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An Evaluation of the Second Constitutional Revolution Among Excessive Goals and Ideologies

Apstrakt: Na osnovu historiografske, politološke i publicističke literature, ovo istraživanje prezentira transformaciju ideja među nosiocima promjena u kasnom periodu Osmanskog Carstva. U radu se dalje ocjenjuje druga ustavna revolucija na osi hegemonističkog jezika koji je uglavnom kreiran ideološkim teorijama i konceptima kao što su pozitivizam, narodizam, solidarnost, korporatizam, nacionalna ekonomija, ali i koncept i uloga žene i štampe u kasnom osmanskome društvu. Autor tvrdi da je rad pokušaj da se dekonstruiše, doduše u ograničenoj mjeri, naslijeđe koje se u Turskoj prenosi od Ustavne monarhije do danas.

Ključne riječi: Abdulhamid II, Druga ustavna era, Komitet unije i progresa, pozitivizam, nacionalizam, solidarnost, korporatizam, nacionalna ekonomija, nacionalna porodica-žene, štampa.

Abstract: Based on historiographical, political science and journalistic literature, this research shows the transformation of ideas among the bearers of change in the late period of the Ottoman Empire. Paper further evaluates the second constitutional revolution on the axis of hegemonic language mostly created by ideological theories and concepts such as positivism, narodnism, solidarism, corporatism, national economy but also concept and role of women and press in late Ottoman society. Author claims that paper is an attempt to deconstruct, albeit to a limited extent, the legacy that has been passed on from the Constitutional Monarchy to the present day in Turkey.

Keywords: Abdülhamid II, Second Constitutional Era, Committee of Union and Progress, Positivism, Narodnism, Solidarism, Corporatism, National Economy, National Family-Women, Press.

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The Turkish intelligentsia, to which Ahmet Mithat Efendi alludes as “*mustağrib* (Westernized)” because of “importing the West to the Orient” and Cemil Meriç as “...those who have cut the umbilical cord with their social remnants”¹, reading of the socio-economic and structural transformations inherited from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic through the dominant attitudes and codes of the Annales School², Marxist-Weberian epistemology³ or Orientalist-colonial discourse⁴ has brought about the formation of a hegemonic language in historiography, which is sometimes the opposite of each other, and sometimes the repetition of each other. In this context, the biggest mistake of this hegemonic language, which serves for the internalization of many new ideas, analyzes, discussions, theses, theories, concepts or facts, is that it interprets the phenomena of western values and norms that are superficial, distorted, that is, impenetrable and cannot be neutralized even if penetrated. This hegemonic language produced in the spiral of modernity and orientalism led to the emergence of the theses of “underdevelopment”, “backwardness”, “semi-colonialization”⁵, “Asian type of production”⁶, and “The Ottoman society was feudal-semi-feudal”⁷. In addition to all these, the same hegemonic language created a wide corpus enriched by theories such as “national democratic revolution”, “uninterrupted revolution”, “dependency theory”, “world system”, “modernization paradigm”. Concept phrases such as “authoritarianism”, “jacobenism”, “bonapartism” and “patrimonyalism”, on which modern or conservative interpretations of Turkey’s two-hundred-year-old modernization adventure are united like a credo, formed the axioms of this language, in a common expression. Likewise, arguments such as petit bourgeois radicalism, patrimonial bureaucratic state system, bureaucratic elites, top-down revolution model, translatorship, eclecticism, transferism, lack of civil society, military-bureaucratic tutelage, elitist, paternalist, nationalist,

¹ Meriç 1986, 236.

² For the Annales School and its impact on modern historiography, see Burke, 2002; Dosse 2008; Boratav 2007.

³ Sönmez 2010, 39-62.

⁴ For a comprehensive critique of the phenomenon of orientalism, see Said, 1998.

⁵ For studies examining these theories, see Cem 1995; Yerasimos 1976; Novichev 1979; Avcioglu 1973.

⁶ For Asian-Type Production Discussions (ATUT), which was heavily discussed in the Turkish intellectual world in the 1960s, see Divitçioğlu 2003; Aydın /Ünüvar 2007, 1082-1089.

⁷ Özyüksel 2015; Barkan 1973, 1-32; Köprülü 1941, 319-334; Cin /Akyılmaz, 1995; Barkan 1956, 54-60; Sencer 1999.

autarchist, elitism, essentialist, sui generis, particularist, were shaped by relations of analogy, continuity, or break. What all this literature tells us is the fact that an intelligentsia, which defines itself according to external interactions, has always outside world.⁸ In other words, this perspective and discourse, which liberal-conservative history readings displayed as if they were united, evaluated the recent Turkish history and the Second Constitutional Era, which is one of its important crossroads, through a kind of “lodge of absences”.⁹

The Nature of the Tanzimat (Reform) Period as the Preparer of the Second Constitutional Era

Modernization, which emerged as a result of the Ottoman Empire’s internal inquiries as well as its dialogue with the West, evolved into both a compulsory and a systematic process with the reformation of the army during the reign of Selim III, and this situation was maintained by turning into attempts to strengthen the central power under the tutelage of the bureaucracy beginning with the reign of Mahmut II.¹⁰ If this process, in which Westernization spread to all the cores of the Ottoman social structure with some instruments, is defined through key concepts such as “innovation”, “reform”, “and breaking”, it can be easily stated that the Tanzimat was one of the first important turning points in this sense. Halil İnalçık, who sees the Tanzimat period as a new phase of the relations between the Muslim mass and the non-Muslim citizens, characterizes this period during which the Western civilization was entered, as one of the main events that explain the 19th-century Ottoman history.¹¹

As pointed out by Yavuz Abadan, the Tanzimat period, in which the notion that everyone is equal from the vizier to the shepherd is drawn with Mahmud II’s “I would like to meet the Muslims of my subjects in the mosque, the Christians in the church, and the Jews in the synagogue” or similarly Rıza Pasha’s, “You are all the subjects of an emperor, you are the children of the same father.” words, “saying infidel to non-Muslims” is prohibited, and the distinction between “millet-i hakime

⁸ For the mentality and discussion environment prevailing in Turkish social science circles in this period, see Kayalı 2014.

⁹ For a comparative analysis of recent Turkish history within the framework of the aforementioned motives, see Arslan 2016, 53-102.

¹⁰ Vatandaş 24-25.

¹¹ İnalçık 2017, 31.

(the governing / Muslim nation)” and “millet-i mahkume (the governed / non-Muslim nation)” is tried to be erased, meant a beginning that was really important in the context of westernization.¹² Because, as Şerif Mardin pointed out, the Tanzimat wanted to implement a “citizenship project” in the Ottoman Empire by keeping the mille-i muhtelif (non-Muslim nation) equal¹³. As a matter of fact, initiatives with limited results with high expectations, such as the establishment of provincial assemblies, in which non-Muslims had the right to speak for the first time in local administrations, The 1869 Education Regulations, which made Turkish compulsory as the official language, and the regulation of the Tabiyet-i Osmaniye Law¹⁴ in 1868, were products of the idea of keeping different societies together.¹⁵ In this context, with the Tanzimat, the basic elements of the modern state were gradually starting to take their place in the state praxis as a lifestyle and a set of values, while the period in which the transition from “subject to citizen” was experienced more rapidly and differentiated in nature would coincide with 1908 and later.¹⁶

Undoubtedly, the Tanzimat, which shook the military-theocratic foundation of the state, was a process in which the “field of individual freedoms” developed, “social institutions” were established, the powers of the ruler were limited in line with the understanding of “divided power”, and in this context, conservative and revolutionary thoughts went hand in hand.¹⁷ Tanzimat was a project owned by the new type of intellectuals of Ottoman Empire, which included those who oscillated between certain ideologies such as the secular-nationalist Şinasi, the modernist-Islamist Namık Kemal, the Turkist-Ottoman Ali Suavi, and the encyclopedist, pragmatist, foreign language-speaking and observants of the outside world, such as Mithat Pasha, who is described as the “representative of the religion of civilization”... However, although the content of this project was important, it was not sufficient. For, as Ebubekir Ratip Efendi, one of the intellectuals and diplomats of the period, pointed out, “... *Just as spring did not come with a swallow, the qibla of civilization of the Ottoman Empire could not be turned from east to west with a few statesmen seeing and understanding the West.*”¹⁸ However, the limiting and transformative role played by

¹² Abadan 2017, 61.

¹³ Mardin 2017, 147.

¹⁴ Özgüroğlu, 185-188

¹⁵ Erdoğan 2008, 19-45

¹⁶ Gündüz 2008, 149-173.

¹⁷ Abadan, *ibid.*, Tanzimat, 57-89.

¹⁸ Karal 2017, 120.

these intellectuals against material power was not something to be ignored.

