

## ***THE METHODS EMPLOYED BY THE UNIONISTS IN POWER TO CONTROL PEOPLE OF THE OTTOMAN BALKAN PENINSULA***

*By*

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### ***Abstract***

The Young Turk revolution was engineered by a committee of union and progress which composed of many different origins. But the main body of the revolutionist movement was the officers among the third army corps in Macedonia. After considerable efforts the revolutionists came to power in 1908. The first demands of this movement were constitution, freedom, equality, and somehow autonomy. The main point shared with non-Muslims and Muslims was to overthrow the absolutist Sultan Abdulhamid II. By overthrowing him, the Young Turks thought that it would be for the better. Thus, they did not hesitate to make any possible collaboration with any subject within the Ottoman Empire. In this paper I shall try to explain which methods the Unionists employed in power to control people of the Ottoman Balkans, and were they successful by using the methods?

**Key Words:** The Unionists- İttihadçılar, Jon Turks, Ottoman Balkans, Sultan Abdulhamid II

### **OSMANLI BALKANLARINI KONTROL ALTINDA TUTMAK İÇİN İTTİHADÇILARIN TAKIP ETMİŞ OLDUKLARI METODLAR**

#### **Özet**

Jön Türk İhtilali farklı etnik kimliklerin temsil edildiği İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti tarafından planlandı. Fakat İhtilal hareketinin esasını Makedonyadaki 3. ordu subayları oluşturmaktaydı. Ciddi çabalar sonucunda İttihadçılar 1908'de iktidara geldiler. İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti mensuplarının ilk talepleri anayasa, özgürlük, eşitlik ve bir dereceye kadar özerklikti. Bu hareket içerisinde yer alan Müslim ve gayr-i Müslim Osmanlı vatandaşlarının üzerinde ittifak ettikleri nokta mutlakiyetçi bir düşünce ile ülkeyi idare etmekte olan II. Abdulhamid'in yönetimine son vermektir. Bu maksada yönelik İttihadçılar Osmanlı idaresindeki Türk olmayan unsurlar ile ittifak etmekte bir sakınca görmediler. Bu çalışma İttihad ve Terakki idaresinin Osmanlı Balkanlarını kontrol altında tutmak için

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uyguladıkları metodları inceleyerek uygulanan bu metodlar sonrasındaki başarı durumunu sorguluyacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İttihad ve Terakki, Genç Türkler, Osmanlı Balkanları, Sultan Abdulhamid II.

### **Introduction**

The Young Turk revolution was engineered by a committee of union and progress which composed of many different origins. But the main body of the revolutionist movement was the officers among the third army corps in Macedonia. After considerable efforts the revolutionists came to power in 1908. The first demands of this movement were constitution, freedom, equality, and somehow autonomy. The main point shared with non-Muslims and Muslims was to overthrow the absolutist Sultan Abdulhamid II. By overthrowing him, the Young Turks thought that it would be for the better. Thus, they did not hesitate to make any possible collaboration with any subject within the Ottoman Empire. But, after the 1908 revolution it was seen that to keep the Empire unified was only a sweet dream. Everywhere in the Ottoman Balkans nationalist demands increased, and uprisings began to occur. Seeing these development it became inevitable for the Young Turks to survive the Empire. So after the constitution the nationalist movements within the Empire encouraged the Young Turks to take some precaution, and they employed some methods to control people of the Ottoman Balkan Peninsula.

In this paper I shall try to explain which methods the Unionists employed in power to control people of the Ottoman Balkans, and were they successful by using the methods?

