

GENESIS OF TURKISH NATIONALISM

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As a political thought, nationalism was introduced to the Ottoman Turks and gained acceptance much latter than it did among the Ottoman non-Muslim nationalities. Turkish nationalism was the last link of the Ottoman Empire's reconstruction and Westernization movement chains. When the Ottoman Empire was trying to modernize its institutions, at the same time, it was trying to protect its unity. Pan-Ottomanism and pan-Islamism were, respectively, the Empire's political initiatives designed to maintain unity. Pan-Ottomanism was weakened by pan-Islamism, then, pan-Ottomanism entirely disappeared during the Balkan Wars.

Turkish nationalist thought developed as a part of modernization and Westernization ideologies, then, it became an independent political ideology. Until the Balkan Wars, nationalist thought was very weak among the Turkish intelligentsia, and it was not clearly defended. In those years, there were few publications about Turkish nationalism. The most famous Turkish nationalist, Ziya Gökalp produced his important works after 1911. Yusuf Akçura's article, "Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset," which was published in an infamous newspaper in Cairo in 1904, was republished and gained publicity after 1911.

MODERNIZATION AND WESTERNIZATION IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Ottoman Empire examined numerous reconstruction plans, but the results were not good enough to stop the Empire's decline. In the Ottoman Empire, renovations were introduced from the top, unlike in Europe, where reforms were demanded from the bottom. In the Ottoman Empire almost every reform aimed to strengthen the army but as was customary, the army rebelled against the reforms.

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When the Ottoman self-recovery reforms failed, the Empire turned its face to the West to apply advanced Western military and economic reforms at home. The foreigners, who visited or lived in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish students, who studied in the West pioneered the introduction of Western thoughts and institutions in the Empire. Already, Christian Ottomans had a variety of transactions with the West, and they were consolidating Western values one way or another.

The reluctance among Muslims to learn a Western language prevented them from actively engaging with the West. The Muslims discredited the learning of foreign languages. The Imperial Translation Office was one of the primary channels of transaction with the West. Until the 1821 Greek Revolution, all of the Imperial interpreters were Greek Ottomans. In 1821, the Imperial Translation Office reformed as the Sublime Porte Translation Office and the Muslims started to serve in this office. When the Greeks were removed from their posts in this office, the government could not find civil servants who had knowledge of Western languages. In the 1840s, there were barely a dozen educated Turks with a competent knowledge of a Western language and some reading in Western books¹. Some Turkish elites learned Western languages in secret. Even Ahmet Cevdet Pasha learned French in secret to escape from public criticism. The Ottoman government first aimed to offer a translation job to the highly respected historian Şanizade Efendi, who knew some Western languages very well, but later the government changed its mind. Offering him this type of position would denigrate him, and there was no doubt that he would reject it. A converted Muslim—Yahya Naci Efendi—and after him another converted Muslim—Başhoca İshak Efendi—were appointed to this position. İshak Efendi, who knew more than five languages perfectly and taught mathematics and physics at the Military Engineering School, trained the Muslim youths in Western languages. The distinguished families of Istanbul competed with each other to send their children to this school. Interestingly, almost all of the last Ottoman Sadrazams including the architect of Tanzimat, Mustafa Reşid Pasha, and many more Western minded sadrazams, such as Ali Pasha, Safvet Pasha, Mütercim Rüşdi Pasha, Fuad Pasha, and Vefik Pasha all began their careers

¹ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Oxford University Press, London, New York, Toronto, 1965 p. 86.

in the Translation Office. An important number of Turkish intelligentsia came of age in this institution.

In the eighteenth century, the Ottoman Empire began to send temporary Ambassadors to European capitals to learn about European political and economic structure. Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi was the first Ottoman temporary Ambassador, who was sent to Paris in 1720. In 1794, the Ottoman Empire began to send permanent Ambassadors to the European capitals. The establishment of the Turkish embassies in the European countries increased political transactions between the Ottoman Empire and Europe and helped the presence of Western thought in the Empire. In 1827, for the first time the Ottoman Empire sent four students abroad, to Paris, and others followed later². The students, who studied in Europe opened another channel for the Turks' understanding of the West.

THE OTTOMAN INTELLIGENTSIA AND MODERN EDUCATION

Nationalism was not a pure ideology for the Turks in the Ottoman Empire. Modernization, Westernization, and even pan-Ottomanism and pan-Islamism had some sort of nationalistic feeling and character. Modernization and Westernization aimed to create a new type of society, shaping it with scientific and logical values, discarding stagnated traditional social institutions that were deemed to be backward. Pan-Ottomanism aimed to keep the Ottoman society united under the rubric of Ottoman citizenship. Pan-Islamism aimed to unify all the Muslims against the danger of the West. In both these ideologies, the Turks were supposed to have a main role in the organization of both Ottoman and Islamic societies. The ethnic Turks were most interested in the establishment of the Ottoman society, and they would benefit more than any other ethnicity in the formation of the Ottoman society, and, again, the ethnic Turks would play a main role in the establishment of united Islamic society since they possessed almost the only surviving relatively strong Islamic state.

The Ottoman Empire's modernization and Westernization initiatives scientifically and ideologically affected the Turkish intellectuals. The effect of the West on the Turkish language, on the Turkish literature and on the Turkish ideological life was revolutionary. Western types of literature and purification of the Turkish language gave avenues for the Turkish language.

² Lewis, p.82.

Interestingly, nationalism was the weakest influence of the West in the Turkish-Ottoman society. However, nationalism was the pivotal Western ideology, and already the Ottoman minorities adapted nationalism. The Turks reached nationalism very late. Positivism was championed as widely accepted Western thought in the Ottoman political groups.

