***Self-Composed:***

**The Narration of Nationality and Identity among Anatolian Kurds, 1908-1938**

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*For my father, who has finally stopped wishing I had chosen chemistry instead*

# Table of Contents

**Introduction: A New Reading of Nascent Nationalisms in Kurdish Anatolia 3**

**Chapter One: Cast of Characters 9**

I. Mise en Scene
II. Dramatis Personae

*Ziya Gökalp*
*Ekrem Cemilpaşa*
*Celadet Ali Bedirhan*
*Noureddine Zaza*

**Chapter Two: Diyarbakır Imagined 26**

I. The Diyarbakır Proof: Home According to Ziya Gökalp
II. Heir to the Patriarchy: Ekrem Cemilpaşa and the Family Estate
III. Location, Location, Location

**Chapter Three: Exigencies of Exile 49**

I. Fracture: Celadet Ali Bedirhan
II. Fidelity: Ziya Gökalp
III. The Clarity of Distance

**Chapter Four: International Nationalism 67**

I. Away From Ottomanism
II. Away From Ottomanism, Together
III. Situating Self

**Conclusion: Words into this Darkness 86**

**Bibliography 89**

# Introduction: A New Reading of Nascent Nationalisms in Kurdish Anatolia

*for life's not a paragraph*
*and death i think is no parenthesis*

e. e. cummings

*Yalnız sözler kalbin aynısı değildir, yazı da ruhun bir aynasıdır.*

Ziya Gökalp

In the middle of August of 1923, Celadet Ali Bedirhan found a modicum of uplifting news to scribble down in his notebook: at the bottom of a basket in his boarding room in Munich, he had discovered a neglected bit of tobacco, which he smoked with great pleasure. This was apparently the only happy moment of his day. Celadet had little money, and less every day. His father's pension had been revoked by the Ottoman state, so what little allowance the son had depended upon was no more. The letters from Istanbul devastated him, bearing news of the family and friends he had been forced to leave behind. On top of this, the man's faith was becoming brittle, apt to break for want of cigarettes, he wrote, and the sole foods he could afford were potatoes and lettuce. Yet he would give up both of these for a diet of stale bread alone if only he could find some cigarettes and *rakı*. He craved intoxication, *needed* alcohol; he was desperate for even a temporary escape.

The bleak picture painted by Celadet Ali Bedirhan is hardly indicative of his heritage as descendant of "one of the most notable Kurdish families" who "trace their origin back to the Umayyad general Khalid ibn Walid."[1] Nor does it hint at his later career as one of the most influential Kurdish nationalists of the first half of the twentieth century. The suffering he records is universal in nature; the grief of a person exiled from home, foisted into a foreign environment, grappling with poverty, hunger and loneliness, and watching the world continue on, oblivious to

[1] Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2004), 70.

his pain. It is easy to understand why the world around him had little regard for his desperate sadness; in the wake of the First World War, he was hardly alone in his hardship, or even among the worst off. It is easy, too, if perhaps not quite as easy, to comprehend why such experiences would be dismissed by historians looking back at the time. The aspects of this man's life considered worthy of historical attention lie in his genealogy and his linguistic and political accomplishments; a few years spent down and out in Munich seem irrelevant to the greater narrative into which his character is placed.

And yet, such a narrative – one of nascent nationalism and communal struggle – effaces innumerable important details, whitewashing the story that it might fit neatly in a textbook. Those who spend time discussing a man such as Celadet Ali Bedirhan essentialize his role in a national struggle that is itself essentialized, the details, contradictions and development of each cast aside. In truth, there is no one narrative into which Celadet Ali Bedirhan fits, just as there is no one narrative of the development of Kurdish nationalism in the wake of the Ottoman Empire. The story of the process and the participants is, in fact, multiple. Yet it is possible, with much effort and great potential for mistake, to chip away at the whitewash that covers this story, just as archaeologists continue to do in that great Istanbul landmark, the Hagia Sophia, slowly revealing frescoes of great complexity that have been forgotten over time. It is with this intent that this study proceeds, examining the personal records of four Anatolian Kurdish men intimately involved with the development of national ideals, each of whom underwent his own crisis of identity as the state that had raised them collapsed. The stories they tell, and the ways in which they are told, will reveal a panorama of experiences, thoughts and realities, captivating in its complexity, fascinating in its contradictions, and convincing in its acknowledgement of both.

This study is organized around four chapters. The first, brief chapter provides the reader with concise biographies of the men discussed in the subsequent sections, as well as giving some

necessary information regarding the Kurdish people and the historical period under consideration, c. 1908-1938. The remaining three chapters proceed as thematic comparisons of issues raised in the set of texts utilized here. "Diyarbakır Imagined," the second chapter, presents two radically different articulations of the nation-space as represented by Diyarbakır, a province in Southeastern Anatolia. Using the writings of Ziya Gökalp and Ekrem Cemilpaşa, the comparison will highlight the development of competing narratives of nation and of self among Anatolian Kurds in the early twentieth century. The third chapter, entitled "Exigencies of Exile," examines as examples of ontological narrative[2] the personal writings of two men (Gökalp and Celadet Ali Bedirhan) to explore the formative role exile played in the development of the national narratives and individual identities of these men. I argue that the experience of exile in many ways shaped the emerging narratives of nation and self during this period for the Kurds of Anatolia (today's Republic of Turkey). The fourth and final chapter, "International Nationalism," attempts to elucidate the manner in which competing Anatolian nationalisms (specifically, Turkish, Armenian and Kurdish) developed under circumstances that forced each to engage with the others. These nascent nationalisms, emerging in the same post-imperial moment, were forced to grapple with the existence of the others in order to articulate their own existence, goals and future. The effects of this phenomenon on the narratives of Kurdish nationalism will be examined primarily through the use of the writings of Ziya Gökalp, Ekrem Cemilpaşa, Celadet Ali Bedirhan and Noureddine Zaza.

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[2] The phrases "ontological narrative" and "ontological narrativity" are used in this study to connote the process of defining the self through the creation of a narrative; both entities – the narrative and the self – emerge out of the same process of storytelling, and both serve to delineate the identity of the narrator. Margaret Somers explains the process of "ontological narrativity" as follows: "…It is through narrativity that we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identities … all of us come to *be* who we *are* (however ephemeral, multiple, and changing) by being located or locating ourselves (usually unconsciously) in social narratives *rarely of our own making.*" (Margaret R. Somers, "The narrative constitution of identity: A relational and network approach," *Theory and Society* Vol. 23 (1994): 606. Emphasis in original.)

This study frequently challenges the canonical renditions of early Turkish and Kurdish nationalism, as well as some of the historiographical understandings of the post-imperial nationalist moment in the former Ottoman Empire. It stands in an important location in contemporary Turkish historiography, examining one of the most influential historical constructs within this field –nationalism – from the perspective of the individual participants. By giving serious attention to the words of those who were themselves constructing the narratives of nationalism that have subsequently been revised and canonized, we are able to discover revelatory themes that problematize contemporary understandings of Turkish and Kurdish nationalist constructs.

This study is an innovative addition to late Ottoman and early Turkish Republican historiography in two essential ways. The first of these is the source base that is utilized, as well as the way in which I have chosen to utilize it. The memoirs and letters discussed here have gone largely unexplored and, when examined, have not been properly mined for the wealth of information and nuance they offer the historian. Through its careful focus on the narratives these men constructed, the words they chose and the sentiments with which they wrote, this work shines light onto what has previously been a dark, unexplored historical space: the personal experience of the formation of post-imperial national identity. The men whose works are examined here should be understood as part of a larger post-imperial phenomenon in the former Ottoman lands, wherein the disintegration of the empire prompted new articulations of identity and nation throughout a vast geographic area. Yet even though this process was not exclusive to the Kurds, they represent the most strikingly underanalyzed participants in this phenomenon, as well as the group that has been most thoroughly silenced in Turkish historiography to date. It is for this reason that these forgotten documents, written by men remembered only in very specific and limited roles (if at all), have been chosen as the basis of my work.

The second – and surely the most controversial – innovation present in these pages is the new approach it offers to the figure of Ziya Gökalp, long considered the unrivaled father of Turkish nationalism. Including him in this analysis of the formation of national narratives by Anatolian Kurds was far from accidental. Through the study of the words with which he articulated his nationalist sentiment, we discover Gökalp to be a character of far more complexity than historians are wont to admit. This study seats Ziya Gökalp squarely among the other Anatolian Kurds in this post-imperial moment, struggling just as surely to define himself and his chosen nation. Though the nation he adopted – the Turkish nation – ultimately offered him a type of historiographical legitimacy that went long unquestioned by Turks and scholars of the Turkish world, Gökalp himself was full of conflict and contradictions. And while his formulation of his own Turkish identity was used by the early Turkish Republic in order to help define the nation itself, the choices he made and considerations he weighed were entirely equivalent to those of the other men examined in this study – men who, by the end of their lives, considered themselves Kurdish (and, as it happened, stateless). State sponsorship catapulted Gökalp into the narrative of Turkish nationalism in a way that neither Cemilpaşa nor Bedirhan nor Zaza would experience. Yet it is crucial that we recognize that Gökalp's own experience of the process of post-imperial articulation of a national identity was strikingly similar to theirs. It is a primary aim of this study to reframe Ziya Gökalp within this context, and it is by listening to *his* words, rather than relying on our own, that this becomes possible.

While there is less historiography to deviate from when it comes to Kurdish nationalism itself, it is still true that this study is also unlike any other in that fledgling field. The development of Kurdish nationalism has garnered paltry historical attention. That which exists generally revolves around debates regarding whether or not a specific figure, institution or event does or does not "qualify" as nationalist in nature. These include, for instance, the argument of whether

or not *Mem û Zîn*, the romantic epic of Ehmedi Xani composed over three centuries ago, "counts" as a nationalist text.[3] Some of these studies are admittedly quite interesting, particularly those of anthropologist Martin Van Bruinessen, one of the most active scholars of Kurdish nationalism.[4] Yet such debates do little to help us understand the development of nationalist sentiment itself and much to essentialize such concepts as "Kurd" and "nationalist" in a way that obscures, rather than clarifies, the historical moments under discussion. The essentialism endemic in such studies is in many ways understandable; most authors are seeking simply to legitimize a stateless people by using the only set of contemporary terms that would render them state-worthy – and these are, today, unavoidably the terms of nationalism. Yet these works are still representative of a school of thought that understands nationalism as a natural category whose presence is a necessary step within a teleological conception of history. The work I have done does not engage with questions of national "legitimacy" or a search for the ephemeral "first" nationalist moment. Such constructs are far less informative than an investigation of the ways Kurds themselves defined and measured nationality, national sentiment and national identity.

In a final note on my methodology, it is perhaps necessary to address my rather broad understanding of "memoir" itself. The texts that will be used in exploring the identity formation of Anatolian Kurds include memoirs in the traditional sense, retrospective compositions about the authors' lives and experiences. Yet they also include other self-reifying written products such as diaries, letters and journal articles. As each source necessitates specific considerations on the part of the historian, the issues of composition for each work will be addressed as they become relevant to the discussion. Lastly all translations from both Turkish and French are my own.

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[3] Also seen as Ahmadi Khani (English transliteration) and Ahmedi Hani (Turkish). I've chosen to use the Kurdish spelling.

[4] Martin Van Bruinessen, "Ehmedî Xanî's Mem û Zîn and Its Role in the Emergence of Kurdish National Awareness," in *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism,* ed. Abbas Vali (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2003), 40-57.

# Chapter One: Cast of Characters

*Although they seemed formidable at first sight … I discovered they were a gentle people. There was nothing fearsome, rough or terrible about them.*

Dana Adams Schmidt

*In this sense writing a history of the Kurds and Kurdistan is as much an exercise in self-awareness as an attempt to construct a geneology of Kurdish nationalism.*

Abbas Vali

## I. Mise en Scene

Prior to introducing the men whose stories will be told in the following chapters, the stage itself must be set with a brief discussion of who the Kurdish people are and where they stood at the historical juncture addressed in this paper. Admittedly, the question of who the Kurds are does not invite consistent, uniform answers. Aside from debates over whether the word "Kurdish" indicates an ethnicity, a set of ethnicities, a nation or (in the case of the Turkish state until very recently) a nonentity, there are multiple minority populations (such as Yezidis and Zazas) who are included in this category by some and excluded by others. There are at least two main language groups that fall under the heading of Kurdish – Kurmanji, largely spoken in Anatolia, Syria and Iraq, and Sorani, spoken primarily in Iran – in addition to the numerous regional variants and dialects belonging to each. The Kurds, then as now, were largely Muslim (primarily Sunni), and thus throughout the Ottoman centuries were legal equals with all Muslims of the empire.

Kurds have inhabited the region that is now divided between southeastern Turkey, eastern Iran and the northern regions of Syria and Iraq for centuries. The land itself has passed through the hands of multiple empires, including the Persian and Ottoman; it is referred to by some as "Kurdistan," the (as yet) unfounded Kurdish state. The territory under consideration will be

consistently referred to in this study in geographical terms (southeastern Anatolia, i.e.) to avoid the ideological connotations that accompany state-based territorial conceptions. The Kurdish lands under the Ottoman Empire operated with a great deal of autonomy, particularly prior to the latter decades of the nineteenth centuries when a series of centralizing measures were undertaken by the state.[5] Yet Kurds were never entirely removed from the imperial center; not only were taxes paid and fealty professed, the imperial court and state bureaucracy included many Kurdish officials, as well. As we will see in the case of three of the four men who serve as this paper's inspiration, the wealthier Kurdish families frequently sent their children to be educated in the schools of Istanbul, thus integrating them into the imperial (Muslim) identity as well as supplying them with knowledge of the several languages necessitated by Ottoman political life (Turkish, Farsi and Arabic). At a time when few would have cited Turkishness or Kurdishness as their primary marker of identity, Kurds, as Turks, were fully regarded as (Muslim) Ottomans.

The end of the First World War and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire brought shocking political change to the region. Though a schism had previously existed between the Kurds of the Persian Empire and those of the Ottoman, the post-war territorial divisions prompted further fragmentation among Kurdish groups. The Kurds living in what became British mandate Iraq, those of French mandate Syria, those of British-occupied Iran, as well as those who remained in the Anatolian lands whose future was unclear, frequently conceptualized their futures in terms of the circumstances in which they found themselves. Never granted statehood or true equality in any of these states, the Kurds who lived in what became the Republic of Turkey arguably experienced the greatest degree of state-sponsored repression. As such – and as participants in the Turkish War of Independence, and thus creators of the state that would neglect

[5] Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 200), 264.

them – their experiences and their conceptualizations of nation and nationalism warrant special attention. The figures here by no means represent the totality of Anatolian Kurds who worked to forge new national narratives. They provide, however, fascinating examples of the malleability of identity, the opportunity available for self-narration in the post-imperial moment and the contemporary concerns that informed both of these processes.

**II. Dramatis Personae**

It may come as a surprise to some to learn that the historian, assuming knowledge of Turkish (French is useful, too), has rather easy access to a wealth of memoirs, diaries and letters composed by individuals of Kurdish origin and dealing with the years 1908-1938. There is no need even to enter the archives; thanks in large part to Kurdish cultural organizations (and particularly the Kurdish Institute of Brussels), as well as to the Avesta publishing house in Istanbul, a good number of texts can be purchased in bookstores and found in university libraries. A remarkable feature of the vast majority of these works, and one that has significance in understanding the formation of Kurdish identities during this period, is that the authors chose to write their texts (and thus their *selves*) in the Turkish language. Those originally written in the Ottoman (Arabic) script have been transliterated into the modern Turkish (Latin) script, making them accessible to contemporary Turkish speakers. With such a collection of sources so readily available for historical consumption, the relative lack of interest they seem to have garnered is something I find quite surprising.[6] People need not rely on such characterizations of the Kurdish people as those offered by the *New York Times* journalist Dana Adams Schmidt; we may turn instead to the Kurds' own words. It is a secondary goal of this work to simply remind those

[6] Hakan Özoğlu is the major exception to this. His use of these memoirs is extensive. His aim, however, has never been to explore the memoirs themselves, but rather to make use of them basically as tools for fact-checking.

working on topics of Turkish and Kurdish nationalisms during the first part of the twentieth century that this source base exists! If that alone proves to be the value of this project, I will be more than satisfied.

To highlight the variety of life choices and potential life narratives available to a man of Kurdish origin during this period, I have attempted to focus on individuals whose forged lives and life-narratives were largely divergent from one another.[7] Finding such variations is, in fact, a far simpler task than finding a common course of action or a common historical interpretation. I have attempted here to choose people representative of various social and economic backgrounds: in Ziya Gökalp, we find the son of a modest government employee in an Ottoman Kurdish province; in Ekrem Cemilpaşa, we find an heir to an important and wealthy *ayan* family in the same province; in Celadet Ali Bedirhan, we have an example of an elite Kurd who identified with the imperial capital more than with the Kurdish region of the empire; and in Noureddine Zaza, we have an example of a member of the next generation who functions to disperse and legitimize the narratives of his forebearers.

*Ziya Gökalp*

Ziya Gökalp is both the best-known and the most historically problematic of the individuals that will be discussed. Indeed, the reason Gökalp is familiar to most students of late Ottoman and early Turkish Republican history is for his role as the first systematic theoretician of *Turkish* nationalism. His conceptions became, in turn, a fundamental base on which much of

[7] The virtual absence of women's role in this process is a source of frustration and regret for me as its author. However, available sources, female literacy rates at the time under investigation, and an inability to conduct any sort of oral research to overcome these obstacles rendered the discussion of Kurdish women in this paper impossible. It is a topic that very much needs to be explored, and I sincerely hope my failure inspires someone else's success in that area.

the new state's articulation of nationalism was built. The influence Gökalp's theories had on Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) have been well recorded; David McDowall even sees Gökalp's sociological texts as perhaps the single most influential factor in Mustafa Kemal's choice in 1923 to cease referencing the Kurds as a legitimate, separate group meriting autonomy in even a limited form, as he had previously.[8] Gökalp was born in1876 in Diyarbakır, a major metropolitan center in the southeastern region of Anatolia. His father had a respectable job as a city administrator, but they were by no means wealthy.[9] As Ottoman censuses recorded Muslims as a single category with no distinction between individuals based on any ethnic descent, it is difficult to know the exact percentage of the Muslim population that would have been considered (or would have considered itself) Kurdish, whether culturally, ethnically or linguistically. However, that it was the majority seems rather clear; the areas functioned as semi-autonomous emirates under the Ottoman Empire for most of its history, and aside from Ottoman officials sent from Istanbul, most Muslim residents of the area would have been in a position of allegiance to a Kurdish family and/or *şeyh*.[10]

The likelihood that Gökalp was of Kurdish descent is very high; indeed, McDowall considers it high enough to assume its truth.[11] In the Turkish memory, however, Gökalp is not merely a Turk, but rather one of the most important Turks of the twentieth century. As anyone who has spent some time in Turkey can attest, the public gratitude that many Turkish citizens today display towards Mustafa Kemal is almost palpable; the man behind the ubiquitous portraits made possible the Turkish nation-state, and this is a fact that remains in he foreground of public life to this day. Yet it would seem some of this recognition would logically overflow onto the

[8] David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2007), 191.
[9] Ibid., 92.
[10] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables* , 59.
[11] McDowall, *Modern History*, 92.

figure of Ziya Gökalp; to make a nation-state, first, one needs an articulation of the nation. And Gökalp, prior to his death in 1924, formulated the basic tenets of Turkish nationalism as they were adopted by Mustafa Kemal and thus understood and taught in the early republic. Hikmet Dizdaroğlu, in a study put together by the Ziya Gökalp Foundation in 1977 that reviewed the research on Gökalp to date, summarizes the depth and significance of Gökalp's work to the formulation of Turkish nationalism as follows:

> *Türkçülüğü dizgeleştirirken tek başına kaldığı için (yani bu alanda tek başına bilimsel çalışma yapan o olduğu için) çalışmaları zorunlu olarak değişik alanlara dağıtmış, kendi deyişiyle "Lisani, bedii, ahlaki, hukuki, dini, iktisadi, siyasi, felsefi Türkçülük" yapmıştır.*
>
> Because he was alone in systematizing Turkishness (that is, because he was the only figure doing scientific work in this field), his works necessarily span different areas of study. In his own words, he created "linguistic, aesthetic, moral, legal, religious, economic, political and philosophical Turkishness."[12]

Importantly, this is not a simple case of a British (or European) interpretation versus a Turkish (or indigenous) interpretation of the facts. Daniel Brown, for instance, identifies Ziya Gökalp as "the Turkish national poet," indicating the acceptance of his Turkish identity in international circles, as well.[13] Indeed, McDowall's argument regarding Gökalp's descent is far more typical of a student of Kurdish studies; in virtually every other context in which I've encountered him, Gökalp's national (and ethnic) identity is left unquestioned, and thereby assumed Turkish, the state's new neutral, the accepted nationality of citizens of Turkey.

