protected, as they were the ones who were designated to educate the children of the nation, supposedly in a pure, Kurdish way. Thus, in this context, the question of women's roles in the nation arose.

Already as early as the twentieth century, the "women's question"began to surface as a topic for discussion in the Kurdish press. Although it received only a modicum of attention, the existence of articles referring to women's roles in the nation and in the nationalist movement indicates that the issue was starting to become a part of Kurdish nationalist discourse. One article in *Rojî Kurd* is devoted entirely to the issue. The author writes:

> During these times a "women's question"has occupied the entire western press, and a little bit of the eastern press, and some philosophers even consider our times as the "women's century."Strong women's movements are taking place in Europe and the United States (...) The Kurdish family is in horrible shape, like other eastern families (...) Women will play a very significant role in curing family illness among the Kurds. With the exception of those in the big cities who have lost their original characteristics, in Kurdistan, the situation of women is pleasing....Among the Kurds woman is considered with respect, and (although) villages and tribes fight against each other and kill each other, women freely travel, and (…) establish necessary communications between two fighting sides.[260]

[259] See Ergeni Madeni Y.C., "*Kürdlerde Kadın Meselesi*" (The Question of Women Among the Kurds), *Roji Kurd,* No.4, 30 Agustos 1329 (12 September, 1913), p. 12.
[260] *Ibid,* pp. 10-11.

Not only would women play a role in developing Kurdish family life and contributing towards unity through their skills in mediation, but they would also, according to the same author, play a central role in reviving Kurdish traditions and customs.[261] Thus, even before the war, some Kurdish intellectuals found a place for women in their discourse.

After the war, this place expanded a bit. In the fourteenth issue of *Jîn,* appears a long article called "The Kurdish Woman,"which also outlines the role of women in the nation. The article begins with the lines:

> One measure of civilization is the place of woman in society and the successes she has attained. In the civilized nations, woman is truly half of that nation; every kind of right and privilege, respect and importance possessed by men, is generously given to women, even more so. Women will lay the foundation for the future generations.[262]

After describing the important roles that women had played in war, even in "primitive" societies, the author delves into a discussion of women's place in Islam. The author explains that there is nothing in Islam which is anti-woman, but he is confounded by the reality that Muslim women from Kurdish, Turkish, Arab, Circassian, and Albanian origins are different from one another, especially in dress, when Islam has dictated one rule for all women. Kurdish women, however, are, according to this author, perfectly in accordance with the requirements of Islam. Furthermore, Kurdish women are freer than other women, and possess a special, superior character.[263] The author gives an example to support his point, and he notes in a footnote he provides, that the following is a true story. Once, when the "man of the house"was

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[261] *Ibid,* p. 12

[262] Vanli M. C. Selimbegî, "Kürd Hanımı"(The Kurdish Lady), *Jîn,* No. 14, March 1335/1919, It should be noted that the idea of equating the level of progress of a nation with that of its women had been floating around intellectual circles for some time. In the article in *Roji Kurd* cited above, the author ended his piece with "[t]he balance of the degree of progress is the level of the women of a nation." (See Ergeni Madenli Y. C., "Kürdlerde Kadin Meselesi" (The Question of Women Among the Kurds), *Roji Kurd,* No. 4, 30 Agustos 1329 (12 September, 1913), p. 12.

[263]At that point several Western travellers support Vanli M.C.Selimbegi's argument. For example, G.K.Driver writes: "The women go unveiled and are allowed great freedom, but most of the hard manual labor falls on them."

away, a non-Kurdish stranger came to the house. The young Kurdish woman of the house seated the stranger under the shade of a tree in front of the house and brought him a meal, but the stranger indicated that he was more interested in the woman than the food. The woman, however, maintaining full seriousness and "with biceps as strong as her morals," tied the man to the tree until her husband came home. When her husband returned, he asked his wife who the man was and why he was tied to a tree. The woman replies that he is someone who has come to steal his property, his honor. However, the woman, with her words, saved the stranger's life by saying that remaining tied to a tree all day was punishment enough. The story is offered to show the character of the Kurdish woman; Kurdish women are physically and morally strong enough to protect themselves against the threats coming from foreign people. Furthermore, according to this story, when Kurdish women reach a sensible decision, their husbands, fathers, brothers or male relatives respect to this decision. The author also mentions that Kurdish women are not threatened by the men in their family that they have to cover up from head to toe, and that polygamy and divorce are rare among the Kurds. The author ends his article by advocating education for women and the need for their position to be in line with the new age's standards, and repeats that they will play an essential role in raising the children of the nation.[264]

Within this nation-women framework, what the Kurdish nationalist intelligentsia had to say about women, then, is that they were "pure" Kurds, linguistically and culturally, and would play an important role in raising Kurdish children in a Kurdish way, but what did women have to say about themselves? A few letters were written to the journals by women, but these letters were mostly nationalistic in tone, serving to praise the efforts of the Kurdish nationalists, without

[264] Vanli M. C. Selimbegi, "Kürd Hanımı."(The Kurdish Lady), *Jîn,* No. 14, March 1335/1919, It is interesting that the character who tries to spoil the Kurd's honor is specifically a non-Kurd.

discussing women's issues in particular.[265] They do indicate that certain elite women were interested in and supported the nationalist movement.

Despite the fact that most historians and feminist researchers have ignored Kurdish women in late Ottoman history, Kurdish women had established an organized movement that was actively involved in social, political, and nationalist affairs. The *Kurd Kadinlari Teâli Cemiyeti* (Society for the Advancement of Kurdish Women) was founded in Istanbul under the auspices of the *Kurd Teali Cemiyeti* in 1919 when the Ottoman state was loosely organized[266].

