

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF TURKISH STUDIES**

**MASTER THESIS**

**SOCIAL DARWINISM IN UNIONIST THEORY AND  
PRACTICE: THE GERMAN CONNECTION**

**SEVDE BOLAT**

**THESIS SUPERVISOR  
PROF. HALİL BERKTAY**

**ISTANBUL, 2021**

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**SOCIAL DARWINISM IN UNIONIST THEORY AND  
PRACTICE: THE GERMAN CONNECTION**

by

**SEVDE BOLAT**

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in  
Turkish Studies**

**THESIS SUPERVISOR**

**PROF. HALİL BERKTAY**

**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 Turkish Studies.

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This is to confirm that this thesis complies with all the standards set by the School of Graduate Studies of Ibn Haldun University.

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ÖZ

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Ağustos 2021, 105 Sayfa

Bu çalışmada, Sosyal Darwinizmin İttihatçı teori ve uygulamadaki rolü ve bu teorinin İttihatçı yöneticiler ve entelektüeller arasında yayılmasında Almanya'nın oynadığı rol ele alınmıştır. Çalışmanın amacı, bu teorinin İttihatçı düşüncede nasıl ve ne genişlikte sirayet ettiğini açıklamak ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin ilk yıllarında da etkisini gösteren Sosyal Darwinizmin Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki kökenlerine inmektir. İmparatorluğun son on yılında özellikle İttihatçı Türkçüleri etkileyen Sosyal Darwinizm, bu çalışmada üç temel soru üzerinden tartışılmıştır. İlk olarak ele alınan temel soru, Sosyal Darwinizmin İttihatçı düşüncede popüler olmasına sebep olan faktörlerin neler olduğudur. Bu kapsamda öncelikle İttihatçıların ortak özellikleri incelenmiştir. Burada karşılaşılan en büyük iki özellik İttihatçıların aldıkları Batı tarzı askeri eğitim ve bu eğitimden kaynaklanan militarist kimlikleridir. Ardından dönemin siyasi şartları incelenerek Osmanlı Devleti'nin içinde bulunduğu kuşatılmışlık halinin İttihatçıları derinden etkilediği, bu durumun da Sosyal Darwinizmin popülerleşmesine zemin hazırladığı görülmüştür. Son olarak, dönemin entelektüel ortam da Sosyal Darwinizmi körüklemiştir. Entelektüellerin istibdat rejiminde siyasî yayınlara gelen sansürler sebebiyle felsefi konulara yönelmeleri Sosyal Darwinizmin yaygınlaşması için temel oluşturmuştur. Osmanlı düşünürleri tarafından Sosyal Darwinizme karşı kapsamlı ve ikna edici karşı-argümanların üretilmemesi de bu teorinin herhangi bir ideolojik engelle karşılaşmadan ilerlemesini sağlamıştır. Bu tezin ikinci temel sorusu Osmanlı aydınlarının Sosyal Darwinizmi hangi kaynaklardan öğrendikleridir.

Aydınları birçoğu Sosyal Darwinizmi Spencer ya da Darwin'den direkt olarak öğrenmeyip, bu düşünürleri ele alan Fransız ve Alman kaynaklardan öğrenmişlerdir. Bu tezde Alman kaynakları incelenmiş, bu kapsamda Ludwig Büchner, Ernst Haeckel ve Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz ele alınmıştır. Son olarak Sosyal Darwinizmin Türklere karşı negatif görüşlerine karşı Osmanlı aydınlarının nasıl argümanlar ürettikleri incelenmiştir. Burada İttihatçıların argümanlarını üç kategoride değerlendirilmiştir. İttihatçılar öncelikle Japonya'nın Rusya'ya karşı zaferi temel alınarak argümanlar üretmiş, ardından Türkoloji çalışmaları ile Türklerin Batı tarafından yanlış anlaşıldığı kanıtlanmaya çalışılmış ve son olarak da barbar ve medeniyetsiz olanın Batı olduğu savunulmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti, Sosyal Darwinizm, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu.

## ABSTRACT

### SOCIAL DARWINISM IN UNIONIST THEORY AND PRACTICE: THE GERMAN CONNECTION

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August 2021, 105 Pages

In this thesis, the role Social Darwinism played in the Unionist theory and practice, and the influence Germany had in spreading this theory among the Unionist intellectuals and politicians. The purpose of this study is to explain how and to what extent this theory affected the Unionist ideology and delve into the roots of Social Darwinism's journey in the Ottoman Empire. Social Darwinism affected especially the Unionist Turkists during the final decade of the Empire, and throughout this thesis, it is discussed through three main questions. The first question is why Social Darwinism became so popular in the Unionist ideology. To answer this question, I examined their backgrounds, and find out that the western education they received, and their militarist identities played a great role in this regard. I also argue that the political environment of their age popularized Social Darwinism. Additionally, it is argued the intellectual atmosphere of the Empire helped this theory to be popularized. The second question debated is through which channels the Unionists acquired Social Darwinist theory. In this thesis, I focus on the German channel, mainly Büchner, Haeckel, and von der Goltz. Lastly, the question of how the Unionists reconciled with Social Darwinism's negative attitude towards the Turks is debated. In this regard, I divided the Unionist counterarguments in three categories. Firstly, I claim that Japan's victory over Russia presented a great argument for the Unionists. Secondly, it is argued that they tried to prove Turks' civilized nature through Turcology works, and lastly, they argued that the West is the uncivilized and barbaric ones.

**Keywords:** Committee of Union and Progress, Social Darwinism, Ottoman Empire.



## DEDICATION

To the people who supported me unconditionally throughout this entire process, my parents, sisters, and brother-in-law, Müzeyyen and Bülent Bolat, Şevval Azra Bolat, and Zülal and Arif Şengör. I also dedicate this thesis to some of the best people anyone can have in their lives, my personal cheerleaders, Mediha Nur Aydın, Gülsüm Mızrak, Ece Eralp, Eda Korkem, Zeynep Nur Sarı and Şebnem Başaran. I would probably give up on five different occasions if I did not have you all by my side.

But most importantly, this thesis is for my seven years-old niece, Elif Neva. I know that one day she will surpass all the members of our family and we will be cheering her along the way.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Professor Halil Berktay, for his guidance, support, and encouragements throughout this journey. I am also thankful to the other members of my thesis jury, Assistant Professor Faruk Yaşıçimen and Associate Professor Selçuk Akşin Somel for taking their time to read my thesis and give helpful feedbacks. I would also like to thank the faculty members of Ibn Haldun University, MA Programme in Turkish Studies for their contributions to my academic baggage, as well as my classmates from the same programme for the great times we had over the two years we shared. Salih, Ayşegül, Türkana, Shameer and Nariman had been there for me countless of times when we were trying to overcome certain adversities, I am truly indebted to them in this regard. I also would like to acknowledge the one and only Zeynep Çavuşoğlu, the best research assistant a faculty can wish for. I am grateful that we had the pleasure of having her during our journey in Ibn Haldun University, without her most matters would be ten times harder to overcome.

I also would like to thank one of the most important professors I had throughout my education, Assistant Professor Serpil Atamaz, who is currently a faculty member in California State University. The time I spent with Prof. Atamaz during my undergraduate education in TOBB ETU had tremendous impact on me, both academically and personally. I would like to express my gratitude not only for the role she played in my education, but also for being a perfect role model for me as a woman thriving in academia. In this regard, I would also like to mention some of the other professors that influenced me with their immense knowledge and work ethic, Professor Birgül Demirtaş, Associate Professor Başak Yavçan, and Assistant Professor Gülriz Şen had all great influence on me, both as an academician-in-making and an overall human being. I truly look forward to a day where I can have an impact on a student similar to how they supported me and believed in me.

Sevde BOLAT  
İstanbul, 2021

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The Ottoman Empire, which lasted more than 600 years, came to an end in the 1920s, and its final years were characterized by the rule of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). The CUP was the main character of the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, and forced Abdulhamid II to reinstitute the Constitution, which was suspended by the sultan himself in 1878. While there were various organizations and people taking part in the Young Turk Revolution, the CUP's influence in the Empire accelerated over the years, and by the time the World War I broke out, they were the ones in charge of the Empire's survival.

The intellectual and political atmosphere of the Ottoman Empire during the 20th century is peculiar in various aspects. The Berlin Treaty in 1878 caused an immense sense of humiliation in the Empire, and especially within the new generation of military officers and students. The treaty not only caused the Ottoman Empire to lose parts of the Empire but also weakened its institutions and undermined the legitimacy of the Empire.<sup>1</sup> The never-ending demise of the Empire and being referred to as the "sick man of Europe" by the foreign powers cemented this humiliation, and it created a generation that wished to treat the sick man. In general, the Unionists accepted that the "sick man of Europe" rhetoric of Europe but refused that there was nothing to do to save him.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, Enver Pasha, one of the most prominent leaders of the CUP, would say that "they have cured the sick man".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Yücel Yiğit, "The Military Origins of the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa," in *War and Collapse: World War I and the Ottoman State*, ed. Feroz Ahmad and M. Hakan Yavuz (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2015). p. 524.

<sup>2</sup> Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism & The Armenian Genocide*, 1st ed. (London: Zed Books, 2004). p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> Akçam. p. 78.

The reason behind the Unionist emphasizes on “treating the sick man” did not only derive from being referred to as the “sick man”. It also derived from the education they received in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The majority of the Unionists were taught in the western-type schools that were founded in the nineteenth century, and gradually, they acquired a more materialist, science-oriented worldview.<sup>4</sup> Combined with their intellectual background, the losses and humiliation the Empire was suffering caused the Unionists to acquire a sense of obligation to save the Ottoman Empire and ensure its survival. In general, the Unionists saw themselves as the elite that the Empire needed and claimed that they had to rule the Ottoman Empire themselves.<sup>5</sup>

While the Unionists did not assume direct rule over the Empire until the coup d'état of 1913 (also known as the Raid on the Sublime Porte), their influence on the Empire and its decision-making process were self-evident. The CUP ideology somewhat shaped the course of actions that were taken during the ten years after the Revolution, and their role only increased when the opposition party, the Liberal Entente, was suppressed after the coup of 1913. The coup marked a new beginning for the Ottoman Empire, and it brought more power to the famous triumvirate of Enver, Cemal, and Talat Pashas.

To comprehend the events of the period from 1908 to 1918, it is crucial to understand the Unionist ideology and mentality. The decision-making process of the Unionist leaders had been greatly influenced by the intellectual environment and political circumstances of the Ottoman Empire during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The CUP mentality did not only determine the end of the Ottoman Empire, but it also had a tremendous effect on the Empire's successor, the new Turkish Republic.

In this thesis, I argue that one of the main components of the Unionist ideology was the social Darwinist themes of the Turkism they implemented and promoted. While social Darwinism of the CUP is a subject that is discussed by many scholars, such as Hans Lukas Kieser, Şükrü Hanioglu, Taner Akçam, Mustafa Aksakal, and Ümit Kurt,

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<sup>4</sup> Mustafa Gunduz, “Sociocultural Origins of Turkish Educational Reforms and Ideological Origins of Late Ottoman Intellectuals (1908-1930),” *History of Education* 38, no. 2 (2009), p. 192.

<sup>5</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), p. 616-17.

this thesis aims to focus on the role the German allyship and German philosophy played in the popularization of social Darwinism among the Unionist nationalist elite. It is known that the intellectuals of the late Ottoman Empire did not learn about Darwinism and Social Darwinism directly from Charles Darwin or Herbert Spencer. Rather, they read about these ideologies from the works written by other thinkers, mainly German philosophers such as Ludwig Büchner, Ernst Haeckel and Carl Vogt.<sup>6</sup> Apart from these philosophers, German military advisor Freiherr von der Goltz Pasha's work *Das Volk in Waffen (Millet-i Müselleha)* had a tremendous effect on the CUP elite and his social Darwinist, militarist ideology shaped the mindset of the Unionist leaders.<sup>7</sup>

The first question the thesis aims to answer is through which channels did the CUP elite encounter with the social Darwinism. The popularity of social Darwinism in the Ottoman Empire brings a second question along, which is why the social Darwinist themes were widely accepted and internalized by the Unionists. There are several factors to be examined here, such as the military defeats, the educational system in the Empire, the backgrounds of the Unionist elites, and I will try to answer this question as comprehensively as possible. While answering The final question that needs to be answered in this thesis is how the social Darwinist ideology made itself visible in the Unionist nationalism. There are several examples in the CUP's policies that we can observe the effects of social Darwinism, especially during and after the Balkan Wars, but most importantly, the question of how the Unionists reconciled with Social Darwinism's certain aspects will be answered.

The methodology of this research mainly relies on the journals, newspapers, and other printed materials from the CUP era. The journals *Türk Yurdu*, *Harb Mecmuası*, *Türk*, *Şura-yı Ümmet* and *Felsefe Mecmuası*, as well as other publications aligned with the CUP and Turkish nationalism are sources that can be used to trace the impact of the social Darwinism in Unionist nationalism. Among these publications, *Türk Yurdu* is perhaps the most crucial one since its writers were either the members of the CUP or

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<sup>6</sup> Hans Lukas Kieser, *Türklüğe İhtida 1870 – 1939 İsviçre'sinde Yeni Türkiye'nin Öncüleri* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008). p. 55.

<sup>7</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902 – 1908* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). p. 294.

had relations with CUP members. Apart from these, books such as *Madde ve Kuvvet*, *Vahdet-i Mevcud* and *Millet-i Müselleha* are important to figure out which aspects of the social Darwinism affected the Unionists.

In this introduction, firstly, I will discuss the Unionist ideology and present different stances on the ideological components of the CUP ideology. While some scholars are claiming that the Unionists had a Turkist agenda since the very first day, the others are suggesting that the Unionists were promoting Ottomanism in order to keep the Empire intact. After discussing this matter, I will elaborate on the other components of the Unionist ideology, such as westernism, materialism, militarism, and social Darwinism. While doing so, I will also touch upon the political events that affected the Unionist elite's mindset. Later, I intend to discuss the CUP's relations with the German Empire after the Revolution in 1908.

There are several arguments made by the scholars regarding the components of the Unionist ideology. While some scholars claim that the Unionists ideology was Ottomanism at least until the end of the Balkan Wars in 1913, there are others arguing that the Unionists had a Turkist agenda since the beginning and had to adopt Ottomanism, albeit superficially, to pacify the elements from different ethnicities within the organization. Feroz Ahmad argues that the ideology supported by the government was Panislamism and Ottomanism, despite the increasing national awakening within the organization. He claims that the intellectual elite surrounding the Unionists, such as the *Türk Yurdu* journal and its contributors, were not that influential on the CUP's ideological stance.<sup>8</sup> Ahmad suggests that even after the Balkan Wars, Ottomanism was still an element within the Unionist ideology. All three elements of the Unionist ideology, Ottomanism, Islamism, and Turkism were still apparent in the Unionist ideology, the only thing that was changed after the Balkan Wars was their hierarchical positioning. According to Ahmad, Turks became the majority of the Ottoman Empire after the Balkan Wars, which increased the importance of Turkism in this hierarchical positioning, followed by Islamism, implemented in order to keep the Muslim, non-Turkish elements of the Empire in the

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<sup>8</sup> Feroz Ahmad, *Bir Kimlik Peşinde Türkiye* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2014). p. 72.

Empire's fold.<sup>9</sup> Ahmad claims that the CUP's focus was mainly on the lands in Rumelia, and only after the major territorial losses in the Balkan Wars they shifted their focus to Anatolia.<sup>10</sup>

Niyazi Berkes shares a similar view and suggests that the CUP elite shared similar views on nationalism, including the Turkish nationalism, with Abdulhamid II. He argues that the Unionists did not only inherit an empire, but they inherited an ideology that treats all aspects of nationalism as a treason against the Ottoman Empire and its survival.<sup>11</sup> Similar to Feroz Ahmad, Berkes claims that the Balkan Wars had been a turning point in ideological positioning of the Unionists. According to Berkes, the Balkan Wars brought more religious and nationalist undertones to the Unionist ideology, despite the Islamists' persistent critiques on how the Turkish nationalism would shatter the panislamic union.<sup>12</sup>

It is also argued that the Unionists embraced Turkism but had to adopt Ottomanism in an attempt at holding the Empire together. Sina Akşin claims that the Unionists embraced a Turkish nationalism that was purer than the type of nationalism Namık Kemal suggested in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, yet they still continued to use Ottomanism as a tool to help their attempts at reunifying the Empire.<sup>13</sup> Taner Akçam shares a similar belief and argues that even though the Unionists were generally Turkish nationalists, they adopted the Ottomanism as an integrationist state ideology and could not voice their belief in Turkism until the end of the Balkan Wars in 1913.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, Fuat Dündar argues that the Unionists were Turkists in their inner core, and the Ottomanism they promoted and used was superficial at best. Dündar states that even after the Balkan Wars, the Unionist leaders continued to keep their Turkist policies hidden especially from the foreign powers.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Feroz Ahmad, *İttihat ve Terakki 1908 -1914*, 5th ed. (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1999). p. 187.

<sup>10</sup> Ahmad. p. 186.

<sup>11</sup> Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2016). p. 408.

<sup>12</sup> Berkes. p. 435-37.

<sup>13</sup> Sina Akşin, "İttihat ve Terakki Üzerine," *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, no. 26 (1971). p. 155-56.

<sup>14</sup> Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism & The Armenian Genocide*. (London: Zed Books, 2004). p. 65.

<sup>15</sup> Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi: İttihat ve Terakki'nin Etnisite Mühendisliği (1913-1918)*. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015). p. 75-76.