### **The Committee of Union and Progress**

As far as it is known in the year of 1889 a group of students at the imperial military school in İstanbul formed a revolutionary organization for the express purpose of overthrowing Abdulhamid II, the sultan of the Ottoman Empire (1876-1909).<sup>1</sup> The maincentre of organization for the secret revolutionist movement was in the Imperial Medical School. One of the founder of this secret society was Kazim Nami Duru. According to his memory, in May 1887 he himself and five fellow students formed a group called the society of union and progress-“İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti”. Two years later, in May 1889, İbrahim Temo, one of the

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<sup>1</sup> E.E Ramsaur, *The Young Turks, Prelude to Revulation of 1908*, New Jersey (1957), p.14. Cf. also Sina Akşin, *Jon Türkler ve İttihat ve Terakki*, Remzi Kitabevi, İstanbul (1987), pp.21-22; Stanford J. Shaw - Shaw, E. Kural; *The History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (1977), pp. 263-267; cf. also Şükrü Hanioglu, *Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti (1889-1902)*, İstanbul 1985.

founders of the committee of union and progress and an Albanian Muslim, joined with a Circassian student, Mehmed Reşid, and Abdullah Cevdet and İshak Sukuti, both of whom were kurds, to reconstitute the group first as the Ottoman Union Society-“Ottoman İttihad-i Cemiyeti” and then as the Ottoman Society of Union and Progress-“Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti”. In a short time the original quadrumvirate was joined by such men as Şerafeddin Magmumi, Giridli Şefik, Cevdet Osman, Kerim Sebati, Mekkeli Sabri and Selanikli Nazim. They called for a program of Constitutionalism, Ottomanism, and Freedom.<sup>2</sup>

For the time being the number of secret society about which it has been mentioned above assembled in a certain area. For instance, the first meeting was called Dörtler İçtimai-The meeting of the fours, and the other was called Hatab Kıraathanesi-Woodstock Reading room meeting, and so on.<sup>3</sup> The secret society within the Imperial Military School spread rapidly to the other schools in İstanbul, such as the Veterinary School, the Civil College, the Naval Academy, and the Artillery and Engineering School.<sup>4</sup> After a while, according to Ramsaur, the existence of the society became known to the Ottoman Sultan, Abdulhamid II, but there was nothing he could do because of weak evidences.

The under ground movement was spreading increasingly in İstanbul. As it has been said previously from time to time the Government became suspicious, however, except for a few episodes, nothing happened. The main body of the movement remained intact for the time being.<sup>5</sup> But in late 1890s the Palace became very much aware of the main body of conspirators, and several of the members of the secret society were taken into custody and exiled to other places within the Ottoman Empire. One of the main conspirators person was İbrahim Temo. He himself, before being taken into custody, went to Rumania there and organized a branch of the society, and, according to his memory, tried to organize a resistance movement in other rest ottoman Balkans, against the Central Government in other words the despotism. The main body of the revolutionist movement were among the third army senior officer at Salonika. For the time being the Central Government sent its inspector of generals to the region to get an idea for the movement within the army. During the inspect time some bad events occurred the inspector of generals, Nazim Bey, was shot in Salonika on 11 June, 1908.<sup>6</sup>

The Revolutionist development had exist not only in the Ottoman Balkans but also in Syria. Take Mustafa Kemal as an example, when he was a young military officer in Damascus he founded a secret society known as Vatan Cemiyeti-

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<sup>2</sup> Ramsaur, *The Young Turks*, p.15. For more information see also Tarik Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasi Partiler*, vol. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. See also İbrahim Temo, *İttihat ve Terakki Anıları*.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Cf. Feroz Ahmed, *The Young Turks. The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics 1908-1914*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, Oxford (1969), pp. 1-13.

<sup>5</sup> Ramsaur, *The Young Turks*, pp.14-15; Akşin, *Jon Türkler*, pp.21-24.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Fatherland Society.<sup>7</sup> From Damascus he tried to expand its branches in such places Jaffa and Jerusalem which at that time was under the Ottoman administration. From these areas Mustafa Kemal wished to move to the Ottoman Balkan Peninsula. After a while he went to Salonika, which was his birth place and spent four months there. These four months were all spent in the works of organizing a branch of the society which he established in Damascus. Mustafa Kemal, during his visit time to Salonika held meeting with the representative of the revolutionist third army officers. At the end of this meeting the organization appears to have expanded its name from Vatan to Vatan ve Hürriyet- Society of Fatherland and Liberty.<sup>8</sup>