The Society for the Advancement of Kurdish Women (SAKW) was the one arena in which Kurdish women, albeit only the elite, did have a voice. The organization aimed at "enlightening Kurdish women with modern thinking and promoting fundamental social reforms in family life and helping Kurdish orphans and widows of the forced migrations and massacres". [267] The founders were members of the Kurdish aristocracy in exile. Thus, Kurdish initiatives for changing gender relations, while limited in scope, preceded most of the state sponsored reforms in Turkey (1920s) and Iran (1930). Forced unveiling by these "modernizing" nation-states was largely irrelevant in Kurdistan since the majority of people lived in rural areas where women were always unveiled.

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[265] In *Kurdistan* (1919) No.8,29 Mayis, 1335, appears a brief notice under the heading, "Teşekkür" (Thanks) that thanks a Kurdish girl who belonged to a local dynasty in Siverek for her "good and meaningful" letter about nation, nationality, history, customs, past and future. The notice thanks her and notes that the journal hopes to receive similar letters from other Kurdish girls (p.3) A letter signed "Muallime Midyadli Tanin Mollazade" (Tanin Mojilazade of Midya, A Woman Teacher"), appears in J*in* No.9, 16 Kânun-i Sâni 1335 (16 January, 1919) in which the author praises the journal for its efforts, indicates that she receives *Jîn at* the school where she works, and states that although she has been separated from her homeland from a very young age, she is still proud of her Kurdish nationality. As early as 1914, in fact, there was evidence that Kurdish women were reading about and were interested in Kurdish affairs. In *Hetawi Kurd* appears an article penned by "a Kurdish girl of the Baban clan," who writes of her joy in seeing a newspaper devoted to Kurdish affairs, and interestingly, the writer advocates that the journal adopt a more religious tone (see Manisa'da Kurd Kızı, Koser (Koser, a Kurdish girl from Manisa), *"Hetaw-ı Kurd Risalesine"* [To the *Hetawi Kurd* Pamphlet], *Hetawi Kurd,* No. 10,20 Haziran 1330(3 July, 1914), pp. 7-9

[266] The Society for the Advancement of Kurdish Women's Regulations. Article 1.

[267] *Ibid,* Article 2.

Several articles were written to congratulate the foundation of the society or to lament for the dispersion of the society. One such article on SAKW was published in the 297th issue of Zarya Vastoka, a newspaper which was published in Tiflis in the early twentieth century. The author writes:

> Kurdish Women's Committee: 1919 witnessed important events: Kurdish intellectuals aimed to establish some cultural associations. The Society for the Advancement of Kurdish Women"was one of them. The most emphasized aims of the society were to upgrade the intellectual level of Kurdish women, to help them to improve their economic and social situations. On the other hand, the society objectifies to help the relatives of martyrs, widowed women and orphan children. In order to carry out these objectives, the society collected money, published journals and brochures, opened reading saloons and libraries[268]. For this reason, they read reports. The committee shared a responsibility among the intellectual Kurdish workers in order to propagate "enlightening"ideas. According to the society's regulations, you did not "have"to be a Kurdish woman in order to be a member of the society. Regardless of her religion or ethnic group, a prospective member should have identified herself as one of the sisters of Kurdish women who aimed to elevate Kurdish women's position in Ottoman society[269].

However, SAKW did not live long. All the society's branches were closed by the nationalists of Constantinople. We do not have consistent information on the exact membership/leadership of the society. These women represented an interesting cross section of prominent and not-so-prominent families, the majority from Kurdistan and Istanbul. Indeed, most of the women involved in the organization's activities were from the urban, educated, middle and wealthier classes that constituted the elite in Kurdistan and Istanbul. They came from families whose men were bureaucrats, merchants, landowners, 'ulema, or professionals, such as teachers, lawyers, medical doctors and civil servants in the Ottoman government.

[268] This can be read from the Article 3, The Society for the Advancement of Kurdish Women's Regulations.
[269] Article 6, The Society for the Advancement of Kurdish Women's Regulations.

We do not know most of these women's names, age, marital status or professions. Still it can be understood from the possible leaders that married women were more visible as official spokeswomen, speakers at demonstrations. Still, it is not justified to dismiss the women's leadership as merely the relatives of the male nationalist leaders. Indeed, as far as we can understand from the sources we have, despite a certain degree of cooperation with the national movement, the women's movement was keen to remain separate, with its own meetings, demonstrations and subsidiary institutions. The fact that the organization was limited to upper- and middle-class women is not surprising. The peasant women who constituted the overwhelming majority of the Kurdish female population during this period had neither the literacy skills nor the time to participate and the middle- and upper-class women who dominated the Kurdish women's organization did not actively recruit beyond their own ranks. It must also be said that above and beyond their genuine sense of social responsibility, the women's leadership was not without a certain condescension toward villages, peasants and poorer women.