The scholars cited above share a common aspect in their arguments by claiming that the Balkan Wars had been a turning point in the CUP ideology. However, contrary to these arguments, François Georgeon states that the Turkish nationalist aspects of the Unionist ideology were visible way before the Balkan Wars. He argues that the defeat in the Balkans did not play any specific role in the history of Turkish nationalism.<sup>16</sup> While agreeing that the Balkan Wars popularized the Turkish nationalism in the public opinion, Georgeon claims that the migration of the Russo-Turkish intelligentsia to the Ottoman Empire in 1908 had a greater role in creating more momentum to the Turkish nationalism in the Unionist ideology.<sup>17</sup>

Similar to Georgeon, Şükrü Hanioglu argues that Turkism was an aspect of the Unionist ideology way before the Balkan Wars. He argues that the increasing number of members of Turkish descent in the leadership group made Turkism a more prominent aspect of the Unionist ideology. Furthermore, he states that it was the Turkism itself that provided an activist core for the Young Turks, and consequently, made the Young Turk Revolution in 1908 possible.<sup>18</sup> However, even though the Unionists acquired a more Turkist outlook prior to the Revolution, they had to form alliances with various other ethnic groups of the Empire. Therefore, the Unionists had to attempt “to sell Turkism as a form of Ottomanism”.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, Hanioglu argues that while the Turkism seemed to be subdued within the official Unionist propaganda, it flourished on the cultural level.<sup>20</sup>

According to Hanioglu, the Ottomanism the CUP accepted as a part of their ideology was assigning the Turkish subjects of the Empire a more dominant role, and greatly emphasizing the unity of the Turks in order to strengthen the Ottoman Empire.<sup>21</sup> As a result of this dilemma within the Unionist ideology, “the difference between “Ottoman” and “Turkish” became increasingly blurred”.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> François Georgeon, *Osmanlı Türk Modernleşmesi 1900 – 1930* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2020). p. 27.

<sup>17</sup> Georgeon. p. 25.

<sup>18</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioglu, “Turkism and the Young Turks 1889 – 1908,” in *Turkey Beyond Nationalism: Towards Post National Identities*, ed. Hans Lukas Kieser (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006). p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> Hanioglu. p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> Hanioglu. p. 16-17.

<sup>21</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008). p. 187-88.

<sup>22</sup> Hanioglu. p. 166.

Both Georgeon and Hanioglu has a point in claiming that Balkan Wars were not the starting point of the Turkism. While Balkan Wars, as suggested by Georgeon, had been a turning point in popularizing Turkism, Turkism on a cultural level was flourishing long before the defeats in Balkan Wars. Turkism started to occur in a cultural level even during the reign of Abdulhamid II, despite the negative attitude towards any type of Turkish nationalism at that period. Especially in the journals and newspapers, articles on the Turkish culture and history increased greatly, and their main attempts were to boost the value of the name “Turk”.<sup>23</sup> Considering this, it can be suggested that Turkism existed long before the Balkan Wars, at least in a cultural level. While this cultural awakening can be deemed to have a limited impact, it was still an important aspect of the Turkism, and later, the Unionist ideology.

While it is true that the official Unionist ideology were more in line with the Ottomanist ideas rather than Turkism or Turkish nationalism, limiting the ideological stance of the CUP only to the official agenda would be a mistake. Even though the Unionist leaders did not openly state their Turkist views at least until after the defeat in the Balkan Wars, their ideologies and beliefs were continued to be shaped by the intellectual environment surrounding them. Even before the Revolution, some members of the CUP were contributing to the journal *Türk*, which promoted Turkism and Turkish nationalism to save the Ottoman Empire.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to this, the CUP supported organizations and publications such as the *Türk Ocakları* (Turkish Hearths, founded in 1912) and *Türk Yurdu* (Turkish Homeland, first published in 1911) since their foundations, and some of the prominent figures of the CUP were contributing to the *Türk Yurdu* with their written works.<sup>25</sup> However, it should be noted that Yusuf Akçura, one of the founders of the *Türk Yurdu*, had been critical towards the CUP leaders due to their hesitancy to adopt a more Turkist ideology.<sup>26</sup> It is important to note that in the following years, especially after the CUP congress in 1913, Yusuf Akçura realized that his ideas became more in line with the

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<sup>23</sup> David Kushner, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Doğuşu (1876 – 1908)* (İstanbul: Fener Yayınları, 1998). p. 17, 24.

<sup>24</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902 – 1908*. p. 296.

<sup>25</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. p. 187-88.

<sup>26</sup> Umit Kurt, “1911-16 Arası Dönemde Türk Yurdu Dergisinde Türk Milli Kimliğinin İnşası,” *Toplumsal Tarih* 232 (April 2013): 24.

Unionist agenda. François Georgeon claims that this is an indication of the shift in the CUP's official ideology, not in the *Türk Yurdu*'s or Yusuf Akçura's stance on Turkism.<sup>27</sup> This can be deemed as another example of how the Unionist agenda became more and more Turkist-oriented during the time they spent in power.

There were several other components that constitute the CUP's mentality. One important aspect of the CUP that affected their actions and policies was their roots in Macedonia. It is known that the first founders of the CUP (then known as the Young Turks) established the organization inspired by the Italian Carbonari.<sup>28</sup> However, the encounters of the CUP with the Macedonian IMRO (The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization) caused the Unionists to acquire a new type of organizational structure and a more militarist agenda.<sup>29</sup> The experiences the CUP's military members gained while fighting against the rebel forces in the Balkans, especially in Macedonia, helped the Unionists to transform themselves into a more revolutionary, action-oriented guerilla type organization. Later on, the Unionists made Macedonia the base for their organization, which caused them to assume a more Ottomanist agenda in order to include different Balkan nations in their fold as well.<sup>30</sup>

The CUP's experience in Macedonia also shaped their course of actions after they assumed power in the Ottoman government as well. Sina Akşin argues that the Unionists learned nationalism through experiencing the violence and massacres in the Balkans, which shaped their worldview and caused the Unionists to react in a similar way against the threats they perceived while they were in power.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, the violence in the Balkans were common themes in the Unionist circle, especially in the works written by ardent Unionists such as Ömer Seyfettin and Mehmet Emin Yurdakul.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> François Georgeon, *Türk Milletçiliğinin Kökenleri Yusuf Akçura (1876 – 1935)* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996). p. 65.

<sup>28</sup> Italian Carbonari is a secret society that was founded in Italy during the early nineteenth century that promoted a constitutional and representative government in Italy. For more information on the role Italian Carbonari played in the Young Turk and the CUP organizations, see: Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of the Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000). M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>29</sup> Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma*. p. 391-92.

<sup>30</sup> Hanioglu, "Turkism and the Young Turks 1889 – 1908." p. 16-17.

<sup>31</sup> Akşin, "İttihat ve Terakki Üzerine." p. 167.

<sup>32</sup> For the Balkan Wars' influence on Ömer Seyfettin, see: Tahir Alangu, *Ömer Seyfettin Ülkücü Bir Yazarın Romanı*. (İstanbul: May Yayınları, 1968). p. 115. For Mehmet Emin Yurdakul, see: Fethi

Another important aspect of the CUP was the secrecy and conspiracy surrounding the organization even after the Revolution. While the CUP was generally deemed as a “political party” after the Revolution, it should be noted that there was a separation between the CUP, the society and the CUP, the political party. According to Feroz Ahmad, the CUP was not exactly a political party, and they were more similar to a “party of leaders”, who shared the common cause of reforming the Empire in order to ensure its survival.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, the CUP lacked any type of party discipline, and failed to present a united front as an organization. They often clashed among themselves, and the members’ priorities and interests did not align with one another.<sup>34</sup> This disorganized essence of the CUP had been a determinant factor that shaped the final years of the Ottoman Empire.

According to Şükrü Hanioglu, the reason behind the CUP’s secrecy and conspiracy was because of the inexperience and youthfulness of their leadership group. Their reluctance to move the Central Committee to Istanbul and preference to stay in the shadows derived from the need to keep the Unionist leaders away from the public scrutiny and regulatory oversight. In addition to this, the secrecy of the CUP helped the organization to create a cult-like aura, much similar to the personality cult of the Abdulhamid II. According to Hanioglu, the Unionists surrounded themselves with secrecy in order to be seen “as the sacred agent of imperial redemption and the guarantor of the empire’s future security.”<sup>35</sup> The secrecy also helped the Unionists to hide the contradiction between the Turkist essence of the CUP and the Ottomanist agenda they were promoting.<sup>36</sup> Even though the CUP became an official political party in 1913,<sup>37</sup> the secrecy and conspiratorial aura around the CUP did not disappear, and displayed itself in the form of the infamous *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* (Special Organization).<sup>38</sup>

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Tevetoğlu, *Mehmet Emin Yurdakul: Hayatı ve Eserleri* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1988). p. 32-33.

<sup>33</sup> Ahmad, *Bir Kimlik Peşinde Türkiye*. p. 54.

<sup>34</sup> Ahmad. p. 59.

<sup>35</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. p. 157.

<sup>36</sup> Akşin, “İttihat ve Terakki Üzerine.” p. 163.

<sup>37</sup> Berkes, *Türkiye’de Çağdaşlaşma*. p. 406.

<sup>38</sup> *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*, or Special Organization, was the secret, paramilitary organization founded as a branch in the CUP organization. For more information on *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*, see: Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler Cilt III: İttihat ve Terakki Bir Çağın, Bir Kuşağın, Bir Partinin Tarihi* (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1989). p. 275-292.

The other important factor that shaped the Unionist mentality was the western education they received both inside and outside the Empire. The first Westernization attempts started as a necessity to halt the Ottoman Empire's decline and catch up with the Western powers. While the first students were sent to Paris to gather the technical knowledge of the West, throughout the nineteenth century, various Western type schools were founded within the Empire.<sup>39</sup> The first western-type schools were *Mühendishane-i Berrî-i Hümayûn* (Imperial School of Military Engineering) and *Mühendishane-i Bahrî-i Hümayûn* (Imperial Naval Engineering School), founded in 1795 and 1772, respectively.

The Young Turks movement was first emerged in one of these schools, *Mekteb-i Tibbiye-i Şahane* (The Imperial Military School of Medicine), a school established in 1827 based on western curriculum. The libraries in *Mekteb-i Tibbiye-i Şahane* were filled with books on materialism and positive sciences, books written by Diderot, d'Holbach, Ludwig Büchner, Nietzsche and many other prominent philosophers' works were quite popular among the students and graduates of the school. Baron d'Holbach's book *Systeme de la Nature*, which was deemed as the handbook of atheism, was especially popular.<sup>40</sup>

According to Şükrü Hanioglu, this school did not only provide medical education, but it was also important in creating a new Ottoman intellectual elite. The main characteristic of this elite was their tendency to blame religion as an obstacle against the social progress and suggesting that the society's problems could be solved with the help of natural sciences.<sup>41</sup> The following excerpt from Abdullah Cevdet's article in the journal *Osmanlı* was perhaps the summary of how the Unionists were evaluating the society around them, and legitimizing their revolutionary ideas with the help of science:

A society is like a human body because each is composed of varied and numerous living cells. Just as an individual requires therapy to recover from an illness, so a society needs to take cures for its special illnesses — the doctors are dubbed lawmakers, administrators, and politicians. If a society is without such doctors, or if in spite of their presence an oppressive group dares to violate the balance of order and aided by luck attains strong power ... the remedy

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<sup>39</sup> Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük*. p. 10.

<sup>40</sup> Can Karaböcek, "Türk Düşüncesinde Büchner Etkisi Ya Da 'Felsefenin Sefaleti,'" *Kutadgubilig Felsefe-Bilim Araştırmaları Dergisi* 22 (October 2012). p. 165.

<sup>41</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi* (İstanbul: Üçdal Yayınevi, 1981). p. 9-12.

to save a nation from so dangerous an illness, which would surely reap grave effects, is the rebellion of the violated people against their oppressors. Rebellion is the only way in which a weak and sick nation may heal itself.<sup>42</sup>

Especially during the reign of Abdulhamid II, the number of materialist and scientist articles and essays within the Ottoman press increased immensely. While articles written on politics were often subjected to censorship, the Unionist press started to include science and philosophy more and more. Hence, materialism and the superiority of science became widespread among the intellectuals.<sup>43</sup> Later, after the Revolution, the Unionists' emphasize on science did not only work as a tool for them to legitimize the Revolution or their rule, but also as a way of promoting their own nationalist agenda as a struggle for civilization.<sup>44</sup> According to Hans Lukas Kieser, the school was also the convergence point of the three aspects of Turkish nationalism: "western science, elitist political conspiracy and military institution."<sup>45</sup> Considering all of these, it would be impossible to disregard the role the western-style schools had played in the Unionist mindset.

While the Unionists were educated both in the west and the western-style schools founded in the Empire, their attitude towards the West had been more complex than that. They were aware that the West had a superiority over the Ottoman Empire, and they agreed that the reason behind this superiority was *ulum ve fünun* (knowledge and science).<sup>46</sup> However, due to the European stance on political matters, especially during the Balkan Wars, they were also sceptic towards the Western powers. The Unionists believed that the international law would only be used against the Ottoman Empire, not in favor of them, and that the European conscience was essentially a Christian conscience, which was voiced in Ziya Gökalp, one of the most important figures that shaped the Unionist ideology.<sup>47</sup> This created another dilemma within the Unionist mindset. On one hand, they were critical towards the European powers and perceived

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<sup>42</sup> Abdullah Cevdet "Kiyam," *Osmanlı*, no. 5, February 1, 1898, 5. Quoted from: Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902 – 1908*. p. 208.

<sup>43</sup> Hanioglu. p. 24-25.

<sup>44</sup> DüNDAR, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi: İttihat ve Terakki'nin Etnisite Mühendisliği (1913-1918)*. p. 430-31.

<sup>45</sup> Hans Lukas Kieser, "From 'Patriotism' to Mass Murder: Dr. Mehmed Reşid (1873–1919)," in *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). p. 128.

<sup>46</sup> Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük*. p. 16-17.

<sup>47</sup> Niyazi Berkes, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959). p. 75.

them as threats to their survival, but on the other hand, they would count “Western civilization” as one of the three basic components of the Turkish national culture.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to the materialism and scientism, the CUP also acquired social Darwinist themes from the Western philosophers. At the beginning of the twentieth century, social Darwinist themes were widely popular in the European and American thought.<sup>49</sup> Social Darwinism suggested that Darwin’s biological laws affect humans as well as other organisms, and the pressure of population growth would lead to the struggle of survival among humans, in which the strongest ones would live, and the weakest would be eliminated.<sup>50</sup> The Unionists acquired these social Darwinist ideas from various sources and embraced them greatly. Especially during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were a great deal of books translated from the social Darwinist ideologs, and intellectuals such as Abdullah Cevdet, Doktor Nami, Edhem Necdet, Samipaşazade Sezai would discuss the social Darwinist ideas and refer to the social Darwinist thinkers occasionally.<sup>51</sup>

One reason behind this interest towards social Darwinism was the intellectual curiosity. The other reason was political and had a much more impact in defining the Empire’s final years. The main problem of the Unionist elite was saving the Ottoman Empire and ensuring its survival, hence, the social Darwinist themes such as “survival of the fittest”, “the necessity of war”, and “struggle for existence” fed the fear of extinction in the Unionist mindset.<sup>52</sup> This fear cemented the skepticism of the Unionists towards the European powers, and the fear of extinction had been cumulated until the point where the CUP started to perceive threat from the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire. According to Hanioglu, Social Darwinism became a tool for them to understand the reality they were experiencing.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and the Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (New York: NYU Press, 1997). p. 79.

<sup>49</sup> Gregory Claeys, “The ‘Survival of the Fittest’ and the Origins of Social Darwinism,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 61, no. 2 (2000). p. 255-56.

<sup>50</sup> Claeys. p. 228.

<sup>51</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902 – 1908*. p. 290.

<sup>52</sup> Hasan Ünder, “Türkiye’de Sosyal Darwinizm Düşüncesi,” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce IV: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekin (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008). p. 429.

<sup>53</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*. p. 21-22.

Hans Lukas Kieser argued that there were several external factors causing the CUP elite to acquire a Social Darwinist mentality. He claimed that the territory losses, bankruptcy, and famine the Empire went through specifically during the twentieth century, as well as the international pressure that was put on the Ottoman Empire regarding the non-Muslim subjects within the state brought the rise of social Darwinist rhetoric alongside.<sup>54</sup> According to Kieser, Social Darwinism was such an important aspect of the CUP's mindset that the Unionist ideology was not a mix of Ottomanism, Islamism, and Turkism like many other scholar suggests, but it was a mix of Turkism and Islamism, accompanied with Social Darwinism.<sup>55</sup>

Apart from the Social Darwinist understanding of the world around them, militarism was also a crucial component of the Unionist mentality. Most of the military members of the organization had joined the CUP after its merger with *Osmanlı Hürriyet Fırkası* (Ottoman Freedom Society)<sup>56</sup> in 1907,<sup>57</sup> which helped the Unionists to adopt a more revolutionary, mobilizing agenda in order to save the Empire. While some of the first founders of the Young Turks, such as Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir and Dr. Nazım, were military doctors, they did not actively serve in the Ottoman army, and therefore, they lacked military ambitions.<sup>58</sup> Naturally, after the Revolution in 1908, the military members of the CUP gained more influence within the Organization.<sup>59</sup> Throughout the years, the military wing of the CUP increased its influence gradually and especially after the coup of 1913, they were the sole leaders of the Empire.