However, since the aforementioned period, the separation of religion and state affairs and the removal of religion from being the reference of administrative affairs progressed in a coordinated manner, and the first important reflections of this were experienced in the public sphere. While public services were carried out on a more secular level, only the field of private law was left within the circle of religious law. In addition, although the central authority was strengthened with the Tanzimat, it ceased to be a sultan-oriented central authority and was transformed into a mechanism shared between the grand vizier, ministers, governors, treasurers, army commanders and other state powers. In this process, in which the state power was transferred to the public bureaucracy and the institutions they were affiliated with, the creation of local participation mechanisms in the provincial organization meant the internalization of democratic concepts and procedures based on negotiation and debate, albeit at the local level, before transitioning to the constitutional parliamentary regime. In fact, the Provincial Regulations issued in 1864 were accepted as one of the most important stages of the transition to the governing model based on the election principle. In the same way, Şura-yı Devlet (the Council of State), which was established with the abolishment of the Meclis-i Vala-yi Ahkam-ı Adliye (Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances) in 1868, transformed into a kind of a small parliament within a year and served as a bridge between the Tanzimat and the Constitutional Monarchy. In this context, it can be said that before the Young Ottomans¹⁹ came on the scene, the words “meşveret (consultancy)”, “şura (council)”, “meclis (assembly/council)” had become the usual parts of Ottoman political literature.

¹⁹The Young Ottomans Society was founded in 1865 by six young people who came together for a picnic in the Belgrad forest. The aim of the society was to organize against the danger of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. Most of the members of the society consisted of those working in the Bab-ı Ali Translation Chamber, which was an extension of the Tanzimat reforms. These characteristics gave them the opportunity to analyze the reasons for the decline of the Ottoman Empire against the West. As a matter of fact, “the leader of the Picnicists’ group was Mehmed Bey, who received his education at the Ottoman School in Paris and returned with a great deal of knowledge of constitutionalism and representation of the people. Mehmed Bey was able to ignite this reformist fire in the hearts of his two younger friends, Nuri Bey and Reşat Bey. All three were appointed for a while in the Translation Chamber of the Meclis-i Vala, an institution that was a direct continuation of the Meclis-i Vala-yi Ahkam-ı Adliye, the first modern administrative consultation mechanism established by Reşit Pasha in 1837.” The other three people were Namık Kemal, who was entrusted with Tasvir-i Efkâr Newspaper by Şinasi, Ayatollah Bey, and Refik Bey, owner of Mirat Newspaper. See. Mardin 2006,19-20.

In addition to all these, materialist schools were opened that conveyed the ideological foundations of Westernization, and these schools functioned as channels where the civil-military Ottoman bureaucracy was raised and where the aforementioned new type of Ottoman intellectual's vision of life was shaped. The media organs published by the said new type of Ottoman intellectuals became the catalysts of the desired change by being published with content that appealed to the cultural sociology of the period. The common denominator that these intellectuals with different ideological visions agreed on in the newspapers they published with the longing for change, almost as if by the refrain, was based on a sacred ideal that could be summarized as saving an empire that was in the throes of collapse. The ideological approaches based on this ideal, on the other hand, found a rich content ranging from Ottomanism to Islamism, from Turkism to liberalism and from there to socialism. However, these ideologies, whose origins go back to the New Ottomans, will take their most effective and extensive form in the Second Constitutional Period. In this sense, it can be said that although Ottoman Turkish modernization owes its prevalence on the social plane to the Tanzimat period, the period in which the mentality change differentiated and accelerated in nature was after 1908.

Current Political and Social Conditions Embodying in the Personality of Abdulhamid II

The 19th century was a process in which imperialist and colonialist Europe enslaved part of the world and threatened others. In this process, the efforts of the states, which had just leapt from commercial capitalism to industrial capitalism, to expand their spheres of influence not only disrupted the current balances of Continental Europe, but also brought about the formation of new rivalries and competition areas. The tension between the states in this competitive environment led to the search for a new balance. In the aforementioned period, the blocs that emerged around the liberal bloc led by Paris and London and the authoritarian bloc led by Berlin were the result of the dominant reflexes of Continental Europe with a high-tension tone.

In the period when Europe entered into a bloc process within the framework of the aforementioned motives, the Ottoman Empire, which was close to Europe via the Balkans, to Asia via the Anatolian-Arabian Peninsula, and to Africa with the lands of Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia, existed in a 3.5 km wide geographical area that had a geopolitical importance. In this geography, whose limbs spread over such a

wide area, the Ottoman society, with its population of thirty million, more than eighty percent of which were villagers, and its multilingual, multi-religious, and multi-ethnic cosmopolitan texture, was under the theocratic and personal power of Abdulhamid II.²⁰ Although it covers a long-term process of thirty years, the period of Abdülhamid II, in which twenty-eight grand viziers came and went, did not exhibit a phenomenon that could be matched with the concept of “stability” and in this process in which the legitimacy of the government began to be questioned, the socio-political fluctuations of the country, the aggressive manner and attitudes of the great powers, the meeting of the British King and the Russian Tsar in Reval in June 1908, and the constitutional regime trials based in Russia and Iran, which took place in front of the intellectuals of the period, were the origins of the revolution that would break out on 3 July 1908.²¹

In this context, the negative social, political, and economic conditions that Abdülhamid II dragged the country into became a source of nourishment for opposition organizations. Because, as Tunaya also stated in this period, “*the word progress was forgotten to some extent and the word regression was substituted for it*”. In this period, when signs of dissolution were clearly observed both inside and outside, the Western States’ seeing the Turks as tenants rather than the owners of their land, and the question of who would take their place on the day these tenants left, led to the emergence of the Eastern Question, which would be identified with the Ottoman Empire. In these circumstances, if the idea of revolution could be cultivated, whose seeds were sowed by a group of intellectuals called “The Unionists” under the umbrella of a semi-secret organization formed by coming together with the “mission of rescuing the state”, as Tunaya pointed out, the issue of the Orient would cease to be an external issue and would be resolved with an internal move, a social revolution.²²

Despite all the hesitations and dilemmas in the aforementioned scheme, it is not possible to evaluate the rule of Abdulhamid II as a period of complete loss. Because every process is crippled by the positive and negative contrasts it contains, or to express it in a customary way, requisites, and necessities. Considering this argument, it would be appropriate to analyze the period of Abdulhamid II as a fermentation period that provides the necessary ground for the emergence of parliamentary democracy in modern conditions.

²⁰ Kodaman, 234.

²¹ Ahmad 2009, 7-8.

²² Tunaya 2003, 90-93.

Announcement of the Second Constitutional Monarchy and Its Reflections

At the beginning of July, the Unionists had joined the gangs. The first of these was on July 3, when Resneli Niyazi Bey went to the mountain with about 200 soldiers and civilians. The exciting atmosphere created by the Reval talks prompted the Unionists to take action as soon as possible. Niyazi Bey had watched Enver Bey's movement to the mountain in Tikveş region, and Selahaddin and Hasan Tosun Beys movement in Albania on July 6. After that, many people appointed by the palace to suppress the movement were eliminated by the Unionists. As a matter of fact, Hakki Bey, who was in the delegation that came to Thessaloniki to inspect, Şemsi Pasha who was assigned in Bitola to suppress Niyazi Bey's movement, Debre Governor Hüsni Bey, again in Bitola a major and a captain, some officers and colonels in Serez were killed by the Unionists and Müşir Tatar Osman Pasha, who was appointed as the Bitola Supreme Commander instead of Şemsi Pasha, was taken to the mountain by Niyazi and Eyüp Sabri Beys. Now the arrow had sprung from the bow and entered an alley of necessity from which there was no return. In addition to the activities of the rebel groups that joined the raids, telegrams demanding the re-enactment of the Kanun-u Esasi (Ottoman Basic Law) had increased the pressure on the palace in a noticeable way. In fact, 30,000 people gathered in Firzovik on July 20, with the suspicion that Austria would invade Kosovo, and sent a telegram with 180 signatures to Yıldız, with the guidance of Gendarmerie Regiment Commander Miralay Galip (Pasinler) Bey, which changed the course of the developments. Because Kosovo, who did not receive a response to their telegrams, stated in another telegram they sent on July 22 that it was not possible to calm their excitement and threatened that they would take armed action if their demands were not fulfilled. This telegram was followed by telegrams from cities such as Serres, İstip (Štip), Pristina, and Thessaloniki. Finally, on July 23, it was announced that the Constitutional Monarchy was declared in Bitola, on the same day and at the same time, in Serres, Drama, Resen, Debre, Macedonia, and other towns in Albania, and it was shown that there was no return from the street of necessity, the signs of which were given long ago.

Thus, the uprising army units and the Unionists declared the Constitutional Monarchy in various cities and towns of Rumelia on July 23, 1908, and Abdulhamid II had to approve this de facto situation. While the Young Turks in Paris were laying a large wreath as if they were paying debts to the famous monument in the Republique Square in Paris, on the same day, Vehip Bey, one of the Erkan-ı Harp

(Military staff) majors, who climbed on the gun cart number 60 in the courtyard of the Military Academy in Bitola, announced that freedom had been declared. Although the gangs did not lay down their weapons, they had descended from the mountain. With the proclamation of freedom, Ottoman cities witnessed enthusiastic demonstrations accompanied by the French national anthem *La Marseillaise*, and streets, schools, squares and even newborn children began to be named freedom. Upon all these developments, Abdülhamid II, who was advised that the parliament should be opened in order to prevent bloodshed among the people and to prevent possible interventions by foreign states, declared that he had re-enacted the *Kanun-ı Esasi* (Ottoman Basic Law) on 24 July. Now, the power had passed to the masses of people who had been silent for thirty years, and the Unionists were sanctified as the founders of the process.