The establishment of modern schools helped the formation of Turkish intelligentsia and resulted in the influence of some Western political thought, including nationalism, into the Ottoman society. Parallel to the Ottoman governmental reform priorities in the army, the first modern schools were military in nature. In 1734, Hendesehane, a school of geometry and engineering, was opened. In 1773, Mühendishane-i Bahri-i Hümayun, the naval engineering school, was opened, and Mühendishane-i Berri-i Hümayun, the military engineering school followed it in 1793.

For the first time, modern secondary and elementary schools were opened during the reign of Mahmud II, when he opened some higher educational schools. In 1838, one year before the Tanzimat, elementary Rüşdiyes were opened. During the Tanzimat era, the number of modern primary and secondary schools, Sibyan and Rüşdiyes, were increased. During the Tanzimat, separate male and female teachers' schools were opened almost in every Eyalet center and in some Sanjaks. Sultan Mahmud II opened Mekteb-i Ulum-i Harbiye, the School of Military Sciences, and Muzika-i Hümayun, the Imperial Music School. In 1827, Mahmud II opened Tibbiye-i Şahane, the Medical School. In 1838, Tibbiye was moved into its new building. At the opening ceremony of the new building, the Sultan addressed the students: "You will study scientific medicine in French. My purpose in having you taught French is not to educate you in the French language; it is to teach you scientific medicine and little by little to take it into our language."³

A variety of modern schools was continuously opened during the Islahat era and especially during the Abdulhamit II reign. Abdulhamit II opened the schools in every part of the Empire. Now the people, who lived in small towns had a chance for education. Abdulhamit II even proposed to educate nomadic Kurdish children by forming traveling schools, whose teachers would meet with their pupils on the plateaus of eastern Turkey, where the

³ Lewis, p.83.

nomadic Kurds lived. Interestingly, almost a large number of Abdulhamit's political opponents graduated from the schools, which were opened by the Sultan himself. Now, intellectual and political personalities were not just from Istanbul or from the big cities. Many influential intellectuals, who were educated in Hamidian schools, were coming from small towns. For example—Ziya Gökalp from Diyarbakır and Abdullah Cevdet from Arapgir.

Before the inauguration of Darü'l-Fünun, the University of Istanbul, in August 1900, some college-level schools were opened, and when the University was formed, instructors from these schools became faculty in the University. Darü'l-Fünun was the first university opened in the Islamic world. In 1859, Mülkiye, the School of Public Administration, was opened, followed by Schools of Finance and Law in 1878, Fine Arts in 1879, Commerce in 1882, Civil Engineering in 1884, Veterinary Science in 1889, Police in 1891, Customs in 1892, and a new improved Istanbul Medical School in 1898.

THE LANGUAGE, THE OTTOMAN PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

As is the case in almost every nationalist effort, Turkish nationalism first aimed to create a language to achieve unity. In this sense, folk language and colloquial languages were chosen to form the national languages. Turkish nationalism also, naturally, followed the same path, trying to create a pure Turkish from the Arabic and Persian languages' influence.

Interestingly, until Tanzimat there was not a language called "Osmanlıca." This term, which identified the Turkish language, was a product of pan-Ottomanist Tanzimat intellectuals. Naturally, pan-Ottomanists, who tried to build up an Ottoman society with all races, religions, and languages existing in the Empire, needed to identify the language, giving credit to no ethnic group. The Turkish language was used among the masses—not only Turks but also a significant number of minorities, who lived in the sea of ethnic Turks. Members of these minorities also spoke Turkish, and an important number of these minorities did not know any other language than Turkish.

The beginning of the Turkish language's mixture with Arabic and Farsi began one millennium before, when the Turks converted to Islam. Soon after the beginning of the Turkish conversion to Islam, Turkish scholars began to produce their works either in Arabic or Farsi. Even the well-known

Turkish dervish, philanthropist, and poet Mevlana—generally wrote his works in pure Farsi, but he openly claimed that he was an ethnic Turk. In the same century, the twelfth, another well-known Turkish dervish, philanthropist, and poet Yunus—wrote his works in pure Turkish. He proved that even religious texts could be written in this language.

During the Ottoman period, the invasion of the Turkish language by Arabic and Farsi, especially starting from the sixteenth century, increased. If we exclude highly sophisticated writings, a Turk had no difficulty understanding the written language as long as he received basic education and had reading and writing knowledge. Unfortunately, power hungry, prestigious, and ambitious scholars made the language difficult to understand in order to show their creative skills. Real difficulty with the Turkish language was/is coming from the Turks' diverse tribal background. There are hundreds of different intonations, even dialects of Turkish in Turkey.

Ali Suavi was one of the first defenders of simplified Turkish. Ali Suavi wrote in his newspaper *Muhbir* (Informer) that there was no language called "Osmanlıca," but only Turkish. Şemsettin Sami also shared this idea. Suavi concluded that whoever speaks Turkish is a Turk⁴. Ali Suavi went so far as to defend the idea of praying in Turkish. According to Şemsettin Sami, the simplification of Turkish was inevitable, because traditional Ottoman literature was dead, and a new literature inspired by the West was in the process of becoming. New ways of thinking could not be expressed by Ottoman Turkish. The new Turkish nation was arising and it needed its own national language⁵. Şemsettin Sami wrote the Turkish dictionary *Kamus-i Turki* in 1901. As a foreword to the dictionary, he wrote that if a nation wants to form its language into a literary medium, it is required to write the language's grammar and dictionary. Şemsettin Sami devoted almost his entire life to Turkish-language studies. His dictionary was considered a masterpiece about the Turkish language.

While the Turkish intelligentsia was trying to simplify the Turkish language, the learning of Western languages became more popular. There

⁴ Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Türkiye'de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi*, Ülken Yayınları, İstanbul, 1979, p. 83.