According to Abdullah Cevdet, antimilitarism was an unrealistic and dangerous idea and the Empire had to be ready for war in order to survive.<sup>60</sup> The Unionists shared this sentiment and promoted a belief that only through war the Empire could avoid extinction. For them, the military power was the only way to ensure the Ottoman Empire's survival and make sure that they would not be another colony for the Western

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<sup>54</sup> Hans Lukas Kieser, *Talaat Pasha: Father of Modern Turkey, Architect of Genocide* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2018). p. 40.

<sup>55</sup> Kieser. p. 61-62.

<sup>56</sup> *Osmanlı Hürriyet Fırkası* (Ottoman Freedom Society) was a secret group founded in Salonika and popular around Macedonia as well. Most members of the organization was military officers and bureaucrats.

<sup>57</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. p. 159.

<sup>58</sup> Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey* (London: Tauris, 2010). p. 99.

<sup>59</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. p. 159.

<sup>60</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902 – 1908*. p. 304.

powers. They had a strong belief that trying to save the Empire through international diplomacy was an attempt in vain, and the only way was defending the Ottoman Empire through war.<sup>61</sup> In the end, this mentality caused the Unionists to perceive the World War I as a final struggle that would determine the Empire's future.<sup>62</sup>

The militarist, social Darwinist mentality of the CUP eventually led to a “culture of violence” that would extensively use symbols of war and war terminology in everyday life.<sup>63</sup> The examples of this could be seen in the newly founded organizations such as *Donanma Cemiyeti* (The Navy League), *Türk Gücü Derneği* (Turkish Strength Societies), and the boy-scout type of associations such as *Osmanlı Güç Derneği* (Ottoman Strength Association). The last one was particularly important in creating a nation with militaristic values since it was compulsory to join for all the Ottoman children between the ages of twelve and twenty.<sup>64</sup> In the following chapters of this thesis, I intend to delve more into the tools that the Unionists used to promote their social Darwinist, militarist worldview and to create a national identity.

Social Darwinism and militarism did not only provide a roadmap for the Unionists on how they could save the Empire. It was also a way of them to legitimize the Young Turk Revolution and later, the coup of 1913. The Unionists interpreted Social Darwinism as the Empire should be ruled by the strongest members of the society. Considering that they were the most educated members of the society and also in charge of the military, it was logical for them to assume power and lead the Ottoman Empire.<sup>65</sup> Abdullah Cevdet went even further than that and claimed that the Ottoman sultans and princes were the children of concubines, and therefore they were not fit to rule the Empire. Cevdet referred to Theodule Armand Ribot's theory claiming that “offspring born to imprisoned animals cannot inherit the racial characteristics of their fathers”, and this theory applied to the Ottoman sultans and princes as well.<sup>66</sup> Abdullah Cevdet suggested that the Ottoman dynasty was unnecessary for the survival of the

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<sup>61</sup> Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). p. 2-3.

<sup>62</sup> Aksakal. p. 19-20.

<sup>63</sup> George W. Gawrych, “The Culture and Politics of Violence in Turkish Society, 1903–14,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 22, no. 3 (1986). p. 307.

<sup>64</sup> Erol Köroğlu, *Türk Edebiyatı ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı (1914-1918)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010). p. 143.

<sup>65</sup> Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük*. p. 616-17.

<sup>66</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*. p. 19.

Empire, however, his views were too radical even among the Unionists circles.<sup>67</sup> While the Unionists were believing that they were the group that would save the Empire, the dynasty to be kept, albeit symbolically.

Putting these aside, there was another aspect of the Unionist attitudes towards the social Darwinist theories. While they were promoting the ideas mentioned above in their own discourse and used social Darwinist arguments to legitimize themselves as the ruling class, they were also conflicting with the western social Darwinist attitudes towards the Ottoman Empire. On one hand, the Unionists were promoting the social Darwinist slogans of “struggle for existence” or “survival of the fittest” freely, but on the other hand, there was a great trend among the Ottoman intellectuals to disprove the social Darwinist theory that categorized the Turks as “barbaric and backwards”.<sup>68</sup> As a counter-argument, the Turkish nationalist intelligentsia argued that the Turks were one of the civilized races, moreover, in his book titled *Les Turcs Anciens et Modernes*, Mustafa Celalettin Paşa went ahead and argued that the Turks, in fact, belonged to the Aryan race.<sup>69</sup> These attempts at proving the superiority of the Turkish race continued increasingly during the CUP regime, and characterized the new Turkish Republic’s pursuit of creating a new national identity. In the following chapters of this thesis, I will be thoroughly examining the dilemma of Social Darwinism in the Unionist ideology.

In this thesis, I suggest that the Unionists’ interactions, whether intellectually or politically, helped them to acquire a social Darwinist, militarist mindset. It is a well-known fact that the Unionists, especially Enver Pasha and other military members of the organization were influenced greatly by the German Empire and had an admiration towards the German military mindset. However, there are several scholars suggesting that the CUP’s intention was never being allies with the German Empire. Feroz Ahmad argues that, contrary to popular belief, the Unionists wanted to be aligned with Great

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<sup>67</sup> Hanioglu, *Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi*. p. 279.

<sup>68</sup> This was a theory by French thinker Arthur de Gobineau in his book titled *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races* in 1853. In this book, he suggested that the Aryan race was the most superior race among humankind, as long as they were unstained by the yellow and black races. More on Gobineau and his thesis: “Arthur de Gobineau,” <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Arthur-de-Gobineau>. Last accessed: 01.07.2021.

<sup>69</sup> Umit Kurt, “Türk Milliyetçiliğinde Irk (-Çılık) ve Irkçı Söylemler: Türk Yurdu Dergisi Örneği (1911-16),” *Toplumsal Tarih* 236 (2013). p. 24.

Britain and France, and that they only turned to Germany out of necessity.<sup>70</sup> He claims that the outcome of the CUP rule influenced historiography on the CUP, which resulted in a narrative that presents the CUP as an organization under the German influence completely.<sup>71</sup> According to Ahmad, this was far from the truth, and the Unionists only turned their focus towards a potential allyship with Germany around 1913-1914.<sup>72</sup> To support his argument, Ahmad elaborates on how the Unionist elite deemed the massive defeats against the Balkan nations as a result of the German partnership. He argues that the Unionists assessed the defeat as the defeat of German technology and military advisories, and the Balkan nations emerged victorious due to their French-manufactured weaponry.<sup>73</sup>

On the other hand, Naci Yorulmaz argues that, while there was a certain disdain towards the Germans due to their close relations with Abdulhamid II in the beginning, this skepticism and hatred towards the German Empire disappeared in the following years. Yorulmaz claims that the reason behind this was the German military influence on the Unionist officers, which was cemented especially during the Abdulhamid II's reign.<sup>74</sup> The majority of the Unionist officers were trained by German officers such as Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz, who was appointed to reform the Ottoman army and though in the military school during the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>75</sup>

Feroz Ahmad has a point in his assessment regarding the initial reaction against the Germans, and the CUP's desire to have the British and French allyship instead. However, I argue that the Unionist leaders and the Ottoman intelligentsia had been, politically and intellectually, under the German influence for decades. This influence is crucial to understand the Unionist mentality, especially the social Darwinist aspect of the Turkish nationalism. In the later chapters of this thesis, I intend to elaborate more on how German philosophy, as well as the ideas of von der Goltz had given the Unionist mentality a more social Darwinist tone.

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<sup>70</sup> Feroz Ahmad, *Jön Türkler Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nu Kurtarma Mücadelesi 1914 -1918* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2020). p. 7.

<sup>71</sup> Ahmad. p. 10.

<sup>72</sup> Ahmad. p. 8.

<sup>73</sup> Ahmad. p. 39-40.

<sup>74</sup> Naci Yorulmaz, *Büyük Savaşın Kara Kutusu: II. Abdülhamid'den I. Dünya Savaşı'na Osmanlı Silah Pazarının Perde Arkası* (İstanbul: Kronik Kitap, 2018). p. 338-39.

<sup>75</sup> Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914*. p. 69.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL DARWINISM IN THE UNIONIST THEORY

While the Social Darwinist ideology made itself visible in the early 1870s in Europe and North America, Social Darwinism started to be known in the Ottoman Empire around the late nineteenth century and popularized during the early twentieth century. Intellectuals such as Beşir Fuad, Baha Tevfik, Ahmet Nebil, and Abdullah Cevdet introduced the Social Darwinism to the Ottoman Empire around the 1890s through their translations and articles. In his work titled *İntikad*, which was written in 1887, Beşir Fuad extensively referred to one of the most prominent Social Darwinists, Ludwig Büchner.<sup>76</sup> Abdullah Cevdet translated some parts of Büchner's book titled *Kraft und Stoff* in 1891, and *Natur und Geist* in 1894.<sup>77</sup> Abdullah Cevdet was also writing on Gustav Le Bon and his Social Darwinist theory in 1905.<sup>78</sup> Of course, the impact of these books was not limited to the translations since there were some elite who read the original or French versions of them long before they were translated to Turkish. However, these translations could be the reason of the popularization of these books, considering that they became available to the casual readers as well.

However, there are two problems that stand out regarding the intellectual publications on Social Darwinism mentioned above. Firstly, the impact of these publications were limited to the selected circle of literate elite, and secondly, and perhaps more importantly, their influence was purely intellectual and lacked a revolutionist sense that the CUP so desperately needed during their first two decades.<sup>79</sup> The Unionists lacked the revolutionary aspect in their ideology until the merger with the *Osmanlı Hürriyet Fırkası*, which enabled them to create a “military-intellectual alliance”, as

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<sup>76</sup> M. Orhan Okay, *Beşir Fuad: İlk Türk Pozitivist ve Natüralisti* (İstanbul: Hareket Yayınları, 1969). p. 184.

<sup>77</sup> Kemal Kahramanoğlu and Ali Utku, “Madde ve Kuvvet: Osmanlı Popüler Materyalizminin Elkitabı,” in *Madde ve Kuvvet* (Konya: Çizgi Yayınevi, 2012). p. 11-12.

<sup>78</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, “Gustav Le Bon,” *İçtihad*, no. 8 (1905). p. 118-121.

<sup>79</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*. p. 21-22.

Hanioğlu put it.<sup>80</sup> This merger did not only helped the CUP to acquire a more revolutionary identity, but in my opinion, it also enabled them to put their Social Darwinist ideology in action.

Despite the lateness of it, Social Darwinism had been one of the dominant themes in the twentieth century, both intellectually and politically. This ideology became a strong characteristic of the Unionist worldview and shaped the CUP's policies during the final years of the Ottoman Empire. Considering all of these, in order to understand this particular aspect of the Unionist ideology, the question of why the Unionists embraced Social Darwinism needs to be asked.

To understand the reasoning behind the popularity and extensiveness of the Social Darwinist ideology within the CUP circles, one needs to take a closer look at several factors. In this chapter, I intend to elaborate on three main elements that helped the Unionist devotion towards Social Darwinism to flourish and take root. To start with, I will delve into the backgrounds of the Unionist elite to comprehend other aspects of the Unionist ideology that enabled them to incorporate Social Darwinism as a part of their worldview. To do so, I will examine the education the Unionists received, which helped them to acquire a more positivist, scientific, and militarist ideology. The newly founded, European-type military schools are particularly important in this regard since most of the Unionists received their education in Military and Military Medical schools. These schools did not only create a network for the CUP and made the foundation of the Committee possible, but they were also the institutions in which the students from various rural areas of the Empire met the western ideologies for the first time. In addition to the western-style education they received, the military background of the Unionists is particularly important for them to embrace Social Darwinism. In this regard, the komitadji identity of the Unionists, and the German military influence on the Unionists catch the attention the most.

In addition to the backgrounds of the Unionist elite, the political atmosphere of their age was also a determinant factor to cement their Social Darwinist ideology within their worldview. "Sick man of Europe" rhetoric that was surrounding the political

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<sup>80</sup> Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. p. 212.

atmosphere in the Ottoman Empire, alongside the defeats that were faced before and after the 1908 Revolution fueled the sense of humiliation and fear of extinction in the CUP elite.<sup>81</sup> This sense of humiliation and fear of extinction, combined with the constant defeats, economic problems, and the overall never-ending demise of the Empire, gradually increased xenophobia and hatred towards the Empire's foreign enemies, especially towards the old subject-nations of the Empire alongside.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, the Tripoli and Balkan Wars brought a sense of being wronged by the international system as well, which increased the Social Darwinist rhetoric in the Unionist nationalism.

The final reason of the popularity of Social Darwinism in the Unionist ideology derives from the ideological problems. The first problem in this regard is the late emergence of Turkism, or Turkish nationalism. While the subject nations of the Ottoman Empire embraced the nationalist ideology throughout the nineteenth century, the Turkist, or Turkish nationalist, ideas were voiced loudly around the 1900s and gained momentum after the 1908 Revolution. This was partly due to the desire to keep the Empire together as long as possible, and partly because the lack of an intellectual structure that could come up with Turkish nationalism. After the Russo-Turk intellectuals migrated to the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish nationalism started to flourish. However, the lateness of a Turkish nationalism caused another basis to embrace Social Darwinism for the Unionist elite. Similar to the political circumstances, the lateness of Turkish nationalism caused the Turkish nationalism to emerge as a reaction against the other nationalisms. The tardiness of Turkish nationalism created an urgent need to close the gap, which, considering certain Unionist policies towards the alien elements of the Empire, also created a basis for several Social Darwinist policies to be implemented during the Unionist tenure. Another ideological problem that increased popularity of the Social Darwinism in the Ottoman Empire was simply the inadequate critics against the theory in the Ottoman intellectuals. While in Germany, Social Darwinism was criticized fervently by philosophers such as Marx, Lieblig, or Lange, the opposition in the Ottoman Empire lacked persuasiveness and authority to denigrate and discredit

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<sup>81</sup> Tanıl Bora, "Türk Ulusal Kimliği Üzerine Bazı Tezler," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce IV: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekin (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2020). p. 56.

<sup>82</sup> Murat Belge, "Türkiye'de Zenofobi ve Milliyetçilik," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce IV: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Murat Gültekin and Tanıl Bora (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2020). p. 185.

Social Darwinism, which made way to the popularization of Social Darwinist theories in the Ottoman elite.<sup>83</sup>

### 1.1 The Unionist Background

As mentioned above, one of the most important factors that enabled the Unionists to embrace Social Darwinism was the Unionist elite's common features and backgrounds. The education the CUP elite received is particularly noteworthy in this regard. The Unionists were generally educated in the modern, western-style schools that were founded as a part of the modernization and reformation policies of the *Tanzimat* era. In this regard, the military and military medical schools had the biggest impact over the course of the Ottoman history, not only because the alumni of these schools were the decision-makers of the Empire for over a decade, but also the important figures of the CUP had acquired the foundations of their worldview and ideologies within the walls of these institutions.<sup>84</sup>

The military and military medical schools provided materialist, positivist, and scientific education to their students. As the graduates of these schools, the Unionists laid foundations of the CUP ideology in accordance with the type of education they received. They embraced certain books that were deemed as the "holy bibles of positivism". The positivist thinkers and their works had been so popular in the military schools that the number of books written by positivist and materialist philosophers present in the Medical School's library surprised the Scottish traveler, Charles MacFarlane greatly:

It was long since I had seen such a collection of downright materialism. A young Turk, seemingly about twenty years of age, was sitting cross-legged in a corner of the room, reading that manual of atheism, the *Système de la Nature!* Another of the students showed his proficiency in French and philosophy, by quoting passages from Diderot's *Jacques le Fataliste*, and from that compound of blasphemy and obscenity, *Le Comphre Mathieu* (...) I saw a few works in German, and there appeared to be a few translations of English medical books, but the bulk was wholly French, Cabanes's *Rapport de la Physique et du Morale de l'Homme* occupied a conspicuous place on the shelves. I no longer wondered it should be commonly

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<sup>83</sup> M. Şükrü Hanoğlu, "Felsefesiz Bir Toplumun Felsefe Olmayan Felsefesinin İlmihâli: Madde ve Kuvvet," in *Madde ve Kuvvet*, ed. Kemal Kahramanoğlu and Ali Utku (Konya: Çizgi Yayınevi, 2012), p. 28.

<sup>84</sup> Mustafa Gunduz, "Sociocultural Origins of Turkish Educational Reforms and Ideological Origins of Late Ottoman Intellectuals (1908-1930)," *History of Education* 38, no. 2 (2009), p. 192.

said that every student who came out of Galata Serai, after keeping the full term, came out always materialist, and generally a libertine and rogue.<sup>85</sup>

In the military and military medical schools, even the most devout Muslim students were slowly embracing the materialist ideas. İbrahim Temo, one of the founders of the CUP, said that they were trying to influence the devout students and push them to read Darwinist, materialist books:

I recall it to this day: While I was a student in Military Medical School, in order to awaken some of our friends, we would try to make them read the works of great scholars such as Darwin. Not only their hodja fathers, even their pasha fathers were warning them that if they would read those books, they would commit blasphemy. “Darwin seduces the world, claiming that the most superior living creature, the humankind was evolved from the apes.”, these people said. They were guiding their children to ignorance with their claims that could only fool the emptyheaded people.<sup>86</sup>

One of the most famous examples of this devout Muslim students who met with Darwinism and materialism during their education in the Medical Military School was Abdullah Cevdet. Even though he was very religious during his first years in the school, and wrote poems praising prophet Muhammad,<sup>87</sup> he became a strong supporter of materialism in the later periods of his life. Despite his religious past, Abdullah Cevdet’s efforts to reconcile Islam with Social Darwinism were limited. When he translated some parts of *Natur und Geist* by Ludwig Büchner, he claimed that he was inspired by a hadith to translate the book but made no further effort to tone down the antireligious aspects of the book.<sup>88</sup>

The military medical schools did not only influence a limited number of students to acquire a materialist, positivist ideology, but it also created a new type of intellectuals that were notoriously against the social values. These intellectuals often deemed

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<sup>85</sup> Charles MacFarlane, *Turkey and Its Destiny* (London: John Murray, 1850). p. 270-71.