However, it is clear that questions of his own nationality and ethnicity were raised during his lifetime. Gökalp, in defining the new concept of Turkish nationality that was to take the place of Ottoman Muslim identity for the Muslims of Anatolia, was propelled either by external forces or his own attention to consistency to analyze his own background. He acknowledges in an article entitled "Millet Nedir?" ("What is a Nation?"), written in 1923, that

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[12] Hikmet Dizdaroğlu, *Ziya Gökalp Üzerinde Araştırmalar* (Ankara: Aslımlar Matbaası, 1981), 5. *Türkçülük* may also be translated as "Turkism."
[13] Daniel Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 210.

when he left home to continue his education in Istanbul, "all those who belonged, like myself, to the Eastern Anatolian provinces were called Kurds. Up until that time I had considered myself a Turk."[14] For a variety of reasons the second claim seems highly improbable. The most important of these is linked to the fact that within the context of the Ottoman Empire, the term "Turk" was used only to connote someone considered rustic, uncultured, and most assuredly a peasant. Gökalp himself recognizes this elsewhere:

> *"Türklüğü ile övünen sanki tek bir kişi bile yoktu. Türk ismini, sanki utanç duyulacak bir sıfatmış gibi kimse üzerine almak istemiyordu."*
>
> "It seemed as if there wasn't a single person who took pride in his Turkishness. The word Turk, as if it were an embarrassing adjective, was one no one wanted to place upon himself."[15]

It was only through the young republic's cultural reforms that the idea was redeemed and Anatolian ("Turkish") culture applauded.[16] The composition of his claim of lifelong Turkish identification just one year prior to his death points to a potential effort to solidify his identity in the public eye at a time when his reputation was at its height. Whether he thought of himself as Turkish, Kurdish, Muslim, Ottoman or simply as someone hailing from Diyarbakır when he was a child is obviously unknowable; the story he wished to compose for himself, on the other hand, is clear.

Ultimately, Gökalp's actual family heritage is of little use to us here. What is essential to note is that two identities were entirely available to him; had he identified himself as Kurdish, he would not have been questioned. And yet he chose to be a Turk, moreover to teach others how to identify as Turks and encourage their doing so. Gökalp's choice in itself is certainly

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[14] Unable to find the original article, I have relied in this case on the translation by Niyazi Berkes found in *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp*.
[15] Ziya Gökalp, *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak*, (Ankara: Toker Yayınları, 2007), 39. This could just as easily be translated to say "*her* Turkishness," as there is no gender in Turkish.
[16] Koray Değirmenci, "On the Pursuit of a Nation: The Construction of Folk and Folk Music in the Founding Decades of the Turkish Republic," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* Vol. 37 No. 1 (2006), 53.

significant; equally significant, however, is the room within Turkish national ideology for such a choice to be made. One could, in short, *opt in*. That this ideology was first articulated in large part by Gökalp himself reveals his acute awareness of the need for a flexible ideology in Anatolia during the urgency of the War of Independence. This awareness that space must be left for loyal Ottoman citizens of non-Turkish descent to become full members of both the nation and the state is crucial to his conceptualization of nationalism, which is defined in terms of culture and language to the complete disregard of ethnic descent.[17] Whether or not he ever conceived of himself as a Kurd – and it is certainly possible that he never did – his origins in a community that was largely Kurdish-speaking and yet largely loyal to the Ottoman state undoubtedly informed his understanding of an inclusive, territorial Turkish nationalism.

Our primary windows into Ziya Gökalp's identity construction will come from a compilation of 572 of the letters he wrote to his family while in exile in Limni and Malta during the years 1919-1921. His political and sociological texts, particularly *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak* (*Turkification, Islamification, Contemporization*) and *Kürt Aşiretleri Hakkında Sosyolojik Tetkikler* (*Sociological Investigations of Kurdish Tribes*), will also be utilized. Where the original is unavailable, I have relied on the translated collection of some of Gökalp's shorter works by Niyazi Berkes, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp.*

*Ekrem Cemilpaşa*

Ekrem Cemilpaşa, like Ziya Gökalp, was born in Diyarbakır, though he was fifteen years younger than the to-be Turkish nationalist. As one of the *ayan* families of the region, the Cemilpaşa family was locally important and relatively wealthy. Ekrem's father, Ahmet

[17] McDowall, *Modern History*, 92.

Cemilpaşa, was schooled at home (a sign of wealth) in the non-Turkish languages of the Ottoman Empire, Arabic and Persian, and served as in the Ottoman bureaucracy at various levels, including the influential position of the *vali* (provincial governor) of Diyarbakır.[18] Hakan Özoğlu, the historian who has engaged most thoroughly with the lives of Kurdish notables in the late Ottoman Empire, reports that no documents exist regarding the family's status in generations before that of Ekrem's father.[19] Thus our ability to know understand family progression prior to this point is limited.

As was typical for the son of a family of privilege, Ekrem continued his education after primary school first in Istanbul and subsequently in Europe. He arrived in the imperial capital, over nine hundred miles from home, at a tumultuous and exciting time; the Constitutional Revolution of 1908 had just been successfully completed and the *Meşrutiyet* period had begun. With the Committee of Union and Progress in power a new (if brief) period of liberalized policies commenced. Former exiles (many of them Kurdish) were invited to return to Istanbul, cultural clubs were given permission to open, and printing presses became remarkably active. In this revolutionary atmosphere young Ekrem, along with his cousin Kadri Cemilpaşa,[20] founded the *Hevi Kürt Talebe Cemiyeti*, or the Kurdish Student Society of Hope (referenced in most sources as simply *Hevi,* or "hope").[21] The members of *Hevi* began publishing a journal (*Roja Kurd*, in Turkish and Kurmanji) in 1913 and were additionally involved with some influential Istanbul Kurds of an older generation.[22] Ekrem describes one individual in particular, Halil

[18]Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables* , 103.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Also known as Zinar Silopi; I will use the name Kadri Cemilpaşa so the reader does not forget the family link.
[21] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables* , 105. Also see Ekrem Cemilpaşa's memoir, *Muhtasar Hayatım (My Life in Brief).*
[22] Ibid. See also Kadri Cemilpaşa, *Doza Kurdistan (Kürdistan Davası): Kürt Milletinin 60 Yıllık Esaretten Kurtuluş Savaşı Hatıraları* (Beirut: Stewr Basımevi, 1969).

Hayali, as a father-like mentor to the young Kurdish students of Istanbul and counts this figure as a major influence in his own eventual articulation of Kurdish identity.[23]

At the outbreak of the First World War, Ekrem, along with Kadri and other Ottoman students studying in Europe, was, in his own words, "invited" back by the state to serve in the imperial military.[24] He reports fighting briefly in Gallipoli before his unit was transferred to the Erzurum Front, followed by time spent at the Muş Front.[25] Wounded, he was sent to the Diyarbakır hospital to recuperate; during this time, Ottoman Paşa Mustafa Kemal was fighting in the area and reportedly visited the Cemilpaşa estate to meet with Ekrem's father, as did İsmet İnönü.[26] Given the senior Cemilpaşa's status in the Ottoman administration, there seems no reason to doubt this claim. Despite his retrospective narration of the First World War, in which Kurds who died in battle are described as "sacrifices to the Turks" in a war that was not their own, the 1916 military photograph of young Ekrem tells a different story.[27] It depicts a young, confident soldier, uniformed in a European style in a high-collared coat with prominent buttons and knee-high boots, standing proudly before a backdrop of cannons and army tents. There is no indication in his proud eyes that this war is anything other than his own.[28]

During the Turkish War of Independence, some members of the Cemilpaşa family supported Mustafa Kemal's fight against foreign forces, a fact that Ekrem recalled some fifty years later with regret and anger.[29] By that time he had conceptualized Mustafa Kemal, Atatürk, as a liar and a traitor. His narration of Mustafa Kemal's arrival in Diyarbakır to recruit Kurdish families for the independence cause is as follows:

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[23] Ekrem Cemilpaşa, *Muhtasar Hayatım* (Brussels: Brüksel Kürt Enstitüsü, 1989), 20.
[24] Ibid., 23.
[25] Ibid., 26.
[26] Ibid., 27.
[27] Ibid., 26.
[28] Ibid., 24.
[29] Ibid., 40.

> *Biz Diyarbakir'de faaliyetlerimize sıcaklık verdiğimiz 1918-1919 senesinin ilkbaharında, hiç akla ve hayala gelmeyen bir rakip, kurnaz, dessas, hain zal bir rakip karşımıza çıktı. Bu kişi Mustafa Kemal'di.*
>
> In Diyarbakır in the spring of the 1918-1919, the year we pursued our activities with such heat, a rival that had never been thought of or even imagined, a shrewd, deceptive, traitorous, insane rival appeared before us. This person was Mustafa Kemal.[30]

His anger towards Mustafa Kemal for, in his narrative, tricking and then betraying the Kurdish leaders of southeastern Anatolia, might also be a sign of his sense of helplessness as a would-be activist in an environment where, according to Van Bruinessen, "In the years 1919-1921 Mustafa Kemal's contacts with Kurdish chieftains appeared to be better than those of the Kurdish nationalist organizations (sic)," including Ekrem's own *Kürdistan Cemiyeti*.[31]

After the war ended, Ekrem was denounced in Mustafa Kemal's *Nutuk*, the leader's epic speech delivered over five consecutive days in parliament, which essentially established official Turkish historiography of the independence era.[32] Ekrem Cemilpaşa was subsequently arrested but, argues Özoğlu, was able to use his family's status to get a relatively light sentence of three years imprisonment, after which time he fled to Damascus in the area that was then considered French Mandate Syria.[33] While in Damascus he and his cousin Kadri were intimately involved with *Hoybun* (*Xoybun*), a Kurdish organization that supported the nationalist cause of Kurds in Anatolia.[34]

Ekrem Cemilpaşa's personal and national narrative will be examined with the help of his memoir, *Muhtasar Hayatım* (*My Life in Brief*), published in 1973, one year before his death in Damascus. His cousin Kadri Cemilpaşa's memoir, *Doza Kurdistan* (*Kürdistan Davası*) (*The*

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[30] Ibid. 38.
[31] Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1992), 279.
[32] This document, too, provides a fascinating example of ontological narrativity – the narration of self (and nation) into being.
[33] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables* , 106.
[34] Ibid.

*Kurdistan Cause*), will also be used as a point of comparison. Though Ekrem will be our main focus, Kadri's experiences and narrative will also periodically be used as examples.

*Celadet Ali Bedirhan*

The Bedirhan family was one of the most influential families of southeastern Anatolia, and Celadet Ali Bedirhan among the most internationally recognized figures of the Kurdish nationalist movement of the early twentieth. In the words of Özoğlu, the Bedirhan family "enjoys a special place in the grand narrative of Kurdish history," tracing its lineage back to an Ummayad general.[35] Unlike the Cemilpaşa family, therefore, we know much about the history of the Bedirhanis. The family tree includes such members as Şerefhan, the sixteenth century ruler who wrote the first extant Kurdish history, the *Şerefname*.[36] In the middle of the nineteenth century, Celadet's grandfather, Bedirhan Paşa, rebelled against Ottoman centralization in what later twentieth century Kurdish nationalists consider one of the first nationalist revolts.[37] Given its limited scope (it did not attempt to inspire unity throughout Kurdistan) and direct political provocation (Ottoman attempts at centralization), both Özoğlu and McDowall have convincingly demonstrated that the rebellion was in nature no different than other rebellions in earlier Ottoman times, revealing no specific nationalist aim, but rather was a revolt against state attempts to usurp traditional privileges.[38] The revolt was put down by the Ottoman army and Bedirhan Paşa exiled to Crete, where Celadet's father, Emin Ali Bedirhan, was born.[39] Emin Ali is described by Özoğlu as "undoubtedly one of the most devoted and well-known exponents of

[35] Ibid., 70.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables* , 71; McDowall, *Modern History*, 47.
[39] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables* , 95.

Kurdish nationalism."[40] Given Emin Ali's death in 1926, this manner of identifying him seems to run rather contrary to Özoğlu's general argument that Kurdish nationalism as such wasn't fully formed until post-1923. Yet his role as one of the early and vocal proponents of secession (rather than autonomy) in his last few years of life are surely Özoğlu's point of reference.

Celadet himself was born in 1893 in Istanbul to this family of great influence.[41] Due to these circumstances, even though he was a peer of Ekrem Cemilpaşa his life experiences were radically different; the Kurdistan that Celadet envisioned was his home(land) only in an abstract sense. His education was among the best a young Ottoman citizen could have experienced in that era, with a law degree from Istanbul University and subsequent study in Germany.[42] Celadet Bedirhan, like both Ziya Gökalp and Ekrem Cemilpaşa, served in the Ottoman army at a relatively high rank.[43] After World War I ended in 1918, the future of the Ottoman Empire was as yet unclear, with the imperial government technically still intact, but with foreign (British and French) forces occupying the capital. It was not until the Turkish War of Independence came to an end in 1923 with the foundation of the Republic of Turkey that Anatolia's future became clear.[44] These four years were a crucial time for Kurds, who were faced with two basic choices for their future. The first was to accept and support the Treaty of Sèvres, the 1920 treaty between the defunct Ottoman Empire and the Allied Powers. The treaty offered an eventual, conditional opportunity to create an independent Kurdish state; though far from a guarantee, the potential for statehood offered by this treaty is now often romanticized as the crucial, missed opportunity for Kurdish nationalists. The second option was to reject the treaty and join Mustafa Kemal's

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[40] Ibid.
[41] Hakan Özoğlu reports that Celadet was born in Kayseri, in central Anatolia, but cites no source for this claim. I have chosen to follow the claim made in the forward to his diary *Günlük Notlar*. In any case, the important fact is that he was not born in a Kurdish province, and Istanbul was where he received his education and spent his young adult life.
[42] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables* , 100.
[43] Ibid., 101.
[44] Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 271-2.

rebellion in hopes of creating an independent state immediately – a state that would be populated by Turks and Kurds alike. Many chose the latter, which we may recall earned them much disapproval from Ekrem Cemilpaşa, who considers Mustafa Kemal's wartime promise of autonomy for the Kurds as a traitorous ruse.[45]

Celadet Bedirhan was among those who wished to take immediate advantage of the Treaty of Sèvres and the opportunity for autonomy under a guiding nation (Britain) that it appeared to offer. Thus it was that Celadet, along with his brother Kamran, solicited the British during this period and acted as guides to Major Edward Noel, who had been sent to take stock of the situation in Kurdistan on behalf of the British government.[46] For such "separatist" activities in the eyes of Mustafa Kemal and his administration, once the Turkish state was founded Celadet was condemned to death.[47] The sentence was ultimately only symbolic; Celadet had fled Anatolia, first for Germany (a step in his narrative that is generally overlooked), then to Egypt, and ultimately to Damascus, Syria, where he, with the Cemilpaşazadeler,[48] was involved in articulating Kurdish nationalism from abroad. He, too, was a member and later the president of *Hoybun*. Additionally, he was the founder, publisher and one of the authors of *Hawar*, a bilingual French-Kurmanji journal published from 1932 to 1943. One of Celadet's most lasting contributions to the formation of a more uniform national Kurdish identity was his regularization of Kurdish grammar and adoption of a modified Latin script, efforts that were clearly reminiscent of Mustafa Kemal's reforms in Turkey.

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[45] Cemilpaşa, *Muhtasar Hayatım*, 38. In 1922, the Grand National Assembly under Mustafa Kemal "undertook toestablish 'an autonomous administration for the Kurdish nation in harmony with their national customs,'" and the rhetoric Mustafa Kemal employed to recruit Kurds to the independence cause stressed the unity of the two peoples under Islam. (McDowall, *Modern History*, 188.)

[46] See Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables*, 101; McDowall, *Modern History*, 129.

[47] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables* , 101.

[48] "-zade" is a Persian suffix utilized in Turkish meaning son/descendant of; "-ler" is the pluralizing suffix in Turkish. "Cemilpaşazadeler" are thus the sons/descendants of Cemil Paşa, roughly, the Cemilpaşa family (including Ekrem and Kadri).

Because Celadet Bedirhan wrote extensively, a variety of sources are available in analyzing his self-narration. These include articles in *Hawar*. My engagement with this source is admittedly the most problematic of those I've chosen. As I do not have knowledge of the Kurmanji language, I will be relying on the French writings, which are fewer than the Kurdish ones, particularly towards the latter years of the journal's publication. Moreover, many of the articles are written by individuals other than Celadet Bedirhan, and many others are anonymous. Yet I believe that viewing Celadet as the editor of the journal will allow us to imagine his approval of the basic ideas in the paper, or at the very least his lack of disapproval. (This may be particularly fair in the case of this individual, given his widely acknowledged ego.)[49] We will also be examining Celadet's self-narrative during the most overlooked period of his life: his departure from Istanbul following condemnation and his arrival as an exile in Germany. His daily diary from this period provides a fascinating look into his transforming conceptions of self and community and presents us with an excellent contrast to the man seen in the pages of *Hawar*. With this combination of sources a more complex understanding of his adaptations and transformations can be achieved.

*Noureddine Zaza*

Noureddine Zaza was much younger than the other individuals whose stories we will be investigating when the Ottoman Empire fell and during the subsequent establishment of the Republic of Turkey. Moreover, despite his closer proximity in time to the composition of this study, far less seems to be known about him. His date of birth is not entirely clear, but he recalls receiving his primary school diploma in either 1929 or 1930 at the age of ten. [50] He was little

[49] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables* , 101.
[50] Zaza, *Ma Vie*, 55.

more than a baby when Mustafa Kemal came to power. He was born in Maden, a town in the Turkish province of Elazığ, about fifty miles away from the city of Diyarbakır (which lies in the Diyarbakır province). Noureddine's last name is most probably indicative of his heritage; the Zaza have a culture, a language and a history distinct from that of the Kurds. Victoria Arakelova of the State University of Yerevan argues that the Zaza constitute a nation in their own right:

> In spite of their distinct national identity and ethnic consciousness, the Zazas have never claimed their separate existence, as they have for centuries been surrounded by the Kurds, the people with a homogeneous language and close culture. Therefore, in the "outer world" they have been always considered as a part of the Kurds, a so-called "Kurdish tribe". The national identity of the Zaza has always been under the shadow of the Kurdish ethnic and national prevalence, and during the last century and a half, it has been totally suppressed by the Kurd's political strivings…[51]

Arakelova's interpretation, if not her ultimate conclusion, must be challenged on a few points. The first is that her rendering of Kurdish nationality as a longstanding, internationally legitimate, internally consistent and dominant force is problematic. The use of the word "homogenous" is simply inaccurate. As we have seen and will continue to see with more clarity, Kurdish identity and Kurdish nationalism meant many things to many people up through the 1930s (and continue to do so today.)