⁵ Niyazi Berkes, *The Developments of Secularism in Turkey*, McGill University Press, Montreal 1964, p. 320.

was a rigid censorship in Turkish publications, but Western publications were free, and it was easy to obtain them in most bookstores. Abdulhamit II's censorship policy increased the demand for foreign publications. Interestingly, some Turkish intellectuals preferred to write in French, avoiding Turkish. Fatma Aliye, the first Turkish female novelist and daughter of Ahmet Cevdet Pasha, wrote, "After some time, it became easier to read and understand the French books than the Ottoman - Turkish books because the latter required, if anything, more recourse to the dictionary than the French."⁶

Political ideologies and new ideas were represented in the Turkish press. Almost every scientific, political, and literary organization had its own press and publications. The Turkish public opinion was formed and educated by the press. Newspapers aim to inform and educate the people. Press language must be simple in order to be understood by ordinary people. To sell their newspapers and to reach the masses, the Turkish press pioneered the use of simple language in publications in the Empire.

Newspapers were reaching and influencing almost every member of the educated elite. Historical and cultural matters assumed a great importance in the newspapers and magazines⁷. Newspapers and publications were not only distributed in Istanbul. They were also circulated in the other cities and even in towns. Ziya Gökalp educated himself by reading Namık Kemal's publications in Diyarbakır.

The first periodical in the Ottoman Empire was the governmental *Takvim-i Vekayi*, which was first published in 1831. The volumes of the *Takvim-i Vekayi* were published both in Turkish and French. The first non-governmental periodical in Turkish was the weekly *Ceride-i Havadis* (Journal of News). A British journalist, William Churchill, began to publish *Ceride* in 1840. After his death in 1864, his son continued to publish the periodical. The outbreak of the Crimean War brought new opportunities for Churchill. He covered the fighting both for British newspapers and for *Ceride*. His reports "gave the news-hungry Turkish reader a new insight into the function and value of the newspaper in the modern state."⁸. Another important function of *Ceride* was the simplification of the language.

⁶ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 291.

⁷ David Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism 1876-1908*, London, 1977, p. 15.

⁸ Lewis, p. 143.

In 1860, Agah Efendi from the Translation Office began to publish his weekly *Tercüman-ı Ahval* (Interpreter of Conditions). İbrahim Şinasi and Ziya Pasha wrote in this newspaper. The government was unsatisfied with Tercüman's writing and shut down the paper. In 1862, Şinasi and Ziya Pasha launched their own newspaper, *Tasvir-i Efkâr* (Illustration of Opinion). İbrahim Şinasi was the first and major figure in the establishment of the Turkish press language. He tried to use language as a tool to give people knowledge and information. For that reason he used simple Turkish in his articles⁹. Şinasi's pupil, Namık Kemal, surpassed his master, and he came under the influence of Lamartine and the romantic school in Paris¹⁰. Under Namık Kemal's editorship, the *Tasvir-i Efkâr* became the first Turkish newspaper to carry sophisticated analyses of foreign affairs¹¹.

Between 1870 and 1876, the Turkish press developed rapidly. For the first time in the Middle East, a public opinion and public spirit came into existence. Newspapers were passed hand to hand by a big number of readers. In 1872, three daily newspapers and a number of weeklies were published in Istanbul. That same year the number of French dailies was six. By 1876, the number of daily newspapers in Istanbul rose to seven¹².

Publications on Turkish history and the Turkish language greatly increased after 1860. Translations from the European languages on a variety of topics started in the 1860s and proved an impressive success. Most of the translations were made by the intellectual society organization "Encümen-i Daniş." To be a member of this society required a complete knowledge of Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Farsi, and at least one Western language. Some very famous figures were among the Encümen's members: Ahmet Cevdet Pasha, Ahmet Vefik, the famous Austrian historian Hammer, the well-known British dictionary James Redhouse, Bianchi, and some former Translation Office employees. Encümen's translations helped the Turkish intellectuals to improve their visions about Western thought and institutions. Moreover, some publications apart from the translations, were a treasured value for Turkish language and Turkish history. Encümen-i Daniş published the first

⁹ Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiyede Çağdaşlaşma*, Bilgi Yayınevi, Ankara, 1973, p. 232.

¹⁰ Hans Kohn, *A History of Nationalism in the East*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1929, p. 226.

¹¹ Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, Princeton University Press, 1962, p. 27.

¹² Kohn, pp. 227-228.

Turkish language grammar “Kavaid-i Osmaniye” written by Ahmet Cevdet Pasha and Fuad Efendi. Redhouse’s English-Ottoman dictionary was another outstanding publication by the Encümen¹³. In addition to these Western translations, Abdulhamit II supported the scholars in their translation of the works of famous Muslim authors into Turkish. Then, an important number of Islamic classical writings were reproduced in Turkish. All these publications helped the Turkish language become a scientific language.

New publications in the Empire gradually regulated written Turkish. Generally, almost all of the Turkish intellectuals tried to simplify Ottoman Turkish. *Servet-i Fünun* and *Genç Kalemler* were significant periodicals in the process of simplification of the Turkish language and in making Turkish a literature and science language. Authors of these two periodicals led new literary movements in Turkey. These periodicals were considered Turkish Literature schools. *Servet-i Fünun* was first published in 1894. The chief figure in this periodical was Rezaizade Ekrem. Some famous late Ottoman and early Republic authors—such as Tefik Fikret, Ahmet Rasim, Hüseyin Cahid (Yalçın), Ahmet Şuayb, Mehmed Rauf, and Cenab Şahabettin—began their careers in this periodical. At the beginning, *Servet-i Fünun* proposed to give information about Western sciences, but the periodical turned out to be a literary journal. Some linguistic and literary debates were carried out by *Servet-i Fünun*’s writers. The major debate was the nature of art. How art should be: “art for art” or “art for people.” Positivist-minded *Fünun* authors preferred the idea “art for people,” then a new literary movement, “*Edebiyat-ı Cedide*” (New Literature), came to life using the language for people’s needs, not for poetic beauty.