Several other articles describing and praising the organization appear also in *Jîn,* but the one I will offer here is the one which is a transcript of a speech given by Encum Yamulki to the women of the organization, in what seems to have been -an opening ceremony. After addressing her audience of "respected gentlewomen", the speaker thanks her audience "on behalf of the Kurdish nation"for their efforts, and prays for their success. She explains how the group, while working for the Kurds' national rights, should extend a hand of friendship to Turks. Explaining the goals of the group, she continues:

> Today, in a time when the destinies of all nations are taking shape and everyone is being given rights, we too want our own rights because there exist millions of Kurds and a big Kurdistan. Our respected ladies and sisters who came running to the society's opening ceremony gave a Kurdish promise to do whatever is necessary, without any hesitation, for the advancement of Kurdishness. The phrase, "a Kurd will not turn back on his/her word,"has become a proverb from

> old... So respected ladies, those who enter into this society are Kurds or are ladies who nourish love for the Kurds. The goals of the society are those of finding jobs for however many Kurdish women and children there are who need them, opening administrative centers, summoning orphaned children to he enlightened by opening schools, and teaching, teaching everything we can with love... God willing, meetings, conferences, pageants and similar works such as this will introduce us to one another and from this introduction, very benevolent profits to our nation will be born. The society needs your sacrifices in order to bandage the wounds of the nation"[270].

In her speech, when she said "we", Encüm Yamulki did not speak on behalf of Kurdish women in particular, on the contrary, this "we"refers to fathers, mothers, husbands, wives etc. of the nation. In this period, the call for women's emancipation in Kurdish society was never couched in anything but nationalist terms. It can be said that emancipation of Kurdish women could not be claimed outside of the nationalist discourse because the nation itself was subordinated. For this reason, putting the desire for the Kurdish nation's independence before the Kurdish women's emancipation or thinking that the emancipation of Kurdish women could only be possible with the emancipation of the nation might be very potential motivation for Ottoman Kurdish women if they had any concerns about their rights.

Encum Yamulki's sentences reminds me of Leyla Zana's comments on her imprisonment: "I view my imprisonment as synonymous with the freedom of my people"[271]The gender consciousness of the movement's founders was not formed or was muted rather than explicitly "feminist"in the contemporary sense of the term, its gender critique often hidden within a manipulation of traditional gender norms. But it is important to stress that despite the charitable and socially oriented character of much of their work, the women explicitly conceived their movement in political terms, even while considering themselves an auxiliary of the

[270] Encum Yamulki, "Bir Hitabe" (An Address), *Jîn,* No. 22, 2 Temmuz 1335 (2 July, 1919)
[271] Leyla Zana, Writings from Prison, (Watertown, Mass, 1999)

nationalist movement. Kurdish women did not define themselves solely by gender, nor did they perceive a sharp break between nationalism and feminism.

Afsaneh Najmabadi suggests that women's ostensibly conservative discourses in this period could be deemed simultaneously "disciplinary and emancipatory transforming them in the process for their emancipatory purposes.[272] Although Kurdish women's activities in the first decades cannot be thought of as the articulation of Kurdish feminism, this period might have paved the way for Kurdish women to claim their own rights. Given the political turbulence of the times and the primacy of the national cause, it is not surprising that the movement during this period was not "feminist"insofar as it did not strive for political, legal, social and economic equality with men.

Similar to European and Ottoman first wave feminists, elite Kurdish women, then, saw themselves as not only having the capacity to help their nation and the nationalist movement, but also saw such help as their duty. The jobs they designated for themselves were philanthropic and educational, and in many regards, not much different from the duties of the men. Women's voices in the Kurdish press were limited, though, and as with the men, the only voices expressed were those of the elite. And this brings us to a general discussion of the goals of the nationalists, as they were in fact goals imagined and to be acted upon by the Kurdish nationalist elite**,** and especially how they viewed themselves and their mission.

Although the First World War destroyed Kurdish people's lives economically, culturally and politically, the Kurdish nationalists were very hopeful about the emancipation of the Kurds from Ottoman rule after the Great War. However, the cost of the war was paid severely by the

[272]Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Crafting an Educated Housewives in Iran" in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu Lughod (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) pp. 113-115.

Kurds as well. When the Ottoman Empire fell into pieces as a direct result of the war, Kurdistan also fell into pieces. The newly-founded Iraqi state was under direct British rule between 1918-1932 and the new Syrian state was under French rule between 1918-1946. These two states were less westernizing than "independent" Turkey and Iran. Being related to westernization and modernization discourses the Turkish and Persian states ordered state feminism from top to bottom while the colonial Iraqi and Syrian states did not launch state feminisms of the Turkish and Persian type. Indeed, in Iraq, the state could not cope with Kurdish demands for women's education. One colonial administrator wrote:

> From the outset of our administration there was a constant and pressing popular demand for the opening of schools for girls, and in the villages. It was quite usual for enlightened parents to send their daughters, up to the age of twelve or thirteen, to attend and sit in class with the boys."[273]

The right of women to equal status with men has long been a favorite topic for articles in the periodical Kurdish press. Owing to the political troubles and other unfavorable circumstances the provision of public instruction for girls was delayed in the Kurdish districts of Iraq. At that point, it would be meaningful to remember that education in the Middle East has been a site of ongoing conflicts between the state and non-state forces. The states**,** in most countries of the region, have owned and run the educational system, and used it primarily as a means of state-building and nation-building. Non-state actors like marginalized minorities have been excluded from the creation of educational institutions. Demanding higher education from the ruling states, Kurds also have been excluded from the political stage on which educational institutions were being formed.