Yet the more interesting challenge that Noureddine Zaza raises for Arakelova's argument is his *self*-conception as a Kurd within the Kurdish national movement. With his father and brother arrested by the new Turkish state when he was still quite young, Noureddine eventually made his way with his brother to Damascus to join the Kurdish community in exile there.[52] He describes living for a time under the care of Ekrem Cemilpaşa while his brother established a medical practice elsewhere in Syria.[53] He would ultimately spend much of his life in Switzerland and then France, working as a politician and a poet; additionally, he was one of

[51] Victoria Arakelova, "The Zaza People as a New Ethno-Political Factor in the Region," *Iran & the Caucasus* Vol. 3 (1999 - 2000): 397.
[52] Zaza, *Ma Vie*, 74.
[53] Ibid.

the founding members of the Kurdish Institute of Paris, a major center of Kurdish studies in Europe.[54] Noureddine Zaza's lengthy memoir, written in French for a European audience, offers us a look at the effects of time, age and distance on the process of memory construction and solidification of narrative. His political and literary activism, which blossomed in later years than those of the Bedirhan or Cemilpaşa families, points to a correlation between time and loyalty to a narrative. Especially in light of his close relationship with Ekrem Cemilpaşa, the opportunity to search for signs of an externally produced social narrative of Kurdish nationalism in the process of absorption and rearticulation by a later generation is particularly exciting.

[54] See institute wesite: http://www.institutkurde.org/en/institute/

# Chapter Two: Diyarbakır Imagined

*Indeed, as we shall see, the 'nation' proved an invention on which it was impossible to secure a patent.*

Benedict Anderson

*Şimdilik [Mustafa Kemal'in] en büyük endişesi Diyarbekir idi.*

Ekrem Cemilpaşa

Too often in the discourse of nationalism one of its essential features is left unexamined – the land itself. Theories of kinship, language and culture abound. However, the center around which this vortex whirls is arguably the homeland, the space in which the nation is (to be) made manifest. This locational concept, the center of the nationalist aim, will be referred to throughout the rest of this work as the *nation-space*. It is necessary here to separate the idea of a nation-state from the space that is visualized as the nation's own; in the case of the Kurds of Anatolia, this distinction is particularly important. For the Kurds of Anatolia, the definition and representation of the nation-space has been a particularly fraught process. A confluence of facts has severely curtailed their ability to articulate their physical and psychological space. These include the fact that Kurdistan encompasses a geographic area whose borders vary by source; that the regions densely populated by Kurds are divided between four nation-states (Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria); and that the existence of an entity called "Kurdistan" is and has been categorically denied by the Turkish government. And yet despite this, there have been serious efforts to articulate and define homeland by Anatolian Kurds. Particularly important to this discourse is the role played by the Diyarbakır province, birthplace of Ziya Gökalp and home to the Cemilpaşa family.[55] The conceptualizations of Diyarbakır as nation-space and the use of the land as a nationalist image are highly revealing both of the diverse narratives developed by Anatolian Kurds in the early

[55] Diyarbakır is the modern Turkish spelling of the province's name (as well as that of its largest city). Other spellings can be found, especially in older texts, including Diyarbekir and Diyar-ı Bekir.

twentieth century and their efforts at integrating their identities with the national, historical narratives they developed contemporaneously. In order to shed light on these processes, the representations of Diyarbakır as nation-space offered by Ziya Gökalp and Ekrem Cemilpaşa will be explored in some depth in this chapter. Idealized and objectified, Diyarbakır serves as a symbol of the nation that each man seeks to define and redeem; the question they raise for their readers, however, is *which* nation? By essentializing Diyarbakır for not merely divergent but actually contradictory ends – to define the Turkish nation, to define the Kurdish nation and ultimately, for both men, to define themselves – Gökalp and Cemilpaşa present the reader with a window into a world in which identity flux is endemic and national self-definition a project of great urgency. In order to define their nations, they show us, it is necessary first to define and thereby claim the land as nation-space; and it is through this dual process that they are able to, at the last, claim their own nationalities.

## I. The Diyarbakır Proof: Home According to Ziya Gökalp

> *Sevgili Zevcem!*
>
> *… Benim garipliğimden bahsediyorsunuz. Evet, ben üç türlü garibim. Yuvamdan, yavrularımdan uzak düşmek bir gurbet. İlmi, edebi meslekdaşlarımdan ayrılmak ikinci bir gurbet. Asıl vatandan mehcur olmak da üçüncü bir gurbet …*
>
> *My dear wife!*
>
> *… You speak of my solitude, my exile. Yes, I've been thrice exiled. To be far from my home, my children is one exile. To be separated from my scientific and literary colleagues is a second exile. And to be distant from my actual homeland is a third exile …*[56]

Ziya Gökalp was a fastidious letter-writer. Over the course of the two years he spent in exile on the islands of Limni and Malta under the watch of British forces, 1919-1921, he wrote multiple letters each week to his three daughters, the youngest of whom was two years old at his

[56] Fevziye A. Tansel, ed., *Ziya Gökalp Külliyatı - II: Limni ve Malta Mektupları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1989), 96.

departure, and to his wife. In these he describes in abundant detail his daily activities (down to fluctuations in his weight), makes wish lists of goods to be sent to him (he particularly longed for real butter), bemoans the distance separating them and tries to offer words of comfort. Aside from perhaps the frequency with which he wrote, there is little remarkable about these domestic epistles. And yet these letters contain something rather more than they seem to at first glance. The feature that makes Gökalp's letters more than a personal record of the experience of exile and war is his unapologetic tendency to philosophize, theorize and lecture to his family from afar. It is left to the realm of imagination to picture how his wife, Vecihe, stranded in Istanbul (far from their home in Diyarbakır) and foisted suddenly into the role of single mother to three girls, would have felt upon reading her husband's pontifications. Would she have taken solace in words such as these?

> *Bizim saadet ve felaketimiz, milletimizin saadet ve felaketine tabidir. Ne bir insan, ne bir aile tek başına mesut olamaz. Ferdin ve ailenin bahtiyarlığı, milletin bahtiyar olmasıyla kaimdir.*
>
> Our prosperity and our calamity are dependent upon the prosperity and calamity of our nation. Neither a person nor a family can be happy alone. The fortune of an individual and that of a family endures together with the fortune of the nation.[57]

Such stoicism may well have done little to comfort Vecihe, who seems to have been suffering from problems of anxiety and depression.[58] Though the responses written by his wife and daughters are not included in the letter compilation, Gökalp without fail describes the contents of the letters he received each week. There is in his responses virtually no indication that any national sentiment was addressed by his family, who seemed preoccupied rather with the daily difficulties of life in Istanbul. Indeed, it feels rather as if Gökalp is writing these words not for his wife or daughters, but rather for himself – that is, not to communicate but rather to express

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[57] Ibid., 147.

[58] Gökalp writes frequently to his daughters about the condition of their mother's nerves and discusses the possibility of her seeking treatment. To his wife herself, he writes that she must remain strong and keep her emotions in check. This is typical of his advice: "Ruhun şen olması da insanın elindedir. Sen de benim gibi ruhuna hakim olsan, çabuk iyileşirsin." – "The joy of the spirit lies in a person's own two hands. If you, like me, became master of your spirit, you would heal quickly." (14)

himself in the written medium. He finds justification for his hardship in the union of his personal fate to that of his (newly conceptualized) nation, that of the Turkish people. By viewing his rationalizations and reformulations of his circumstances as an exercise in self-integration into a new national narrative, it becomes possible to understand the stakes of the nationalist project for Gökalp. In creating his identity as he creates the story in which the identity functions, Gökalp can be understood to be creating an ontological narrative, constructing his conception of self in tandem with his story. Our analysis will proceed in this light, focusing here on his articulation of his home province, Diyarbakır, and its fantastical stand-in, *Yeşilköy*. His works *Kürt Aşiretleri Hakkında Sosyolojik Tetkikler* (*Sociological Investigations of Kurdish Tribes)* and *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak* (*Turkification, Islamification, Contemporization*) will serve as additional sources in understanding his approach to Diyarbakır.

On the ninth of September, 1919, Ziya Gökalp wrote a letter to his three daughters, Seniha, Hürriyet and Türkan, from Malta. In it he addresses several topics that recur frequently in his communications. He insists that the girls go to school and work hard; that they treat their ailing mother well; and especially that they not neglect to write him every week! Squeezed between this fatherly advice is a rather more cryptic yet revelatory comment directed towards Seniha (the eldest):

> *Mektepte başka çocukların ahlakına uymasınlar. İstanbul'daki ahlak pek fena. Biz kendi memleketimizin ahlakını muhafaza etmeliyiz. Asıl Türk ahlakı bizim memlekettedir.*
>
> Let not [your sisters] adopt the morality of the other children at school. The morality of Istanbul is quite bad. We must preserve the morality of our own birthplace. True Turkish morality is to be found in our birthplace.[59]

Locating "true Turkish morality" well over a thousand kilometers from the imperial center, Istanbul, represents a radical shift away from the typical Istanbul-based Ottoman perspective. Once the republic was formed, a similar effort to establish a populist, rural image of Turkish

[59] Ibid., 53.

morality was undertaken by Mustafa Kemal, as will be discussed later on. In 1919, however, with the future of the empire far from certain and the former provinces being claimed by France, Great Britain and others, Constantinople (as it was still officially called) was the empire's only remaining lifeline, still home to the technically sovereign (albeit powerless) sultan.

Interspersed among his quotidian anecdotes and philosophical exhortations, Ziya Gökalp also wrote home describing his fantasies of a haven to which his family would escape once he was freed. He named his utopia Yeşilköy (literally, Greenvillage) and spent dozens of letters detailing its physical landscape, their future home and the peace they would find there. Fevziye Abdullah Tansel, who compiled Gökalp's Limni and Malta letters, discusses this extended fantasy in his introduction, noting the considerable amount of space dedicated to the vision. Tansel ultimately explains the Yeşilköy dream as a manifestation of Gökalp's imagination and undying optimism.[60] While this conclusion is hard to dispute, it is incomplete. The essential aspect of Yeşilköy is its overlap with Diyarbakır; indeed, it is my reading that Yeşilköy represents the ideal Diyarbakır village, and Gökalp's ideal home, the place to raise his proper Turkish family. Not only are Yeşilköy and Diyarbakır geographically alike, Gökalp also describes the two with similar imagery, evoking above all bucolic peace. An evolution of the Yeşilköy idea that points to the union of the two locations can be traced through the letters: Upon his exile, he speaks often of return to Diyarbakır. This is followed by a series of letters describing their moving to "yeşil bir köy" (a green village); with time, the words ultimately coalesce into Yeşilköy (Greenvillage) and become a specific locational embodiment of his dreams of home. Moreover, after several months he himself consciously unites the Diyarbakır with Yeşilköy:

> *Ben gelinceye kadar İstanbul'da kalınız. Şimdi Diyaribekir'e gidilemez. Sulh yakındır. Sulh olunca yanınıza gelirim O zaman yerimizi tayin ederiz. Ben müstakbel yuvamızın adını Yeşilköy koydum.*

[60] Ibid., XLVIII.

> You all must stay in Istanbul until my return. One cannot travel to Diyarbakır now. Peace is coming. When the peace arrives I will come to you. Then we will determine our place. I have named our future home Yeşilköy.[61]

With the two locations symbolically linked, Gökalp's Yeşilköy fantasies become relevant to his conceptualization of Diyarbakır. Yeşilköy is a quaint, rural village lying along the bank of a small river, home to families and shepherds; it is safe for children to roam (unlike Istanbul). Connected in his mind to the site of true Turkish morality is a rural, apolitical paradise, far from the machinations and corruption of Istanbul. This must be understood as part of Gökalp's Diyarbakır, and thus part of his conception of the Turkish nation-space.

To better understand his aims in the relocation of "true Turkish morality" to a province that was at that point inhabited primarily by Kurds (the formerly substantial Armenian population having been subject to extensive massacres and deportations by the Ottoman Empire prior to the First World War), it is necessary to explore his other attempts to define Diyarbakır as a fundamentally Turkish land. Most useful in this light is Ziya Gökalp's sociological study of the Kurdish tribes of southeastern Anatolia. Gökalp, like many of the other Young Turks, was something of a renaissance man. A poet, a politician, a political scientist, a historian, a moralist, a journalist and a teacher, Gökalp was also a student of sociology. He was largely self-taught, though well-read, and counted Émile Durkheim as his greatest influence.[62] The sole complete sociological study he published was his study of the Kurdish tribes of Anatolia, though even in this work he tends to veer away from sociology and towards anthropology and political science on occasion. The newness of the field of sociology in the Turkish-speaking world at this time (the early 1920s) is highlighted in his introduction, wherein he takes the time to define and differentiate concepts such as sociology, ethnography and anthropology, suggesting Turkish-

[61] Ibid., 121.
[62] Ibid., XXV.

language equivalents for the terms (rather than simply Turkified spellings of the French that served as his model). The study addresses a variety of topics, including tribal structure, local law, traditions and lifestyles. Woven throughout these sections is an unacknowledged but inescapable preoccupation with Diyarbakır. The province presents Gökalp with a problematic example; unable to deny its presence and participation in the Kurdish region he has undertaken to describe, he is driven to somehow ultimately conclude that it is a Turkish land. With no other location does he go to such lengths; Diyarbakır is exceptional.

If Gökalp's letters come across overall as rather plodding and methodical, his academic works seem even more so. Logical consistency and clearly articulated, step-by-step explanations are the features that define his writing. Thus when confronted with the "problem" of Kurdish-populated Diyarbakır, Gökalp amasses an army of logical objections to its Kurdish identity (or rather *reputation*, if Gökalp has his way). While none of his arguments are particularly tenable from a historical perspective, they are exemplary of his efforts to forge a new narrative for himself and the Turkish nation. Diyarbakır is Turkish and the people of Diyarbakır are Turks, holds Gökalp, for three primary reasons, each of which is explored in some detail. The claims he makes are: 1) even the Kurdish-speaking towns were originally settled by Türkmen tribes;[63] 2) the Kurdish spoken in Diyarbakır is Turkish-influenced and incomprehensible to "real" Kurds – he calls it "Turk Kurdish";[64] and 3) Kurds are inherently rural people, whereas Turks are urban (and thus must comprise the population and be responsible for the foundation of the city of Diyarbakır).[65] His aim is to prove that though cultural ignorance, particularly the sort found in Istanbul, leaves Diyarbakır with a reputation for being a Kurdish land, it is inherently and internally Turkish. Some acrobatics are admittedly necessary for this argument to be made.

[63] Ziya Gökalp, *Kürt Aşiretleri Hakkında Sosyolojik Tetkikler* (Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1992), 133.
[64] Ibid., 127. "Türk Kürtçesi."
[65] Ibid., 135.

Gökalp accepts Türkmen tribes as "real" Turks in this context, for instance, whereas they are not included in others. Moreover, though their inclusion should problematize his rendition of Turks as inherently urban folk (the Türkmen tribes being largely nomadic), Gökalp chooses not to address the discrepancy. He also emphasizes populations of Turks who lost their identity over the years, having felt shame at being called "Turk" when the word implied something akin to "rube." He speaks, too, of Turks who can speak only Kurdish (despite earlier claiming that Turkish was everyone's native language):

> *Türkçe'yi tamamıyla unuttuklarından Türk olduklarını da Kürt lisanıyla söylemektedirler.*
>
> As they have forgotten Turkish completely, they even call themselves Turks in the Kurdish language.[66]

In all, his method is to actively search out the technicalities (all constructed, if to varying degrees) that enable him to render the land objectively Turkish; what is key is the fact that the proof is presented as if the province is very much on trial. Who the prosecutors are is left to the reader's imagination.

Thus does Gökalp scientifically claim Diyarbakır as a fundamental part of the Turkish national homeland, the source of what he calls "true Turkish morality." It stands in stark contrast to Istanbul, about which he warns his wife in an early letter,

> *İstanbul, ahlakça bozulmuş bir muhittir. Böyle bir yerde çocuklar kendi başına bırakılamaz.*
>
> Istanbul is a morally rotten environment. In a place like this children cannot be left by themselves.[67]

The efforts he expends in redeeming Diyarbakır are incomparable to anything else in Gökalp's writing; he has no interest in redeeming Hakkari, Urfa, or Antep. Even Mosul, which he attempts to claim paternalistically (Turks would watch over the Kurds there better than Arabs would, he

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[66] Ibid., 132. Simple contrast with Diyarbakır aside, another point of interest can be found in this quote; this is the fact that rather than calling Istanbul a city (*şehir*), he uses the word environment (*muhit*), potentially underscoring both the vast scale and unique circumstances of the imperial capital. Elsewhere, he uses the same word, *muhit*, to refer to all the Arab provinces.

[67] Tansel, *Ziya Gökalp Külliyatı – II*, 14.

argues), is not ethnically or linguistically brought into the Turkish fold.[68] This anomaly begs explanation. *Why* Diyarbakır? Why was the province and city of such importance for Gökalp?

It seems there were two major claims at stake for Ziya Gökalp, both secured once Diyarbakır was Turkified. One of these was personal and one political. Politically, Gökalp seems to have felt it essential to dispel Kurdish claims on Diyarbakır. Diyarbakır was a site of potential unrest and rival national claims, and thus a conceptual threat to nascent Turkish nationalism. It was perhaps the most important site of Kurdish political organization within southeastern Anatolia and thus home to many influential Kurdish politicians (including Ekrem Cemilpaşa, as we will see in the next section). Diyarbakır was the location of the first Kurdish political association in southeastern Anatolia and host to the region's first printing press. The threat it posed as a potential rival national stronghold was very real. It is necessary to recall that upon its formation, the policy of the Turkish Republic regarding national claims by the Kurds was a combination of denial and violence;[69] we can see the denial starting here, with Gökalp, several years before the republic was founded. To deny Kurdish claims on Diyarbakır, arguably the most politically organized and educated space in southeastern Anatolia, was to deny Kurdish status in any form other than that of tribal nomads dependent on the Turkish state for its civilizing efforts. It was only one step further to deny them altogether, to turn them into merely "Mountain Turks." Indeed, throughout *Kürt Aşiretleri Hakkında Sosyolojik Tetkikler* this sentiment flows; the Kurds are simple, tribal people potentially capable of organizing their own little affairs, but they need to be exposed to the influence of modernizing Turks if they ever wish to emerge from their tents. Co-opting Diyarbakır – one of the strongest examples of non-nomadic, civilized and educated

[68] Gökalp, *Kürt Aşiretleri*, 139.
[69] Edgar O'Ballance, *The Kurdish Struggle 1920-94* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 12.