Genç Kalemler was first published in 1911 and went beyond *Servet-i Fünun* by proposing to use pure Turkish and eliminating Arabic and Farsi words or replacing them with Turkish ones. Kazım Nami, Ömer Seyfettin, and Ali Canip were well-known authors of *Genç Kalemler*. They wrote some nationalist articles for their periodical. For the first time *Genç Kalemler* published Ziya Gökalp’s “Turan” poem:

The fatherland for Turks is not Turkey, nor Turkistan,
The Fatherland is a vast and eternal land: Turan.

¹³ Berkes, *Türkiye’de Çağdaşlaşma*, p. 229.

Ali Canip argued that Turkish nationalism was not meant to rescue just the ethnic Turks: "Now, many Circassians, Kurds, Albanians, and half-bloods are endeavoring to improve Turkishness since they know that only Turkishness can rescue the Oriental nations from despotism and exploitation by the West."¹⁴

For the first time, publications about the pre-Islamic history of the Turks began to appear in Turkey in the second half of the 1870s. Süleyman Pasha was the first author, who wrote about ancient Turks, in his history book in 1876¹⁵. The students, who were educated in the West, and the Westerners, who resided in Turkey, influenced the Turkish elite to create nationalist thought. European Orientalism and archaeological discoveries about ancient Turkish civilization increased the nationalistic sentiments in Turkey. Hungarian scholar Arminius Vambery—who spent a long time in Turkey and Central Asia—came in contact with many Turkish intellectuals and became a friend of the Sultan himself¹⁶. Vambery preached about ancient Turkish history in Istanbul. A Danish war soldier, W. Thomsen, captured by the Russians, was exiled deep into the steppes. He saw some monumental, written stones along the river Orhon. In 1893, after a period of long and tiresome work, he deciphered the script of the stones. They were seventh-century Göktürk remnants and written in Göktürk Turkish. His discovery was astonishingly speculated about in the West and affected the Turks via Western publications. For the first time, Hayrullah Efendi wrote about modern Western discoveries about ancient Turkish history. Ahmet Vefik Pasha and Ahmet Cevdet Pasha gave some information in their history books. Mizancı Murad, an émigré from Russia, wrote about the mythical hero, Oğuz Han, who was considered the mythological ancestor of Turkey's Turks.

EMERGENCE OF TURKISH NATIONALISM AND ITS DEFENDERS

Development of Turkish Nationalism

Nationalism affected the Ottoman Turks later than it did any other European and Balkan nations. The political situation of the Turks and their culture and religion resulted in the nationalist thought coming late to the

¹⁴ Masami Arai, *Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era*, Leiden, New York, 1992, p. 42.

¹⁵ Berkes, *Secularism*, p. 318.

¹⁶ Kushner, p. 10.

Turks. The Ottoman Turks did not need nationalism. They established the Ottoman Empire, and they were the core of the Empire. Turkish nationalism obviously would hasten the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. While nationalist movements deeply affected the Balkan Christian elite, they did not have any effect on the Turkish elite and on the Turkish masses at all. Ethnic Turks tried to save the Empire by creating a multi-ethnic Ottoman society. Nationalism in no sense existed among the Muslim Turks. Islam strictly forbids nationalism and vigorously damns racism. At the same time Islam is not opposed to people identifying themselves with names of the tribes to which they belong.

Turkish nationalism came into existence during the devastating wars in the Empire. The Ottoman Empire first lost Christian populated territories then Muslim-populated territories, in the Crimea. Russia and some Balkan states seized the territories with the bulk of their Muslim populations. The Ottoman defeats in Crimea, in the Caucasus, in the Balkans, and in eastern Turkey resulted in dramatic Muslim casualties. During the war in 1877-78 alone, between the Ottoman Empire and Russia, Russian soldiers and Bulgarian bands killed some 200,000 to 300,000 Muslims and uprooted more than a million Muslims, who were living in the territories from the Danube to Istanbul¹⁷. Muslims in Russia began their last long resistance against Russian occupation. Muslim rebels and Muslim intellectuals began to defend first Muslim unity then Turkish nationalism against nationalist Russians. Slavic discrimination against the Turks in Russia helped the growth of Turkish nationalism in Russia. Masses of Muslim émigrés sought a settlement in Turkey to protect their lives. These émigrés, who came from different tribal backgrounds and non-Turkic tribe members easily mixed with Turks in Turkey. Still, Islam was the biggest power among the Turks, and it was the most important element to keep people together. These émigrés carried nationalistic feelings because of their hatred for Russians and the Balkan nationalism.

Defenders of Turkish Nationalism

Namık Kemal(1840-1888) was the chief intellectual who affected almost the entire variety of intellectuals in the Empire. He was the Hegel of the

¹⁷ Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914, Demographic and Social Characteristics*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, p. 49.

Turks. His influence touched almost all enlightened Turks in the Empire, and his works were secretly read by the masses. A generation grew up reading his works. Then, they developed their ideas and political preferences. Even though Namık Kemal was not a nationalist but a populist, he was a great patriot and aware about Turkish history and Turkish culture. Moreover, he more deeply influenced the nationalists than any other ideological groups. In his play "Celaleddin Harzemşah," he created Turkish romanticism. As wasn't true for French romanticism, there existed no borders of Vatan in Kemal's thought. Vatan was both the Ottoman State and the Islamic territory¹⁸.

Namık Kemal represented young Ottoman thought. He opposed to copying Western institutions, yet he tried to adopt their intellectual backgrounds. Desiring to prepare the people for Western institutions and Western thoughts, he combined these new Western thoughts with Islamic traditions and introduced them to the people, using relatively simple language in the press. Namık Kemal was one of the pioneers, who dealt with the language problem. He concluded that language should educate the people and for that reason it should be in a form that people could understand. He opposed the Medical School's policy of offering education in French. He was faced with a terminology problem, when he translated some works from French into Turkish, and he was the first person to use 'Vatan' as the fatherland and the 'Millet' as the nation. Interestingly, some other intellectuals also produced new terms using Arabic-origin words and creating the terms that were never placed in Arabic. İktisat—or economy—and Mefkure—or ideal—are two of these invented terms.

