

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS INSTITUTE
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MASTER THESIS

**AN ANALYSIS AND TRANSLATION OF SAID HALIM
PASHA'S "İSLAM'DA TEŞKİLAT-I SİYASSİYE"**

THOMAS DAKOTA SIMPKINS

THESIS SUPERVISOR

ASST. PROF. VAHDETTİN İŞİK

İSTANBUL, 2021

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by

THOMAS DAKOTA SIMPKINS

**A thesis submitted to the Alliance of Civilizations Institute in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Civilization
Studies**

THESIS SUPERVISOR

ASST. PROF. VAHDETTİN IŞIK

ISTANBUL, 2021

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Civilization Studies

Thesis Jury Members

Title - Name Surname

Opinion

Signature

This is to confirm that this thesis complies with all the standards set by the Alliance of Civilization Institute of Ibn Haldun University.

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Signature:

ÖZ

SAID HALİM PAŞA'NIN “İSLAM'DA TEŞKİLAT-I SİYASSİYE” ADLI ESERİ BİR
ANALİZ VE CEVİRİ

Simpkins, Thomas

Medeniyet Araştırmalarında Yüksek Lisans

Öğrenci Numarası: 185070011

Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID): 0000-0001-9811-9488

Ulusal Tez Merkezi Referans Numarası: 10428439

Tez Danışmanı: Asst. Prof. Vahdettin Işık

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Said Halim Paşa, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun son sadrazamlarından biri ve önde gelen bir İslamcı aydın olmasına rağmen, uzun zamandır küçümsenen bir figür olmuştur. Burada Said Halim Paşa'nın İslam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye adlı makalesinin Fransızca orijinalinden yola çıkarak mevcut Osmanlıca ve İngilizce tercümelerini de dikkate alarak tenkitli bir tercümesini sunacağım. Daha sonra Cambridge entelektüel tarih okulundan esinlenerek metnin analizine geçeceğim ve Said Halim Paşa, İslam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye ile ne yapmak niyetindeydi ve niyetini önceki ve çağdaş söylemler bağlamında nasıl anlayabiliriz sorusuna cevap bulmaya çalışacağım. Genellikle bir “gelenekçi” olarak anılmasına rağmen, Said Halim Paşa'nın büyük ölçüde Osmanlı'nın geç dönem İslami bir modernite, yani alternatif veya müzakere edilmiş bir “modernite” yaratma girişimi içinde anlaşılması gerektiğini iddia edeceğim. Said Halim Paşa, özellikle bilim ve din arasında bir çelişki ortaya koyan büyüyen bir pozitivizm bağlamında, temsili ve modern bir İslam devletinin temelini oluşturmak üzere Şeriat egemenliğinin bilimsel zemini olarak gördüğü şeyi yaratmayı amaçlamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Entelektüel Tarih; İslamcılık; İslami Devlet; İslami Modernleşme; Jon Türkler; Said Halim Paşa

ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS AND TRANSLATION OF SAID HALIM PASHA'S "İSLAM'DA TEŞKİLAT-I SİYASSİYE"

Simpkins, Thomas

MA in Civilization Studies

Student ID: 185070011

Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID): 0000-0001-9811-9488

National Thesis Reference Center: 10428439

Thesis Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Vahdettin Işık

September 2021, 115 Pages

Despite being one of the Ottoman Empire's last grand viziers and a prominent Islamist intellectual, Said Halim Pasha has long been an underrated figure. I will provide a critical translation of Said Halim Pasha's essay *İslam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye*, based on the French original, while taking note of the existing Ottoman and English translations. I will then move to an analysis of the text, where inspired by the Cambridge School of intellectual history, I will attempt to answer the question "What did Said Halim Pasha intend to do with "İslam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye" and how can we understand his intention within the context of preceding and contemporary discourses?" Despite usually being understood as a "traditionalist," I will argue that Said Halim Pasha should largely be understood within a late Ottoman attempt to create an Islamic modernity, that is an alternative or negotiated "modernity." Specifically within the context of a growing positivism which posited a contradiction between science and religion, Said Halim Pasha intended to create what he saw as scientific grounds for the Sharia's sovereignty to form the basis for a representative and modern Islamic state.

Keywords: Intellectual history; Islamic modernization; Islamic State; Islamism; Said Halim Pasha; Young Turks

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Thomas Simpkins

ISTANBUL, 2021

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“I went on, and saw two men engaged in prayer,
the acolyte a Turk, the leader an Afghan.
The Sage of Rum, in rapture continually,
his face radiant with an ecstasy of joy, said,
‘The East never gave birth to two better sons—
... and passionate Halim, commander of the Turks,
whose thoughts matched the loftiness of his station.
To offer prayer with such men is true devotion,”¹

The above lines are taken from the poet Muhammad Iqbal’s epic poem *Javidnama*. Along the lines of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, the poem depicts Iqbal’s journey through the heavens as he is escorted by none other than the Sufi master Celaddin Rumi (the Sage of Rum). In this particular section, Rumi has taken him to the sphere of Mercury where Iqbal hears the sound of the *adhan*, the Islamic call to prayer. Rumi mentions that the spot is sanctified due to Adam spending a few days here after being cast out of heaven, making it a customary place for saints and pious men to offer prayers.² Here the pious men offering prayer are none other than “the father of Pan-Islamism” Jamaladdin Al-

¹ Muhammad Iqbal, *Javidnama* trans. by Arthur J. Arberry, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966), 54.

² Syed Tanvir Wasti, “Said Halim Pasha – Philosopher Prince,” *Middle Eastern Studies* vol. 44, no 1, (January, 2008), 88.

Afghani and Said Halim Pasha, depicted as his spiritual descendant as symbolized by him following al-Afghani in prayer. Said Halim Pasha, however, was effusively praised not only by Muhammad Iqbal, the future national poet of Pakistan, but also a close friend of Mehmet Akif, the author of the Turkish national anthem.³

Said Halim Pasha was the grandson of Muhammad Ali, often thought as the founder of modern Egypt, and was one of the last grand viziers of the Ottoman Empire, holding the office leading up to and during World War I. Even more than being “the commander of the Turks, Said Halim Pasha is known for a series of essays that were published in the French originals and Ottoman translations in Istanbul and various European capitals between 1910 and 1921.⁴ However, after his death, he would quickly fall into obscurity. He was initially ignored in the early Turkish republic and it took it forty years for his writings to be re-published in modern Turkish, there is now a wealth of literature on him in Turkish. He, however, remains for the most part an obscure figure outside of Turkey today. I, for example, could not find a single academic article in Arabic on him worth noting. This is most likely due to three factors. The first is the Ottoman Empire’s collapse, as blame escapes almost none who live through periods of decline and collapse. The second is the degree to which his ideas are deemed starkly different to what eventually won out. Third, is that someone who was born in Egypt, raised in Istanbul, but wrote in French, would not easily fit into the categories of future nation-states, leading no nation to take up his mantle. As Kayali summarizes it,

Said Halim has not only been dismissed as an ineffective statesman, but his work also has remained buried. His Egyptian princely pedigree, his preference for French over Ottoman Turkish in his writings, his staunch and methodical defence of Islam as the basis of the state, and his association with the Unionist *bêtes noires* made him an unlikely candidate for Republican veneration.⁵

However, these factors make him a perfect figure for intellectual history. Perhaps, the most interesting fact for an intellectual history of his period is the fact that Said Halim Pasha, despite his clear “Islamist” convictions, served as grand vizier under the “Young

³ Wasti, “Philosopher Prince,” 100.

⁴ Ahmet Şeyhun, “An Ottoman Statesman and An Islamist Thinker (1865–1921)” PhD diss., (McGill University, 2002), 11.

⁵ Kayali, “Islam in the Thought and Politics of Late Ottoman Intellectuals: Mehmed Akif and Said Halim,” *Archivum Ottomanicum* vol. XIX (2001), 309.

Turks,” who are usually thought solely as a secularizing force which paved the way for the establishment of the Turkish Republic. While this picture will have to be slightly complicated, a detailed intellectual history of Said Halim Pasha and his context will make it easier to understand how an avowed Islamist served with a majority-secularist party. The main focus in this thesis will be on his “staunch and methodical defence of Islam as the basis of the state,” specifically the last essay he wrote in his life, *Islam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye* (The Political Regime in Islam), which was published posthumously only a couple of weeks after his assassination. While the essay culminates in an argument for the Islamic state, the bulk of the text in fact focuses on the philosophical and social bases of political organizations and how they differ in the Western and Islamic worlds. It is only in the final parts of the essay that he turns to the details of his vision for a constitutional Islamic state.

In this thesis, I will provide a translation of Said Halim Pasha's last essay *Islam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye*, while making a number of comparisons and notes on existing translations, some of which have resulted in a number of important misunderstandings. A text as multi-layered as *Islam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye*, possessing a French original, two Ottoman translations, and numerous English and modern Turkish translations since, of varying qualities, deserves a critical edition. Even more than a new translation, a fresh look at the importance of this figure is warranted. The degree to which he is unknown in the Anglosphere means the majority of the literature functions as an introduction to him in one manner or another, whether his biography, works or political career, or all three. They however make very little contributions in the way of analysis and theoretical reflection, and several of the works even have serious grammatical mistakes. However, perhaps more importantly, the existing literature mostly takes the modern-traditional and religious/secular binaries seriously and expends effort in categorizing him on either side. However, a growing body of literature within Ottoman studies has increasingly complicated these binaries and instead emphasized the degree to which religion played a role in legitimizing the modernization process.

Leaving aside the thorny question of how to define “Islamic,” I will argue that Said Halim Pasha should largely be understood within a late Ottoman attempt to create an

Islamic modernity, or an alternative or negotiated “modernity,” that is, a modernity that negotiates with the needs of Muslim society, as he would put it. For far too long, Ottomanists have seen any move in the social and public sphere legitimized by religion as obviously disingenuous. The significance of this thesis is not so much that an argument was made for modernity from an Islamic discourse, but its lateness and Said Halim Pasha’s connection to the CUP. This means that even on the verge of the Turkish Republic, and indeed in its early years, there were some who continued to wish for an “Islamic state.” This represents a major challenge to the view of an inevitable secular telos. For this my methodology in this endeavor, I have relied on the Cambridge School of intellectual history. Considering the school’s instrumental role in changing views on modernity in Europe, emphasizing the degree to which the earlier tradition of “civic republicanism” played a role in the French and American revolutions, it is only fitting it be used for a similar revision of modernity in the Ottoman context.⁶

This thesis consists of three main chapters. This introductory chapter consists of five subsections. Section 1.1 gives a biographical overview, especially focusing on his political career. This is important not only for his history, as his political experience shaped his thought, but also historiography, as authors often overly his thought to his political experiences. Section 1.2 gives an overview of the other works he wrote throughout his life, while 1.3 introduces and summarizes the text at hand. 1.4 reviews the existing English literature on Said Halim Pasha and a number of systematic issues in the literature hitherto. 1.5 reviews the literature on Islam and modernity. The methodology present in section 1.5 seeks to remedy some of these issues through loosely adhering to the Cambridge School of Intellectual History.

Chapter 2 presents a translation of *İslam’da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye*. Chapter 3 then moves to an analysis of the text. Section 3.1 makes some necessary comments about the intellectual context of 18th and 19th century Ottoman Empire in order to understand the analysis that follows. Section 3.2 introduces the text’s first major theme, the Sharia as the natural law, and the relationship between science and religion. Section 3.3 present

⁶ See for example, Pocock John Greville Agard, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975).

the Pasha's critique on National Sovereignty, especially as an alternative to the ideas of solidarity present at the time. Section 3.4 presents his vision for a Representative Islamic state and how the branches of government are divided through government bodies. The thesis then ends with a number of conclusions and suggestions for future research.

1.1 Biography

Said Halim Pasha was born in Cairo, most likely between 1864 and 1865. Bostan in his "Bir Islamci Dusunur" gives the date of February 21, 1864, as based on the *Sicil-I Ahval* registers.⁷ Şeyhun, however, gives the date of January 28, 1865 as based on Said Halim Pasha's own biography at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in family notes.⁸ His father, Prince Halim Pasha, was the younger son of Muhammad/Mehmet Ali Pasha, the modernizer of Egypt who came close to overthrowing the Ottoman dynasty.⁹ When in 1866, Sultan Abdülaziz excluded Said Halim's father from the line of succession to the Egyptian throne, Prince Halim attempted a *coup d'état* to overthrow the Khedive Ismail. The coup was put down and resulted in Prince Halim and his family being exiled to Istanbul.¹⁰

Like the elites of his age, Said Halim Pasha was educated in Istanbul by private tutors. He is reported to have been fluent in Turkish, Arabic, Persian, English and French due to this education, though he would later write exclusively in French.¹¹ He later went to Switzerland where he studied political science for five years. The deep knowledge of European history and political philosophy he gained in the course of his studies is clear in his writing. In May 1888, Prince Halim started his career in the Hamidian administration with his appointment to the State Council. He was quickly promoted and

⁷ Henefi Bostan, *Bir Islamci düşünür Said Halim Paşa*. (Istanbul : Irfan Yayınevi, 1992), 17. For a modern Turkish translation of the *Sicil-I Ahval* register for Said Halim Pasha, see Ismail Kara, *Müslüman Kalarak, Avrupalı Olmak Çağdaş Türk Düşüncesinde Din Siyaset Tarih Medeniyet* (Istanbul: Dergah, 2018), 426-427.

⁸ Şeyhun, "An Ottoman Statesman," 73.

⁹ For more on Mehmet Ali, see Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cairo, 2002).

¹⁰ Michelangelo Guida, "The Life and Political Ideas of Grand Vezir Said Halim Pasha," *İslâm Araştırmaları Dergisi* Sayı 18, (2007), 105.

¹¹ Syed Tanvir Wasti, "Said Halim Pasha – Philosopher Prince," *Middle Eastern Studies* vol. 44, no 1, (January, 2008), 86.

awarded a number of medals and honors by Abdulhamid, most likely to assure his and his family's loyalty.¹² Suspicions began to grow over his sympathies for the Young Turks or the Committee of Union and Progress, and his career would end abruptly and he would be forced into exile for five years after a search of his mansion confirmed these suspicions.¹³ However, the exile in fact only pushed from being a mere sympathizer to an activist. He went first to Paris in 1905, becoming an official member of CUP. He would then later move to Egypt, a hotspot for Young Turk sympathizers, due to its legacy of modernization under his grandfather, and became a financier of the journal *Osmanli*.¹⁴

A quick word is due here on the Young Ottoman and the later Young Turks. The Young Ottomans were a small, but influential group of intellectuals active during the late Tanzimat period, from 1867-1878.¹⁵ While the Young Ottomans have a varied legacy, their main contribution to Turkish thought was a widespread popularization of the idea of constitutionalism. Aiming for a genuine synthesis of an Islamic framework and Western political ideas, they re-adopted Islamic terms such as *meşveret* (consultation) to constitutionalism, *halk* (people) to mean a political community, and *millet* (religious community) to mean nation, and introduced novel terms such as *hürriyet* (liberty) and *vatan* (motherland).¹⁶ The Young Ottomans did not however wholesale adopt all liberal Western ideas, but declared some to be hollow imitations, and often differed in their particular re/interpretations and syntheses.¹⁷ The Young Ottoman movement gained political momentum when a group of high-ranking statesmen decided to overthrow Sultan Abdulaziz in favor of the crown prince Murad who had convinced them of his support for a constitution. Drawing back on his promises, after a period of turbulence, he was then replaced by his uncle Abdulhamid II, who also came to the throne by

¹² Şeyhun, "An Ottoman Statesmen," 75-76.

¹³ Guida, "Life and Political Ideas," 105.

¹⁴ Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: a Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 191; Şeyhun, "An Ottoman Statesmen," 80

¹⁵ Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 3.

¹⁶ Sohrabi, *Revolution and Constitutionalism in the Ottoman Empire and Iran*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 40-41.

¹⁷ Sohrabi, *Revolution and Constitutionalism*, 39.

promising to instate a constitution for the Ottoman Empire.¹⁸ He would one year later annul the parliament and constitution, citing disagreements with parliament and its inefficiency. He would rule over the Ottoman domains for thirty-three years and would be the final sultan to hold effective power. His reign would see the most extensive modernization of the Empire, and many have pointed out that it was, ironically, the modern schools he established that would produce the Young Turks.¹⁹

However, many were discontented with his reign's absolutism. In 1889, a number of Ottoman dissidents formed a secret organization in Paris, the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress (CUP).²⁰ While the platform that unified the various branches of the CUP and their allies was the constitution's reinstatement, they should be perhaps be understood as modernists first and foremost, as they primarily saw a constitution as a means to the end of saving the empire through modernization, rather than as valuable in itself.²¹ In terms of their ideological beliefs, they often showed a strong commitment to Social Darwinism, positivism, and elitism and promoted an ideal society based on these ideas, a key difference between them and the Young Ottomans.²² Sohrabi summarizes the Young Turks' differences with the Young Ottomans as "greater radicalism, lesser Islamism, greater emphasis on progress, a strong statist orientation, and a sense of Turkish nationalism..."²³ Zurcher has pointed out that the Young Turks "were primarily male, Muslim, urban, literate offspring of state employees who were educated in modern schools. Many of them hailed from the European provinces, particularly the southern Balkans."²⁴ In this sense, Said Halim Pasha stands out both in terms of his ethnic origin and elite background.

¹⁸ Sohrabi, *Revolution and Constitutionalism*, 41. See Robert Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period, A Study of the Midhat Constitution* for the establishment and procedures of the first Ottoman Parliament.

¹⁹ Sohrabi, *Revolution and Constitutionalism*, 48.

²⁰ Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: the Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics: 1908-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 6.

²¹ Robert Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period: a Study of the Midhat Constitution and Parliament* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1964), 28.

²² Hanoğlu M. Şükrü, *Preparation for a Revolution: the Young Turks, 1902-1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3.

²³ Sohrabi, *Revolution and Constitutionalism*, 61.

²⁴ Erik-Jan Zurcher, "The Young Turks: Children of the Borderlands?" " *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 9 (2003): 279–81.)

The end to Abdulhamid II's reign would come as events spiraled out of control in Macedonia. The troops sent by Abdulhamid to suppress a mutiny instead sided with the CUP, who promptly declared the constitution's reinstatement in Monastir and Macedonia's other major cities. On July 24th, 1908, Abdulhamid relented and declared the Constitution's promulgation, beginning the Second Constitutional Period.²⁵ The CUP would soon face a challenge to their *de facto* rule as an armed insurrection in Istanbul on April 13, 1909 forced the CUP out of Istanbul for nine days. They demanded the "restoration of the sharia" and the dismissal of Unionist officers and ministers, including the grand vizier and the ministers of war and navy.²⁶ This opposition group consisted of lower-ranking soldiers in the army, the conservative lower-ranking ulema and some Sufi leaders who were organized around the Volkan newspaper and the Society of Muhammedan Union (*İttihad-ı Muhammedi Cemiyeti*) led by the Naqshbandi sheikh Derviş Vahdeti. While the counter-revolution has traditionally been depicted as a religious movement or even "fundamentalist," Sohrabi instead emphasizes the role of social tensions, specifically among the ranker soldiers against the higher-ranking officers of the CUP.²⁷ It is largely a legacy of the Young Ottomans that upon a careful analysis of their writings, even the "Society of Islam" famous for instigating the counter-revolution should not be understood as complete anti-constitutionalists, but rather as an attempt to incorporate stronger "Islamic" elements.²⁸ In response, the Unionist "Action Army" from Macedonia occupied the city with the support of the CUP-dominated parliament. While the evidence points to none of the parties involved being in favor of giving power back to Abdulhamid, and Abdulhamid himself not in favor of their action, the counterrevolution nonetheless resulted in his exile.²⁹ On April 27, 1909, Parliament voted to depose and exile Abdulhamid and replace him with his younger brother, Mehmed Reşad V.³⁰

²⁵ Şeyhun, "An Ottoman Statesmen," 86.

²⁶ Nurullah Ardiç, *Islam and the Politics of Secularism: The Caliphate and Middle Eastern Modernization in the Early 20th Century*. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 149.

²⁷ Sohrabi, *Revolution and Constitutionalism*, 224.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 283.

²⁹ Şeyhun, "An Ottoman Statesmen," 110.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 111.

After the Constitution's restoration on July 24th, Said Halim Pasha like many Young Turk exiles returned to Istanbul on 23 July 1908.³¹ He quickly re-entered politics, running as the CUP's candidate for the mayor of Yeniköy.³² He further became one of the Sultan's thirty-nine appointees to Senate upon its establishment on December 14th, 1908.³³ Said Halim Pasha headed the Ottoman delegation to Lausanne to end the Ottoman-Italian war in Libya. Italy rejected his offer of ceding Tripolitania to Italy, and keeping the rest of Cyrenaica (Eastern Libya) for the Ottomans and with the fall of Said Pasha (not to be confused with Said Halim Pasha) as grand vizier, the new cabinet did not renew the Pasha's delegacy.³⁴ The situation in Libya would soon be overshadowed by events in Europe, as Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia declared war on the Ottoman Empire. As the situation on the battlefield eventually changed in the Ottoman's favor, negotiations over Edirne and the Aegean Islands took place between the Ottomans and the Great Powers. However, due to the reigning cabinet's proclivity to accept the terms offered by the Powers, the CUP organized a coup and forced the aging Kamil Pasha to resign from the grand vizierate at gun-point. Said Halim Pasha is reported to be among the organizers of this coup.³⁵

Following Mahmud Şevket Pasha's assassination by anti-unionists, the CUP would respond harshly. On the same day of the assassination, CUP members had an audience with the Sultan and recommended Said Halim Pasha's appointment as Grand Vizier (*Sadrızam*). The Sultan finally relented the next day, signing an imperial decree on June 12, 1913 making Said Halim Pasha the new grand vizier. Guida points out that his government, serving from June 17, 1913 until February 3, 1917, was in fact the longest of the entire Second Constitutional Period."³⁶ Said Halim Pasha had several traits that made him an attractive candidate to be the head of the CUP government. First, as an Arab, his appointment could help assuage Arab fears about the CUP's policies of Turkification. However, Guida perhaps overstates the case when he argues that his

³¹ Heneft Bostan, *Bir İslamcı düşünür Said Halim Paşa*. (Istanbul : İrfan Yayınevi, 1992), 23.

³² Bostan, *Bir İslamcı Düşünür*, 26.

³³ Şeyhun, "An Ottoman Statesmen," 89.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 117.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 123.

³⁶ Guida, "Life and Political Ideas," 106.

appointment was inter alia to placate Arab opinion.³⁷ Said Halim Pasha had the further advantage being of noble background, like most of the CUP's appointees. The CUP, aware of their own lower social status, preferred to operate as a "government within a government."³⁸ Nonetheless, Seyhun argues against the usual view of him as a puppet in the "trimivurate's" hand and rather portrays him as a counterbalance to Enver and Talat. He especially notes that the CUP's most secular legal reforms only came after his dismissal.³⁹ This point is further echoed by Işık.⁴⁰

War would soon break out again in the Balkans, with an unhappy Bulgaria declaring war on Greece and Serbia. As Greek and Serbian armies defeated Bulgaria in the field, the Ottomans decided to act. Said Halim Pasha played a key role in persuading the cabinet to re-take Edirne and Eastern Thrace and subsequently stand strong against Western threats of invasion.⁴¹ As a result of Said Halim Pasha's efforts, Edirne, and the islands of Kırklareli and Dimetoka were handed back to the Ottomans on 29 September 1913 with the signing of the Istanbul Treaty with Bulgaria.⁴² On the eve of World War I, Said Halim Pasha as the grand vizier attempted to keep his country out of the war, later calling the policy he desired at the time "armed neutrality."⁴³ He responded to the *fait accompli* of the Ottoman Empire entering the war with despondency and was narrowly convinced to not resign.⁴⁴ While it is probably only due to Said Halim Pasha's personal intervention that the break between the Amir of Mecca and the Unionists did not take place prior to World War I,⁴⁵ Sharif Husayn's revolt during the war would nonetheless prove fatal to his career, in addition to the failure of Egypt, his homeland, to revolt on behalf of the Ottomans.⁴⁶ Indeed, if we agree with Hanioglu's assessment that the CUP

³⁷ Guida, "Life and Political Ideas," 106. It is not entirely clear if the statement is Guida's one or someone else's, as it is placed in quotation marks, but without reference.

³⁸ Sohrabi, *Revolution and Constitutionalism*, 25.

³⁹ Şeyhun, "An Ottoman Statesmen," 18.

⁴⁰ Vahdettin Işık, *Said Halim Paşa Bir Islah Düşünürünün Hayatı, Düşüncesi ve Eserleri*. (Istanbul: Ketebe, 2018), 10.

⁴¹ Şeyhun, "An Ottoman Statesmen," 135.

⁴² Elçin Karlı, "The Concept of State in Said Halim Pasha and Ziya Gökalp," MA Thesis, (Fatih University, January 2010), 25.

⁴³ Şeyhun, "An Ottoman Statesmen," 267. Ironically, after its experiences in World War I, Turkey would follow a similar policy in World War II.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 165-168.

⁴⁵ Ahmad, *The Young Turks*, 137.