Kurdish society – as a product of the Turkish nation was an attempt to undercut Kurdish claims to nation-status and homeland.

Yet political utility comprises only one of Gökalp's motives, it seems. The unending preoccupation with claiming Diyarbakır that infiltrates even his most private correspondence shows that the issue was not simply one of pragmatism; it was emotionally and psychologically important, as well. It is worthwhile to recall Gökalp's narration of his early experiences as a student newly arrived in Istanbul from the distant, largely Kurdish province:

> A person's nationality cannot be determined arbitrarily. It is a matter to be solved scientifically. When, in my youth, I went for the first time to Istanbul to study, I was forced to make this scientific inquiry for myself because there, in accordance with a bad habit that had survived of old, people from the Black Sea coast were called Lazes, those from Syria and Iraq, Arabs, and those from Rumeli … Albanians; all those who belonged, like myself, to Eastern Anatolian Provinces were called Kurds. Up until that time I had considered myself a Turk. This feeling of mine, however, was not based in any scientific knowledge. In order to discover the truth, I began to study the Turks and the Kurds.[70]

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the likelihood of his self-identification as a Turk during childhood is slim. Yet the point of interest here lies elsewhere: once identified by others as a Kurd, he was inspired not only to refute their claim, but to do so *scientifically*, that it might never be challenged. With Diyarbakır as his homeland, then, it should come as no surprise that his scientific (sociological) efforts are directed mainly towards that province. In claiming Diyarbakır as Turkish, he may irrefutably claim Turkish nationality for himself, as well.

Issues of pride, identity and legitimacy intermingle in Gökalp's work. As the Diyarbakır representative in the Committee for Union and Progress, work for which he was exiled by the British, Gökalp knew that Turkish legitimacy was an essential piece of his public identity. When he wrote home to his elder daughters beseeching them to speak only proper Turkish with their baby sister Türkan so she would learn to speak correctly, a concern over familial identity and

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[70] Niyazi Berkes, trans., *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 43.

legitimacy seems to rise to the surface, as well.[71] For Gökalp, it is not enough that Diyarbakır be merely Turkish; it must instead be home to the "richest of Turkish culture."[72] His daughter, meanwhile, must not simply speak Turkish, but speak it with an untarnished accent. Even as he officially conceptualizes nationality something predetermined and not adopted or learned, his struggles in accepting his homeland and raising a proper family reveal fears that nationality can perhaps be *denied* by others, immutable fact or no. To prevent arbitrary denial one must take refuge in science; and it is with science that Ziya Gökalp defines Diyarbakır and thereby himself, forever silencing the children in his class who so mistakenly labeled him Kurdish.

**II. Heir to the Patriarchy: Ekrem Cemilpaşa and the Family Estate**

Ekrem Cemilpaşa left his home in Diyarbakır for Istanbul in 1908, the first year of the *Meşrutiyet*, the Second Constitutional Period. Like Gökalp, and like the children of well-to-do families around the region, Ekrem left Diyarbakır to be educated at the military schools of the imperial capital. Upon graduation, he journeyed to Lausanne, Switzerland, and subsequently to Ghent, Belgium, to pursue advanced studies. Returning to Anatolia in order to fight with the Ottoman army during World War I, and then subsequently involving himself in the newly forming Kurdish political organizations, Ekrem was ultimately forced to flee to Syria upon threat of death. He would spend the rest of his life – indeed, the majority of it – in Syria, working as a teacher and a political organizer. These events are detailed in his memoir, *Muhtasar Hayatım*, and the basic outline substantiated by contemporary records (such as those of Celadet Ali Bedirhan, with whom he worked in Syria) and through Hakan Özoğlu's research.[73] *Muhtasar*

[71] Tansel, *Ziya Gökalp Külliyatı – II,*171.
[72] Gökalp, *Kürt Aşiretleri,* 126.
[73] See Celadet Ali Bedirhan: *Günlük Notlar*; Özoğlu: *Kurdish Notables* .

*Hayatım* (*My Life in Brief*) was written in 1973; Cemilpaşa died one year later at the age of eighty three. And yet his long, politically active life in Syria takes up a surprisingly small amount of space in his memoir. A total of thirty pages are dedicated to his life in Syria (nearly one third of the book itself), but of those thirty fully seventeen display photographs that take up the entire page. This leaves just thirteen pages reserved for his Syrian experiences. Thus it is not the space in which he lived for over half his life, got married, had children and led two careers that serve as the focus of this work. The narrative he creates for himself is not one that leaves room for such themes as exile and aging. Instead he speaks of youth, and he speaks of Diyarbakır.

After the introductory paragraph explaining why he has chosen to compose this memoir, the first sentence Ekrem writes is this: "Ben Diyarbekir'liyim." – *I am from Diyarbakır*.[74] When that sentence was composed, it had been over forty years since he had fled the province. And yet before stating the year he was born, before giving the name of his father (an essential part of his identity in the patriarchal society from which he emerged), Ekrem Cemilpaşa chose to introduce his distant homeland as the dominant feature of his identity. Since this memoir was written in Syria and published in Belgium, and as it is not to be found in Turkey due to its criticisms of Mustafa Kemal, the deployment of Diyarbakır in such a fashion is even more striking. As many readers would never have been there, this pronouncement can be understood as proud self-affirmation rather than as specifically informative. He situates himself more than his reader.

There is good reason that self-affirmation would be tied up with the land for Ekrem. He was grandson of Ahmet Cemil Paşa (from whom the *paşa* suffix in his surname was inherited), the one-time governor of Diyarbakır, and son of Kasım Bey, who reputedly oversaw more than

[74] Cemilpaşa, *Muhtasar Hayatım*, 7.

twenty of the villages that had been managed by Cemil Paşa.[75] The early memories he recorded are of luxury, peace and wealth; this is visible in the following childhood vignette:

> *Sofra başına koşuşan çocuklar nefis kebapları, güveçleri, bahçeden toplanan lezzetli meyvaları büyük iştahla, gülerek, şakalaşarak yerlerdi. Yemekten sonra bir müddet de istirahat ederlerdi. Artık koşmak, oynamak, terlemek yasaktı. Çocuklar hizmetçilerin, daha doğrusu emekdarların etrafında çimenler üzerinde otururlar, onların seviyelerine uygun hikayelerini, hafif, şirin şarkılarını dinlerlerdi …*
>
> The children, dashing to the table, laughingly and with great appetite dined upon delicious kebabs, stews and delectable fruits gathered from the garden. After the meal they would relax for a period. Running, playing and sweating were no longer allowed. The children would sit on the grass with the servants, or more accurately with the older female workers, and listen to them tell age-appropriate stories and sing light, pleasant songs …[76]

The Diyarbakır presented here is a utopia. The details with which he recalls the environment in which he grew up are striking, both for their poetic imagery and for their function in revealing adult Ekrem Cemilpaşa's concerns in preserving a memory for posterity. The most immediate feature of Ekrem's Diyarbakır is clearly its wealth; he tells of childhood days spent frolicking in the forest with a big group of cousins, afternoon meals for which entire sheep were slaughtered, innumerable servants, the sprawling family estate and vacations to various family-managed villages. This is not the space of the simple (Turkish) peasant morality that Gökalp recalls. It is a place of consumption (for the wealthy), social inequity, a firmly established patriarchy and exploitation of the land and its inhabitants. Diyarbakır is a villa whose stables hold the best of horses and whose trees bear the sweetest of fruit; Diyarbakır, for Ekrem, who lived much of his life in exile and earned a living as a teacher, was a place of privilege lost. The sense of undeserved loss haunts the pages of his memoir; clearly, the knowledge that what he describes is the land he was to have inherited informs his depiction.

It is necessary to note, however, that Ekrem Cemilpaşa's paradise lost was not strictly a material ideal. Like Gökalp, Cemilpaşa seems to have felt the need to articulate a claim on

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[75] Ibid., 7 and 12. See also Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables*, 104.
[76] Cemilpaşa, *Muhtasar Hayatım*,12-13.

Diyarbakır for his readers, and seemingly for himself, as well. With a European education and connections to those fighting for the Kurdish cause from Europe and the United States (specifically, Britain's Major Noel and *New York Times* journalist Dana Adams Schmidt), Ekrem Cemilpaşa would have been familiar with the expected elements of nationhood for at least those two countries.[77] He would have known, too, the stereotypes of backwardness and tribalism associated with the Kurds. In this light it is perhaps not surprising that his recollections seem specifically tailored to dispute the presumptions about the Kurdish population made by both Europe (particularly Britain and France) and the Turkish state. With Kurdish society decried then (as it continues to be today by some) for tribal ignorance and traditionalism, Ekrem directs specific emphasis to the educational opportunities and gender equality of Diyarbakır. Play hours came only after school hours, he insists, and not a single descendant of his grandfather the pasha was illiterate.[78] Gestures to highlight the "civilized" lifestyle of Diyarbakır Kurds can also be found scattered throughout his memoir, a trend that will be discussed later in the context of Noureddine Zaza. A concise example of this comes in the sentences that precede the passage quoted above:

> *Diyarbekir'in bu yaramaz, ele avuca sığmayan afacanları yorgunluğa, tere, kire, toza ehemmiyet verdikleri yoktu. Buna rağmen, bu çocuklar biraz dinlendikten sonra havuz kenarında kendilerini temizlemeye başlardı. Sofraya tertemiz oturmaya dikkat ederlerdi.*
>
> Diyarbakır's naughty, mischevious rascals paid no mind to fatigue, sweat, filth or dust. Despite that, after resting a bit these children would begin bathing themselves at the edge of the pool. They would make sure to come to the table spotless.[79]

These seemingly mundane recollections of childhood hide important clues to Cemilpaşa's concerns when constructing the story of his youth. The emphasis here at first is on the vitality of Kurdish youth, and by proxy the nation; having long been known for fighting prowess and

[77] Ibid., 51. See also Dana Adams Schmidt's account of his experiences researching in Kurdistan in *Journey Among Brave Men.*
[78] Ibid.,11 and 7.
[79] Ibid., 12.

endurance, such a rendition makes sense here. As a key aspect of the region and the people's identity, Cemilpaşa would have it continue as an attribute of the nation, as well. And yet he feels the need to qualify the picture, challenge the frequent (external) confluence of military skill with tribalism and barbarity. Diyarbakır Kurds were vigorous, yes, but they weren't savages, he seems to be saying. Rather than distance Diyarbakır from urban (Istanbul-esque) corruption and extravagance as Gökalp aims to, Ekrem strives to show that such signs of modernity and urban civilization as thorough bathing were so natural to his people as to be practiced without coercion by even the youngest and naughtiest of children. Civilized behavior is rendered instinctive, tied to the very geography of the land.

Other efforts to overcome stereotypes of tribalism and traditionalism include Ekrem's emphasis on full female participation in educational activities. He includes the female members of the family when he discusses literacy, makes sure to mention their attendance in class, and even describes them as equal playmates on the family estate. And though he briefly mentions the division of the Cemilpaşa villa into the *harem* (women's quarters) and *selamlık* (men's quarters), he does not mull over the significance of this in terms of gender equality. His vision is that of a child, for whom the significant fact is that within playgroups there occurred no separation of boys and girls.[80] His declarations – the children *were* clean, girls *weren't* separated from boys – read as if they are reactions to accusations earlier made that have somehow slipped off the page. One senses them still lurking in the margins. Such aspects of Diyarbakır are almost certainly emphasized in order to dispel particular attitudes regarding Kurds that Ekrem had confronted while abroad. The fact that he forms his personal narrative around such details shows the extent to which life abroad and foreign influences affected his self-perception and his understanding (and narrative construction) of his nation-space. Diyarbakır is envisioned as a land of wealth,

[80] Ibid., 11.

education and equality; moreover, though Ekrem expresses pride in his heritage, these aspects of his life are not treated as exceptional, but rather natural to the land. What unites this narrative to that of Gökalp is the definition of Diyarbakır in implicit contrast to what the authors seem to perceive as common misconceptions of the land.

Unlike Ziya Gökalp, Ekrem Cemilpaşa was not faced with the task of "claiming" Diyarbakır as a Kurdish land. In his mind, and in the mind of most, this was simply so. When he speaks of his homeland, he is unquestionably speaking as a Kurd of an inherently Kurdish space. Thus there are no equivalent theories of the land's Kurdishness to contrast with Gökalp's scientific attempts to render the land Turkish. However, there *can* be found in the text representative examples of what, to Cemilpaşa, the Kurdishness of Diyarbakır was, and why it was important. Above all, it was a distinct *national* culture in which to take pride:

> Kasım Bey hiç bir gün Kürtlük, Kürtçülük mevzuuna ders vermiş değildi. Bu pedagog yalnız elle dokunulur, gözle görülür milli sahneler gösteriyor ve canlı bir şekilde govendler, türküler çocukların milli hislerini uyandırıyor, bu çocuklara seksen yaşını geçtikten sonra bile unutamayacakları panoramalar gösteriyordu.
>
> Kasım Bey [Ekrem's father] was never one to give lessons on the topics of Kurds or Kurdishness. This pedagogue only presented national scenes that could be touched with the hands and seen with the eyes, thus waking up the nationalist feeling of the children with folksongs, and showed them panoramas that they would not be able to forget even after their eightieth birthday.[81]

Memorialized here is the calm Kurdish patriarch who imparts his cultural wisdom and nationalist sentiment through songs and stories rather than lectures or philosophical treatises. Ekrem imparts a sense of nobility both to his father (who, while not a "noble," was a man of high status) and to his serene confidence in the legitimacy of the Kurdish nation. Notably, any description of what such "panoramas" were comprised of is absent; the reader is left ignorant as to what national images Kasım Bey passed on to his brood. The importance here for Ekrem is not to be found in the details of this experience; it is rather his aim to point out that that such an experience

[81] Ibid., 15.

*occurred*, that national, cultural sentiments were cultivated and recognized and treated with respect. The Diyarbakır of his narrative was a place secure in its status as a Kurdish homeland, and in his mind (once this security was established) the details need not be investigated further.

Ziya Gökalp describes people who cry "We are Turks!" in their mother tongue of Kurdish. We might conceptualize Ekrem Cemilpaşa as something of the reverse: through his memoir, he proclaims his Kurdishness in Turkish. Thus though he does not attempt to "prove" in any way the Kurdish culture of Diyarbakır at large, he does wish to emphasize what he considers remarkable about his family's own approach to their Kurdish identity: one of pride. Let us consider this description of his family's servants:

> *Ailemizin çok önemli bir özelliği vardı. Birkaç Süryani katip dışında, selamlıkta erkek, haremin hizmetçileri Türkçe bilmeyen köylülerdi. Çocuklar şehirlilerin bildiği çarpık çurpuk Türkçe'den önce köylü dayinlerden zarif Kürtçe'yi öğrenebilirlerdi.*
>
> There was something quite special about our family. Aside from a few Assyrian Christian scribes, the servants in the men's and women's quarters were villagers who did not know Turkish. Before learning the distorted Turkish of the cityfolk, the children were able to learn the elegant Kurdish language from the village creditors.[82]

Rather than chafing under the labels bestowed upon him by school boys in Istanbul, Ekrem reports reveling in them. The word Kurd, he tells us, was no insult to him; it was an identity he shared with his brothers, uncles and cousins in Istanbul, and it rendered them blessedly distinct from the Turkish students. Indeed, his experiences at school, rather than inspiring an assimilationist instinct within him as similar circumstances apparently had in Gökalp, awoke what he describes as his first nationalist feeling when he was seventeen years old. The event that he recalls as the moment of crystallization of his self-identification as Kurdish *as opposed to* Turkish was a fight at school, and is worth quoting at some length:

> *Okul talebelerinin sekiz yüzden fazlası Türk'tü. Bunlardan başka, Kürt, Çerkez, Arnavut, Laz, Boşnak, Rum, Ermeni ve saire halklarından talebeler vardı. Türk talebeleri bu azınlıklara tahakküm ederlerdi, yahut tahakküm etmek isterlerdi. Okulda Kürt talebelerin sayısı on beşi bulmuştu. Günler, aylar geçtikçe Kürt, Türk soğukluğu, sevimsizliği artıyordu.*

[82] Ibid., 12.

> *Bir gece, bu muhasım iki grup arasında ciddi bir kavga oldu. İdare heyetinin müdahalesiyle kavga nihayet sona erdi. Okul müdürüne haber verildi, çünkü Kürt'lerden hiç bir yaralı olmamasına rağmen, Türkler'den beşinin kafası yarılmıştı. İşte benim ve benden dört yaş büyük amcam Ömer Bey'in, benden sekiz ay büyük Kadri Bey'in Kürtçülüğü bu tarihten, 1908'de, yani hatıralarımı kaleme aldığım seneden 65 sene önce başladı.*
>
> Over eight hundred of the students at school were Turks. Aside from these, there were students from Kurdish, Circassian, Albanian, Laz, Bosnian, Greek, Armenian and other communities. The Turkish students would tyrannize these minorities, or they would wish to tyrannize them. The number of Kurdish students at school was fifteen. As the days and months passed, the coldness and dislike between the Kurds and Turks was growing. One night, a serious fight occurred between these two rival groups. With the interference of school officials the fight came to an end. The headmaster was informed, because despite the fact that not a single Kurd was hurt, five of the Turks' heads had been wounded. Thus it was that my Kurdishness and that of [my uncles] began on that date in 1908, 65 years before I picked up my pen to compose these memoirs.[83]

Thus it would appear that it was only when Ekrem Cemilpaşa found himself far from home, away from the security in identity that came both from the culture of Diyarbakır he recalls and from his status in a powerful, wealthy family, that he began conceptualizing Kurdish identity as something to be battled for, something defined specifically in opposition to Turkish identity. This is the first depiction Ekrem presents of the two groups defined by their rivalry.

This sense of opposition is, of course, something entirely different from anything Ziya Gökalp articulates. Despite his personal need to be a scientifically legitimated Turk, Gökalp claimed no inherent superiority for the Turks. But more importantly, he claimed no equivalence between the two groups; to be compared, entities must (by definition) be *comparable*. Though Gökalp thought Turks and Kurds were communities with a long history of cooperation and symbiosis, he also seems to argue that while the Turks united to form a nation, the Kurds dispersed and fragmented to form tribes. In Ekrem Cemilpaşa's short explanation of the fight at school, on the other hand, the status of two discrete, comparable and oppositional groups is clear. Moreover, that the fight occurred between Turks and his *family members* from Diyarbakır must not be overlooked. In the vision presented here, Kurds are a people tied together though a specific

[83] Ibid., 17-18. Two of Ekrem's uncles were quite close to him in age and were attending school at the same time.

locational identity (Diyarbakır) and through kinship. This is opposed to the homogenous, interchangeable Turkish students. Though the Diyarbakır Kurds may be outnumbered, they are no less of a community – and certainly no less skilled at throwing punches. This microcosmic opposition culminates in the opposition of two nations for Cemilpaşa, and those nations take strength from and are at least in part defined by their nation-spaces.