What Was the Second Constitutional Monarchy?

While liberal constitutionalism movements in the West expressed a struggle for class and rights which started in a very old period that was waged by different parts of the society such as the bourgeoisie and the working class and the industrialization process, the Ottoman-Turkish constitutionalism took place in an environment that was both quite new compared to Europe, and where industrialization was not yet fully developed. In this sense, a group of Ottoman intellectuals who tried to limit the state power of the Second Constitutional Monarchy found a positive effect as a result of their modernization aspirations.²³

Evaluating the constitutions as “the crossroads of the historical development process”, Tarık Zafer Tunaya, while describing the Second Constitutional Period, which he referred to as “I am a republican, I always get the strength to fight the traditions that hinder the freedom of science from this source,” as “a process in which all questions about the past, present and future of an empire are actually asked and answered”²⁴, on the one hand, he also pointed out the importance of its nature as a movement prioritizing the Republic.²⁵ In this sense, while Tunaya saw the Second Constitutional Era, in which almost everything was experienced, as a prelude to the republic, even its “*laboratory*”, Ahmet Turan Alkan considered this process as

²³ Hakyemez, 133-135.

²⁴ Tunaya, *ibid.*, XVII-3.

²⁵ Tunaya, *ibid.*, XVIII.

a “*concentrated republic*” since everything happened in five or six years. The same Second Constitutional Monarchy, which Tevfik Çavdar saw as “an armed uprising initiated by the military-civil intellectuals in Rumelia under the leadership of the Committee of Union and Progress”²⁶, according to Ernest E Ramsaur, “*It was the explosion point of the of activities that have been going on for nearly a century by some liberals or wannabe liberals.*”²⁷ According to Ziya Şakir, one of the witnesses of the period, “*it was both the most vivid and the most disastrous period in our recent history.*”²⁸ Mete Tunçay, who evaluated the Constitutional Monarchy as a “great cultural, social, ethnic and political bloom”, describes 1908 as the “longest year” in a period when the empire was approaching its end.²⁹ Again, Mustafa Gündüz confirms this situation with his idea and words “*Compared to all other periods, the Second Constitutional period constitutes the longest year of the Ottoman Empire with its experiences, innovations, and differences it brought.*”³⁰

Undoubtedly, the Constitutional Monarchy is not just a form of government or a political regime, it expresses “a lifestyle and a set of values”. For the Unionists, who set out with the aim of living a parliamentary experience based on principles such as “consultancy”, “principle of clarity”, “publicness of legislative-supervision activities” and “sovereignty”, concepts such as “freedom”, “equality”, “fraternity”, “ittihad-ı anasır (unity of social elements/society i.e. the unification of people under the identity of “Ottoman” regardless of their ethnicity)”, “unity” and “progress” have been the driving values of the constitutional monarchy. In this sense, a rapid politicization process was experienced with the societies and political parties that emerged from the first months of the Second Constitutional Monarchy. In the representative, competitive, election-based assembly, the “freedom of the seat” was given its due by experiencing a highly deliberative, argumentative, and occasionally conflicting and content-rich process. Moreover, the deputies of the period, who were willing to supervise the government, did not hesitate to resort to the confidence vote mechanism from time to time.³¹

²⁶ Çavdar 2008, 13.

²⁷ Ramsaur 2007, 19.

²⁸ Şakir 2018, 7.

²⁹ Tunçay 2008.

³⁰ Gündüz, *ibid.*, 150.

³¹ Demirci 2008, 83-104.

So, was the Second Constitutional Monarchy of 1908, which set out with these values, a revolution or not? In this context, while some consider the 1908 movement as an attempt to bring back a constitution that was accepted thirty-two years ago, some define it as a mild/moderate revolutionary movement for the realization of certain reforms, while others argue that it gained a revolutionary essence over time, although it was not at the beginning. If we try to find an answer to this question through Cenk Reyhan's proposition about revolutions, it may be useful to make some evaluations first. Cenk Reyhan bases the revolutionary results on the radical change of state power. In this context, he primarily points out that the political power had not changed with the 1908 movement and that the power was still in the hand of the existing status quo consisting of the sultan-dynasty and the Bab-ı Ali (Sublime Porte) bureaucracy. Likewise, he states that the 1908 movement was not a revolution, considering that the Unionists were not yet ready enough to seize power fully and to go to a radical bureaucratic liquidation. However, he mentions that the change and liquidation in power after the 31 March Incident³² changed this situation and that the 1909 constitutional amendment brought the 1908 movement to a revolutionary result. Because, the arbitrary power of the sultan was limited with the 1909 constitutional amendment, which took into account points such as the cabinet's responsibility to the parliament, imposing an obligation on the sultan to swear

³² The March 31 Incident or revolt started with the demonstrations of the opponents of the Constitution, after the editor-in-chief of the Volkan Newspaper, Hasan Fehmi, known for its conservative and Islamist publication policy, was killed in an unsolved murder. The fall of Kamil Pasha's government, known for its liberal political tendencies, in the aforementioned period represents a turning point in terms of escalating the tension between the Unionists and the opposition. Developments such as the fact that the British Embassy and its lobby, which thought that it cast a shadow on Britain's influence in the empire, began to demonstrate the moral support it gave to the anti-Unionists, and the establishment of the Committee of Union of Nations, which came to the fore with anti-community propaganda, on April 5, were like the harbingers of the March 31 uprising that would break out on April 12-13 after the two months following the fall of Kamil Pasha's government. The 31 March Revolt, which turned into a rebellion against the Unionists in a short time, was suppressed when the Action Army from Thessaloniki reached Istanbul. Mustafa Kemal was the Chief of Staff of the Action Army under the command of Mahmut Şevket Pasha. With the suppression of the rebellion, Abdulhamid II was deposed and replaced by Mehmed Reşad V. Again, as a result of this event, the powers of the sultan were limited and the powers of the Parliament were increased. Discussions still continue in Turkish historiography regarding the underlying causes and consequences of the March 31 Incident. For more information on this subject, see Akşin 2015; Alparaslan 2013; Alkan 2011; Albayrak 2015; Avcıoğlu 2014; Güresin 1969; İrtəm 2003; Mevlanzade 2010.

allegiance to the constitution, the loss of the sultan's authority over the formation of the council of ministers, the removal of the sultan's absolute veto power, and obtaining permission from the sultan to propose laws. But perhaps more importantly, the authority and scope of the parliament, which was the symbol of popular sovereignty, was expanded. In other words, a revolutionary break in the ancient state praxis was created by replacing the traditional understanding of the state based on the absolute authority of the sultan, with a constitutional parliamentary system.³³

The Unionists as the Main Architects of the Constitutional Monarchy Generation

When we evaluate the two-century modernization process of Turkey's recent history, it is necessary to position the 1908 Constitutional Monarchy and the Unionists, known as its actors, in non-Western geography, in the context of the developments and reaction axes arising from the dichotomy of the traditional and the modern. While Feroz Ahmad defines the Unionists as the "ideological heirs of the New Ottomans"³⁴, M. Naim Turhan evaluates them as "*The summit of the activities that have grown like an avalanche with a series of organized actions since the establishment of the association, which they initially called the Union of Ottoman Society*".³⁵ Ziya Gökalp, one of the general members of the party, describes the same Union and Progress as "an ideal move that broke off from the spirit of the Turkish nation".³⁶ However, according to Tunaya, the Unionists, also called the "Constitutional Generation", were not only the name of a generation, but also went beyond that and were among the main architects of a mentality that extended from the past to the future in the dialectic of time.³⁷ Today, when the Young Turks are mentioned, it is understood as those who prepared the 1908 Constitutional Monarchy as the revolutionaries who added mobility to the change and transformation process according to modern needs for the modernization of the Ottoman Empire.

Undoubtedly, all the leadership and the ruling elite of this period inevitably developed a defensive reflex against Western imperialism. Because the 1908 revolution

³³ Reyhan 2008, 103-129.

³⁴ Ahmad 2020, 9.

³⁵ Turhan 2013, 175-176.

³⁶ Birgen 1936.

³⁷ Tunaya, *ibid.*, 155-157.

took place on the eve of the First World War, when the world was dragged into a general war of division. For this reason, they have always lived with a phobia of “annihilation”, “division” and “fragmentation”. However, the war waged by the Unionists, who wanted to be contemporary in the western sense on the one hand, against the colonialist side of the west, on the other, formed one of their main dilemmas, like the two sides of a medallion. The inspirations that encouraged the Unionists against the imperialist Western bloc and made them vigilant were the projections of the 1905 Russian³⁸ and 1906 Iranian³⁹ revolutions, which are the extensions of a process that can be described as the age of revolutions after the French Revolution of 1789 in the Eastern geography. In this context, the Unionists were a generation influenced by the ideological references of the aforementioned revolutions as well as the universal values of the French Revolution in the intellectual preliminary phase of 1908.