⁴⁶ Şeyhun, "An Ottoman Statesmen," 189.

used the competing discourses of Turkism, Ottomanism and Islamism to the point of “political opportunism,” then Sharif Husayn’s revolt was a sign that Islamism’s usefulness for the CUP had run out.⁴⁷

With the war’s conclusion, Allied troops occupied Istanbul and although various courts were established to try important persons for their role in World War I and the massacres against Anatolia’s Armenians. However, the Greek invasion of the Aegean led the British to instead exile the detainees to Malta, where Britain held many of its prisoners, on May 19, 1919.⁴⁸ Said Halim Pasha would stay there until 29 April 1921, when he released as per an agreement signed between Ankara and the British on March 16th 1921, when the British agreed to exchange the release sixty four of the Ottoman prisoners. Neither able to go to Istanbul, blocked both by the British and the Ottoman government, nor Egypt, a British colony, he went to Rome. Guida mentions that the Italian government “intended to gain a greater political and economic influence in Anatolia by building good relations with leading figures of the dismantled CUP.”⁴⁹ The Italians would quickly realize that this policy would not win it any favors with the new Ankara government and changed course. In Rome, Said Halim Pasha would spend the last months of his life and write the text at hand before being assassinated by the Armenian militant Arshavir Shiragian, who also assassinated a number of other CUP figures.⁵⁰ While as grand vizier, he had endorsed Talat Bey’s deportation bill in the assembly on May 26, 1915, Said Halim Pasha categorically denied responsibility and knowledge of the events in post-war interrogations. He was released before the investigation concluded due to a lack of proof and the new national assembly in

⁴⁷ Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, 289-301.

⁴⁸ Wasti, “Philosopher Prince,” 87.

⁴⁹ Guida, “Life and Political Ideas,” 107. However, Guida does not mention that the Italy-Turkish relations were far deeper. Italy even actively the young Turks fight against the Greek occupation of Anatolia, and Italy was the first unofficial representation abroad for the Ankara government. For more on the Italian influence on the Young Ottomans, see Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 21-23.; for more on Italy’s relationship with the Young Turks, see the Italian Diplomat’s Count Carlo Sforza’s memoirs “Fifty Years of Diplomacy in the Balkans.”

⁵⁰ For Arshavir’s memoirs see “The Legacy: Memoirs of an Armenian Patriot” translated by Sonia Shiragian. They have also been translated into Turkish as “Arşavir Şıracıyan, Bir Ermeni Teröristin İtirafı, İstanbul 1997 Kastaş Yayınevi.”

Ankara's pressure against British occupation.⁵¹ Said Halim Pasha's body was brought to Istanbul on 29 January 1922. In a ceremony starting from his waterside residence in Yeniköy, today a popular venue for holding weddings, he was brought to rest next to his father in the garden of Sultan Mahmud II's mausoleum.⁵²

1.2 His Works

Intellectually, Said Halim Pasha is most well-known for a series of essays, seven or eight depending on how they are grouped, that were written and published between 1910 and 1921.⁵³ These essays were mostly published under the *nom de plume* of Mehmet and all were written originally written in French. They are as follows:

While *La Crise Politique* (The Political Crisis)'s date of publication in Paris is unknown, it was published in Istanbul in two parts (and hence why his essays were seven or eight in number).⁵⁴ The first, *Mukallidliklerimiz* (Our Imitations) was originally produced by an Istanbul publisher in 1910. The main topic of the article was to warn of the danger of imitating Western institutions and concepts. He gives the example of equality:

In Islam, "equality" does not possess the severe connotations of the class struggle which permeate it in the West. Strictly speaking, there is no priestly class or no aristocratic privilege that may be attached to birth. Any social inequality is based substantially on personal achievement.⁵⁵

This view of a lack of "class struggle" will also be seen in this text. The second part published as *Meşrutiyet* (Constitutionalism), also written under the 'Mehmed', was originally published in Istanbul in 1911 as a pamphlet of 31 pages.⁵⁶ It is a critical

⁵¹ Burak Muhammet Nuri Gücin, "A Late Ottoman Expression of Modernity: Prince Said Halim Pasha's Enterprise of Muslim Political Agency," *Global Histories* vol.4, no. 2 (October 2018): pp. 24-44, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/GHSJ.%Y.241>, 29.

⁵² Karli, "The Concept of State in Said Halim Pasha and Ziya Gökalp," 16.

⁵³ Şeyhun, "An Ottoman Statesmen," 11.

⁵⁴ Gücin, "A Late Ottoman Expression of Modernity," 30.

⁵⁵ Wasti, "Philosopher Prince," 89.

⁵⁶ Şeyhun claims these to be only partial and inaccurate translations from the French original. Şeyhun, "An Ottoman Statesmen," 12.

assessment of the First Turkish Constitution that was ultimately annulled by Abdulhamid II.⁵⁷ He argued that the Constitution was a faulty imitation of European constitutional charters that did not take into consider Ottoman particularities and, therefore, would not be able to meet its stated aim of helping reform the Ottoman state.⁵⁸ In the Pasha's estimation, the constitution was nothing more than another imitation he warned of in the first part due to its founder's not paying sufficient attention to the particularities of Ottoman and Islamic society. As he says, "It is impossible to deny that this Charter constitutes a great error and that it does not reconcile the social, political, and spiritual conditions of the country. It even constitutes a threat to the Ottoman national essence."⁵⁹The essay also generally discusses the political events of the Hamidian period.⁶⁰ This essay is important for understanding the Constitutional Islamic state in *İslam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye*

Buhrân-i ictimâîmiz (Our Social Crisis) was originally produced by an Istanbul publisher in 1916 as a booklet of 35 pages. This essay was actually written in the middle of World War I and analyzed how the once powerful Ottoman society had deteriorated. He censures Ottoman society for their moral decline and being false to their history.⁶¹ Said Halim considers both the West and the Muslim world as having social ills; whereas the social ills of the West were due to the inherent inequalities of its social structure, in the Muslim world it was due to unchecked equality.⁶² Similar to above, these views are also reflected in this text. Buhrân-i Fikrîmiz (Our Intellectual Crisis) was also written under the name Mehmet and was first produced by an Istanbul publisher in 1917 as a pamphlet of 15 pages. It was subsequently reprinted two year later with Said Halim Pasha acknowledged as the author on the title page.⁶³ If Buhrân-i ictimâîmiz focused on westernization of social mores, Buhrân-i Fikrîmiz criticized the Westernization of

⁵⁷ See Robert Devereuz, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period, a Study of the Midhat Constitution* for the establishment and procedure of the first Ottoman parliament.

⁵⁸ Guida, "Life and Political Ideas," 110.

⁵⁹ Said Halim Paşa, *Buhranlarımız ve Son Eserleri*, 59 quoted in Guida, "Life and Political Ideas," 109.

⁶⁰ Gücin, "Late Ottoman Expression of Modernity," 30.

⁶¹ Wasti, "Philosopher Prince," 95.

⁶² Ibid, 91.

⁶³ Ibid, 92.

Ottoman intellectuals. There is also a third Buhrân-i Siyasimiz (Our Political Crisis) that is unfortunately unpublished.⁶⁴

Though *Le fanatisme musulman* had been written in Paris much earlier, in fact his earliest work, it only became available in Istanbul from 1917 under the title *Ta'assup*, "Fanaticism."⁶⁵ It analyzes the reasons for the historical and contemporary animosity between Muslims and the West. In the Pasha's opinion, Muslims' fanaticism is only due to the oppression and injustice they face. Rather, he seeks to reverse the charge, as it is, in fact, Europe that was fanatical.⁶⁶ In his opinion, the same fanaticism the West showed towards the Muslim world in the Crusades was now simply done in the name of modern "civilization."⁶⁷

His *Essai sur les causes de la decadence des peuples musulmanes* or *Inhitât-i Islâm Hakkında bir Tecrübe-i Kalemiye* (An Essay on the Regression of Islam) presents his theory of decline, and as such can be thought of as a longer version of the section "Period of Decline" in this text. He sought to argue against the view that the Muslim world's decline was due to Islam itself. He in fact reformulated the question as "why do Muslims not know how to benefit from their religion?," showing what he thought to be behind the decline.⁶⁸ In this essay, he also differentiated between the Ottomans' *avam-havvas* (public-elite) distinction and the West's class struggle, and argued that Ottoman society in fact had a democratic character.⁶⁹

Said Halim Pasha did not see all Muslim societies as equally declining, however. These differences depended on the degree to which non-Muslim characteristics were still preserved even after Islamization.⁷⁰ This relates to the next essay, "İslamlaşmak" (Islamization) was first published in 1918 in four issues of the journal *Sebîlürreşad* with Mehmed Akif as the translator. It is his first essay to openly carry Said Halim Pasha as

⁶⁴ Işık, *Bir İslah Düşünür*, 102.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 104.

⁶⁶ Bostan, *Bir İslamcı Düşünür*, 112.

⁶⁷ Guida, "Life and Political Ideas," 110.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 108.

⁶⁹ Işık, *Bir İslah Düşünür*, 106.

⁷⁰ Guida, "Life and Political Ideas," 108.

the author instead of the pen name of Mehmet in its first print.⁷¹ The essay is the second most famous of his works and contains many of his developed ideas. He defines Islamization as meaning the full application of Islam's principles on belief, morality, life and politics after they have been interpreted in a manner in accordance with the needs of contemporary history and geography.⁷² Nonetheless, Islam's moral and social ideals had been gradually de-Islamized through the influence of local practices and pre-Islamic superstitions." Said Halim discusses the nature of political systems in the Islamised environment. Politics, he says, would be devoid of spite, hate and unfair competition because political power would be based on social solidarity and would be seen as a quasi-religious duty to preserve Islamic rule and social order.⁷³ All of the above essays were collected in one book in 1919 under the title *Buhranlarımız* (Our Crises)

It is important before transitioning to the last treatise of his life and the subject of this thesis, to note that while many works on Said Halim Pasha mention the above seven (or eight) treatises they mostly fail to mention his other important works, namely his letters and memoirs. After World War I, Said Halim Pasha wrote his memoirs *L'Empire ottoman et la Guerre mondiale* (The Ottoman Empire and the World War) on the Ottoman Empire leading up to World War I, and the politics immediately following the war. Especially important are his comments on the Caliphate as we will see that the general unfamiliarity with the work led at least one researcher to make a mistake while reading *Islam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye*. The French original was published by Isis publishing house in Istanbul in 2000. However, it also has recently been translated into modern Turkish in 2019 as *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Dünya Savaşı* by Kronik Kitap. Said Halim Pasha also wrote a series of letters to the American president and French and British prime ministers. These letters, according to the testimony of Eşref Sencer, himself an important and fascinating character, were 38 pages each.⁷⁴ Pasha, warns

⁷¹ Wasti, "Philosopher Prince," 92.

⁷² Ibid, 95.

⁷³ Ibid,.

⁷⁴ Eşref Sencer Kuşbcubaşı was known for his role in the late Ottoman special operation Teşkilatı Mahsusa, and especially his role fighting against T.E. Lawrence in World War I, for which he has been called the "Ottoman Lawrence." He was imprisoned alongside Said Halim Pasha in Malta, hence why he could serve as an eyewitness. For more on his life, see Benjamin C. Fortna, *The Circassian: A Life of Eşref Bey, Late Ottoman Insurgent and Special Agent* (Hurst & Company, 2016).

these leading politicians who were trying to establish the “People’s Assembly” that they would fail as the Ottoman Empire held a mission in the world.⁷⁵ The letters are unfortunately unpublished. Additionally, there are also as many as 29 small French essays are not yet published.⁷⁶ As for the text at hand, it will be introduced and discussed at length in Section 2.1 before the translation of the text itself.

1.3 Literature on Said Halim Pasha:

It took forty years after his death for the Pasha’s writings to see their first collection, with slight simplifications, A more recent popular collection is that of Özalp’s *Said Halim Paşa Bütün Eserleri* (Said Halim Pasha’ Complete Works).⁷⁷ These were renderings of the Ottoman into contemporary Turkish. Since then, it would be neither possible, nor productive to recount the number of collections in full. A noteworthy recent collection is that of “Said Halim Paşa Külliyyatı” which not only presents modern Turkish translations with explanatory notes for the Ottoman words that would be difficult for a contemporary Turkish-speaking audience, and the original Ottoman translations on the other page.⁷⁸

In the review of the existing English literature written on Said Halim Pasha to follow, my comments will be limited to books and articles that are both of sufficient length and directly touch on his life, works and thought. This has meant, for example, the exclusion, for example, of encyclopedia articles that do not discuss the topic at sufficient length to warrant their inclusion. It has also meant the exclusion of articles not directly relevant for the purposes of this thesis, such as Mukerrem Miftah’s “Multiplexity in civilization studies: Insights from Ibn Khaldun and Said Halim Pasha,” as it deals almost exclusively with civilization directly from his work, making it not directly relevant for

⁷⁵ Bostan, *Bir İslamcı Düşünür*, 117.

⁷⁶ Işık, *Bir İslah Düşünür*, 102.

⁷⁷ Said Halim Paşa, *Said Halim Paşa Bütün Eserleri* (İstanbul: Anka Yayınları, 2003).

⁷⁸ Said Halim Paşa, *Said Halim Paşa Külliyyatı* (İstanbul: Ketebe Yayınları, 2018).

the purposes of this thesis.⁷⁹ I have similarly excluded the 2017 article “Islamlashmaq” Term in Said Halim Pasha” by Celal Emanet due not only to its short length at only 10 pages, but also the constant grammatical mistakes and low academic standards throughout.⁸⁰

The single most important work on Said Halim Pasha written in English is Ahmet Şeyhun’s doctoral thesis “Said Halim Pasha: An Ottoman Statesman and an Islamist Thinker (1865-1921)” published in 2002 at McGill University, which was published as a book by Isis Press in Istanbul in 2003, and then once more in the United States in 2010.⁸¹ By far, the longest work on Said Halim Pasha, it has the space to go into far more detail than all the other English-language works that will be reviewed here. “An Ottoman Statesman” strikes a good balance between the Pasha’s overall historical and political context, his political career and intellectual works. Specifically, it features the most extensive coverage of his diplomatic career, which the author highlights with his knowledge of French including untapped diplomatic correspondence and an interview with the Pasha’s niece.

Nonetheless, Şeyhun’s analysis can remain quite general at times and occasionally falls into faulty comparisons. For example, while Şeyhun does not directly attribute Said Halim Pasha’s Islamism to Ibn Taymiyya and Abdulwahab, he does mention that they are “reminiscent.”⁸² The irony here is that it was in fact Said Halim Pasha’s own grandfather, Muhammad Ali, who put down the Wahabi revolt at the Ottoman’s behest.⁸³ There is simply no good evidence that he disapproved of his grandfather’s actions, and one contemporary source reports that he had the ambition of eventually

⁷⁹ Mukerrem Miftah, “Multiplexity in Civilization Studies: Insights from Ibn Khaldun and Said Halim Pasha,” *İbn Haldun Çalışmaları Dergisi* 3, no. 2 (2018) <https://doi.org/10.36657/ihcd.2018.45>: pp. 203-224.

⁸⁰ Celal Emanet, “‘Islamlashmaq’ Term in Said Halim Pasha,” *Akademik Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 41 (March 2, 2017): pp. 269-279.

⁸¹ *Said Halim Pasha: Ottoman Statesman and Islamic Thinker (1865-1921)*, (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2003); *Said Halim Pasha (1865–1921): An Islamist Thinker and an Ottoman Statesman*. Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2010.

⁸² Şeyhun, “Ottoman Statesman,” 26-27.

⁸³ For an in-depth exploration of how the Ottomans reacted to the Wahabi movement, see Elif Ayşenur Conker’s 2018 M.A. thesis “The Transformation of the Ottoman Perception of the Wahabi Movement: From Negotiation to Confrontation (1745-1818).

becoming the khedive of Egypt himself.⁸⁴ The most likely explanation for any resemblance, however superficial it may be, between Said Halim Pasha's thought and Muhammad Abdulwahab in terms of "puritism" is their reacting to similar conditions.⁸⁵ Despite any faulty comparison, Şeyhun's thesis and book are by far the most important work on Said Halim Pasha yet written, with every article written on Said Halim Pasha in English after its publication referencing it.

Perhaps, the best introduction to the Pasha's biography and overarching themes of the Pasha's works in English can be found in Guida's "The Life and Political Ideas of Grand Vizier Said Halim Pasha."⁸⁶ Guida starts by emphasizing the degree to which Said Halim Pasha and Islamism as a whole is indebted to Western thought and modernity. However, the article perhaps overstates the degree to which Said Halim Pasha is indebted to Western thought. For example, to emphasize the Pasha's "modernity" he compares the absence of the Caliphate in the Pasha's work to that of Seyyid Bey, who argued for its abolition on the floor of the Turkish parliament.⁸⁷ However, this is a bizarre comparison, as Seyyid Bey did only reject the Caliphate, but rejected the very idea that Islam or the Prophet had anything to say about politics at all. Said Halim Pasha, on the other hand, sees Islam as the very basis of society and politics. Section 3.4 will argue that this view of the lack of Caliphate in this text needs to be amended and will discuss the issue of the Caliphate in Said Halim Pasha's work in greater detail. It is nonetheless important to remember that the debate on the Caliphate in the early Turkish republic would only emerge a few years after his death. Nonetheless, Guida provides a valuable introduction to his life and thought and has a more complex approach to modernity not far from this this thesis's approach, arguing

⁸⁴ Seyhun claims he wanted to become khedive of Egypt, quoting from the memoirs of Cavid Bey, the finance minister during his premiership. See Şeyhun, "Ottoman Statesman," 179.

⁸⁵ Scholars in Middle Eastern and Islamic studies have for far too long ascribed any "purist" tendencies to "Wahabism" or "Salafism." For a strong counter-argument, see Ahmad S. Dallal, *Islam without Europe: Traditions of Reform in Eighteenth-Century Islamic Thought* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

⁸⁶ Guida, "Life and Political Ideas."

⁸⁷ Interestingly, the same author has written on the episode, see "Michelangelo Guida, "Seyyid Bey and the Abolition of the Caliphate." *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.44, 2008, ps.275-289." For more on the debates on the Caliphate in the late Ottoman/early republic context and an argument for it as a form of secularization, see Nurullah Ardiç, *Islam and the Politics of Secularism: the Caliphate and Middle Eastern Modernization in the Early 20th Century* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017)."

that it was both a reaction to European-style modernization as well as itself an expression of modernity that attempted to modernize the Empire.⁸⁸

Guida is not alone in emphasizing the Said Halim Pasha's modernity. Burak Muhammet Nuri Gücin's main argument in "A Late Ottoman Expression of Modernity: Prince Said Halim Pasha's Enterprise of Muslim Political Agency," is that Said Halim's Pasha "Pan-Islamism" should be mostly understood as a modern movement.⁸⁹ While a valuable reminder of the degree to which "Pan-Islamism" is modern, the article often seems most interested in pointing the contradictions between Said Halim Pasha's features of modernism and Islamism/Pan-Islamism, rather than a careful delineation of how and why Pan-Islamism is "modern." For example, Gücin writes that Said Halim Pasha was unwilling to be self-critical, a fact mentioned while he arguing that he was unwilling to apply the necessary reforms needed to save the Empire. He attributes Said Halim Pasha's unwillingness to be self-critical and to apply the necessary reforms needed to save the Empire to his "occidentalism anger"⁹⁰ (a term borrowed from Hasan Aksakal). However, he admits that Said Halim Pasha was in favor of science and industry, which he describes using Bassim Tibi's concept of "semi-modernity," an Islamist fantasy of taking only modernity's material benefits, which he sees as explaining "the employment of the achievements of modernity in order to establish an Islamic political order."⁹¹ In that sense, this understanding of Said Halim Pasha is undoubtedly correct. However, why is that only semi-modern? Is a modernity that does not seek to transplant Western cultural norms any less complete in its modernity? While at times, Gücin also seems more reconciliatory to Said Halim Pasha's critiques of modernization in the Ottoman Empire, it is all too easy to read his statements of "occidentalism anger" and "semi-modernity" as normative judgements that any view of modernity that does not seek to imitate Western social and moral values equals an inability to be self-critical. This confusion is not helped by the fact that nowhere does he fully define or at least attempt describe how he conceptualizes modernity.

⁸⁸ Guida, "Life and Political Ideas," 102.

⁸⁹ Gücin, "Late Ottoman Expression of Modernity."

⁹⁰ Ibid, 36.

⁹¹ Ibid, 43.

In another place, Gücin writes that Said Halim Pasha's thinking had a blurred "notion of Islam that did not clarify if it included only the Ottomans or all Muslims."⁹² This sentence perfectly demonstrates the need for why intellectual history must be carefully read in context, and not just as the product of an individual thinker. What was blurred in Said Halim Pasha's thought was not if Islam included all Muslims (by definition it must), but whether "Islamic/Muslim nationalism" as expressed mostly through the concept of *millet* included only Ottoman Muslims, all Muslims, all Ottoman residents irrespective of religion, or some prioritization or combination of the above. While this is a fair charge, it is by no means unique to Said Halim Pasha, but rather due to ambiguity of the concept itself in the context of a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional empire. A similar ambiguity can be viewed with Namik Kemal, for example, among many other thinkers of the period.⁹³ It is worth mention that Gücin, like Şeyhun, also attributes the influence of Islamism to Ibn Taymiyya (on Jamaladdin Al-Afghani, Abduh and Rida, and only secondarily on Said Halim Pasha).⁹⁴ That there are tensions between the new elements of political thought and "tradition" in the thought of Said Halim Pasha (and his generation) is undebatable. However, Gücin focuses too much on showing Said Halim Pasha's personal contradictions and engages in far too many generalizations, rather than providing a careful history of the Pasha's ideas in his context.

The only Masters thesis I could find written on Said Halim Pasha is Elçin Karlı's unpublished MA thesis at Fatih University "The Concept of State in Said Halim Pasha and Ziya Gökalp."⁹⁵ Though the thesis is actually a comparison of Said Halim Pasha and Ziya Gökalp, the comments here will naturally be limited only to the first and third chapters, which cover Said Halim Pasha exclusively and in comparison with Gökalp, respectively. Chapter 1 presents a summary of Said Halim Pasha's thought specifically on the state, meaning that it also focuses heavily on "İslam'da Teşkilat-i Siyasiye." It however contains very little in terms of critical analysis, with some sentences appearing to be literal paraphrases of the text. The author also completely misunderstands the

⁹² Gücin, "Late Ottoman Expression of Modernity," 32.

⁹³ For example, see Şerif Mardin's treatment of the ambiguity of the concept of *vatan* or *millet* in Namik Kemal's thought, 327-329; also Şeyhun, 42-44.

⁹⁴ Gücin, "Late Ottoman Expression of Modernity," 37.

⁹⁵ Elçin Karlı, "The Concept of State in Said Halim Pasha and Ziya Gökalp." MA thesis, Faith University.

Pasha when she writes that he saw social and natural laws as “exclusively different.”⁹⁶ As argued in Chapter 4, Said Halim’s efforts were actually to emphasize the degree to which both natural physical laws and “natural” social laws are natural. The Pasha sees the laws of physics and the laws of society as differing exclusively in their epistemology (physical laws being material and therefore discoverable by science, whereas as natural social laws being immaterial truths requiring revelation), but not in their ontology (nature and God as its author).

Chapter 3 of the thesis then compares the thought of Said Halim Pasha and Gökalp, specifically in terms of democracy, the method of national representation, law and religion. The comparison however focuses on the level of very specific ideas, meaning the reader has a hard time understanding the macro-differences between them. The thesis’s conclusion is an interesting discussion on the concept of the state in modern Turkey, however by jumping ahead too far in the future it takes for granted the transformation of the state in Turkey from between the late- Ottoman/early republic to today. The most important critique of the thesis is that she perhaps compared the wrong figures. The comparison draws too sharp a binary between the two thinkers, and “modernity/tradition.” In terms of ideas of the state, a comparison instead with Namik Kemal would have been more subtle and revealing, especially as the main differences between Said Halim Pasha and Gökalp are not with regards to the state, but the nation.

Wasti’s “Said Halim Pasha: Philosopher Prince,” after introducing the thinker and his biography, primarily functions as a summary of the eight or so essays Said Halim Pasha wrote, also giving multiple full quotes in English from each work and indicating the main themes of his work present in each work.⁹⁷ The article also presents a very extensive biography (also covering his grandfather Mehmet Ali) and contains the most extensive coverage of his relationship with Muhammad Iqbal. As such, the work is an excellent introduction to Said Halim Pasha’s works, but offers little in the way of theoretical contributions.

⁹⁶ Karl, “The Concept of State,” 88.

⁹⁷ Wasti, “Philosopher Prince.”

The majority of the literature also functions as an introduction to his biography, works or political career, or all three, with very little in the way of analysis and theoretical reflection. Several of the works have serious grammatical mistakes in English, sometimes even in the work's title. The literatures' introductory nature also means that there is very little theoretical or methodological debate between the articles and works. Furthermore, what analysis there is focuses far too heavily on the contradictions in his personal thought and make normative statements such as "Said Halim Pasha's ideas are valuable, but contain some incongruities with the contemporary understanding of democracy and human rights"⁹⁸ or accuse Said Halim Pasha of being unwilling to be self-critical. The task of an intellectual historian is not to excoriate a thinker for not being sufficiently modern by our standards, nor what this has to say about him personally, but more importantly what this indicates about his context. As Sariyannis points out, reading early-modern authors with the aim to draw a genealogy to our contemporary "problématiques" leads to clear misunderstandings of the text and author.⁹⁹ This can help explain why in the present English literature Said Halim Pasha is compared to figures as widely different as Seyyid Bey and Muhammad Abdulwahab, and is described by some almost as a "fundamentalist," and others as a modernist or semi-modernist. As will be seen, combatting this trend of "presentism," is one of the primary motivators for the initial development of the Cambridge School.

1.4 Literature on Islam and Modernity

While much of the literature on Said Halim Pasha takes the modern-traditional binary for granted and expends effort in categorizing him on either side, a growing literature within Ottoman studies has increasingly complicated this binary. Specifically, recent literature tends to emphasize the continuity between the modernizing projects of the Late Ottoman Empire and early Republic, and increasingly complicates various aspects of the classical binaries of religious/secular and modern/traditional. There are two

⁹⁸ Guida, "Life and Political Ideas," 101.