This knowledge of opposition is narrated as something appearing first outside the nation-space. The Diyarbakır of Ekrem's childhood was a place of secure identity, not an identity that existed relative to a separate, imposing group. This sense of relativity and opposition, Cemilpaşa shows us, was subsequently imported to Diyarbakır. Wounded in the midst of the First World War while voluntarily serving in the Ottoman army, Ekrem was sent to recuperate in a hospital in Diyarbakır. Not long afterwards, the war came to an end and he moved back into his family's home, becoming an active member of the burgeoning Kurdish political community in Diyarbakır. As a founder and subsequently the elected president of *Kürdistan Cemiyeti* – The Society of Kurdistan – Ekrem found himself in a newly influential political role.[84] Through this society, moreover, he reports being able to bring Diyarbakır recognition as a center of pro-Kurdish activity. He describes with pride the fact that his organization became a model for others like it in other Kurdish communities in southeastern Turkey.[85]

Ekrem's Diyarbakır is forced out of its Eden-like existence by the outbreak of war. It gains knowledge of itself as Kurdish in opposition to Turkish when oppression is first experienced on a personal level in Istanbul and then on a political/national level within the province itself. And finally, Diyarbakır is transformed into a political hotbed and the center of southeastern Anatolia upon the foundation of the *Kürdistan Cemiyeti*, itself precipitated by the

[84] Ibıd., 32.
[85] Ibid., 46-47.

arrival of Turkish forces in the region, according to Ekrem. Yet Diyarbakır is also a place of ignorance and betrayal, with Ekrem detailing his anger with local Kurds (some of them his relatives) who chose to cooperate with Mustafa Kemal's local officials. And it is finally a place of disappointment; with life as a member of the Society of Kurdistan "as dangerous as that of a soldier," Ekrem was ultimately told to flee from Diyarbakır before he was killed.[86] He did so, to return only briefly before fleeing the country entirely upon threat of death. Ekrem narrates in the story of Diyarbakır the rape of a virgin land, the corruption and violence brought into the borders by the Turkish enemy. His homeland wasted, his compatriots unable to compete with the stronger Turkish forces, Ekrem leaves the country never to return. If Diyarbakır is a symbol of anything Turkish at all, it is their violence and exploitation of the weak, the same tendency Ekrem felt existed in high school. But more than anything for Ekrem, Diyarbakır of his childhood represents his nation in its ideal condition, at peace, plentiful and free of entanglements. It is the ideal that proves the legitimacy of the nation through its unwavering self-knowledge, and it is the ideal for which the Kurdish nationalist struggle must be undertaken.

**III. Perspective, Perspective, Perspective**

Two Kurdish men were born in Diyarbakır. One goes on to be remembered as the father of Turkish nationalism. The other becomes known as one of the major figures of early Kurdish nationalism. Both ground their understanding of the nation in large part upon the soil on which they were born. How is it that such radically divergent conceptualizations of a space were created from the same environment? What factors made this possible? What is its significance? These are some of the major questions raised by the Diyarbakır construct.

[86] Ibid., 45.

The easiest answer to offer is the men's age difference. Born fifteen years apart, at the tumultuous end of the nineteenth century, the two men may have been just distant enough chronologically to have seen different worlds in the same space. This answer is hardly satisfactory, however. First, there are examples of other Kurdish intellectuals of Gökalp's age who become engaged with Kurdish national identity; perhaps the best example would be his contemporary Mevlanzade Rıfat.[87] Aside from this, however, it is necessary to recognize the level of fantasy Gökalp was willing to employ in creating a Turkish Diyarbakır. His convictions about the meaning of Diyarbakır for the Turkish nation and for himself as part of it leave him ready to reformulate and reimagine the truth in a radical and innovative fashion. The distance between Gökalp's narrative and what data indicates is clear, but it is just as clear that this is only part of the story. Real interest should lie in the fact that a lifelong rationalist found these issues urgent enough to tell and simultaneously believe a new narrative of Diyarbakır, and, by proxy, of himself. It seems that the specific historical conditions that these men were born into did not serve as the cause for their narrated differences.

The other clear contrast present in the two men's life is their social status/class. While Gökalp was certainly not impoverished (after all, he was sent to Istanbul to study), he was not part of the local patriarchy as Ekrem Cemilpaşa was. The financial and social status of the Cemilpaşa family did clearly influence Ekrem's worldview; in his discussions of other Diyarbakır Kurds, for instance, he was consistently condescending on topics related to their intelligence and superstitious behavior. His observations are frequently class-based. Moreover, being part of the Cemilpaşa family meant his arrival in Istanbul was less of a shock than Gökalp's. Moving together with family members offered Ekrem a support system and a group identity that Gökalp lacked. Indeed, embracing Kurdishness was likely not much of a choice for

[87] Mevlanzade Rıfat, *Mevlanzade Rıfat'ın Anıları* (Ankara, Arma Yayınları, 1992).

Ekrem! Elsewhere, the tendency for *ayan* families (whether Kurdish or not) to protest centralization most vociferously has been discussed.[88] State centralization, whether during the imperial age or in the republic, implied a loss of the regional autonomy that the local elites had become accustomed to. This, too, potentially contributed to Ekrem's assertion of his Kurdish identity; he, certainly, would not have been among those who equated the concepts of "Kurd" and "rube." This argument, while certainly a part of the story, does not completely explain away the variance. When we recall that members of the Cemilpaşa family chose to cooperate with Mustafa Kemal even as Ekrem was serving as president of the Kürdistan Cemiyeti, it becomes clear that the patriarchy was not, for everyone, a force strong enough to deter Turkish nationalist sentiment.

Though a class-based explanation of the two men's varying spatial symbolisms seems more valid than an age-based one, it does not seem complete. Present, too, and worthy of emphasis, was the wealth of opportunity for self-articulation and redefinition that existed as the Ottoman Empire disintegrated and the Turkish Republic was established. As Ziya Gökalp himself argued,

> *Dünyanın doğusu da, batısı da bize açık olarak gösteriyor ki, bu asır Milliyetçilik asrıdır. Bu yüzden, yüzyılın vicdanları üzerinde en etkili kuvvet de, milliyet ülküsüdür.*
>
> Both the east and the west are clearly showing us that this century is the century of Nationalism. For this reason, the strongest force acting upon the consciences of the century is the national ideal.[89]

What is left out of this observation is the fact that the "national ideal" was by no means a uniform, communicable, interchangeable entity. As a force upon "the consciences of the century," moreover, it seems to have behaved quite differently from case to case. The most notable consistency, certainly in this context, is a need to define the land in terms of the nation, and the nation in terms of the land. Diyarbakır, be it Kurdish or Turkish, suddenly had to belong a

[88] See, for instance,David McDowall: *Modern History*; Karen Barkey: *Empire of Difference*; or Martin van Bruinessen: *Agha, Shaikh and State*.
[89] Gökalp, *Türkleşmek*, 11.

nation. It was no longer possible for it to remain just a home; Diyarbakır was forced to become a homeland, part of a nation-space.

# Chapter Three: Exigencies of Exile

*Mahkum-ı zeval etti bizi koydu bu hale*
*Dehrin bu kadar çilesi gelmezdi hayale.*

Celadet Ali Bedirhan

… [T]he most purely nationalist of all rebellions [was] organized and co-ordinated by a Kurdish political party in exile.

Martin Van Bruinessen

Exile functions as a pivotal moment in the narratives constructed by several of the Kurdish authors under discussion in this work. Though they were sent out of Anatolia for a variety of reasons and subject to highly varied conditions once gone, exile functions consistently for each as an impetus to the consolidation of firm self-articulation within a national framework. This chapter will explore the experience of exile as it manifested itself in the transitions in national identity, the changing articulations of the nation itself and new understandings of the narrative of engagement with the national projects these individuals had undertaken. Hopefully, this discussion will bring to light the role of the exile experience as a crucial factor in narrative divergence among the Anatolian Kurds addressed here.

## I. Fracture: Celadet Ali Bedirhan

When Celadet Ali Bedirhan fled Istanbul with his brother, Kamran, in 1922, he was a wanted man. Having fought for the Ottoman Empire during World War I, like Ziya Gökalp, Ekrem Cemilpaşa and many other Anatolian Kurds, Celadet subsequently traveled to southeastern Anatolia in 1919.[90] There he served as a guide to Major Noel, the British official sent to monitor the conditions of Kurdistan, who is often remembered as the great international

[90] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables* , 101.

advocate of an independent Kurdistan.[91] It is important to note, however, that Celadet was not returning to his place of birth in venturing to Kurdistan. His grandfather having led a revolt against the Ottoman State in the mid-eighteenth century, Celadet was born in Istanbul, far away from his ancestral home (Cizre). The act of playing host to Major Noel was later interpreted by Mustafa Kemal as treasonous behavior against the Turkish nation, for which Celadet was issued a death sentence in 1923.[92] Knowing in advance of his danger, Celadet fled the country in 1922, going first to Germany, then Egypt, and finally living out the rest of his days in what is now Syria, near to and periodically working with Ekrem Cemilpaşa.[93]

Celadet stayed in Germany for over two and a half years, most of them spent hungry, impoverished and cold, and left behind a diary (written in Turkish) of short entries describing his experiences. Long unknown, this work was discovered only in the early 1990s and transcribed and published in the modern Turkish alphabet in 1995. Within this diary of exile, *Günlük Notlar* (*Daily Notes*), fundamental shifts in Celadet Ali Bedirhan's national self-conception can be traced. Two and a half years after fleeing a homeland he knew only briefly, Celadet emerges from these pages as a character more and more confident of his Kurdish identity and no longer inclined to express any of the Ottoman sentiments that had defined his worldview previously. This slow transition from loyal Ottoman soldier to articulator of Kurdish nationalism becomes manifest in its final form years later through his work on *Hawar*, a Kurdish cultural and linguistic journal he published in Damascus. Though it is argued by Özoğlu that the crystallization of his Kurdish identity occurred within Anatolia during the final years of World War I,[94] a close

[91] McDowall, *Modern History*, 120. Major Noel himself plays a large if complicated role in the story of the development of Kurdish nationalist sentiments; remembered as a great advocate for the formation of a Kurdish state (as indeed he personally was), McDowall explains that his initial assignment was actually to make clear to Kurdish leaders that Iranian lands would not be included in any future Kurdish State.
[92] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables* , 101.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.

examination of these texts reveals that instead it was his years in exile in Germany that serve as the more decisive bridge between his two identities.[95] Exile ultimately provided Celadet with both the freedom and the impetus to narrate himself anew.

On the morning of September 28, 1922, Celadet and his brother Kamran arrived by ferry at Burgaz, a port city on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast. They had left Istanbul the evening prior, and he notes that the journey took approximately fifteen hours. The following day they would begin their journey by train to Sofia, from whence they would proceed to Vienna and finally Munich. During this journey, he found a moment to scribble down the following entry:

> *Bulgaristan'da Bulgarlar İslam ahalisi kadar Mustafa Kemal Paşa harekatıyla ilgileniyorlar. Bize dair bu konuda soru soruyorlar. Başarı haberlerini birer müje sayıyorlar.*
>
> The Bulgarians in Bulgaria are as interested as the Muslim community in Mustafa Kemal Pasha's military campaign. They ask us questions on this topic as it relates to ourselves. News of success is taken as glad tidings.[96]

This comment reveals a crucial aspect of Celadet's self-conception as he fled Anatolia. The first clue to his self-image comes in the form of the categories into which the characters of his story are divided; there are the ethnic Bulgarians (a largely Christian group) and there is the Muslim community, still depicted as a single, cohesive unit. This sense of cohesion and union among Muslims as a group, regardless of their location or genealogical background, is very much an inheritance from the Ottoman mentality. Legally, there was no distinction between Muslim citizens, be they of Turkish, Kurdish, Arab or any other background. (There were, of course, distinctions between the legal status of Muslims and that of non-Muslims.) The Ottoman Empire also defined itself in part through "a supranational ideology based on the Ottoman dynasty representing the realm of Islam against the infidels."[97] These two factors, in combination with the existence of an ethnically diverse Ottoman administration (ethnically diverse even among the

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[95] See Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables.*
[96] Celadet Ali Bedirhan, *Günlük Notlar* (1922-1925), (Istanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 1995), 9.
[97] Barkey, *Empire of Difference*, 99.

Muslims, that is) contributed to a philosophy of religious unity that eclipsed the role of any genealogical or ethnic background as markers of identity. The breakdown of this overarching concept of a religious unity that overshadowed other forms of identification is one of the symptoms of emerging nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire. Yet this breakdown clearly did not occur evenly or synchronically among various populations or even within them. Ziya Gökalp, as we have seen, argues (from the perspective of a Turk) that there is a sufficient religious and historical union between Kurds and Turks to justify the incorporation of Kurds into the Turkish state. In other words, Gökalp never left this ideal behind.

Celadet Ali Bedirhan, on the other hand, does eventually reject such a union as the basis of self-identification and community foundation. What is crucial for our purposes is that, even after he had toured southeastern Anatolia with Major Noel, the categories into which he divided his world remained consistent with Ottoman categories and are entirely distinct from those he would employ subsequently. Indeed, Celadet's actual emphasis lies on the fact that (Christian) Bulgarians also count Mustafa Kemal's victories as their own. We can presume he wrote this down because it struck him as surprising, out of the ordinary. And it certainly seems unexpected to a contemporary reader of the document, so established in Ottoman and European historiography is the idea of rival nations at long last escaping from the Ottoman yoke and rejoicing in their newfound freedoms. This passage potentially indicates that not only was nationalism a multifaceted, multidirectional series of ideas in the Kurdish context, it was in no way simplistic even in those Christian nations that had attained independence from the empire in the years preceding World War I. Some last allegiance must have existed for Bulgarians to cheer on victories in the Turkish War of Independence, if only a shared animosity towards the Greeks. Exploring this notion in any more detail is ultimately well beyond the scope of this project, however, and Celadet beckons from where we left him in Burgaz.

Were his comment regarding Bulgarians to seem unconvincing proof of Celadet's Ottoman orientation, a more decisive (and highly surprising) example of the same presents itself on the train ride from Belgrade to Vienna:

> *Gece kompartmanımıza bir iki Alman geldi. Türklere karşı büyük bir sevgi gösteriyorlardı. Hayli gevezelik oldu.*
>
> [Last] night a couple of Germans came to our [train] compartment. They showed great fondness towards Turks. We had quite a chat.[98]

As his brother Kamran was Celadet's only traveling companion, the Turks to whom the Germans showed such affection must have been none other than the Bedirhan brothers themselves. The identification *by* the Germans of the men as Turks is very much to be expected – not only had "Turk" long been synonymous with "Muslim" in Europe, the Kurds especially were not a well-known community. The remarkable feature of this short entry is that Celadet *accepts* their definition of himself and his brother, even in the private confines of his journal. There is no protest, correction or even comment on the use of the word "Turk." Thus, whether or not the word was used first by Celadet when introducing himself or by the Germans upon hearing where the men were coming from, it was not considered an affront or inappropriate, and was scribbled down matter-of-factly. This arguably exhibits an even greater acceptance of Ottoman identity than the previous example; the acceptance of the word "Turk" shows that Celadet's Ottoman sentiments had evolved with the times, becoming more Turkified even as the state did so.

The German state in which Celadet finally disembarked from his long train journey was itself experiencing heightened nationalist sentiments. Indeed, just a few weeks and three journal entries after he apparently hears that his name is among the one hundred and fifty personae non gratae specified by Turkey in the Treaty of Lausanne, he writes of Hitler's Munich Putsch. Living in Munich at the time, he witnessed and recorded the chaos and excitement that filled the city.

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[98] Bedirhan, *Günlük Notlar*, 11.

Particularly evident in Celadet during his time in Munich is his desire to assimilate and acculturate himself to what he imagines will be his new home. He studies German tirelessly (he once received a free lesson in return for a lesson in Kurdish), begins violin lessons, sits in on various courses at the university, attends classical concerts as often as possible and travels the countryside. He even attends church with his landlord on Easter. Moreover, he records nothing but praise for the German people and culture he encounters and tries to identify with them, even expressing distress when the exchange rate is in his favor, not theirs.[99] Away from home, outside of a context wherein his identity would have been presumed, Celadet seems to have liberated himself from his previous identities, giving himself permission to start anew. Though he ultimately leaves Germany in 1925, there are several days when he writes as if he envisions himself part of their national narrative.[100]

His international anonymity, or perhaps more accurately inscrutability, is evident on the day he leaves Germany for Egypt to join some family members there. He again finds himself witness to a nation in flux:

> Güvertede korunmuş bir yer aldık. Yavaş yavaş güverte yolcuları görünmeye başladı. Tümü Yahudi. Bunların hepsi Rusyalı olup Filistin'e gidiyorlar. Meğer her hafta böyle kafile kafile Yahudi Filistin'e gitmekte imiş. Vapur şirketiyle Yahudi Göçmenler Derneği arasında yapılan bir anlaşma ile bu kişiler yaklaşık olarak iki buçuk İngiliz lirasıyla faraza Varşova'dan Yafa'ya kadar gidiyorlar. … hiçbiri Yahudice bilmeyen bu Yahudiler Yahudice okumakla meşgul.
>
> We got covered seats on the deck. Slowly the passengers began to appear on deck. They were all Jewish. They were all Russian and going to Palestine. Apparently group upon group of Jews are going to Palestine like this every week. Thanks to a deal between the ferry company and the Jewish Immigrant Society these people pay about two and a half British pounds to get from let's say Warsaw to Jaffa … These Jews, not one of whom knew the Jewish language, were busy studying it.[101]

The everyday fashion in which he reports such historically significant events – Jewish settlers illegally escaping to Mandate Palestine, Hitler's Munich Putsch – is remarkable in and of itself.

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[99] Ibid., 37.
[100] One of the more amusing examples of this comes when, having been in Germany for less than a year, he bemoans the fact that "Münih yavaş yavaş Viyana oluyor": *Munich is gradually becoming [like] Vienna.* Ibid.
[101] Ibid., 64.

And yet it is his personal reactions and understandings of such events, and their repercussions for how he views himself, that are of importance here. Able to identify with the German cause while in Munich, he apparently shares no sense of affinity with the Russian Jews who are in flight. Indeed, passengers on board, he writes, continually mistake him for a Jew, something that "in truth doesn't please me at all."[102] On the same boat, he trades stories and liquor with an Italian porter (in German) and an Arab from Anatolia working as a translator (in Turkish). He leaves in his journal no indication of how he identified himself; certainly the word Turk no longer appears, but neither do Muslim or Kurd. Two and a half years prior, his explanation of his journey was filled with clues as to who he conceived himself to be and how he viewed the communities around him. On the boat, surrounded by people of different nations, a sense of disorientation fills his narration. Years abroad spent mostly in isolation seem to have rid him of a personal national or religious identity, let alone a communal one; surely the disorientation that is sensed in these pages springs from this. It would be a few years before he was fully oriented once more.

Celadet's time in Egypt, where he was to stay with his father, is largely obscure. Yet two years after his arrival there, in 1927, Celadet Ali Bedirhan abandoned Egypt for Syria, where he quickly became the first elected president of the nationalist organization *Hoybun* that was centered in Damascus.[103] Ekrem Cemipaşa recalls this event in his own memoirs, recording that *Hoybun's* leadership wrote numerous letters to Celadet and his brother Kamran, entreating them to come to the aid of the organization. In 1932, Celadet began his own projects in addition to working with *Hoybun*: the publication of *Hawar*, a bilingual Kurmanji-French journal, and the subsequent introduction of a modified Latin alphabet for the Kurmanji language. The coverpage of *Hawar* indicates that Bedirhan lives and works in the "Kurdish Quarter" of Damascus, home

[102] Ibid., 65.
[103] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables* , 101.

to both an established Kurdish population and Kurds who had fled Anatolia. There is no longer any question evident in Bedirhan's writing of his national self-identification or his level of loyalty to that nation (as opposed to Islam or an alternate form of identification). One of the most evident shifts in his writing is his choice not to use the Turkish language any longer. Moreover, to simply *utilize* Kurdish was not enough for Celadet; the most regularly occurring column in *Hawar*'s years of publications is Celadet's serial work on Kurdish grammar, spelling and usage. The language was to be systematized, perfected and understood. Notably, these articles appear in French, as well, and are written as if Celadet envisions an audience not simply interested in learning about the language, but interested in learning to use it. Over time, the use of the Arabic alphabet in the journal fell in comparison to the Latin; eventually it was discarded altogether.

