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SOCIAL DARWINIST REFLECTIONS IN THE SINGLE PARTY PERIOD VARLIK MAGAZINE

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Abstract

This study examines whether Varlık magazine, a leading publication during Turkey's early Republican era (1933-1945), leaned toward social Darwinism while contributing to the nation's social and intellectual transformation. Social Darwinism, a prominent Western ideology between the two world wars, influenced politics, economics, and psychology, and Turkish intellectuals, who saw Westernization as a key ideal, were likely aware of it. Varlık, founded in 1933 by Yaşar Nabi Nayır and supported by prominent thinkers, served as a platform for contemporary ideas. Through primary sources, literature reviews, and archival research, the study reveals that social Darwinism was openly debated in Varlık, making the magazine a significant medium for its dissemination. The findings suggest that Varlık not only reflected but also actively shaped the intellectual climate of the time, aligning with global trends while contributing to Turkey's foundational transformation. It is also clearly seen that the "social Darwinism" organization, which showed itself as a content that could be experienced even in the West at that time, was also active.

Keywords: Social darwinism, Varlık magazine, Single party, Eugenicism, The nature of human.

Tek Parti Dönemi Varlık Dergisinde Sosyal Darwinist Yansımalar

Öz

Bu çalışma Türkiye Cumhuriyetinin kuruluş kodlarının da inşa edildiği bir dönemde, döneminin önde gelen dergilerinden Varlık'ın 1933-1945 yılları arasındaki sayılarında zamanının toplumsal ve zihinsel dönüşüm çabalarına katkı sunmaya çalışırken sosyal Darwinizm'e yönelip yönelmediğini açıklamaktadır. Zira iki dünya savaşı arası yıllarda Batı'da sosyal Darwinizm teorik çerçevede tartışılan, politika ise uygulama alanı bulan bir yaklaşımdır. İlgili yıllarda Batı'da ontolojiden psikolojiye, ekonomiden sosyolojiye, siyaseten insana kadar pek çok alanın Darwinici bir perspektifle inşa edilmeye çalışıldığı gözlenmektedir. Bu zaman aralığında Batılılaşmayı en büyük ideal olarak gören Tek Parti dönemi aydınlarının bu yaklaşımdan habersiz olması beklenemez. İlgili düşüncenin kendine yaşam alanı bulduğu yerlerin başında Varlık Dergisi gelmektedir. Dönemin önde gelen aydınlarının yazarlık yaptığı, devletin açıktan destek verdiği dergi 1933 yılında Yaşar Nabi (Nayır) öncülüğünde yayın hayatına başlamıştır. Varlık Dergisinin 1933 ile 1945 yılları arasındaki sayıları sosyal Darwinist perspektiften, birincil kaynaklar üzerinden, literatür taraması ve arşiv araştırmasına dayalı olarak nicel bir incelemeye tabi tutulduğunda, bu yaklaşımın pek çok argümanının derginin yazarları arasında açıkça tartışıldığı, toplumu dönüştürmek için önemli bir pusula/rehber olarak görüldüğü anlaşılmaktadır. Ayrıca o dönem Batı'da bile çok fazla kullanılmayan sosyal Darwinizm kavramının Varlık Dergisinde kullanıldığı da açıkça görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal darwinizm, Varlık dergisi, Tek parti, Öjenizm, İnsanın muhtevası.

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1. Introduction

The Single Party period in Turkey was a time when the foundational principles of the Republic were shaped. This era was marked by efforts to abandon the “old” and embrace the “new,” although the definition of what was truly “new” remained debatable. Although there is a consensus that the construction of the new was inspired by the currents of ideas emerging in the West (Lewis, 1993, pp.287-358; Zürcher, 2020, pp.227-406), there is no clarity as to what exactly it is. The reason for this is both the existence of different intellectual currents in the West and the different manifestations of these currents in the One Party period. This uncertainty stems from the diversity of Western intellectual traditions and their varying interpretations in the Turkish context. The French Revolution, the Enlightenment, and modernism, as major historical ruptures, played a role in shaping thought in both the West and non-Western societies. Additionally, Social Darwinism, which emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, had a significant impact on social sciences and political ideologies, especially between the two world wars. This paradigm also resonated with the intellectual environment of the Single Party period in Turkey. The state sought to disseminate the dominant scientific ideology of the time, which was rooted in Darwinism and scientism, to broader society (Hanioglu, 2011, p.59).

The newly founded Turkish Republic set its objective as achieving “contemporary civilization,” which was closely associated with the West. However, during the interwar period, the West itself was undergoing a transformation, distancing from the ideals of liberty promoted by the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment. Instead, authoritarian regimes were gaining strength, and Social Darwinist ideas were providing a scientific framework for various political and social policies. In the words of Eric Hobsbawm, this period was the “age of catastrophes” (Hobsbawm, 1995, p.19). This was a time when authoritarian and totalitarian systems legitimized their policies by claiming to be based on science and reason. Large-scale social engineering projects, sterilization, and even eugenics-based killings were implemented. Anthropology, under the influence of Darwinism, contributed to racial classifications, and debates on racial superiority gained prominence. Social Darwinism was most prominently applied as state policy in Nazi Germany. Rooted in Darwin’s theory of evolution and the concept of natural selection (Hodgson, 2004), Social Darwinism also justified laissez-faire economics, imperialism, and racism (Hofstadter, 1962, pp.53-55). It framed human beings as biologically determined entities (Crook, 1994, p.137), and some argue that it was even among the causes of World War II (Hodgson, 2004, p.428). For these reasons, Hobsbawm labeled this period the “age of catastrophe.”

Zafer Toprak explains this situation by stating that “*in the catastrophic age of the West between the two world wars, Turkey experienced its own ‘new’, its own ‘enlightenment’*” (2022, p. 5). Varlık Magazine, which aimed to contribute to the social transformation of the era and disseminate “scientific truths,” was inevitably influenced by the Social Darwinist arguments that shaped Western intellectual discourse. At a time when the state itself promoted Darwinist perspectives through textbooks, academic studies, congresses, and conferences (Ergün, 2023), it is understandable that a magazine aligned with state ideals would reflect similar ideas. To explore this phenomenon in detail, a comparative analysis is conducted between the Social Darwinist reflections in the West during the interwar period and the original texts published in Varlık Magazine between 1933 and 1945. This research relies on archival studies and document analysis to examine the extent of Social Darwinism’s influence on the intellectual landscape of the Single Party period.