⁹⁹ Marinos Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 10.

major difficulties in reviewing literature on what I have termed “Islamic modernization.” One is the myriad aspects that have been adopted in the literature so far. The second is that much of the literature does not use the term directly. One of the earliest uses of the term “Islamic modernism” was Weismann in his book on the Naqshbandiyya, though he does not produce a theoretical defense of the term, and seems to use the phrase in at least two different contexts.¹⁰⁰ Ultimately, I borrow the term here from Kahraman Şakul’s “Nizâm-ı Cedid Düşüncesinde Batılılaşma ve İslami Modernleşme” (Westernization and Islamic Modernization in Nizam-I Cedid Thought), itself an excellent review of the literature on Selim III’s reign.¹⁰¹ However, while much of the literature does not use the term, the negative suggestion that conservative reactionism to modernity was not the only recourse available to Islamic discourse implies a positive counter-part: the existence of an Islamic discourse that did support the modernization process.

A focal point of the literature in overturning traditional assumptions has been the reign of Selim III who introduced what is known as the *Nizam-I Cedid*, or the New Order. Yaycioglu points out that this name in fact introduces much of what was significant about the movement, its emphasis on newsness and on orderliness.¹⁰² However, while the traditional view in Ottoman studies saw the counterrevolution that eventually succeeded in (temporarily) halting the reform movement as a religious conservative backlash led by the ulema and the janissaries, Yaycioglu instead argues that it was “... a controversy between those who supported global trends in military-fiscal reorganization, the military sciences, and trans-imperial Muslim religious activism to carry out an agenda to reform and discipline military, social and spiritual life against those groups who guarded established conventions, privileges and spiritual norms and practices.”¹⁰³ The trans-imperial Sharia-minded activists indicated here were mostly Naqshbandiyya (specifically of the Mujadaddiyya-Khalidiyya branch), which largely explains why one

¹⁰⁰ For his use, see Itzhak Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2009), 139-146.

¹⁰¹ Kahraman Şakul, “Nizâm-ı Cedid Düşüncesinde Batılılaşma Ve İslami Modernleşme,” *DÎVÂN İlmi Araştırmalar* 19 (2005): pp. 117-150.

¹⁰² Ali Yaycioglu, “Guarding Traditions and Laws—Disciplining Bodies and Souls: Tradition, Science, and Religion in the Age of Ottoman Reform,” *Modern Asian Studies* 52, no. 5 (2018): pp. 1542-1603, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0026749x1700018x>, 1567.

¹⁰³ Yaycioglu, “Guarding Traditions and Law,” 1601

of the first books to use the term “Islamic modernism” was a book on the Naqshbandi order. Abu-Manneh long ago demonstrated that many of the reformists in Sultan Selim III’s bureaucracy were followers of Mehmet Amin Bursali, a member of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddadiyya.¹⁰⁴ As Aysel Yıldız has more recently shown, many of the notable characters around Selim III during the New Order were connected to the Mujaddidiya in one manner or another.¹⁰⁵

A classic in the field which makes a similar argument on the same time period is Heyd’s “The Ottoman ‘Ulemā and Westernization in the Time of Selīm III and Maḥmūd II.” He argues that leading ulema not only supported reform in discourse, but occasionally were themselves pioneers of reform themselves.¹⁰⁶ Some factors he sees as helping their support for the reforms, were the ulema’s fear of their declining power, hostility to the Janissaries, closeness with government, and the existential threats to the state. It is, however, outdated in its approach, ignores socio-political explanations for ulema’s support, and the use of the word “westernization” in the title should suggest to the reader that he still holds on to a view of “modernization” as “westernization” and a slight hint of a teleological reading. A more recent work that focuses on the ulema in a later period is Susan Gunasti’s “The Late Ottoman Ulema’s Constitutionalism” which explains the ulema’s understanding of constitutionalism and the important role they played in the Second Constitutional Period.¹⁰⁷ Gunasti demonstrates how the ulema contributed to public political discussions on the important issues at the time, such as creating a legitimate political order, how to organize society, and how to ensure that the rule of law prevailed. Perhaps, even more importantly the dissent of the Second Constitutional Period following the crackdown of the counter-revolution meant that the ulema played the role of mediators between the different factions of the Second Ottoman parliament. Therefore, it can easily be concluded that the ulema quickly adopted to political

¹⁰⁴ Butrus Abu-Manneh, “THE NAQSHBANDIYYA-MUJADDIDIYYA AND THE KHĀLIDIYYA IN ISTANBUL IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY,” in *Studies on Islam and the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century (1826-1876)* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2011), pp. 41-46.

¹⁰⁵ Aysel Yıldız, *Crisis and Rebellion in the Ottoman Empire: The Downfall of a Sultan in the Age of Revolution*, (London, I. B. Tauris, 2017), pp. 137-42, 204-09.

¹⁰⁶ Albert Hourani et al., “The Ottoman Ulema and Westernization in the Time of Selim III,” in *The Modern Middle East: A Reader* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993), pp. 29-59, 30.

¹⁰⁷ Susan Gunasti, “The Late Ottoman Ulema’s Constitutionalism,” *Islamic Law and Society* 23, no. 1-2 (2016): pp. 89-119, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685195-02312p04>.

participation, but were even key negotiators in it. Gunasti concludes that the ulema “had a clear modernist, political ideology and that they sought to shore up mechanisms of governance, including the legislature and judiciary, to promote the rule of law.”¹⁰⁸

In terms of works that give an birds-eyes view of the Ottoman state’s modernization, there at least three prominent works in the field. The first two are Kemal Karpat’s *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith and Community in the Late Ottoman State* and Selim Deringil’s *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* are two of the most important works on the Ottoman state’s modernization, with a particular focus on the Hamidian period.¹⁰⁹ Karpat’s work, breathtaking in its scope, it is a summary of his entire academic career. While he does not explicitly use the term Islamic modernity, the main argument in the book indeed indicates that “reform in the Ottoman state was carried out successfully through the medium of Islam.”¹¹⁰ While his broad strokes on the creation of a public sphere and Islamic “populism” (though perhaps anachronistic in this time period) are welcome, the book easily falls into the fallacy that Islam was somehow “depoliticized” before the transformations of the Late Ottoman state. *The Well-Protected Domains* also covers the same time period, it is more focused on the ideology the Ottoman state used to legitimize itself. Deringil argues that the Late Ottoman Empire’s crisis of identity was similar to the crises faced by other multi-ethnic empires at the time. However, while he emphasizes the use of Islamic motifs and vocabulary in the Ottomans’ legitimization ideology, he sees “religiosity” as superficial, or as he puts it, “secular reforms with a cocoon of religious vocabulary.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Gunasti, “Late Ottoman Ulema’s Constitutionalism,” 119.

¹⁰⁹ Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2011), Indeed, similar enough that Deringil wrote a quite scathing review of the book, implying that it used parts of his book without quotation. Karpat for his part rejected the claims and pointed out that though his book was published after Deringil’s, significant portions had been written before the latter was released. For more, see Kemal H. Karpat, “A Reply to Selim Deringil’s Review of *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith and Community in the Late Ottoman State*,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 36 (2004): pp. 155-157, <https://doi.org/10.1017.S0020743804361283>

¹¹⁰ Karpat, “A Reply to Selim Deringil’s Review,” 157.

¹¹¹ Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 168.

The third of these works, Hanioglu's recent survey of the period entitled *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, is invaluable as a monograph covering the entire history under review here and as a work that adopts a more critical approach to modernization and secularization. Hanioglu attempts to rescue the study of the late Ottoman Empire from the teleology of Turkish nationalism.¹¹² He also acknowledges these transformations as part of larger global dimensions, and indeed, almost all the recent studies that argue the traditional binary of religious vs. secular, tradition vs. modern, almost all acknowledge the global dimension. Focusing on a similar time period, Silverstein's "Islam and Modernity in Turkey" argues that the reason modern institutions find wider acceptance in today's Turkey than most of the Muslim World is due to the "secularizing" reforms of the Late Ottoman period being in fact established on Islamic grounds.¹¹³ He, hence, opposes the use of the term "Westernization" in this context. He highlights how Islamists in fact pushed these modernizing reforms in order to save religion in a global context in which religion was increasingly defined as a private, internal affair. However, the second part of the book is an ethnographic study of how "modernity" changed Sufi practices and how Sufis, especially the Naqshbandi tariqa responded both to Republican banning of the Sufi orders and the challenge of new communication technologies.

I have not included the growing literature on the transforming categories of religion and science, specifically the emergence of a view that saw the two as a binary, something Said Halim Pasha, vociferously opposed, as this literature is already directly engaged in the main text of Chapter 3.¹¹⁴ However, two more works should be mentioned here, though they are already directly referenced in the main body of Chapter 3 as their timing

¹¹² Hanioglu M. Şükrü, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

¹¹³ Brian Silverstein, *Islam and Modernity in Turkey* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

¹¹⁴ I have also omitted Amit Bein's *Ottoman Ulema, Turkish Republic: Agents of Change and Guardians of Tradition* as though a portion of the book covers the ulema of the Late Ottoman Empire, the majority of the book covers the Turkish Republic as late as the 1960s makes it slightly out of the scope of this literature review. I have also omitted Usama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism," *American Historical Review* 107 (2002): 768-796" and Selim Deringil, "'They live in a State of nomadism and savagery': the late Ottoman Empire and the post-colonial debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History: an International Quarterly*, 45.2 (2003). These are both works on how notions of "civilization" and "civilizing" in the late Ottoman Empire resembled contemporary notions in Europe. While the two are valuable works, they lie slightly beyond the scope of this literature review.

helps situate my own work. The first is the aforementioned *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* by Şerif Mardin, one of the main theses of which is that the Islamic element was a key and consistent concern of the Young Ottomans.¹¹⁵ Nuruallah Ardic's *Islam and the Politics of Secularism: the Caliphate and Middle Eastern Modernization in the Early Twentieth Century* also echoes Silverstein's point about secularism paradoxically happening on Islamic discursive grounds, however does by tracing the debates on the caliphate in the late Ottoman/early Republic.¹¹⁶ Therefore, in terms of time period, this thesis lies somewhere between Mardin and Ardic's works, as Said Halim Pasha belongs to the Young Turk generation, while most of the literature so far has especially focused on the New Order and Tanzimat periods.

It will be seen that I agree with a wide swathe of literature that argues against equating modernization with westernization and secularization and does not take the secular-religious, modern-traditional binaries for granted. Furthermore, this literature tends to look for socio-political explanations in place of pure ideological or individualistic reasons and also emphasizes the degree to which the Ottomans were part of similar transformations happening in Europe and across the globe. Indeed, literature in global history is increasingly sees religion as having a continued role in legitimizing modernity in non-Islamic contexts later than previously thought, as global historians increasingly view that in the eighteenth century arguments for modernity worldwide were mostly made on religious grounds, often even in the West.¹¹⁷

Nonetheless, I do not find views that admit the surface-level religiosity of these reforms, but sees them as hiding a "secular" essence, that is, "secular reforms with a cocoon of religious vocabulary" as sufficient. Rather, I take their religiosity (often on both sides of the debate) seriously, most because I do not believe that taking religious discourse seriously necessitates ignoring socio-political explanations or larger global transformations, nor engaging in hairsplitting theological debates. As Ovamir Anjum notes, the power of traditions come from the fact that they often act as constraints on

¹¹⁵ Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 81-82.

¹¹⁶ Ardic, *Islam and the Politics of Secularism*.

¹¹⁷ C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World: 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2012), 76.

actors who both have genuine convictions and act in (or what they perceive as) their own self-interest.¹¹⁸ Therefore, how do we categorize someone like Said Halim Pasha, who clearly had religious, even Islamist, convictions, but also clearly aims at modernization without westernization? Is such a figure “modernist” or “traditionalist”? Therefore, I have adopted the term alternative or negotiated modernity to emphasize that Said Halim Pasha’s attempt at modernization does not fit the classical view of a “modernist.” I argue that “Ottoman political thought almost never ceased to belong to the broad category of Islamic ideological genealogies” as Sariyannis put it.¹¹⁹ I take this seriously until the Young Turks, only because their historical record proves that they let *praxis* lead their ideology, rather than their ideology their actions. Even then, men as committed to Islamic ideals as Said Halim Pasha found areas of common ground with the Young Turks upon which they mutually work to preserve the world as they knew it. A fair deal of the analysis in Chapter 3 will focus precisely on this common ground of understanding between Said Halim Pasha and the Young Turks.

1.5 Methodology: The Cambridge School of Intellectual History

This thesis’s methodology will largely lie within intellectual history, another growing approach within Ottoman studies as of late. If Jane Hathaway could once boldly claim that “Intellectual history is arguably the great lacuna in Ottoman history,”¹²⁰ that claim seems to be increasingly outdated. One of the first proponents of intellectual history in Ottoman studies was Şerif Mardin, and specifically his work “The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought,” which decades later perhaps still remains the most sophisticated intellectual history of the Young Ottomans. While a wide variety of scholars, such as Kaya Şahin, Ethan Mechinger, and Kenan Tekin,¹²¹ have recently written in Ottoman

¹¹⁸ Ovamir Anjum, “Islam as a Discursive Tradition: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 3 (January 2007): pp. 656-672, <https://doi.org/10.1215/1089201x-2007-041>, 661.

¹¹⁹ Sariyannis, *Ottoman Political Thought*, 455.

¹²⁰ Jane Hathaway, “Rewriting Eighteenth-Century Ottoman History,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19:1 (2004): 38.

¹²¹ Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013; Ethan L. Mechinger, *The First of the Modern*

intellectual history, I am especially influenced by Sariyannis and Topal's utilization of the "Cambridge School" of intellectual history to study Ottoman political thought. While Topal focuses on concepts of reform, Marinos Sariyannis utilizes the Cambridge School's methodology to trace the transformation within the Ottomans' conceptualization of the "state," in his "A History of Ottoman Political Thought Up to the Early Nineteenth Century," the first monograph that attempts to cover almost the whole of Ottoman political thought. In that sense, it was indeed inspired by and resembles the scope and function of Skinner's "Foundations of Modern Political Thought," one of the most important works of the school. However, in addition to the Cambridge School, both Topal and Sariyannis also use Koselleck's "conceptual history." Therefore, they employ both a diachronic and synchronic approach, that is, they aim to both study a text or series of texts within the same milieu and period as well as trace a single concept over a long period of time and multiple translations. This thesis however limits itself to a synchronic analysis, as an analysis over the *longue durée* lies beyond the present thesis's scope.

The Cambridge School is a loose approach within intellectual history that can be considered to have emerged by the 1970s.¹²² The most famous and original practitioners of the "school" include Quentin Skinner, J. G. A. Pocock, and John Dunn, although Richard Tuck, Anthony Pagden and Stefan Collini have also further extended the approach. The school obtains its name from the fact that most of these figures have either taught or been affiliated with Cambridge University in one manner or another. It is, however, more of a loose approach than a formal school or methodology. Indeed, there are major differences between the two major proponents Skinner and Pocock, in that the former leans more towards "conventionalism," while the latter leans more towards "contextualism." That is to say that while Skinner focuses on debates

Ottomans: The Intellectual History of Ahmed Vasif (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Kenan Tekin, "Reforming Categories of Science and Religion in the Late Ottoman Empire (Ph.D. thesis, Columbia, 2016).

¹²² Richard Whatmore, "Cambridge School of Intellectual History," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2015), pp. 61-65, 61.

comprising individual speech-acts over similar questions, Pocock leans more towards placing texts in paradigms of shared beliefs and assumptions.¹²³

Quentin Skinner's 1969 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas' is considered by many to be the school's manifesto.¹²⁴ Here Skinner criticized what he considered to be the two "orthodoxies at the time, the first being "perennialism", that is the view that philosophers have always debated the same fundamental questions. This can largely be understood as a response to the early "history of ideas" as popularized by Arthur Lovejoy in "The Great Chain of Being." Skinner argued that every text should instead be understood finitely, but holistically, as a response to their time's unanswered or unsatisfactorily answered questions, not as a contribution to some omni-temporal conversation outside and above any historical context.¹²⁵ The second orthodoxy Skinner questioned is the "notion that context is irrelevant to a historical understanding of texts, which should instead be read as autonomous and self-contained systems."¹²⁶ Sariyanis argues that this means the Cambridge School can best be thought of as a "third approach between an ahistorical study of texts and a deterministic contextualism."¹²⁷ The Cambridge school also rejects presentism, or what they refer to as prolepsis, or the tendency to read the past not just from the vantage of the present, but to use the present to show the past made it inevitable, rather than show the multiple contingencies of any historical moment. Jay more colorfully refers to this tendency as "precursoritis."¹²⁸ This extended even to the point of placing emphasis on the questions the author themselves sought to address, rather than the relevance of their questions to the present.¹²⁹

While the Cambridge School was successful in institutionalizing intellectual history as a respectable discipline, it has also had its share of critics. Here the main focus has been on the more practical critiques of the Cambridge School, rather than deep philosophical

¹²³ Mark Bevir, "The Role of Contexts in Understanding and Explanation," *Human Studies* 23, no. 4 (October 2000): pp. 395-411, <https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1005636214102>, 396.

¹²⁴ Whatmore, "Cambridge School," 62.

¹²⁵ Martin Jay, "Historical Explanation and the Event: Reflections on the Limits of Contextualization," *New Literary History* 42, no. 4 (2011): pp. 557-571, <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2011.0043>, 558.

¹²⁶ Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1969): pp. 3-53, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2504188>, 17.

¹²⁷ Sariyyanis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought*, 9-10.

¹²⁸ Jay, "Historical Explanation and the Event," 559.

¹²⁹ Sariyanis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought*, 9-10.

arguments beyond this thesis' purview.¹³⁰ Some have criticized Skinners' intentionality, contending that rather than their intentions, the "unintended consequences" of an author's work are more interesting or important.¹³¹ Other scholars have criticized the Cambridge School for focusing too exclusively on political philosophy (especially of early modernity). Specifically, the Cambridge School has mostly focused on European early-modernity, perhaps due to the complexity of early-modern thought requiring such an approach. Many have also criticized the European focus of the school. In a recent article, Pocock admitted the Eurocentrism of the Cambridge School as obviously true and that it "calls for reformation."¹³²

All in all, the critiques of the Cambridge School mentioned above only makes it more of a natural fit for this thesis's purposes. First, Skinner's focus on authorial intention helps to fill the existing gaps in the English literature on Said Halim Pasha. Many writers seem more interesting in lambasting the Pasha for not being "modern" enough, rather than attempting to "historicize" Said Halim Pasha and "*İslam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye*" and focus specifically on his intentions and why he did not see his own beliefs as contradictory. Furthermore, the Cambridge School's focus on European political philosophy in early modernity makes it a perfect fit to analyze the complexity of the early-modern/modern moment in the Ottoman domains, in which Islamic concepts were modernized, and modern concepts Islamized. As Alp Eren puts it, the concepts at the time were "acquir-(ing) new meanings at the same time retaining part of their former meaning"¹³³ as could be seen in the above-mentioned concept of *millet*. Last but not least, if the charge of Orientalism against the Cambridge School indeed holds, then this

¹³⁰ One of the most thoughtful critiques comes from Martin Jay who uses the theory of "events." He emphasizes the difficulty that a later historian has in establishing the context and mixed reality of historical occurrences. There are genuine history-making events. While a sophisticated theoretical critique, lays beyond the purview of this thesis.

¹³¹ Sariyyanis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought*, p.10

¹³² J. G.A. Pocock, "On the Unglobality of Contexts: Cambridge Methods and the History of Political Thought," *Global Intellectual History* 4, no. 1 (January 23, 2019): pp. 1-14, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23801883.2018.1523997>, 2.

¹³³ Alp Eren Topal, "From Decline to Progress: Ottoman Concepts of Reform 1600-1876." PhD diss., (Bilkent University, 2017), 9. For more on how European concepts were mis/translated into Ottoman, see Einer Weigen's "State of Translation: Turkey in Interlingual Relations."

thesis can make a small contribution to bring Ottoman studies into further conversation with developments within intellectual history and early modernity.

In conclusion, we can consider the central question that motivates the Cambridge School “What did the author intend to “do” with the text, and how can we understand this text and intention within his linguistic context?” Inspired by this, the central question this thesis aims to answer is “What did Said Halim Pasha intend to “do” with “*İslam’da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye*” and how can we understand his intention within the context of preceding and contemporary discourses?” I will seek to answer this question through a number of discursive strategies. When possible, I will seek to answer this question through a close reading of the text. As it will be seen, a number of misunderstandings present so far in the literature can often be solved by simply reading statements within the larger context of the text. At other times, specific sentences or statements in this work were misunderstood because they were not read in conjunction with his other works. This is all the more important with regards to this text, as the last text written in his life, it is often a summation of the idea presented throughout his work, meaning that earlier works often expound on the same issue at greater length. Finally, I present an intellectual history that aims to contextualize his ideas within his time. Specifically, I will pay attention to the common ground shared between Said Halim Pasha and his “opponents.” Indeed, that often makes their differences all the starker and more significant. The next chapter will present an annotated translation of the text, before attempting to answer this question in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER 2

TRANSLATION

2.1 An Introduction to a Multi-Layered Text

The text at hand is an incredibly multi-layered text that deserves an in-depth critical study. Indeed, even in the Pasha's own lifetime there were multiple versions of the text. It was first published in Rome in 1921 under the title *Les institutions politiques dans la société musulmane* (The Political Institutions of Muslim Society). It was then published a year later in Paris in the journal *Orient et Occident* under the title *Notes pour servir à la réforme de la société musulmane*, (Notes to Serve Towards the Reform of Muslim Society)" shortly after his death.¹³⁴ It was then translated by Mehmet Akif in the magazine *Sırat-ı Müstakim* as *İslam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye* (Political Institutions in Islam), and further re-published when the magazine started re-publishing in... Recently, another translation by Celal Nuri was also discovered, one which had kept the section "National Sovereignty" earlier erased by Mehmet Akif, presumably due to his political conditions. In 1927, the text was translated into English by Marmaduke Pickthall, now mostly remembered for his translation of the Quran, in *Islamic Culture: The Hyderabad Quarterly Review*, of which he was the editor at the time.¹³⁵ Pickthall then also helped it to be translated into Urdu in 1928 in the magazine *Darul Ta'leef wa Tarjuma*, translated as *Khudah ki badshahat* – the Kingdom of God. Pickthall both wrote the foreword for the essay, and the translation was done by a close friend of his, Syed Hashmi

¹³⁴ Said Halim Pasha, "Notes pour servir à la réforme de la société musulmane," *Orient et Occident*, vol. 1 (1922), pp. 18-54

¹³⁵ Marmaduke Pickthall, "The Reform of Muslim Society," *Islamic Culture: The Hyderabad Quarterly Review*, 1: 1 (1927), 111–135

Fareedabadi.¹³⁶ It is very likely that these English and Urdu translations influenced perhaps the two most prominent theoreticians of the Islamic state after Said Halim Pasha, Abul A'la Maududi and Mohammed Asad. Pickthall handed over the editorial responsibilities of *Islamic Culture*, the journal that published the English translation to Mohammed Asad, who would later go on to become Pakistan's first foreign minister. Maududi was also familiar with Pickthall at this time, translating a speech he gave in Bombay into Urdu. Given that both Pickthall and Iqbal had helped introduce him to English and Urdu intellectual circles in North India/later Pakistan, it is highly likely that Maududi was familiar with Said Halim Pasha and read his last article.

In terms of more recent translations, the text has since seen multiple modern Turkish simplifications that mostly seem to only reference the Ottoman without reference to the French original. There is also a much later translation into English by Begum Aisha Bawani Wakf, to which I did not have access.¹³⁷ In 2011, a revised version of the Pickthall translation was published by a journal in Pakistan.¹³⁸ While this English translation sticks much more closely to the French than other translations, it does retain some of its archaisms and one or two mistranslations. Though he does not mention in what way, Wasti sees this translation as being slightly modified from the French.¹³⁹ My own translation sticks very closely to the French, including in paragraph structure, which varies considerably from translation to translation. My aim here, however, is not just to produce a new, better English translation, but also a critical edition that compares the different translations, especially on the Ottoman translations throughout the text to demonstrate how the translated texts were received in their own contexts.

It is further worth mention that most of the articles in English do not rely on the English translations and instead work from the Turkish translations, which means that some of the misunderstandings that resulted from mistranslations and deletions remain important. An example of some of the important issues that come from this critical

¹³⁶ M.A. Sherif, "Pickthall's Islamic Politics," in *Marmaduke Pickthall: Islam and the Modern World*, ed. Geoffrey P. Nash, vol. 21 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), pp. 106-136, 125.

¹³⁷ see, Said Halim Pasha, *The Reform of Muslim Society* (Karachi: Begum Aisha Bawani Wakf, 1965).

¹³⁸ Prince Said Halim Pasha, *INSIGHTS*, 'Da'wah: Principles and Challenges' Number, 03: 2-3 (Winter 2010-Spring 2011) pp. 211-244.

¹³⁹ Wasti, "Philosopher Prince," 97.

edition is the deletion of entire sections by Celal Nuri. While mostly not important, it does result in a few important misunderstandings. For example, Gücin uses his claim of an absence of a well-defined role for the ulema in Said Halim's thought to emphasize his "modernity." This is partially due to the Ottoman translations not including the section that makes clear that the source of competence in his political system for law makers is source of competence is knowledge of the sharia. While the translations maintain that jurists will have to know all the Sharia, it is not clear that the jurists and ulema are one and the same, as it is very much possible that they could remain secular lawmakers with some knowledge of Sharia. Furthermore, neither of the translations included the adjective "civil" when describing how the nation can bring down the ruler. Though only one word, this is a very important word, as it suggests both that he wouldn't support a violent rebellion, but also did not see civil political action as comparable to rebellion. Furthermore, both translations leave out the word "sociologists," the inclusion of which has important implications on one of the thesis' arguments in Section 3.3.

Furthermore, returning back to the French original of the text in fact strengthens the argument here, as occasionally his language was modern and sometimes even positivist to the point of presenting difficulty to translate into Ottoman. He literally uses the word positive, modern, evolution and in the text. At one point in the text, when he refers to "modern science" it was deleted out of one translation and rendered as "new sciences" in another, making this influence not as clear. The Ottoman translations seemed to especially have difficulty with two words: authority and institutions. Both Mehmet Akif and Celal Nuri avoided the word "authority," opting instead for sovereignty or the less abstract government. For "institutions," even though Nuri uses the word *teşkilat* in the title, he also uses the word *cemiyet* in the text, suggesting that there was not a settled word to translate institutions yet.