Actual language aside, however, the topics Celadet Ali Bedirhan and those working for him address reveal a strong conviction in the Kurdish national identity and their status of members of that nation. We might look at an excerpt from the very first issue of the journal, published on May fifth, 1932:

> *Nous avons fondé notre revue, Hawar, dans un but exclusivement scientifique et littéraire.*
> *Elle voudra donc combler une grosse lacune existant dans la nation Kurde.*
> *Elle ne s'occupera en aucun cas de la politique.*
> *Elle ne traitera que des sujets scientifiques qui non seulement interesseront les Kurdes mais aussi les etraugers desireux de mieux connaitre les langues et nations orientales.*
>
> We have founded this journal, Hawar, for exclusively scientific and literary purposes.
> It will aim to fill in a great gap that exists in the Kurdish nation.
> It will not in any case be involved with politics.
> It will address only scientific subjects that interest not only Kurds, but also foreigners who wish to become more familiar with oriental languages and nations. [104]

After this passage, specific aims of the journal are listed. While the principal claim – that this is to be a cultural and scientific project, rather than a political once – is contestable, the national orientation of the journal and its founder Celadet Ali Bedirhan are certain. The Kurdish nation

[104] F. Cewerî, comp., *Hawar: Cilt I, Hejmar 1-23 (1932-1933)* (Stockholm: Waşanên Nûdem, 1998), 29. I have left the French as it is in the original.

emerges as an entity entirely separate and distinct from any other, and it is not infrequently defined as being a "better" example of an "oriental" society (as compared to the Turks or Arabs, with whom direct contrasts are drawn). Evident, too, is the sense of urgency in this project; in the French language sections, there is an incessant aim to redeem the nation in the eyes of the Western reader, to prove its legitimacy and nationhood. As many of the members on staff at *Hawar* were also members of *Hoybun*, most particularly the president Celadet himself, the connection between this project of cultural legitimation and *Hoybun*'s organization of actual military rebellion within Anatolia itself becomes clear. Celadet's articulated understanding of himself transitions from that of a Muslim who has no objection to being conceived of as a Turk to that of a Kurd whose lifework is the redemption of his nation, both philosophically and physically. The necessary step in this reconceptualization of self was exile, separation from a context in which identity was assumed. Forced into life circumstances that necessitated self-definition from scratch, Celadet Ali Bedirhan found the opportunity and perhaps (upon the call of his compatriots in Syria to join them) the obligation to adopt a national Kurdish identity as his primary lens of self-knowledge.

**II. Fidelity: Ziya Gökalp**

The clarifying nature of exile, the exigencies of identification in foreign contexts that demand explicit self-identification, prove to be equally decisive for Ziya Gökalp's narration of his personal and national identity. In chapter two, Gökalp's new articulation of Diyarbakır as part of the Turkish nation-space (and by proxy his status as an unquestionable Turk) was examined. In this chapter we move away from his conceptualizations of the nation-space itself and instead focus on the role exile played in his evolving Turkish identity. Though he claims to have considered himself Turkish from birth (and implicitly professes faith in a "Turkishness" that had

existed in pure form, buried beneath Ottoman identity), Gökalp's evolution and cultivaton of his Turkish identity emerges in his writing. The Turkish national identity he professes faith in, the identity adopted by Mustafa Kemal and subsequently the Turkish state, is very much a product of Gökalp's writings themselves. Through his numerous articles published in magazines after his return from exile, Gökalp popularized notions of the Turkish nation that remain fundamental to the nation's identity to this day. Yet apparently unaddressed in the historiography of Turkish nationalism is his initial articulation of his nationalist ideals in his letters and poems written while in exile. The same ideas that were published upon his return to Anatolia in 1921 can be found emerging in nascent forms in his exile compositions; tracing the evolution of these ideas will be the aim of this section. It appears that, like Celadet Ali Bedirhan, Gökalp found that separation from his nation forced him to narrate his nationality in an explicit fashion. Moreover, like Celadet, his personal conceptions of the nation became widely dispersed and adopted, rendering both subsequent Kurdish and Turkish nationalisms to be based in large part on narratives written from positions of exile from the nation-space. To address this topic properly, it will be most helpful to progress backwards, engaging first in a discussion about Gökalp's actual theories of nationalism, and subsequently tracing their roots to his exile compositions.

One of Gökalp's most influential articulations of Turkish nationalism can be found in "Millet Nedir?" ("What is a Nation?"), published in 1923 after his return from exile. "Millet Nedir?" presents, as the title implies, Gökalp's definition of the nation. It proceeds as a list first of what the nation *isn't* – misconceptions Gökalp feels are all too common and far from innocent. To begin with, the nation is not a geographic entity; giving the example of Iran, he points out that geographic spaces often encapsulate many different peoples. The nation is not a racial entity, either; for too many centuries races have migrated, assimilated and intermixed with one another for such a concept to have any meaning, he says. The nation is also not composed of people

living under a shared political system such as an empire; within the Ottoman Empire, he says, many nations existed. Furthermore, he explains, the nation is not a community that an individual has the capacity to select for him- or herself. The nation is not open to voluntary membership.[105]

What, then, *is* the nation? In Gökalp's formulation,

> *Millet, lisanca ortak olan, yani aynı terbiyeyi almış fertlerden meydana gelmiş bulunan kültürel bir zümredir.*
>
> The nation is a cultural community found to consist of individuals who speak the same language and have received the same education and manners.[106]

Gökalp presents a rather fascinating vision of the nation wherein it is definitively not ethnic or otherwise genealogical but *is*, nevertheless, predetermined. The determining factor is culture, inculcated through an education that commences at birth with the introduction of the native language. He additionally describes the nation as a "partnership in education, culture and emotion."[107] This argument allows him to deflect accusations that occurred during his lifetime regarding his probable Kurdish background, which he takes the time to do at the end of this essay itself:

> *…dedelerimin bir Kürt yahut Arap muhitinden geldiğini anlasaydım yine Türk olduğuma hüküm vermekte tereddüt etmeyecektim. Çünkü, milletin yalnız terbiyeye dayandığını da sostolojik tetkiklerimle anlamıştım.*
>
> …even if I were to have understood that my forefathers came from the Kurdish or Arab environment, I would not have hesitated to deem myself Turkish. For through my sociological studies, I had come to understood that the nation relies solely on education.[108]

The inclusion of such a personal claim at the end of an academic text would strike the reader unfamiliar with Gökalp's "suspect" background as entirely out of place. The fact that he felt the need to claim his own nationality in his most formal articulation of the nation itself shows how closely tied his personal identity was to his identification of the Turkish nation. The projects were intimately linked.

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[105] Gökalp, *Kürt Aşiretleri,* 123-124.
[106] Ibid., 125.
[107] Ibid., 124.
[108] Ibid., 128.

Having defined the nation at large, Gökalp published in the same year a separate essay in which he addresses the aims of the Turkish nation specifically. The piece is entitled "İnkilapçılık ve Muhafazakarlık" ("Revolutionism and Conservatism"). Here one of Gökalp's crucial theoretical achievements is visible: the separation of culture from civilization, a semantic shift that allows him to justify the adoption of Western scientific and technological methods without admitting Turkish inferiority or abandoning the unique Turkish way of life. The revolutionary aspect of Turkish nationalism is its abandonment of the trappings of Ottoman civilization; it must, however, remain conservative in the preservation of actual Turkish culture. The shift to be made, he explains, is a civilizational one:

> Civilization is the clothes of nations. Just as individuals change their clothes so nations may do. Turks, for example, have in the past turned from the civilization of the Far East to Oriental [Near Eastern] civilization. And now there is no reason why they should not accept Western civilization provided they preserve their Turkishness and Islamic faith … To master the civilization of the West, or to be mastered by the powers of the West: between these alternatives must we choose![109]

It is important to note, too, that the distinction between civilization and culture manifested itself in very specific ways according to Gökalp. When he describes adopting the civilization of the west, his reference is specifically to Europe's "positive sciences, industrial technology, and social organization [division of labor]."[110] The formulation of this distinction influenced Mustafa Kemal's understanding of modernization greatly, and was used to engender enthusiasm among the Turkish population when his radical new laws were enacted.

As has been hinted at previously, the rendition of Ziya Gökalp's national theory as seen above emerged in its original form in his letters home and the poetry he composed while in exile. Prior to being expelled from Anatolia, he had been a soldier in the Ottoman army and a member of the Committee of Union and Progress, the political organization of the Young Turks. Both of

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[109] Berkes, *Turkish Nationalism,* 266.
[110] Ibid.

these efforts had been inclusive of (and dependent upon) Kurds; indeed, Kadri Cemilpaşa (Ekrem's cousin) claims that before he "became Turkified," Gökalp himself spent time in Istanbul putting together a Kurdish dictionary and grammar book with an(other) Istanbul-based Kurd, Halil Hayali.[111] Thus his pre-war political participation should not be considered explicitly nationalist, as it occurred in an environment still very much defined by Ottoman identity, particularly for those in Istanbul. It is when Gökalp is in exile that he begins to write home, bit by bit, his new national narrative.

While Gökalp remained stuck outside the nation-space, Istanbul remained active. Though this may have been difficult enough for the politician (distance from his colleagues was one of his "three exiles," we might recall), there were even more difficult challenges in store for him. Perhaps the most poignant of these was the published accusation by journalist and politician Ali Kemal Bey in Istanbul that Gökalp was actually Kurdish. That such an accusation was being made at all shows the rapid development of ethnic Turkish nationalism in Anatolia. To Gökalp such an accusation represented not only a personal affront but also a threat to the future of the Turkish nation. He wrote his answer to this attack in the form of a poem while waiting out the end of the war in Malta. It is titled simply "To Ali Kemal:"

| | |
|---|---|
| *Ben Türküm! Diyorsun, sen Türk değilsin!* | "I'm a Turk!" you say, but you're no Turk! |
| *Ve İslamım! diyorsun, değilsin İslam!* | "I'm Muslim!" you say, but Muslim you aren't! |
| *Ben, ne ırkım için senden vesika,* | I've asked neither for a certificate of my race |
| *Ne de dinim için istedim ilam!* | Nor a decree of my religion from you! |
| | |
| *Türklüğe çalıştım, sırf zevkim için* | I've worked for Turkishness for my pleasure alone |
| *Ummadım bu işten asla mükafat!* | I've never hoped for a reward for this work! |
| *Bu yüzden bin türlü felaket çektim* | I've suffered a thousand tribulations for this, |
| *Hiç bir an esefle demedim: Heyhat!* | Not for an instant have I said with regret: Alas! |
| | |
| *Hatta ben olsaydım: Kürt, Arap, Çerkes;* | In fact if I had been a Kurd, an Arab, a Circassian; |
| *İlk gayem olurdu Türk milliyeti* | My first cause would have been the Turkish nation |
| *Çünkü Türk kuvvetli olursa, mutlak,* | Because if the Turks are strong, surely, |
| *Kurtarır her İslam olan millet!* | They will save every Muslim nation! |

[111] Kadri Cemilpaşa, *Doza Kurdistan*, 30. The most interesting aspect of this anecdote comes later, when Hayali asks Gökalp for the draft at a CUP meeting. Gökalp, according to Kadri, tells Hayali he burned the pages!

| | |
|---|---|
| *Türk olsam olmasam ben Türk dostuyum,* | Turkish or not, I'm a friend of the Turks, |
| *Türk olsan olmasan sen Türk düşmanı!* | Turkish or not, you're their enemy! |
| *Çünkü benim gayem Türkü yaşatmak,* | For my goal is to give life to the Turks, |
| *Seninki öldürmek her yaşatanı!* | While yours is to kill the life-givers! |
| | |
| *Türklük, hem mefkurem, hem de kanımdır:* | Turkishness is both my ideal and my blood: |
| *Sırtımdan alınmaz, çünkü kürk değil!* | It can't be lifted from my back, for it's not a fur! |
| *Türklük hadimine "Türk değil!" diyen,* | He who says the servant of the Turks is no Turk, |
| *Soyca Türk olsa da "piçtir," Türk değil!* | Even if of Turkish stock, is a bastard, not a Turk![112] |

In this poem we find much of the sentiment buried underneath the theory of "Millet Nedir?." Provoked by a personal attack, Gökalp begins to reformulate the nation. If someone such as he could have his nationality challenged despite his clear affiliation with the Turkish national cause, the flaw lay not with him, but rather in the definition of nationalism! Dismissing the relevance of race/ethnicity in its entirety, Gökalp rejects ethnic identification as a viable option for the Turkish nation. As one of the "life-givers" of the nation, currently suffering through the ultimate trial, exile, it was inconceivable to Gökalp that he might be rejected as an illegitimate Turk. Surely, he argues, his life's work alone merits his membership in the nation. Missing in this poem is an explicit articulation of what bond replaces that of ethnicity in uniting a nation. While this is clear by the time he composes "Millet Nedir?"– the bonds being language and education – the exiled Gökalp is able at this point only to say that the current formulation is wrong, that it does not serve the nation.

Yet the seeds of his adoption of education and language as the unifying features of the nation are visible in his letters home, too. In chapter two, his insistence that his youngest daughter learn "proper Turkish" was discussed as a symbol of his desire for national legitimacy. In light of his later works, this supposition seems even stronger. Furthermore, his continued insistence on all of his daughters' regular attendance at school can be understood now in a more nationalistic light. A child goes to school not simply for education as an end in itself; a child goes to school to

[112] *Ziya Gökalp: Hayatı, Şahsiyeti. Seçme Şiir ve Yazıları,* (Ankara: Edebiyat Yayınevi, 1968), 34.

receive an education that will in turn impart to that child a nationality, irrevocable membership in a nation. Indeed, on the third of November, 1919, Ziya Gökalp wrote a letter to his in which he discusses education in more universal terms:

> *Mektepte … yüzlerce çocuk beraber duyuyor, beraber düşünüyor, beraber anlıyor, istikbal için müşterek gayeler tahayyül ediyor. İstikbalde milletin ferdleri arasında müşterek duygular ve fikirler bulunabilmesi için, çocukların mekteplerde beraber duyması ve düşünmesi lazımdır.*
>
> At school … hundreds of children hear together, think together, understand together, conceive of common goals for the future. For there to be found shared emotions and ideas among individuals in the future, children must feel and think together at school.[113]

Thus visible in his letters, in admittedly disconnected forms, are two of the major sentiments that will be united in his theories of nationism: first, that the nation is a cultural (not ethnic) community, and second, that education is the essential experience that unites members of a nation and allows them to envision a common future.

The major idea of "İnkilapçılık ve Muhafazakarlık" ("Revolutionism and Conservatism"), that is, the separation between culture and civilization that justifies the adoption of western technologies, can also be found in letter-form alongside such quotidian subjects as the foods he misses most from home.

> Bugün her Türk'e Fransızca, İngilizce gibi lisanlardan birini bilmek lazımdır; çünkü ilme dair kitaplar henüz lisanımızda kafi derece yok. Bu lisanlardan bilmeyen, ne ilimde, ne edebiyatta, ne de başka bir hünerde ilerleyemez. Biz medeniyetçe Avrupalı, harsça Türk olmalıyız. Hars; dini, ahlaki, bedii duygularla lisandan ibarettir. Hars halktan alınır … [M]edeniyet; ilimdir, fendir, sanayidir.
>
> Today it is necessary for every Turk to know a language like French or English, for a sufficient numbers of scientific books have yet to be written in our language. Anyone ignorant of these languages will be unable to advance in science, literature or other expertises. We must be civilizationally European and culturally Turkish. Culture is composed from the language of religion, morality and aesthetics. Culture is taken from the people … Civilization is science, technology and industry.[114]

Indeed, this sentiment appears virtually unchanged, if perhaps expressed in rougher prose.

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[113] Tansel, *Ziya Gökalp Külliyatı – II*, 76.
[114] Ibiid., 79.

Thus the emergence of these ideas during exile is clear. When this emergence is combined with Gökalp's apparent urge to communicate these ideas immediately to an audience whose receptance and interest is entirely debatable, the entirely personal significance of these theories becomes evident. His desire to share his theories in such a fashion seems to be the result of several factors. The first is surely his desire to redeem his sullied reputation after Ali Kemal Bey's bit of "slander." Gökalp's letters, now public, were even in those years likely to be shared with a circle of friends and family. Moreover, that he wrote to friends at the same time is also known; those letters, unfortunately, are not included in the collection published by the Turkish History Foundation. Yet one can assume these ideas were articulated in that format as well. Elsewhere, Gökalp hints at what might be the real motivation behind the immediate dispersal of his ideas, even in such limited a format as personal letters:

> *Cemiyet hangi fikri mukaddes tanırsa, o mefkure olur; cemiyet hangi kaideyi mukaddes tanırsa, o vazife olur. Aynı zamanda, bir adam kendi başına bir hakikat yaratamaz. Hakikat, cemiyetin doğru olduğuna inandığı fikirlerdir.*
>
> Whatever idea the community regards as sacred, that becomes an ideal; whatever standard the community regards as sacred, that becomes a duty. At the same time, a man cannot create a reality by himself. Reality is the ideas the community believes to be true.[115]

Thus Ziya Gökalp, self-assured as he may have been, was unable to create a reality wherein the Turkish nation is a cultural union based on emotional partnership unless he convinced other people of its truth. The lengths he goes to articulate the narrative of the Turkish nation and his place within it are surely examples of just such an attempt to "create a reality."

The role exile plays in this evolution of ideas and their articulation must not be overlooked. It is perhaps tempting to see the sequence of events as coincidental; the slander to which Gökalp reacted occurred during his exile by happenstance, perhaps, and the evolution of an ethnic reading of Turkish nationalism was similarly coincidental. Yet coincidence seems

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[115] Ibid., 76.

hardly a satisfactory answer. It is well known that Gökalp had earlier been accused of being Kurdish, but never before had it provoked such a poetic tirade of national justifications. And while education and modernization were ideals he valued even before his exile during his time with the CUP, his expression of them changes in urgency during and post-exile. They become national goals of the utmost importance, rather than symbols of general progress. Like Celadet Ali Bedirhan, Gökalp was exiled from his nation-space because his loyalty was seen as threatening to the opposition. In taking him prisoner, the British were branding him *too* loyal to his nation. By experiencing the punishment for this "crime," his national sentiment appears to have increased dramatically, with the result being that through heightened belief in the cause his suffering is justified. Thus is a new narrative of nationalism and sacrifice formed, with Gökalp serving as a main character. When, in this context, his very position as a Turk (let alone a national hero!) is questioned, the reaction it provokes is far more extreme than it ever had been in Istanbul. Once exile turned him into a martyr for the nation, Gökalp could not accept that his nationality might be revoked.