2. Method

2.1. Research Model

In this study, the document analysis method, one of the qualitative research methods, was used to examine the reflections of social Darwinist thought, the dominant paradigm in the West during the interwar period, in *Varlık*, one of the important journals of the time. Qualitative data collection methods in the social sciences offer researchers the opportunity to gain a deep understanding of social phenomena. Document analysis, one such method, aims to obtain information through the systematic examination of existing written, visual, or digital documents (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021, p. 189). Documents can be obtained from various sources, such as official reports, archive records, letters, media content, or social media posts (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). Document analysis is a qualitative research method that aims to extract meaningful data from existing documents. Merriam (2009, p. 150) defines the method as “the process of systematically examining documents related to the research topic.” In this process, documents are related to the conceptual framework of the research and interpreted in terms of themes. The aim is to reveal the meanings in the documents, understand historical processes, or evaluate the social impacts of current policies (Bowen, 2009, p. 30).

This study will first examine biological and social evolution theories, the social Darwinism approach in the literature, and the reactions to this approach in various Western countries during the interwar period. Subsequently, the journey of social Darwinism in Turkey will be briefly reviewed. Finally, the primary and original texts of the issues of *Varlık* Magazine published between 1933 and 1945, which constitute the main problem of the study, will be examined within the framework of social Darwinist arguments, and the extent to which this idea is reflected in the magazine articles will be explained. To achieve these objectives, the *Varlık* magazine, which is still in publication today, was contacted and a request was made to access its archives. The journal granted access to its archives on the condition of a one-year subscription. In this context, all issues of the journal from 1933 to 1945 were scanned. Keywords such as social Darwinism, eugenics, racial improvement, biological evolution, social evolution, biological materialism, and the struggle for life were used as the basis for this scan. Although these concepts were used as keywords, since there was no option for searching within the text, the entire texts were read, and passages containing these concepts and explanations involving the social Darwinist approach were quoted without disrupting the context of the text. *Varlık Dergisi* defines itself as a magazine published every 15 days, but some issues have been found to be published monthly. In this context, all 250 issues were scanned in the context of the relevant concepts.

2.2. Research Ethics

This study was conducted by scanning the documents of the journal during a specific period to reveal the relationship between the relevant approach and the journal. Therefore, no ethics committee approval was required. There is no situation within the study that would require ethical approval.

2.3. Finding

The article first examines how social Darwinism emerged in the West and how it was applied in different countries. According to this:

Germany was the country that most rigorously implemented social Darwinism as state policy. During the Nazi era, practices such as eugenics, sterilization, and the elimination of those deemed unfit to live were carried out systematically. England used social Darwinism primarily to legitimize imperialism; thinkers such as Malthus, Spencer, Darwin, and Galton formed the basis of this idea. The US based social Darwinism on approaches based on both racial discrimination and reducing human

nature to biology. Anti-Miscegenation Laws prohibiting interracial marriage are examples of this. France became an important center for the spread of social Darwinism with thinkers (Le Bon, Demolins, Vacher de Lapouge) who attempted to adapt the Darwinian idea of competition to education and social structure.

In the early period of the Republic, the state and intellectuals followed the modernization ideals of the West and thus encountered social Darwinist thought directly or indirectly. The state was in a position to disseminate Darwinian and scientific discourse through textbooks, conferences, and academic studies. Within this atmosphere, Varlık magazine became an important medium where social Darwinist thought was visible.

An examination of all issues of the journal between 1933 and 1945 yielded the following findings:

a) Depiction of life as a “battlefield”:

Life was frequently described in the journal as follows: Life is a necessary arena of conflict and war. As in nature, the strong survive and the weak are eliminated in society. This idea of struggle was seen as the fundamental condition for progress and advancement. This approach is identical to the social Darwinist understanding of life.

b) Reduction of the understanding of humanity to biology:

Humanity is defined not through the idea of creation, but through biological evolution. The “new human” model is depicted as a competitive, dynamic, and creative being that adapts to the harsh laws of nature. Many articles emphasize the deification of humanity, the transfer of creativity from God to humans.

c) Rejection of religion, God, and traditional morality:

Science, not religion, is taken as the source of knowledge; religion is presented as a “force that hinders progress.” It is claimed that old morality weakens humans, and a new morality based on struggle and power is proposed. This situation coincides with the aspect of social Darwinism that excludes traditional values.

d) Discussions on race, eugenics, and improvement:

Western theories on race, intelligence tests, and eugenics debates were covered in the magazine. Some articles advocated “preventing the reproduction of unhealthy individuals”; Nazi Germany's sterilization policies were cited as a positive example.

e) Explicit use of social Darwinism at the conceptual level: The journal not only contained articles defending this view in terms of content, but also explicitly used the term “social Darwinism.” Cemil Sena Ongun's articles are particularly notable in this regard.

Most of the magazine's writers distanced themselves from the social Darwinist worldview after witnessing the horrific consequences of the war. Only Cemil Sena Ongun continued to argue that the war represented “natural selection.” Names such as Yaşar Nabi, on the other hand, accepted that these ideas were “deceptive” in the face of the savagery of the war.

As a general conclusion, Varlık Magazine was one of the most visible and influential platforms for social Darwinist thought in Turkey during the period 1933–1945. The articles published in the journal clearly show that fundamental concepts such as life, humanity, knowledge, religion, and morality were reinterpreted within a social Darwinist framework. However, unlike in the West, social

Darwinist thought did not become state policy in Turkey; rather, it was influential primarily in the intellectual world of the intelligentsia.

3. Social Darwinism in the West: The Transformation of Human Conception

Social Darwinism is a school of thought that emerged from the application of Charles Darwin's theory of biological evolution to social and economic fields. This approach suggests that the principle of "survival of the fittest" in nature can be adapted to human societies. Herbert Spencer's concept of "survival of the fittest" is considered one of the cornerstones of social Darwinism (Spencer, 2004, p.51; Ergün, 2023, p.66). Social Darwinism gained popularity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but was subjected to various criticisms over time. In particular, it was criticized for being used to justify racism, imperialism and economic inequalities (Hofstadter, 1944, p.102). Social Darwinism is an approach that emerged in the West. Contributions from various thinkers from different countries have been made. Thinkers who contributed to this idea and states that implemented social Darwinist approaches as state policy constitute the subject of this heading.