<sup>86</sup> İbrahim Temo, “Darwin’in Ellinci Ölüm Yıldönümü,” *İçtihad*, no. 347 (1932). p. 5736.

““Hatıramdadır: Mekteb-i Tıbbiyede talebe iken, ba’zı arkadaşları uyandırmak ve ‘Yarım hoca insanı dinden, yarım hekim candan eder’ darbı meseline maruz bırakmamak için Darwin ve sa’ir büyük adamların eserlerini okutmağa sa’y ederdik. Bunlardan bazılarının değil yalnız Hoca babaları, Paşa babaları bile böyle şeyleri okumayınız küfre uğrarsınız, ‘Darwin, efdalı mahlukat olan insanı maymundan çıkmadır diye âlemi iğfal ediyor’ iddia-i eblehfiribanesiyle evladlarını cehalete sevk ediyorlardı! İslamiyet akidelerinin hakikatına vakıf olmayan bu cühela: ‘Ayinedir âlem, her şey Hak ile ka’im’ felsefesini unutuyorlardı.”

<sup>87</sup> Hanioglu, *Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi*. p. 6.

<sup>88</sup> M. Sukru Hanioglu, “Garbcılar: Their Attitudes toward Religion and Their Impact on the Official Ideology of the Turkish Republic,” *Studia Islamica* 86 (1997). p. 135.

religion as a roadblock in front of the science and progress they valued so dearly.<sup>89</sup> The *Tıbbiyeli*, as they were often called, deemed the medical schools as the laboratories, and themselves as the social doctors that were qualified to treat the society and the Empire.<sup>90</sup> Hence, it can be easily argued that the materialist, scientific education led the way to the popularization of Social Darwinism. Considering that some of the most prominent Social Darwinists of the Ottoman Empire, such as Abdullah Cevdet, Rıza Tevfik, and Beşir Fuad were all graduates of these schools, assuming that the military and military medical schools laid the foundations of Social Darwinism in the Unionist ideology would not be wrong. While Beşir Fuad did not take part in the Young Turk organization actively, Abdullah Cevdet was one of the founders of the organization, and Rıza Tevfik was a prominent member of the CUP especially after the 1908 Revolution.

Combined with the political situation of the Empire, the scientific, materialist worldview of the Unionists caused them to assume the duty of treating the sick man, which led them to view themselves as the “social doctors”.<sup>91</sup> Due to this ardent faith in science, the Unionists believed that the Empire’s illnesses could be cured by science, and science only. This attitude showed itself especially after the Babıali Raid in 1913, when the CUP became the dominant of power within the Empire, but it was still apparent among the CUP elite long before they assumed power. Ahmet Rıza, one of the founders of the Committee, wrote as such in his essay in 1894:

The society is an entity of various components, which is subjected to the laws of nature. This entity has certain periodical illnesses. In order to diagnose the illness, the patient must speak up, the people’s circumstances and characteristic, troubles and necessities must be known by the doctors of the nation. The antidote cannot be found if the poison remains unknown.<sup>92</sup>

A great example for this was the policies against the non-Muslim elements of the Empire, which were named as “demographic engineering” or “social engineering” by

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<sup>89</sup> Hanioglu, *Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi*. p. 9.

<sup>90</sup> Hans Lukas Kieser, “From ‘Patriotism’ to Mass Murder: Dr. Mehmed Reşid (1873–1919),” in *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). p. 129.

<sup>91</sup> Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük*. p. 607.

<sup>92</sup> Hanioglu. p. 604. “Cemiyet kavanin-i tabiiyeye tâbi’ bir vücûd-i mürekkebdir. Bu vücûdun bir takım devrî hastalıkları vardır. Teşhis-i maraz için hastayı söyletmeli, ahalinin hal ü mizacı derd ü ihtiyacı etibba-yı millete malûm olmalıdır. Zehir bilinmedikçe panzehiri bulunamaz...”

some scholars, such as Taner Akçam, Fuat Dündar and Hans Lukas Kieser.<sup>93</sup> The demographic engineering policies of the Unionists were often legitimized through their scientific, materialist worldview. Taner Akçam quotes Kuşçubaşı Eşref, one of the most prominent members of the CUP's intelligence organization, *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* (Special Organization) to emphasize more on this matter: "In the words of Kuşçubaşı Eşref, the 'non-Turkish elements' were 'an internal tumor,' the 'purging' of which was a 'matter of national importance.'"<sup>94</sup> In addition to Kuşçubaşı Eşref, Abdullah Cevdet had a similar thought back in 1904.

We do not wish for any blood to spill, however, there are some pus that are also red. Deceived by their color, leaving them inside the organism of the society would mean surrendering the entire existence of the society to poison and destruction. The thing that flows through the veins are not blood, they are the pus. Pus is not the blood, and drawing out the pus is the treatment.<sup>95</sup>

Another particularly important aspect of the Unionist background, which is also connected to their educational background, is their military identities. As mentioned above, the Unionists were educated in the military schools, and combined with the positivist, materialist, scientific ideologies that were promoted in these schools, the Unionist ideology had been shaped greatly. While the military schools were first organized with the help of French advisors, most of the Unionists received their educations from German military officers and advisors, or from the Ottoman officers who were already trained by these German military officers.<sup>96</sup> The German-Ottoman military affairs first started with Helmuth von Moltke in 1835, and then continued with Freiherr Colmar von der Goltz's appointment in 1883, both of them influenced the cadets of these military schools, especially on subjects such as Darwinism and materialism.<sup>97</sup> Both of these military advisors were well-known for their Social

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<sup>93</sup> Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012). p. 15.

<sup>94</sup> Akçam. p. 14-15.

<sup>95</sup> Abdullah Cevdet, "Saika-i İntikam," *Osmanlı*, no. 134 (1904). Quoted from: Hanioglu, *Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi*. p. 255. "Kan dökülmesini hiç istemeyiz lâkin bazı irinler vardır ki kırmızıdır, rengine aldanıb onları uzviyyet-i cemiyetde bırakmak tek mil beden-i cemiyeti tesmim ve helâka teslim demek olur. O damarlarda dolaşan kan değil irindir. İrin kan değildir. İrini akıtmak tedavidir..."

<sup>96</sup> Ayşe Gül Altınay, *The Myth of the Military-Nation: Militarism, Gender and Education in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave, 2004). p. 14.

<sup>97</sup> Atilla Doğan, *Osmanlı Aydınları ve Sosyal Darwinizm* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2006). p. 168.

Darwinist views, von Moltke specifically known for his attempts at rationalizing the states using force, similar to Heinrich von Treitschke.<sup>98</sup>

Consequently, the German military advisors and German military approach being implemented at the Ottoman military schools had increased the German influence on the CUP elite tremendously. As discussed in the introduction chapter, the Unionists were skeptical towards the German Empire due to their support to the Abdulhamid II's regime in the previous years. However, their influence increased over time, and the more the military wing of the CUP took control over the government, the more the German military mindset became apparent in the Ottoman Empire's ruling class. Yusuf Akçura, one of the most important figures in Turkist ideology, stated the increase in German influence over the Unionist elite prior to the 1908 Revolution as follows:

It seems to me that an increase in the relations between the Ottomans and the Germans, and the growing acquaintance among Turkish youth of the German language and especially the historical and philological studies done by the Germans, have been very influential in the formation of this circle. In this new group, rather than the light, frivolous, and political style characterized by the French tradition, there exists a soundly-based science which has been obtained quietly, patiently, and in a detailed fashion.<sup>99</sup>

The military background of the Unionists brought militarism and Social Darwinism as the two most noteworthy elements of the Unionist worldview. These two elements were almost always intertwined, which brings the question of whether the Unionists embraced Social Darwinism due to their militarist worldviews, or they became more militarist due to the influence of Social Darwinist theories. In this regard, I argue that both arguments can be valid. On one hand, the Unionists militarist worldview enabled them to incorporate Social Darwinism into their ideology, and on the other hand, the Social Darwinist ideology increased the militarist elements within the Unionist worldview. Even Abdullah Cevdet, despite the fact that he supported the German pacifist Darwinist, Baronin Bertha von Suttner,<sup>100</sup> claimed as follows:

Gustav Le Bon is in favor of militarism. He even accepts a coordinated army organization as a nation's trails of progress and guarantor of life. Yes, abolishing the military, creating a

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<sup>98</sup> Doğan. p. 76.

<sup>99</sup> Yusuf Akçura, *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (Ankara: Kilit Yayınları, 2012). p. 17. Translation by: David S. Thomas, [http://vlib.iue.it/carrie/texts/carrie\\_books/paksoy-2/cam9.html](http://vlib.iue.it/carrie/texts/carrie_books/paksoy-2/cam9.html), (Last accessed: 08.07.2021)

<sup>100</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902 – 1908*. p. 304.

socialist public rule sound all wonderful, but right now, these are all in vain. There can be no other request that is more futile than the desire for only France to demolish the enlistment these days, while the entire Europe is armed. Today we see the consequences of the ceasefire congresses in The Hague! And after the Congress, the seas of Transval, Manchuria, and Japan are drowning in blood. The truth is on the same side as Gustav Le Bon. The truth is a magnificent, hopeless, sorrowful truth: Be ready for war, if we want, then peace and comfort.<sup>101</sup>

Another important Unionist, Ömer Seyfettin, shared a similar belief with Abdullah Cevdet. Compared with Abdullah Cevet, Ömer Seyfettin's arguments were with less philosophical and were more in accordance with the political situation of the Ottoman Empire. He claimed that the sense of internationality and international peace are the tools of European powers who wished to dismember the Ottoman Empire. According to Ömer Seyfettin, not war, but peace would ruin the nations, and the peaceful nations could never progress and prosper.<sup>102</sup>

After reading carefully, the lesson that must be taken from history is as follows:

1. Not war, but peace ruins the nations.
2. A nation that is peaceful and tranquil will be destroyed by itself, even if they were not attacked by another nation. They will go back from the path of progress. Just like the Chinese, the Mongols, the peoples of the Inner Asia, Indians...
3. A nation's denial of its nationality means suicide<sup>103</sup>

While militarism could be deemed as the element which helped Social Darwinist ideology to be popularized in the Ottoman Empire, there were also cases where Social Darwinism fueled the militarist worldview of the Unionist regime. Especially after the 1908 Revolution, the Social Darwinist and militarist ideology of the CUP increased its intensity over the Unionist agenda. In this context, the foundation of societies such as *Türk Gücü Derneği* (Turkish Strength Association) and *Donanma Cemiyeti* (Fleet Committee) is particularly important.

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<sup>101</sup> Cevdet, "Gustav Le Bon." p. 120. "(Gustav Le Bon) askeriyet 'militarisme'in taraftarıdır. Ve hatta ber muntazam teşkilât-ı askeriyeyi bir milletin isr-ü terakkisi ve zâmin-i hayatı olarak kabul eder. Evet, askerliği kaldırmak, sosyalist bir idare-i umumiye vücuda getirmek bunlar hep hoş fakat şimdi hep boş! Bütün Avrupa, dışına kadar müsella olduğı şu zamanda yalnız Fransa'dan askerliğin kaldırılmasını istemek kadar abes bir temenni ne olabilir? Lahey'deki terk-i silah kongrelerinin semerâtını ilâ maşallah bol bol görüyoruz! Ve kongreden sonra Transval, Mançurya, Japon denizleri insan kanlarına gark oldu. Hakikat, Gustav Le Bon tarafındadır, o hakikat ki müdhiş, me'yus, ye's-engiz bir hakikattir: Hazır ol harbe, eğer ister isek sulh ü salâh. İnsanlar hayvaniyetden kamilen kurtulmadıkça böyle takip etmek zaruridir."

<sup>102</sup> Köroğlu, *Türk Edebiyatı ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı (1914-1918)*. p. 359.

<sup>103</sup> Ömer Seyfettin, *Bütün Eserleri 16: Türklük Üzerine Yazılar* (İstanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1988). p. 24. ":(...) Dikkatle okuduğı tarihten alacağı ders budur:

1. Milletleri harp değil sulh mahveder. 2. "Sulh"cu ve "sükûn"cu bir millet ikinci bir milletin hücumuna maruz kalmasa bile kendi kendine taaffün eder. Terakki yolundan geri döner. Uyuşur kalır. Çinliler, Moğollar, Vasati Asya kavimleri, Hindistanlılar gibi... 3. Bir milletin milliyetini inkar etmesi intihar demektir. (...)"

Founded in 1913, *Türk Gücü Derneği* aimed to militarize and mobilize the Ottoman youth in a German *Pfadfinder* (boyscout) type of association. This organization not only aimed to increase patriotic feelings among the Ottoman youth, but also wanted to better the health and physical conditions of the recruits of the Ottoman army. This association found great support from the Ministry of War, as well as the other Unionist circles, such as the *Türk Yurdu* circle.<sup>104</sup> *Türk Gücü* claimed that in order to defend the Empire, all subjects of the Ottoman Empire, had to be strong physically and mentally.<sup>105</sup> This aim was in confirmity with the Social Darwinist ideology, since it aimed to make the nation physically and intellectually strong, as well as patriotic and nationalist, in order to increase the chances of the nation's survival. An anonymous article written in the *Türk Yurdu* journal explains how the Unionist emphasized on creating a military-nation through the foundation of *Türk Gücü* association.

My nation must live! My nation must know that health is connected to strength. I would like to see a Turk as vigorous, sturdy, strong, and ferocious. Not as weak, destitute! The foot must be swift, the wrist must be quick!<sup>106</sup>

Furthermore, in the same article, it was also argued that the reason behind the political desperation the Ottoman Empire experiencing was due to the fact that the Turkish nation lost its militarist identity.

My nation was a great manly nation, but being conquerors did not agree with him. Pleasure and debauchery made him weaker. That army of men fell apart. That cavalry, chevalier nation dismounted, sank into coffee shops. He left his own golden bed and took a billiard's bat into his hands. In coffee shops, in dice, in games, he traded his glory, his title, his strength and his manhood for the pleasures of the West and debauchery of the Europeans. The race, the breed became ruined, the majority of the grandchildren of that ferocious, healthy nation now consists of the shorts, the dwarfs, and hunchbacks, the one-armed, the knock-kneed. Ash and nicotine ruined my nation, it destroyed him. Their hands are yellowed because of the tobacco, faces pale; their hands are shaky, eyes are lifeless, their selves dimmed because of the alcohol. I would like to see our youth's hands to be calloused due to swords, javelin, sails; their faces to be reddened and cheeks aflame due to the daylight, sun, the clean air, the cutting winds!<sup>107</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Zafer Toprak, "İttihat ve Terakki'nin Paramiliter Gençlik Örgütleri," *B.Ü. Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi*, no. 8 (1979). p. 95-96.

<sup>105</sup> Toprak. p. 97.

<sup>106</sup> "Türk Gücü," *Türk Yurdu* 3, no. 35 (1328). p. 186. "Milletim yaşamaladır! Milletim sağlığını sağlamlığa bağlı olduğunu bilmelidir. Ben Türk'ü dinç, gürbüz, güçlü, yavuz görmek isterim! Cılız, düşkün değil! Ayak atik, bilek çevik olmalı!"

<sup>107</sup> "Türk Gücü." p. 187. "Milletim pek erkek bir kavim iken fatihlik ona da yaramadı. Zevk u sefahat onu kuvvetten düşürdü. O erkek ordusu dağıldı. O cümdü, o silâhşör millet at sırtından indi, kahvelere düştü. Kendi döktüğü altın kakmalı yatağanını bıraktı, eline bilardo sopası aldı. Kahvede, zarda, oyunda şanı unvanını, gücünü, koca erkeklğini ezvâk-ı garbiyeye, sefahat-ı Frengiyeye değişti, sattı. İrk, cins bozuldu, o yavuz, o tendürüst milletin ahfadı arasında boysuzlar, cüce ve kamburlar, çolaklar, paytaklar, koca bir yekûn teşkil ediyor. Kül ve nikotin milletimi yaktı, yıktı. Tütünden eller sararmış, bet beniz uçuk; içkiden öz sönük, göz donuk, eller titrek... Ben isterim ki gençlerimizin

Apart from the *Türk Gücü* association, *Donanma Cemiyeti* is important when it comes to the Unionist agenda of militarizing the nation. The committee was founded in 1909 to strengthen the Ottoman Navy, and it was extensively used in order to raise money for the purchase of dreadnoughts ordered from Great Britain. The lottery *Donanma Cemiyeti* organized attracted great interest especially from the Muslim population, which caused the politicization and militarization of the ordinary people.<sup>108</sup> As Nadir Özbek put it, the philanthropical organizations similar to *Donanma Cemiyeti* functioned as the helpers of the military, and resulted in a more militarized, nationalized society.<sup>109</sup>

Another example of how Social Darwinist ideology increased the militarist ideology in the CUP made itself visible in the shape of intense usage of warmongering in their rhetoric. Fueled with the political chaos the Empire was experiencing, especially during the Balkan Wars, the warmongering of the CUP could be observed in *Tanin*, one of the journals in the Ottoman Empire famously known for their support of the Unionists.<sup>110</sup> Cited in Hans Lukas Kieser's *Türklüğe İhtida*, this excerpt from Enver Pasha's private letters explains how the Unionist elite viewed war as a Social Darwinist opportunity.