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[273] C.J. Edmonds; *Kurds, Turks and Arabs, Politics, Travel and Research in North-Eastern Iraq 1919-1925*. London, 1957, p.15

After the occupation of Baghdad in 1917, the British authorities began to reorganize the educational system that the Ottoman Turks had established on the basis of European, chiefly French, models. One change was in the medium of instruction, which had formerly been in Turkish. According to an official report, "Arabic, or the local vernacular in places where Kurdish, Turkish, Persian, or Assyrian was spoken, was adopted as the medium of instruction"[274] The British administration looked at education as a source of sedition and resented the popular demand for more schools. Thus, Britain rejected the demand for establishing more schools or a Kurdish college. The report about the administration of Iraq in 1923-24 had already warned everyone about the dangers of "the uncontrolled spread of education":

> The increasing control of education, as of other activities of the government, by 'Iraqis makes it necessary to dwell chiefly on those dangers of which 'Iraqis themselves are least aware. One danger is the belief held by nearly all, except the most obscurantist, that there is no limit to what education can do, and no limit to the money that might profitably be spent on education. There is no risk of too much money being spent on education, but there is real danger in the belief in unlimited education as the cure of every ill. Education is one of the influences, perhaps the most important influence, in the creation of sound citizenship and morals, and of industrial efficiency. But even the best educational system in the world cannot produce results immediately, and must therefore conform to the real, and not to the imaginary economic, political and social needs of the country. The overcrowding of the clerical profession and consequent unemployment in a class productive of political agitators, is one of the results which may follow from the uncontrolled spread of education.[275]

Britain and France did not launch either "state feminisms" or "state nationalisms" though they did pursue a policy of installing Arab states, and integrating the Kurds as Iraqi and Syrian citizens. However, the post-colonial Iraqi and Syrian states followed the Iranian and Turkish politics of state nationalism and feminism, and pursued, from the early 1960s, strong assimilationist policies.

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[274] *Report by His Britannic Majesty's Government on the Administration of Iraq for the Period April, 1923 – December,* 1925

[275] *Report by His Britannic Majesty's Government on the Administration of Iraq for the Period April, 1923 - December 1924*. London, His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1925, Colonial No. 13: 214-5.

In the above-mentioned Middle Eastern countries, the reconstructed image of "new ideal women" became something that is repeated, relocated and translated in the name of "tradition" that is not necessarily a faithful representation of the past. This reconstruction of women's image must be related to the contemporary nationalisms and the role of women within the nationalist discourses. In this reconstruction process the notions of "traditional" and "modern" go hand in hand. The roles of myths, legends, love stories and other Kurdish, Turkish, Arabic, Armenian classics in reshaping the image of women cannot be ignored. Modern writers used many of the major tropes from earlier literary traditions in order to reconstruct gender roles. For the Kurdish case, *Mem û Zin* and *Demirci Kawa* are some of these literary examples. The question is: "Has nationalism supported women's emancipation or has nationalism worked as a major obstacle to the development of feminist movements in the Middle East?"In spite of its limited support of women's emancipation, nationalism has created a division along ethnic lines, among the women of each country or among the women within a country. Thus, nationalist discourses support (or if they do not support, they do not impede as well) the activities of feminists of the privileged ethnic group while they hinder the unprivileged feminists' articulation for desired rights. In return, feminists of the dominant nations, Turks, Arabs, and Persians, have promoted the interests of their own patriarchal nationalism by supporting the state and its official feminism.

The Kurdish case sheds much light on the complex ties that bind feminism to nationalism and patriarchy. Nationalist conflicts make it much easier for feminist and women's movements to confine themselves within their ethnic shell, and to participate in their nation's war against other peoples. In all parts of Kurdistan, national liberation has fully overshadowed women's emancipation. To the limited extent that Kurdish nationalism has been in power in the early

1920s in Iraq, in 1946 in Iran, and since 1991 in Iraq, its record is no better than paying lip service to gender equality.

The autonomous government of Shaikh Mahmud in the early 1920s was a typically male, patriarchal, feudal regime[276]. The Kurdish Republic of 1946 took steps in the direction of women's participation in public life, mostly in education and support for the political party in power. Some fifty years later, the parliament of the Regional Government of Iraqi Kurdistan took many steps backward by refusing to repeal the misogynist laws (personal status and penal codes) of the Ba'thist regime. At the same time, the two Kurdish ruling parties allowed Islamic groups, funded by Iran and Saudi Arabia, to push for Islamization of gender relations in Kurdistan. Violence against women, especially honor killing, in Iraqi Kurdistan reached unprecedented proportions under nationalist rule in the 1990s.

Bowing to tradition and culture, other Kurdish nationalist organizations have also relegated gender equality to the future, to after the achievement of independence. Just like their nationalist grandfathers who had created the myth of the relative freedom of Ottoman Kurdish women as compared to their Turkish, Arabic, Armenian sisters, new generation nationalists assessed Kurdish women's privileged positions within the social, cultural and political realm[277]. The PKK, which prided itself on recruiting large numbers of women into the nationalist struggle,

[276] Sheikh Mahmud Barzani (1878 -1956) was the leader of several Kurdish uprisings against the British Mandate of Iraq. The success of the Kurdish fighters' anti-British revolts forced the British to recognize Kurdish autonomy in 1923. Returning to the region in 1922, Sheikh Mahmoud continued to promote raids against British forces, and declared himself the King. On September 14, 1922, the British recognized Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji as the first King of Kurdistan under the British mandate. The Kingdom of Kurdistan lasted from 1922 to 1924. After the British government finally defeated Sheikh Mahmud, they signed Iraq over to King Faisal I of Iraq and a new Arab-led government. Sheikh Mahmud retreated into the mountains, and later signed a peace accord with the Iraqi government and settled in the new Iraq in 1932