Jean-Baptiste Lamarck established profound connections between humans and other living species (Doğan, 2005, p. 400), developing an approach to human origins outside of creator-centered explanations. Although he did not completely exclude God from his theory, acknowledging the existence of a Supreme Author in interspecies transitions (Lamarck, 1963, p.60), he argued that living species existed on a predetermined ladder of life (Blackledge, 2002, p.9).

Herbert Spencer, who advocated evolutionary ideas before Darwin, was extremely popular during his lifetime (Ritzer, 2011, pp.36-37) and was even considered "the greatest living philosopher" by some in the 1970s (Clark, 1984, p.39). Spencer proposed a universal "law of evolution" applicable across all domains of life, from biology to sociology (2009, pp.17-24), arguing that through natural selection, the fittest would survive (survival of the fittest) and society would trend toward continual improvement (Crook, 2007, pp.30-36). This approach would later provide the foundation for Francis Galton's concept of eugenics (racial improvement) and find application in various countries, most notably in Hitler's Germany.

The most recognized figure associated with evolutionary theory is undoubtedly Darwin. In his 1859 work "On the Origin of Species," he explained the development of plant and animal species using principles akin to laissez-faire economics (Russel, 1990, pp. 55-56). Darwin later published "The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex" in 1871, incorporating humans into the evolutionary process (Doğan, 2012, p.40).

Darwin positioned natural selection, which he defined as "a power incessantly ready for action," as the foundation of his theory (1976, pp.86-87). Influenced by Thomas Robert Malthus's population theorem, he proposed that because reproduction rates exceed food production rates, living beings exist in a perpetual struggle (1976, pp. 25-88). This approach would later form the basis for "conflict theory" in social sciences.

In "The Descent of Man," Darwin specified three objectives: to explain whether humans descended from different species, to elucidate human bio-physiological development, and to examine the significance of racial differences (Darwin, 1975, p.8). While the first two objectives reduced human ontological nature to biology, the third has been argued to provide "scientific" legitimacy to racism and imperialism (Hofstadter, 1962, pp.53-55). Darwin described the inhabitants of what he called "Tierra del Fuego" as incomplete in their evolution, barbaric, and subhuman (Darwin, 1976, pp. 89-92).

The attempt to apply natural selection theory to social sciences is termed Social Darwinism (Hodgson, 2004, p. 448). One concept evident in Social Darwinism is eugenics, introduced by Darwin's cousin Galton. Eugenics advocated accelerating natural selection through human intervention, preventing the birth of "unhealthy" fetuses while promoting the continuation of "healthy" ones. This approach, which embraced racial purity and interracial struggle, rejected the idea of natural equality among humans (Dennis, 1995, pp.246-247). This approach was implemented as state policy not only in Hitler's Germany but in many Western countries during the interwar period.

3.1. Social Darwinism in Germany: Eugenics by the State

Social Darwinism carries negative connotations primarily due to its explicit implementation as state policy in Hitler's Germany. This period witnessed the rigorous application of eugenics, variably translated into Turkish as "ırk ıslahı" (racial improvement). The architect of this implementation, Hitler, wrote "Mein Kampf" (My Struggle) in 1925 while still in the early stages of his political career, establishing the theoretical foundation for his future policies. By 1945, this work had sold 18 million copies and been translated into 18 languages (Koschorke, 2016, p. 7). In this synthesis of Darwin's natural selection and Galton's eugenic ideas, Hitler argued that products arising from two unequal species would be unhealthy, contradicting what he perceived as nature's laws, which were designed for elevation and progress (Hitler, 2007, p.254). According to Hitler, nature subjects living beings to harsh conditions solely to ensure the survival of the strong and the elimination of the weak (Hitler, 2007, p.255). This inference aligns precisely with Darwin's concept of natural selection. Unlike Darwin, however, Hitler, drawing inspiration from Darwin's cousin Galton, sought to improve the human species himself, which he viewed as acting contrary to natural selection (Hitler, 2000, pp. 311-312).

Friedrich Nietzsche was among the most influential thinkers in the propagation of Social Darwinist thought in Germany and significantly influenced Hitler. Although Nietzsche criticized Darwin (2002, pp.144), his explanation of human origins through evolution (1984, p.20), his assertion that the only reality is "will to power" (2003, pp. 220-221), and his advocacy that life's fundamental ideal is to achieve the *Übermensch* (superman) (2006, pp.89-90) positioned him among the most important Social Darwinist thinkers. Opposing moral judgments, Nietzsche argued that humans, like animals, possess a self-preservation reflex, but the primary goal is mastery, and the sole ideal is to attain self-creating humanity (2010, pp.35-36). Nietzsche's ideas profoundly influenced Hitler, who subsequently attempted to create his own society of *Übermenschen*.

Hitler implemented the ideas he theorized in "Mein Kampf" during his reign. It must be emphasized that Hitler, as widely known, killed millions of Poles and Jews whom he considered inferior races damaging to the Aryan race (Gross, 2022, p.643). However, Hitler did not harm only those of different races. He also prevented reproduction among pure German individuals who were unhealthy, had hereditary diseases, or exhibited antisocial personality traits by subjecting them to sterilization. This was not conducted randomly but within a legal and systematic framework established by the Sterilization Law of July 14, 1933. By 1939, approximately 320,000 Aryan Germans had been sterilized under this law due to relevant conditions. Moreover, Health Courts were established in 1935, authorizing the state to perform abortions up to six months on fetuses deemed "unhealthy" (Geary, 2000, p.60). Hitler, who explicitly embraced Social Darwinism (Geary, 2000, p.6), attempted to legitimize these actions to his high-ranking officials by stating that "victory belongs to the strong, death to the weak" (Heywood, 2013, p.217).

Hitler's Social Darwinist ideas did not emerge suddenly nor were they exclusive to him during that period. Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, who served as German Chancellor during and after World War I, operating within the framework of Social Darwinist ideas, declared that in a world

where natural selection functions harshly, only the most suitable would survive under the policies implemented in Germany (Herwig, 2003, p.164). Ruth Henig, noting that the German military and civil bureaucracy of the same period possessed a Social Darwinist perspective, asserts that the policies Hitler implemented were already present in the intellectual framework of this segment of society (2002, 36).