**III. The Clarity of Distance**

This chapter explored two experiences of exile in some detail, searching for the ways in which the physical and psychological removal from the nation-space served as a turning point in these men's conceptions of their nations. In both cases, it is clear that not only was loyalty to the nation at large heightened considerably, but also personal intellectual effort to orient the self into the narrative of the nation was expended. Exile for each was a liminal space, one wherein an automatic identity no longer existed, and self-articulation was necessary. While Celadet Ali Bedirhan was greeted by confusion and mistaken identity, Gökalp met direct challenges to his national orientation. Each had the space, the time and the provocation to express their national

identity in a far more thorough manner than they would have been able to in the nation-space itself. This is, of course, not least because their projects of national self-identity, dealing with nascent nations as they were, were also very much projects of national identity at large. From the vantage point provided by exile, the nation could be conceptualized at a distance, and the self narrated into the new national entity. Though in a prison of sorts, each was granted a previously unattainable freedom to objectify their nation with no interference. Not surprisingly, their results were quite different.

# Chapter Four: International Nationalism

*It was a very restless country, with people tearing around all the time.*
*Every so often, somebody would stop and put up a monument.*

Kurt Vonnegut

*Paşam, biz Kürtler ayranı böyle içeriz.*

Kadri Cemilpaşa

Just as nationalism is not a homogenous concept, but rather articulated and narrated from different perspectives and to different ends by its formulators, it is similarly not an isolated phenomenon. Contingent upon a confluence of historical factors, nationalisms are very much products of their times and places. In the previous chapters we've examined some of the specific factors informing the development of Kurdish national narratives, particularly the nation-space as represented by Diyarbakır and the formative experience of exile. In this chapter, the discussion will move to address the ways in which narratives of Kurdish nationalism are intertwined with other concomitant national narratives. This is not a unidirectional process, nor is one nationalism dependent upon another with which it interacts; nonetheless, mutual reaction and engagement between nationalisms emerging at the same time and in the same place are important factors determining the development of the national narrative. The mutual influence, awareness and engagement between those developing the post-World War I Kurdish national narratives and those engaged with the Turkish and Armenian narratives will be the topic of this chapter.

## I. Away From Ottomanism

> Turkish nationalism was born in the second half of the nineteenth century in response to the adoption of nationalist ideologies by subject peoples. It then stimulated the development of Arab nationalism. The aim in every case was to create homogeneous nation states. But the

> ethnic and confessional map of the old Ottoman Empire was too complex to allow the full realization of this dream, and minorities have survived to this day.[116]

Thus does Andrew Mango, whose biography of Mustafa Kemal, *Atatürk*, is among the best available, explain the emergence of Turkish and Arab nationalisms. Part of this evaluation has merit, it seems; Mango acknowledges the temporal and circumstantial nature of nationalist development, emphasizing an explanation based on context rather than one depicting the awakening of a primordial force. Yet his vision is surely flawed. Nations here are presented as a series of dominoes, one ready to topple after the next, each dependent on the one(s) prior, falling into nationalism through forces of gravity rather than volition. Specifically problematic in his reading is the implicit inclusion of Kurds in the category of "minorities," which are to be distinguished from nations apparently through their lack of state. This rather blatant dismissal of non-state-sponsored nationalist sentiment aside, however, it is the domino theory of nationalism that discussions such as the one to follow will hopefully problematize. Rather than a unidirectionally dependent understanding of contemporaneous national narratives, I propose instead to envision nationalist narratives growing, adapting and changing through interactions with one another and exposure to the same historical context. Rather than dominoes, we may perhaps think of a rhizome.[117] It is in this light that we will now discuss some linkages and mutual concerns of developing Kurdish and Turkish national narratives. Specifically, we will address the national concerns exhibited by *Hawar*, Celadet Ali Bedirhan's Kurmanji-French journal, and compare them to contemporaneous concerns found in the Turkish nationalist project. Subsequently, the express narration of a necessary, reactive nationalist response amongst Kurds and Turks will be addressed.

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[116] Andrew Mango, "The Turkish Model," *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 29 No. 4 (1993): 745-746.

[117] My use of this word is in no way intended to echo or reference Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's usage. My reference is to the botanical entity itself, in which an underground system of intertwined roots supports plants that on the surface appear to be discrete bodies.

*Hawar*, as was mentioned earlier, claimed not to be a political tool. It was to be a cultural and scientific work, aimed at interesting both Kurds and (French-speaking) Europeans who were curious about "Orientals."[118] Yet beyond the known participation of its major contributors in the explicitly political, nationalist organization Hoybun (centered in Damascus), the separation between the cultural and political is ultimately untenable even in the pages of the journal itself. Its political nature, visible in its own right, becomes more apparent when contextualized in developments in Turkish nationalism at the time, revealing shared concerns between the two developing nationalisms. Among the most prominent of these is the emphasis on the national language, not only as a source of national identity, but (more importantly) as an urgent project. The language needed purifying, modernization and standardization. A symbol of the unique status of the nation itself, language was also to be a link to the modern community of nation-states.

The greatest articulator of this concern from the Turkish nationalist perspective is, not surprisingly, a familiar character: Ziya Gökalp. His linguistic concerns are multiple; mentioned earlier was his conviction that new scientific terms must be created based on Arabic and Farsi roots to serve as a civilizational link between scientists of the Muslim world.[119] Elsewhere he maintains that in daily speech, the Arabic and Farsi words often used during the Ottoman Empire in place of preexisting Turkish equivalents must be abandoned. The Turkish word must be used. And for those everyday objects that have no Turkish name, one must be invented. He describes one branch of the language project thus:

> *Yüzyılın temsilcisi olan milletlerin gazete ve kitaplarından tercümeler yapıyoruz. Böylece kültürel ve bilimsel hayatımızda bulunmayan bir çok anlamlar, aydınlarımız tarafından yeni kelimelerin bulunup çıkarılmasını bekliyor … Bir zaman gelecek ve Türkçe'miz, Fransızca, İngilizce, Almanca'nın bütün kelimelerinin karşılıklarına sahip olacaktır.*

[118] See chapter three of this work for a more detailed discussion of this.
[119] See chapter three.

> We are translating [into Turkish] books and newspapers of the nations that represent this century. Thus it is expected that many meanings that are not currently found in our cultural or scientific life will be found and exposed by our intellectuals … A day will come when our Turkish language will contain an equivalent for every word of French, English and German.[120]

The importance of being able to express every contemporary idea in the national language is made explicitly clear; the very *number* of words in a language bears great weight, not simply the meanings themselves. Along with the goals for the language at large came the idea that the standardization of the language was essential. "Istanbul Turkish" was the dialect that should be taught everywhere, and writing should be standardized and made part of the school curriculum.[121] An essential piece of this latter policy was, of course, Mustafa Kemal's "Letter Revolution" (*Harf Devrimi*) in which he introduced the modified Latin alphabet for the Turkish language. (Ottoman Turkish had been written with the Arabic script.) But the language campaign also had its far less practical and far more political manifestations, such as the Sun Language Theory, a pet project of Mustafa Kemal's towards the end of his life that posited Turkish as the original human language from which all others sprung.[122] (With this logic, even "borrowed" words were ultimately rooted in the Turkish language.)

Overlapping concerns can be found in the pages of Celadet Ali Bedirhan's journal *Hawar*, again, not just concerns over language as a marker of nation, but as a tool that both represented the nation and allowed its entrance into a community of nations. The clearest manifestation of this was the rejection of the Arabic script and adoption of a modified Latin script. While in the Turkish context this was a relatively simple process given its state-sponsored and enforced nature, in the Kurdish context this choice was more complex. Without a state to dictate language or a system of public education to pass the reform on, the effort by Celadet

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[120] Gökalp, *Türkleşmek*, 17-18.
[121] *Ziya Gökalp: Hayatı,* 58.
[122] Sylvain Auroux, ed., *La Linguistique Fantastique* (Paris: Denoel, 1984), 84.

Bedirhan and his compatriots could not be as wide-reaching. This does not take away from its political significance, however; indeed, Bedirhan's knowledge of the limited scope of his project accompanied by his decision to pursue it as his lifework anyway shows clearly what weight he gave to the issue. The text of *Hawar* itself visually highlights the difficulty of the change; for many years the Kurdish section appeared in a mixture of Arabic and Latin alphabets, with explanations of the Latin alphabet appearing in earlier issues. For the Kurds as the Turks, this decision represented a specific political intent. Primary in this was the wish to distance the nation from the Arab world, despite any rhetoric of Islamic unity. Gökalp, as the father of Turkish nationalism, made explicit his opinion on which nations were the "representatives of the century" – and each of them used the Latin script. The pages of *Hawar*, meanwhile, reveal a distinct effort in the French section to differentiate the Kurds from Arabs, both ethnically and linguistically. In one of Celadet's articles, he stresses that the construction and lexicology of the language is "closer to German than Arabic."[123] Issues not only of nationality but of race as it was then understood and of global influence (ie, colonial status) rise to the surface in the focus on language and alphabet.

Other overlapping thematic concerns include the redemption of a true national culture found among rural peasants, and, connected to this, the collection and conscious restaging of such cultural products as folk music, stories, proverbs and stories. Koray Değirmenci speaks of this phenomenon in the context of the early Turkish Republic:

> Cultural transformation as a political strategy includes appropriation and reprocessing of the meanings in cultural forms, institutional regulations to transform the meanings and aesthetic forms of cultural output, especially in the case of the State, and utilization of some particular cultural discourses in order to maintain a politically favorable position. Thus, control over

[123] Cewerî, *Hawar: Cilt I*, 32.

> cultural forms is to be considered as a crucial element with which politics operates in the cultural domain.[124]

Değirmenci goes on to describe the construction of the Turkish "folk," a project he sees as entirely influenced by nineteenth century European nationalisms and their explorations/inventions of their own national folk. This invention of the Turkish folk is intimately linked to the redemption of the word "Turk" that has been discussed in previous chapters, and both were aimed to be distinct steps away from the urban, elite Ottoman past. Mustafa Kemal's choice of Ankara in central Anatolia as the republic's capital is further demonstrative of the effort to distance the Turkish nation from the Ottoman Empire and give it a separate identity rooted in the culture of the people. Notably, this process did not always mean state adoption of traditional Turkish forms of art. Serdar Öztürk has discussed the state's "co-opting" of the Karagöz shadow theater performances, bowdlerizing them of their traditional raunchy and overtly political material so that they might better fit into the national narrative.[125]

A similar preoccupation with the collection and contextualization of cultural material in a specifically political, national context is visible in *Hawar*, as well. Alongside linguistic articles and what we may perhaps call ethnographic writings about the Kurdish people, folk stories, poems and lengthy lists of proverbs are also included in the journal. Many of the proverbs represent ideals emphasized elsewhere in the journal, as well as in the memoirs of Ekrem Cemilpaşa and Noureddine Zaza. These include such themes as unity, long suffering, triumph over struggle and superiority in war. And just as Gökalp distinguishes the Turkish nation from its once Islamic and to-be European civilization, the authors of *Hawar* make an effort to separate their national identity from religion. This manifests itself in several ways. The first is the

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[124] Koray Değirmenci, "On the Pursuit of a Nation: The Construction of Folk and Folk Music in the Founding Decades of the Turkish Republic," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* Vol. 37 No. 1 (2006), 47.

[125] Serdar Öztürk, "Karagöz Co-Opted: Turkish Shadow Theatre of the Early Republic (1923-1945)," *Asian Theatre Journal* Vol. 23 No. 2 (2006), 292-313.

narrative developed that depicts Islam as a homogenizing force that caused Kurds to lose much of their vocabulary:

> *En dehors du fait que la langue Kurds n'était pas utilisée comme langue officielle et administrative, un des principaux motife qui ont incité les poètes Kurdes à negliger leur langue maternelle littéraire peut être trouvé dans l'influence de la religion islamique, qui penetra très profondement les instituts les plus intimes des peuples qui l'ont embrassée.*
>
> Aside from the fact that the Kurdish language was not used as an official and administrative language, one of the principle reasons that caused Kurdish poets to neglect their literary mother tongue may be found in the influence of the Islamic religion, which penetrates very deeply into the most intimate of institutions of those people who embrace it.[126]

The step away from Islam by both the Turkish and Kurdish articulators of nationalism, the rendering of the religion as something of an oppositional force to national culture, is remarkable. Though related in part to the abovementioned wish to distinguish themselves from the Arab peoples in the eyes of European observers, this realignment of religious identity goes beyond that. It is ultimately a rejection of the identity that had been primary throughout the Ottoman Empire, that of Muslim (and *just* Muslim). While not abandoning the religion itself by any means, these articulators of national identity were promoting a reorientation of identity in which religion is one aspect of the nation, the nation itself (represented by its language) being the primary source of identification henceforth. Needless to say, such an argument was not necessarily (or even likely) to have been embraced by the nation itself, either Kurdish or Turkish, for which Islam remained (and for many, still remains) a primary source of identity. What the argument does represent, however, is a discursive shift away from the Ottoman identifier found in Islam to a national one found in language. Thus did each nation not only struggle to define itself, it struggled to remove from its new definition the identity once shared between the two groups of people, thereby severing old ties. This was a national concern that was entirely mutual and contemporaneous.

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[126] Cewerî, *Hawar: Cilt I*, 72.

Other examples of the interwoven nature of the two national narratives can be found in Ekrem Cemilpaşa's narrative of political awakening in Diyarbakır after the end of World War I. His explanation is actually highly reminiscent of Andrew Mango's domino vision. Ekrem understands Kurdish nationalism to have emerged due to the great damage and suffering inflicted upon the Kurds by the Turks during World War I and subsequently during the War of Independence. Indeed, even after experiencing poverty, starvation, exploitation and death, Ekrem holds that the Kurds would not abandon their Ottoman identity.

> *İstanbul'un düşmesine, Osmanlı devletinin münkariz olmasına rağmen, Kürtlerin yüzde doksanı buna hala inanmıyorlardı. Halen Türk hükümetinden çekiniyor, korkuyorlardı. Bunun için cemiyetimiz en büyük gayretini bu noktaya vakıf etmişti. Her vasıta ile Kürt'e hakiki vaziyeti anlatmak ve dört yüz seneden beri Türk'ün boyunduruğu altında inleyen Kürt'ün eline halas fırsatı geçtiğini anlatmak, Osmanlı hükümetinin, yani Türklerin elim hallerini ve hatta mahv oluşlarını Kürt'ün kafasına iyice yerleştirmekti.*
>
> Despite the fall of Istanbul and the collapse of the Ottoman state, ninety percent of Kurds still didn't believe this. They still shied away from and feared the Turkish government. Therefore our organization dedicated its largest effort to this issue. It was to explain the true situation to Kurds, to explain that the opportunity for redemption was finally in the hands of the Kurds who had groaned under the Turkish yoke for four hundred years, to plant the idea in Kurds' minds that the Ottoman government, or rather the Turks, were in a deplorable condition, in fact, had been destroyed.[127]

In Ekrem's narrative, Kurdish nationalism has an opportunity to blossom because of the collapse of what he deems the Turkish (not Ottoman) state, and can find justification for doing so in the centuries of suffering that he defines as the relationship between Turks and Kurds throughout the Ottoman Empire's history. While the nation to Ekrem was primordial, its rise was contextualized and intimately tied to the history of the Turkish nation and its successes and failures. This rendition of events informs many of the stories he imparts in his memoir; the great nationalist meetings and subsequent cooperation among Kurds are provoked by the arrival of three Turkish pashas, sent by Mustafa Kemal to create alliances with the Diyarbakır Kurds.[128] And such

[127] Cemilpaşa, *Muhtasar Hayatım*, 35.
[128] Ibid., 41.

efforts, to Ekrem, were simply part of the ultimate plot to betray the Kurds. His words are no kinder for those who engaged with the Turks than the Turks themselves:

> *Cahil Kürt millet kendi eliyle kendi hükmi idamını imzalıyordu!*
>
> The ignorant Kurdish nation was signing its death sentence with its own hand![129]

Ekrem's roots near the top of a patriarchal system manifest themselves clearly in his vision of Kurdish nationalism and his articulation of its failures. The oppressed nation was also ignorant and needed educated organizers (such as himself) to guide it out of its dark days. Such an understanding is quite different from that depicted by Celadet Ali Bedirhan, whose journal praises the Kurdish culture at large, rather than an elite portion of it, as Ekrem's memoir tends to. Yet, crucially, both stances are informed by the men's engagement with the Ottoman and subsequently Turkish state, and both write narratives of nationality that are contingent upon the Turkish national narrative.

**II. Away From Ottomanism, Together**

Kurdish national narratives of the early twentieth century, far from overly studied in their own right, have been investigated in tandem with Armenian national narratives even less often, if at all. The historiography regarding Armenians and Kurds in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire paints a decidedly bleak picture. The main events of the story include the formation of the *Hamidiye* army by Sultan Abdülhamit II, a force made up of Kurdish soldiers that was involved in the Armenian massacres of 1895-1896. Depending on the source, Armenian aggression on Kurdish populations may or may not be mentioned. Following that, the Kurds are also implicated as some of the main actors in the Armenian massacres prior to and during World War I. The next discrete moment of antagonism is located in the struggle for British recognition

[129] Ibid., 44.

and support of their national claims in the wake of World War I. With both the Armenian population and some portions of the Kurdish population interested in forming a nation-state potentially under the guardianship of Britain, and with overlapping territories claimed, the two communities are typically posed as rivals competing for British benevolence. (The British, and the United States as well, generally acted more favorably to the Armenians.) Finally, some narratives include the attempted cooperation between the Armenian coalition (represented by Bogos Nubar Paşa) and the Kurdish coalition (represented by Şerif Paşa) at the Paris Peace Conference, which involved a plan to recognize and support one another's right to a nation-state. We are left to believe this brief endeavor, lacking support, fizzled to naught; there the story of interaction largely ends.[130]

While not factually inaccurate – massacres did indeed occur, land claims certainly overlapped and common interest was frequently lacking – this story is incomplete, or at least is incomplete according to several Kurdish narratives of emerging nationalism. Indeed, it may well be in *reaction* to this largely Euroamerican narrative depicting villainous Kurds and victimized Armenians that the Kurds who were interested in developing a national narrative chose to focus on connections with Armenians, rather than on conflict. (There is no hesitation, on the other hand, to highlight conflict over cooperation with Turks, even where cooperation existed.) Whether for significance synchronic or retrospective (and most likely it was a combination of both), there is an emphasis found in the writings of Ekrem and Kadri Cemilpaşa and the memoir of Noureddine Zaza on cooperation with the Armenian population. This cooperation is emphasized using three primary moments: the description of Şerif Paşa's participation in the Paris Peace Conference, the founding and activities of the Hoybun society, and the composed

[130] For a typical example of this, if perhaps a bit more sympathetic to the Kurdish position, see McDowall: *Modern History*; also, Özoğlu: *Kurdish Notables.*

memories of harmonious intercommunal life prior to World War I. These three moments emphasize the role of both nations as victims of the oppressive Turkish system; according to the narrative that was developed, cooperation between the two groups was a practical solution to the challenge of Turkish oppression of minorities. These narratives largely overlook the real conflict that makes up the wider historiographic rendering, and thus should not be understood as a complete, objective truth that will disprove the currently accepted narrative. They do, however, point to the influence of national developments on one another and underscore the contextual nature of national narratives. The Armenian nation and its own national narrative(s), as well as the global narrative of Armenian/Kurdish interactions, had to be grappled with by these Kurds in developing their national narratives.