Although the Committee of Union and Progress had a heterogeneous appearance as a large mass party, it did not become a party of any class. However, when we look at their cultural sociology, it can be said that the organization found its class base in the educated middle class, which includes teachers, lawyers, petty civil servants, bureaucrats and members of the army. In this sense, it can be said that almost all of the Constitutional Monarchy generation that created the 1908 movement had studied in Western schools since the 1860s, learned French, the dominant foreign language of the time, and had the opportunity to get to know the intellectual accumulation, lifestyle and especially the French intellectuals of the Continental Europe through this language. With the advantage of these visionary perspectives, the same

³⁸The revolution that broke out in Tsarist Russia in 1905 parallels the 1908 Second Constitutional Monarchy in many ways. The 1905 Russian Revolution, which first triggered the Constitutional Revolution in Iran in 1906 and later inspired the Unionists, broke out as a result of the alliance of the intelligentsia with the Russian peasantry against the Tsarist regime, and inspired the Eastern revolutions especially in the sense of limiting the power area of an autocratic model. Apart from this, the Narodnik movement's effective role during and after the revolution had a significant impact on the Unionist leader cadre's perspectives on village and village problems after the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy. For a comparative analysis of both revolutions in this context, see Atali 2002.

³⁹One of the important events that triggered July 23, 1908 in the east was the revolution that took place in Iran in 1906 and resulted in constitutionalism. The Iranian Revolution had a significant impact on the Young Turk cadres. Contrary to the Russian Revolution of 1905, the Iranian Revolution of 1906 had erupted in a Muslim region, and this proximity had influenced the preparers of the Second Constitutional Monarchy. For more information on the 1906 Iranian Revolution, see Cezani 2014; Dilek 2007, 49-68.

Constitutionalism generation, who approached social problems within the framework of the doctor-patient relationship, pursued the mission of “saving the state” by turning to “social engineering” in today’s terms, “social doctorship” with the prevailing jargon of the time.⁴⁰ Within this mission and mental background, the Unionists, who thought that they had nothing to lose on the way of revolution, created the revolutionary generation of their own geography with the organizational models they created both at home and abroad.

In the process leading up to the 1908 revolution, the Unionists were generally organized in distant places and cities such as Thessaloniki, Macedonia, Skopje, Izmir and Cairo, where the absolute authority was relatively less felt, and they expanded these organizational models by moving them to European cities outside the Ottoman geography, such as Paris, London and Geneva. They were “children of the border tribes,” as Zürcher points out. And the children of these border tribes continued to consolidate their organizational experience gained during the preparation phase of the revolution with new clubs and associations they opened both in Anatolia and the Balkans after they achieved their goals. When we look at the organization schemes of the Unionists, it is noticed that the core structures consisting of cells of three people work under the control of the committees, while the committees operate under the supervision of the central government. When we look at the organization schemes of the Unionists, it is noticed that the core structures consisting of cells of three people work under the control of the committees, while the committees operate under the supervision of the central office. The oligarchic general assembly, which dominated everything, preventing the structuring of the society from being based on a single chief, had turned into an organized party of chiefs over time. As a matter of fact, the transformation of the 1908 revolution into a triumvirate leadership consisting of Enver, Talat, and Cemal Pasha over time, but especially after 1913, can be read within this framework. In addition to all these, organizational models such as the Italian Carbonari Society, masonic structures⁴¹

⁴⁰ Indeed, the number of Medicine students and doctors graduated from the Committee of Union and Progress is quite high. Dr. İshak Sukuti, Dr. Abdullah Cevdet, Dr. Nazim, Dr. Refik Nevzat, Dr. İbrahim Temo, Dr. Bahattin Şakir, Dr. Mehmet Reşit are some of them.

⁴¹ It is stated by every researcher working on this subject that there is a relationship between the Committee of Union and Progress and the active Masonic lodges in Macedonia of the period. It should be noted that the organization model in the Masonic lodges inspired the Committee of Union and Progress, which was secretly organized. In fact, many of the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress became members of the Veritas and Risorta lodges in Macedonia. Talat

and Bulgarian communism that emerged in the Balkans led to the formation of a revolutionary generation that carried out the highest sacrifices and the most disappointing extremisms side by side.⁴² The Unionists, whose aim was to save the state by leaving the society in the background, could not be the implementers of a certain doctrine, although they generally operated in the action plan with these organizational structures within the ancient state praxis.

When the revolution took place, the Unionists, had two options in front of them in the delicate balance of the palace, liberals, and unionists, to destroy the existing power sources and institutions or to realize the motives of the revolution with it despite it, inclined to the latter. In addition to the lack of knowledge and experience necessary to take over the administration, the lack of consensus among them on the point of carrying the revolution beyond the political stage was also effective in this tendency.⁴³ Moreover, they thought that the traditional social structure

Bey, Minister of Finance Cavit Bey are just a few of them. One of the main factors underlying the membership of some of the Unionists to the Masonic lodges is that they thought that the oneness-unifying method in Freemasonry would help them to achieve Ottoman unity, that is, the unity of the society. See Koloğlu 1991, 29; Koloğlu 1991; Again, one of the practical benefits of this cooperation between the Masonic lodges and the Unionists is that Masonic lodges were used to escape from the spies of Abdülhamid II and to gather more freely. See, Ramsaur 2004, 144; İlhami Soysal explains these relations as follows: “The Macedonian Rizorta Lodge and Veritas Lodge in Thessaloniki, although the Turks in it were in the minority, gradually came under the control of the Turks and at one point became the sources of the Committee of Union and Progress. The leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress Talat Pasha, Mithat Şükrü Bleda, Kazım Paşa, Manyasızade Refik, Kazım Nami Duru, Major Naki, who later became a Muş deputy, Gendarmerie Commander Hüseyin Muhittin, Finance Inspector Ferit Aseo, are from the Macedonian Risorta Lodge. Emanuele Karasu, Cemal Pasha, who would later become the Minister of the Navy, Faik Süleyman Pasha, İsmail Canbolat, Hodja Fehmi Efendi, the Deputy of Komotini, and Mustafa Necip, who was later shot during the Bab-ı Ali Raid, were members of the Veritas Lodge. Talat Pasha, who would later become the grand vizier, and Major Naki Bey participated in the work both in the Macedonian Risorta Lodge and in this Veritas Lodge.” Soysal 1980, 235-236; For a study revealing that the relations between these Italian-origin lodges and the leaders of the Union and Progress continued until the Tripoli War in 1911 and that these relations deteriorated with the war, see Lacovella 2005. Along with all this, the historical approach woven with conspiracy theories based on the relations between Unionism, Freemasonry and Sabbateans underestimates and devalues these two important structural transformations that Turkey’s recent history has seen. For such vulgar studies produced both in the academic and popular fields in recent years, see Küçük 2003; Yalçın 2014; Düzdağ 2002; Küçük 2005; Eygi 2001.

⁴² Tuna, *ibid.* 132-133.

⁴³ Ahmad, *ibid.*, 8-10.

was far from understanding their immanent imaginations of the revolution, and in this direction, they also considered the possibility that they could be the notional opponents of their legitimacy. When external pressures were also added to their mentality and inexperience, the change they expected from the revolution was more limited than they expected. In other words, the Unionists, who found a solution to the autocratic absolutism regime by re-establishing the Constitutional Monarchy with the liberal-democratic and libertarian thesis of the French Revolution that affected the whole world, found it more appropriate to carry out their reforms from a gradual perspective after they succeeded in their aims. However, despite all these negativities, they never hesitated to show that they were the watchdogs of the revolution, both ideologically and practically.

Although the Unionists, who carried out the revolution with the motto of “Liberte, egalite, fraternite”, set out with liberal rhetoric, especially after giving up the power of control after the Bab-ı Ali Raid⁴⁴ (1913 Ottoman coup d’état) and choosing to be fully empowered in the administration, they acted with more oppressive and authoritarian tendencies while taking firm steps towards becoming a single-party government. The Unionists, who remained in power for 4.5 years after the transition to the constitutional-parliamentary constitutional system, in which many political parties and societies were established from the 1908 revolution until 1918, did not allow any structuring that would overshadow their own power and legitimacy, the excluding cabinets of Gazi Ahmet Muhtar Pasha, which were established after the Kamil Pasha and Halaskar Zabitan movement, besides the March 31 Incident. To put it more clearly, they had almost become the perpetrators of a political climate without opposition, like a rose garden without thorns. In this sense, on the one hand, they did not hesitate to resort to methods leading to acts of terror and terror against opposition elements, and they made plans that went beyond their revolutionary discourse with regulations such as the Law on the Tatil-i Eşgal-i Cemiyet (Ottoman Strike Union) which was amended on August 9, 1909, limiting freedoms such as the right to form trade unions and the right to organize. In addition, they supported their anti-democratic actions with paramilitary subsidiaries such as Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa (Special Organization)⁴⁵, Turkish Power, Ottoman

⁴⁴ For a detailed analysis of the power-opposition conflict that took place in the Ottoman Empire from the 1912 elections to the Bab-ı Ali Raid, see Dülger 2009; İslamoğlu 2004; Birinci 1990.