3.2. Social Darwinism in Britain: A Tool of Legitimization for Imperialism

Britain is the homeland of both biological and social Darwinist ideas. The pioneering theorists of Social Darwinism—Malthus, Darwin, Galton, and Spencer—were all British. While Darwin's and Spencer's ideas have been briefly outlined above, addressing the ideas of the other two will suffice for understanding Social Darwinism in Britain. Malthus's population theorem forms the foundation of Darwin's ideas, as Darwin was significantly influenced by this theorem while formulating his own concepts (Vorzimmer, 1969, p.527). Malthus presented this theorem in his work "An Essay on the Principle of Population." In this study, Malthus argued that since population increases geometrically while resources increase arithmetically, resources would be insufficient to sustain the population without population control, thus necessitating such control (Malthus, 1966, p.14). It would not be incorrect to state that this desire for population control led to racism based on eugenics and the emergence of authoritarian and totalitarian policies. The emergence and proliferation of the concept of eugenics occurred through Galton.

In 1883, during a period characterized by scarce resources and racial differences accepted as "scientific" truths, Galton published his work "Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development." In this work, Galton proposed eliminating "defective" individuals, ensuring the continuation of the species through healthier individuals, and accelerating the slow and natural selection process through human intervention. Galton also opposed the idea of natural equality, which he considered erroneous, advocating for the reproduction of what he believed to be a sufficient quantity of wealthy, aristocratic Anglo-Saxon class in Western society (Dennis, 1995, p.246-247). These ideas were later used for the "scientific" legitimization of racism and racial improvement in Germany, and imperialism in Britain (Ergün, 2023, pp.74-75; Galtung, 1971, p.81; Hobsbawm, 1999, p.71).

One of the most significant pieces of evidence that imperialism was an extension of Social Darwinism is the popularization of "Human Zoos" in the 1880s, where colonial powers exhibited people from colonized societies in their countries as subhuman entities (Sánchez-Gómez, 2013, p.2). Imperial states developed the custom of exhibiting authentic products from the geographies they colonized, including indigenous peoples displayed as subhuman species (Sánchez-Gómez, 2013, p.3). Britain was foremost among the countries engaged in this practice. British elites, influenced by Darwinian thought that dominated the science of the period, viewed the people of colonized countries with contempt and inferiority, reflecting this in their policies (Crook, 1994, p.8). Indeed, some thinkers with various studies on Social Darwinism, led by Jeffrey C. Brautigam, even suggest that Darwin's theory simply applied the British aristocratic societal model to the animal kingdom (Brautigam, 1990, p.115).

3.3. Social Darwinism in America: Absolute Obedience to Biological "Truths"

While eugenics was utilized as "scientific" legitimization for racial improvement in Germany and imperialism in Britain, in America it catalyzed racism and the reduction of human psycho-social nature to mere biology. Theodore Roosevelt was instrumental in elevating Social Darwinism to the highest level of state policy in America. Roosevelt, who served as the American president from 1901 to 1909, emphasized in his 1901 publication "The Strenuous Life" the necessity of teaching his society every form of struggle in the arduous battle of life where the strong prevail (Roosevelt, 1902, pp.20-

21). Nevertheless, in an interview with the Chicago Evening Post, Roosevelt claimed that wild and natural life was greatly exaggerated and suggested that it possessed a spiritual dimension. Roosevelt also accused Jack London, one of the most prominent figures in American literature at the time who introduced Social Darwinism to the literary domain, of overstating this brutality. Following these statements, Edward B. Clark, who conducted the interview, titled his article "Roosevelt on the Nature Fakirs." In response, London characterized Roosevelt as "an amateur who does not understand evolution" (Berliner, 2008, pp.52-53). This incident demonstrates that evolutionary and Social Darwinist ideas were widespread among the American upper class during that period, and individuals' perspectives on the subject provoked serious debates.

Another figure of significance in Turkish history is John Dewey. Dewey, who adapted Social Darwinism to educational sciences, was invited to Turkey in 1924 to prepare a report on national education, which subsequently shaped Turkey's national education system in the following years. Dewey's arrival in Turkey received extensive coverage in the media of that period (Ata, 2001, pp.195-196). Dewey highlighted Darwinian ideas in his 1909 publication "The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy." In this work, Dewey explicitly stated that living beings exist in a hierarchical structure due to the evolutionary process, and that European thinkers also acknowledged this (2016, pp.2-5). Dewey reflected his Darwinian thoughts on pedagogy in his work "Democracy and Education." Dewey explained the formation of human behavior through interaction with nature, elucidating this from a Darwinian perspective (Çelik & Küçükyıldırım, 2022, p.58).

One of the most distinctive features of Social Darwinism in America was its reflection in the field of psychology. Some theorists of modern psychology in America, influenced by Darwin, explained the human psyche by centering evolutionary biology. During the interwar period in America, humans were described as "puppets shaken by biological strings," and it was proposed that humans, like their animal ancestors, display aggression due to brain chemicals as part of their nature (Crook, 1994, pp.137-139). Henry Rutgers Marshall, one of the pioneers of evolutionary psychology in America, in his 1916 work "War and the Ideal of Peace," depicted humans as "fighting animals," suggesting this was a requirement of evolutionary biology (Marshall, 1916, pp.95-96).

One of the most significant indicators of Social Darwinist thought, which permeated both social sciences and societal domains in America, was the prohibition of interracial marriage. The Anti-Miscegenation Laws, which were enacted in 1861 and implemented until their invalidation by the United States Supreme Court in 1967, stand as one of the most important pieces of evidence that social life was shaped through Social Darwinism. According to these laws, which were implemented in 14 American states, the white race was prohibited from marrying other races, and various monetary and imprisonment penalties were prescribed for such occurrences (Barnett, 1964, pp.95-96).

3.4. Social Darwinism in France: Anglo-Saxon Cultural Envy

Social Darwinism arguably gained popularity in France with Edmond Demolins' 1887 publication "A Quoi La Superiorite Des Anglo-Saxons" (The Causes of Anglo-Saxon Superiority). In this work, Demolins synthesized Social Darwinism with the individualist school of thought. The book reached twenty-six editions and sold fifty thousand copies during that period (Clark, 1984, p.130). Demolins' objective was to adapt the contemporary popular approach of Social Darwinism to the French educational system, as he believed Anglo-Saxons had developed a superior society through this approach (Demolins, 1899, p.1; Demolins, 2016, p 9). Criticizing the French educational system for being designed merely to produce civil servants for the state, Demolins advocated for a system that would prepare young people for the "struggle for life" (Demolins, 1899, pp.15, 21). He believed that success could be achieved by transferring the discourse of "struggle for existence" and "self-help" that

he considered predominant in the British educational system to the French educational system (Demolins, 1899, p.78).