Oh, how I wish for the war to finally start! Surely we will emerge victorious. The cabinet is preparing the memorandum they will send – I pray to God that the Entente to reject this memorandum. Because this is war, and yes, war means life for Turkey.<sup>111</sup>

## 1.2 Political Environment

The Treaty of Berlin in 1878 could be deemed as the beginning of the end of the Ottoman Empire. As Halil İnalçık suggested, the Treaty of Berlin set the tone for the relations between the Ottoman Empire and European states and that tone would be

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elleri kılıçtan, ciritten, görkten, yelkenden nasır bağlasın; günden güneşten, temiz havadan, keskin rüzgardan yüzler kızarsın, yanaklar alevlensin!“

<sup>108</sup> Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks and the Ottoman Nationalities*, 1st ed. (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2014). p. 49-50

<sup>109</sup> Nadir Özbek, “Defining the Public Sphere during the Late Ottoman Empire: War, Mass Mobilization and the Young Turk Regime (1908-18),” *Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 5 (2007). p. 797.

<sup>110</sup> Kieser, *Talaat Pasha: Father of Modern Turkey, Architect of Genocide*. p. 125.

<sup>111</sup> Kieser, *Türklüğe İhtida 1870 – 1939 İsviçre’inde Yeni Türkiye’nin Öncüleri*. p.123. “Ah, harp nihayet bir başlasa! Muhakkak ki onu kazanacağız! Kabine vereceği notayı hazırlıyor – müttefiklerin notayı reddetmeleri için Allah’a dua ediyorum, çünkü bu savaştır, evet savaş, bu da Türkiye için yaşam demektir.”

apparent in Ottoman foreign policy until the very end of the Empire.<sup>112</sup> The Treaty of Berlin did not only weaken the Ottoman institutions and created instability especially in the Balkans, but it also caused an immense humiliation and desperation within the Empire. The Ottoman-Russo War in 1878 and the Treaty of Berlin laid the foundation of the Unionist ideology and they noticed that the Turks need to be awakened if they wanted to survive.<sup>113</sup> For the Unionists, it fueled the idea that the Ottoman Empire would extinct if they did not act, and that the Empire would become another colony for the European powers.<sup>114</sup> This belief would later cause the Unionists to be more authoritative and prone to use force in order to cement their rule.

The Ottoman-Russo War in 1878 and the Treaty of Berlin could be deemed as the tipping point for the Unionist worldview. I argue that the Unionists, who lived through the aftermaths of the Treaty of Berlin, had been affected by the circumstances that surrounded them, and it could be the instigator that caused the Unionist mindset to become more absolutist and increased the Social Darwinist and militarist undertones of the CUP ideology. Combined with the humiliating defeats in Tripoli and the Balkans, the political failures of the Ottoman Empire fueled the Unionists desire to stay in power. For them, the Empire could only survive if they were in power, and if they were to be overthrown, that would be the end of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>115</sup>

In this regard, the Balkan Wars had the most influence on increasing the Social Darwinist undertones in Unionist propaganda. Especially the Turkist intellectuals wrote about the injustices against Muslims in the Balkans and voiced their criticism against the West for turning a blind eye to the Balkan nations' violations against the international law. Their aim was to create a unity in the Ottoman Empire against the Balkan nations, and the language they were using was heavy on the Social Darwinist rhetoric. Even Halide Edip Adıvar, an intellectual that is deemed as a liberal today, contributed to this campaign to create a national unity through a common hatred towards the Balkan nations.

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<sup>112</sup> Halil İnalçık, *Devlet-i Aliyye IV* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2016). p. 293.

<sup>113</sup> Sina Akşin, "İttihat ve Terakki Üzerine," *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, no. 26 (1971). p. 165-66.

<sup>114</sup> Yiğit, "The Military Origins of the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa." p. 503.

<sup>115</sup> Köroğlu, *Türk Edebiyatı ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı (1914-1918)*. p. 205

Don't you think that our fight with Bulgaria will end tomorrow after the peace treaty. No, this is like the war between Rome and Cartagena. Like Cato the Elder said in Rome once upon a time, I will tell you, "Bulgaria is only a few hours away from Turkey. Bulgaria must be destroyed". I will tell you this every day, in every occasion, up until the day I die: "Bulgaria must be destroyed!" (...) I repeat! You will preach your children the duty of the future, "Bulgaria must be destroyed", and then teach them to be united. You will tell them that nothing, no party, no ideology, or city, is greater and more important than the motherland. You will firstly found a common, unified Turkey in their hearts, and then the Turkey you have found in your children's hearts will be built as a true and eternal state on earth.<sup>116</sup>

In addition to Halide Edip's call for the Turks to unite for the purpose of Bulgaria's extinction, another excerpt written by her published in *Türk Yurdu* can be deemed as the perfect example of how the defeat against the Balkan nations was a humiliating, belittling experience for the Muslim Turks of the Empire, the ones who were, once upon a time, were the rulers.

The muddy feet of the yesterday's gardeners are attempting to trample down the glory and honour, faith and dignity of a six-hundred years' worth of history. They take away the Turkish soldier's canon, rifle and defeat their much bigger army, their six-hundred years' worth of bravery and manhood! The Europe, which is astonished at situation the Turkish strength was in, is now clapping for the belittling and pleased little Bulgarians' victory against the great and brave Turks. Bulgarians are making themselves a new and gilded history, meanwhile, we are burying ours.<sup>117</sup>

A similar tone and attitude towards the humiliating defeats in the Balkans could be seen in Yusuf Akçura's article published in the same issue of *Türk Yurdu* journal:

Let us show enough bravery to confess a bitter truth. Up until today, we are not the ones that are victorious in this war. The milkmen Bulgarians, the pigmen Serbians, and even barkeeper Greeks, the ones that we look down belittlingly, had defeated the Ottomans, their masters of five hundred years. This inconceivable truth, if we had not been annihilated completely, will

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<sup>116</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, "Felaketlerden Sonra Milletler," *Türk Yurdu* 4, no. 40 (1329). p. 287–91. "Zannetmeyiniz ki, yarın musâleha etmekle bizim Bulgar'la kavgamız bitmiş olsun. Hayır, bu Roma ve Kartaca kavgası gibidir. Hangi taraf vatanımı kalbinde taşır, düşmanlarına kinini vaktiyle Roma'da Katon'un dediği gibi, size "Bulgaristan Türkiye'ye birkaç saatlik mesafededir. Bulgaristan mahvedilmelidir," diyeceğim ve bunu ölünceye kadar her münasebetle söyleyeceğim: "Bulgaristan mahvedilmelidir. (...) Tekrar ediyorum! Çocuklarınıza "Bulgaristan mahvedilmelidir," vazife-i müstakbesini telkin ettikten sonra onlara ittihat etmeği öğreteceksiniz. Onlara fırka, fikir, şehir, hiçbir şeyin vatandan büyük olmadığını söyleyeceksiniz. Onların yüreklerinde evvelâ müttehîv ve müşterek bir Türkiye binası kuracaksınız ve sonra bu çocukların kalbinde kurduğunuz Türkiye binasını onlar bir hakikat ve ebedî bir devlet olarak yer yüzüne kuracaklar, düşmanlarının hükümetleri, şan ve şerefleri yanında yükselecek bu muhib Türkiye'nin temellerini pek aciz görünen bugünkü Türk anaları attığını da unutmayacaklardır."

<sup>117</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, "Padişah ve Şehzadelerimize," *Türk Yurdu* 3, no. 26 (1912): 33–34. "Dünkü bahçıvanlarımızın çamurlu ayakları tarihin, altıyüz senelik tarihin şan u şerefini, din ü izzetini çiğnemek üzere kalkmış, Türk askerinin topunu, tüfeğini alıyor ve kendisinden büyük ordusunu, altıyüz senelik mertliğini, erkekliğini yeniyor! Bu yenilişi, en zayıf olduğu zamanlarda bile dünyanın hürmet ettiği bu izzetin, Türk izzetinin düştüğünü evvelâ hayretkâr seyreden Avrupa şimdi istihfâfkâr ve memnun küçük Bulgarların mazisiz, tarihsiz Bulgarların izzetli ve cesur Türkleri mağlûb edişine müttefik el çırpıyor. Bulgarlar yeni ve yaldızlı bir tarih yapıyorlar, biz tarihimizi gömüyoruz."

be a severe slap in the face that would make us open our eyes and guide our minds towards healthy thoughts.<sup>118</sup>

The Balkan Wars increased the xenophobia among the Ottoman elite and ordinary people as well. Reactions against the Balkan nations were not only voiced in political, intellectual writings, but they were also apparent in literature. Non-Muslims, especially Bulgarians and Greeks, were generally characterized as the deceitful, evil, and barbaric people in literature, and the authors were tasked with proving that the non-Muslim characters were the sole reason behind the struggles of the good, honest, pure Turkish-Muslim characters. This tendency to portray non-Muslims as such started way before the Balkan Wars, such Mizancı Murat's, one of the important figures of the Young Turk organization, novel titled *Turfanda mı yoksa Turfa mı?*, which was written in 1892.<sup>119</sup>

It can be argued that the wars against the Balkan nations fueled this xenophobia and made itself even more visible in the Turkish literature during the twentieth century. Ömer Seyfettin and Mehmet Emin Yurdakul wrote the most obvious examples of these type of novels and poems, and their works were often published in Turkist press, such as the *Türk Yurdu* or *Genç Kalemler*. Especially Ömer Seyfettin's stories can be deemed as the reflection of the overall attitudes against the Balkan nations. In his monography on Ömer Seyfettin, Tahir Alangu argued that Ömer Seyfettin's time in the Ottoman army during the Balkan Wars caused him to observe the situation in the Balkans and reflect them in his writing.<sup>120</sup> In Seyfettin's stories, as discussed above, the Balkan nations were portrayed as the sole reasons behind the war, and they were often deemed as the barbaric nations. He gave elaborate descriptions of the violence in the Balkans, especially in his story titled *Beyaz Lale* (A Pure White Tulip), and it was apparent how the Social Darwinist ideas were a part of Ömer Seyfettin's ideology. In this story, the antagonist, Captain Radko is obviously a Social Darwinist, and

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<sup>118</sup> Yusuf Akçura, "Türklük Şuunu, 1328 Seferi (Ma'bad)," *Türk Yurdu* 3, no. 26 (1912): 45–46. "Pek acı bir hakikati itiraf edecek kadar mertlik gösterelim, Bugüne değin harpte galip gelen biz deęiliz. İstihfaf ettięimiz sütçü Bulgarlar, domuz çobanı Sırlar, hatta meyhaneci Yunanlılar bizi, beşyüz yıldır hepsine efindilik eden Osmanlıları yendiler. Hayalimizin bile alamayacağı şu hakikat, eđer büsbütün ölmemiş isek gözümüzü açtıracak, zihnimizi salim düşünelere sevkeyleyecek şiddetli bir şamar olabilir."

<sup>119</sup> Belge, "Türkiye'de Zenofobi ve Milliyetçilik." p. 184.

<sup>120</sup> Alangu, *Ömer Seyfettin Ülkücü Bir Yazarın Romani*. p. 115.

through his perspective, Ömer Seyfettin explains how a nation must eliminate or assimilate all its enemies in order to ensure its survival.<sup>121</sup>

We are working for greater Bulgaria. No enemies must remain inside this greater Bulgaria. Men over sixty or women over forty-five cannot have children. They are like fields that have sanded up. So it is all such that cannot breed enemies of greater Bulgaria, that we are going to Christianize and allow to live. All girls up to the age of eight, we are going to send to Bulgaria to be turned over to villages and priests. All will become Bulgarians. A little thought is needed. We are not going to be slaughtering children. We are going to be slaughtering tomorrow's adults. A young woman can bring forth fifteen enemies from her womb. To kill a young girl or woman is to kill fifteen enemies at one stroke. If, when they conquered these places, the Turks had abided by their elders' counsel and slaughtered all of us, would there be any Bulgaria today? Would we be able to chase and pursue them in this way? They erred. While they had the chance, they did not slaughter our women and children. Left alive, Bulgarians reproduced and reproduced to increase and multiply. They rose from under their compassionate, that is to say weak rulers. And now we are lording it over them.<sup>122</sup>

This sense of hatred and distrust towards the Balkan nations, especially towards the Greeks, can be observed in how writers such as Ömer Seyfettin portrayed non-Muslim women in his stories. While he portrayed Muslim, Turkish women as good, pure, natural, honest, and noble, and strong the non-Muslim women were the opposite: weak, dishonest, and superficial. The most obvious example to this portrayal is in *Primo: A Turkish Boy*, as Seyfettin describes Primo's mother, an Italian, as such:

(...) while Grazia was drowning in sobs, like a cowardly feminine symbol of that weak, sick and slothful West that was certain to be crushed by the inevitable triumph of a young, strong, resurgent and victorious Turan.<sup>123</sup>

In his poem *Dört Balkanlıya*, another member of the *Türk Yurdu* journal described the Balkan nations similar with Halide Edip Adıvar and Ömer Seyfettin, and rather fervently, suggested that the "microbes" within the Ottoman Empire would not be enough to take this Empire down.

Ulu Türkün devrilmesi zelzeledir, ve volkandır  
Vücudundan dökülen kan boğar sizi: Tufandır

Yıkar, yakar o "zelzele ve volkan" garb âlemini  
Fakat, bilin; dört mikropla incinemez Türk teni  
Ey bu kavmin bedeninden hayat alan mikroplar!<sup>124</sup>

<sup>121</sup> Emin Alper, "Ömer Seyfettin," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce I: Cumhuriyete Devreden Düşünce Mirası Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyetin Birikimi*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekin (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009). p. 187-88.

<sup>122</sup> Ömer Seyfettin, "A Pure White Tulip," in *Ömer Seyfettin: Bütün Eserleri*, ed. Hülya Argunşah (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1999). Translated by: Halil Berktaş.

<sup>123</sup> Ömer Seyfettin, "Primo: A Turkish Boy," in *Ömer Seyfettin: Bütün Eserleri*, ed. Hülya Argunşah (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1999). Translated by: Halil Berktaş.

<sup>124</sup> Feyzullah Sacit, "Dört Balkanlıya," *Türk Yurdu* 2, no. 24 (1912): 394.

As seen above, the Balkan Wars created a sense of rage and hatred among the Muslim, and especially Turkish Muslim elements within the Ottoman Empire towards the non-Muslims.<sup>125</sup> Balkan Wars did not only increase the Social Darwinist undertones in the Unionist agenda, but it also marked the defeat of Ottomanism as an ideology that could be used in order to keep the Empire together.<sup>126</sup> While the CUP officials would continue to voice their wishes to unite the Empire's all subjects together, after the Balkan Wars, it can be said that these kind of rhetoric was emptier than usual. Indeed, the Balkan Wars created a sense of unity in the Ottoman Empire, but that unity was excluding the non-Muslim members of the society and took the shape of a Muslim/Muslim Turkish unity. One example of this unity was the Muslim boycotts against the non-Muslim owned businesses. The Muslim boycotts were not limited only to Istanbul, but they were also practiced in the Anatolian cities as well.<sup>127</sup> The idea was that the Muslims needed to strengthen their economies and create a *milli iktisad* (national economy) in order to ensure their survival. As one Unionist governor put it, it was not seen as a boycott, but as a "only an economic awakening, and a struggle to survive".<sup>128</sup> This sense of boycott and the importance of creating a national economy was so dire that even the children's journals were promoting this matter, and it only increased after the Balkan Wars. A good example for this matter would be the journal *Çocuk Dünyası*, in which a lullaby preaching the importance of tradesmen and trade for the Ottoman Empire was present. Similarly, another children's journal, *Çocuk Duygusu*, was promoting the importance of using the Turkish products and boycotting the non-Muslim shops and businesses.<sup>129</sup>

For the Ottoman Empire, the Balkan Wars showed the necessity of a European state on their side and paved the way of the German-Ottoman allyship to enhance.<sup>130</sup> In addition to that, it also increased the sense of "struggle to survive" mentality in the Unionist elite. As Mustafa Aksakal quoted, the Unionists, especially the Turkist

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<sup>125</sup> Feroz Ahmad and M. Hakan Yavuz, *War and Collapse: World War I and the Ottoman State*, 1st ed. (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2015). p. 7.

<sup>126</sup> Umut Uzer, "Ambiguities of Turkism Cultural and Intellectual Manifestations of Turkish National Thought," in *War and Collapse: World War I and the Ottoman State*, ed. Feroz Ahmad and M. Hakan Yavuz (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2015). p. 251.

<sup>127</sup> Ahmad, *The Young Turks and the Ottoman Nationalities*. p. 47.

<sup>128</sup> Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914*. p. 54.

<sup>129</sup> Cüneyd Okay, "İki Çocuk Dergisinin Rekabeti ve Müslüman Boykotajı," *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 45 (1997). p. 43-44.

<sup>130</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. p. 174.