[277] Like some Western observers of Kurdish society, Ottoman Kurdish nationalists claim that Kurdish women enjoy more freedom than their Arab, Persian, and Turkish sisters. Whatever the status of women in Kurdish society, Kurdish nationalism, like other nationalist movements, has been patriarchal requiring the unity of genders, classes, regions, dialects, and alphabets though paying lip service to the idea of gender equality.

often entertained traditional gender relations. For instance, guerrilla camps in the mountains were segregated along gender lines. Males and females were not allowed to enter into intimate relationships, or to marry even according to traditional norms. Criticism of the organization's gender policy was virtually stifled. On the other hand, it is known that at the end of the 1990s the women guerrillas of the PKK created their own party, the PJA (Partiya Jinan Azad- Free Women's Party) which has its own decision-making mechanism and its own army. After the foundation of the PJA, the number of women in the central committee of the PKK increased. These developments can be read as a challenge to the traditional gender inequalities in Kurdish society.

Today, Kurdish women still face a host of obstacles such as the patriarchal politics of Kurdish nationalist parties, the misogynism of Islamic groups, the political repression of central governments, continuing wars, and a largely disintegrated economy and society. Pre-modern gender relations persist in the present society undergoing extensive urbanization and "modernization". These sufferings attract many women to political and military activism, a growing tension between feminist awareness and patriarchal nationalism is visible. The presence of several thousand Kurdish female guerrillas, visible groups of writers, poets, painters, journalists, teachers, physicians, and parliamentarians (in Iraq, Turkey, and Europe) constitutes an important context for the transformation of gender relations.

Divided by international borders, dialects, alphabets, class and other social cleavages, Kurdish women seem to share little in common. However, we can observe today that national oppression, lingucide and other ill-treatment towards Kurds unites this heterogeneous "nation" of women, though, the modernizing project of the nation-states to transform Kurdish women into Iranian women, Turkish women, Iraqi women, Arab women is continuing. These ill-treatments

motivated many women to keep their identities tightly. By the mid-1920s, Turkey and Iran, where most of the Kurds lived, implemented a policy of linguistic and cultural genocide.

In Iran (under British rule between 1918 and 1932) and Syria (under French rule between 1918 and 1946), the Kurds were struggling for autonomous rule. Although a few women were prominent public figures, in Iraqi Kurdistan, the political and intellectual environment dominated by nationalism and feudal patriarchy was not hospitable to feminist consciousness. During the brief life of the Kurdish Republic established in 1946 in Soviet-controlled areas of northwest Iran, a "women's party"was formed as an affiliate of the Kurdish Democratic Party which led the autonomous government. The women's party tried to promote literacy and rally support for the republic. It was inspired by the achievements in the USSR and Europe but the members were not familiar with the feminist ideas of the time.

During the later part of the century, Kurdish women did not enjoy any freedom to form their own organization in any Middle Eastern country although they joined the officially sanctioned (Turkish, Arab or Iranian) women's groups. The Kurdish nationalist political parties pursuing autonomy or independence were clandestine except for brief periods in Iraq (1958-61, 1970-1974) or Iran (1979-1980). Although male dominated, they usually put gender equality on their agenda. In practice, however, they failed to organize women. Even when they had a women's organization (e.g., in the Democratic Party-Iraq), it was primarily ornamental with only few female activists. These political parties were at times involved in guerrilla war against the state; women in villages and the cities were expected to support the military and political work of those parties, but they were not recruited as active members and very rarely joined the members of the leadership team. The nationalist parties relegated women's emancipation and class struggle to the future, to after achieving autonomy and independence. Many women willingly

accepted the nationalist agenda. One factor was the violence of national oppression which rallied every one to the nationalist cause. The other was the general absence or weakness of feminist consciousness. The communist parties, too, were generally clandestine and favored party-controlled women activism only. Feminist literature was either lacking or not readily available.

In the 1980s and 1990s, two radical Kurdish political parties, Komala, the Kurdistan Organization of the Communist Party of Iran"and the "Kurdistan Workers Party-PKK"the former against Iran and the latter against Turkey, mobilized women and recruited a substantial number into their ranks. Young women, mostly from the rural areas, took up arms and engaged in political and military operations. However, the leadership of the parties is made up of men only. In their military camps in the mountains, Komala allowed women to engage in non-traditional work (e.g. military and political training, broadcasting, etc.) moreover, traditional female work, e.g. cooking and child care, was divided between males and females. Men were taught about gender equality. However, nationalist agenda, rather than feminism, was dominant especially in PKK.[278]

If we turn our attention to the motivations behind the Declaration of Woman Rights and Citizen, we will remember Olypme de Gouges' demands for women's equal citizenship rights and rights for child custody. After centuries, very similar claims have been voiced in Turkey by the Saturday Mothers who constitute a "disturbing"example of (mostly) female visibility in the public sphere. We should analyze this appearance of Saturday Mothers in the public sphere keeping in mind the fact that unlike Olypme de Gouges', Wollfstonecraft's, Virginia Woolf's and many Western feminists' emancipation struggles which had nothing to do with masculine/

[278] Kurdistan Solidarity Committee and Kurdistan Information Centre, *Resistance: Women in Kurdistan, (London, August 1995)*

patriotic/nationalist discourses, Middle Eastern women's struggle for their rights generally merged with nationalism at the expense of the feminist accents.