Even the episode of this narrative that the original historiographic and the Kurdish version share – Şerif Pasha's efforts at an alliance with the Armenians – is rendered as an entirely different event in the pages of Ekrem Cemilpaşa's memoir:

> *Çok geçmeden Vilson prensiplerini ilan etti. Büyük küçük, bütün milletlerin hür ve mustakil olmalarını, ebedi sulh ve sükunun takririni istiyordu. Ben ve genç arkadaşlarım Paris'te bulunan Süleymaniyeli Şerif Paşa'nın Kürt mürehassı olarak tayininde ve Ermenilerle dostluk tesis ederek onların mümessili Boğos Nubar Paşa ile ittifakın meydana gelmesi için pek çok cehd ve gayret ettik.*
>
> Soon after, the Wilson principles [Fourteen Points] were announced. They requested the liberty and independence of every nation large and small, an enduring peace and the declaration of an accord. My young friends and I dedicated much energy and effort into securing the alliance between the Armenian delegate Bogos Nubar Pasha and the Kurdish delegate, Şerif Pasha of Sülemaniye, who would thereby cement a friendship with the Armenians.[131]

The context attributed to this event is unmistakable. From Ekrem Cemilpaşa's point of view, the international community (here represented by Wilson's Fourteen points) had expressed official support for self-determination for all nations. The *very next sentence* in his narrative addresses cooperation between two nations, disenfranchised and unrecognized until that point, joining

[131] Cemilpaşa, *Muhtasar Hayatım*, 53.

together in friendship to attain a mutual goal. The Armenian community is posited as being in exactly the same position as the Kurdish community; past or present conflict completely swept aside, the two nations are envisioned as striving to attain the same salvation from the same source of oppression – the Turks. Shared suffering and shared hope in freedom in the shape of a nation-state are depicted as the links between the two groups. Kadri Cemilpaşa makes the shared suffering thesis more explicit than Ekrem does; discussing Şerif Paşa's efforts, he says the following:

> *Her iki milleti hakimiyeti altında ezen Türk hükümeti bunların özel durumlarını kötüye kullanarak hürriyet ve istiklal mücadelelerinde işbirliği yapmalarına mani olduğuna hemfikirlerdir.*
>
> Both nations shared the belief that the Turkish government, under whose rule they were oppressed, had been an obstacle in their cooperation in their struggle for liberty independence by taking advantage of their particular circumstances.[132]

The common enemy is not in question. Notably, this agreement between Şerif Paşa and Bogos Nubar Paşa involved real efforts at compromise. The map of Kurdistan that Şerif Paşa presented at the peace conference revealed, as Hakan Özoğlu convincingly shows, territorial compromises on the part of the Kurds that "without a doubt, [demonstrate] the existence of a dialectical process" between the Armenian and Kurdish coalitions.[133] Specifically, the entire province of Van (in present-day Turkey and largely populated by Kurds) was omitted from the hypothesized Kurdistan. Özoğlu goes on to explain that the map was rejected by many major Kurdish figures themselves because of this omission, including Emin Ali Bedirhan, father of Celadet (whose journeys we have traced in Germany and Syria) and then-vice president of the Istanbul-based *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti,* the Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan.[134] Thus is Şerif Paşa's cooperation rendered an anomaly, ultimately dismissed by other Kurdish

[132] Kadri Cemilpaşa, *Doza Kurdistan,* 105.
[133] Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables ,* 39.
[134] Ibid., 39.

nationalists. This claim is seriously challenged by Ekrem Cemilpaşa's narration of events, however. Ekrem, along with his cousin Kadri, was *also* a member of *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti* – in other words, Emin Ali Bedirhan's rejection of the compromise map does not represent Kurdish sentiment at large or even the sentiment of that specific organization! As was discussed in chapter two, Ekrem's conceptualization of the Kurdish nation-space was very much influenced by his loyalty to his home province, Diyarbakır. It is thus quite possible that such local loyalties allowed the loss of the Van province, at some distance from Diyarbakır, to seem tolerable. Whatever his justification may have been, however, Celadet's support (and that of his compatriots in Diyarbakır) was fully with an Armenian compromise, according to this narrative. Pragmatism, cooperation, international support and mutual salvation from the same reality of Turkish repression are the themes stressed here.

This emphasis on cooperation, compromise and mutual aid between Armenians and Kurds is similarly emphasized in other contexts, as well. In 1927, nine years after the Fourteen Points were announced, the Paris Peace Conference held, and the Şerif Paşa - Bogos Nubar Paşa compromise scrapped, the previously mentioned organization *Hoybun Cemiyeti* was founded in Syria. *Hoybun*, several of whose members were involved with the publication of *Hawar*, was based in Aleppo. Its aim was to design and enact a rebellion in Anatolia, for which the "movement would send a revolutionary army to establish itself in the mountains of northern Kurdistan, proclaim a government and unify the local tribes under its leadership."[135] McDowall adds as a sidenote that Kurds were "happy to accept funds" from the International Minority Movement, "happy to forge an alliance" with the local Armenian organization, and very much

[135] McDowall, *Modern History*, 203.

desirous of military assistance from the United States and Italy.[136] These are listed as if of equal (and equally minimal) significance, opportunistic moments in a primarily national fight.

Thus is it surprising to see how radically different the foundation of *Hoybun* and its subsequent activities are portrayed by the Cemilpaşa cousins. Neither money from international sources nor a desire for foreign military aid is mentioned. The alliance they were merely "happy" to cement, however, is underscored as one of the major platforms upon which the organization was based. Ekrem Cemilpaşa describes the founding of Hoybun in his memoir. At its founding meeting, he explains, a charter was drawn up that contained five principles. These were 1) that Hoybun would fight for an independent Kurdistan; 2) that the battlefront for Hoybun was Turkey and that no other sovereign state would be interfered with; 3) that İhsan Nuri Paşa's struggle in Ağrı would be supported; 4) that ties would be formed with the Armenian nation "with whom they had been neighbors for thousands of years;" and 5) that propaganda to inform the world about the Kurdish nation would be produced.[137] Thus in the story told by Ekrem, this was no opportunistic alliance with the Armenian organization that happened to be located in Aleppo. On the contrary, it was a founding principle to work together with the Armenian *nation*, a principle justified through a claim of a common past. Ekrem's narrative is consistent in its support for the Armenian nation as a whole, justifying events in 1918 and 1927 in identical language. Armenians are not simply mentioned, they are *included* in the story; they are not to be bystanders, but rather participants in the founding of a Kurdish nation.

This claim of Ekrem's was composed in 1973. Four years prior, his cousin Kadri Cemilpaşa had published a radically different claim based on the same event:

> *Kürt Milletinin öz fedakar çocuklarının meydana getirdiği Hoybun Cemiyeti'nin tesisi ve Taşnak Cemiyeti'yle kısıtlı şekilde işbirliği yapmış olmalı düşmanlarımız tarafından*

[136] Ibid.
[137] Ekrem Cemilpaşa, *Muhtasar Hayatım*, 72.

> *garazkarane yorumlanarak Hoybun'un Ermeniler hesabına çalıştığını propaganda etmek suretiyle kamuoyunu kasten ihlal etmek istediklerini göstermek için, Hoybun programıyla hedef ve gayesini, teşkilatın esaslarını Ermenilerle yapılan işbirliğinin şeklini detayları ile bildirerek yapılan suçlamanın iftiradan ibaret olduğunu belirtmek isterim.*
>
> The founding of Hoybun Cemiyeti and the qualified alliance with the Dashnak Society done by the true, self-sacrificing children of the Kurdish nation were maliciously criticized by our enemies through the use of propaganda that claimed that Hoybun was working for the benefit of the Armenians. In order to show that they wished to deliberately spoil public opinion, I would like to clarify that the accusations about the program and purpose of Hoybun that depict the founding principles of the organization as an alliance with the Armenians are nothing but slander.[138]

Ekrem's claim, posited as a true history of the Kurdish nationalist movement, is identical in substance to those accusations Kadri considers the greatest of slander: willing cooperation with the Armenians. While a "qualified alliance" is acknowledged, there is no mistake that the Kurds involved were good nationalists (and therefore, apparently, opposed to aiding the Armenian nationalist movement). This explanation is certainly far more reminiscent of David McDowall's explanation. And yet it differs in one significant way, and this is in the weight placed upon the issue. Though his vision of proper Kurdish nationalism is entirely different even from that of his close cousin Ekrem's on this topic, Kadri is in implicit agreement on the fact that engagement with the Armenian nation is something that needs to be addressed, clarified and allotted the proper attention. Clearly Kadri formed a less coherent narrative of engagement with the Armenians than Ekrem did; apparently supportive of Şerif Paşa's efforts, he is offended at accusations that his own organization might have made similar sacrifices to advance mutual national causes with Armenians.

Such ambiguity is perhaps more honest than the enforced consistency found in Ekrem's tale. And yet consistency is an important part of a narrative; for a story to be told and understood and believed in, it must have a comprehensible plot. In the late 1960s Kadri Cemilpaşa is unable to offer this. By the early 1970s, Ekrem Cemilpaşa succeeds. Were it not for the continued

[138] Kadri Cemilpaşa, *Doza Kurdistan,* 103.

polishing of the story, this gap in time might seem a simple coincidence, a family dispute displayed in the pages of memoir. And yet if we turn to the work of the Noureddine Zaza, the idea that as time passed the narrative around the Armenian engagement was simplified and solidified seems to have some merit. Noureddine, we may recall, was significantly younger than the other people under discussion. He was forced to leave his home in Maden when he was just ten years old, grew up largely in Syria in the company of Ekrem Cemilpaşa and other exiled Kurds, and later moved to France. His memoir presents a fascinating example of the solidification of the Kurdish national narrative over time. Despite his extremely young age during the rise of Mustafa Kemal, he nonetheless narrates the political and military events of his childhood in some detail. Interspersed periodically with a personal memory, this introductory portion of his French memoir reads as a historical overview. Yet it must not be dismissed as such – a detached overview – because it is also written with the personal, emotional significance of a private story. Knowledge not his own at the time of the events is learned later, through exposure to such figures as Ekrem, and percolates down into his narrated memories themselves. Because he was slightly younger, he was able to utilize the nascent national narrative as a framework for his own childhood memories. Indeed, Zaza himself discusses the degree to which he was enamored with and influenced by the Kurdish figures who surrounded him in Syria:

> *C'est au cours de ces longues soirées que je m'éveillai au nationalism kurde et que je commençai à réapprendre le kurde tout en me révoltant contre les injustices frappant mon peuple.*
>
> *Durant un mois, je côtoyai, jour et nuit, des Kurdes exceptionnels. Côte à côte buvaient, mangeaient et dormaient des descendants de princes, de pachas, de la haute bourgeoisie et de la féodalité traditionnelle kurdes. Certains avaient accompli de hautes etudes, vu le monde. D'autres avaient vécu des aventures et des instants dramatiques dans les prisons et devant les Tribunaux turcs.*
>
> It was during those long evenings that I awakened to Kurdish nationalism and began to learn Kurdish again even as I was appalled by the injustices suffered by my people.
>
> In a month, I mingled, day and night, with exceptional Kurds. The descendants of princes, pashas, the elite bourgeoisie and Kurdish feudalism drank, ate and slept side by side. Some

> had completed advanced studies, seen the world. Others had lived through adventures and dramatic moments in prison and in Turkish tribunals. [139]

Thus Zaza's moment of awakening is clearly articulated in his mind. (We might note that for him, too, it occurred in exile!)

With the inheritance of the language and the political stance surely came the inheritance of the philosophy that linked the two together: the nationalist narrative. Thus do we turn now to investigate the way in which the Armenian interactions were articulated in 1982 by Zaza, thirteen years after Kadri Cemilpaşa's claim that any talk of alliance was pure slander and ten after Ekrem told a very different story. It will perhaps come as little surprise that Zaza adopted the narrative given by his part-time caretaker, Ekrem. Indeed, he plots his own life experiences upon the general framework of "thousands of years of cooperation" with a neighbor. He mentions on several occasions the Armenian girl his family called "Djadjo" whom they "rescued from the massacres."[140] Notably, "the massacres" themselves are not addressed; who was being killed, who was doing the killing – such details were rendered unimportant next to this act of displayed intercommuncal unity. Such a rendition is quite reminiscent of Ekrem's emphasis on the Şerif Paşa alliance, which emerges from no history at all but represents an important moment of cooperation between the two peoples.

Later, he explains that "in 1919, the Kurds aided the Armenians in taking refuge in Syria."[141] There are two interesting aspects to this comment. The first is that in general, the Armenians are depicted as having helped the Kurds take refuge in Syria, having fled Anatolia at an earlier date. This is something Ekrem, Kadri and contemporary historians agree upon. Thus when Zaza prefaces this act with a similar act of benevolence on the part of the Kurds, the Armenian aid becomes not a favor but one act in a cycle of neighborly cooperation and mutual

[139] Zaza, *Ma Vie*, 71.
[140] Ibid., 12.
[141] Ibid., 15.

assistance. The narrative is smoothed out as time goes on. Moreover, the idea of nations equal under Turkish oppression is expanded by Zaza to include several other groups, including Greeks and Bulgarians.[142] The idea that cooperation among mutually oppressed nations against the oppressor is natural and in everyone's benefit is unquestionable for this younger author. An idea that ten years prior was debated rather forcefully in the pages of cousins' memoirs is quotidian and obvious for Noureddine Zaza.

This canonization of themes in earlier Kurdish narratives that is visible in Zaza's work can be seen, too, in the places where he incorporates other latter-day concepts with events of the past. He discusses not Ottoman lands but the Middle East – an innocent enough term perhaps in 1982, but an entirely foreign concept to the time and space he describes. We might recall that Celadet Ali Bedirhan similarly discussed "the Orient" in the pages of *Hawar* that were dedicated to a French audience. Concerns about reception are never far away, particularly when writing specifically to be published, as Zaza was. But the most interesting example of the simplification of the national narrative over time points to the very reason this study was undertaken to begin with: Zaza easily discusses "Kurds" and "Kurdish nationalists" without ever feeling the need to define or problematize the terms. He also includes events in his narrative that occur all over the Kurdish landscape, rendering it all equivalently Kurdistan. This is radically different than the specific, space-based engagement that was visible in the generation prior. To someone who left the region when he was ten, barely knowing the language, Kurdistan was Kurdistan and Kurds were Kurds. From a distance, and while under the influence of people articulating their own pasts, it was possible for Zaza to envision a homogenous homeland with a discrete past and a specific set of representatives. Not having to narrate his own transitional identity, Zaza was free to embrace an idealized Kurdish nationalism made up of the best of his neighbors' memories. It

[142] Ibid., 30.

is only in doing so that he can conceive of his own memoir, written in Paris some sixty years after he fled the region, as the true "cry of the Kurdish people."

**III. Situating Self**

Context is an essential part to any narrative, with the possible exception of "Waiting for Godot." Thus the development of a story – of self, of home, of nation – necessarily entails grappling with preexisting places, characters and events. Nationalism in isolation could never exist; for what is a nation if not a body distinct from other nations? And how is distinction rendered but through comparison and contrast? The efforts and strategies visible in the Kurdish engagement with Turkish and Armenian nationalisms are thus not remarkable simply because they exist; they are remarkable, instead, because they were so openly and directly dealt with by the narrators. Discussions of Turks and Armenians and enmity and cooperation are not tangential to the shape of the Kurdish nationalist narratives because Turks and Armenians were not tangential aspects of their self-identity. To escape from an imperial identity, these authors were forced to reorder the peoples of the empire with whom they had most contact. This involved, for those Anatolian Kurds whose views we are exploring, orientalizing Arabs, demonizing Turks, and equalizing (for better or for worse) Armenians. In time, as Noureddine Zaza's work so usefully highlights, once-novel narratives, if functional, become canonized, fractures within a group become whitewashed, and history becomes simplified. In this process emerges a story that everyone can comprehend.

# Conclusion: Words into this Darkness

I would hurl words into this darkness and wait for an echo,
and if an echo sounded, no matter how faintly,
I would send other words to tell, to march, to fight…

Richard Wright

İnsan duyduğu gibi yazmalı.

Ziya Gökalp

It has been said that nationalism is a construct. With acknowledged faith in this claim, I have attempted to track down some of the builders, catching them in the very moment the foundations were laid. Specifically, this study has been an exploration of the ontological narration present in the writings of those Anatolian Kurds remembered now as "nationalists" (Kurdish and Turkish). The post-imperial context in which the four subjects of this work found themselves offered, I have argued, a unique opportunity for diverse narratives of nation, nation-space and self. Thus have we seen a multiplicity of stories told as to who the Kurds are (and who they are not); where they live (and where they do not); and how they envision their selves through personal participation in national narratives of their own design. The ultimate crystallization of narrative after this post-imperial moment is also explored in the example of Noureddine Zaza, a nationalist of the next generation raised by those of the one prior.

In addition to this larger project of placing the individual within the nation, of course, there is the specific project undertaken in these pages, namely, that of bringing to life lost voices of Anatolian Kurds in the first decades of the twentieth century. Long since drowned out by the cacophony of historical voices and neglected in the largely externally-produced history of the early Turkish Republic, the words of the participants themselves have been in serious need of an audience. I have attempted in these pages to bring them forward, offering what struck me as some of the issues of greatest urgency to each as he grappled with questions of identity and

nationality. For the purposes of this study, these issues include discussions of Diyarbakır as the location utilized in the narration of nation-space, the formative role of exile in the development of national narratives and crystallization of national identity, and the interaction with nearby nascent nations whose simultaneous emergence from the same imperial world necessitated mutual awareness and engagement (both physical and philosophical).

The other aim of this work has been to reexamine the figure of Ziya Gökalp from a new perspective, seeing him as one of many participants in the process of post-imperial articulation of national identity that was undertaken by Anatolian Kurds. By examing his self-conception and the concerns informing his formulation of Turkish nationalism, it has become possible to understand Gökalp as someone far more multifaceted (and far less unique) than his epithet of "father of Turkish nationalism" implies. The fact that his individual distress regarding the national legitimacy of his family and himself so deeply informed his conceptualization of nation and nationality, and that those conceptualizations in turn formed the basis of the new Turkish Republic's own formulations of nation and nationality, is knowledge that has striking ramifications for the historiography of Turkish nationalism. Understanding the specific circumstances that necessitated the largely cultural definition of nationality that has continued to inform Turkish nationalist rhetoric is a necessary step in understanding the history and trajectory of Turkish nationalism since that moment. It is my hope that this study will contribute to further research and understanding of this topic.

Though this study offers many themes to contemplate and a number of angles from which to approach them, there are many questions this project has raised and areas left as-yet unexplored. Other themes of great importance still awaiting examination can be found in these texts. These include, among others, relations between Kurds and Arabs of this time and place, specific aspirations regarding the future of the nation-space, interactions with the Kurds of Iran

and articulations of religious sentiment. In addition, there are many texts that were not incorporated into this project due to constraints of time and scope. Sources in the Kurmanji language must be examined and utilized to get a clearer picture of the processes under discussion, particularly for the period after 1932.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that this study lacks a coherent narrative itself; it begins and ends in a world of confusion, offering endless alternatives and no right answers. And yet, this last admission, unlike those of the prior paragraph, is not a one that begs an apology from the author. Indeed, it was just such a convoluted panorama that was sought at the outset to replace the cartoonishly simplistic depictions of nationalisms as easily digestible, specific and comprehensible entities. It has been the aim to explore, here, the personal inside the national, and the ways the personal influence the national. Thus presenting a multiplicity of narratives, some still in use today, others discarded, and exploring the ways the written word was used to define both the national self and the nation serves a purpose beyond muddying the waters; it underscores, rather, the very real complexity that determined the form of perhaps the most influential construct of the past century, nationalism itself.

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