As the last text in his life, in some ways "Political Institutions of Muslim Society" is a summary, and perhaps even maturation, of the range of topics dealt in his earlier essays. The text can be divided into three main parts. The first section presents a natural law theory of the Sharia. He opens the essay with an introduction that argues for the

separation between the Muslim and Christian worlds and argues that the Muslim world has nothing to envy in the realms of society and ethics. The section “The Social Impact of Islam” defines Islamic society as that one in which the Sharia is sovereign, and forwards a theory of the Sharia as a “natural law,” similar to the natural laws of the physical world differing only in the epistemological means by which they can be reached.

The second part forwards a critique of Western society and the political system it gave birth to in national sovereignty, as well as the reasons for the Muslim world’s decline which led them to mistakenly take up this system. The section “National Sovereignty” critiques national sovereignty not only on the basis of being an alternative sovereignty to the Sharia, but as a form of tyranny which seeks to replace the previous sovereignties of the Church and Monarchy in the Western world. This is followed by a short paragraph length section “Consequences of the Principle of the Sharia’s Sovereignty” which argues that the Sharia creates a unique type of society in its obedience to the Sharia and unity under Islamic brotherhood. The section “The Period of Decline” presents his own decline theory: the Muslim world failed to materially advance due to their abandonment of the natural sciences caused by the ulema’s “scholasticism.” In “Western Society,” Pasha returns to the idea of national sovereignty, arguing that the continuity of the “bourgeois” class’s domination has meant that Western society has never found a constant idea. This lack of a constant idea led to the necessity of national representation and the Parliament as a site of dispute between the conflicting classes as he forwards in “The Western Political System.”

The third and final part deals with the specifics of this version of the Islamic state, or more specifically the constitutional Islamic state. It begins with the section “Muslim Political System” which is presented as a form of limited representative government, which nonetheless has different bases than the European representative state. The rest are paragraph length sections devoted to one aspect of this government. The first “Right of Legislation” argues that it must only belong to those capable and wise and knowledgeable of all the Sharia. The executive power must be centered in a single person, the “Head of State,” who oversees the whole of the system and protects the

Sharia. “Executive Power” is an incredibly short paragraph and argues that the executive power, consisting of the head of state and his deputies, must be independent in its actions. “Political Parties” argues that this political system will not require parties, which he sees as an institution arising from Western society, though this section in the Nuri translation is not entirely understandable due to the portions left out. The last paragraph “The Upper Chamber,” argues that upper parliaments, chambers are made up of the society’s nobles (similar to UK’s House of Lords) in order to observe government and suppress populist instincts. This upper chamber will not be necessary in an Islamic state given the lack of class struggle in society. The essay ends with a two paragraph conclusion on the difficulty of the task of reform, but is necessity.

Perhaps, the most interesting part of the text is this historical context. Said Halim Pasha’s thought and especially his last text represents an attempt to place Islam as the basis of the socio-political order at the historical moment when nation-states were soon to be formed. This contentious history of the text itself can best be demonstrated by the fact that when Mehmet Akif translated the text into Ottoman Turkish in a context in which the nationalist forces in Anatolia had declared national sovereignty, he omitted the paragraph on national sovereignty. While this is widely acknowledged he also deletes at least two other parts, one where Said Halim Pasha mentions Islam’s wisdom and justice in “the government of states,” and another section where he argues that for authority or sovereignty to be incontestable it can only spring from the word of God himself. To further indicate this historical context, I open the text with a handwritten note Said Halim Pasha sent with this text to Egypt during its uprising against the British, before turning to a translation of the text.

2.2 Said Halim’s Handwritten Note to Egypt

In these difficult days that Young Egypt passes through, it is a sacred duty for each of us to participate in the best way possible to help it achieve its national emancipation and meet its freedom, an enterprise made with awe-inspiring sacrifices.

I bring him here my very modest contribution, dedicating to it these pages which are the fruit of a long experience dearly acquired and a whole life of studies and tireless meditations.

May they be of any use to it in accomplishing its heavy and noble patriotic duty.

Said Halim,

Rome, 15 November, 1921¹⁴⁰

2.3 Some Notes to Serve towards Muslim Society's Reform

It is with infinite satisfaction that we see the Muslim peoples today awaking from their apathy and aspiring to free themselves from the yoke of foreign domination.¹⁴¹ This means that they have finally realized that it is every Muslim's duty and the most sacred duty of all to enjoy liberty and that without it there can be no good, nor real progress.

Nonetheless, we must confess that this satisfaction is not unmixed. We observe, in fact, that the vast majority of the Muslim intellectual class¹⁴² tends to only endow their countries with barely-disguised copies of Western institutions¹⁴³ and believe that they can only achieve their revival by adopting Indo-Aryan conditions and principles.

It is this state of mind of the Muslim "intelligentsia" that distresses us, as their state of mind is no longer confined to Islam, which teaches us not only of the one God worthy of worship, but so too endowed us at the same time with a set of social and moral principles which springs from this foundation of Divine Oneness, that these principles are imposed on us by it and that all Muslim societies until now were given birth to and lived by these principles.

It therefore seems that this intellectual elite is no longer able to assure itself with full and entire conviction that the Muslim religion is the human religion par excellence; religion in its highest and most complete formula; that it is civilization in its truest spirit and

¹⁴⁰ For the French original, see Ismail Kara, *Müslüman Kalarak, Avrupalı Olmak*, 398. For a Turkish translation, see footnote 31 on page 397 of the same work

¹⁴¹ A reference to both The Turkish and Egyptian Wars of independence.

¹⁴² Both Ottoman translations use the word "*münevver*" literally enlightened to express intellectual.

¹⁴³ Institutions was a difficult word for the Turkish to translate. Celal Nuri translates it as *cem'iyat*, even though it is translated as *teşkilat* in the title. Mehmet Akif renders it as *muessese*, closer to both the current Arabic and one of the current Turkish words for institutions.

most perfect meaning; and that, therefore, just as there can be no eternal salvation apart from it, so too can there not be social salvation outside of it.

As such, it seems they have apparently forgotten that just like for the Christian world all roads lead to Rome, for the Muslim world all roads lead to Mecca. In other words, they do not understand that each world is called to follow a different direction, a different destiny, and to fill a different thread in the general evolution of humanity.

Undoubtedly, the difference between the ideals, concepts and aspirations, needs and the means to satisfy them of the Christian world and those of the Muslim world is as great as that between the beliefs, social and moral concepts, general mentality, and the origin of Christianity on the one hand and Islam on the other. Could it be otherwise while the former is born of the latter?

Therefore, it is a flagrant error to believe that the institutions the Christian world has provided itself to meet its own needs, whether of a political or social order -as in the final analysis the two notions are based in each other- can ever suit us, no matter how one modifies the details. These worlds are, in fact, so essentially dissimilar that no effort could make them conform to the same conception of individual and collective life.

We can only attribute the above mentioned real distortion of the Muslim mentality, which expects the revival of Muslim society to come from being assimilated into Western society, to the harmful influence of foreign domination suffered by the peoples subject to the Prophet's law, a domination which played the role of an intellectual dissolvent among them.

We propose here to dispel the errors with which this mentality is loaded and to prove that from the moral and social points of view, Islamic Civilization has nothing to envy the West, and nothing to learn from it. To the contrary, it is Christianity which in these two respects has a lesson to learn from Islam.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ Interestingly, the French used the word "Islamisme," which would literally be translated as "Islamism." However, both Celal Nuri and Mehmet Akif translate it into the Ottoman as "*Islamiyet*," and Akif alternatively as "*Musmanlik*" or Muslimness. Given the current meaning of Islamism, I have decided to

Nothing could better enlighten, and in a clearer way, the conscience on this question of transcendent importance, than to establish what Islam's social work was. This evocation will convince our compatriots and co-religionists that Islamic reform consists quite simply of the faithful learning to better understand and better apply the teachings of their sublime religion.

2.3.1 The Social Work of Islam

All of Islam's social work is built on the foundations of the Sharia's sovereignty.¹⁴⁵ Muslim society is that society subject to this sovereignty.

As for the Sharia, it is that set of natural moral and social truths that our Prophet revealed to us in the Creator's name, and on which human happiness depends.

The Sharia's sovereignty is therefore only the sovereignty of those moral and social laws which have their source in nature itself, which are, therefore, immutable and independent of human will, like the physical laws. It is evident that all men are equal before these laws, the freedom they enjoy being limited only by the respect and submission they owe to the divine will of which they are a manifestation.

By instituting the Sharia, or rather its sovereignty, Islam establishes the principle of true equality, of true liberty, and with it, the principle of true human solidarity,¹⁴⁶ thus creating the highest and truest social ideal.¹⁴⁷

As we see, the principle of the Sharia's sovereignty is the recognition of the fundamental truth that all existence, whatever its nature, is subject to the natural laws

not translate it as Islamism, and instead refer to it as "Islam." However, this does give some credence to the argument often made that the word Islam has been overly reified in modern times.

¹⁴⁵ Mehmet Akif translated as *vazife* or duty above, and here as *ictimaiyat*, whereas Celal Nuri uses the less direct "*İslamiyet'in vücuda getirmiş olduğu eser-i ictimaiye*," literally "the social effect that Islam brought"

¹⁴⁶ Whereas Mehmet Akif attempts an Ottoman translation of *tâazud* writing the French "solidarité" in parenthesis, and uses the word without the parenthesis in the rest of the text, Celal Nuri simply translates it as *beyne'l efrad teaviün* or cooperation between individuals.

¹⁴⁷ For more on the concept of solidarity in his thought and intellectual milieu, see section 3.3 of this thesis.

which are peculiar to it, and consequently, that man's social existence is subject to natural social laws, just as his physical existence is subject to natural physical laws. This is where Islam came to establish the principle that man is in no way bound to submit to the law of his fellow man, even if it was an act of will by the most numerous group, as it would inevitably be arbitrary to a certain degree, and that man owes obedience only to his Creator's will as manifested in natural laws.

In this way, Islam subjugated empiricism¹⁴⁸ and rationalism, both full of prejudices and errors, which had hitherto guided men in forming and developing their social organizations, and formulated principles that enabled them to emancipate themselves from the imaginary sovereignties they had given themselves to satisfy their natural need for a moral, social and political authority capable of ensuring order and discipline.

It is Islam which, unquestionably, created the truest conception of authority, which gave it its real meaning by teaching man that indisputable authority proceeds from God alone, that in this case it is found in the Sharia which is the sanction of moral and social truth, and consequently the safeguard of wisdom and justice in the government of states.¹⁴⁹ It put an end to that belief that authority derives from that fragile human reason whose social and political laws have in reality only created a tyrannical and commanding power, born of violence, a conventional sovereignty which changes as the egoistic goals of those in power change.

From everything that has just been said, it becomes clear that the Sharia is indeed of divine essence, without having, moreover, any supernatural character as we so often imagine. This is what explains the absence of a clergy in the Islamic organization.¹⁵⁰ In fact, the Sharia is a divine code, made up of perfectly natural laws.

If the Sharia merits respect and absolute submission, it is only because it contains the divine truth applied to social organization, a truth of the highest value since it alone is

¹⁴⁸ Celal Nuri translated "empiricism" as *ihdiyaret*, a translation I believe to be unique, and rationalism as *akliyet*. Mehmet Akif does not translate either of these.

¹⁴⁹ Mehmet Akif deletes the words "in the government of states" here.

¹⁵⁰ Celal Nuri erases these two sentences, presumably to avoid the difficulty of "supernatural" in Ottoman Turkish, though he does use *feveka't tabiiyeden* below.

capable of guaranteeing social goodness, and that for it to be known required a Prophet to reveal it.

It did not take long for Islam to open up wider and different paths for the human mind than those of rationalism¹⁵¹ which, with its pretentious dogmatism, paralyzed it and prevented it from developing normally. It produced a radical revolution in the field of human thought, which was as beneficial and as decisive as that which it provoked everywhere it was established in the field of practical life. Thanks to the new orientation provided to the mind by Islam, man was able to develop freely his intellectual faculties, his capacities for observation and reasoning, which led him to invent the experimental method and to develop his skills to create modern science.¹⁵² The first scholars, in the true sense of the word, were the Muslim scholars. They were the initiators and pioneers whose works will be useful to mankind's eternal glory.

The error of believing the Sharia to be a code of supernatural laws and that those who submit to it unreservedly are mere fanatics is due to the fact that the truths contained in this collection were not conceived by the same procedures as those used for the acquisition of other natural knowledge; that these truths are not the products of observation and reasoning, but were revealed by the Prophet. Man's failing and his experiences have intervened only to confirm and justify these truths. But we repeat: apart from their origins, the Sharia's laws are nothing but natural.

Now the question poses itself as to why the Sharia was revealed. If these faculties of observation and reasoning are sufficient to let man learn the laws of science, why can they not succeed in making him discover moral and social laws? The answer to this is very simple. It is clear that there is an essential difference between these two categories of knowledge. Indeed, the former, as they concern man, can offer a certain basis for study only from the point of view of his physical being. They are, therefore, of a purely

¹⁵¹ Whereas Nuri earlier translated rationalism as *akliyet*, here he simply gives the transliteration of *rasyonalism*. Mehmet Akif avoids it by translating as "pure reason"

¹⁵² Whereas Akif deletes this important sentence, Nuri keeps it, rendering "modern science" as *ulum-i cedide* or "new sciences," which is not entirely clear that the adjective modern was used in the French original.

objective nature.¹⁵³ The latter relates to the human being as a moral, conscious and social being. As such, they are of a sentimental, psychological charge, that is to say, they are eminently subjective and do not offer a basis for positive regulation.

Man possesses the independence and impartiality of mind necessary to draw correct conclusions concerning the facts and phenomena which occur outside of his will mechanically and over which his personal peculiarities have no influence. He can draw out rules and laws corresponding to reality.

But as soon as it comes to studying man's existence as a moral and social being, that is to say as a factor thinking and acting on his own account, and to formulate laws governing his conduct, from this point of view, observation and reasoning, however disciplined the employment, become uncertain and most often deceptive guides, because they are always tainted with the flaws of the one they serve.

Man's natural incapacity to discover the truth in this domain is undeniably manifested in the ignorance the West's nonetheless ultra-civilized peoples still possess of the moral and social laws corresponding to natural principles and their sufferings as a result of this ignorance, while their efforts have given them such a high degree of knowledge of the other natural laws.

Therefore, it is a fact that if the Prophet had not revealed them, man would not have known the natural moral and social laws on which human happiness mainly depends.

It is therefore man's inability to realize the secret of moral and social laws from nature that made the Prophet intervene to reveal it to him in a special code, leaving him the task of discovering the other natural laws for himself through his personal efforts, but particularly recommending humans to cultivate the science which leads to it.

One of Islam's most remarkable and distinctive aspects is the Prophet's insistence on the importance of scientific instruction, which he made a special duty for Muslims, while telling them, in particular, "to go even to China" in order to obtain it. The Prophet made science one of the essential actors of human happiness.

¹⁵³ Mehmet Akif translates this as "*afaqi*." Celal Nuri does not include this section.

In summary, Islam's social doctrine consists in teaching us that the natural human society, that which conforms to the natural moral and social laws, is that society which is built on the principle of the Sharia's absolute sovereignty. The cardinal point of this teaching is that authority,¹⁵⁴ the basis of order and stability in society, can only derive from an incontestable and undisputed source, in this case from the word of God himself, since science is powerless to provide this source.¹⁵⁵

Islam furthermore teaches us that the happiest society is that which best knows and applies the best of not only the moral and social laws, but also the physical laws, in other words, that society which obeys the total body of the Divine Will. Islam, indeed, insists on the fact that happiness assured by the ethical and social laws alone, although it is real and stable, is nonetheless incomplete because it lacks the material aspect, and that that happiness which comes entirely from the knowledge of scientific laws undoubtedly also procures material comfort and enjoyment, but does not ensure social peace, which is the real basis of moral contentment.

2.3.2 National Sovereignty¹⁵⁶

Despite the evident superiority of Islam's doctrines in matters of social organization, the Muslim mind is nowadays distorted to the point of preferring, instead of the Sharia's sovereignty from which this organization derives, the principle of the sovereignty of the national will, an omnipotent, infallible and irresponsible will. Although, this principle was just born yesterday and considered infallible, it certainly has never reached its aim in any place.

Dazzled by Western society's material power and prosperity, a growing number of Muslim intellectuals like to attribute this situation, the object of their boundless admiration, to the "miraculous" effect of the principle of national sovereignty.

¹⁵⁴ Celal Nuri avoids translating authority directly, instead rendering it as "hüküm ve hakimiyet," that is "rule and sovereignty."

¹⁵⁵ While this section is entirely missing from the Celal Nuri translation, Akif keeps the first sentence, but leaves out the second perhaps due to its implicit critique of any sovereignty other than the Sharia's.

¹⁵⁶ This is the section missing from Mehmet Akif's translation.

Having had this principle adopted in certain Muslim countries, - for the sake of form, as its operation has remained completely artificial, - they would like the Sharia to cease to be the source of inspiration and criterion for Muslim governments.

Now, this concept of omnipotent national sovereignty is as false as all the other conceptions of sovereignty which preceded it in the West. It is based on an imaginary right that the nation ordains to itself on its own initiative and authority, in this, imitating its past masters, the Church and the Monarchy, who had also proclaimed on their own authority and in turn their omnipotent, unaccountable and irrefutable sovereignty.

At the base of these sovereignties, we always find the same principle: force. The result is a constant struggle for power, in which social hatreds escalate and fragment national power. These sovereignties are therefore prerogatives imposed by force and not principles which command respect in themselves by the mere prestige of their intrinsic moral value; therefore they represent usurpations, that is to say injustices.

This is because in reality the real right (to rule) only arises from the performance of a duty. It is that thing deserved due to the accomplishment of a duty. Otherwise, it is just injustice and usurpation.

It is generally believed to that one is very liberal in claiming that the human being is born with certain natural rights, including that of being free. However, nothing is more false, we would even say more anti-liberal. Man does not enjoy any natural rights. It is only natural for him to be able to adapt to his environment, that is to say, to observe the natural laws to which his moral and physical existence is subject to and to conform to them, in other words, to perform his duties.

It is by fulfilling his duty to educate himself that he acquires the right to be listened to, it is by practicing virtue that he acquires the right to be respected, and it is by conforming to his moral and social duties that he acquires the right to a certain degree of liberty, the value of which is very exactly determined by the intrinsic moral and social value of the duties he accomplishes and the manner in which he discharges them.

This is why, Islam, moreover, taught man through the Sharia only his essential duties, those whose perfect fulfillment should ensure him as a result the right to enjoy complete and eternal happiness.

As for national sovereignty, being born from the evolution of a false principle, it too is destined to disappear like its predecessors with the continuation of this evolution.

Moreover, what has come to be called the national will is in reality only the will of the majority of the nation, a majority which is likely to represent only half of the nation plus a vote, that is, the will of a very small majority in opposition to a very large minority, a minority almost equal to the majority.

The principle of national sovereignty is therefore nothing but the recognition of the majority's right to impose its will on the minority, a will which makes law in everything and decides without appeal. Consequently, it is an absolute will which prevails only on strength of numbers, that which - supposing it is not artificial, which is often the case - is precisely the least capable of being inspired by truth and wisdom.

If we remember that in the past centuries the same right belonged to a minority, whether aristocratic or clerical, which did not fail to abuse it at its whim, we will agree that the sovereignty of the national will is only the majority's revenge from the minority, a revenge which will sooner or later attract in turn some new revenge that will have been well deserved.

It would be absurd to disregard or to want to depreciate the value of the national will exactly expressed and not admit that it represents a set of individual wills which are the very precious manifestation of society's conscience, the exercise of a right on his part and the fulfillment of a duty. It therefore should be given a certain consideration and respect. But however great this deference, we must not forget that everything that exists here below is subject to natural laws, social phenomena as well as physical phenomena, and that the human will, in any of these areas must be guided by the laws which govern each of them and that wisdom, therefore, consists in conforming the human will to the requirements of these laws.

If the national will is not sovereign and omnipotent in the physical domain, if it is obliged to respect the laws which govern this domain, it cannot then claim sovereignty and omnipotence in the moral and social domain and must respect the laws relating to it as it does in the physical domain.

To the contrary, this foundation however should manifest within legitimate means and reasonable limits, so it might serve social happiness, something which only social and ethical structures built on universal laws could fulfill. Only by serving and obeying the Sharia's sovereignty as its other high and firm foundation, can the national will meet this aim.

As, on the other hand, it is not possible to determine these laws through observation and reasoning, belief in the Sharia's sovereignty is essential, and national sovereignty takes a secondary role which owes respect and submission to the Sharia.¹⁵⁷

2.3.3 Consequences of the Principle of the Sharia's Sovereignty

These consequences are of importance; as they consist in the birth of a whole new society built on new foundations which clearly distinguish it from other societies.

Islam's social work is summed up in the establishment of a social state based on equality and freedom in their most natural spirit and character, a social state in which class rivalries, caste struggles and where no claims for freedom or equality took place. This is how this social state knew the truest and most sincere human solidarity, which, extending from one people to another, established this Muslim brotherhood, a phenomenon unparalleled in the history of mankind, which unites in one big family a whole world of nearly 400,000,000 human beings, belonging to the most varied races and living in the most different conditions and climates.

Islam also knew how to endow the peoples who adopted it with a constant common ideal which never ceased to preside over their evolution and thanks to which, for more

¹⁵⁷ These last three paragraphs are cut out of the Celal Nuri translation.

than thirteen centuries in their splendor as in their decadence, they only sought to conform their conduct to the Sharia's teachings, and obey it to the best of their ability, always hoping for their salvation only from it.

Another consequence of Islamic society's establishment was to give authority a prestige and influence unknown elsewhere and in all ages.¹⁵⁸ In this way, it made itself simultaneously feared, respected and loved.

It made itself loved because it was born of the Sharia to serve it and make it reign, so it was of blameless legitimacy that removed it from any suspicion of usurpation or corruption.

It made it feared and respected due to its faultless holy source and as the standard of ethical and social truth. Even the errors committed in its name could not shake the prestige, nor the trust given to it.

It made itself loved and respected by the all-powerfulness of its impeccable origin and its quality of being the sanction of moral and social truths it earned it.

As such, the errors and abuses committed in its name could never undermine the prestige with which it was invested in the beginning, nor the confidence that it inspired. The Muslim peoples have always kept the conviction that the injustices and arbitrariness from which they had to suffer were neither in the Sharia's authority, nor the institutions and laws derived therefrom, but indeed only the vices of those who held power and acted in the law's name.

They never thought to challenge the legitimacy of the authority established by the Sharia, nor of undermining it in any way. They sought remedy to the rulers' abuses and injustices by changing their rulers in a direction which seemed to promise them to better represent the Sharia and better apply the law.

¹⁵⁸ Celal Nuri's translation erases "authority" in this sentence and makes Islam the subject of the sentence instead, "Islam became loved and respected." He also erases authority from the rest of the sentences as well and deletes the last two paragraphs. Mehmet Akif keeps "authority" as the subject of the sentence, translating it as *hükümet* or government.

The absolute correctness of the principle of the Sharia's sovereignty was therefore established by the constant, never changing respect that this sovereignty ensured through the centuries. Its effectiveness was most strikingly manifested in its creation of a social state which fulfilled all the essential conditions to guarantee man real and complete individual and collective happiness. As if by enchantment, it removed the thousand obstacles which hitherto hindered man's development and improvement and gave birth overnight to an admirable civilization which for centuries illuminated the world with its bountiful lights, teaching it science, justice and wisdom, and above all providing that society directly subject to its law with unparalleled moral well-being and material prosperity.

2.3.4 The Period of Decline

For about two centuries Muslim civilization has been in full decline, although the Muslim world has remained steadfastly loyal to its beliefs, still recognizes the Sharia's sovereignty, and does its utmost to observe Islam's sublime teachings and commandments at all times of its greatness.

If the same causes do not produce the same effects, if Islam's effect does not give the same results, it surely means that the Muslim peoples have fallen into an inability to understand and accomplish their Islamic duties with the same precision.

There has been an attempt to attribute the Islamic decay to all kinds of other more or less erroneous and fanciful causes. The detractors of Islam have gone so far as to claim, contrary to logic and historical truth, that the principle of this decadence is to be found in Prophet's very law and that the Islamic peoples are condemned to remain in their current state of inferiority as long as they retain their faith in it.

Nothing would be easier than to cofound the inveterate enemies of Islam. But we consider that it would be daring to enter into discussions with people dominated by bias and prejudice.¹⁵⁹

We will therefore content ourselves, without worrying more about these provocative omens, to specify the Muslim world's inability to comprehend its Islamic duties, that incapacity which is the sole source of Muslim decadence. This will allow us to determine the character of this fall and at the same time indicate to us the means of remedying it.

What does the Islamic world's crisis consist of? What are the Islamic duties that Muslim people are no longer able to fulfill as exactly as before?

These are the two questions which arise and which we must answer.

Can we reasonably claim that freedom, equality and solidarity have disappeared from Muslim society, when, on the contrary, we find that, no more than at any other time, class and caste hatred and antagonisms of race do not appear there, while Islamic fraternity asserts itself more lively and actively than ever, while finally the Sharia's authority retains its prestige and enjoys the faithful's trust and respect to a full extent?

It is evident that, in this respect, the Muslim peoples, in spite of their decadence, are more fortunate than the Western peoples, among whom social unrest is more marked than ever, among whom authority is attacked with increasing violence, as it inspires neither confidence, nor respect.

Unfortunately, the same is not true of the Muslim peoples' economic conditions. This is where we come in contact with the wound.