From 27 May 1995 on, the Saturday Mothers, relatives of those who have disappeared after being taken into police custody, held weekly demonstrations in front of Galatasaray Lycee, in Istanbul. Like the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, Saturday Mothers aimed at reacting to the state authorities which, they thought, determine the boundaries of the legality of "disappearances", extra-judicial killings, torture and massacres, and thus, decide who may live and who must die. As citizens or much more correctly, as mother citizens, they must have rights over their children and therefore they must have rights to ask for an explanation for their children's missing bodies. However, every demonstation and the growing silence it brought showed that the state had more rights over these missing bodies than their families did. Without making any speech or without holding any placards, the protesters made their points; silently displayed the photographs of their -mostly Kurdish- missing sons, fathers, daughters, and brothers and waited for an explanation. After a while, the Mothers veiled their mouths with a piece of black cloth, implying the absence of one of the most important citizenship rights, "freedom of speech". As time went by, the police started to detain the Mothers and finally, on March 1999, the Saturday Mothers decided to give an end to their weekly gatherings.

When we analyze the official discourse of the state and when we look at archives of newspapers or political speeches of authorities, we can see that the status of the Saturday Mothers as citizens was constructed through their disappeared/marked relatives or friends, thus, these women were not accepted as citizens with their own identities. Can it be thought that, in this way, the state legitimizes the violence it operates against the Mothers in the eyes of the

people? Can it be said that the state legitimizes unequal citizenship rights which were derived from nation-state's ideology of one nation (Turks), one language (Turkish), one history (Turkish history) and one future?

These marked citizens; "mothers of those who deserved to disappear", cannot appear in the public sphere and civil society because they *lack certain kinds of knowledge, skill and language to maintain a rational critical debate* and these lacks prevent them from enjoying their citizenship rights. This may lead us to the conclusion that modernity promised universal rights for citizens, creating hierarchies/inequalities through community and property, and mostly for these reasons, in Turkey citizenship can be regarded as a utopic concept in practice. One can challenge these inequalities with the claims of liberty, equality and personal rights but in order to do this s/he has to use the public sphere's special language. At that point, the utopia of universal/equal rights for citizenship fails to exist.

As N. Fraser argues, the classical bourgeois public sphere of Habermas was essentially masculine by allowing the visibility of male bodies and excluding female bodies. Thus, we should interpret the protests and resistance of Saturday Mothers within a historically patriarchal, male-dominated public sphere in Turkey. They were not only protesting women/mothers who were alien to the bourgeois male public sphere, they were also known as mothers of "Kurdish nationalists", "terrorists", thus, they were marked as "separatist activists"just like their disappeared relatives. The Saturday Mothers challenged patriarchal/national notions relating to the public sphere. The Saturday Mothers challenged the idea that marked citizens can only enter the "national"/"patriarchal"public sphere at the cost of shedding their own identities because in Turkey, the description of public sphere is based on state power and "Turkish community".

Furthermore, like Olypme de Gouges who were silenced by the guillotine, Saturday Mothers demonstrated that although citizenship is something that one must possess from birth, it has its own struggle areas.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This thesis attempted to contextualize and historicize femininity within the context of Kurdish nationalist discourse in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. My initial motivation was to look at late Ottoman history from below with subaltern, local, fragmentary and gendered perspectives in order to destabilize the meta-narratives which have been offered to us by mainstream historians and social scientists. This motivation requires two kinds of awareness; being aware of the fact that there has been a strong relationship between power and representation, and as a challenge to this relationship; being aware of the fact that there cannot be a single, absolute and authentic account of the past. On the contrary, when the historians change their perspective a new reading of the same past appears. In other words, turning their gaze from the powerful actor's point of view to the *mise en scene* and the marginalized groups and looking at history from below may allowed historians to reconsider the relationship with "the powerful" center and "the powerless" periphery. For this reason, one of the most important contributions of such an approach is the avenue it opens to understand how "the powerful" dehistoricizes the subaltern by marginalizing, excluding, erasing it and how these parties have constructed their identities by making silent/implicit references to each other.

The Constitution and politics of identity are based on a distinction. Trying to discover the authentic and original content of its identity, the West sought to construct a subject as "its Other" and created images for itself and for this "Other" within discursive formations and practices. This representation included "stable", "unprogressive", "savage", and "backward", "latecomer", "uncivilized" images of the Rest which were necessary for the Western world to position itself as an onward-moving homogeneous group of torchbearers of progress, civilization and modernity.

These constructed "lacks" of the Rest open an area for the West to formulate its own representation which has none of these lacks. For this reason, there is no need to mention that identity formation is always relational, incomplete and in progress. It is only through the relation to this "Rest/ the Other"; to what is called its "constitutive outside"[279] that identities can be constructed. Thus, it can be said that because every identity depends upon its difference from or its negation of the other, the West could not articulate its existence if the Rest did not exist and vice versa.

The construction of Western and Eastern identities with special attention to their nationalist and feminist aspects was one of the most important discussions of the thesis. My motivation was to examine the production of "indigenous/national versus modern"within the contexts of European, late Ottoman and Kurdish nationalist discourses. As several articles from Kurdish journals which emphasized the relationship between civilization/culture and the West or the motivations behind Ottoman reformation periods show, the hegemonic position of the West throughout this identity formation process has left the role of "closing the gap" to the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman sultans, bureaucrats and intellectuals who lived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries attempted to close the growing gap between the modern, civilized West and themselves because Europe became an object of desire for the Ottoman politicians and intellectuals. During the interconnected processes of modernization, Westernization and nationalism, the West was accepted both as a model to be followed in order to catch up with the civilized world and was perceived as a threat to "authentic" Ottoman values. Thus, the West became "the other/the referent" of Ottoman transformation and Westernization came to be accepted as a synonym of modernization.