⁴⁵ For more detailed information about Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa, see also Tetik 2014; Altın 2014; Aksoley 2009; Stoddard 1993.

Power Association, Ottoman Youth Association⁴⁶, National Defense League⁴⁷, the Navy Society⁴⁸, which emerged as an extension of their semi-secret and committee like structures that did not coincide with the constitutional monarchy.

On the other hand, the Unionists owed their military and paramilitary methods such as espionage, gang warfare, propaganda, and national mobilization patterns such as establishing hospitals behind the front, opening aid campaigns, and helping orphans and widows, to the underground network they created with these structures. The Unionists, who included Masonic lodges and sect members in the secret underground structures, owed their legendary identities to this mystical organization in a sense. Tunaya's words, "*The more Constitutional the Constitutional Monarchy was, the more of a political party the Union and Progress became.*" mirrors these organizational models of the Unionists. Because the underground structure of the organization was much bigger than the political party organization. In this sense, this contradictory situation, in which the question of whether society dominated the party, or the party dominated the society had become a problem, undoubtedly moved it away from its identity as a political party. In addition to all these, the illegal and militarist organizations of the Unionists with high authoritarian tendencies, which did not coincide with the constitutional values, led to the manifestation of oppositional voices within the organization, and this brought about divisions and separations within the party. In this sense, although the Union and Progress was the dominant party of the first multiparty political process in 600-year-old Ottoman history, it transformed it into a single-party political climate in a period of five years. Because a central office that controlled the executive power had been more suitable for their general nature. In this respect, they did not hesitate to resort to anti-democratic methods such as ad-hoc laws, imprisonment, and exile. For

⁴⁶ Before the First World War, the Unionists wanted to benefit from the knowledge that emerged in Germany in order to provide the spiritual and physical education of the youth. In this respect, under the guidance of an officer from Germany named Von Hoff, they established the "Ottoman Youth Associations" instead of the previously unsuccessful Power Associations. These Young Associations which were established, aimed to raise young people who were not of military age physically, mentally, and bodily in a vigorously and healthy way. For detailed information on this subject, see Sarisaman 2000, 439-501; For details of the idea of total mobilization, which the Union and Progress tried to create by creating a paramilitary structure through the Youth Associations, see Yetkin, 1997, 419-428; Toprak 1979, 95-113.

⁴⁷ Polat 2002, 628-636.

⁴⁸ Necdet 2020, 103-120.

example, the fact that they enacted 1061 temporary laws between 1908 and 1918 constituted an obvious version of the practices of these authoritarian attitudes in the public sphere. However, it should be noted here that the Unionists, who went to the Second Constitutional Revolution with a series of congresses held abroad, continued to organize these congresses after the success of the revolution. Although these congresses tried to put an end to the party-society dichotomy with the declaration of the Committee of Union and Progress as a party in 1913, this dualistic structure was not fully clarified until 1918, when the Committee of Union and Progress dissolved itself. To put it more clearly, the party could not get rid of the syndrome of being a child born by society. However, another point that needs to be underlined here is that the congresses, despite the party-society duality, have been instrumental in expanding and internalizing the democratic practices under the umbrella of the Committee of Union and Progress. Along with all this, it should not be overlooked that in the 1916 Congress, the authority and responsibility of the chairman were increased as a result of the extraordinary conditions of the General War.⁴⁹

On the other hand, considering the Unionists as responsible for everything that went wrong in the aforementioned period, without considering the real politics of the Ottoman Empire, does not fit the reality of the scientific discipline. First, it is not possible to talk about an uninterrupted and unibody administration of the Unionists in the aforementioned process. In addition, the conditions in which the country and the world were dragged into were not the same. It should not be overlooked that, unlike the period of Abdulhamid II, the Unionists were facing a Europe that was going towards polarization as the disagreements between them deepened.

⁴⁹The Unionists, who organized the 1902 and 1907 congresses abroad before the 1908 movement, held their congresses every year until 1913 after the success of the revolution and published regulations containing the decisions regarding the functions of both the society and the party. In the 1913 congress, the Committee of Union and Progress declared itself as a party and wanted to put an end to the dichotomy of society and party and tried to partially clarify it. Due to the start of the General War in 1914 and the Battle of Çanakkale in 1915, the party could not convene its congresses. While the 1916 congress was a congress in which the powers and responsibilities of the chairman were increased, the 1917 congress functioned as a platform where important legal regulations such as the Family Law Decree were made, despite the extraordinary conditions created by the war. The 1918 congress, the last congress of the political life of the Committee of Union and Progress, included a period in which Talat Pasha presented the annual report that looked like a summary of the First World War, resigned from his duty as the head of the party, and the party dissolved itself and turned into the Renewal Party. For the congresses organized by the Unionists after the 1908 movement, see Mehmetefendioğlu 2008, 105-130.

So much so that, in addition to the alliance between England and Russia, the rivalry between England and Germany, rapid armament, the aggressive policy of Russia which returned rapidly to the West and the Balkans after the 1905 Japanese defeat, and the loneliness of the Ottomans in foreign policy, which was added to all these conflict axes, caused an unbearable contraction with the options for the Unionists. It should also be noted that the Unionists, who did not have a wide range of action, passed the test of realpolitik every day. Undoubtedly, it requires a neutral point of view not to ignore the last struggle of the Unionists for the survival of the Ottoman Empire, which had just emerged from the Balkan Wars, and to see that they did not surrender to a forced fate laid before them. The inability to develop the neutral point of view in question makes one forget the fact that the point connecting the 1908 Second Constitutional Monarchy and the 1923 Republic is primarily due to these resistant attitudes and reflexes⁵⁰. Undoubtedly, this situation makes it difficult to evaluate the axes of continuity and rupture between certain points of Turkish recent history from a holistic perspective.

The Unionists Who Made the Ideology of Non-Ideologism

The Unionists, who were compared to the “river novels” that we encounter in literature, inspired by the three periods of Turkey extending from the empire to the nation-state, naturally reflected this in their actions, as they carried the traditional and modern in their mental visions, or in other words, the accumulation of Tanzimat dualism.

The primary goals of the Unionists, who constructed the direction of the Second Constitutional Era within this mental background, were to include the idea of “ittihad-ı anasır”, that is, the “unity of the elements”, into the “homeland”. In this direction, they primarily wanted to perpetuate Ottomanism as an official and supra-partisan ideology. However, when they saw that Ottomanism based on the understanding of unity of country and interest was an impossible dream to realize in practice, the radicalized Unionists turned to the ideology of Islamism, which gained momentum during the reign of Abdulhamid II. In this period, Islamism, which was handled on a more methodological level, gained a new meaning as a political doctrine and action plan in order to get rid of the oppression and threats of imperialism in the years of World War I. While trying to keep the collective consciousness alive

⁵⁰ Cengizer 2008, 33-69.

with the motto “There is no you or I, there is only we” in this ideological spiral, where one of them was at times preceded or veiled as the equivalent of the other, they turned to Turkism as a new ideological mortar following the Balkan Wars. Another person who theoretically supported Yusuf Akçura and Ziya Gökalp’s understanding of nationalism with Turanist and Pan-Turkist tendencies in the aforementioned period was Mustafa Celaledin and his famous work *Old and Modern Turks*.⁵¹ In this respect, the arguments defended by Mustafa Celaledin Pasha in his work against the orientalist corpus’ descriptions as static, stagnant, closed to development, nomadic, far from the institutions and dynamism of settled life, were effective in shaping the understanding of nationalism of the Second Constitutionalist intellectuals. Because, contrary to the Western orientalist discourse, Mustafa Celaledin argued that the Turks are an ancient tribe that has a place in world history. In this context, it would not be wrong to state that the Second Constitutionalism nationalism, which reminds Turks of their historical memories, is also a type of nationalism adorned with expansionist and romantic elements. In addition to all these ideological orientations, Russian Narodism, French solidarist-corporatism, Frederik List’s German national economic school, and Anglo-Saxon liberalism, and the synthesis of socialism combined with Islamic thought, albeit with limited influence, were the main starting points. On the other hand, they displayed a distant attitude towards liberalism and socialism, which were seen as ideologies in which dissident organizations had found growth.