The development within the Ottoman Balkan Peninsula came to its conclusion in July of 1908, and the Young revolution finally broke out. All the senior officers among the third army corps demanded the 1876 constitution. To begin with, a man called Resneli Niyazi who was an Albanian took to the hills demanding the Constitution in July 1908.<sup>9</sup> Soon after, others followed so as to that to force the Ottoman Sultan to reinstate the constitution. The event was informed to the palace, thus, it had become very aware of the dangerous situation for the government. Now the situation was becoming very dangerous that the matter really got out of from Sultan's hands. The troops who were brought, to Macedonia from Anatolia to suppress the rebels, joined them instead. Joint military and civilian uprisings took place at Monastir, Firzovik, Serez, Üsküp, and other towns and cities proclaiming their support for the constitution in mass meetings held between July 20 and 23 and sending telegrams to the Sultan expressing their demands.<sup>10</sup> All the rebel groups agreed on the Constitution. It seems that the recall of Parliament would be the real solution without any revolution or without any soldiers storming the Palace, and without bloodshed, the Young Turk Revolution, thus, had taken place. The Sultan had to be forced to declare the constitution. The Sultan declared that he had suspended the parliament until the work of modernization was completed and that the time had now come for it to meet again so it could share in the difficult task of saving the crumbling Empire from its enemies. Thus, the age of Abdulhamid II was over, though the Sultan would remain on the throne for another year, the era of the Young Turks was about to begin.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Hüsrev Sami Kızıldoğan, "Vatan ve Hürriyet = İttihat ve Terakki", *Belleten*, I/3/4 (1937), pp. 619-625.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> See Feroz Ahmed, *The Young Turks*, pp. 4-7.

<sup>10</sup> See İ. Hakki Uzunçarşılı, "1908 Yılında İkinci Meşrutiyetin Ne Süretille İlan Edildiğine Dair Vesikalar", *Belleten* XX/77 (1956), pp. 103-174.

<sup>11</sup> Stanford J. Shaw - Shaw, E. Kural; *The History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, pp. 263-267.

### **Aftermath the Young Turks Revolution:**

As it has been mentioned before, in the Summer of 1908 the Young Turks overthrew the thirty-two year old absolutist regime of Abdulhamid II and reinstated the constitution of 1876, they thought that parlementarism would suffice not only to curb the national separatist movements but also, as a consequence in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire on behalf of its minorities.<sup>12</sup>

According to Young Turks' way of thinking, since all ethnic groups would be represented in parliament, the grievances as well as the aspirations of the latter would be voiced through proper peaceful channels. Insofar as the Ottoman minorities were contented with their political rights in Turkey, then the powers would soon praise their glorious achievement and start treating Turkey, now a constitutional state, with due respect. The Young Turks were soon to be disillusioned. Contrary to what they had expected, the Powers considered the unstable situation in Turkey during the first months of the newly-born regime as a golden opportunity to promote their own claims against the Ottoman Empire. Thus, in October 1908 Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Greeks established their rule over Crete, While Bulgaria proclaimed its total independence from the Porte.<sup>13</sup>

Now if we have a look at the domestic scene, the Young Turks vision of the "unity of races"-*İttihad-i anasir* had not materialized. After the initial outburst of enthusiasm, aroused by the proclamation of the constitution, the various elements in the Ottoman body politic started to promote their national aspirations. For instance, Greeks, Albanians, Arabs, Kurds and Circassians established nationalist clubs to propagate their claims and entered the 1908 elections with their own "national programs", indeed, some ethnic groups were more outspoken groups, such as the Albanians rose up in 1910.<sup>14</sup>

Having seen the nationalist movement within the Ottoman Empire, especially among the Ottoman Balkan's population, the embittered Young Turk recognized that the integrity of the Ottoman Empire depended upon the

