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NOTES AND COMMENTS

A COMMENT ON HAKAN ÖZOĞLU, "NATIONALISM AND KURDISH NOTABLES IN THE LATE OTTOMAN–EARLY REPUBLICAN ERA"

ROBERT OLSON

In "Nationalism and Kurdish Notables in the Late Ottoman–Early Republican Era," (*IJMES* 33:383–409), Hakan Özoğlu states that his study "revises Olson's argument about the origins of Kurdish nationalism" (p. 405, n. 2). He also says, "Olson's praiseworthy study is based exclusively on British archives and can also be criticized for this reason." Özoğlu explains that his "revision" consists of defining Kurdish nationalism as a World War I phenomenon, a view he contests contrary to the views of Wadie Jwaideh and myself, who characterized it as being defined during the rebellion of Shaykh Ubeydullah of Nehri in 1880–81.

First, it must be noted that Jwaideh wrote his dissertation in 1960 and that he used the term "nationalism" as it was used forty or fifty years ago, meaning "a sense of community." Jwaideh told me this himself. It is unfortunate that Professor Jwaideh passed away in March 2001 and is unable to defend his thesis.

Özoğlu's reasoning is troubling in several respects. He states, "The Ubeydullah revolt is important not only because it demonstrates the emergence of new political leadership in Kurdistan, but, more important, because some students of Kurdish nationalism identify the revolt as the origin of the Kurdish nationalist struggle, for the Shaykh demanded a Kurdish state (either independent or autonomous) governed by himself" (p. 391, n. 27). But when we turn to n. 27, it says, "See Olson . . . and Jwaideh," and Özoğlu gives no page numbers. In n. 30, Özoğlu says, "In fact, using the British reports and memoirs of American missionaries, Jwaideh argues that Ubeydullah wanted an independent Kurdish state. Relying on Jwaideh, Olson places the Ubeydullah Revolt as the first stage in the emergence of Kurdish nationalism" (p. 407). It is disconcerting that Özoğlu consistently misspells Jwaideh's name (he insists on spelling it Jawaideh throughout his article. Surely when one takes it upon oneself to revise someone else's thesis, it is not too much to ask that the name of the person being "revised" should be spelled correctly. The misspelling also seems to have escaped the readers of the manuscript and *IJMES* editors, which raises the point that maybe they had not read Jwaideh's dissertation or my work.

It is correct that I did, and still do, place Shaykh Ubeydullah's rebellion as the *first* stage of emerging Kurdish nationalism in Turkey. However, in my *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion: 1880–1925*, I mention four other stages. If Özoğlu does not consider my stages two, three, and four as nationalistic, how can he consider stage one as being nationalistic? I consider Ubeydullah's rebel-

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lion, like the Hamidye (stage two), the Young Turk revolution (stage three), and the period from 10 August 1920 to the outbreak of Shaykh Said's rebellion in February 1925 (stage four) as periods contributing to the Shaykh Said rebellion (1925). It is not until the occurrence of the Shaykh Said rebellion itself that I found the necessary developments to consider it nationalist.

I agree with Özoğlu that "Kurdish nationalism was not a cause but, rather, a result of the Ottoman Empire's disintegration" (p. 404). I also agree that "Kurdish nationalism emerged as a full-fledged political movement only after World War I." It must also be noted that Özoğlu does not provide a date for the ending of the war, which complicates the defining of the chronology of the developments contributing to Kurdish nationalism after 1918. Özoğlu concludes his article in an amorphous manner and never addresses the Shaykh Said rebellion. Is it possible that he also does not consider it nationalist?

Özoğlu also says "Olson's praiseworthy study is based exclusively on British archives and can also be criticized for this reason" For this reason and this reason alone? At least, I used *one* archive very extensively in addition to numerous books in Turkish and some in Ottoman, French, and German. Özoğlu, according to his notes, used Ottoman archives for just four notes (nn. 60, 63, 69, 76). He seems to have derived even these notes from references in Tarik Zafer Tunaya's *Türkiyede Siyasi Partiler.* Where he quotes the F.O. as his source, he seems to have relied on Jwaideh's or my book for his references. I would also note that in the 1980s it was impossible to get permission from Turkish authorities to work in the Başbakanlık Arşivi. This was especially true for non-Turks. It is true that Özoğlu interviewed Melik Fırat, grandson of Shaykh Said, and Hızır Ceylan, grandson of Sayyid Abdulkadir, and I did not. How much these interviews add to the determination as to when Kurdish nationalism emerged in Turkey, I leave to the readers.

Özoğlu concludes, "We can no longer afford to ignore the subject matter [Kurdish nationalism] in Turkish studies and in Middle East history" (p. 405). Where has he been for the past four decades? It is exciting when young scholars become cognizant of the significance of periods and developments in history of which they previously were ignorant or the importance of which they did not assign sufficient value, but to assume that other scholars had done so, prior to their own "awakening," is disconcerting and arrogant.

A REPLY TO ROBERT OLSON

HAKAN ÖZOĞLU

I found Robert Olson's letter unprofessional and full of factual errors. There is nothing in the letter that causes me to reconsider my position. Nor is there any substance that warrants a full response. I would kindly suggest that Dr. Olson read the article more carefully.

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