In the aforementioned period, the Constitutional Monarchy generation, who “*asked and sought answers to all questions about the past, present and future of the Empire*”, was inspired by many ideological formulations, especially the cultural accumulation of Continental Europe. In this direction, they benefited from the ideological orientations of the French Third Republic in their perspectives on state philosophy, regime problems, public bureaucracy, and social problems. Solidarist corporatism, Auguste Comte positivism, and sociological social division of labor theses inspired by Durkheim formed their basic philosophies. In this framework, the Unionists, who connected with the French world of thought through Montesquieu and his

⁵¹ Although Mustafa Celaledin Pasha’s book had a great impact on both the Young Ottomans and the intellectuals of the Second Constitutional Era and the Republic in the context of nationalism when it was published, it was only in 2014 that the book was translated from French into Turkish and published. It is a misfortune for the cultural and academic life of our country that the book was published approximately 145 years after it was published both in Istanbul in 1869 and in Paris in 1870. For the Istanbul and Paris editions of the book, see. Djelaledin 1869; Djelaledin 1870.

work Spirit of Laws, shaped the constitutional monarchy on the basis of principles such as “concrete individual”, “freedom” and “separation of powers”. Thus, it is necessary to evaluate the constitutional amendment implemented in 1909 within this framework. However, the principle of separation of powers lasted until 1913 and after this date, all forces gathered in the general center.⁵² In addition to the ideas produced by the French Third Republic, another ideological formation they got inspiration from was the 19th-century German public philosophy and thought tradition. Just as the French Emile Durkheim’s “La Division Sociale”⁵³ translated as “İçtimai Taksim-i Amel (The Division of Labour in Society)” became a book circulated by the intellectuals of the period, Ludwig Büchner’s “Kraft und Stoff”⁵⁴ translated as “Madde ve Kuvvet (Matter and Force)” had also become one of the important bedside resources. In this context, the understanding of the “soldier nation”, to which Bismarkian German romantic nationalism provided important data and the “national economy” and “state capitalism” theories developed as inspirations from Frederick List were the projections of German public philosophy to the Turkish mentality. In addition to all these, the Unionists, who reached social Darwinism and then vulgermaterialism through positivism and its conservative, liberal, statist and radical westernization derivatives, and as the reflections of these tendencies, were inspired by the works of Charles Seignobos, Ernest Lavisse and Alfred Nicolas Rambaud in history, from the ideas of thinkers such as Emile Durkheim, August Comte, Celestin Bouglé in sociology, from the work of economists such as Charles Gide, Charles Rist, Frédéric List, Paul Gauwes in economics, and from the books of lawyers such as Leon Duguit and Eugene Pierre. It can be said that eclecticism constituted one of the main methodological veins of almost all Young Turk and Unionist opposition movements. In this respect, it can be said that the intellectuals of the Second Constitutional Period, who could not have an ideological formation in the doctrinal sense, made the ideology of non-ideology. Therefore, they could not form strong ideologists as a local philosophical tradition and representatives of this tradition.⁵⁵ In this context, it can be said that the Young Turk movement, with its lack of revolution and all its inadequacies, would not have gone beyond a dream if a sound criticism had not been made by the establishments of the 1923 Republic.

⁵² Arslan, *ibid.*, 108-109.

⁵³ Durkheim 2006.

⁵⁴ Büchner 1855.

⁵⁵ Arslan, *ibid.*, 112-118.

From Liberalism at the Center of Oppositional Elements to National Economic Policy

In the midst of all these theoretical discussions and interactions, the intellectuals of the Second Constitutional Era displayed a distant attitude towards liberalism. Because liberalism had been an ideological platform where oppositional elements gathered in the aforementioned period. Political parties such as the Ottoman Liberty Party and Freedom and Accord Party, which were shaped around the decentralization and personal initiatives reflected by Prince Sabahaddin, can be evaluated within this framework. The adoption of national economic policy rather than liberalism can also be evaluated within the framework of the same reflex, in the cyclical conditions determined by the socio-economic elements of the Second Constitutional Monarchy generation, which was dragged from the Balkan Wars to the General War. In this sense, the Unionists, who made a controlled transition to economic liberalism until 1913, started to see this ideology as a weak ideology after 1913, and they embraced the theories of “national economy”. In this direction, their primary aim was to create a national Turkish bourgeoisie by ensuring the capital accumulation in the hands of non-Muslim community groups and Levantines to change hands. However, while forming their economic policies, the Unionists, who had no other choice but the liberalism of the Minister of Finance Cavit Bey, the solidarist-corporatism of Ziya Gökalp and the vocational representation approach of Kör Ali İhsan Bey and Kara Kemal, acted with these eclectic reflexes.

The Unionists, who switched to the idea of National Economy with these thoughts and interactions, wanted to create a new base by organizing tradesmen associations in this direction. The first reflection of the national economic policies of the CUP, which included issues such as distribution of land to the villagers, providing low-interest loans, changing the existing title deed system, establishing the existing state control in education, teaching Turkish in primary schools, opening trade, agriculture and vocational schools, and taking measures for the development of agriculture in their party program, was the boycott movement be taken after the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Austrians. According to them, a national bank and national companies should have been established, Anatolian merchants should have been involved in commercial activities, traders should have been organized, and cooperatives that were the property of the people should have been established. In this sense, the CUP’s desire to increase the customs duties from

11% to 15%, introducing the registration of residential property in the land registry in 1911, the removal of the internal passport, and other measures restricting the freedom of movement that prevent travel, the development of projects related to irrigation of Konya and Cilicia plains, emerged as manifestations of economic policy. Initiatives such as the abolition of the capitulations unilaterally on September 10, 1914, the enactment of the Industry Encouragement Law in 1914, the establishment of the Tradesmen Association in 1915, the conversion of the Ministry of Trade and Agriculture into the Ministry of National Economy after the Çanakkale Victory, on September 14, 1916. as the transition from the *ad volerem* tariff to the specific customs tariff and the enactment of the law envisaging Ziraat Bank to give loans to farmers in 1916 were also embodied as reflections of the same policy.⁵⁶ Likewise, It was tried to act with the same understanding during the difficult years of the General War with arrangements such as the “Subsistence Law” on July 10, 1916, “Agriculture Law” on April 2, 1917, “Law on Prohibition of Provision” in June 1917, and “Decree on General Subsistence” in July 1918. These regulations, which were implemented to centralize the economic units with the effect of the socio-economic and political conditions of the period, were supported by institutional structures such as the National Weighage Company, the Ekmekçiler (Bakers) Company, the National Economy Bank, and the Subsistence Ministry.⁵⁷

Education Designed on The Axis of Positivist and Nationalist Reflexes

The new approaches and practices regarding education formation, which started with the modernization of military schools in the Ottoman Empire since the Tanzimat period and then spread to the civilian schools within the empire, were developed and continued during the Second Constitutional Period. The Unionists saw education as the only means of reaching the level of contemporary civilization. For this reason, the ideological approaches they nurtured to find solutions to the problems of the empire also shaped the educational understanding of the period. In this sense, positivism and the statist reflexes of German public philosophy were the elements that gave color to the reconstructed education policies. With these dominant attitudes and reflexes, the efforts of the intellectuals of the period to transform the education system, who put forward their theses on many issues, especially

⁵⁶ Ahmad, *ibid.* 25-45.

⁵⁷ Tunaya, *ibid.*, 139-143.

language discussions, were really admirable. As a matter of fact, discussions such as the “simplification in language” movement, the acceptance of the Latin Alphabet and the idea of “unity in education” emerged in this period, the copyright and translation works of Western education scientists such as Frobel, Montessori and Pestalozzi were in great demand, and courses such as history, law and knowledge of civilization were included in the school curricula in order to reconstruct the social culture in Western forms during this period. Likewise, the education of girls, the idea of education in the village, schools based on job training started to be discussed for the first time in this period. Especially after the Balkan Wars, the understanding of “military nation” gained importance and “body training” policies began to be discussed, inspired by the German public philosophy. In this sense, Goltz Pasha’s work called *Millet-i Müselleha* (Armed Nation)⁵⁸ had a great impact on the Ottoman military bureaucracy and the ideal of a fully militarized homogenized nation became one of the political goals of the period. Thanks to these ideological orientations, the understanding of military training of the Turkish nation and keeping it under constant vigilance with social instruments such as symbols, myths, anthems, and body training policies had come to the fore.