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<sup>12</sup> M. Kemal Öke, "Young Turks, Freemasons, Jews and the Question of Zionism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1913", in *IIIrd Congress on the Social and Economic History of Turkey, Princeton University 24-26 August 1983*, Proceedings edited by Heath W. Lowry and Ralph S. Hatton. Published under the Sponsorship of the Institute of Turkish Studies (Washington, D.C.) and the French Institute of Anatolian Studies (İstanbul), *ISIS Press*, İstanbul (1990), pp. 32-33.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. Cf. F. Ahmed, *The Young Turks*, p.57. On the Ottoman Policy towards the Bulgarian nationalist movement, see Süleyman Demirci, "Rise of Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire: How Did Ottoman Government Respond To The Bulgarian National Movement 1839-1870?", to be published in *Journal of Institute of Social Sciences/Erciyes Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, vol. 22 (2007/1) forthcoming.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

preservation of the ruling Turkish caste. After all, a branch of the Young Turks, the Committee of Union and Progress, emerged as the “party of the Turks” and tried to ensure that their hegemony in Turkish political life went unchallenged. To this end, the unionists did not hesitate to gerrymander the elections and to silence the opposition more often than not by violent means. For the assimilation of the ethnic groups, the unionists consistently applied a through “Ottomanization” policy. They not only maintained the centralized system of the Hamidian regime but also abolished the many privileges Abdulhamid II used to extend to the non-Turkish Muslim population.<sup>15</sup>

The Albanians were compelled, for the first time in thirty years, to pay taxes, while the non-muslim inhabitants were required, for the first time since the founding of the Empire, to serve in the armed forces. According to contemporary accounts, the unionist brought back the repressive measures of Abdulhamid. It will be discussed below.

### **The Macedonian Question and the Young Turks**

The most difficult, complicated and long-lived problem faced by the Unionist was the Macedonian Question, which resulted from the ambitions of the Empire’s neighbors to rule Macedonia. Indeed, from the Congress of Berlin (1878) until World War I the issue occupied Ottoman and European statesmen alike more than any single diplomatic problem.

Macedonia itself stretched between Thrace and Albania, bounded in the south by the Aegean sea, in the north by the Sar mountains, and in the west by Lake Ohrid. It was organized into the Ottoman Provinces of Salonica, Monastir, and Kosova including in addition the cities of Serez, Ohrid, Üsküp, and Bitola. Its population was mixed, with no single group having a majority and each disputing which elements should be counted with it. The question can be asked why the Macedonia took very important place in the Ottoman Empire? The answer could be because Macedonia was of strategic importance, commanding the communication route down the valleys of the Vardar and Morova and offering both Bulgaria and Serbia a vital outlet to the sea. Moreover, it had considerable agricultural wealth. So, with existing balance of power, control of Macedonia would give any Balkan state just the strength needed to dominate the area. Indeed, there was different meaning of the Macedonia. To the Ottoman Empire Macedonia meant not only rule over than 1 million Muslim but also substantial was a buffer zone against Greek ambitions for the Ottoman territories farther east.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> G. Archon, *The Rise of Nationalism in the Balkans*, pp.76-80. W. Gewehr, *The Rise of Nationalism in the Balkans, 1800-1930*, USA (1967); Stanford J. Shaw - Shaw, E. Kural; *The History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, pp. 207-208.

Because of its strategic and economic situation the battle was fought in various ways between those multi-cultural population. To achieve nationalist ambitions, the Balkan nationalists formed terrorist societies, such as the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) established by Bulgarians in Macedonia to lead their people against the Ottomans and all others who opposed the Bulgarian claim, and the rival external Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (EMRO), established in Sofia to train Macedonian exiles for the same kind of objective.<sup>17</sup>

IMRO was reflective of Macedonian viewpoints, aiming at the establishment of autonomous province, associated federally with Bulgaria and Serbia, while the EMRO was more Bulgarian in its goals, advocating union with Bulgaria once the Ottomans were driven out.<sup>18</sup>

It was this atmosphere that the Young Turks revolution broke out giving an entirely new aspect to the situation. Now let us to make some criticism on the Young Turks Policy by using Hüseyin Kazim as an example. He was a senior Ottoman provincial administrator during the young Turks period, serving in Macedonia as *mutasarrif*-sub-governor of Serez and subsequently as *vali*-governor of the *vilayet* of Salonika.