[279] Stuart Hall , Paul du Gay, Questions of Cultural Identity, (London, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1995) p.4

As I discussed throughout the thesis, Abdulhamid II's reign witnessed the initiation of the series of reforms known as the Tanzimat, which intended to reorganize the Ottoman government, law, and society along lines inspired by Western European experiences. Closer economic and diplomatic ties with major European powers accompanied the reforms. The lifestyles of the elite also began to change under the influence of French and British ideas, tastes, fashions, and commodities.

Although the initial aim was to catch up with the progressive Western world, these reform makers also wanted to keep what was authentic to Ottoman culture. Thus, Westernization in the Ottoman period cannot be understood as an objective process in which technological innovations, manners, intellectual developments were imported from the West. Rather, Ottoman society, by bringing together cultural elements from the East and the West, and by simultaneously experiencing the pursuit of both change and preservation, clearly illustrates the existence and availability of multiple ways and faces of modernization.

This was, indeed, a process in which , on the one hand, the West was otherized and became a progressive model to be followed, and on the other hand, the non-Westerner others of the Ottoman Empire (Kurds, Arabs etc.) came to be exteriorized/otherized and subjected to unequal power relations. This double-faceted process helped Ottoman intellectuals to create their own "savage/uncivilized/unprogressive others" and to identify themselves as a modernizing, westernizing and developing empire by making references to these inferior others. As I discussed in the fourth chapter, the initial motivation behind the Tribal School, for instance, was to integrate the uncivilized periphery to its modernizing center as well as to disrobe Arab, Kurdish or Albanian students from their tribal/backward identities and transform them into educated, loyal and reliable Ottomans. This intention shows itself in Abdullah Freres' (photographers of

Abdulhamid II) album; “imperial self-portrait” prepared for the national libraries of the United States, Britain and France. It can be said that these albums were created to show the Europeans how far the Ottoman Empire had progressed during the reign of Abdülhamid II. In one of the photos in the album, a student in his national (Arabian, Kurdish or Albanian) costumes was standing in front of a rural scene and the next photo shows a group of students in European-style school uniforms standing in front of Asiret Mektebi. These images can be read as the illustration of an Ottoman center which created its own “oriental periphery” with the aim of demonstrating the civilizing mission of the Ottoman center on these tribal, backward Kurds, Arabs or Albanians. The rules of the game were clear; if the Ottoman rulers could manage to modernize their own Orient through several social engineering projects, then they would catch up to the modern Western countries. Besides, the effective implementation of the modernization project would be a good indicator of the Ottomans’ ability to internalize European discourse and to act as Europeans or become Europeans. This example can give us a clue about how the “Orientals” answered back to their representation by the West.

At that time, Tanzimat reforms aimed at creating an effective and efficient central government that also commanded the respect of the population through their equitable treatment before the law and incorporation into the administrative cadres. By the 1870s, however, the story became to change. The heterogeneity of the Ottoman population, the poor state of the economy and government finances, and vulnerability to external pressures threatened the political integration of the Ottoman Empire. Meanwhile, nationalist uprisings in the Balkans turned into bloody ethnic and religious confrontations. The European powers joined forces to bring pressure on the Ottoman government to grant autonomy to the Christian population in those areas where they lived in large numbers.

This modernization/Westernization period also changed the relationship between the Ottoman center and its Kurdish periphery. The Ottoman Empire, under the influence of pressures for political modernization, applied several policies to centralize its rule and exercise direct power over the Kurdish territories. The Ottoman government sent rulers from the center to Kurdistan instead of allowing the Kurds to determine their own rulers. This centralization process resulted in the decline in power of former ruling Kurdish tribes. Thus, the loss of autonomy on the part of the Kurdish intellectuals and leaders was perceived as a challenge to their authority. In return, they struggled with these policies by exteriorizing the state and the discourses that the state represents. In other words, for the first time in Kurdish history we see the development of ideas comparing Turks, Armenians and Kurds, Turkish women and Kurdish women as well as Turkish and Kurdish power and culture. The Kurdish nationalist movement was, thus, a reaction not only to Western European concepts like "equality", "nation", "self-determination"but also to the hegemony of Istanbul.

The emergence of Kurdish nationalist discourse and the inner/outer domains it determined was one of the most important emphases of this thesis. The Kurdish intelligentsia borrowed nationalist concepts from Europe, but they transformed them in their own peculiar ways, making them meaningful in their unique contexts. However, this borrowing only took place in what Partha Chatterjee has called the "outer domain". The "inner domain" in the Kurdish case included "family, tribal relations, eternal history, religion, eternal language, and spirituality". These constituents of the "inner domain" became the driving force in the Kurdish nationalist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Thus, while the vacuum left by the weakening religion and strong monarchies was filled by nationalism in the European experience, religion, strong tribal networks and family, reconstructed Kurdish history, and

language became the instruments of the Kurdish nationalist discourse. Kurdish nationalism shares this feature with other anti-colonialist nationalist movements.

In the Indian context, the inner domain refers to the concept of the nation and the outer domain to the concept of the colonial or postcolonial state. Indian national identity should be constructed on this inner domain where the imperialist policies of British rulers did not penetrate. The project of creating an independent India from the ashes of what has left them untouched elevated the importance of this inner domain. For Kurds, the inner domain also meant those pieces which must come together and construct the "most Kurdish" identity.