Unionists, were claiming that even though the Balkan Wars were over, the national war was still going on strong, because living meant struggling and “only the dead are without struggle.”<sup>131</sup>

This sense of struggle to survive increased greatly with the arrival of refugees from the Balkans and cemented the idea that the West would only protect and support the Christians and would turn a blind eye to the injustices against the Muslims.<sup>132</sup> The refugees, who came from the war zones in a rather terrible condition, fueled the hatred towards the Balkan nations in the Ottoman press and public. As Mustafa Aksakal put it, the Balkan Wars increased the feelings of vulnerability that the Muslims were feeling already.<sup>133</sup> This sense of vulnerability would create a more Social Darwinist rhetoric both in the public and politics, and in some cases, would take shape of violence against the non-Muslim subjects in the Anatolia.

The West’s indifference against the Muslims being tormented in the Balkans also created a distrust and somewhat hatred towards the European powers as well. Often deemed as the “Batının ihaneti”, the intellectuals and politicians alike, voiced their criticism against the European powers for leaving the Ottoman Empire alone and turning a blind eye to the injustices. Even Abdullah Cevdet, and his journal *İctihad*, one of the most ardent supporters of westernization in the Ottoman Empire were voicing their criticism against the European powers.<sup>134</sup> While Şükrü Hanioglu suggests that this criticism by Abdullah Cevdet could also be derived from his time in prison during the Balkan Wars and he could be using his platform to gain the CUP’s favors once again, it is still important to note that even the biggest supporters of the West were turning against them.<sup>135</sup> Ziya Gökalp would voice this unbalanced attitude of the West towards the Turks and claimed that the Ottoman Empire did not have a place in the European system.

But if we analyse this sentiment, we see that the international love and solidarity of that period was confined only to Christian peoples, and international law likewise pertained only to the

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<sup>131</sup> Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914*. p. 30.

<sup>132</sup> Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism & The Armenian Genocide*. p. 97.

<sup>133</sup> Mustafa Aksakal, “Not ‘by Those Old Books of International Law, but Only by War’: Ottoman Intellectuals on the Eve of the Great War,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 15, no. 3 (2004). p. 517.

<sup>134</sup> Berkes, *Türkiye’de Çağdaşlaşma*. p. 419.

<sup>135</sup> Hanioglu, *Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi*. p. 292-93.

rights of the Christian states. The Balkan Wars demonstrated to us that even today the European conscience is nothing but a Christian conscience.<sup>136</sup>

The anti-Western attitudes were so increased in the Ottoman Empire that Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın would write upon the start of the World War I as such:

They would not see the terrible things that are happening in their own countries and other places, but they immediately intervene even for the smallest thing that happens in our country. Every single day they would gnaw a piece from our rights, our sovereignty, they would openly operate on us and pull off huge pieces from our alive bodies. Our hearts carried a sense of exuberance that was contained, and our fists were clenched, but we were helpless, silent, and patient, and we would grumble: “Oh how I wish they would turn against one another, how I wish they would fight each other!” Yes, today they are fighting among themselves, and this is the Turk’s curses.<sup>137</sup>

### 1.3 Intellectual Reasons

One of the reasons behind the popularity of the Social Darwinist themes in the Unionist nationalism derives from the intellectual reasons such as the lateness of Turkish nationalism compared to other nationalisms that emerged out of the Ottoman Empire, the intellectual environment during the Abdulhamid II’s era, which mainly promoted biological materialism and Darwinism, and the lack of strong criticism against the Social Darwinist theories. All of these intellectual aspects of the Unionist ideology, combined with their general characteristics and the political environment they were living in, affected the popularity of Social Darwinism in the CUP mentality. Especially the intellectual problems that the Unionist were facing before the 1908 Revolution, as well as their position of opposition during the Abdulhamid II’s reign caused the Social Darwinism to take root in the Unionist ideology.

The basis of the Social Darwinist ideology had been founded, unexpectedly enough, during the Abdulhamid II’s *istibdat* regime. Due to the limitations and censorship on political matters in the press, the debates on cultural and philosophical topics had increased greatly. Biological materialism had been a popular theme in the press, and

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<sup>136</sup> Berkes, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp*. p. 75.

<sup>137</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, “Türk’ün Ahı,” *Tanin*, no. 2022 (1914): 1. “... kendi memleketlerindeki, başka yerlerdeki fenalıkları görmezler de bizdeki ufak bir şey için müdahale iderler, her gün hakkımızdan, hakimiyetimizden bir zerreyi kemirirler, canlı vücudumuz üzerinde teşrih-i ameliyesi yaparak koca koca parçaları koparırlardı. Ve biz, kalbimizde bilzarûre zabt edilmiş bir hiss-i tuğyan, yumruklarımız kısık, fakat aciz, sakit ve hamûl, içimiz yana yana mırıldanırdık: ‘Ah birbirlerine düşseler, ah birbirlerini yiseler!’ Evet, işte bugün birbirlerini yiyorlar ve bu, Türk’ün ahıdır.”

while these topics did not draw too much attention in the political level, they helped to popularize Darwinist and materialist ideologies among the Ottoman intellectuals. Despite incessant criticism it faced, evolution theory was a topic that was covered extensively, and it helped Social Darwinism to spread over the Ottoman Empire.<sup>138</sup> Specifically the journals such as *İçtihad* embraced these topics and discussed them to a great extent.

Ahmet Midhat Efendi is an important figure to elaborate more upon when it comes to the Social Darwinism's fertility in the Ottoman Empire. Even before Abdulhamid II's reign, Ahmet Midhat Efendi was extensively discussing Darwin and Lamarck in his journal *Dağarcık*, and while he did not refer to Darwin by name a lot in his writings, he was referring to Lamarck and Lamarck's evolution theory. The reason behind his tendency to not refer Darwin by name could either be explained with the French influence on his writings, or with his hesitancy to draw more criticism that follows Darwin's name anywhere it was mentioned.<sup>139</sup> However, this hesitancy did not deter him to elaborate more on Lamarck's evolution theory. In his article titled *İnsan*, he explained the very existence of human beings from an evolutionist and naturalist perspective, and while doing so, he tried to make peace with religion and claimed that there was no conflict between religion and science. In this article, he claimed that humans, when created, were weaker than the animals around them, but due to the endless competition among themselves, the humankind gained their current physical and spiritual superiority.<sup>140</sup> In one of his articles, Ahmet Midhat Efendi went ahead and applied these evolutionary theories to the social affairs.<sup>141</sup>

Revenge is a sort of justice and a violent justice... Harming someone for pleasure is quite rare, and the origin of this is always due to greed, glory, and interest... Why would we deem the harm from the evilness that is present in existence bizarre? Thorn and teazel are vicious, only due to their nature.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük*. p. 24-26.

<sup>139</sup> Doğan, *Osmanlı Aydınları ve Sosyal Darwinizm*. p. 153.

<sup>140</sup> Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Türkiye'de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2013). p. 152.

<sup>141</sup> Doğan, *Osmanlı Aydınları ve Sosyal Darwinizm*. p. 156.

<sup>142</sup> Ahmet Midhat, "İntikam," *Dağarcık*, no. 2 (1872): 37. Quoted from: Doğan, *Osmanlı Aydınları ve Sosyal Darwinizm*. p. 156. "İntikam bir nevi hakkaniyet ve adalet-i vahşiyanedir.. Telezüz için fenalık edildiği pek nadir olup bunun daima menşei vuku-ı hırs, şan ve menfaattir.... Hilkatinde olan bedkarlığın bize fenalık etmeye saik oluşunu neden garip görürüz. Har, mugaylân yırtıcı ise, tabiatdır."

Ahmet Midhat Efendi was critical towards one of the most popular Social Darwinists in the Ottoman Empire, Ludwig Büchner, and had a tremendous enmity with Baha Tevfik and his group, and later in his life, he started to criticize positivism as well.<sup>143</sup> However, despite all of these, he was an important figure among the Turkists, and especially Russo-Turk intellectuals such as Yusuf Akçura praised him greatly after his death. When Ahmet Midhat Efendi died in 1328 (1913), an entire issue of *Türk Yurdu* journal was dedicated to him. This is highly important to mention here, because it shows how valuable Ahmet Midhat Efendi was to shape the ideologies of the Turkist Unionists. Yusuf Akçura described the importance of Ahmet Midhat Efendi to Turkism as follows:

Midhat Efendi's Turkism was apparent since his foundation of the library of İkdâm's on the works of ancestors, which was 15-16 years ago. It was Midhat who encouraged Necib Asım and Veled Çelebi to study Turcology. After Revolution, Midhat's Turkism became more apparent and open. (...) In a big conference, which was organized by Russo-Turk students and manifested Turkism first time in Istanbul, Midhat Efendi gave very precious information regarding Turkish history and ethnography. According to his own opinion, even the Tuaregs who lived in Africa were Turks. Whenever I was honored with his presence, he would always encourage and compliment Turkish Homeland. (...) Once again, I repeat this truth here today; Turkism owes a debt of gratitude to Midhat Efendi. With his passing, Turkism and Turkishness lost one of their honorable wise old men.<sup>144</sup>

Another important figure that discussed evolution and Darwinism during the nineteenth century was Beşir Fuad. As mentioned above, Beşir Fuad was a graduate of Military Medical School and he had been deemed as the most ardent supporter of materialist thinking in the Ottoman Empire. In his monography on Beşir Fuad, Orhan Okay mentioned him as the first Turkish positivist and naturalist, and his contributions to the intellectual life of the Ottoman Empire, especially on matters such as materialism and evolution. As seen in his book titled *Beşer*, Beşir Fuad was highly influenced by Herbert Spencer and his categorization of sciences and claimed that the

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<sup>143</sup> Ülken, *Türkiye'de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi*. p. 153.

<sup>144</sup> Akçuraoğlu Yusuf, "Ahmet Midhat Efendi," *Türk Yurdu* 3, no. 30 (1328). p. 104. "Midhat Efendi'nin Türkçülüğü, İkdâm'ın âsâr-ı eslaf kütüphanesini tesis ettiği zamanlardan, yani 15-16 sene evvelinden itibaren iyiden iyiye mahsustur. Necib Âsım'ı, Veled Çelebi'yi Türkolojiye teşvik eden Midhat olmuştur. İnkılaptan sonra Midhat'ın Türkçülüğü daha ziyade kesb-i sarahat etti ve küşayış buldu. (...) Rusyalı Türk talebe tarafından tertip edilip, İstanbul'da Türklük fikrinin ilk tezahüratından bulunan bir büyük konferansta, Midhat Efendi, Türk tarih ve etnoğrafyasına dair pek kıymetli malûmat vermiş, kendi içtihadına göre Afrika'da yaşayan Tuareglerin bile Türk olduğunu söylemişti. Kendileriyle müşerref olduğum zamanlar, daima "Türk Yurdu" için teşvik ve iltifat buyururlardı. (...) Bu hakikati, bu gün burada yine tekrar ediyorum; Türkçülük Midhat Efendi'ye pekçok medyûn-ı şükrandır. Midhat Efendi'nin vefatıyla, Türklük ve Türkçülük muhterem ak sakallılarından birini kaybediyor."

one mistake of the Ottoman Empire was not abiding by this categorization in the schools' curricula. According to Beşir Fuad, physiology should be the most important subject thought in the schools, and literature should be the last.<sup>145</sup> This argument was in accordance with the establishment of *Türk Gücü Derneği*, but Beşir Fuad did not live long enough to see that his argument was implemented in the Ottoman Empire.

Orhan Okay suggests that Beşir Fuad was greatly influenced by philosophers such as Herbert Spencer, Stuart Mill, August Comte, Diderot and D'Alembert, Emile Zola, Ludwig Büchner, Ribot and Gabriel Tarde, and introduced these philosophers to the Ottoman intellectuals himself.<sup>146</sup> Şerif Mardin, however, argues that despite the fact that Okay mentions August Comte among the philosophers Beşir Fuad was influenced by, his positivism was not the positivism that was promoted by August Comte. According to Mardin, the positivism that Fuad was defending was simply “a sense of putting great importance to the material facts.”<sup>147</sup>

Despite his early suicide, Beşir Fuad had been a tremendous figure in the young students at the Military schools. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın narrated the influence of Beşir Fuad upon the new generation as follows:

I had a cousin who was older than me. He was a student of the military medical school. He was in love with the fire of freedom that was burning within the Medical school as well. We were talking about this subject among ourselves with great enthusiasm and candor. My cousin Hulki were telling me about Beşir Fuad, who had a great impact on that generation. His translations from Büchner were saving the youth from the shackles of our theologians and taking them into broader horizons.<sup>148</sup>

Another example of how Beşir Fuad affected the Unionist ideology was his close friendship with Mizancı Murad. As a close friend of Beşir Fuad, Mizancı Murad published several of Fuad's works in his journal *Mizan* after the author committed suicide.<sup>149</sup> Due to this friendship, Mizancı Murad also wrote several pieces on realism

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<sup>145</sup> Okay, *Beşir Fuad: İlk Türk Pozitivist ve Natüralisti*. p. 105.

<sup>146</sup> Okay. p. 217.

<sup>147</sup> Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri 1895-1908* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2019). p. 59.

<sup>148</sup> Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, *Edebiyat Anıları* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 1975). p. 45-46.

“Benden daha yaşlı bir teyze oğlum vardı. Tıp Fakültesi öğrencisiydi. Tıp okulunun öteden beri içinde yanan özgürlük aşkına o da tutulmuştu. Onunla bu konu üzerinde ne kadar içten ve coşkuyla konuşuyorduk. Teyzeoğlum Hulki bana Beşir Fuad'tan da söz açıyordu. Beşir Fuad'ın o günkü kuşaklar üzerinde büyük bir etkisi olmuştur. Büchner'den çevirdiği eser gençleri bizim klasik Tanrıbilimcilerimizin zincirlerinden kurtararak daha geniş ufuklara götürüyordu.”

<sup>149</sup> Okay, *Beşir Fuad: İlk Türk Pozitivist ve Natüralisti*. p. 67.

in coordination with Beşir Fuad's ideology, which were published in his journal *Mizan* as well.<sup>150</sup> Considering this, it would not be wrong to assume that the Unionists were highly influenced by Beşir Fuad and his works, which established a basis on Social Darwinism to take root within the Unionist ideology.

In addition to Ahmed Midhat Efendi and Beşir Fuad, perhaps one of the most important figures of the Ottoman intellectual life was one of the founders of the Young Turks, Abdullah Cevdet. Abdullah Cevdet did not only translate several books written on Social Darwinism, but he also wrote on Darwinist, materialist and Social Darwinist matters in some journals, mainly in *İçtihad*. Especially on issues regarding the application of biological materialism into the matters of society, he was highly influenced by Carl Vogt and Jacob Moleschott, as well as Ludwig Büchner and Gustav Le Bon.<sup>151</sup> Even though he was a devout Muslim when he started his student years in the Military Medical School, upon reading Felix Isnard's *Systeme de la Nature*, his views on religion started to change and he embraced materialism. Similar to Isnard and Büchner, Abdullah Cevdet aimed to teach materialism to the Ottomans as simply as he can.<sup>152</sup>

It can be argued that Abdullah Cevdet's interpretation of Darwinism and Social Darwinism was, to some extent, an extremity. Abdullah Cevdet embraced the Social Darwinist idea of an elite class to rule in order to gain advantage in the struggle for existence, and he suggested that the best way to determine the elite members of the society was measuring the skulls of people.<sup>153</sup> In his article on Gustav Le Bon, he referred to this idea to a great extent:

His studies on skulls are extremely important. These greatly detailed studies were mentioned in the first pages of a volume that we published in Istanbul under the title of *Hıfz-ı Sıhhat ve Fizyolociya-i Dimağ*. Thousands of skulls were gathered from the corpses buried in various ages, and after the careful examinations on these skulls, the summary of the results were as followed:

1- The more a society's civilization and knowledge progressed, the number of people who have more than average wideness of the inside of their skulls increases as well.

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<sup>150</sup> Okay, p. 213-14.

<sup>151</sup> Hanioglu, *Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi*. p. 14.

<sup>152</sup> Hanioglu.

<sup>153</sup> Hanioglu. p. 16-17.

2- Women's wideness of the inside of their skulls, generally, in all ages, are less than the wideness of the skulls of the men.<sup>154</sup>

While Şükrü Hanioğlu evaluates Abdullah Cevdet's participation to the Young Turks as a decision made not because of political reasons but because of philosophical reasons.<sup>155</sup> His aim was to spread his idea of replacing religion with biological materialism in society's matters and presenting biological materialism and Islam as synonymous.<sup>156</sup> Some of Abdullah Cevdet's ideas, such as the argument regarding the illegitimacy of the Ottoman dynasty on the basis of Ribot's theory, could be considered as a radical idea despite the Young Turks and later, the CUP's goal to overthrow Abdulhamid II. Despite his strained relations with the CUP after the Revolution, and specifically after the Babiali Raid of 1913, Abdullah Cevdet's influence on the Unionist ideology cannot be overlooked. Especially his views on establishing an elite rule had been a common characteristic of the Unionist ideology.<sup>157</sup>

While Abdullah Cevdet's main focus was philosophical, his Social Darwinist understanding of politics were apparent in his writings as well. He did not hesitate to refer the Social Darwinist classification of races while discussing the political matters. In addition to his direct philosophical influence on spreading Social Darwinist ideology, it can be argued that his articles such as *Me'yus Olmalı Mıyız*, which was published in 1904, shows us that the Unionists were aware of Social Darwinism, and the sense of humiliation and anger due to the West's demeaning, Social Darwinist attitudes were known by them.