In his article "Avrupa Şarkı Bilmez" (Europe does not know the East), Namık Kemal complained about European misinterpretation of the Ottoman Empire. In his article "İttihad-ı İslam" (Unification of Muslims), Kemal emphasized the lack of transactions among the Muslim societies. The harmony among the Muslims, which had been established since Abbasit Me'mun, had disappeared centuries ago. In his writing "Kavimler Anlaşması" (Social Contract), he pictures the features of Ottoman society, which is made up of individuals equal in the eyes of law, and shared common interests but with different ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds. This society existed for six centuries and, according to Kemal,

¹⁸ Ülken, p. 95.

it could survive in the future with the establishment of a sort of federational-governmental system. The United States served as a good example for establishing a mixed Ottoman Society¹⁹.

Some Azerbaijani nationalists affected the Turkish nationalism in Turkey. The first Azerbaijani figure was Mirza Fethali Ahundov (1812-1878). Ahundov presented the Ottoman government with a plan for the reformation of the Turkish script²⁰. He proposed that the Turks use the Latin alphabet in stead of Arabic. Another important Azerbaijani person in the course of Turkish nationalism was Hüseyinzade Ali Bey. After studying in St. Petersburg, he came to Istanbul in 1889 and started teaching in the Medical School. There, he taught the ideals of Turkish nationalism to interested students. He took part in the establishment of the society of Union and Progress²¹. Another Azerbaijani pan-Turkist, Ağaoğlu Ahmet (1869-1939) was one of the first Azerbaijani students, who studied in the West (Paris). He met with a predominant Turkish positivist, Ahmet Rıza. After the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, Ağaoğlu Ahmet came to Istanbul and worked for the pan-Turkist newspaper "Türk Yurdu"²². A Crimean Tatar, İsmail Gaspıralı was another distinguished pan-Turkist, who affected the nationalists in Turkey. In 1883, he began to publish his newspaper, "Tercüman" (Interpreter), in Bahçesaray. His motto was: "Dilde, Fikirde, İşte Birlik" (Unity in Language, Thought and Action). He tried to unify the Turks in Russia through the use of the Turkish language. His newspaper was read in the Ottoman Empire and was often quoted by the Turkish press²³.

The predominant nationalist figure among the Russian Turks was Yusuf Akçura. He was born in 1876 in the Volga region; then he immigrated to Istanbul with his mother. İsmail Gaspıralı was his brother-in-law. Akçura graduated from Military School. Because of his opposition to the regime, he was exiled; later, he escaped to Paris. He studied Political Science in Paris. After completing his education in France, he went back to Russia. He worked as a teacher in Kazan and wrote his famous article—"Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset" there in 1904. His article was published in the newspaper "Turk" in Cairo.

¹⁹ Ülken, pp. 96-98.

²⁰ Kushner, p. 12.

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 12.

²² *ibid.*, p. 13

²³ Kushner, p. 12.

After the Young Turk revolution, Akçura came to Istanbul. He was one of the founders of “Türk Derneği” (Turkish Association) in 1908. A large number of Turkish and foreign intellectuals became members of this organization. In a short time, the association opened branches in Rusçuk, Budapest, İzmir, and Kastamonu²⁴. Türk Yurdu (Turkish Homeland) was the Turkish Association’s journal. This journal published some serial articles about the history of the Ottoman Empire and historical and contemporary Central Asia. As is true of every nationalist movement, the language issue was of primary concern for the Türk Yurdu. The journal adopted some words from the peasant language, which was considered vulgar. Meanings of the new words were explained with footnotes. Some articles were written about the Finnish, Hungarian, and Mongol languages, since they belonged to the same Turkish language family. The journal wrote about some little-known Turkic tribes in its publications. The Çuvaş were presented as a forgotten Turkic Tribe. Most of the founders of Türk Derneği were Turkish émigrés from Russia. Its press organ–Türk Yurdu–aimed to generate Turkish national spirit among the Ottoman Turks. The Ottoman Empire was called the “Turkish State” in its publications.

“Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset” was the first publication about Turkish nationalism. Akçura analyzed three types of Ottoman politics–pan-Ottomanism, pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism–in his article. Because it was published in a small journal, his article did not capture a significant amount of attention. Later, he republished his article, when Turkish nationalism was a major political concern in Turkey. Since the Ottoman Empire acquired the desire to develop and regain power inspired by the West, mainly three political paths were followed; 1- to create an Ottoman society from different ethnic peoples; 2- to unify all Muslims politically; and 3 to create a political “Turkish Nation” based on racial criteria. According to Akçura’s three types of politics:

1- Osmanlıcılık (Pan-Ottomanism): This idea aimed to unify Muslims and non-Muslims, giving equal rights and obligations, while recognizing the full ideological and religious freedom of the people. In this sense, a society would be created instead of racial and religious differences. The United States was a role model for the proposed Ottoman society. Mainly, Osmanlıcılık targeted protection of the borders of the contemporary

²⁴ Arai, p. 8.

Ottoman Empire. This policy was good for Muslims and Turks, as it was an internal Ottoman policy, but did nothing for the Turks outside the Empire²⁵. Osmanlıcılık might have worked to meet the needs of the Empire, but there were some serious dangers for the Empire in the long term. Giving the same rights to minorities and mixing the real owners of the Empire, the Turks would be assimilated in the Ottoman society, and there would no longer be an Ottoman State, when Turkishness was gone. The Muslims did not want to have equal rights with non-Muslims, and non-Muslims did not want to create a future with Muslims. Recently, non-Muslims were taught that they had their past, their civilizations, and their freedom. No one would want to create a new nationhood by melting into a nation that destroyed their freedom, even though they had plenty of opportunities to do this. So, Osmanlıcılık ended up creating a great fiasco. The gap between the religions was widened, with İslamcılık in reverse of Osmanlıcılık²⁶.