From this point of view, the comparison is very much to the advantage of Western societies. As their material prosperity and the economic power have grown, so too have those of Muslim societies declined. In this respect, Islamic civilization is to be pitied; it has every reason to envy the Western peoples' fate and has much to learn from them.

¹⁵⁹ Celal Nuri's translation deletes these two paragraphs.

The abasement of the Muslim world's material conditions has resulted in its political downfall. Reduced to impotence by its poverty and shortcomings of tools, it was unable to defend its independence against the Western peoples' ambitious enterprises. It thus has known all the evils and all the humiliations of enslavement. But, - and this demonstrates the measure of Islam's intrinsic power of domination- the calamities which befell it did not make it lose for a single moment its ardent faith in its religion, nor - and this marks the power of the Muslim organization - could not annihilate it socially, despite its economic and political ruin.

Given that power and material prosperity are the prerogative of societies which know how to take advantage of nature's blessings by discerning the laws which govern it, Muslim decadence can be attributed in the final analysis to ignorance, against which the Prophet had especially warned the faithful.

As deplorable as the condition of Muslim peoples is due to this ignorance, the case is not fatal. Indeed, it is a matter of material decadence, and therefore easily repaired. Morally and socially, the Muslim structure has survived. This is the essential. There is much to console ourselves with.

The history of the Muslim world provides a categorical confirmation of our diagnosis of its decline. It teaches us, in fact, that the decline of this world coincided with the appearance in its midst of a certain scholasticism.¹⁶⁰ The Muslim religion is absolutely opposed to the intricacies and excessive refinements of religious thought, and this is what explains the absence of a clergy in Islam.

This scholasticism propagated the belief that the Prophet's pressing recommendations for study and science pertained exclusively to the truths contained in the Sharia, and that it is the meditation of these truths that should absorb the human mind. This was a fundamentally arbitrary interpretation of the Prophet's intentions for, after having taught us the moral and social truths in the Sharia, he never ceased to insist, as we have already noted, on the need to always acquire more knowledge by ourselves and educate

¹⁶⁰ Akif avoids translating "scholasticism" directly and instead rendering it as "a number of entirely unbeneficial and unestablished sciences." He translates "this scholasticism" in the next paragraph as "these sciences."

ourselves without respite. He tells us that it is through science that we will appreciate our religion more and practice it all the better. By this, he intended to assure us, by means of constant labor which was to deliver to us the secrets of nature, a material happiness worthy of the moral and social happiness which he offered us free of charge in the Sharia.

Nonetheless, the mysticism, to which the Muslim world fell victim to by virtue of the pseudo-clergy which established itself wrongly in its midst, became so generalized that it ended up dominating the Muslim mentality.¹⁶¹ As a result of scholasticism, the Muslim world became increasingly disinterested in the study of the nature and almost completely abandoned the natural sciences.

Thus, the Muslim peoples fell into an increasingly marked inability to secure the material well-being and the power they needed to live free and to defend their independence from external assaults. They are therefore themselves responsible for their economic and political decline.

However, the persistent failure of their efforts to revive, their increasingly intimate contact with the West, and above all the teachings which it provided them, ended up creating the conviction in the Muslim world that the Sharia's laws are contrary to the requirements of material progress.

Deceived by this fatal notion, some thought they had to sacrifice their material well-being for their moral and social well-being, in other words, the laws of progress for those of the Sharia, while others thought it, to the contrary, more wise to decide to sacrifice the Sharia's demands for those of their material uplifting, whereas the two are not only compatible with each other, but complement one other.

By doing so, the former hoped to resuscitate an already distant, yet glorious past, without realizing that material progress is the necessary compliment of moral and social well-being, while the latter imagined that they could create a new prosperous and powerful society from scratch by ripping the Sharia of its sovereignty.

¹⁶¹ Akif deletes the word "mysticism" from this sentence, instead translating it as "the influence of these ulema."

This is how the desire for Occidentalization first arose in the Muslim mind.

It is true that the partisans of this tendency were never more than a tiny minority, but this minority represented the majority of the intellectual and enlightened classes. It thus ended up exerting a considerable influence on the self of Muslim society, thanks above all to the support given to it by Western domination's representatives in the Muslim world.

The Muslim "intelligenza" had rallied all the easier to the principle of Westernization as this class had been educated in large numbers in the Western centers or in the schools that the foreign powers competed with another to establish in Muslim countries, concerned as they were to establish their moral and intellectual domination over the Muslim world through propaganda in order to consolidate their economic and political domination.¹⁶²

Trained in these conditions, Muslim intellectuals ended up judging their religion only through a more or less Westernized mentality, that is to say, they no longer understood the moral and social truths it teaches. It even happened that they lost faith in its moral and social principles, showing them either scornful indifference or violent animosity.

Thus, by westernizing itself, this so-called elite blinded itself completely to the illness it wanted to cure, and also did not understand its character, it ceased to discern the forces of society or where these ills were located.

In short, it only complicated the Muslim world's already very precarious condition and disturbed its public conscience by partially deforming it in its own image.

As for the Sharia's partisans, deceived and subjugated by scholasticism, they were not any more successful in their efforts to remedy Muslim decadence by the system of renunciation.

But let us do them justice. It is thanks to them that in the world of Islam there arose a group of people who continued to study, meditate and comment on the Sharia's truths, to consume them and to devote all their thoughts and hearts to them. It began to create a

¹⁶² The Celal Nuri translation cuts out these nine paragraphs.

whole science based on venerating the Sharia, where man observes, compares and concludes only by its truths, a science whose aim is to teach man to conform to the Sharia in all manifestations of his moral being and apply it in all his actions.

This science, which is peculiar to Islam and is known by the name of "Fiqh," is certainly most considerable and the most perfect of what the human mind has produced in the domain of the moral and social sciences. It provides in this a discipline in this domain which corresponds to the experimental method in the domain of the positive sciences¹⁶³. It is thanks to fiqh that the Muslim world was able to keep intact its conceptions, principles and traditions, as well as its Islamic spirit and ideal, throughout the centuries and the thousand vicissitudes of foreign domination. It owes fiqh to have thus escaped a moral and social decadence which would have been irreparable.

Now that we know the nature of the illness afflicting the Muslim world and the causes that produced it, the way to remedy it is self-evident.

It is clear indeed that it is simply to acquire the positive knowledge that we lack. As, on the other hand, this knowledge happens to be possessed by the West's peoples, it is among them that we must go and seek it. It is from them that we must re-learn the experimental method that we have forgotten, and the modern technique that we have neglected.

But it is important to clarify that this is all we have to ask of the peoples of the West. Indeed, if it is indisputable that the only way to put an end to Moslem decadence is to borrow from the West its positive science and its technical procedures, this does not mean that we should adopt the ways it has adopted this scientific knowledge, particularly in the field of organizing capital and labor. Far from us the system of relations which has been established in the West between these two factors of production!

¹⁶³ Celal Nuri translation cuts off this very important sentence, which hammers home the degree to which he has positivized Sharia and fiqh. Mehmet Akif however keeps it, translating 'positive sciences' as *ulum-I hakmiyye*.

On this point, elementary wisdom enjoins us to stick to the Sharia's prescriptions, which have proven their worth in sparing Muslim society the dissensions and struggles between classes which have never ceased to disturb the existence of Western nations. It is to fiqh, which is based on the Sharia and has developed its spirit and meaning, that we must turn to create and regulate our economic organization. We will find there the guarantee for the functioning of positive laws in a social framework free from the perturbations which corrupt the Western systems.

These lines will undoubtedly displease our Westernizers. But no matter how violently they think they must protest, they cannot alter the fact that their judgments expressing an unqualified admiration for Western conditions are not based on in-depth studies, nor sufficiently philosophical comparisons and that, therefore, there is a serious chance they are wrong. The sentiment they profess in particular with regard to the Western peoples' social system, is simply inspired in them by the spectacle of their material prosperity, as well as the disdain they so ostentatiously show towards the Muslim social system and generally towards all of Islam's social work, no matter how admirable, proceeds from the view of the inferior conditions of Muslim society's material existence.

However, a society's material prosperity is the product of its activity in the field of technical knowledge. It does not constitute sufficient proof of the superiority of its social system. One could even say that prosperity reigns in the West despite its social conditions, which are clearly very imperfect.

In summary, what has induced our Westernizers to profess their boundless admiration for Europe and their disdain for Islam, a double error which classifies them among the dabbling sociologists,¹⁶⁴ is the immoderate taste for the pleasures they have acquired through contact with the former.

2.3.5 Western Society

¹⁶⁴ This phrase here was cut out of the Nuri translation and Akif translations. The inclusion of the word "sociologists" in the French is important for the theory that he was at least partially responding to Gökalp's thought on some of these issues discussed in Section 3.3 of this thesis.

By following the evolution of Western societies from their formation to the present day, we see that first spiritual power dominated there and then gave way to royalty, that is to say to temporal power. We will see that the latter ended up bringing the reign of democracy, a falsely named regime, as it is currently characterized by the omnipotence of the bourgeoisie.¹⁶⁵

Thanks to this omnipotence of this industrious, but not very idealistic, and therefore selfish class, economic questions have acquired an exceptional importance in the last phase of the Western peoples' evolution, to the detriment of questions of a moral and social order, which has a much more considerable role in terms of true human happiness. This process has impressed a very special character on the present phase of Western evolution. It results in developing in the individual a thirst for a life of pleasure and luxury and pushes him to acquire wealth to assure this life. The idea of wealth overwhelms his ego and leads to a ferocious exploitation of the weak by the strong. In pursuit of enjoyment, that is to say wealth, the individual ends up believing that everything is permitted.

The prodigious rise of industrialism which we are witnessing today, a development unparalleled in history, is the product of this evolution. Industrialism forms the basis on which almost the entire Western social edifice rests.

But, if it is the capitalist bourgeoisie which created this state, it is the proletariat which sustains it and extends its life through its labor. As a result, the latter is found to have acquired in Western society an importance at least equal to that of the bourgeoisie. So we see this proletariat making all its efforts to impose its will, not only on the bourgeoisie, but on the whole society, whose institutions it would like to overthrow and replace them with a new organization in accordance with its own conceptions, and which it intends to manage exclusively.

¹⁶⁵ The connection to Marxism was hidden in Pickthall's translation as he translates it to "trading class," whereas the Turkish maintains this link by transliterating it into *burjuva*. While Akif maintains the word "democracy" transliterating it into Ottoman, Nuri renders it as "*hakimiyet-i amme*" or "popular sovereignty."

As we can see, Western society has never ceased to feel the need to change and re-change the morals of its collective existence. From this point of view, its evolution was only a series of experiments and research experiences, always of an essentially empirical character, and out of which it allowed itself to be guided by prejudices, momentary needs and passing circumstances. If so, it is evident that this society has never achieved a constant social ideal. It changed incessantly, evolving with its changing sentiments, material needs and technical knowledge. Its ideal, or rather ideals, did not guide its general evolution, but followed it. Now, if a social ideal is not fixed; if at every moment it is transformed by already accomplished facts; if it depends on social evolution instead of inspiring it; that is because this ideal is empty and not based on natural moral and social truths, those which are independent of man's will and are not imposed by his respect for their intrinsic value, but rather on arbitrary and capricious decisions of such or such party of rulers.

It is therefore evident that Western society has not yet learned the true moral and social principles, that is to say those principles which are founded in immutable nature and which are alone capable of ensuring the collective of stable conditions of existence, a stability which indicates equilibrium, a category without which social happiness will always be inconclusive and ephemeral.

A social system's instability is obvious proof that it satisfies only one part of society, while it annoys the other, that it favors one to the detriment of the other. It follows that the more unstable a regime, the more oppressive it is, but fiercely opposed. It maintains itself only through violence and repression and ends up undermining itself through the injustices and abuses it commits to maintain itself.

This is how authority, which is essential for collective existence, is fought without respite in Western society. What a difference from this point of view between this society and Muslim society, where authority, inspiring an unshakeable confidence and respect, is not affected!

It does not matter whether it is Royalty or the Church which governs, whether it is secularism or spiritualism which dominates,¹⁶⁶ whether democracy has supplanted aristocracy, or whether socialism is substituted for capitalism, the illness only reproduces itself in other forms and other aspects. There are always new abuses, new injustices which replace the old ones and which in turn give birth to others from which future generations must suffer.

Therefore, whatever prosperity, power, and material bonding such a society may enjoy at any given moment, its happiness will be fleeting and short-lived, since it will not know stability and real moral well-being by default. Would such a condition really be enviable?

Now, the measure of liberty and equality, no matter the society, is in proportion to the stability of that society's social equilibrium — in other words, to the degree of justice therein. If, therefore, in Western society, class rivalries and antagonisms persist to the point of pushing them to fight each other with the violence that we see, if solidarity is only confirmed among members of the same class to the detriment of society as a whole, if in summary, the social equilibrium is constantly upset or threatened, there is much conclusive evidence that freedom and equality are far from being as perfect as our intellectuals want to believe.

However, it is very difficult to establish real liberty and equality in a society founded on the negation of these principles, as in the West. For make no mistake, favor and privilege, as far as the individual and certain sections of the community are concerned, are the basis of the West's social organization. In such a world, no matter how many so-called liberal laws are enacted, the mentality, being fundamentally anti-liberal and anti-egalitarian by virtue of the age-old prejudices entrenched there over the centuries, will keep injustices in practice. To remedy this situation, the mentality must be reformed by

¹⁶⁶ Akif translates secularism as “a class with no relationship to religion.” By spiritualism, Said Halim Pasha here means “theocracy.” Akif transliterates both socialism and capitalism directly into Ottoman, suggesting he expected his readers to be familiar with them.

means of an appropriate educational system applied with patience and intelligence over entire generations.

Distinctions of class, rank and race will only really disappear from Western society when the spirit of impartiality and tolerance has passed into the public consciousness, and when men, whatever their origin and position will see in their fellows only equals differing from each other only in their individual capacity to fulfill their duties and exercise their rights. It is on these conditions alone that man can form a true conception of liberty and equality and can enjoy them to the fullest extent and according to his needs. Indeed, it is for him to understand that the measure of freedom and equality existing in a determined society, depends on the moral and social value of the individuals who compose it, and that the individual's moral and social value depends in turn on the moral and social principles on which this society is built, and not on the circumstantial laws, more or less accidentally just, which it sets for itself to correct the social injustices which perpetuate there in favor of the spirit of intolerance and impartiality.

Only this re-molding of the Western mentality will be able to put an end to the class rivalries and struggles which persist through the multiple changes made to abolish them. All these aspirations towards freedom and equality, all these social demands which emerge with more or less violence without ever being satisfied, will only be realized under this condition. Only then will the West attain the social justice it has so long sought and failed to find.¹⁶⁷

From the various observations and comparisons that we have made, it follows - let us say it once more - that Muslim society has no reason to prefer the West's moral and social principles over those of the Sharia, which are incomparably superior. It is not by separating ourselves from them, to the contrary, it is by seeking to better understand and apply them, that we can hope to put an end to the Muslim world's current decline.

¹⁶⁷ The Nuri translation cuts out most of the above ten paragraphs.

2.3.6 The Western Political Regime

Like all political regimes, those of the West were born of its various social systems to serve them and contribute to their evolution. The Western political system must, therefore, necessarily undergo the transformations imposed on it by those of the social system during its evolution. This was to render it as unstable and as variable as the social system from which it was derived.

We will not deal here with the various phases that the Western political system has gone through in the past. What interests us now is its current phase.

As it appears to us today, it too is entirely based on the principle of national sovereignty. It had to be as such, so long as Western society consented to see social truth and justice only as being the national will expressed freely and without restriction. Until further notice, it will not be otherwise.

One of the first consequences of adopting this principle was that it gave rise to national representation. The institution of national representation was the chief political work of modern Western society. It is the basis of its entire political system.

However, as Western nations find themselves divided into social classes with different ideals and aspirations resulting from their different political and social needs, often even conflicting, it happened that, from its very beginning, national representation became the closed field of these hostile classes' struggle. Thus were political parties born, whose leaders, while devoting themselves almost exclusively to defending the interests of their respective classes, nonetheless claim to fight on the nation's behalf.

Western Parliaments thus became the arena where social struggles were waged, sometimes providing one of the political parties, sometimes the other, the opportunity to seize power and exercise it as it saw fit during its administration.

Such is the part played by national representation nowadays in the Western nations' social evolution. It will last as long as class antagonism continues. The era of political peace and good-will will dawn for Western nations only when they achieve social peace and good-will.

It should be recognized, however, that, good or bad, the political system that Western society has created for itself perfectly responds to and entirely satisfies its social system.

With regards to the rights and prerogatives of this national representation- as omnipotent, infallible and irresponsible as the national sovereignty from which it arises- they are naturally of the most extensive, you could even say, boundless. It has a monopoly on legislation, which reserves it the exclusive right to make known the national will and to impose it in the form of laws. It also exercises over the Executive power control which, in some countries, goes so far as to allow it to dominate it.

National Representation's chief role then is to democratize society, that is to say to submit the minority to the will of the majority, while the right of control conferred upon it procures much more advantages to its own members if it does not procure a wise and honest administration.

In such a system, the executive is but a docile instrument of Parliament, and as any power which loses its independence also gives up its essential character and deprives itself of the possibility of conscientiously exercising its natural function, the executive ends up working to serve the particular intents of the parties and the personalities who support it in Parliament. It seeks to recruit their supporters by creating and distributing well-off posts, to ensure them the majority in elections by all means, thus resorting to all

kinds of compromises and concessions which corrupt the administration, while making it more and more expensive.

In conclusion, in such a political regime, the executive does more bad politics than wise and honest administration.

Moreover, any political regime where the right to legislate is monopolized by a political body is always most undesirable, because it is of an obvious partiality, is careless of justice, and the law is no more than a more or less sensitive legal instrument of oppression. The laws will aim to satisfy particular interests, at the same time as that of the party's, without taking into account the public interest of a more general and elevated order. They will inevitably be tainted with injustice and partiality.

If, moreover, one realizes that the political body legislating is the one where passions and rivalries are the most keen, and consequently moderation and wisdom are the most lacking, one can easily conceive of the discredit that must necessarily fall on the laws enacted under such a system.

Yet, the nations that live in this form of political organization have gone to great lengths to shield those they designate to interpret and apply the law from evil influences in order to prevent errors and injustices.

Unless these nations think that it takes more impartiality and wisdom, as well as more knowledge, to apply the laws than to elaborate them, one sees in this attitude which we are criticizing an admission of the political system's flagrant insufficiency.

It would be superfluous to dwell any longer on listing the flaws and shortcomings of the system in question. The list is too long. The one we have just pointed out is enough to condemn it. It is the most important and most grave, as well as the most direct consequence of the principle of national sovereignty.

But, however great the errors of this system from the point of view of social justice, let us repeat that it nevertheless has the merit of being in line with the social system of which it is its political counterpart, of being its logical and natural product and sincere manifestation. If it is defective, that is because it is intended to meet the demands of a social system which is, itself, defective.

This, moreover, is the only merit that we can recognize in it without thinking of disdaining it. But it is obvious that in a society whose needs are different than those of Western society it would be disastrous. Moreover, it would have no *raison d'être*.

It seems that those of us who declare themselves to be supporters of the Western political system are unwittingly influenced by this system's perfect suitability for the social system that gave birth to it. In reality, their admiration comes from nothing else.

Let us reiterate.

The illness from which Muslim society suffers stems from its ignorance of the natural physical laws, which prevents it from enjoying nature's benefits and condemns it to material misery, while compromising its political independence.

On the other hand, the illness afflicting Western society stems from its ignorance of natural moral and social laws, which keeps it in perpetual social crisis.

The first of these societies is deprived of material well-being, the second of social well-being.

To escape its illness, Muslim society must dispel the ignorance that is its source. It must, therefore, address itself to Western society which, more fortunate than it in this respect, possesses science.

As for Western society and a cure for its internal illness biting away at it, it must benefit from the spiritual and social truths within the Islamic Sharia.

So therefore, the aid and support that Muslim society has to ask of Western society is limited and of a very specific nature. This aid and framework does not in any way have

to be of a social or political character. Indeed, the westernization of Muslim society in whatever form and at any degree would be the biggest conceivable mistake.

2.3.7 The Muslim Political Regime

The best political regime is the one which best meets the requirements of the social regime to which it belongs, which best interprets its fundamental principles, and which is its most faithful expression. Based on this principle, we will try to determine what the best Muslim political regime should be.

As we have already explained, Muslim society is that society which is subject to the Sharia's sovereignty. It is, in other words, that society where everyone is required to himself accomplish the duties imposed on him by the Sharia's moral and social laws, and to ensure, on the other hand, that they are respected and applied by others, that is, the entire collective.

It is, therefore, a religious duty for every Muslim to ensure the Sharia's supremacy hand-in-hand with his government. This Islamic duty has as its counterpart an indisputable Islamic right: that of controlling the Government.

Thus, the Islamic system in its essence is representative.

In Muslim society, which ignores class rivalries, where social ideals and aspirations are the same for everyone, national representation must of course take a very different form from that of Western society. It must differ from it in its spirit and its objective, its composition, and in its rights and prerogatives.

National representation in Muslim society must be ensured by an assembly of the nation's elected representatives, whose composition will guarantee within it the reign of political concord and peace modeled on the fraternity between classes, which is one of Muslim society's distinctive features. It must establish and maintain in the political field that solidarity which is affirmed in the social field.

In the Muslim Parliament, therefore, there will be no Communists, no Socialists, no Republicans, and no Monarchists. There will only be men of good will who nurture the same ideal and pursue the same goal: carrying out the Sharia's wise commandments to the best of their ability. They will be men who differ from each other only in the choice of means to serve this common ideal.

Therefore, the representatives of the Muslim nation will not have to fight to win and dominate. They will only have to help each other to ensure the submission of all to the common idea. Being free from the spirit of rivalry, their control will be exercised without passion, without jealousy, without hatred, that is to say in the conditions where human activity can make itself the most beneficial and the most fruitful.

As for this Parliament's rights and prerogatives, they will be broad enough to enable it to exercise the most extensive, complete, efficient and effective control over Government. But they will not include the power of legislation. The recognition of such a right for national representation would be contrary to the Sharia's spirit, whose wisdom and perfect justice could not admit a group of politicians, however high their character, to be charged with law-making.

Moreover, the particular reasons for which this privilege is recognized in Parliament in Western society do not exist in Muslim society. In fact, the Muslim Parliament would not have to concern itself with facilitating, by making appropriate laws, the constant social transformations demanded by the Western collective's fluctuating state. It would only have to improve and consolidate the existing state, essentially stable state, with a view to its conservation.¹⁶⁸

The Right of Legislation

Since in Muslim society the function of legislation is an essentially social function of the utmost importance, a function, therefore, in which the political character does not predominate as in Western society, the right of legislation must belong to those who

¹⁶⁸ These very important paragraphs are missing from the Celal Nuri translation.

know how to make laws, that is to say a jurist, because this cannot be a question of majority and minority, but simply of competence.

If it is competence alone which gives the physician the indisputable right to look after an individual's physical health, all the more reason should it be competence and nothing but competence that confers on the citizen the much more important right to care for an entire nation's moral and social health. Then it becomes impossible to dispute the exercise of this right.

Because of the pre-eminent importance of the jurist's functions, the competence which will enable them to be exercised should be particularly high and be shown to be superior in all regards. Obviously, the legislator will have to thoroughly know the Sharia.¹⁶⁹ This will be the source of his technical competence. But he must also possess great moral qualities, in particular moderation, prudence, impartiality, and general wisdom. He will be a psychologist and know, inside and out, the people's soul, spirit and temperament.

It is only in these conditions that the jurist will make, so to speak, living laws, which will be simultaneously loved, feared and respected. Otherwise these laws will only have the value of police regulations in the nation's view.

Therefore, it is to the jurists whom the right of legislation must belong, that is to say to that class of specialists who are mainly concerned with the study of the Sharia. However, virtue must be added to his science, so that the jurist enjoys popular respect and confidence to a sufficient degree for his laws to be imposed on the nation.

Consequently, it is the nation which should elect its legislative assembly, which will be as free and independent as its Parliament, the observatory power, and which, like it, will have the supreme aim of consolidating the Sharia's reign and omnipotence.

In this manner, Muslim law will continue to be based on a thirteen-centuries-old system whose spirit of wisdom and righteousness has stood the tests of time with resounding

¹⁶⁹ The Nuri translation cuts this sentence, which not only erases the fact that is knowledge of the Sharia that makes up the legist's competence, but make it seems as if their superior moral qualities is the only qualifying factor. For more on this misunderstanding among some English commentators on the ulema's role in Said Halim Pasha's thought, see section 3.3.

success. In this manner, Muslim society will continue to enjoy stability, order and progress. It is in this manner again that Islam, guaranteed against violent changes by maintaining its traditions, will develop in the sense of its own individuality, according to a thoughtful, coherent, logical and harmonious plan.

The Head of State¹⁷⁰

Given that in Muslim society authority emanates from the Sharia, of which it is only the consequence and the sanction, it is important that it be as powerful and effective as possible so it ensures all the benefits that reside in it. Without power, the best-intentioned and best-inspired authority remains sterile. It is therefore important that authority in Islamic society has the moral, social and material resources necessary for its rigorous and lasting functioning. In Islamic countries, unlike what happens in the West, it is a duty for authority to protect religion and the entire civilization that derives from it against assaults from within and encroachments from without. More than anywhere else, authority must be strong in Muslim states. It is superfluous to explain that one of the conditions for authority's power and effectiveness is that it resides in one person.

It is just as important that the holder of authority be selected by the nation. This is one of its most unquestionable rights, since it unites with its equally indisputable duty to ensure that the administration functions well, one of the conditions of which is that the supreme power be entrusted to the one most worthy of exercising it.

But the possession of a right and the exercise of that right are two very different things when it comes to government. The possession of supreme power involves no competition or participation; it is none the less true, on the other hand, that its exercise can only be carried out by delegation, with certain elements of the nation participating in enjoying some of the Head of State's rights - obviously with the latter's consent.