Some Europeans who differentiate the creation of the peoples into separate categories, and some Ottomans who imitates everything that they see from the Europeans, deem us as a nation belonging to the lower ranks of the humankind. To put it in Turkish, they deem the Turks as the inferiors of the humankind. This slander against the nature, this slander against the creation, in short this diseased idea is being demolished by the Japanese who belong to the yellow race,

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<sup>154</sup> Cevdet, "Gustav Le Bon." p. 118. "“Kıhflar üzerine tedkikat son derecede mühimdir. Bu tedikat-ı müşikâfâneneden (Hıfz-ı Sıhhat ve Fizyolojiya-i Dimağ) unvanlı İstanbul'da tab' u neşr etmiş olduğumuz bir cildin baş tarafında dūr u dirâz bahs olunmuştur. Muhtelif asırlarda medfûn ecsâdin binlerce kafatasları mezarlıklardan toplanmış ve bu binlerce kuru kafalar üzerinde icra idilen tedkikatdan çıkan hülâsa-i mühimme şu olmuşdu: 1-Bir kavmin ilm u medeniyetin ilerilediği nısımda vüs'at-i dahiliye-i kıhfiyeleri hadd-i vust'anın fevkinde olan efrâdın adedleri çoğalır. 2-Kadınlar vüs'at-i dahiliye-i kıhfiyeleri yani kafa taslarının vüs'at-i dahiliyeleri, umumiyet itibariyle, her asır ve zamanda, erkeklerin büs'at-i dahiliye-i kıhfiyelerinin dününde kalmıştır.”

<sup>155</sup> Hanioğlu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük*. p. 273.

<sup>156</sup> Hanioğlu. p. 276.

<sup>157</sup> Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902 – 1908*. p. 308-09.

they are demolishing it with their progress in their motherland, and their canons and rifles in Manchuria.<sup>158</sup>

In addition to Ahmet Midhat Efendi, Beşir Fuad, and Abdullah Cevdet, Yusuf Akçura had been an important figure that promoted Social Darwinism in the Ottoman Empire. In an article that was published in the journal *Türk*, which was published in Cairo, Akçura explored Herbert Spencer and Spencer's advice to Japanese nation. Akçura, in his article, claimed that even though Spencer was directly advising the Japanese, due to the fact that Ottoman Empire was an eastern empire as well, the advice Spencer gave to the Japanese could be applicable to the Ottoman Empire. In his article, he printed an exact translation of Spencer's letter to the Japanese, and some parts of that letter is noteworthy to understand some of the Unionist behaviors.

I think, be that of keeping Americans and Europeans as much as possible at arm's length. In presence of the more powerful races your position is one of chronic danger, and you should take every precaution to give as little foothold as possible to foreigners. (...) Apparently you are proposing by revision of the treaty powers with Europe and America "to open the whole Empire to foreigners and foreign capital." I regard this as a fatal policy. If you wish to see what is likely to happen, study the history of India. (...) [Inter-marriage of foreigners and Japanese] It should be positively forbidden. It is not at root a question of social philosophy. It is at root a question of biology. There is abundant proof, alike furnished by the inter-marriages of human races and by the inter-breeding of animals, that when the varieties mingled diverge beyond a certain slight degree the result is invariably a bad one in the long run. I have myself been in the habit of looking at the evidence bearing on this matter for many years past, and my conviction is based upon numerous facts derived from numerous sources.<sup>159</sup>

Considering the quotation above, some similarities between Spencer's advice to the Japanese and the Unionist mentality draw attention. Spencer's advice on not letting

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<sup>158</sup> Abdullah Cevdet. "Me'yus Olmalı Mı?," *Şuray-ı Ümmet*, no. 62 (1904): 1. "... akvamın hilkatlerini birbirinden tefrik ile ayrı ayrı tabakalara taksim iden bazı Avrupalılar ve her gördüklerini bilmiyerek taklid iden bazı Osmanlılar bizleri ecnâs-ı âliye-i insaniyenin madununda bir kavm addediyorlar. Türkçe söyleyelim. Türkleri insan cinsinin aşağı kısmından sayıyorlar. Bu iftira-i tabiatı, bu bühtan-ı hilkatî velhasıl bu fikr-i sekamı bugün sarı cinsinden olan Japonyalılar memleketlerinde terakkileriyle Mançurya'da topları tüfenkleriyle yıkıyorlar."

<sup>159</sup> Yusuf Akçura, "Spencer'in Japonlara Vasiyetnamesi," *Türk*, no. 23 (1904): 4. "Bunlardan (Amerika ve Avrupa) ne kadar uzak durur ise o kadar terakkisinde kesb-i sür'at eyler. Mevkiniz müşekkel ve ihâta idilmiş bulunduğunuz tehlike pek mezmumdur. Zira sizden daha kuvvetli milletler mevcut ve kendilerine meyl etmenize muntazar ederler. O halde var kuvvetinizi vererek ecânibin memleketinize ayak basmalarını men idiniz. (...) Ben görüyorum ki, sizler Amerika ve Avrupa ile olan muâhedemelerinizi tenkîh ile ecnebilere ve mal ve metâlarına memleketinizi açık istiyorsunuz. İşbu siyasetinize cidden teessüfler eylerim zira kapılarınızı bunlara ve metalarına açtığınız gün mahv olduğunuz gün demektir. Bu yüzden başımıza neler gelebileceğini bilmek isterseniz Hind tarihini okuyunuz. (...) Japonların ecnebilere izdivaçlarını men' ediniz. Japonlarla ecanibin izdivacı meselesi felsefe-i siyasiyeye aid bir şey olmayıp ancak "biyoloji"ye [ilm-ü hayata] aid bir bahisdir. Aralarında büyük bir ihtilâf bulunan esnâf-ı beşerin birbirleriyle izdivaç eylemeleri veya aralarında büyük bir ihtilaf bulunan esnâf-ı hayvanatın yekdiğerleriyle çiftleşmeleri hayatları için muzırdır. Zira izdivaç iden esnâf arasında ihtilaf hadd-i muayyenini tecavüz eylerse semere-i izdivaçları yani yavruları gayetle fena oluyor."

the *ecanib* (foreigners) into the Japanese soil was similar to the Unionist xenophobic tendencies towards both the West and the non-Muslim elements within the Empire. While the Unionists were not in a position of casting away the European influence on the Ottoman Empire completely, their xenophobia turned towards the other aliens in the Empire, mainly the non-Muslims and Balkan nations through certain policies. In addition to this, Spencer's advice on not having interracial marriages so that the Japanese race could stay pure is connected to the portrayal of Ömer Seyfettin's *Grazia* and *Primo*, *Grazia* and *Kenan's* child. While at the end of the story *Primo: A Turkish Boy* *Primo* had a realization of his Turkish identity and embraced his Turkishness, at the beginning of the story he did not have any trace of Turkishness on him. The story of *Primo*, and how a child born into an interracial marriage was portrayed is not a coincidence, considering that Ömer Seyfettin and Yusuf Akçura were from the same Turkist circle.

While the discussions on themes such as materialism, Darwinism, and Social Darwinism was increasing in the Ottoman press, the lack of quality criticism against these arguments also helped Social Darwinism take root in the Unionist mentality. Şükrü Hanioglu claims that Social Darwinists such as Ludwig Büchner were criticized by his fellow countrymen such as Marx, Liebing, and Lange,<sup>160</sup> but criticism against the followers of Social Darwinism in the Ottoman Empire was primal due to the fact that the Ottoman Empire did not have its own Marx or Liebing. In the same article, Hanioglu argues that the Social Darwinism, often deemed as *Vulgärmaterialismus* in German philosophy, became a "high philosophy" in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>161</sup> Even though the German influence upon the Ottoman elite increased in the twentieth century, this influence did not bring German philosophers such as Marx, Engels, or Feuerbach, it brought the *Vulgärmaterialismus* and an admiration towards German militarism and authoritarianism.<sup>162</sup> Even though there were critics against Social Darwinism in the Ottoman intellectual circles, especially towards Büchner and Ernest Haeckel's works, the inadequate criticism did not help to prevent its spread over the Unionist intellectual.

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<sup>160</sup> Hanioglu, "Felsefesiz Bir Toplumun Felsefe Olmayan Felsefesinin İlmihâli: Madde ve Kuvvet." p. 26.

<sup>161</sup> Hanioglu. p. 28.

<sup>162</sup> İlber Ortaylı, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Alman Nüfuzu* (İstanbul: Kronik Kitap, 2019). p. 80-81.

Apart from the overall intellectual environment of the nineteenth century, the lateness of Turkish nationalism itself had been a factor in popularizing Social Darwinism in the Unionist discourse. Turkish nationalism, or Turkism started to be shaped during the mid-nineteenth century, but it did not become a part of the politics until the twentieth century, which made the Turkism as one of the last nationalisms that emerged within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>163</sup> This situation created a “catching-up” mentality in the Unionist elite, which had been a great factor in their aggressive nationalism. The anxiety to catch up with other nationalisms, especially with Balkan nationalisms, caused the Unionist nationalism to embrace the Social Darwinist ideas of “struggle to survive” and “survival of the fittest”.<sup>164</sup> After all, Turkism was presented as the roadmap for the Ottoman Empire to survive, and in order to survive, the other nationalisms and naturally, the other nations would be deemed as the enemy. This situation was clearly apparent in Ömer Seyfettin’s stories, in which the author portrayed the Balkan nations nationalist actions as “barbaric and unjust” while praising the Turkish nationalism and the Turks’ heroic actions that were made in the name of the Turkish nation.<sup>165</sup>

Herkül Millas argues that the Turkish nationalism was copied from the Greek nationalism and Greek expansion in the Balkans in almost every sense.<sup>166</sup> Considering the *komitadji* background of the Unionists, it can be argued that the lateness of Turkish nationalism caused them to acquire a type of nationalism that was prone to Social Darwinist themes. Mark Biondich argues that the Balkan nations acquired nationalism which had Social Darwinist undertones in its essence, which gave them an illiberal and aggressive trait to the Balkan nations.<sup>167</sup> Considering the interaction between the Unionist leadership and Balkan nations while fighting one another throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Balkan nationalisms could be considered as a factor that enabled the Unionists to embrace Social Darwinism.

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<sup>163</sup> Kemal Karpat, *Osmanlı’da Milliyetçiliğin Toplumsal Temelleri* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2017). p. 200-201.

<sup>164</sup> Bora, “Türk Ulusal Kimliği Üzerine Bazı Tezler.” p. 53.

<sup>165</sup> Köroğlu, *Türk Edebiyatı ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı (1914-1918)*. p. 366-67.

<sup>166</sup> Herkül Millas, “Milli Türk Kimliği ve ‘Öteki’ (Yunan),” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce IV: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekin (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2020). p. 195-96.

<sup>167</sup> Mark Biondich, “The Balkan Wars: Violence and Nation-Building in the Balkans, 1912–13,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 18, no. 4 (2016). p. 391.

## CHAPTER III

### THE GERMAN CONNECTION: SOURCES OF SOCIAL DARWINISM IN UNIONIST THOUGHT

There are several debates regarding the CUP's choice of a main ally during their tenure in power, which is an important topic to debate considering their choice in allies affected their policy making as well. In addition to the political effects of the allies the CUP pursued after, it is also undeniable that the choice in political allies also created new trends among the Ottoman intellectual elite and popularized the books imported from the said allies. Thus, it can be argued that the foreign policy choices of the CUP had a tremendous effect on the Ottoman intellectuals' cultural accumulation. Social Darwinism and how the theory was popularized in the Ottoman Empire is a great example of this. Rightfully, many academicians give great emphasize on the French connection regarding the Social Darwinism's popularity in the Ottoman Empire, considering that the likes of Gustave le Bon or Theodule Ribot had tremendous effects on the Ottoman elite. However, I argue that in order to understand how the Ottoman elite learned about Social Darwinism and embraced it as a valid way to explain the world they were in, one needs to take a closer look at the influence the Germans had. In this chapter, I will delve into the various channels between the Ottoman elite and German intellectuals to explain this connection.

It is known that the CUP pursued an allyship with either France or Great Britain especially during the first years of their rule, which was not a preference that was kept secret by the CUP leaders.<sup>168</sup> While many Unionist leaders were either trained by or influenced by the German commanders such as Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz, the biggest examples being Mahmut Şevket Paşa and Enver Paşa, the hesitancy towards Germany being a possible ally was apparent due to Germany's obvious support to

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<sup>168</sup> Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development* (New York: Verso, 1987). p. 78.

Abdulhamid II's reign.<sup>169</sup> However, the more the Ottoman Empire was rejected by the French or the British, the more an ultimate alliance with the German became inevitable.

The events between 1909 to 1914 created a situation for the CUP leaders an environment where Germany was the only solution for their problems, despite the distrust they had felt towards Germany at the beginning. Combined with the fact that many of the CUP leaders were trained with and influenced by the German values, Germany's absence in the Reval Meetings, which was organized in order to divide and share the Ottoman Empire, can be counted as the side factors that encouraged an alliance between Germany and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>170</sup> To some extent, it can even be suggested that the reason behind the Turanism that the CUP embraced more and more each passing day was related to the increasing German influence on the CUP elite and the way the Ottoman Empire had been pushed to loneliness on the eve of the World War I.<sup>171</sup> By 1914, the CUP elite was disappointed in Great Britain and failed to secure them as their main ally, and ironically, one of the reasons behind Abdulhamid II's alliance with Germany derived from a similar frustration towards Great Britain. Similarly, Abdulhamid II opted Germany as an ally due to the same sense that empires such as the Great Britain, France, and Russia were waiting to divide the Ottoman Empire as soon as the first opportunity presented itself.<sup>172</sup>

However, it should also be noted that an alliance with Germany was not favored by the entire political elite. The CUP's choice in aligning themselves with Germany had been debated among the political and intellectual elite, and at one point, some circles in the Ottoman Empire stated that the reason why they were humiliated against the Balkan nations was the Germans.<sup>173</sup> The Balkan nations used French weapons and had been trained by the French officers, hence, in the eyes of these circles, it proved that the German weapons and German style of military the Ottoman Empire opted for was

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<sup>169</sup> Ahmad, *Jön Türkler Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nu Kurtarma Mücadelesi 1914 -1918*. p. 7-8.

<sup>170</sup> Ortaylı, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Alman Nüfuzu*. p. 173.

<sup>171</sup> Köroğlu, *Türk Edebiyatı ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı (1914-1918)*. p. 151.

<sup>172</sup> Ortaylı, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Alman Nüfuzu*. p. 46-47, 49.

<sup>173</sup> "Osmanlıların aldığı her yenilgi, gerek siyasi gerekse askeri açıdan Almanların fiyaskosu gibi görülüyor. Bütün aziz dostlarımız Osmanlılara şöyle diyorlar: "İşte Alman dostluğunun sonu budur. Şimdi söyleyin bakalım, Alman taliminin, Alman silahlarının ve gemilerinin size ne faydası var?" *Grosse Politik*, c. 13, 12364 and c. 14, 13500. cited in: Ahmad, *Jön Türkler Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nu Kurtarma Mücadelesi 1914 -1918*. p. 39.

inferior.<sup>174</sup> In addition to that, the CUP elite's favoritism towards a possible German alliance had been a source of debate in parliamentary sessions even as early as 1911. Considering that the CUP was still attempting to forge an alliance with Great Britain until the very last minute, Dukakinzade Basri Bey's criticism towards the CUP leaders on their alignment with Germany is important to understand how the CUP was never completely separated from Germany in terms of politics.

On April 18, during the budget meetings, Dukakinzade Basri attacked the government's foreign policy in a lengthy speech. The summary of the three points that he emphasized on during his speech was as follows: 1- The foreign policy that favors Germany implemented by the government is baseless, meaningless, and destructive. (...) Germany is designing the caliphate of Turkey to become a German colony. They wish to have influence on the entire geography from India to China. They are thinking of following the same path Yavuz Sultan Selim followed, settling in Cairo and from there, owning the entire Muslim Africa.<sup>175</sup>

Despite the unstable and somewhat uncertain political relations between the CUP and Germany, the German influence on the Ottoman intellectuals prevailed even during the most strained times. For example, while Dukakinzade Basri was harshly criticizing the government for their policies regarding Germany, the translations from German philosophers such as Ernst Haeckel and Ludwig Büchner were among the most popular books of the Empire and deemed as must-reads by the majority of the Unionist intellectuals. The German influence on the Turkist elite also continued throughout the up and downs of the political side of the German and Ottoman relations and found its voice in Turkist publications.<sup>176</sup> This trend peaked during the World War I, an obvious example of this was Feyzullah Sacid Ülkü, who was one of the younger members of the CUP and the *Türk Yurdu* journal, his poem published in the journal *Türk Yurdu* was portraying how the Unionists, especially the *Türk Yurdu* circle, viewed Germany.

Bir fert, bir mert, âdil kavî bir millet  
Seçme bilmez, demez ki bu İsevi'dir, bu İslâm,  
Ne İngiliz, ne Rus tanır, ne yamyam;  
Böyle nice cihan harbi tutuşturur cihanda.

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<sup>174</sup> Ahmad. p. 40.

<sup>175</sup> Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi Cilt 9: İkinci Meşrutiyet ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı (1908 - 1918)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1996). p. 142. "18 Nisan'da, bütçe görüşmelerine ilişkin olarak, Dukakinzade Basri uzun bir demeç ile Hükümetin dış politikasına saldırdı. Demecinde üzerinde durduğu üç konunun özeti şöyle idi: 1- Hükümetin sözde Genç Türkler adına tutturmuş olduğu Alman dış politikası temelsiz, anlamsız ve yıkıcı bir politikadır. (...) Almanya Türk halifeliğini bir Alman sömürgesi haline getirmeyi tasarlamaktadır. Hindistan'a ve Çin'e kadar olan alanda sözünü geçirmeyi istemektedir. Yavuz Sultan Selim'in izlemiş olduğu yoldan geçerek, Kahire'de yerleşmeyi ve oradan da Müslüman Afrika'nın tümüne sahip olmayı düşünmektedir."