According to Hüseyin Kazim, the government set out to openly protect the centralists against the supremacists who hoped for annexation to Bulgaria. In the centralists way of thinking "Makedonia for the Macedonians". Thus, the Young Turks supported the centralist against the supremacist by all means. Indeed, in Hüseyin Kazim's view, it was not logical because the main purpose of the constitution was to keep the Empire with all the subject together. So, the centralist demands were against the main principle, in other words against the constitution. However, the Young Turks believed it and considered the centralist bandits friends of the Empire. It can be seen very clearly that all the nations within the Empire had supported the Young Turks movement in this region. But now the Young Turks preferred each other, and used them in the same way. As was the case, the Young Turks changed their policy. This change in policy caused the population to despair and to doubt the government's impartiality. Now let us make it a bit more clear by using Hüseyin Kazim's memory; The Young Turks administration in Macedonia not only protected every side of the centralist leaders but it also gave them a considerable amount of money. Take Sandasky as an example, he was an administrative counselor of the *nahiyes*/sub-district and *vilayet* of Salonika. The crucial point for him is that the Young Turks used him for their own purposes such as all officials from the *kaymakams-district governors* of the *kazas* to The Müdürs (Principals) of the *nahiyes* and village watchmen were hired and fired in

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. Shaw, S.J; The History of the Ottoman Empire, pp.207-211

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. For detail see Feroz Ahmed Khan Yasemee "Nationality InThe Balkan: The Case Of The Macedonians" available in the Research Centre at the University of Macheater.

accordance with his views and approval. Indeed, it was not a decent policy which the Young Turks applied. In addition to these, the comrades, supporters and accomplices of this traitor were placed in the most important offices.<sup>19</sup>

The centralist-supremacist policy of the Young Turks caused a terrible dissension, and ambition in Macedonia, and shook the population's confidence. After seeing this the people of the Ottoman Balkans understood that the constitution was not the real solution because the first election under the new constitution returned a substantial Muslim majority to the parliament. From the outset it was apparent that the young Turks had no intention of establishing a real constitutional system in which power would be adequately shared with the Christians or non-Turk Muslims. Indeed, it can be argued that at that time it was difficult to make people, both Christians and Muslims alike, happy except giving them independence or at least autonomy.<sup>20</sup>

Now let us turn back to the Young Turks Policy, in Macedonia the government entered upon a systematic policy of strengthening the Muslim element by bringing colonists into the regions where the Turks were weak. The policy of seeking a balance by setting the various ethnic groups at each other brought great trouble. Thus, for each group understood that it had been deceived and they all allied together.<sup>21</sup>

Above all, the Young Turks within Macedonia decided upon a most important measure to solve the Macedonian problem-to provoke a revolution in Bulgaria, to throw bombs in Sofia, and to despatch bandit bands, thus taking revenge on Bulgaria which tried to influence the Ottoman domestic affairs in Macedonia. For this purpose, an organization was set up and thousands of *Lira* spent. One of the centralist leaders called Serafim took charge of this business and worked at it.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Albanians and the Young Turks**

While the nationalism idea took place among the Albanians, a new political factor was emerging at the heart of the Ottoman Balkans and this factor was being to exercise a growing influence on the course of events in Albania. This, as mentioned previously, was the movement of the Young Turks. From the beginning, the movement had attracted a number of Albanian leaders, who saw in it the best hope of achieving the recognition of the rights of the Albanian nation and preventing its dismemberment. Indeed, the Young Turks called to overthrow Abdulhamid II's despotic regime, and in particular their promise to grant

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<sup>19</sup> The Memory of H. Kazim, translation provided by Feroz Ahmed Khan Yasamee of Manchester University.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

democratic freedoms and provincial autonomy to oppressed nations, had a certain impact on Albania. Meanwhile, some Albanian nationalist leaders believed that the way to achieve administrative autonomy was not by isolated armed rebellions, but by collaboration between all nationalities that oppressed by the Empire which included the Turks themselves - in a democratic revolution against the absolutist regime of the Sultan. This would then be replaced by a constitution based on the principle of decentralization of imperial power and on the granting of autonomy to provinces of different nationalities.<sup>23</sup>