Thus, in a Muslim country, the head of state must be the nation's elected representative. He must have all the rights and prerogatives ensuring the effectiveness of his authority. But, by delegation, he fulfills his functions as supreme head of the Executive by

¹⁷⁰ Celal Nuri renders this as *Reis-i Hükümet*, that is "head of government" rather than state, though the word state is used in the French original.

granting his agents and representatives sufficient rights to enable them to replace his action with theirs under the best possible conditions.

The chief role of the supreme head of the Executive is to serve as regulator of the country's political system, ensure that it functions smoothly, maintain harmony between the different powers and settle any differences that may arise between them.

Representing the national will and the authority which emanates from the Sharia, the Head of State - a distinctive feature of the Muslim organization - is personally responsible towards both the Sharia's representatives and guardians, whatever the body in charge of these functions, and towards the nation, while his delegates are responsible towards the representatives of the nation and those of the Sharia.

Thus, in the Muslim political system, the executive power's responsibility towards the Parliament and the Legislative Assembly is established.

In the special case where it would not be the Parliament which would complain about the Executive's representatives, and where the offender would be the Head of State himself, either by incapacity or indignity of conduct, - the nation itself will bring a civil action against him - the Sharia listens to it and pronounces his forfeiture.¹⁷¹

By an extremely simple mechanism and procedure, the Muslim nation can get rid of its sovereign when its faults, sins or shortcomings have made it unbearable. In a single day, it can make it fall from the height of grandeur to the rank of a mere mortal.

The Executive Power

Every competence confers a right and every right confers a competence. Together, these two conditions create independence of action.

¹⁷¹ None of the translations mention the word "civil action," which could have important implications, suggesting both that he does not have a place for violent rebellion in his thought, and that "civil action" is not construed as violent rebellion. For more on the issue of rebellion in the Ottoman context, see Mardin's discussion on why Namik Kemal did not have a theory of justified rebellion, Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 294-295

If national representation has the right to control the government, that is because the nation alone is competent to judge whether its Executive is behaving well or ill towards it. Likewise, it is because the Legislature is made up of the personnel most competent to make laws that it has the right to legislate. The function of governing and administering also requires a competence which the Executive, if it does not already possess it, acquires by experience, and which grants it the right to govern and administer.

If, therefore, right and competence guarantee complete independence for Parliament and the Legislative Power, these conditions will also suffice to ensure the same independence for the Executive Power. Consequently, the executive power must be as free in its own domain, that of action, as the Parliament and the legislature in theirs.

Parliament's right to control the Executive is in no way an infringement on the latter's liberty or independence, which must be able to act according to its own inspirations and own conscience. This is how it can work effectively and responsibly. It advises, it warns, it does not command. In the event that the disagreement between Parliament and the Executive takes a critical form, it is up to the Head of State to intervene to smooth the dispute in a manner favorable to the nation's claims.

But the need to satisfy the nation is not a restriction on the Executive's freedom either, since its *raison d'être*, its sole purpose, is to satisfy the nation by giving it laws in accordance with its needs, and that of Parliament is to exercise control over the government in accordance with the nation's wishes, another satisfaction it procures. To argue the contrary would be tantamount to saying that by forcing an institution to conform to the very purpose for which it was created its freedom and independence are undermined.

As for the Executive's rights and privileges, they will be those which apply to every Executive, its functions being nearly the same everywhere.

Political Parties

In politics, as in any other field of action or thought, differences of ideas, conception and judgment arise to divide men. But these divergences are always of a very variable nature because of the environment in which they occur, the causes which produce them and the character which they assume. If those which exist in the domain of politics are represented everywhere by political parties, it does not mean that the causes which generate them and the character which they present are the same.

While in the Western political system rivalries arise from the social classes' rivalry and antagonism- some desiring to overthrow the existing social regime in order to replace it with one that pleases them, others seeking to modify it only slightly to better ensure their ambitions, still others wanting to keep it as it is -, in the Muslim political system, differences only arise with regards to the choice of means to achieve the common goal of consolidating and perfecting the existing social system.

While in the Western system, the role of parties is to change, to constantly transform the existing social state, in the Muslim political regime, it is, on the contrary, to maintain the social institutions that Islam has created.

This is why in the West, political parties have acquired an inordinate importance, dominating, so to speak, national life and altering and distorting its forms of activity according to their own convenience. This also explains why political parties and their activity in Muslim countries play a much more modest role. They will never come to dominate the nation's life.

This is an important point, as it proves the superiority of Islam's social and moral structure compared to Europe.

Furthermore, if political activity has acquired such exceptional importance in Western countries, this is because they experience the need to remedy the defects of their social

order in that way.

It is a fact that Muslim society is better constituted than Western society.

The Senate (Upper Chamber)

The Senate is an essentially aristocratic institution born out of the need to defend the rights and privileges of a certain class and of certain individuals. Its mission is to moderate and temper society's democratization and prevent it from falling into excess.

It, therefore, has no *raison d'être* in Muslim society, where there is no legal inequality, neither between classes, nor between individuals; where, consequently, there are none of the dangers which may threaten Western society in its evolution. The wisdom and moderation of which Muslim society may stand in need in its own evolution will be always amply provided to it by its single Chamber aided by the Legislative Power, both guided by the Sharia.

Thus, by instituting, as we have just described, the Observatory Power, the Legislative Power and the Executive Power, each made independent of each other by their competence and their special attributions, and by ensuring authority all its power in all its effectiveness, the Muslim regime will respond perfectly to the Sharia's spirit and closely unite all these powers for the named purpose of safeguarding the Sharia's integral and perpetual supremacy.

It is such that peace and harmony will be established in Islam's political life, that peace and harmony which exists in Muslim social life. Thus we shall achieve the perfect harmony which should exist between social and political institutions if nations are to truly thrive.

Such indispensable harmony is the aim that any constitution, any political reform, must achieve; for, without it, even the best social system would find itself paralyzed and reduced to impotence, while even the most defective social system which would have

the advantage of being in harmony with its political system will always know how to progress.

As we see, we have sought in this study only to make a simple statement of what should be the spirit and the character of the political system intended to best respond to the Muslim social system and be in complete harmony with it. There could be no question, in the circumstances, of any draft political constitution as such. Such a project would not be in its place in a work of such a general character, considering that determining a people's constitution is an enterprise of a very particular nature which will have to respond to this people's political needs and be inspired consequently from the moral and intellectual level of the mentality, and the character that belongs to them.

Furthermore, as it is not conceivable that a single form of political constitution could be suitable for all Muslim peoples, despite the many points in common that exist between them, those who read this study will certainly not be surprised that I did not exhibit them here. My goal was simply to warn my compatriots and co-religionists, my Muslim brothers, of the irreparable errors that the Muslim peoples would commit were they to adopt imitations of the West's political constitutions and with them the social and political principles of this world, the adoption of the first necessarily implying that of the second.

What would happen, in fact, if the partisans of Westernization succeeded in fully realizing their ideal in a Muslim nation? They would quickly discover that they had only replaced that social solidarity, which is Islam's most distinctive feature, with the West's rivalry and class hatred; that they had only ruined freedom and individual equality in the nation in question and would have made it fall into the Western disorder, that is, brought it to an imbalance where it would be constantly in pursuit of this same freedom and equality to which it had voluntarily renounced, without ever succeeding in attaining it. They would discover that the hatred that exists between the West's peoples, a hatred without truce or mercy, had replaced the beautiful Muslim brotherhood, and that the common ideal that united them would have disappeared to make room for all kinds of imaginary, deceptive and ephemeral ideals which arise from men's egoism, character

defects and momentary needs, dividing individuals and classes and condemning them to hate each other and, consequently, constantly fight each other.

No doubt it would be them again who would be the first to recognize , although too late, that it is not by morally and socially disorganizing a nation, that it is not by plunging it into social anarchy, that one achieves its economic prosperity and political power and safeguards the nation against foreign domination.

The dangerous illusions as to the effects of Westernization on the Muslim world which we have nowadays in Islam's lands, can therefore only come from a faulty conception and an incomplete knowledge of the questions which are vital for this world, but which nevertheless are treated with an inconceivable triviality most worthy of that mentality which is at the base of all this action.

It is these deplorable illusions that prevent those who nurture them from seeing that the inevitable death that Westernization will cause in the Muslim world will always be directly proportional to its degree of realization and that, therefore, the more complete this transformation, the more harmful it will be to this world, ultimately bringing about its complete ruin.

It is once more these illusions which do not allow their victims to convince themselves of the truth that the Muslim world's salvation lies in building its social, political and economic life solely on the Islamic truths, immutable and eternal in their perfection.

Finally, we will add that by believing itself obliged to imitate the West and be inspired by its principles, example and spirit, Muslim intellectuals demonstrate that they, the majority at least, have a very erroneous conception and very little in relation to the mission they are called to fulfill.

They ignore that their only end, if not their sole *raison d'etre*, is to represent Islamic principles in all their truth and perfection, and to serve them as best they can; that they must, therefore, be inspired only by Islam's purest and highest spirit, most beautiful

traditions, and noblest examples, so that they can guide themselves and not be guided by others; to serve as an example instead of following the example of others.

It is only on this condition that Muslim intellectuals will be able to participate in the common work of civilization and human progress, and worthily fulfill in it the preponderant role which belongs to Islam. Any other conduct on their part would condemn the Muslim world to live indefinitely under the West's tutelage, and consequently, in a condition of perpetual subjugation and inferiority which would end up corrupting it and forever subjugating it to the West's peoples.

If the task of modern Muslim intellectuals is far from easy, it is no less beautiful for it. It requires, in fact, a lot of perseverance, self-sacrifice, courage and above all an unwavering faith in Islam's cause, an ardent and absolute faith which will arm our intellectuals, who have become its champions, with all the confidence they must have in themselves to discharge their heavy burden. It demands great moral qualities, without which Muslim intellectuals cannot claim any right to exist at all.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I will give an intellectual history of Said Halim Pasha. Specifically, I will seek to answer the question “What did Said Halim Pasha intend to “do” with “*Islam’da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye*” and how can we understand his intention within the context of preceding and contemporary discourses?” I will do so by focusing on what I find to be the three main ideas in *Islam’da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye*: the Sharia as the natural law, his critique of national sovereignty and the constitutional Islamic state. These three issues, however, are only divided up for convenience. It will be seen that all three can in fact be easily synthesized in Said Halim Pasha’s goal of laying a scientific ground, as he sees it, for the Sharia’s sovereignty as the basis for a constitutional Islamic state. Furthermore, this chapter will argue that this aim is largely understandable within the framework of 19th century debates on the nature of modernization needed to save Ottoman state and society. Indeed, when viewed from this perspective, it will be seen that there is much similar between Said Halim Pasha and the Young Turks. As such, before an analysis of the text’s three most important ideas, I should offer some introductory comments on the intellectual background of the 19th century Ottoman domains to properly contextualize his work.

The 19th century Ottoman intellectual scene is often presented as a fierce competition between the camps of Islamism, Nationalists and Westernists for influence. While this is partially accurate, far too often they are presented as factions with hard borders. Rather, 18th and 19th century Ottoman intellectuals exhibit a high degree of hybridity and syncretism, with individuals often taking idiosyncratic combinations of various strands. The point should be made that the background for these debates was the immense

geopolitical pressure on the Ottoman domains. These intellectuals argued how to save the “state,” and each thought it was their ideology that was necessary to save the Ottomans, in a context in which the Ottomans were losing domains either to nationalist revolts or foreign competitors with the line between the two often quite blurry. All agreed something had to be done to save the Empire, they just disagreed on what was to be done.

3.1 Ottoman Debates over Modernization in the 18th and 19th Centuries

While I have so far argued that Said Halim Pasha belongs to a longer tradition of Ottomans seeking to mediate between the Islamic discursive tradition and modernity, given that Said Halim Pasha himself does not directly draw on these ideas or reference them (nor does he reference anyone for that matter), I argue his ideas should more properly be understood within his 19th century context. Therefore, a proper understanding should therefore start primarily with the Young Ottomans. Earlier histories tend to be guilty of “presentism” and only viewed the Young Ottomans for their importance of setting the stage for the Young Turks, rather than on their own terms. The view that the telos of nationalism and secularism was inevitable has specifically meant downplaying the “Islamic” element in their thought. Meanwhile, Turkish Islamists have themselves often credited such Young Ottomans as Namik Kemal and Ali Suavi as their predecessors, both of whom will be referenced often in this chapter.¹⁷² Mehmed Murad Bey, for example, was a clear Pan-Islamist and early natural candidate for leadership of the Young Ottomans, before he was convinced by Abdulhamid to come to Istanbul, leading to a change in the Young Ottoman leadership.¹⁷³ There is an argument to be made that it was the Young Ottomans who

¹⁷² Ismail Kara, *İslamcıların Siyasi Görüşleri*, vol. I: Hilafet ve Meşrutiyet, 2nd ed., (Istanbul: Dergah), 2011, 24; Hanioğlu, M. Şükrü, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1995), 18.

¹⁷³ Şeyhun, “An Ottoman Statesmen,” 77.

“invented” Pan-Islamism, as they witnessed both the Ottoman domains and other Muslim countries one by one come under colonial domination.¹⁷⁴ As the Ottomans lost more non-Muslim minorities to nationalist revolts, Ottomanism, the idea of identifying citizens purely on the basis of belonging to the Ottoman Empire with no reference to religion or ethnicity, became less necessary.¹⁷⁵ The even more important relationship of the Young Ottomans to Islam is their equating the Sharia and constitutionalism. For many of the Young Ottomans, constitutionalism was seen as a return to the rule of law under the Sharia.¹⁷⁶ Baki Tezcan argues in his “The Second Ottoman Empire” that there had been a longstanding debate in the Ottoman Empire since the seventeenth century over whether the Sultan had the prerogative to make the law, or was himself bound by it.¹⁷⁷ That is to say, seeing a limit to the Sultan’s power as being more in line with the Sharia’s “original spirit” was nothing new. While the Young Ottomans’ importance is often downplayed or is only emphasized for its role in “leading up to” the Young Turks, they in fact made a major contribution to Islamic thought by creating a language to legitimize constitutionalism. Indeed, even today the notions of the “Islamic state” put forward by most Islamists are constitutionalist.¹⁷⁸

This ambivalent relationship with Islam continued with the Young Turks or the CUP. Indeed, at this relationship was complicated enough to actively seek Said Halim Pasha as their candidate for prime minister (even if only for utilitarian purposes) before removing him in the aftermath of Sheikh Hussein’s rebellion. Zürcher notes that because the Young Turks’ base of support in the Balkans, where they would often organize defense committees against nationalist bands, it led to the formation of what he terms “Ottoman Muslim nationalism,” which was rampant throughout the CUP. It was nationalist in the sense of establishing a state for Ottoman Muslims. Yet, it was purely political, with this “ethnicizing of religion” explaining why they could claim to be working for Muslims on

¹⁷⁴ Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, p. 60-61; for a more critical view of the Young Ottomans invention of Pan-Islamism, see Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World: a Global Intellectual History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019).

¹⁷⁵ Sohrabi, *Revolution and Constitutionalism*, 39.

¹⁷⁶ Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 105 & 165.

¹⁷⁷ Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 11.

¹⁷⁸ See March, *The Caliphate of Man*, 11-13 for a summary for the elements of consensus among Islamists today on the constitutional elements of the Islamic state.

the one hand, and pursue secularizing measures on the other hand.¹⁷⁹ Enver, especially, was convinced of Islam's power to unite Muslims even outside of Ottoman borders, and would eventually lose his life in Central Asia after trying to establish a Turkish-Islamic union.¹⁸⁰ As the Ottoman Empire increasingly lost its Christian minorities to nationalist movements, Young Ottoman and Young Turk Islamists increasingly sought to unite the remaining domains through Pan-Islamic bonds. This continued, arguably, even as late as the War of Independence. For example, Provenance points that the Sivas Conference organized in support of the independence struggle, explicitly mentioned an Turkish-Arab union (and did not mention the limits of its territorial ambitions), and even after the declaration of Turkish sovereignty there were some Syrians still calling for a union with their brother Turks.¹⁸¹ Granted, part of the complexity of determining 19th century Turkish intellectuals' views on the "nation" or "millet" and nationalism, is what intellectuals meant by "millet" at the time, as mentioned before. The fundamental reason for this ambiguity is the inapplicability of nationalism within a trans-national imperial context. The fact that even the intellectuals most influenced by nationalism were not ready to let go of the empire, meant that they were often, to borrow the title of a recent book in a slightly different context, "nationalists who feared the nation."¹⁸² Some would point out to the degree to which the Young Turks, were more driven by action than ideology and were utilitarian in the discourses they utilized.¹⁸³ Hanioglu calls this "to the point of political opportunism."¹⁸⁴ Regardless of their sincerity, the Young Turks still operated in an environment in which one had to prove the legitimacy of one's actions and ideas within an Islamic framework/vocabulary, and were crucially aware from their experience with the counter-revolution the powerful delegitimizing effect that Islamic discourse could have.

¹⁷⁹ Erik Jan Zürcher. 'Young Turks, Ottoman Muslims and Turkish nationalists: identity politics 1908–1938' in: Karpaz, Kemal H. (ed.), *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 173.

¹⁸⁰ Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2017), 17.

¹⁸¹ Michael Provenance, *The Last Ottoman Generation and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 110-111, 134.

¹⁸² Dominique Kirchner Reill, *Nationalists Who Feared the Nation: Adriatic Multi-Nationalism in Habsburg Dalmatia, Trieste, and Venice* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012).

¹⁸³ Zürcher, "Ottoman Muslims and Turkish nationalists," 173.

¹⁸⁴ Hanioglu, *Preparation*, 289-301.

Still, it is important to mention the significant ground shared by Said Halim Pasha and the Young Turks. Indeed, the only explanation for Pasha agreeing to serve in their government despite their being perceived as Westernizers is if he thought enough connected them despite their disagreements. So then, why did the Pasha continue to associate with the Young Turks despite the very serious ideological disagreements? In fact, it will be seen that there is some level of agreement between the Young Turks and Said Halim Pasha on each of the three main ideas of the text. The text's first main idea, the Sharia as the natural law, is really a discourse on science and education. In that sense, it is important to mention that an emphasis on education and science was near-ubiquitous in his time. As Mardin puts it, there does not seem to be a single nineteenth-century Turkish thinker who was not convinced of this.¹⁸⁵ In Said Halim Pasha's critique of national sovereignty, the text's second main idea, he emphasizes the Sharia's sovereignty as way of ensuring social harmony. In this regard, his critique of European individualism and attempt to build a scientific basis for social solidarity is similar to Ziya Gökalp, the man who would later be considered the main ideologue of the Kemalist revolution.¹⁸⁶ However, the single biggest similarity between them must be their commitment to constitutionalism. This is despite his criticism of the 1876 Ottoman Constitution as being a superficial imitation of European constitutions not suitable for Ottoman state and society.¹⁸⁷ Therefore, Said Halim Pasha, like the Young Turks, also encouraged science, wanted to build societal harmony and a constitutional state, but just believed at every point that Islam already inherently possessed those characteristics or was not contradictory to it. Said Halim Pasha, therefore, was indeed a Young Turk Islamist. This general agreement on the overall framework, while disagreeing on Islam's compatibility with it, will be explored in detail for each of these issues later in this chapter.

Further proof of the Young Turks' complicated relationship with Islam and Islamism is that Said Halim Pasha was not the only explicit "Islamist" associated with the Young Turks. The comparisons between Said Halim Pasha and Filebeli Hilmi are striking. Bein

¹⁸⁵ Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 275.

¹⁸⁶ Guida, "Life and Political Ideas", 116.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 110.

could as well be describing Said Halim Pasha, when he writes that Filebeli's overall approach was "Modernist yet deeply devout, Islamist yet uninterested in scripturalist paths of religious revival." Both were part of the Young Turk movement, but rejected those elements they found to be anti-religious.¹⁸⁸ Both were modernist, engaged with Europe's latest intellectual trends and suspicious of the religious establishment, accusing them of "scholasticism."¹⁸⁹ In fact, the use of the term "scholasticism" is a clear giveaway of their Young Turk influence, among whom the term was common. We also find Gökalp, for example, using it complaining of the two extremes of the "zealots of Europeanism" and the "zealots of scholasticism."¹⁹⁰ Interestingly, both make the exact same argument that it was the ulema's scholasticism that led to the decline of science among Muslims. However, Filebeli uses much harsher language, whereas Said Halim Pasha, for example, credits them with inspiring many to study Islam and its sciences. Filebeli is further different from Said Halim Pasha in the stronger influence of Turkish nationalism and his more positive view of Sufism, whereas Said Halim Pasha censures the ulema's "mysticism" as one of the reasons for Muslims' decline.¹⁹¹ The similarities and differences between these two Young Turk "Islamists" is a perfect encapsulation of the unique combinations of different ideologies that 19th century Turkish intellectuals often held.

The last intellectual group that should be introduced for understanding Said Halim Pasha is what is usually thought of as "classical Islamism," that is Sayyid Qutb and Mawdudi. They both focus on sovereignty, specifically sovereignty as belong exclusively to Allah, a tendency toward utopianism, with significant democratic/representative elements through the doctrine of the "Caliphate of Man." This idea, whose genealogy is traced in detail by Andrew March in his eponymous book, is the idea that the *Ummah* holds popular sovereignty through their status as God's deputy or caliph.¹⁹² While Said Halim Pasha does not justify in these terms (or indeed justify it at all), it is clear from his

¹⁸⁸ Amit Bein, "A 'YOUNG TURK' ISLAMIC INTELLECTUAL: FILIBELI AHMED HILMI AND THE DIVERSE INTELLECTUAL LEGACIES OF THE LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39, no. 4 (2007): pp. 607-625, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020743807071103>, 607 .

¹⁸⁹ Bein, "A Young Turk Islamic Intellectual", 609.

¹⁹⁰ Ardiç, *Politics of Secularism*, 76.

¹⁹¹ Bein, A 'YOUNG TURK' ISLAMIC INTELLECTUAL, 620.

¹⁹² March, *The Caliphate of Man*, xi.

thought that it is the “Muslim nation” that is the custodian of the Sharia, and not the rulers or ulema. This is an important point as studies on Islamism tend to ignore or downplay the connections between Late Ottoman Islamists (and the “Ottomanism” of Arab Islamists in late Ottoman Egypt and Syria) and what is usually thought as classical Islamists. My point here is not that his work “anticipates” the later work, as much as to point that this brand of Islamism started earlier than is often appreciated. This similarity can most likely explained through a shared context of modernization. It was the modernization of the Late Ottoman State that set the stage for the creation of modern nation-states in the Middle East, and it is within this context that the Late Ottoman and post-Ottoman Islamists acted and re-acted, often trying to propose some form of an Islamic “modernity,” as will be demonstrated in the analysis to follow.

3.2 Those Laws whose Source is Nature Itself: the Sharia as the Natural Law

Islam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye opens with the argument that Islam contains a set of moral and social principles that make the Muslim World and the West radically different and make any attempt at superficially copying or imposing Western institutions and ideas doomed to fail. While the Muslim world must learn from the West's science and material progress, it has nothing to learn from its society and mores. However, Said Halim Pasha does not only seek to tell this, but to show it, through an argument whose philosophical sophistication has been underrated so far. The subchapter entitled “The Social Impact of Islam” is where he shows his two-step unique line of argumentation. The first step is to argue that the Sharia contains or perhaps is “those moral and social laws whose source is nature itself.” This means that just like the laws of nature, the Sharia laws too are permanent and independent of the human will. The first step therefore is an ontological one, that is the argument that the Sharia's natural laws are just as natural as the physical laws of nature, as both share the same source of manifesting from the divine will. This being its ontological source means it has brought the highest level of human happiness and solidarity possible among human society. For

Said Halim Pasha, the Sharia is not just a natural law, but the natural law.¹⁹³ The Muslims' freedom from false sovereignties ultimately only based on violence meant that they were first to discover the "experimental method" and pioneer science.

He then moves to the argument's second step, the epistemological argument. While both physical laws and the Sharia's social laws are natural, they have an epistemological difference as human reason cannot reach these moral and social laws on its own. Rather, humans require revelation as they are unable to look within their own selves without personal biases and discover the self's inner secrets. Skipping ahead in the essay, Said Halim Pasha provides his view on science as key to his own "decline theory" presented in the section subtitled "The Period of Decline." His primary concern here is to combat the impression that it is following the Sharia that has led to the Muslims' decline. Rather, this decline in material prosperity is due to the ulema becoming a class of specialists more focused solely on the religious studies, rather than the natural sciences. A nation's material prosperity is born out its technical abilities and industrial capacity, meaning that the ulema's abandonment of science led to a decline in Muslims' material prosperity. However, this separation of the physical and the social and meta-physical means that the West's superficial and material superiority cannot prove that nation's social structure to also be superior. Indeed, the West prospered materially despite its weak social structure. Would-be reformers, however, due to their ignorance of the Sharia's encouragement of science, see Muslims' material poverty and believe that independence and reform can only be had by abandoning the Sharia. However, in fact, given that the Sharia is a natural law, the only true "scientific" thing is to follow the Sharia's guidance in the realms of society and morality. This is the central argument of the treatise and one he will return to in different forms time and time again throughout the rest of the essay.