2- İslamcılık (Pan-Islamism): When Osmanlıcılık did not work, young Ottoman idealists, whose slogans were "Vatan" and "Unification," ended up with "Islam," adapting the slogan "Religion and State are United". In other words, Islam in one country. All Muslims should be united in a country. With this ideology, the Empire revitalized and empowered the concept of the religious state, when it had been abandoned by the Tanzimat. İslamcılık opposes any national identity. In Akçura's words, Islam is a mill in which you put people from different racial, linguistic backgrounds. Islam then produces one type of Muslim—with equal rights and standardized thought²⁷.

3- Türkçülük (Pan-Turkism): The idea to create a Turkish nation based on racial values is a very new concept. Neither the Ottoman Empire nor other Turkish states before the Ottoman Empire had the idea of creating a Turkish nation. Now, Türkçülük had a scientific character rather than a political ideology in the Empire. Increasing Ottoman relations with Germany influenced the Turkish youth about German studies concerning their language and their history. Now the Turkish youth created their own intellectual elite, which matched German and French types of scientifically oriented intellectuals²⁸.

²⁵ Yusuf Akçura, *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara, 1976, p. 19. (Republished Copy).

²⁶ Akçura, pp. 29-30.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 32.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 23.

According to Akçura, Türkçülük aimed at unifying all the Turkic people, whose language, culture, and religion were almost the same. Türkçülük at the same time proposed the religious unity through racial unity. Another aspect of Türkçülük was to Turkify semi-assimilated non-Turkic people. Unifying the Turks, who live in the vast areas of Asia and Eastern Europe would give the Ottoman Empire a chance to be a Great power in the area between the “yellows” and the “whites”. When the Empire gained power and new territories, it would at the same time lose power and territories in the Arab world²⁹.

Akçura admits that there were many bigger problems to be encountered in unifying the Turks than there were in unifying the Muslims. According to Akçura, Türkçülük was a “new born baby.” The idea of Turkish unification and the creation of Turkish literature were very new. There were no strong establishments and no spectacular will for Turkish unification, while both of these existed for the purpose of Islamic unification³⁰.

In Akçura’s conclusion, he cannot decide, which politics were most beneficial to the Ottoman Empire: İslamcılık or Türkçülük. He does not count Osmanlılık as an alternative.

Ziya Gökalp, Founder of Modern Turkism

Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924) was the first intellectual to see Turkist ideology as a political thought. He had a very strong Islamic and traditional background. Namık Kemal’s works deeply influenced him. His early writings were romantic. He recalled in his memoirs the time, when his father informed Gökalp that his greatest hero, Namık Kemal, died. His father was waiting for the high-school-age Gökalp to talk with him. The father told the son that this day should be the gloomiest of Gökalp’s life, because his hero had passed away. Gökalp recalls his bitter pain, when he heard this “black news.” The distinguished Turkish historian Niyazi Berkes writes in his foreword to Gökalp’s work—*Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization*—that Gökalp later recognized Namık Kemal as a major obstacle to progress towards the establishment of a modern state³¹. The positivist-

²⁹ Akçura, p. 34.

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ Ziya Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization*, Translated and introduced by Niyazi Berkes, London 1959, p. 18.

minded Berkes discredited the ideologies with religious and romantic sense and apprised what is expressed in a secular manner. He criticized Namık Kemal for being utopian. Berkes wondered why outstanding nationalists and socialist intellectuals to whom Kemal was introduced in Paris did not influence Kemal. In reality, Gökalp's writings and ideas were changed drastically. Some of his religious sentiments were replaced by secular and purely nationalistic ideas. His intellectual capacity and his ability to organize Turkish Nationalism as a political thought brought him a spectacular reputation. His ideas influenced Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his revolutions in the Turkish Republic. In addition, his nationalist formulas and concrete conclusions gave opportunities to the nationalists to develop pillars of the Turkish nationalism. Gökalp had an exceptional power over the youth of Turkey and over the politicians. A nationalist was not considered a true nationalist if he did not read Gökalp's works.

Gökalp produced his major works on the nationalism in the years between 1911-1918 and 1922-1924. His writings questioned how the Turks should adopt Western civilization and how they should harmonize the Turks' traditions with their Islamic background. He formulated the future of Turkish civilization: Westernism, democracy, political and economic independence, and secularism³². Islam would provide the moral and legal bases of society, while Western civilization would furnish the material and practical methods and techniques to enable this system to survive in the contemporary world of power and economic progress. Gökalp followed Namık Kemal's moderate view that the non-material aspects of European civilization should not be emulated.

Ziya Gökalp was the first Turkish sociologist. Gökalp, who was deeply influenced by grandiose sociologist Durkheim, had a great faith in sociology as the supreme positivist science. According to Gökalp, the Turks would create a Turkish nation using sociology. He formulated everything to match his sociological approach. Durkheim's assessments about values and ideology (mefkure) influenced Gökalp to formulate his nationalist thought³³. According to Gökalp, ideology was foremost strength of the

³² Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization*, p. 12.

³³ Uriel Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism: The Life and Teachings of Ziya Gökalp*, Harvill Press, London, 1950, p. 48.

nation in its progressive actions³⁴. He symbolically formulated the “kızıl elma” ideology to keep national spirit alive³⁵. In Gökalp’s view, culture was the most important element of the society. The discovery of the cultural values of the basic social unit would eventually lead to the formation of the nation. The modern nation is a community with a unique complex of cultural values. Only nations have social reality as cultural units. Gökalp examined the concepts of civilization and culture, and he distinguished these concepts from each other. Culture was national and had a tendency not to change, but civilization had an international character, and it had a tendency to change. A full-fledged national culture could come into existence only, when its raw material on an ethnic and folk level was worked with the fresh techniques of a civilization to which many nations had contributed.