In this context, intellectuals such as Satı Bey, Emrullah Efendi, and Ethem Nejat, as well as Ziya Gökalp, Tevfik Fikret, İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu and Prince Sabahaddin tried to find sometimes urgent, sometimes pragmatist and sometimes conciliatory prescriptions for the problems experienced in the education system. Among these, Emrullah Efendi’s Tuba Tree theory, which suggested starting the reform activities in education from higher education institutions, and Ziya Gökalp’s education model, which included national, solidarist, socialist and authoritarian tendencies in coordination with rising nationalist reflexes, aimed to get more immediate results. Undoubtedly, the intellectuals of the Constitutional Monarchy had views that were incompatible with each other but were also necessary and indispensable for each other. As a matter of fact, Satı Bey’s thought that the modernization process should be started from primary education, which he considers as the predecessors of education, contrary to the education model presented by Emrullah Efendi with the theory of Tuba Tree, is an example of this. In this respect, Ethem Nejat, who draws attention to the problems of primary and secondary education for subjects such as public education and the education of peasants, put forward his ideas in a similar dialectic. The views proposed

⁵⁸ Aydın / Türkoğlu 2009, 271-272; For a detailed analysis of this German influence that emerged in the Unionists, see also Gencer, 2015.

by Prince Sabahaddin on a self-confident, entrepreneurial, creative and individual-oriented education system and the individualist, pragmatic and functional education philosophy Tevfik Fikret designed under the name of “New School” can be evaluated in the same way. The views of İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, which represent a middle way between these extreme socialist and individualistic views of the Second Constitutional Era, have a conciliatory essence. Undoubtedly, all these discussions gave an epistemological, ideological and historical content to the structural transformations that were foreseen to be realized during the Second Constitutional period. Because, as Osman Konuk states, “... *the 1908 Constitutional Monarchy, which experienced the political and social disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in a ten-year period, paradoxically represents one of its brightest educational and intellectual periods. Because the most radical and contradictory ideas, organizations and initiatives created an extraordinary colorfulness and diversity during the Second Constitutional Period, which was one of the last and most intense periods of Ottoman modernization. In this context, while the problems experienced in the field of education brought about theoretical discussions, they became the harbinger of cultural richness and accumulation with the solution suggestions offered by the intellectuals of the period in terms of models, structure, method, program and philosophy in education.*”⁵⁹

It can be stated that the activities carried out in the field of education during the Second Constitutional Period, which all these intellectual debates fostered theoretically, had an important place. Thus, as a reflection of the ideas presented in the pedagogical sense in the mentioned period, practices such as taking the first and serious steps in preschool education, the opening of higher education institutions for the first time for girls, the closure of most of the traditional primary schools, the adoption of new educational methods and models such as experiments, maps, laboratories, excursions, the enrichment of school curricula and the training of qualified teachers were important in the context of transforming the education system.⁶⁰

Polyphonous Press of the Second Constitutional Monarchy

The Second Constitutional Era was also a process in which the reflections of civil liberties in different compartments of the public sphere were experienced. The Second Constitutional Era, in which individual rights and freedoms such as freedom of

⁵⁹ Konuk, 361-384.

⁶⁰ Osman Konuk, agm, ss. 361-384.

public (hürriyet-i umumiye), right of equality (hakk-ı müsavat), personal freedom (hürriyet-i şahsiye), freedom of thought (hürriyeti-i efkar), freedom of belief (hürriyet-i mezahib), freedom of education (hürriyet-i tedrisiye), right of assembly (hürriyet-i içtima), right of organization (hürriyet-i iştirak), freedom of work (hürriyet-i mesai), trade, and savings were discussed, brought along a libertarian process. In this sense, the movement in the Ottoman press, which started with the emigre Young Turk press that prepared the 1908 revolution, exploded in the days following July 23. In his words “The nation has two languages, one of which is the tribune of the nation and the assembly, and the other is the press. Unless these work regularly, the constitutional machine does not function completely,” the importance that Talat Pasha attributes to freedom of the press mirrors the mentality of the period. Considering the numbers of the periodicals published in the first year of the Second Constitutional Monarchy, 739 by *Revue de Monde Musulman*, 660 by Mehmet Seyyitdanlıoğlu and 730 by Orhan Koloğlu, it can be said that there was a big explosion no matter how one looks at it. In addition to the events such as the March 31 Incident, the Babıali Raid, and the assassination of Mahmut Şevket Pasha, as well as the increasing external pressures, in the aforementioned period, the “freedom of the press” was the one which always caught it in the neck. Although the Unionists enacted a press law in 1909, which can be considered quite liberal according to the conditions of the age, they almost never implemented it. Moreover, starting from the second half of 1909, they did not refrain from resorting to the methods of terror, such as the closure of newspapers and magazines, the deportation of journalists to places such as Sinop, Çorum, and Ankara, and finally the murder of opposition journalists in the middle of the street. In fact, the decrease in the number of newspapers in Istanbul to 63 in 1914 can be considered as an extension of this. In addition to all these, the liveliness experienced in the Ottoman press during the Second Constitutional Monarchy was important for the freedoms internalized by the revolution and created a significant difference in the transformation of the mentality of the period.⁶¹

National Family and Women at the Center of Social Transformation

Another problematic area of the Second Constitutional Era, which had a special identity in itself, was the struggle of women to seek their rights reflected in different compartments of public life. In that period, the debates that focused on issues such

⁶¹ Koçabasoglu 2010, 1-12.

as dress, feminism, education, freedom, equality, family, child education, polygamy, women's work, and veiling wanted to transform the understanding of the period that restricted women's freedom in the public sphere.

In fact, it was inevitable that a social revolution would follow the political revolution realized during the Second Constitutional Period when the structural dynamics were regulated in every aspect. In this process, in which the social revolution was tried to be defined through phrases such as “new life, new family, national family”, according to the intellectuals of the period, women should have been liberated from the ongoing traditional life codes. Undoubtedly, in this change of mentality, the contributions of a new conception of life centered on the socialization of women in the Ottoman port cities surrounded by the cultural norms of the West, the liberation of the press, the development of communication and transportation opportunities, the close monitoring of the European publications and the long war years, which started with the Balkan wars and continued with the Great War and War of Independence, had been great. In this direction, the intellectuals of the period, who were affected by the cultural accumulation of Continental Europe, sought to gain knowledge and information in many fields from history to law, from economics to sociology, and from there to anthropology, and were seeking what the motives the social revolution could be sustained with. With the influence of these intellectual orientations, the understanding of the “nuclear family”, which came to the fore instead of the “paternal family”, gained importance to overcome the social disintegration. Thus, the private-confidential family life came to an end, the state and the family became transitionally integrated, and women's freedom and the family structure suitable for this formed the main axis of the discourse of “new family”, “new life”, “national family” in the words of the Unionists.

Indeed, during the Second Constitutional Monarchy, the debates on the equality of men and women (*müsavat-ı tamme*) constituted one of the most important problematic areas of the social revolution. Because the most devastating effect of the series of wars that started in the late Ottoman period on the social structure of the country was on the concept of family. However, the same process had brought with it the result of women becoming visible in the public sphere to ensure their subsistence economy, because of the adult male population being sent to the front with the wars. To put it more clearly, the “concept of family” and the “biological function of women” gained importance in the Ottoman society, which collapsed with wars, whose value norms were turned upside down, and which was shaken by serious demographic losses.

However, the overlapping of the position of the woman, who was placed at the center of the notion of family, with her new achievements, which could be evaluated in the context of her liberation in the public sphere, expressed a paradox that needed to be resolved before the Unionists. But time was limited, and the problems were great. Therefore, great things had to be accomplished in a short time. As a matter of fact, the Ottoman Women's Employment Society *Islamiye* was established under the patronage of Naciye Sultan, the wife of the War Minister Enver Pasha, in order to find a solution to the "temin-i maişet (the problem of earning a living)" of the Ottoman women, who became increasingly impoverished during the war years. Moreover, women were tried to be provided with jobs and professional gains in various field under the roof of many organizations such as "Teali Vatan Osmanlı Hanımlar Cemiyeti (Ottoman Ladies' Society for the Advancement of the Homeland)", founded by Mrs. Nesime Yusuf and a group of men from Thessaloniki, Abdulkerim Pasha's daughter Mrs. Zekiye's "Cemiyet-i Hayriye –i Nisvaniye" and Halide Edip's "Teali Nisvan Cemiyeti (Society for the Advancement of Women)", and especially the "Cemiyeti İmdadiye", which was founded by Fatma Aliye Hanım, the daughter of Ahmet Cevdet Pasha. Likewise, with the Family Law Decree of 25 October 1917, the institution of marriage was intervened for the first time, issues such as the family council, talaq, polygamy, inheritance, adoption, and divorce were regulated, and very important legislation in terms of women's law was included in public law. Again, legal legislation in this area had been tried to be established based on Leon Duguit's book named *Hukuk-u Esasiye* (Constitutional Law – This book translated by Menemenlizade Edhem was read by Atatürk), and Roaul de la Grasserie and Eugene Pierre's law books. The aforementioned years also included a wide range of publications addressing *Nisvan-ı Islam* (Muslim women) intellectually and examining almost all their problems, with magazines and newspapers such as *İnci*, *Yeni İnci*, *Süs*, *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, *Musavver Malumat-i Nafia*, and *Büyük Mecmua*. In addition to these, "Jeanne d'Arc's" inclusion, who has become a symbol of courage, identified with the concept of homeland and has a special place in the formation of the French national identity, in Said Pasha's *Mirat-ul Iber*, Mizancı Murad's *General History*, and Ahmet Mithat's *European history*, as it can be said, was the first forerunner of the fight for "equality between men and women (*müsavat-ı tamme*)" in these lands.