It should be clear from the above that the main purpose of this section and perhaps the whole treatise is to forward an Islamic response to positivism and the Enlightenment

¹⁹³ It is worth mention that he is also listed as having an unpublished essay entitled "The Natural Religion," Işık, *Said Halim Paşa Bir İslah Düşünürü*, 103. Given the degree to which his essays demonstrate overlap and the fact that it is only ten pages, a fair amount of ideas and material were probably used here.

glorification of science over religion. In the longer French original, this focus on science becomes clearer, as the Celal Nuri translation regularly cuts out parts that connect points back to the science and material progress. In the Akif translation, it becomes not just the argument of one section, but the main argument to which all other ideas connect to. This comparison to Enlightenment, and perhaps more importantly counter-Enlightenment, thought is not an original contribution of this thesis. Şeyhun, for example, points out the degree to which European enlightenment and counter-enlightenment thinkers such as Locke, Rousseau, and Montesquieu were already present in Young Ottoman thought.¹⁹⁴ Specifically, he compares Said Halim Pasha's critique of natural rights to that of Rousseau.¹⁹⁵ This, however, is a not very accurate comparison as though they both critiqued natural rights, they did so, on very different grounds.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, it does not suffice to do a one-to-one comparison, but rather more important is to provide an intellectual history for why and how Young Ottoman thinkers were inspired by the Enlightenment.

While it was mentioned above that there is a widespread 19th consensus on the need for science, industry and education, he is also far from alone in his views on science as separate from society and morality. Filebeli too “argued that although Orientals (*şarklılar*) were evidently behind Europeans in their technological, scientific, and economic progress, they were indisputably superior to them in their morality and social organization.”¹⁹⁷ However, this view extends beyond just Said Halim Pasha or Filebeli. Said Halim Pasha's thought on science in this section is nicely summarized by the name of a recent thesis tile by Yalcinkaya: “Their Science, Our Values”: science, state and society in the 19th century Ottoman Empire.” Indeed, he argues that this approach of “their science, but not their values” is constitutive of nineteenth century Ottoman and

¹⁹⁴ Şeyhun, “An Ottoman Statesmen,” 44.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 215.

¹⁹⁶ Rousseau critiqued the idea of natural rights being based in reason, which he did not think we could be certain was present in the state of nature. He, therefore, based rights in a state of nature on self-preservation and pity. Said Halim Pasha, on the other hand, critiques the idea of any natural right beyond our ability to extrapolate from our environment and the idea of rights without duties, which would seem to indicate that he rejected the entire idea of a “state of nature.”

¹⁹⁷ Bein, “A ‘YOUNG TURK’ ISLAMIC INTELLECTUAL,” 614.

Turkish discourse as a whole.¹⁹⁸ He argues that these discussions on the sciences were inseparable from concerns regarding social order. This claim, however, was not only near ubiquitous among his fellow Ottomans, but also a wide swathe of “Oriental” intellectuals of the period. If one replaces the word “Islam” with “East,” Said Halim Pasha’s quote that it is “Rather it is the West which must learn from Islam in this regard (social and moral laws),” could just as easily be a quote of Gandhi or Tagore speaking of the necessity for the destructive Western civilization to learn from the East’s inherent spirituality.¹⁹⁹ Indeed, as scholars and writers such as Cemil Aydin and Pankaj Mishra show, there is a great deal of common ground between “Islamists” of the period and larger anti-European anti-imperialist movements all over Asia.²⁰⁰

Not only are Said Halim Pasha’s views on science and morality widely shared, his reflections on the “natural” essence of the Sharia are not entirely new either. Namik Kemal, for example, attempted to reconcile between Montesquieu’s view of law as the natural relation of things by also arguing for God as the author of the “nature of things.”²⁰¹ Suavi, on the other hand, outright rejects sovereignty as belonging to anyone or anything other than God, and argues that the Enlightenment philosopher’s “all-pervading” force was a weak substitute for God.²⁰² It is a worthwhile digression to note that Tezcan points out the relationship between the Sharia and fiqh is in fact very similar to the relationship between natural law and positive law in Western law, that is, a system of universal moral principles on which the latter man-made laws are based.²⁰³ While Said Halim Pasha was not the first to argue against natural rights, he is idiosyncratic in at least two regards. First, he provides a much more sophisticated philosophical argument for the Sharia as natural law, doing so on both ontological grounds (God as the originator of both revelation and science, a revelation of different sorts) and

¹⁹⁸ Mehmet Alper Yalcinkaya, “Their Science, Our Values”: science, state and society in the 19th century Ottoman Empire, PhD diss., (UC San Diego, 2010), 1.

¹⁹⁹ Pankaj Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire: the Revolt against the West and the Remaking of Asia* (New York, NY: Picador, 2012), 230.

²⁰⁰ In addition to Mishra’s Ruins of Empire quoted above, see Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2019).

²⁰¹ Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 318.

²⁰² Ibid, 367.

²⁰³ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 26.

epistemological grounds (the material is accessible to human beings, whereas the immaterial requires revelation). Secondly though, there is also a much stronger “naturalization” of the Sharia in his thought. He is not only arguing that the Sharia is natural in the sense of being in accordance with human nature, but goes beyond to “scienticize” it. In response to the growing challenge of what we would today call “scienticism,” that is, the argument that science could offer better answer than religion in the social and moral spheres, he sought to argue that the Sharia was already inherently scientific. However, the price he pays is that at time his rhetorical exaggerations almost equates the need for revelation to these natural laws, a sort of “spiritual positivism.” While this understanding is certainly not tenable over the long run, neither with Islamic theology, nor Said Halim Pasha’s larger thought, it does throw into sharp relief the danger of placing the Sharia on that positivistic a basis.

A much more important critique is if Said Halim Pasha’s formulation of the Sharia as the “natural law” can even be considered a “natural law.” Though both Western philosophers and Said Halim Pasha use the same word “nature,” they seem to mean two very different things. Mardin argues that “nature” in Western philosophy meant the world of self-moving things, a heritage from Greek philosophy.²⁰⁴ This may be a bit of a simplification on Mardin’s part, as a great deal of the nominalist revolution against scholasticism, which Gillespie argues is crucial for understanding the Enlightenment, was in fact a debate over “nature” and natural law.²⁰⁵ While this was an incredibly complex process happening over centuries, the important point is that nature in the Western tradition eventually came to be seem as independent of God’s will. By the Enlightenment, God was often argued to be the “first mover,” and in the later stages of the Enlightenment nature moved to itself possessing divine attributes.²⁰⁶ In his *Alternative Paradigms*, Davutoğlu formulates a theory can help us understand why this was not a possibility within Islamic theology. The book’s main argument is that a great deal of political differences, whether epistemological, methodological or hermeneutical, can in fact be traced to the ontological differences between Islamic and Western

²⁰⁴ Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 88.

²⁰⁵ Gillespie, *Theological Origins of Modernity*, 24.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 273, 275.

philosophy. He argues that Western philosophy (Western because he argues there is a good deal of continuity between Greek and Roman beliefs and Christianity) exhibits “ontological proximity” between God and Man. That is, the lines between Man, Nature and God are blurred and it is relatively easy for one to overtake the others in the hierarchy over time. Meanwhile, the doctrine of *tawhid*, or the absolute oneness of God, has meant that Islamic civilization has consistently saw an “ontological separation” or “transcendence,” that is to say that in Islam the gulf between Creator and created (both man and nature) is so absolute that it cannot be crossed.²⁰⁷ Davutoglu also specifically mentions the prioritization of nature in Western philosophy.²⁰⁸ Therefore, Namik Kemal, Ali Suavi and Said Halim Pasha all respond to “natural law” by arguing that it is in fact God which is the author of nature because this answer is fully line with hundreds of years of consensus in Islamic theology. However, by doing so, they are also perhaps misunderstanding the role “nature” plays in Western natural law. The entire point of natural law in the Western tradition is minimize the role of revelation in this sphere, as nature’s self-evident truths are readily available to man via his rational faculties with no need for revelation. Whether Said Halim Pasha was unaware of this or was intentionally flipping the term’s meaning on its head lies beyond our ken.

Mardin describes the closest Islamic theology comes to a theory of natural rights. While human beings may be absolutely subservient to the God, this also means that all human beings are radically equal and has been given inviolable rights and conscience vis-à-vis their fellow human beings.²⁰⁹ Though Mardin does not put it in these terms, this is in fact, the doctrine of “Caliphate of Man” mentioned earlier. That is, that man has ultimate freedom and dignity on this world because he had been honored by God as his deputy on earth. In fact, some of the points March makes about Sayyid Qutb and

²⁰⁷ It is worth mention that the strongest counter-argument against this be reflective of all Islamic schools would be the Sufi notion of intimacy and the doctrine of “*wahdatul wujud*” of Ibn Arabi and his followers, which has often been understood as at least partially pan-theistic. While Davutoglu does not mention this doctrine directly, he does reject the notion of Sufism as pantheistic as a complete misinterpretation of Sufism quoting from a number of Sufi authorities in that regard. For more, Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Alternative Paradigms The Impact of Islamic and Western Weltanschauungs on Political Theory* (Lanham, MY: University Press of America, 1994), 72-73.

²⁰⁸ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Alternative Paradigms The Impact of Islamic and Western Weltanschauungs on Political Theory* (Lanham, MY: University Press of America, 1994), 25,48.

²⁰⁹ Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 92-93.

Mawdudi are easily applicable to Said Halim Pasha as well, specifically, the notion that the Sharia is superior to human systems of law and morality because it is in line with our human nature. In fact, March argues this is the key concept for understanding Qutb's thought, as the Sharia's harmony with human nature explains why the Sharia is both perfect and realistic in a prosaic sense.²¹⁰ However, this is also a telling difference between Said Halim Pasha and Qutb/Mawdudi. The "nature" that Qutb and Mawdudi point to is not the "nature" of science and the Enlightenment that Said Halim Pasha refers to, but rather the Islamic concept of *fitra* (human's inner nature, innate inclination towards monotheism). This throws in clear relief how though both Said Halim Pasha and Qutb/Mawdudi reach the same conclusion (the Sharia's compatibility of nature guaranteeing human happiness), they do so through different means, demonstrating the stronger influence of the Counter-Enlightenment on Said Halim Pasha. Therefore, Said Halim Pasha's view on science must be read in the context of an near-ubiquitous agreement on the importance of science to save the Empire in the nineteenth century, while preserving morals (whether they be seen as Turkish, Muslim, or both). Within this context, he intended to provide an Islamic response to Enlightenment and specifically the religion/science binary, and build what he considers a "scientific" basis for the Sharia's ultimate sovereignty as the basis of the Islamic political order. Therefore, the most unique element of Said Halim Pasha's thoughts on science and the Sharia as the natural law is his attempt to give a systematic and sophisticated ontological and epistemological argument for doing so.

3.3 National Sovereignty and other False Sovereignities:

Said Halim Pasha does not just resemble the later Islamists of Sayyid Qutb and Mawdudi on natural law, but shares a focus on, perhaps even obsession with, sovereignty. In this treatise, this focus on sovereignty comes in the form of a critique of national sovereignty. Said opens the section by bemoaning that the people of his time, and especially intellectuals, want to replace the Sharia's firm foundation with national

²¹⁰ March, *Caliphate of Man*, 146.

sovereignty, believing it to be the reason for the West's material prosperity. One of the most unique arguments in the entire treatise is that national sovereignty is actually a continuation of the sovereignties that preceded it, namely the Church and the Monarchy, which both also once claimed absolute sovereignty, unaccountability and infallibility. This seems to be an idiosyncratic argument as I have not seen any thinker of his generation or later Islamist make this argument. It indicates a deep knowledge of European history on his part and is interestingly similar to many of the ongoing conversations in political theology which emphasize the role that Christian theology played in creating the modern state and national sovereignty.²¹¹

For Said Halim Pasha, the necessary falsity of these ideas means they can inevitably only sustain themselves through coercion. This is because occupying power is a privilege after fulfilling one's duty. This leads him to the aforementioned critique of the idea of man having "natural" rights, rather the only right given to him by birth is his ability to understand nature around him and adapt to it. Man only has duties he fulfills, which then grant him rights and respect. He then moves to critique national sovereignty on the basis of the classic "tyranny of the majority" problem, as national sovereignty in fact means nothing more than a small majority enforcing their will on a minority almost as equal to them, and even when not, it cannot be guided by wisdom. In fact, it a revenge of the masses from the aristocrats and priests who had once ruled them. His turn to employ what is basically a borrowed Marxist argument in both vocabulary (capitalist, proletariat, bourgeoisie, labor) and in analysis is underappreciated and does not seem to have yet been commented on in the English literature. This Marxist element is also clearer in the French original. He expands on this in the later section "Western society" which explicates his view that national sovereignty is a revenge of the proletariat against the bourgeois. It is worth mention that these ideas on Islam's lack of a bourgeoisie and

²¹¹ Political theology is often taken to begin with Carl Schmitt's famous assertion that "all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts." See Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago, IL: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2005), 36. Therefore, many in the field would agree with the assertion that the various ideological and political struggles in the 17th century between the Pope and European monarchs did in fact produce our modern theory of state sovereignty. See for example, "Was Wesphalia 'all that'?" Hobbes, Bellarmine and the norm of non-intervention." Jonathan Havercroft. *Global Constitutionalism* Volume 1/Issue I March 2012.

national identity were also present in his *Meşrutiyet*, which Guida points out was published even before the Balkan Wars.²¹² This revenge of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie is just the latest conflict in a long series due to the West's inability to find a constant social ideal. At the end of this subsection, he uses this to argue against that the view that Western societies have greater individual liberty, as in his view it is only social harmony that can provide the basis for individual liberty.

Said ends "National Sovereignty" by linking to his earlier arguments on the natural Sharia and, by concluding that he is not rejecting the national will outright, but that it should be expressed within the limits of the Sharia's social and moral principles which are in accordance with human nature. Just as the national will cannot contradict nature's physical laws, so too can it not contradict nature's moral and social laws, which cannot be known except through the Sharia. This point is a bit clearer in the French original which further ties the national will into being limited by the natural law, and is an example of somewhere the Celal Nuri summarizes an important point. He ends the section by mentioning that he should not be misunderstood as completely negating the national will, but rather only that it should be secondary to the Sharia.

Said Halim Pasha's above critique of national sovereignty should also not be misunderstood as an outright rejection neither of the nation, nor nationalism. Indeed, not only because he makes it clear at the end of the section that the national will is afforded some respect and consideration, but because his views on the "nation" and nationalism are more complex than they may initially seem. For example, when Sultan Abdulhamid II suggested the idea of making Arabic the Empire's official language, Said Halim Pasha, at the time one of his advisors, objected to the proposal on the grounds that it would threaten the Empire's Turkish nature. Furthermore, while discussing the argument that the Caliphate could only belong to the Arabs (through the tribe of Quraish), he argues that this was necessarily a misunderstanding of the *hadith* in question given that Islam did not recognize any racial discrimination, but rather established full equality and brotherhood.²¹³ On the other hand, we find him in one of his

²¹² Guida, "Life and Political Ideas", 113.

²¹³ Said Halim Pasha, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Dünya Savaşı*, (Kronik: İstanbul, 2019), 127.

essays explicitly calling classifying people into nations as the most excellent form in the social organization of human groups. He writes:

Therefore, this form is naturally the convenient one for revealing and realizing the Islamic truths in the most perfect way...One day, humanity will understand the most true and beneficial type of nationalism by the means of Islamic principles. It is a great mistake to see Islam as contrary to every kind of nationalism.

The key to understanding this seeming contradiction is the phrase “every kind of nationalism.” It is also worth pointing out that he places this beneficial type of nationalism as something to be realized in the future. Duran however misunderstands this passage as an implicit recognition by Said Halim Pasha of the nation-state system. This is not only a jump from the nation to the nation-state, but Said Halim Pasha outright rejects the nation-state system in this treatise on the basis that it claims sovereignty, which can only truly belong to God (and his natural Sharia by extension). That is, the offensive word in “national sovereignty” is not the nation, but sovereignty. His point seems to be that one can fully recognize the existence of Turkish, Arab, and Kurdish nations within the overall framework of Islamic brotherhood (the Muslim nation?), but this does not entail independent sovereignty for these nations. Therefore, it seems fair to say that Said Halim Pasha did not reject the notion of “nation” outright, but rather the concept of its sovereignty as the basis for the state. In fact, Said Halim Pasha gives a very large role for national representation in the Muslim political system as will be seen shortly.

Said Halim Pasha’s critique of national sovereignty strikes the reader at first glance as difficult to understand, perhaps even idiosyncratic. For example, Duran in his doctorate on Twentieth-Century Turkish Islamism mentions Said Halim Pasha as the almost sole example of opposing the “*ijma*” or consensus of the compatibility of Islam and national sovereignty.²¹⁴ He is somewhat overstating the case here. For example, Ali Suavi, a

²¹⁴ Burhanettin Duran, “Transformation of Islamist Political Thought in Turkey from the Empire to the Early Republic (1908-1960): Necip Fazil Kısakürek’s Political Ideas,” PhD diss., (Bilkent University, 2011), 124.

member of the Young Ottomans, also critiqued the idea of popular sovereignty and on a similar basis, objecting to the idea that “sovereignty” could belong to anyone or anything other than the Divine Will and argued that the only sovereignty humans are owed is “non-interference” from other human beings so long as they obey the Sharia.²¹⁵ However, the even bigger problem with Duran’s statement can be understood by looking at the text’s practical context. Writing on the five main questions that motivate Skinner’s approach to the reading of texts, Tully gives the second of the five questions as “What is or was an author doing in writing a text in relation to available and problematic political action which makes up the practical context?”²¹⁶ Here a possible practical context for Said Halim Pasha’s critique of national sovereignty could be the Turkish nationalist forces’ declaration of national sovereignty in Ankara on April 23, 1920. Indeed, it is not too presumptuous to assume that it was largely that event that motivated him to write the treatise in the first place. Given that this essay was published in the original French a year later, the timing makes sense.²¹⁷ Both Şeyhun and Ardic also agree or imply that the treatise was in response to the Turkish Parliament’s declaration of national sovereignty.²¹⁸ Indeed, the essay’s opening line references the independence movements to throw off the foreign yoke, undoubtedly a reference both to the Turkish War of Independence and the Egyptian revolt. Indeed, there seems to be some confusion in the English literature on Said Halim Pasha’s stance towards the Turkish War for Independence. Guida notes that “*L’Empire ottoman et la Guerre mondiale*,” (The Ottoman Empire and the World War) written when he was still a prisoner in Malta, Said Halim Pasha had effusively praised Mustafa Kemal’s independence struggle. In *Islam’da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye*, however he states that he was hoping for rapid Egyptian independence and his feelings were focused on the “hard tests that Young Egypt is facing.”²¹⁹ Eşref Edip, the longtime editor of *Sırat-I Müstakim*, confirms that while in Malta Said Halim Pasha was genuinely hopeful for the liberation

²¹⁵ Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, p.367, 381.

²¹⁶ Tully, “Meaning and Context,” 88 (or p.8).

²¹⁷ Şeyhun, “An Ottoman Statesmen,” 11.

²¹⁸ Ibid, 216; Ardic, *Politics of Secularism*, 166.

²¹⁹ Guida, “Life and Political Ideas,” 107-108.

struggle led by Mustafa Kemal.²²⁰ Accounts further confirm that towards the end of his life he had put his hope more in the Egyptian national movement led by Saad Zaghlul and that the opposition even thought of him as a candidate for the throne.²²¹ The interest was reciprocal, as Şeyhun argues that Said Halim Pasha “dreamed of one day becoming the khedive of Egypt.”²²²

This seeming contradiction can be explained by how radical the declaration of national sovereignty would have seemed to Said Halim Pasha and many others at the time. Because we know the story’s ending, it seems inevitable that the War for Independence would end in a declaration of national sovereignty. However, Ardiç points out that war-time discourse and even the first constitution displayed a dual nation/Islam discourse at play, where the parliament represented the nation and the Caliph represented Islam, which actually closely resembles Said Halim Pasha’s own formulation. Therefore, Ardiç argues that in the earliest years of the Republic, the “nation” was not entirely defined on an ethno-secular framework.²²³ It is important to remember that at the time of the treatise’s publication, the War for Independence would not end until September the next year and the Turkish Republic would not be declared for another two years.²²⁴ This point also allows us to avoid misunderstanding a rejection of national sovereignty and a rejection of constitutionalism as one and the same. Though constitutionalism and national sovereignty are inexorably intertwined today, in the Pasha’s time period, the adoption of one did not necessitate the adoption of the other. Sohrabi points out that nowhere does the 1876 constitution mention national sovereignty. Though it had usurped his powers in practice, the Sultan’s position as the symbolic source of legitimacy was still left untouched at this point.²²⁵ This mistake for example can be seen when Duran after mentioning Said Halim Pasha’ rejection of national sovereignty immediately moves to his critique of constitutionalism, as if they were one and the

²²⁰ Eşref Edip, “Âlem-î İslam İçin Pek Büyük Bir Ziyâ’ Prens Said Halim Paşa Hazretlerinin Şehâdeti,” in Müslüman Kalarak, Avrupalı Olmak Çağdaş Türk Düşüncesinde Din Siyaset Tarih Medeniyet, İsmail Kara (Dergah, İstanbul: 2018), pp. 443-448, 447.

²²¹ Bostan, *Bir İslamcı Düşünür*, 94.

²²² Şeyhun, “An Ottoman Statesmen,” 179.

²²³ Ardiç, *Politics of Secularism*, 59.

²²⁴ Gücin, “Late Ottoman Expression of Modernity”, 41.

²²⁵ Sohrabi, *Revolution and Constitutionalism*, 138.

same.²²⁶ This causes him in fact to misunderstand Said Halim Pasha as completely rejecting constitutionalism.

Nonetheless, it is also important to mention that Said Halim Pasha's critique of national sovereignty does line up with his context in significant manners, specifically in terms of what the Sharia's sovereignty was intended to do in place of national sovereignty, namely establish social harmony. A significant part of the Pasha's critique of national sovereignty is that it is only necessary in the West because of its inherent social conflict. In opposition to this social conflict and class struggle, Said Halim Pasha emphasizes harmony, a view shared with Namik Kemal, who both longed for a harmonious system and opposed the view of political as a clash of opposites (what today might be called the Schmittian friend-enemy distinction). Kemal similarly sees this harmony as ensured by the Sharia, whose obedience is superior to that of law in the Western sense because of its moral aspect. Mardin traces this to a possible influence from Montesquieu, for whom harmony played an important role in his thought.²²⁷ This emphasis on harmony often took the form of what is termed Corporatism. Corporatism (not to be confused with corporatism meaning the rule of corporations, also known as corporatocracy) is the idea that the basic unit of society is not the individual, as is predominant now, but different corporate groups.²²⁸ It often uses the metaphor of the human body with its different organs each fulfilling different functions to explain the relationship between these corporate groups.²²⁹ On this note, Guida attributes the Pasha's corporatism to his political experiences, but corporatist thought had long been a part of Late Ottoman and even early Republican thought.²³⁰ As mentioned earlier, the Pasha's corporatism is not very different from that of Ziya Gökalp, considered by many to be the main ideologue of the Kemalist Revolution.²³¹ Both are ultimately attempts to build "national" harmony,

²²⁶ Duran, "Necip Fazil Kisakürek's Political Ideas," 124.

²²⁷ Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 307-308.

²²⁸ Howard J. Wiandra, *Corporatism and Comparative Politics: The Other Great 'Ism'* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 18.

²²⁹ Wiandra, *Corporatism and Comparative Politics*, 28.

²³⁰ Guida, "Life and Political Ideas", p.115 to 116; See for example Taha Parla and Andrew Davison, *Corporatist Ideology in Kemalist Turkey: Progress or Order?* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004).

²³¹ *Ibid*, 116.

though Said Halim Pasha vociferously critiques Gökalp's attempt to do so on pre-Islamic Turkish ethics, rather than the Sharia.

I argue here that Said Halim Pasha's attempt argue for social harmony through the Sharia can largely be understood as a response to Durkheimian sociology, of which Ziya Gökalp was a proponent at his time. In his article on the various attempts to synthesize or reject a synthesis of *fiqh* and the social sciences, Recep Şenturk sees the Pasha's critiques of Western society as a response to Gökalp's project of combining *fiqh* and the social sciences.²³² We do, in fact, know that the two thinkers knew of each other's works. For example, Ismail Kara reproduces in modern Turkish in his "Müslüman Kalarak, Avrupali Olmak" a text believed to belong to Gokalp in which he critiques Said Halim Pasha's "*Inhitât-i Islâm Hakkında bir Tecrübe-i Kalemiye*."²³³ Gökalp had already translated most of his major works into Ottoman Turkish (Said Halim Pasha could have also read the originals in Switzerland) Durkheim believed that this *anomie* (what Marx would call alienation) caused social dislocation and felt that by this "[i]t is the law of the strongest which rules, and there is inevitably a chronic state of war, latent or acute."²³⁴ Durkheim here sounds like Said Halim Pasha in his section "Western Society." In response to this chronic state of war, Durkheim theorized his famous mechanical/organic solidarity distinction, arguing that it was society's moral obligation to end this situation by creating a moral organic solidarity based on the disciplines working as a single public institution. Durkheim was essentially building a quasi-scientific explanation for the ideas of "solidarity" prevalent in France and the Ottoman Empire by extension in his days.²³⁵

²³² Recep Şenturk, "Intellectual Dependency: Late Ottoman Intellectuals between Fiqh and Social Science," *Die Welt Des Islams* 47, no. 3 (2007): p. 311, <https://doi.org/10.1163/157006007783237482>; M. Sait Özervarli, "Transferring Traditional Islamic Disciplines into Modern Social Sciences in Late Ottoman Thought: The Attempts of Ziya Gokalp and Mehmed Serafeddin," *The Muslim World* 97, no. 2 (2007): pp. 317-330, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-1913.2007.00175.x>.

²³³ I have limited my comments here on the text as it does not directly touch on issues of "sociology." Gökalp mostly critiques his use of civilization, instead forwarding his own civilization/hars distinction.

²³⁴ Émile Durkheim, *De la division du travail social*, Paris 1973. Quoted in Antony Black, *Guild and State: European Political Thought from the Twelfth Century to the Present* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 226.

²³⁵ Antony Black, *Guild and State*, 224.