Gökalp thought that his formation of the nationalism did not need to completely follow the footsteps of Western nationalism. He rejected Durkheim’s idea that nationalist thought should only contain pure positivist ideology excluding any religious motives. Gökalp concluded that different individuals and nations needed different moral standards³⁶. According to Gökalp, modernized Islam could be easily combined with Turkish nationalism and national culture³⁷. But he rejected the idea that Islam was a civilization and that Western civilization was a Christian civilization. Contemporary Western civilization has nothing to do with either nationality or faith. The confusion on this point is due to a conflation of culture with civilization³⁸. On the other hand Gökalp concluded that Christianity failed to reconcile itself with modern civilization, but Islam is the most modern religion; it in no way conflicts with modern science³⁹.

Gökalp attacked Osmanlıcılık: “The Tanzimatists said you are Ottomans; do not claim a national existence distinct from other nations. If you do, you will cause the destruction of the Ottoman Empire. The poor Turk, scared to lose his fatherland, had to say I am not a Turk, I am nothing but an

³⁴ Heyd, p. 49.

³⁵ Heyd, p. 111.

³⁶ *ibid*, p. 58.

³⁷ *ibid*, 98.

³⁸ Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization*, pp. 24-28.

³⁹ *ibid*. p. 214.

Ottoman.”⁴⁰ Gökalp believed that Tanzimat failed because it tried to adopt the civilization of Europe without building the national culture. He claimed that revolutionists were against the Ottomans but that they were too conservative for Turkish culture. The Turkish Republic started to change the Ottoman traditions and Ottoman civilization, which was an oriental civilization and had nothing to do with Islamic civilization. It was only an Eastern Roman civilization, and it had begun to be replaced by European civilization. Gökalp asserted that it is religion that separates us from Europe more than anything else. Europe will always remain Christian as we shall remain Muslim. But this will not prevent us from introducing the science from the West⁴¹.

To establish a nationalism requires going to the nation itself. When the Turkish nationalists began to form nationalism, they were faced with a national identity problem. Who were the Turks and on which value the Turks would be united? To find answers to these questions, Turkish nationalists tried to explain the concept of ‘Turk’ as a nation and formulated Turkishness, relying on cultural and linguistic variables. The Turks, who lived in the countryside, especially the nomadic Türkmens, were portrayed as role model for Turkish language and Turkish culture.

The meaning of the term “Turk” was an important problem for Ziya Gökalp too. He preferred to explain the term as “Türük,” the plural form of “Turk,” in the meaning “generate.” It may be that the Myth of Ergenekon (genesis of the Turks) led Ziya Gökalp to come to this conclusion. Moreover, Arabs called the Muslim Turks, mostly Oğuz Turks, Türkmens, and Europeans called the Turks “Turks.” Then, Turkish nationalists used “Turk” to stand for the Turkish nation.

Ottoman culture was city- and town-oriented. High Ottoman culture was developed in some well-known town centers. The Ottomans ignored the villages. The ethnic Turks, who lived in the cities identified them with high Ottoman culture and distinguished themselves with their blood brothers, who lived in the countryside. Ottoman-labeled Turks in the cities often called the Turks in the countryside as “Turk” but in an inferior manner. The Turks in the villages preserved their languages and traditions. The semi-

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 260.

⁴¹ Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization*, p. 336.

nomadic Turkmen tribes colorfully lived out their cultural values for the centuries without any drastic change.

Going to the people was one of the fundamental principles of Turkism in Ziya Gökalp's nationalism. The elite had to consolidate a common understanding, recognizing people's cultural values as national dynamics.

Naturally, Gökalp dealt with language problems too. He produced moderate and very useful ideas about Turkish language. Gökalp believed that every word known and used by the Turkish people is Turkish. It is not important to express everything with original Turkish words. "We don't need to adopt dead Turkish words into our language. The language of a people is a living organism composed of its own living organs, not of dead roots. The purification of Turkish should not be based on the extremist claims of the purists. On the other hand, we can adopt the words from other languages, but we should not import their language rules into Turkish."⁴²

Ziya Gökalp formulated the principles of the Turkish language:

1- We should abandon the Ottoman language by replacing it with folk language. We should pronounce the new language with the pronunciation of the women of Istanbul.

2- We should abandon Arabic and Farsi words if we are using their Turkish counterparts.

3- We should regulate Arabic and Farsi-originated words in the Turkish language, spelling and pronouncing them according to Turkish-language rules.

4- Old fossilized Turkish words should not be revived.

5- New terms should be generated in Turkish⁴³.

Gökalp believed that Turkism is not a political movement. Rather, it is a movement scientific, philosophical, and literary in nature. It is a movement of cultural derivation and regeneration⁴⁴. Ziya Gökalp was a defender of cultural nationalism. Feeling Turkish and expressing himself as a Turk were

⁴² Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization*, p. 293.

⁴³ *ibid*, p. 297.

⁴⁴ *ibid*, p. 305.

enough reasons to be considered a Turk. When he was criticized as a being Kurd, who was defending Turkish nationalism, he answered the criticism in his poem "To The Man, Who Calls Me Not A Turk":

Even if I were a Turk or not
I am friend of the Turk
Even if you are a Turk or not
You are an enemy of the Turk.

Ziya Gökalp's articles in the journal of "Türk Yurdu" were regenerated in the book "Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak" (To Be Turkified, To Be Islamized, To Be Modernized.) The book's title was chosen from one of Gökalp's articles. In this book, Gökalp compared Turkism, Islamism and Modernism. He concluded that these ideologies don't contradict each other in terms of their application to the Turkish nation.