Undoubtedly, the most significant figure who facilitated the dissemination of Social Darwinism to broader audiences in France was Gustave Le Bon. With his elitist and Social Darwinist ideas, Le Bon influenced not only France but also various other countries, particularly Turkey (Ülken, 2005, p.250). Le Bon first clearly articulated his Social Darwinist ideas in his 1881 publication "L'Homme et les Sociétés" (Man and Society). He continued to vigorously defend the Social Darwinist approach in his subsequent works, especially in his 1898 anti-socialist publication "Psychologie du Socialisme" (The Psychology of Socialism). Le Bon explicitly argued that for natural selection to occur, the state should not intervene in society through social security policies (Clark, 1984, p.134). According to Le Bon, nature, the source of life, shows no tolerance toward the weak, eliminates them, and permits the existence of the strong. Believing that intelligence, resulting from skull structure and brain chemicals, is the greatest indicator of this, Le Bon suggested that the state should cease protecting the weak through social policies (2001, pp.239-242). Le Bon maintained that even if one party in any war were completely annihilated, the state of war would never end due to the inherent structure of life (2001, p.242). This approach was not unique to Le Bon during that period. Many thinkers across different countries were observed defining life as a field of war/struggle.

Georges Vacher de Lapouge, who made significant contributions to the emergence of anthropology both in France and generally, sought ways to achieve superiority in his 1899 publication "L'Aryen Son Role Social" (The Social Role of the Aryan). Defining life as a field of war and struggle, Vacher de Lapouge portrayed humans as a class of mammals with no right other than to fight, and posited a strong relationship between skull structure and intelligence. Like Spencer and Le Bon, Vacher de Lapouge opposed supporting the weak through state intervention and argued that the primary duty of the state was to ensure the continuity of the strong (Hecht, 2000, pp.287-289; Toprak, 2012, p.18; Vacher de Lapouge, 1899, pp.369-411).

The earliest examples of intelligence or IQ (Intelligence Quotient) tests, designed to reveal differences between races, emerged in France. The first practical intelligence test, conducted in 1905 by two Frenchmen, Alfred Binet and Theophile Simon, aimed to demonstrate the effect of hereditary structure on intelligence. These tests, resulting from admiration of Anglo-Saxons followed by a superiority complex, were used as a "scientific" means of legitimization for claims of racial dominance (Dennis, 1995, pp.246-248).

4. Varlık's Conception of Being: Intellectuals in Search of the Self

It was entirely natural for Social Darwinism to find resonance in newly established Turkey, as it did in Western countries, and for its reflections to appear in Varlık, one of the important journals of the period. The entire writing staff of Varlık Journal was known for embracing the modernization (Westernization) ideal that constituted the new state's objective. Given that the state's inclination at that time favored the Darwinian approach, which was the scientific language of the period (Hanioğlu, 2011, p.59), it is understandable that the journal's contributors would demonstrate a similar tendency in their writings.

Varlık Journal, which began publication in 1933 under the leadership of Yaşar Nabi (Nayır) and continues to this day, was one of the significant and influential journals between 1933 and 1945 in which prominent intellectuals of the period published various articles. The definitive and sharp conviction in the journal that the "old" was negative had a profound impact on the vigorous defense of the new. This was because, on the principle that nature abhors a vacuum, a "new" had to be constructed. In this sense, the new state and its intellectuals, who had turned their faces toward the

West, embraced the contemporary Western debates and acceptances as their own and attempted to construct their societies accordingly. The articles published in Varlık Journal between 1933 and 1945, which played a crucial role in this construction process, will be examined through a Social Darwinist perspective and evaluated through the conceptualizations of notions such as life, human, knowledge, religion, god, and morality. This is because the transformation of conceptual content indicates the transformation of mentality, which is an important indicator of the extent to which this permeates social life. Additionally, references prior to the Surname Law (1935) will be made using first names, while subsequent references will use surnames.

4.1. Life: A Field of Forced Strife

The first article in the inaugural issue of Varlık Journal, authored by Yaşar Nabi under the title "Youth and Denial," discusses an unending struggle in all domains of life from past to present. This struggle is presented as a consequence of nature and the jealousy, malice, and ambition that nature has instilled in humans. According to Yaşar Nabi, life itself consists merely of a "struggle to live and die" (1933a, p. 2). In another article, Yaşar Nabi views struggle as the most important instrument of progress and evolution, believing that without struggle in life, indolence and lethargy would emerge (1933b, p. 3). Thinking similarly to Spencer, the author argues in yet another article that there exists an indisputable law of evolution within life, through which transformation/elevation can only be realized (Nayır, 1940, p. 545).

The idea of elevation within the laws of evolution/development was so prevalent during that period that Mehmet Saffet asserted poetry could not be written without understanding the laws of life's evolution (1933b, pp. 15-17). The Darwinian perception of nature was so dominant in the conceptualization of life that Cemil Sena (Ongun) believed that if this approach were not understood and life constructed accordingly, merciless nature would eventually crush all creatures. To ensure this, the establishment of numerous schools and the education of people within this framework were suggested, enabling the new human model to exist in social life in accordance with the laws of nature (Cemil Sena, 1933a, p.51). This was because, according to Yaşar Nabi, while the "old human" was lethargic and indolent, characteristics inherent to the East, the "new human" was a dynamic living being reconciled with nature's destructive and cleansing forces (1933b, p.3).

Destruction and war, which brought about destruction, were so exalted that Cemil Sena, in his article titled "Fragments of Thought," argued that wars prevented life from deteriorating further. Cemil Sena, who proposed that humans were creative deities, believed that attaining Nietzsche's Übermensch required taking control of all nature (1933b, p.146). Cemil Sena (Ongun) did not advocate this approach unconsciously. In one article, he explicitly discussed Social Darwinism, stating that the lever that propelled nations was in the hands of superior individuals, and that many heads of state embraced this idea, which he explicitly identified as Social Darwinism (Ongun, 1940a, p.307). In another article, Ongun went even further, openly expressing that they attributed great importance to the idea of Social Darwinism, that they endorsed all forms of war because they found explanations for morality and justice within it, and that they considered it legitimate for the evolution of human life (Ongun, 1941, p.73). While Social Darwinism was the dominant paradigm in the West during that period in terms of content, the terms themselves were not highly popular; Ongun's use of the concept and detailed elaboration of its content demonstrates the familiarity with this concept during that period (Ergün, 2022, p.25). In other words, it would not be incorrect to state that those who advocated the fundamental arguments of Social Darwinism in Varlık Journal were aware of what their efforts corresponded to conceptually.