All these ideas were suitable to the Albanian nationalists so that they would gain their independence. Thus, the Albanians supported the young Turks movement against the Sultan. For example, in July 1908 this took on a particular significance: 20,000 armed Albanian gathered at Firzovik and demanded that the Sultan proclaim the constitution. The movement then joined a rebellion by several Turkish garrisons in the Vilayet of Monastir. Thus, with the active participation of the Albanians, the bourgeois revolution triumphed in Turkey.<sup>24</sup>

In Albania the proclamation of the constitution was received as a great turning point in the life of the Empire, a turning point which marked the end of the Sultan's century-long autocracy and the beginning of a new era of freedom, equality and civilization. The Albanians greeted the announcement of the constitution as a historic victory. Spontaneous demonstrations celebrated the Young Turks revolution in every town. The warriors of the patriotic bands came down from the mountains and within a few weeks in all of Albania, Albanian patriotic clubs were created.<sup>25</sup>

On their initiative, Albanian newspapers began for the first time to publish freely in Albania, and the teaching of the Albanian mother tongue proceeded without fear. In addition to these, many political exiles returned.<sup>26</sup>

As they acclaimed the revolution, the whole country made clear that it expected the Young Turks to grant them the promised national rights and, above all, autonomy for a united Albania. But it was their misunderstanding. The Young Turks had no sooner consolidated their authority. Then they began to take steps to limit and then to crush the movement for Albanian autonomy, claiming that the Albanians were Ottoman subject, and as such were obliged to observe the law of the Empire. Once the Young Turks established their power, the promises were trampled under foot. Since they immediately recognized "Ottomanism" as the

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<sup>23</sup> Frasheri, History of Albania, pp.136-170

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. Pollo and Puto, History of Albania, pp.114-144

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

main theory within the limits of the Empire. Hence, they were Ottoman subject alone, “equal before the law” and subject only to the central power of the Porte.<sup>27</sup>

Seeing the Young Turks policy both in Albania and Macedonia, the Albanian were disappointed. Thus, the Ottoman Balkans once again became a battle field. The Albanian nationalist leaders led the rebellion, drawing up a programme which demanded administrative and cultural autonomy for Albania. While the Albanian demands were still in progress, in Albania as well as throughout the entire Ottoman Empire, the campaign for the election of deputies to the Turkish Parliament was going on. During the election campaign many Albanian patriots announced their candidacy for deputy. By means of intimidation and corruption, and using subtle methods of propaganda, as a result of their policy, the Young Turks administration did its utmost to eliminate the opposition candidates in Albania. Thus, the Young Turks gained the majority throughout the Empire. It was one of the main mistakes of the Young Turk's. Thus, in the Ottoman Parliament many Albanian deputies waged open war against the policy of the Young Turks on diverse point.<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, one of the Albanian deputies within the Ottoman Parliament, İsmail Kemal, with the aim of gathering the adversaries of the Young Turks in one common front, founded the *Ahrar* Party with liberal tendencies and contradictory programmatic points of view, which demanded, among other things, decentralization of the administration which the Young Turks against, and autonomy of provinces of the Empire on the basis of the nationality.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to these, After returning power in 1909, the Young Turks continued their crucial policy of denying the Albanian national rights. Now it was necessary for the unionists to get their prestige back. So, as soon as they had secured the majority in Parliament the Young Turks took a series of steps in order to strengthen especially in Albania, the centralized authority and began to stamp out, by means of military force, the demands for nationality rights, and began to set their centralized administration up and to conscript recruits in the mountainous regions. Thereafter, relations between the Young Turks and the nationalist groups deteriorated. During the winter and spring of 1910 a fierce conflict arose between the two groups over the Albanian alphabet, for the Young Turk insisted on the use of Arabic letters so as to keep the Albanians from the nationalist publication. The huge popular gatherings held at the time in favour of the Latin Alphabet was seen an important sign of a development in the political maturity of the masses and in their national consciousness. The Young Turks could not be silence against such an event. For this purpose they made immediate declaration saying that; the law for