On the other hand, long-lasting wars, while providing employment opportunities for Muslim Turkish women in different fields from trade to factories, from road construction to street cleaning, also caused women who could not find a job to earn

their livelihoods to get involved in prostitution. So much so that the proliferation of venereal diseases such as gonorrhea, syphilis, chancre, scabies, etc., during the years of the War, brought with it the issuance of the “Emraz-ı Zühreviyenin Men-i Sirayet-i Hakkında Nizamname (Regulation for Protection from Sexually Transmitted Diseases)” on October 18, 1915.

To summarize, although women, who were the subject of literature, history, economics, law, and the press during the Second Constitutional Era, were accepted as “individuals”, they were not valued as “citizens”. Again, in this period, concepts such as *taksim-i amal* (division of labor), *ara-i nisvan* (women’s vote), *ara-i amme* (general vote) were discussed but could not find a legal response. As a result, although there was an attempt to create legal legislation regarding the social role of women, their recognition as “citizen” would occur in the Republican period.⁶²

Conclusion

The Young Turks, who were the architects of the Second Constitutional Revolution, were also the pioneers of the process of going from the Empire to the Republic. The Unionists, who were the main actors of this fragile process from the past to the future, along with its faults and merits, acted with the longing for a constitutional parliamentary system with the Second Constitutional Monarchy, which they saw as the only recipe that would ensure the salvation of the empire during the thirty-three-year tyranny period. Even after the revolution was successful, they became the foundations of the transition from the concept of the subject to the citizenship project with a revolutionary action with the opening of the parliament, the consecrated constitution, and the first political parties established.

However, in the mentioned period, not only the political system but also the mentality of the period underwent a transformation. As a matter of fact, when the intellectual orientations of the intelligentsia of the period are examined, it is observed that they were influenced by the German public philosophy as well as the intellectual orientations of the French Third Republic. In addition, they wandered in an eclectic

⁶²In Turkey, from the Second Constitutional Era to the Republic, interest and scientific studies on the issue of women have intensified since the mid-1980s. For a selected bibliography on the literature produced in Turkey on this subject, see Toprak 2015; Çakır 1994; Yaraman 2001; Zılfi 2000; Bulut 1999; Durakbaşa 2000; Berktray 2003; Poyrazi 2010; Akagündüz 2012; Gökçe 2011; Kartal 2008, 215-238; Özcan Demir 1999, 107-115; Çiçek / Aydın / Yağci 2015, 269-284; Toprak 1994, 5-12.

world of thought consisting of the positivism of Auguste Comte, Islamism, Westernism, Russian Narodism, French solidarist-corporatism, Frederik List's German national economy school and Anglo-Saxon liberalism, and the synthesis of socialism with Islamic thought, albeit limited. However, they displayed a distant attitude towards liberalism and socialism, which they saw as the source of oppositional organizations.

On the other hand, the revolution also opened the door to the emergence of a libertarian socio-cultural climate. In this context, with the abolition of censorship applied to the press, many new newspapers and magazines were published, many associations and societies were established, and social mobilization was enabled through street actions such as rallies, protests, and boycotts. Through the new educational institutions opened in the aforementioned period and the educational formations whose curricula were changed, the raising of new generations that coincided with the understanding of revolutionary action and freedom was supported.

However, although the Unionists, who carried out the revolution by acting with the motto "Liberte, egalite, fraternite", set out with liberal discourses, they gave up their power of control after the March 31 Incident and the Bab-ı Ali Raid and chose to be fully competent in the administration, and they acted with authoritarian tendencies, taking confident steps towards becoming a single-party rule. In this direction, they did not hesitate to resort to methods such as acts of terrorism against opposition elements, and they made plans that went beyond their revolutionary discourse with regulations such as Law on the Tatil-i Eşgal-i Cemiyet (Ottoman Strike Union), which limited freedoms such as the right to form trade unions and the right to organize.

Despite all these anti-democratic tendencies, another issue that should be mentioned at this point is that the Unionists, who went to the Second Constitutional Revolution with a series of congresses held abroad, continued to organize these congresses after the success of the revolution. Although these congresses tried to put an end to the party-society dichotomy with the declaration of the Committee of Union and Progress as a party in 1913, this dualistic structure continued until 1918, when the Committee of Union and Progress dissolved itself. Another issue that needs to be underlined and emphasized at this stage is that the congresses, despite the party-society duality, were instrumental in expanding and internalizing the democratic practices under the umbrella of the Committee of Union and Progress. Along with all this, it should not be overlooked that in the 1916 Congress, the authority and responsibility of the chairman was increased as a result of the extraordinary conditions of the General War.

The Unionists, who realized the revolution by acting with the phobia of extinction, with the effect of increasing national reflexes and uneasiness, especially after the Balkan Wars, also undertook the leadership of the social, cultural and economic structures with the word “national” at the beginning, such as “national family”, “national education”, “national economy”, “armed nation”, and “national bourgeoisie”. In this context, they tried to shape their national goals and policies with the new legal regulations they had enacted and the different institutions and organizations they had established.

In fact, while they were taking steps towards the regulation of social life with regulations such as the Law of Family Decree of October 25, 1917, which improved the social position of women whom they saw as the basis of the national family, as well as the Law of Associations of August 16, 1909, the content of the national economic policy had been tried to be filled with initiatives such as the unilateral abolition of the capitulations on September 10, 1914, enactment of the Industry Encouragement Law, the establishment of the Tradesman Association in 1915, the transformation of the Ministry of Trade and Agriculture into the Ministry of National Economy after the Çanakkale Victory, the transition from ad valorem tariff to the specific customs tariff on September 14, 1916, and the enactment of the law envisaging Ziraat Bank to give loans to farmers in 1916. However, the structural reforms carried out in the Second Constitutional Period did not end the dualist structure that has been going on since the Tanzimat period but also deepened it with some laws and regulations. However, when viewed as a whole, it can be stated that the structural changes in question are tried to be put into practice with a secular, populist essence but on a plane that prioritizes the state. The continuation of the discussions on the same issues from the Second Constitutional Period to the present shows that the results of the change of orientation have not yet been reached and the tides that are being experienced.

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Bahar Arslan

*Procjena druge ustavne revolucije između krajnjih ciljeva i ideologije –
Razmatranja o drugom ustavnom periodu kroz hegemonijski jezik kreiran
ideološkim teorijama i konceptima*

Rezime

Iako je faza u kojoj je Osmansko Carstvo ušlo u zapadnu civilizaciju započela periodom Tanzimata, stvarna promjena mentaliteta u gore spomenutoj osovini po prirodi odgovara periodu ustavne revolucije od 23. jula 1908. U procesu tokom kojeg je zaboravljena riječ “progres” (terakki) zamijenjena riječju “opadanje” (tedenni), zapadne države, gledajući Turke kao zakupce, a ne kao vlasnike svoje domovine, otvorile su vrata perioda u kojem se Osmansko Carstvo poistovjećuje sa “istočnim pitanjem” U tim okolnostima cilj unionista, koji su došli do izražaja kao revolucionarna intelektualna grupa tog vremena, bio je riješiti pitanje Orijenta unutrašnjom revolucijom i spriječiti da ono bude vanjsko pitanje. U ovom procesu, u kojem je ustavni parlamentarni sistem zamijenjen tradicionalnim poimanjem države zasnovanom na apsolutnoj vlasti sultana, došlo je do revolucionarnog prekida u drevnoj državnoj praksi. Pojmovi kao što su savjetovanje, nacionalni suverenitet, sloboda, jednakost, bratstvo, jedinstvo elemenata i napredak, koji su nastali kao rezultat modernizacijskih težnji intelektualaca tog perioda, postali su neizostavni elementi drugog ustavnog perioda. Uoči Prvog svjetskog rata, kada je svijet bio uvučen u opšti rat podjela, ova generacija, živeći sa fobijom od “izumiranja”, “podjele” i “dezintegracije”, dodala je osovini borbe protiv kolonijalističke strane Zapada na njihovu viziju modernizacije carstva ideološkim orijentacijama koje su primili od Zapada. U ovom članku predstavljeni su ciljevi i refleksi jedne revolucionarne generacije koja je slijedila misiju “spasavanja države” pomoću “socijalnog inženjeringa” u navedenom periodu, kojim su se ideološkim praksama i sklonostima hranili, prema kojim su radije zauzeli distanciran stav, kakvu interakciju je njihovo djelovanje stvorilo u turskoj državnoj tradiciji od tog perioda, te odrazi ovih orijentacija na društveno-ekonomske jedinice se vrednuju kroz parametre perioda. Odgovorima na pitanja o prošlosti, stanju i nezavisnosti carstva kreirali su osovine promjena u kontinuitetu koji je kružio od Ustavne monarhije do Republike pa do danas. Ovaj članak je pokušaj da se dekonstruiše, doduše u ograničenoj mjeri, naslijeđe koje se prenijelo od Ustavne monarhije do danas. U tom kontekstu, opće

karakteristike koje daju osnovu članku bit će otkrivanje lijekova koje su unionisti pronašli ili nisu pronašli, koji su se svojim greškama i zaslugama pojavili kao glavni akteri ovog krhkog procesa koji se proteže od prošlosti do sadašnjosti, i njihovo prenošenje u stvarna vremena.