The writers of Varlık Journal rejected the idea of teleological/purposive creation in their interpretation of life, attempting instead to define it through the laws of nature and the wild. Thus, it was emphasized that Darwinian natural selection operated within social life as well, making strength a necessity of life. Therefore, Muzaffer Reşit (1936, p.6) stated: "Nature is unconscious, cruel... it kills weak and frail capacities." Cemil Sena, who shared Muzaffer Reşit's perspective, provided examples similar to those given by Spencer, Darwin, Malthus, and Le Bon, suggesting that natural selection in life ensured the elimination of the weak. Otherwise, he argued, there would be no food or living space left in life, and the world would become uninhabitable, filled with fools and unconscious herds of humans (Cemil Sena, 1934a, p.42).

Social Darwinist arguments were so dominant in the conceptualization of life in the writings of Varlık Journal during the relevant period that basic human values were abandoned for this approach. A conception of life was explicitly described where the strong were right, not the right being strong (Cemil Sena, 1935a, p.232). The meaning of life was sought in the ideas of Lamarck, Darwin, and many founders of evolutionary approaches, with references to these individuals, and war was defined as the most sacred and valuable phenomenon within life. Some writings went so far as to define war as nature's most sublime art (Ongun, 1940b, pp.219-220).

In a process where life was being reinterpreted, it is quite difficult to say that the writers of Varlık Journal, who assigned themselves a duty in this matter, were in agreement about how to accomplish this. While the authors concurred on the abandonment of the old, it must be said that they were confused about the new. Although they expressed similar views regarding the laws of evolution and life as a field of struggle, it must be acknowledged that they were in a state of searching. Ahmet Karahasan, who incorporated Cemil Sena Ongun's 1934 book "The Evolution of the Idea of God" into his article, stated that in this work, the idea of God was removed from the metaphysical and mystical realm and made a subject of science. Therefore, he proposed that the creator was no longer included in the hypothesis of the new conception of life (Karahasan, 1936, pp.91-92).

4.2. Human The Ideal of Reaching the Superhuman

In an intellectual framework where life's meaning is constructed upon the notions of struggle/conflict/war from a Social Darwinist perspective, humans are necessarily assigned a combative role. In the journal's early issues, Yaşar Nabi, while criticizing the old as indolent and lethargic, maintained that "new Turkey" possessed the ideal of attaining the *Übermensch* (borrowed from Nietzsche)—a combative and dynamic being. Yaşar Nabi believed that this process had commenced with the new reforms, and that racial selection/improvement would be achieved in accordance with evolution (1933c, p.3). According to Yaşar Nabi, the new Republic had begun to dismantle "the numbing effect of Islamic mysticism," and through new reforms, individuals had begun to take "creative power" into their hands (1933d, p. 129). Yaşar Nabi explicitly defined humans not as volitional beings but rather—like Darwin and his followers—as creatures living "under the dominion of superior natural forces" (1935, p.1). This definition can be interpreted as a search for meaning between "puppets shaken by biological strings" and the self-creating "superman" described in various Western countries. When viewed holistically, this approach appears to define humans as simultaneously powerful enough to seize creative force yet impotent enough to lack any world or will beyond biological limitations.

Reşat Şemsettin, advocating that all domains of life should be constructed based on evolutionary laws, considered it essential in his article "Fundamental Differences Between the New and Old School" that the new national education curriculum be prepared accordingly (1933, p.35). In particular, he proposed that humans reconstructed through new national education curricula should be

raised to understand natural power, seize the opportunity for struggle, and win the battle of life (Reşat Şemsettin, 1933, p.36). According to him, while the old school was based on a conception of life founded on the idea of a creator, the new school was based on "modern science"; the old human had faith, while the new human prepared for life's struggle through doubt (Reşat Şemsettin, 1933, pp. 35-36). According to this view, the new human of the new state is a living being who doubts rather than believes, who accepts science rather than the idea of a creator, who struggles rather than resigns. Like Reşat Şemsettin, Ahmet Cemil also asserted that humans were living beings formed through biological evolution. According to him, the human (Cemil, 1938, p.616) is: "a creature that has taken its present form after hundreds, thousands of transformations and hybridizations following other vitalities resulting from millions of transformations and hybridizations of the first being, whose origin, traces, and fossils we cannot know."

In 1934, Osman Halit authored an article in Varlık Journal titled "The Science of Temperaments: Characterology." Analyzing the character structure of the human species, Osman Halit believed there was no such definition as "humanity," that there were only individual humans, and he accepted as truth Spencer's approach of "evolutionary law" which he proposed existed in all domains of life. Osman Halit viewed concepts presented as human virtues, primarily family, morality, happiness, and virtue, as "stereotypical" and did not consider it correct to construct a life based on them. Accepting the fundamental approach of Social Darwinism, Osman Halit advocated constructing a social life in accordance with "natural" laws accepted to exist in nature (Osman Halit, 1934, p.179). Precisely in line with Social Darwinism, Osman Halit argued that to determine a person's character, one must evaluate them in a laboratory, and that it was possible to "scientifically" reconstruct humans with the help of "psychophysical" laws that he believed existed. Defining life as a field of struggle, Osman Halit exalted the emotion of ambition as he believed it was shaped within the evolutionary process and was the most important faculty keeping humans alive. Viewing evolutionary theory as absolute truth for understanding life, Osman Halit proposed constructing an education and life system appropriate to the biological structure he believed existed in nature and human nature for human evolution (Osman Halit, 1934, p.180).

While some believed humans should live in accordance with their biology, they were also expected to seize divine power. More precisely, humans, whose ontological nature was explained by reducing them to their biology, were asked to abandon the creational approach. This new human was expected to seize creative power. On this matter, Cemil Sena told the new human, "By transcending yourself, you shall measure yourself against God!" and suggested, "You must be a creative being, a God!" (1934b, p.90). In another article, Cemil Sena went even further, suggesting that he pitied prophets, that they had deviated to incorrect ideas, suffered unnecessarily, and missed the opportunity to become gods (Cemil Sena, 1935b, p.176). Haşim Nezihi, who thought like Cemil Sena, defined humans in a world where the old was completely destroyed and the new was being constructed in his article "The New Man" (193, p.168): "expects nothing from shadows, because he has brought down God and the universal will from the heavens and placed them in his head and arms."