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<sup>27</sup> Frasheri, History of Albania, pp. 163-166; Pollo and Puto; History of Albania, pp.137-138

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

the guerrilla groups decree capital punishment for anyone who found to be connected with the nationalist gangs. In addition to this, the new and arbitrary taxes, plus obligatory military service in the Turkish army, became official. Using all these as a method the Young Turks wished to make the people weak, and obedience to the Porte.<sup>30</sup>

The Young Turks were determined to suppress the Albanian nationalist movement at all cost in order to preserve the Empire in the Balkans for as long as was possible. As a result of the Young Turks' policy the discontent of the Albanians had grown to the extent that in the spring of 1910, as the Young Turks' Government levied new taxes from the population of Vilayet of Kosovo, an armed revolt broke out in Pristina, spread over the other cities within a very short period of time. After defeating the government forces, İstanbul charged the General Saffet Turgut Pasha with the special army corps of Rumelia to carry out large-scale operations, smash the libations revolts, disarm the population and recruit new soldiers by force. The revolt, however, had taken such vast proportions that the Minister of war, Marshal Mahmud Şevket Pasha had to come personally with fresh forces to the aid of the army corps of Şevket Turgut Pasha. The revolt was put down. The Albanian national movement was not taken under control, other revolts would soon follow.<sup>31</sup>

The Young Turks became very much aware of the growing opposition of various national groups in Parliament simultaneously the Albanian national movements. So, The Young Turks decided to dissolve it on 18 January 1912. They assumed that the new election, which had been fixed for April, would give them a huge majority, enabling them to get rid of their opponents and set up their dictatorship openly. However, in the face of the unexpected spread of the uprising, on July 22, 1912, as the Albanian rebellions were marching victoriously into Prishtine, in İstanbul the opponents of the Young Turks, among them the partisans of *Hürriyet ve Itilaf*, formed a new government presided over by Ahmed Muhtar Pasha<sup>32</sup>.

The situation in Albania did not change. One of the most pressing jobs of the new government was to extinguish the fire of the revolt in Albania, and for this reason it requested that the leaders of the revolt stop fighting and start negotiating at once with the government delegations sent to the rebels saying that; the revolution in the country was over and in its place a rational and logical administration was going to be implemented.<sup>33</sup> But, the Albanians did not give up the revolt as the new government had thought. The unstable conditions in this region continued until the Albanian independence.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Aksin, Jon Türkler ve İttihat ve Terakki, pp.185-204. Frasher, History of Albania, pp. 166-168.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

In the autumn of 1912 the Balkan states of Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro formed an alliance against the Porte. Montenegro declared war on 8 October 1912, the other states following on 17 October.<sup>34</sup>

In one month the Turkish army was defeated and the Empire in Europe had been overthrown. The First Balkan war was a perfect opportunity for the Albanians to gain their independence. It happened that after the necessary preparations, delegates from all over Albania met at the congress in Vlore. The congress, presided over by İsmail Kemal Vlora, the experienced Albanian politician and diplomat, proclaimed Albania an independent state on 28 November 1912. Thus, the Turkish Empire lost its sovereignty in the Balkan Peninsula.<sup>35</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In this paper it has been shown that the Young Turks used different methods in power to control people of the Ottoman Balkan Peninsula. The methods were as follows: To take away their weapons and leave them defenceless, to collaborate with some groups and put them against others groups, to spend money in order to gain people's support, to bring colonists into the regions where the Turkish population was weak and to increase the taxes in order to make people powerless, and obedient. Last one not least to set up bandit groups, and use them for some specific purpose. Finally, eliminate all the opponents within the Parliament by using any means possible, and establish the Young Turk dictatorship.

The Young Turks used these methods in order to survive the crumbling Empire in the Balkan Peninsula. Now the question can be asked once again; were the Young Turks successful by using these methods? The answer, after having seen the lost the Ottomans' sovereignty in the rest of the Balkan in 1912, was absolutely not.

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<sup>34</sup> Archon, *The Rise of Nationality in the Balkans*, pp. 89-94.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

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