Adopting this view would allow us to explain Said Halim Pasha's focus on Islamic brotherhood, which plays, *mutatis mutandis*, the same role of building organic solidarity as labor unions do in Durkheim's thought. It was a widespread view among intellectuals of his time that "scientific knowledge would lead subjects to appreciate their state, rendering them obedient."²³⁶ Gökalp especially saw sociology and ethnographic studies as useful to save the state and modernize society.²³⁷ Understanding this common understanding among late Ottoman intellectuals, and the contemporary challenge of Durkheimian/Gökalp sociology, explains why Said Halim Pasha also saw sociology as useful for saving the state and modernizing society, but saw sociology as already inherent in the natural laws of the Sharia and fiqh. He furthermore encouraged scientific knowledge because he believed an objective observer would come to the conclusion that the Sharia is "scientific" and in line with human nature, which would further convince them of the need to obey the state. All of that is to say that in his context, shared obedience to the Sharia played the same role that "Turkish values" or national solidarity played for other 19th century thinkers in terms of combating what they saw as the destructive inherent conflict or "artificiality" of Western society. In this context, Said Halim Pasha intended to provide a scientific basis for rejecting national sovereignty and for the Sharia's sovereignty to play the role that other thinkers mistakenly thought "Turkish values" or the Turkish community would play. He intended to ensure nationalism was subservient to Islamic brotherhood and the national will secondary to the Sharia's sovereignty.

3.4 Representing the Sharia's Authority: The Modern Islamic State

Having established what he sees as a scientific basis for the Sharia and its sovereignty in lieu of national sovereignty, Said Halim Pasha turns in the treatise's last pages to more detailed questions of the Islamic political regime's make-up. He starts "The Muslim Political Regime" by drawing some features in broad strokes. The fact that every

²³⁶ Yalcinkaya, "Their Science, Our Values," ix-x.

²³⁷ Ardic, *Politics of Secularism*, 68.

Muslim individual has the duty to ensure his government applies the Sharia means he has an incontestable right to observe government and requires it to have a representative nature. While he does mention this by name, this is essentially the doctrine of “*al-amr bil-ma’ruf wa al-naḥi ‘an al-munkar*” (commanding the right and forbidding the wrong). It is worth mention here that by doing so, the Pasha is basing representation here not on individualism, now seen as inseparable from a democratic system, but rather communal grounds. However, because Muslim society is bereft of the West’s social conflict, representation will naturally be of a different nature. It must have enough power to control the government and ensure it applies the Sharia, but the right to legislation must remain outside the purview of politics. With regards to legislation, just as it is competence that determines who is a doctor, so too will the right of legislation only belong to those whose knowledge of the Sharia makes them competent. However, they must be elected by the Nation, so the populace views them as virtuous. The head of State must have significant enough power and independence to fulfill his role, and it must be centered in one person. His job to overlook the system from a birds-eye view and he, too, must be elected by the nation. The Head of State is responsible both to Parliament and the Muslim nation, though it is the Muslim nation has the right to sack the head of state if seen as incompetent or not fulfilling of his job (though how is not mentioned). He closes the treatise by detailing what such a system would not need: political parties or a senate. Political parties, whose existence he sees as entirely due to the antagonisms and class struggles within the Western social body (as it also has no need for a Senate or Upper Chamber) However, this Chamber would be a single chamber, as the Senate, literally the House of Lords, is an institution designed to protect aristocratic interests against the populace’s excesses. Given that in his opinion Islamic society has no aristocrats (he does not deny that some individuals are richer than other, only that this does not reach a class consciousness or class project), it has no need for an Upper Chamber. These institutions are all united in their goal of serving the Sharia, while being sufficiently independent in their actions and conscience.

More than any other section of the treatise, this section requires contextualization, as the dominant trend in the English literature so far has been to attribute his political ideas to his biography. For example, Şeyhun attributes his belief in authority’s centralization in

one person to his experience of working with the CUP's shadow government, while as already mentioned Guida attributes his corporatism to his political experience; Gücin attributes his dislike of parties to the CUP's turbulent activity, and his censure of the second chamber as a forum for the interest of nobles to his participation in the Ottoman upper chamber.²³⁸ A strong head of state may initially seem to be a contradiction with his constitutionalism. However, it is neither a contradiction, nor do we require recourse to his biography to explain it; a strong head of state to ensure the constitution was in fact a popular idea in his period. Mustafa Fazil Paşa, an important Young Ottoman thinker, for example, was adamant that it was the sovereign who should lead the constitutional regime.²³⁹ Indeed, this is precisely why Abdulhamid II was brought to the throne. Furthermore, Sohrabi notes in how both the Ottoman and Iranian cases, the revolutionaries often went to great lengths to not insult the Sultan directly, and would blame their complaints instead on the grand vizier or the people surrounding the monarch. Even after the Young Turk revolution, the Parliament continued to pretend that it was only under the "Sultan's benevolence" that they had been summoned.²⁴⁰

While Said Halim Pasha supports a strong head of state, not a mention is made of the Caliph in name. In an over-fixation on whether he can properly be classified as modernist as "traditionalist," one of the arguments used to argue for his modernism is the treatise's lack of the caliphate and the ulema, which were traditionally arguably the two most important elements of Islamic political thought. I will discuss these two in turn. As mentioned in the literature review, Guida goes so far as to compare him in this regard to Seyyid Bey, who would argue on the floor on the Turkish parliament in 1924 in support of abolishing the Caliphate. However, even if this view could possibly be understood from this work, the claim however quickly becomes untenable in light of his comments on the Caliphate in his memoirs, to which he dedicates a whole chapter. There he attributed Pan-Islamic solidarity against the English occupation of Istanbul to the Ottoman's position as the Caliphate and the reason for widespread Muslim support

²³⁸ Şeyhun, "An Ottoman Statesmen," 251; Gücin, "Late Ottoman Expression of Modernity", 40.

²³⁹ Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 281.

²⁴⁰ Sohrabi, *Revolution and Constitutionalism*, 137.

for the resistance against the British led by Mustafa Kemal.²⁴¹ Further proof is provided by the letters he wrote, which warned them that the Ottomans would not fall for their attempts to occupy Istanbul, as it had a mission in the world, presumably as the seat of the Caliphate.²⁴² Therefore, Guida is completely inaccurate in comparing his lack of a Caliph to that of Seyyid Bey, who did so clearly on secular grounds.²⁴³ Said Halim Pasha in another work further makes it clear that he does not recognize the religious/secular binary. Said Halim Pasha made it explicit when he said that by penetrating into all human actions, [Islam] rejects the distinction between the profane and the religious. ... “In the Prophet’s law, the religious institution and the state are one. Neither can be separated from the other.” He then specifically compares this to Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s concept of “civil religion” in *The Social Contract*.²⁴⁴ Therefore, he saw the Caliph or head of state as neither solely religious, nor secular.

How then can we understand the absence of a direct mention of the Caliphate in his treatise? Here there are at least two options. The first is that his “head of state” and the Caliph are one and the same, with adult suffrage replacing the limited group of electors of medieval Islamic political theory, the *ahl al-hall wa al-aqd*. It is worth mentioning that this is, in fact, a common argument among Islamists today.²⁴⁵ A possible second explanation and perhaps the stronger of the two is that it is due to the nature of the treatise. The system he outlines here is not meant for any one country, but rather was designed to be applicable to any Islamic country, as he states in the conclusion that members of particular countries would have to write more detailed constitutions based

²⁴¹ Halim Paşa, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, 134.

²⁴² Bostan, *Bir İslamcı Düşünür*, 117.

²⁴³ Seyyid Bey, a member of the ulema, argued for the Caliphate’s abolition on Islamic discursive grounds. However, he also recognized the secular-religious divide, and therefore, argued that Islam in fact recognized the secular-religious divide, and therefore paradoxically use

²⁴⁴ Said Halim Pasha, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Dünya Savaşı*, 122; This comparison is interesting in light of many contemporary Islamists who insist that the Islamic state is not a “theocracy,” but in fact a “civil religious state.”

²⁴⁵ Salman Al-Oudeh simply remarks that given does not appear in the Quran or Sunnah, it is simply a historical-dependent term based on the elitism at the time. Salman Al-Oudeh, *Asilat al-Thawra* {Questions of Revolution}, (Riyad: Markaz Nama lil-Buhuth wa Al-Dirasat, 2012), 83. Ghannouchi on the other hand sees the Parliament as fulfilling the form of the *ahl al-hal wal-aqd* of representing the “Ummah” or “Muslim Nation” to the Head of State or Caliph. Rachid Al-Ghanoushi, *Al-Hurriyat Al-A’ama fe Al-Dawla Al-Islamiyya* {Public Freedoms in the Islamic State}, Beirut: Markaz Dirasat Al-Wihda Al-‘Arabiyya, 1993), 224. While Said Halim Pasha does not mention the term directly, the role of the parliament in practical terms seems to be closer to the latter.

on their country's particularities. Even more specifically it could be because he actually did not have Turkey in mind while writing the treatise, but rather Egypt. This reading would make sense in light of the handwritten note sent to Egypt, noting that it was his humble contribution to the cause, that I translated and included as section 2.2 of this thesis.

If the absence of the Caliphate in this treatise must be mended in light of the Pasha's other works, the idea that he gives no place for the ulema can be outright rejected based only on a close reading of this text. Gücin claims that "Said Halim did not articulate a well-defined and functionally positioned room for the ulema... within his desired regime."²⁴⁶ However, in the section "Right of Legislation," Said Halim explicitly makes it clear that the right to legislation must belong to the jurists (*légiste*) based on their technical ability, that is, in their knowledge of the Sharia. Though this sentence is cut out of the Celal Nuri translation, he defines legists as "that class of specialists who are engaged in study of the Sharia," which is as clear a definition of the ulema as possible. This also makes sense in line with his earlier comments on the superiority of fiqh, whose precision in the science of ethics and morality is comparable to that of the positivistic sciences with regards to the natural world. The only cause for this misunderstanding then must be from relying on the absence of the actual word "ulema" rather than a close reading of the text. Why then did he not use the word "ulema" explicitly? Here there are at least two possibilities. The first is that it is quite possible that is actually due to a mistranslation. The use of the word *légiste* in French is quite similar to the word *fuqaha'*, who are often referred to contemporary Islamic studies literature as "Islamic jurists" or simply "jurists." I have reflected this in my translation by translating legists as jurists, the usual English translation for fuqaha.

The second possibility is that he did not use the word ulema not to eliminate the class, but to widen it. This point is clearer in the Akif translation which preserves the phrase of a "class of specialists." The idea that *ijtihad* in fiqh cannot be limited to the fuqaha, but must be a collective effort in conjunction with experts in other fields was a common time both in his period and in our own day. This explanation is also congruent with his

²⁴⁶ Gücin, "Late Ottoman Expression of Modernity", 41.

views on the ulema's "scholasticism," or their limiting their knowledge to only the religious sciences. To be fair, the above misunderstanding is easy given the lack of clarity in his use of the term "law." Is the law encapsulated entirely by the Sharia, or is the word "law" intentionally used to indicate a larger field of law consisting of both the Sharia and a "secular" field of law for matters not directly explicated by the Sharia, similar to the role of *Kanun* in the Ottoman Empire? However, nonetheless the argument that he did not include the ulema in his vision of an Islamic political system does not stand with a basic reading of the text.

Both of the above misunderstandings on some level are due to the desire to classify him as "modernist" or traditionalist. We have seen in the above sections that Said Halim Pasha can be thought of as an "Islamic modernist" with regards to his view on science, education and his aim of providing a scientific basis for the Sharia. However, can the same be said with regards to his politics? More specifically, can his conception of the state be considered as a "modern" state? Here it is useful to consider the literature so far on the degree to which the late Ottoman state can be considered modern. Rifaat Abou-El-Haj, the pioneer in arguing for the early-modern Ottoman state, argued that the late seventeenth century marked the Ottoman Empire's transition into an early modern state. He argued that one of its main characteristics was a growing separation between the state and the ruling class.²⁴⁷ More recently, Baki Tezcan, one of Abou-El-Haj's students, attempting to close the difference between "early modern" and "modern," argued that both periods saw similar sociopolitical developments in common in the limitation of royal authority and expansion of the political nation. The global expansion of markets led to commoners having far larger influence on political decisions than previously.²⁴⁸ Sariyannis points out that this corresponds to the development of a rational bureaucracy in Weberian terms.²⁴⁹ This is important as the Young Turks most came from this social class and had served as low-level administrators (blocked from being promoted by the

²⁴⁷ Rifaat Ali Abou'l-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), 7.

²⁴⁸ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 232-233.

²⁴⁹ Marinos Sariyannis, "Ruler and State, State and Society in Ottoman Political Thought," *Turkish Historical Review* 4 (2013): pp. 92-126, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18775462-00401004>, 114.

state's corruption).²⁵⁰ So much so that Sohrabi, who consistently focuses on the period's sociopolitical aspects, saw the Young Turk's large social base and radicalness as bearing the marks of a "class project."²⁵¹ Sigalas argues that there is, in fact, a double conceptual and structural change, as the concept of "power" transforms to "community," and power itself becomes "secularized," now founded on society rather than the charisma of the ruler or his office.²⁵² In that sense, the Islamic state espoused by Said Halim Pasha can be usefully thought of as modern to some degree given the clear separation between the "ruler," now called the head of state, and the state, and the legitimacy of power now residing with the "Muslim nation."

Nonetheless, a great degree of ambiguity still remains in the "modernity" of his conception of the state.²⁵³ Mardin, while writing on Namik Kemal's political theory, notes that Kemal does not truly differentiate between the "state" and "government."²⁵⁴ This he traces to Islamic thought not recognizing an independent existence for the state. Rather, the "state," or more accurately the government, only exists to serve a pre-existing community, whether that is the "community," the "Ummah," or the "Muslim nation."²⁵⁵ While it is not entirely clear, it seems that Said Halim Pasha, like many of the Young Ottomans, does not conceptualize the state as separate from society.²⁵⁶ The degree of representation and the ease to which he believes the head or state or government can be replaced by the Muslim nation, given their religious duty to observe the government, indicates that the state does not truly have sovereignty in his scheme, but only "delegation," which is the Muslim nation's religious duty to revoke if necessary. In that sense, "devlet" saw a gradual conceptual shift similar to that of "millet," and only gradually came to mean "state" as we understand it today, compared

²⁵⁰ Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 124.

²⁵¹ Sohrabi, *Revolution and Constitutionalism*, 62.

²⁵² Sariyyanis, "Ruler and State", 102.

²⁵³ It is worth mention that the issue of the state and modernity is hotly-contested in academia far beyond Ottoman Studies. Some argue to see the modern state as radically different from pre-modern "states," which by this definition were not truly states. See for example Bob Jessop, *State Theory: Putting the Capitalist State in Its Place* (Oxford: Wiley, 2013). On the other hand, another group argues that pre-modern states were in fact "states" in a meaningful manner and emphasize the continuity between the two, rather than the disruption. See for example, Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2012).

²⁵⁴ Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 300.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 302.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 345.

to its earlier meaning of “dynasty” and the ruler’s personal authority.²⁵⁷ Interestingly enough, even though Said Halim Pasha himself used the word “*e’tat*” or state in French, as well as also using it in his memoirs (the above-mentioned argument that the religious institution and the state cannot be separated in Islam) the Ottoman translations mostly avoided it. While mentioning the governance of states, Celal Nuri translates it as “*idare-i düvel*” using the Ottoman/Arabic plural form of *devlet*, whereas translating the chapter heading “Head of State,” he uses the word *hükümet* or government instead. However, given that the power of the word *devlet* is mostly in the singular (the state), it speaks to the degree of ambiguity among the Ottoman audience with regards to the “state.” In comparison, modern Turkish translations clearly use the word *devlet* throughout the text.²⁵⁸

This reading is also supported by the fact that Said Halim Pasha wanted the Ottoman “*devlet*” to retain a more flexible imperial model. A clue in this regard comes from his political experience. Sharif Husayn had long been resisting the Young Turks’ centralization efforts. It boiled over when they attempted to replace him and extend the Hijaz railway from Medina to Makkah, with the Sharif instigating a Bedouin revolt in response. Talat Bey, the Interior Minister, wanted to send an army to replace the governor by force, but Said Halim Pasha played a crucial role in convincing them to take a more conciliatory route. He later wrote on the incident that “The old, decentralized model Ottoman political system is better suited to the realities of Muslim countries than the European, centralized model of the Tanzimat.”²⁵⁹ This is further confirmed in his memoirs where he writes that it was Turkey’s duty as the Caliphate to retake the Arab lands (*cezire*, short for *cezire ul-arab*, or the Arabian Peninsula), and that neither Turkey, nor the Arab world could break this tie.²⁶⁰ Therefore, his view of the “state” is neither centralized, nor does it possess sovereignty independent of its duty to serve the Sharia and the Muslim Nation. This makes sense within his thought, as Said Halim Pasha would likely respond that Muslim society’s organic ties of Islamic

²⁵⁷ For a detailed breakdown of the changes in its meaning of *devlet* over time, see Sarriyanis, “Ruler and State, State and Society,” 87-95.

²⁵⁸ See for example Özalp, *Said Halim Paşa Bütün Eserleri*, (Istanbul: Anka, 2003), 216, 249-250 uses *devlet başkanı* instead of *reis-i hükümet*, that is “head of state” rather than “head of government.”

²⁵⁹ “*La Société Ottomane*.” Typescript. Quoted in Şeyhun, “An Ottoman Statesmen,” 187.

²⁶⁰ Said Halim Paşa, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, 133.

brotherhood and common aim of the Sharia means that there is no need for a state to stand above the community. He would likely see the state as a political organization reflecting the West's social organization, which requires a state to stand above and independent of society in order to manage its various social conflicts. His critique of false sovereignty's coercion also means he would likely see the centralizing tendencies of modern states as incredibly violent, and a violence only necessitated by the degree of the West's social disharmony.

The above discussion is not to over-fixate on his modernity or lack thereof, but only to place him in his proper intellectual context. His "state" shows a clear separation between the ruler, now deemed the head of government, and the political nation, and an expansion of the political subjects to include all members of the "Muslim nation." However, he also still supported the older, more flexible imperial model rather than a centralized state. This ambiguity, however, can be clarified when viewed in terms of an attempt to create an alternative modernity. In that sense, his state is a "modern state," if we free "modernity" from meaning what we already know happened in hindsight, to the modernity he thought possible. As El-Haj puts it, "the nation-state should instead be viewed simultaneously as representing a transitional object and as one of several choices for political organizing during set historical junctures."²⁶¹ Therefore, while his desired state is certainly not a modern *nation*-state, it is arguably an attempt to provide a modern Islamic state, one whose sovereignty is based not on the nation or the ruler's personal authority, but the sovereignty of the Sharia and representation of the Muslim "nation."

²⁶¹ El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State*, 74.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Conclusions

Said Halim Pasha is a fascinating statesman and intellectual who with the passing of time has mostly been forgotten outside of modern Turkey. While his political career has been mostly overlooked most likely due to the Empire's ultimate collapse, he in fact demonstrated a subtle ability as a diplomat. As an intellectual, he has largely been overlooked due to the timing of his arguments. At the moment nation-states were soon to be formed on a secular-ethnic framework, he attempted to place Islam and the Sharia's sovereignty as the basis of the socio-political order. However, it is precisely that timing that also makes him a fascinating and valuable subject for an intellectual history set in the Late Ottoman Empire. I have focused here on his treatise *İslam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye*. As the last essay in his life, it represented a mature summary of many of the views he expressed throughout his life in his earlier essays, such as the theory of decline, and the causes for intellectual and social Westernization. It is furthermore a multi-layered text, possessing a French original, two different Ottoman translations, and a plethora of modern Turkish and English translations. In both my translation and analysis of the text, I took care to highlight the subtle differences between these multiple layers of text.

The timing of his arguments and the complex historical moment(s) he lived through has also meant a difficulty in categorizing him. This has, unfortunately, meant that the English literature, and even the Turkish literature to a lesser degree, has demonstrated an obsession with categorizing him as a modernist, traditionalist or semi-modernist. I have

significantly revised some of the arguments here, such as comparing him with Mohammed Abdulwahab, or highlighting the absence of the Caliphate or the *ulema* in his constitutional state. Perhaps, more importantly I sought to focus here on the overall intellectual context he wrote in, that is, to shift the discussion from an intellectual biography to an intellectual history. To do so, I relied on the Cambridge School of intellectual history, as it serves as an ideal third way between overly isolationist readings of texts and a deterministic contextualism, by focusing on what the author themselves intended to do within light of the prevailing discourses at the time. Furthermore, the Cambridge School's focus on European political philosophy in early modernity makes it a perfect fit to analyze the complexity of the early-modern/modern moment in the Ottoman domains, in which Islamic concepts were modernized, and modern concepts Islamized. While the Young Turks indeed seem to have been utilitarian in employing other ideologies to further their political aims, I also took serious here the number of late Ottoman intellectuals, among them Said Halim Pasha, who were serious in attempting an alternative or negotiated modernity.

Based on the central question of this methodology in reading texts, "What did the author intend to "do" with the text, and how can we understand this text and intention within his linguistic context?" the central question this thesis aims to answer was "What did Said Halim Pasha intend to "do" with "*Islam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye*" and how can we understand his intention within the context of preceding and contemporary discourses?" This question led my discussion of the three main topics of *Islam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye* in Chapter 3: the Sharia as the natural law, national sovereignty and the constitutional Islamic state. Said Halim Pasha's goal in the text seems to be creating scientific grounds for the Sharia's sovereignty as the basis for a constitutional Islamic state. I argued that this desire to find what he considers to be a scientific basis for the Sharia must be read in the context of an near-ubiquitous agreement on the importance of science to save the Empire in the nineteenth century, while preserving morals (whether they be seen as Turkish, Muslim, or both). However, considering that that the attempt of "their science, but our values" was widespread, what is unique is not so much his thought on science and the Sharia as the natural law, but his attempt to give a systematic and sophisticated ontological and epistemological argument for doing so than any of his predecessors.

Having established this scientific basis for the Sharia and its sovereignty, he then critiques national sovereignty. However, a closer analysis demonstrates that both he and proponents of national sovereignty aimed to do the same thing: create a basis for social solidarity that would combat what they saw as Western society's destructive inherent conflict or "artificiality." This goal is shared by no figure no less than Ziya Gökalp, widely considered to be one of the main ideologues of the Kemalist revolution. In the last section of the essay, he then moves to a brief outline of the constitutional Islamic state as he would see appropriate for Ottoman society. I argued to see this as an alternative form of the modern state. While it is certainly not a modern *nation*-state, considering that its sovereignty is not based on the nation and his continued sympathies for an older more de-centralized imperial model, it still carries significant enough features for us to consider it an alternative model of the modern state, one whose representation is based on the Muslim "nation" which derives its legitimacy from its shared following of the Sharia's sovereignty. A word, however, is due here. My emphasis on Said Halim Pasha's attempt to derive an Islamic-based modernization should not be misunderstood as an argument that Said Halim Pasha was in fact a "modernist" and not a "traditionalist." My point is that from his perspective this binary would make no sense. In his view, modernity (at least in its technical aspects) was fully in line with the Islamic tradition. Whether one ultimately agrees with his estimation in hindsight is left to the reader's judgement.

4.2 Summary of Contributions

This thesis has made a number of contributions to the existing academic literature. They can be organized as follows:

- I have made a number of revisions to the prevailing arguments in the literature on Said Halim Pasha. Specifically I argued that a number of common arguments, such as the lack of the Caliphate and ulema in *Islam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye*, have to be outright rejected based on a close reading of this text and in the context of his other works.

- This thesis is part of a growing literature in Ottoman studies that aims to complicate or move beyond the secular/religious binary, instead emphasizing the role that religious discourse played in legitimizing and reinforcing the modernization process. Specifically, I argued that in light of the challenge brought by positivism by his fellow Young Turks, he intended to create a scientific base for the Sharia. Doing so, he believed would allow for the Sharia's sovereignty to remain as the basis of a constitutional and representative government..... In the eighteenth century, arguments for modernity worldwide were mostly made on religious grounds, often even in the West.
- I argued to take a larger intellectual history approach rather than narrowly categorizing him as “modernist” or “traditionalist.” By focusing on intellectual history, it contributed to a growing movement towards intellectual history in Ottoman studies. By applying the Cambridge School to the Ottoman case, it contributed to the move to de-Orientalizing intellectual history/the Cambridge School, which no one less than Pocock, one of the schools' two major founders, admits calls for reformation.
- By focusing on the many similarities between Said Halim Pasha and later Islamists such as Sayyid Qutb and Mawdudi, especially in their focus on sovereignty and possessing some form of a popular sovereignty, this thesis planted the origin of Islamism firmly within the late Ottoman Empire. Though this point has been repeated almost *ad nauseam*, the actual results in larger Middle Eastern studies and studies on Islamism is highly debatable.
- This thesis made the point that Islamism as a response to Western geopolitical pressures can usefully be compared to other “Oriental” movements at the time. Both Pankaj Mishra and Cemil Aydin have made useful strides in this regard. This consideration could hint towards a contribution to “global” intellectual history, something far beyond the scope of this thesis.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal Information:

Thomas Dakota - Simpkins:

Education:

2010-2014 Double Degrees in Arabic and International Area Studies, University of Oklahoma, USA History

2019-2021 MA in Civilization Studies, Ibn Haldun University, Turkey

Experience:

Freelance English Editor and Arabic-English Translator, July 2013 - Present

Copy Editor, April- August 2017

Yeni Şafak, Istanbul, Turkey

English Language and Literature Teacher, September 2014 - August 2015

Horizon Language Academy, Istanbul, Turkey

Program Assistant, August 2013 - May 2014,

University of Oklahoma Arabic Flagship, Norman, OK

Arabic Tutor & Teaching Assistant, August 2011- May 2012

University of Oklahoma Arabic Flagship, Norman, OK

Translation Intern, September 2012- June 2013

Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria, Egypt

Publications:

Parker, Thomas. Review of *Religion as Critique: Islamic Critical Thinking from Mecca to the Marketplace* by Irfan Ahmad. *ReOrient* 4, no. 1 (October 2018): 115–17.
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