The issue of human deification is so prevalent among many Varlık Journal writers that this emphasis is consistently observed. Cevdet Kudret Sol, who thought like Cemil Sena and Haşim Nezihi, took this further in his article "Creating" (1936, p.9): "There is only one creative force on earth: The human mind... To understand what everything is without knowing anything is to recreate it. Humans have done precisely this. Humans are God."

While humans, liberated from their god, were expected to seize creative power, they were simultaneously expected to submit to the laws shaped by nature through evolution. This situation was explicitly expressed in the article "Nature's Lesson," translated by Hayri Rüştü Akyürek from Georges

Herbert. According to this article, humans cannot do anything beyond nature. Humans are limited by nature, and recent efforts to transcend nature will be futile. The comfort brought by civilization has caused humans to lose strength. Nature, like a conscious being, thwarts human efforts to transcend it. The individual must obey the laws of nature and their own nature (Herbert, 1937, p.341).

In the examined issues of Varlık Journal, it is observed that the ontological nature of humans is defined by reducing them to biology, that God is removed from the hypothesis, and that divinity is explicitly attributed to nature. Nature is defined as the creator of all living beings, including humans. It is asserted that nature accomplished this through natural selection and evolution (evolutionary) processes, and it is emphasized that the most evolved living being of this process is the human. As for why humans acquired this status, it is claimed that it is due to their insatiable desire to fight. Because humans have been in constant war with matter, animals, themselves, and even god, they have been able to achieve the highest level of evolution (Ongun, 1942, p.23; Osman Halit, 1934, p.179; Reşat Şemsettin, 1993, pp. 35-36).

The idea that the definition of humans by reducing them to their biology should not only explain their ontological nature but also find correspondence in their social life was extensively treated in the relevant issues of the Journal. In the article "Theories on Races and Racism," translated by Muzaffer Reşit from Julian Huxley, it is emphasized that the evolutionary approach was further "scientifically" reinforced with the emergence of the concept of race. It is proposed that humans, having achieved differentiation from other animal races through their biological history, offer a "scientific" method for resolving national and political issues. It was suggested that this could be done under the leadership of the League of Nations and with the financial support of the Rockefeller Foundation (Huxley, 1936, p.56).

The issue of eugenics, one of the dominant approaches in the West during the two world wars, also appears on the agenda of some Journal writers. In the article "Civilized Society and Nervous Crisis," translated by Nasuhi Baydar from Alexis Carre, it is claimed that civilized societies, particularly America, lead to the deterioration and corruption of races by the mentally ill and criminals. To prevent this, it is argued that a system where natural selection would occur in social life should be established (Care, 1937, pp.73-74). İhsan Şükrü Aksel, who addressed the issue of eugenics in his article "Modern Racial Hygiene," suggested that "unhealthy" individuals should not have children. Thinking that harsh measures should be taken on this matter, Aksel cited Nazi Germany as an example and argued that sterilization policies would be effective (1937, p.471).

4.3. Knowledge: A Tool for the Construction of the “New”

In a period when life, humanity, and numerous social concepts were undergoing dramatic transformation, it would be inappropriate to expect the nature of knowledge to remain unchanged. Indeed, one must acknowledge that the pioneering role in the transformation of these concepts was the change in the nature of knowledge itself. This is because the conception of what knowledge is and how it should be obtained would determine its impact on the conceptual world. In Varlık Journal, it is evident that the thought presented as knowledge and science was constructed upon evolution, positivism, and materialism in accordance with the Social Darwinist paradigm. In his article "Scientific Thinking," Niyazi Hüsni expressed that evolutionary approaches, particularly positivism and materialism, had not received sufficient esteem, and that religious figures resisted these approaches with mystical and erroneous knowledge, comparing such people to "spiders that have woven webs and are waiting in ambush for their prey." Believing that science differed from "religious dogmas," Niyazi Hüsni defined humans as "animals whose predispositions are difficult to change" and complained that their rational aspects might occasionally be disrupted (1933, p.133).

Suphi Nuri (1933), who believed that the most important element in the transformation of knowledge for Turkey was secularism, thought in his article "The Second Decade of the Republic" that an "error" that had persisted since Prophet Muhammad had been corrected by the "Great Gazi." For him, Islam was a significant error and an impediment to acquiring genuine knowledge. Suphi Nuri attributed vital importance to the establishment of new schools that would disseminate new knowledge to rectify this situation (Suphi Nuri, 1933, pp.134-135).

Cemil Sena, who shared Suphi Nuri's perspective, believed that the Christian world had crucified its god and was seeking new gods, and through these pursuits, they had discovered science. According to him, the unfortunate Muslims remained weak because they placed God at the center as the criterion of knowledge in the interpretation of the universe. Opposing this situation, Cemil Sena proposed constructing a new religion valid in this world for Muslims with modern science. He believed that the Republican reforms were the fundamental elements of this new religion (Cemil Sena, 1934c, p.7).

In his translation of Aldous Huxley's "Science and Religion," Ferzan Arif Aras considered that in a world without science, human admiration for the superhuman created religion. It was asserted that this still continued in some segments, but that science had replaced it, that this was not possible with this new method of knowledge, and that science itself had replaced religion (Huxley, 1936, p.5). Muammer Necip Arda, who thought like Huxley on this matter, claimed in his article "To Live" that the religions to which humans had clung for centuries as truth were "merely dim fantasies," that the creative human had emerged with new scientific methods, and that "these new non-religious individuals emerged as the religious figures of new knowledge" (1938, p.109). As the nature of knowledge changed in the relevant issues of Varlık Journal, intense attacks against the religious and those derived from it were observed. Beyond rejecting the religious with new methods of acquiring knowledge, it is evident that numerous pejorative terms were used against it (Cemil Sena, 1934, p.12):

"Despite our minuteness in this vast universe, we want to resemble God, whom we presume to be even greater and absolute; we want to measure ourselves against God, in short, we want to be God! Those who cannot find a channel for the flow of will and freedom in the field of work turn their eyes to the other world and ultimately to God. Thus, they imagine they will obtain in an invisible, unknown world the things they could not win in this world of stones and soil. Their renunciation is from impotence, and their submission and resignation are from being captivated by a hope superior to fantasy and reality."