However, these two perceptions of "inner domain" are different. Being a colony, India was under the domination of colonial Britain and as we know, colonialism was not only about capitalist expansion. The colonizing nation did not only dominate the resources, labor, and markets of the colonial territory, but also imposed socio-cultural, religious and linguistic structures on the colonized people. Although the colonized people were affected differently depending on certain criteria like gender and class, the difference and inferiority were attributed to the colonized as a whole. Second, race and religion must be addressed. The British in India remained alien on both these counts. The British rulers disdained the Indians on the ground of their own "racial and religious superiority".

While India was a colony and while Indian intellectuals perceived this inner and outer domain in the shadow of this experience, Kurdish people under Ottoman rule did not experience such intensive political, cultural or economic policies of the central state. As discussed in the second chapter, with the centralization efforts of the Ottoman government the Kurdish periphery became more dependent on the center while it still enjoyed limited political autonomy which gave the Kurds a chance of developing their own culture, language, traditions and as a whole

their own identity independently. Although the state's "social engineering projects" like the above mentioned Tribal Schools or the state's centralization policies like appointments of rulers from the center or the emergence of the Hamidiye Cavalry changed the status quo in Ottoman Kurdistan and limited their independence, Kurds never experienced the cultural, political, economic domination of the Ottoman state as directly and as harshly as India experienced British domination.

When Kurds became disturbed by the changing status quo in Kurdistan, they began to make references to this inner domain; culture, language, common eternal history, myths, legends and women who carried all these items in themselves. The inner domain of the Kurds came from their need to distinguish themselves further from their Muslim Ottoman compatriots by emphasizing their nationness and uniqueness on several fronts.

During the period of determining the inner domain and before claiming nationhood in the international arena, Kurdish intellectuals regarded themselves as the capable ones who could motivate, educate, direct and lead the other Kurds. They saw themselves as the only people who could define the problems facing their society and offer solutions and take their society where they wanted it to go. One of the prominent figures of the journals, Halil Hayali wrote: "The duty falls upon the elite of the nations, who understand their defects and flaws to correct these evil acts through explanations"[280] For this reason, the primary mission of the journals is to carry this message. They drew the ideal appropriate models for a nation, for a movement, for gender roles, for the youth and for womanhood.

[280] Halil Hayalî, *"Dert ve Deva"* (Disease and Cure), Rojî Kurd, No: 1, 2 Haziran 1329 (15 June 1913) p. 7

Kurdish nationalists tried to create their own domain of sovereignty within Ottoman society before the Kurds appeared in the international political arena claiming national autonomy. These intellectuals strove to carry out this objective by dividing the world of social institutions and practices into two domains, "inner/spiritual" and "outer/material". They imagined a Kurdish constituency untouched by the material domain and composed of language, history, folklore, legends, stories and folk songs. These were indeed marked by the journals as the innermost Kurdish domain within which Kurdish nationalist discourse must be developed. Kurdish intellectuals established their hegemony within this inner realm by standardizing the Kurdish language, reviving traditional literature, animating heroic ancestors through epics and poems, establishing organizations and using journals as an instrument for the circulation of nationalist ideas. Apart from reconstructed histories, literatures and traditions, the mother tongue became an essential instrument to distinguish the Kurdish nation from the Turkish, Arabic, and Persian speaking Muslim constituents of the Ottoman Empire as well as to create an imagined community among Kurdish people. The contextual rhetoric of the building and emergence of the Kurdish nation subsumed the location and identity politics of the "woman". In this respect, Kurdish women were accepted as the pure and historical symbols/conveyors of Kurdishness since it was their language and culture that was thought to be the purest and most Kurdish. This suggests that despite their symbolic female role as mothers of the nation, women are subordinated in actual political processes. Thus, "ideal Kurdish women" who were portrayed as "desexualized political bodies" have been cultural constructs which are continually being revised, rewritten and re-appropriated.

Although this thesis was an attempt to analyze whether Kurdish nationalism, developing in a non-European culture, had no historical alternative but to follow in the shadows of Western

thought, it heavily relies on the analytical categories regarding Western or Indian nationalisms in its own analysis of Kurdish nationalism. Such an attempt to put Kurdish nationalist intelligentsia's acts into certain categories, branding them European-like or Indian-like in terms of the path they followed, makes it difficult for the researcher to hear "the original" voices of Kurdish nationalists. Thus, the researcher can be trapped as Partha Chatterjee describes below:

> I have one central objection to Anderson's argument. If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain "modular" forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine? History, it would seem, has decreed that we in the postcolonial world shall only be perpetual consumers of modernity. Europe and the Americas, the only true subjects of history, have thought out on our behalf not only the script of colonial enlightenment and exploitation, but also that of our anti-colonial resistance and postcolonial misery. Even our imaginations must remain forever colonized.[281]

Instead of classifying Kurdish nationalists' ideas and acts according to European and Indian nationalists' ideas and actions, it is more productive to see how they construct their subjectivity within a specific historical framework where the transition to modernity and the evaluation of the tribal or ethno-religious "tradition" went hand in hand. Members of the Kurdish national elite constituted their identity through a projection of the West in affirming their construction of a modern society. They organized the desire to be modern around the marker of "the West," which they claimed to possess. However, they also urged the Kurds not to become "too westernized". Trying to encapsulate them within European or Indian categories leads us to ignore their peculiarities.

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[281] Partha Chatterjee, *Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1993)p.5

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