Gökalp believed that after the ideals of nationalism come to life, they spread to the other nations. Nationalists must sacrifice and work hard in order to achieve their goals. Linguistic, literary, economic, and political developments in nation states attract neighboring states to their notions of progress. In time, neighboring states are influenced by nationalistic movements. The ideology of nationalism first started among the non-Muslims in the Empire and influenced the Albanians, Arabs, and eventually the Turks⁴⁵.

Gökalp sketches the scene of the Turks in the Ottoman Empire in this book. The Turks identified themselves with the state. When social and economic domination were shifted from the Turks' hands, they could not realize their losses, believing they were still the state. They were not jealous of non-Turks, who occupied high scientific and economic positions. The Turks were satisfied with non-Turks' success, realizing that they were good enough for the Empire, and the Turks stayed out of the circle of creativity and prosperity. The Turks were civil servants and farmers. These groups of people were far from creative, since trade and science developed people's creativity. So, Turkishness was stagnated, and the term "Turk" came to identify the peasantry⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ Ziya Gökalp, *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak*, Hazırlayan İbrahim Kutluk, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara, 1976, p. 2.

⁴⁶ *ibid*, p. 5.

A lack of national ideology prevented Turkish progress in art, science, and economics. Ideals of family were very narrow, and the ideals of the “ümmet” were too broad to achieve basic progress goals. The Turks needed nationalism between these two for their success. Turkism represents nationalism, while Islamism represents internationalism. They do not contradict each other. Nationalism needs religion since nationalist feelings empower religious feelings, and Turkism requires some sort of Islamism. When the Turks were defeated in the Balkan wars, there were not Hungarians, Mongols or any non-Muslim Turkic nations, who paid attention to the Turkish defeat. On the other hand while many unknown Muslim tribes in India, Indonesia, Sudan, and China shared the pain of the Turks⁴⁷. Gökalp defends the idea that Turkism needs to have an Ümmet program to develop its relations with the Islamic world.

In conclusion, Gökalp described modernization as a technological development. Turkism, Islamism, and Modernism were reality, and they were coming from national necessities. Gökalp proposed a “modernized Muslim Turkism.”⁴⁸

Pre-Islamic Turkish history inspired Gökalp’s nationalist ideas. He learned much about Turkish history and made very successful conclusions about understanding Turkish culture and applying this culture to entire Turkic nations as a social dynamic for their future unification. He lectured about ancient Turkish history at the University, where he worked as a sociology professor. When he was exiled to Malta, he regularly gave lectures about Turkish history and Turkish culture to other political exiles in Malta. In his works “Türk Uygarlığı Tarihi” (History of Turkish Civilization) and “Türk Töresi” (Turkish Tradition), he wrote about the origins of Turkish society and its culture, beginning from the earliest period of Turkish history.

POLITICAL NATIONALISM

The idea of Turkism developed under Ottoman modernization thought. Ziya Gökalp formulated Turkish nationalism as a separate political ideology. Ziya Gökalp and Yusuf Akçura were influenced by a German-type of romantic nationalism. A Turkish national identity was created using language, ethnography, and culture.

⁴⁷ Gökalp, *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak*, pp. 10-11.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 12.

Political Turkism was the last chain of the Ottoman dissident movements. Opposition to the sultan and his rule led to the establishment of some underground organizations in the Empire. The Kuleli Vakası of 1859 was the first Ottoman dissident movement. A strong opposition movement started with the establishment of the community of the Young Ottomans in 1865. Namık Kemal was one of the founders of this secret organization.

In 1889, four medical students established another influential underground organization, "İttihad-ı Osmani." Five years later, this organization was called the community of "İttihad Terakki." Because of their opposition to the regime, a big number of İttihadists left Turkey for some European countries. Basically, they defended the parliamentary political regime and the concept of self-determination for all Ottoman citizens. The "Hürriyet" became their magical slogan to attract the attention of the masses. In 1908, they achieved their goal through the establishment of the parliamentary regime in Turkey.

In 1908, the elections for 288 seats in parliament took place. Little more than half of the seats, 147 were won by the Turkish deputies; other seats were won by the minority groups. "Hürriyet" and the parliamentary regime did not bring tranquility to the people. After the 1908 revolution, Bulgaria declared its independence from the Ottoman Empire, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. At home, the Turks were shocked with non-Turkish deputies' demands from the Empire. All these circumstances made positivist İttihadists nationalist. İttihad Terakki first ran the government from behind the curtain, then, it ruled the country as a political party.

İttihad Terakki adopted a nationalist program, one not openly articulated in multi-ethnic Turkey. The most important nationalist action of İttihad Terakki was the declaration of the Turkish language as Turkey's official language. The party required all official correspondences in Turkish and aimed to teach Turkish to all Ottoman citizens. İttihad Terakki introduced its nationalist program under the title of Westernization and secularism.

Beginning with the Balkan war, İttihad Terakki openly defended Turkish nationalism. Most of the high-ranking Ottoman military officers,

including Mustafa Kemal, were İttihad Terakki's members. After the Balkan wars, nationalism was the most popular political thought among the Turkish elite and Turkish military.

The Ottoman Empire was dragged into World War I under Enver Pasha's leadership. Enver Pasha aimed to regain lost Ottoman territories and to establish a Turkish Empire reaching the Turks in Russia. The revolution of 1917 in Russia gave the nationalists hope that they would achieve their goal of unifying the Turks. The slogan "Rusya viran olacak, Türkler Turan olacak" (Russia will perish, the Turks will form Turan) echoed among the nationalists.

The occupation of Turkey after World War I fostered nationalist feelings in every section of the Turkish society. The Turks started a national resistance movement against the occupation. The Turkish war was called the "National Freedom War," and fighting groups were called the "National Powers". A "National Oath" was proclaimed by the last Ottoman Parliament in order to save the majority of the Turkish populated areas. Finally, the Turkish assembly was formed and named the "Grand Turkish National Assembly". All these nationalistic movements gave birth to the national Turkish State.