It is observed that the change in the method of obtaining knowledge first led to a differentiation in the conception of life and human, and then to an intense attack against everything religious. It must be noted that the efforts to measure up to religion and its owner, God, caused a change in the nature of morality derived from it. First, the nature of knowledge changed, and previous methods of acquiring knowledge were rejected. Subsequently, the nature of life and the human, who is the bearer of knowledge, changed, and finally, intense attacks were made on the concepts of religion and god. Ultimately, morality derived from religion was disparaged, and there was an attempt to construct a moral understanding in accordance with the Social Darwinist paradigm (Cemil Sena, 1934d, p. 23):

"Every emotion that kills personality in humans is accursed. Ideas that do the same must also be cursed. It is for this reason that moral principles derived from religion and tradition prevent our genuine freedom and development. As many have seen, it is necessary to hate, in proportion to its sanctity, every idea that restrains human will that has become conviction, faith, and principle.

Religion gives us despair; and old morality paralyzes us. The inauspicious minds that think no novelty remains under the sun have long since decayed. Many thought they had triumphed over these negative forces with fine arts. The more triumphant human, however, is the one who brings a new morality, a new religion to society starting from themselves, that is, the person who overturns values."

A new religion and morality are explicitly proposed because new knowledge has changed the nature of life. It is suggested that those who believe in the old religion and its morality have no place in the new life, and therefore, religious and moral principles compatible with the idea that survival is essential, which is the basic dynamic of the Social Darwinist argument, are proposed (Ongun, 1938, p.150):

"Nearly all prophets and philosophers have shown various ways for humans, who perish after a sorrowful struggle, to be a little happier; they have proposed a set of rules that are as ridiculous as they are incompatible with reality. The only point on which they agree: consists of ensuring human happiness. But the means they used, the principles they established are so contradictory to each other that when one observes and analyzes all of them from a bird's-eye view, one very well understands to what deceptive illusions poor humans have attached themselves. Theoretical thoughts and the necessities of practical life are so incompatible with one another that some thinkers who are aware of this have ultimately fallen into immoralism.

Today, just as political morality between nations has failed, conscience and notions of honor that regulate relations between individuals also appear to have collapsed... And relations with our interlocutors have adopted a mean and sordid guise that does not sacrifice from our personal interests and does not rely on any unrequited kindness, and since most of those who succeed in life are liars, hypocrites, thieves, greedy, appearing different, shameless... and most of those who are defeated in the general survival struggle are those who obey the philosophical or dogmatic commands of morality... It is certain that a young person who believes in theoretical or religious moral principles will find themselves in the position of a fool or an idiot in the society in which they will live tomorrow."

The change in the nature of knowledge has created such a significant impact that many areas, from the meaning of life to the ontological reality of humans, from the position of religion and god to the nature of morality, have been affected by it. While the old is demolished with great enthusiasm, it is evident that the Social Darwinist arguments, which were the dominant paradigm in the same period, are explicitly used for what will replace it.

Results, Discussion, and Recommendations

In the interwar period, it is evident that Social Darwinism found various applications in different Western countries, permeated the scientific domain, and infiltrated state policies. Although applications varied across countries, a common intellectual paradigm emerged that viewed life as a field of struggle and war, defined humans by reducing them to their biology, and posited that humans were in a continuous struggle/war for survival, with those who lost being eliminated. It is also observed that the content of knowledge was constructed in accordance with the evolutionary paradigm, leading to attempts to reinvent religion and the morality derived from it. During this process, many intellectuals of the newly established Turkish Republic sought to construct the intellectual and social spheres with this paradigm. In this context, it is analyzed that the writers of Varlık, one of the significant journals of the period, shared this perspective and intensively treated these ideas in the journal leading up to the Second World War.

The Second World War created a major intellectual rupture both in the West and in Turkey. The cost of a conception of human and life based on Social Darwinism was understood, and consequently, this thought was either abandoned or approached with distance. This situation

manifestly reveals itself in Varlık Journal as well. Many thinkers who explicitly advocated this idea before the Second World War authored writings emphasizing the essentiality of abandoning these ideas in the face of the war's horror. Yaşar Nabi, who had defined life as the natural domain of struggle and war, distanced himself from the idea of war/struggle upon witnessing the horrific state of the theoretically imported war when the Second World War erupted and thought they had been "deceived" (1939, pp. 129-130). He confessed that they understood what glorifying war and power had cost humanity and became convinced that the disappearance of morality meant the disappearance of society (Nayır, 1942, pp. 505). However, until this historical rupture, it is observed that Yaşar Nabi and other Varlık Journal writers persistently continued to advocate the Social Darwinist paradigm.

It is possible to make the following generalization for the articles in Varlık Journal: While writings up to the Second World War were intensively embellished with Social Darwinist approaches, it is observed that these ideas were distanced after the horror experienced following the outbreak of the War. There is only one exception to this, and that is Cemil Sena Ongun. Ongun was pleased when the War erupted because the Social Darwinist theory found a domain to realize itself and selection occurred. According to Ongun, this war was a great opportunity for the realization of the Social Darwinist principles he advocated and for both individual and social selection to occur (Ongun, 1941, p. 73; Ongun, 1942, p. 23). However, writers other than Ongun acknowledged that Social Darwinist ideas were wrong in the face of the horror created by the war.

In Varlık Journal, which regarded social change as its mission, the idea of Social Darwinism, the dominant paradigm of the period, was intensively treated between 1933 and 1945. In many writings based on the preconception that the old was bad, the paradigm presented as new was based directly or indirectly on Social Darwinism. Through this paradigm, issues such as the nature of knowledge, the ontological reality of humans, and the meaning of life were attempted to be reinterpreted. Additionally, religion and god were presented as matters to be eliminated, a view shared by almost all writers. It is clearly observed that in place of these, a morality and religion based on power and struggle were proposed, and divinity was intended to be given to nature and to humans who were claimed to have been created by nature. This situation offers a new perspective for those who will study the Single-Party period.

Comparing the debates on social Darwinism in the West with those in Varlık Magazine is quite important for a better understanding of the study. First, it is understood that the theory of biological evolution was widely accepted in the relevant issues of Varlık Magazine. Second, the practices in the West are also recommended by the authors of Varlık Magazine for the new Turkey. Thirdly, as in the West, it is seen that many authors in Varlık Magazine, particularly Cemil Sena Ongun, understood and defended social Darwinism in terms of content. However, as far as can be understood from the articles in Varlık Magazine, social Darwinism, which was adapted to social and political policies in the West, did not become state policy.

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