<sup>176</sup> Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism & The Armenian Genocide*. p. 67.

Nice kavmi boğar kanlı tufanda.  
Alman gibi milletlerin yumruğuyla ezdirir.<sup>177</sup>

As discussed in the previous chapter, there were several crucial factors to understand why Social Darwinism became extremely popular among the Unionist elite, but this situation brings the question of the sources the Ottoman intelligentsia learned Social Darwinism from. There were two main channels for the Ottomans to acquire Social Darwinism, and while the French channel is important as well, I find the German channel more crucial to understand the place Social Darwinism had in the Unionist mindset. I argue that despite the language barrier, the German sources of Social Darwinism that were popular among the Ottoman elite had more practical effect on the Unionist agenda and policies compared with the French sources. There are three important figures that should be elaborated on this matter, German thinkers Ludwig Büchner and Ernst Haeckel, and perhaps the most important of them all, General Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz.<sup>178</sup> In this chapter, I will firstly delve more into the philosophical sources of Social Darwinism, mainly the works written by Haeckel and Büchner. Specifically, *Vahdet-i Mevcud* by Ernst Haeckel and *Madde ve Kuvvet* by Ludwig Büchner are the main works to examine in this regard. Secondly, I will focus on Colmar von der Goltz and his influence on the Unionist elite, as well as his famous work *Millet-i Müsellaha*.

It should be noted, however, that there is a third category under the umbrella of German connection on Social Darwinism in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman, and mainly Young Turk elite that were sent into exile or voluntarily migrated to Switzerland before the 1908 Revolution had been greatly influenced by one of their professors, Eugene Pittard. As Nazan Maksudyay stated, Pittard was an anthropologist that promoted scientific racism,<sup>179</sup> similar to his professor Carl Vogt. Despite the undeniable effect he had on his Ottoman/Unionist students, his influence was more apparent in the Republic of Turkey, which was founded after the Ottoman Empire had ceased to exist.<sup>180</sup> Hence, while Pittard had a tremendous influence of shaping the national identity of the New Turkey, due to the limited interaction he had with the

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<sup>177</sup> Feyzullah Sacit, "Alman Kavmine," *Türk Yurdu* 9, no. 96 (1331), p. 267–69.

<sup>178</sup> Doğan, *Osmanlı Aydınları ve Sosyal Darwinizm*, p. 168.

<sup>179</sup> Nazan Maksudyay, *Türklüğü Ölçmek: Bilimkurgusal Antropoloji ve Türk Milliyetçiliğinin İrkçi Çehresi 1925-1939* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2016), p. 18.

<sup>180</sup> Kieser, *Türklüğe İhtida 1870 – 1939 İsviçre’inde Yeni Türkiye’nin Öncüleri*, p. 100-102.

Unionist leaders and intellectuals resident in the Ottoman Empire, this particular channel is not discussed throughout this thesis.

## 2.1 Philosophical Connection: Ernst Haeckel and Ludwig Büchner

The new generation of Ottoman elite, also can be named as the Unionist elite, claimed that the previous generation's ideology was useless as a valid way to understand the world around them. According to Şükrü Hanioglu, this new intelligentsia found what they were looking for in the works of Western thinkers such as Büchner, Isnard and Schopenhauer.<sup>181</sup> Started with the materialist, positivist ideologies being widespread around the Empire, the some of the Ottoman intelligentsia were open to embrace Social Darwinism. Pioneers such as Ahmet Midhat Efendi, Beşir Fuad, and Abdullah Cevdet and their works paved the way for the popularization of Social Darwinist ideology in the Ottoman Empire, and during the early twentieth century, Social Darwinism became even more widespread in the Empire. Translations of works written by German Social Darwinists such as Haeckel and Büchner played an immense role in the popularization of Social Darwinism in the Ottoman Empire. Combined with the intellectual environment that led to the popularization of Social Darwinism in the Ottoman Empire, these works played a tremendous role in Unionist worldview as well.

Ernst Haeckel can be deemed as the first ardent supporter of Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory in Germany and became widely known not only in Germany but also in the entire European continent due to his works on zoology. Claiming that the nature had the power to create its own living creatures and God and the nature are essentially the same thing, Haeckel denied any type of theism. He argued that the scientists claiming that science and theism could be reconciled were either dishonest or confused.<sup>182</sup> This side of Haeckel's ideology is particularly important to underline, considering that some of the Ottoman elite had an ongoing campaign of trying to reconcile religion with the works such as Haeckel's or Büchner's. In addition to this, Paul Crook summarizes Haeckel as someone who "... accepted the role of struggle in selection theory, a precondition to progress, but he used physiological parallels to

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<sup>181</sup> Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük*. p. 32-33.

<sup>182</sup> Remzi Demir and Bilal Yurtoğlu, "Vahdet-i Mevcud: Baha Tevfik ve Ahmed Nebil'in Haeckel'den Bir Tercümeleleri," in *Vahdet-i Mevcud: Bir Tabiat Aliminin Dini*, ed. Remzi Demir, Bilal Yurtoğlu, and Ali Utku (Konya: Çizgi Yayınevi, 2014). p. 7-11.

underline the nationalistic principles of integration and mutual dependence in social evolution".<sup>183</sup> In this regard, it is also logical for the Unionists elite to accept Haeckel's ideology and integrate it into their worldview. A great example of these Unionists was Abdullah Cevdet, who, according to Rıza Tevfik's claims, had been influenced by Ernst Haeckel tremendously.<sup>184</sup>

While Ernst Haeckel had been popular with his studies on zoology, his most popular work in the Ottoman Empire was *Der Monismus als Band zwischen Religion und Wissenschaft*, translated by Baha Tevfik and Ahmed Nebil under the title of *Vahdet-i Mevcud: Bir Tabiat Aliminin Dini*. Originally, this work was published as Haeckel's answer to another German scholar by the name of Schlesinger in 1892 and was translated to Turkish in 1911.<sup>185</sup> Interestingly this book was not the first work written by Haeckel that was translated to Turkish, Baha Tevfik translated the first volumes on Ernst Haeckel's *Die Welträtsel* (Kainatın Muammaları) in the journal *Felsefe Mecmuası* in 1908.<sup>186</sup> This is particularly important to mention in this regard, considering that 1908 marked a year in which the bilateral relations between the Ottoman Empire and Germany had been unstable. Even when Germany was deemed as the scapegoat for all the things that happened during Abdulhamid II's reign, the example of *Felsefe Mecmuası* shows us that the ideological influence of Germany continued during those years as well. As the first philosophy journal of the Ottoman Empire, *Felsefe Mecmuası* promoted German *Vulgärmaterialismus* and gave great emphasis on Ernst Haeckel's Monism.<sup>187</sup>

As mentioned above, Haeckel claimed that God and the nature were essentially the same and he opposed to reconcile religion with science. However, the Ottoman elite's main concern regarding this type of publications was to not offend the readers too much on subjects of religion and avoiding further debates on Haeckel or Büchner's

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<sup>183</sup> Paul Crook, *Darwinism, War and History: The Debate over the Biology of War from the "Origin of Species" to the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). p. 30.

<sup>184</sup> Rıza Tevfik, "Abdullah Cevdet," *Nevsal-ı Milli*, 1330, 99–100. "Mütefekkirler arasında bilhassa Büchner, Karl Vogt, Haeckel ve biraz da Spencer'in asar ve efkariyle ülfet itmiş ve onları beğenmiştir. Bu adamların şakirdi olduğunu itiraf eyler."

<sup>185</sup> Demir and Yurtoğlu, "Vahdet-i Mevcud: Baha Tevfik ve Ahmed Nebil'in Haeckel'den Bir Tercümeleeri." p. 12.

<sup>186</sup> For Kainatın Muammaları, see: *Felsefe Mecmuası*, cilt 1, sayı 1; cilt 1, sayı 2; cilt 1, sayı 3; cilt 1, sayı 4; cilt 1, sayı 6; cilt 1, sayı 7; cilt 1, sayı 10.

<sup>187</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. p. 185.

views on Islam. There was a similarity between how some German members of *Monistenbund* were viewing Christianity as an obstacle in front of the national development of Germany and how some of the Ottoman intellectuals were viewing Islam as a similar roadblock in front of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>188</sup> Despite this similarity, in the final words of the *Vahdet-i Mevcud*, Baha Tevfik and Ahmed Nebil added their own thoughts regarding the author's views on religions, and specifically Islam. They claimed that Haeckel was criticizing Islam simply because he had no insight or further knowledge of what Islam as a religion really is.

Upon seeing that some of the author's criticism was towards Islam, we realized that how deceived he was, and that those criticism derived from not having a complete grasp of our religion. Because our religion, is such a perfect religion that no real natural scientist can object. However, our knowledge in Arabic disciplines is not enough to answer those criticism.<sup>189</sup>

In addition to that, at the beginning of the book, the translators Baha Tevfik and Ahmet Nebil claimed that while Monism was not a familiar subject for their readers, it was not too unfamiliar to them as well. They suggested that Bektashi order's *vahdet-i vücud* (the unity of existence) was similar to Haeckel's Monism, and sometimes that similarity would lead to the Ottoman readers to confuse *vahdet-i vücud* with Monism. According to the translators, Monism was nothing but a more materialist, more scientific version of *vahdet-i vücud*.<sup>190</sup>

As one of the most fervent supporters of Darwin and Darwinism, one particular aspect of Haeckel's *Monism* was his preach of evolution and how he deemed Darwinism as the most important point of the humankind's progress.<sup>191</sup> Haeckel claims that thanks

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<sup>188</sup> Kieser, Türklüğe İhtida 1870 – 1939 İsviçre'sinde Yeni Türkiye'nin Öncüleri. p. 40-41.

<sup>189</sup> Ernst Haeckel, *Vahdet-i Mevcud: Bir Tabiat Aliminin Dini* (Konya: Çizgi Yayınevi, 2014). p. 106. "Yazarın bazı eleştirilerini İslamiyet'e de yönelttiğini gördüğümüz zaman, ne kadar aldandığını ve bu eleştirilerin dinimize tamamiyle vakıf olamamaktan ileri geldiğini anladık. Çünkü bizim dinimiz, hakiki bir tabiat aliminin asla itiraz edemeyeceği derecede mükemmel bir dindir. Fakat bizzat bu eleştirilere cevap vermeye Arapça ilimlerdeki bilgimiz henüz yeterli bir dereceye gelememiştir."

<sup>190</sup> Haeckel. p. 73. "Bu mesleği bizde Bektaşî tarikatında olanlar kabul ettiği gibi, Bektaşî olmayanlar da kabul etmişlerdir. Şu kadar ki bu meslek bizde herkesin kendi fikrine göre kabul edilmiş olduğundan hakikati, ne gibi esaslara dayandığı pek az kimseler tarafından biliniyor. Bazı kimseler ise vahdet-i mevcudu, vahdet-i vücud mesleği ile karıştırırlar. Bizde "ışrak felsefesi = hikmet-i işrakîyye" adıyla tanınmış olan vahdet-i vücud mezhebi ile Avrupalıların "panteizm" felsefesi arasında bir münasebet bulunsa da "monizm" denilen vahdet-i mevcud felsefesiyle asla birleşmez. Şu kadar ki vahdet-i mevcud mesleği vahdet-i vücud mesleğinin daha maddi, daha bilimsel bir şekilde sokulmasından başka bir şey değildir."

<sup>191</sup> Haeckel. p. 89. "İnsan zekasına ait bütün bu ilerleme ve mazhariyetlerin üstünde diğer bir mazhariyet daha vardır ki, o da evrim teorisinin keşfidir. Aşağı yukarı bir asır evvel şair Goethe tarafından sezilen bu teori on dokuzuncu asır başlarında Lamarck tarafından bilimsel bir ifade şekline

to the theory of evolution, it was proven that most of the animals and plants derived from the offspring of the same animal, humankind as the most evolved species of them all. According to Haeckel, even a mediocre comparison can prove great similarities between the man and the ape, which is a common phenomenon considering other similarities between the mammals.<sup>192</sup> In connection with this theory, Haeckel denies the traditional idea claiming that the other elements of the universe were created in order to serve the mankind.

Humankind, who assume themselves as completely similar and derived directly from God, had given themselves an entirely different ranking and presumed themselves separated from the other components of the nature. This presumption created another philosophy: “The purpose of the creation is mankind”. The foundation of this philosophy is that the purpose of the creation and nature is the mankind, and the mankind is the greatest purpose of life. The rest of the nature’s components exist solely to fulfill the mankind’s needs. (...) the belief of “The purpose of the creation is mankind” had been demolished by Spencer in 1859.<sup>193</sup>

In *Monism*, Ernst Haeckel also states four characteristics and argues that any natural scientist that possesses these characteristics should accept Monism and consider it as a religion. According to Haeckel, any natural scientist that carries the following traits must embrace Monism as well, since those traits would only lead a scientist to the rightful path.

It is compulsory for all the natural scientists who fulfills the following requirements to accept monism and embrace it as a religion.

1. Have adequate knowledge in all of the natural sciences; especially the theory of evolution.
2. A keen intelligence and capability for reasoning in order to obtain logical results using either deduction or induction.

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konulmuş ve kırk üç sene önce Charles Darwin tarafından bir teori olarak kurulmuştur. Darwin’in bu teorisi Lamarck’ın kalıtım ve çevreye uyum kuralları arasındaki karşılıklı tesirler teorisini tamamlamış, bu husustaki boşluğu doldurmuştur.”

<sup>192</sup> Haeckel. p. 90-92. “Yine biliyoruz ki, muhtelif ve birçok hayvan cinsleri ve bitkiler, hepsi de aynı bir tek hayvanın yavruları ve yine bir tek kütüğün dallarıdır. Hatta insanlar da bu yavru cinslerden biri ve en tazesini, en gelişmişini, en mükemmeli bulunuyor ki, bağlı olduğu ilk kütük omurgalılar kütüğüdür. (...) İnsan “omurgalılar” sınıfının memeli kısmından bir hayvandır. En adi bir mukayese insan ile maymun arasındaki sıkı münasebeti ve şekil birliğini ortaya koyar. Bu münasebetlerin büyük bir kısmı esasen memeliler arasında da müşrehtir. Günden güne daha ziyade tabiatın bu gibi organik parçaları arasına nüfuz eden “anatomi” ve “karşılaştırmalı anatomi” bilimleri bize ispat ediyor ki, insan ve insana benzeyen hayvanlar arasındaki şekil ihtilafı yine bu hayvanlarla diğer maymunlar arasındaki ihtilaftan daha önemsiz ve daha azdır.”

<sup>193</sup> Haeckel. p. 80-81. “Kendisinin tamamıyla Allah’a benzediğini ve doğrudan doğruya ondan ayrılmış olduğunu varsayan insan kendi kendisine büsbütün başka bir mevki vermiş ve tabiatın diğer parçalarından ayrı kaldığını zannetmiştir. İşte bu zan ortaya bir felsefe daha attı ki o da: “yaratılışın gayesi insandır” mesleğidir. Bu meslekte esas, tabiatın ve yaratılıştan maksat insandır, insan en yüksek gayedir. Tabiatın diğer parçaları insanın ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak için yaratılmıştır. (...) “Yaratılışın gayesi insandır” itikadını da 1859’da Spencer yıktı.”

3. Adequate moral qualities in order to be completely and constantly loyal to Monism and to ignore the hostile attacks from the supporters of dualism and pluralism.
4. Determination and understanding in order to throw away every single religious superstition that was etched into our brains since childhood.<sup>194</sup>

Considering these traits that Haeckel mentioned above, it is not surprising that the Ottoman intelligentsia embraced Monism and Ernst Haeckel so easily. As discussed in the previous chapter, due to their background and education, some of the Ottoman elite was open to receive any theory that was embracing materialism and Darwinism. In addition to their easy acceptance of scientific, materialist theories, the Ottoman elite's attitude towards Islam created an environment where the popularity of Haeckel and his *Monism* increased suddenly. Apart from the ideas of *Monism* and Darwinism, Haeckel also mentions the Social Darwinist idea of "struggle to survive" and natural selection.<sup>195</sup> In relation with the political atmosphere of the Empire, this idea was a popular one and it only boosted the popularity of Haeckel among the Ottoman intellectuals. Combined with how he resonated with Ottoman elite on his idea of *Monism*, Haeckel's acceptance of a perpetual struggle for existence found great support in the Empire.

While the Young Turks generally embraced Ernst Haeckel, and, according to Şükrü Hanioglu, Ernst Haeckel's theory on race could be adapted to the case of Ottoman Empire, they refrained from doing so.<sup>196</sup> This preference is connected to an aspect of Social Darwinism that was also discussed Haeckel's other popular books, mainly *Anthropogenie oder Entwicklungsgeschichte des Menschen* (Anthropogeny: Or, the

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<sup>194</sup> Haeckel. p. 103-104. "Birkaç satır aşağıda açıklayacağım dört önemli şartı yerine getiren her tabiat aliminin mutlaka monizmi kabul etmesi ve bunu bir din olmak üzere değerlendirmesi zorunludur. 1.Tabii bilimlerin tümüne yeteri derecede vukuf; özellikle evrim kanununa. 2.Tecrübi olan vukufardan gerek tümdengelim ve gerek tümevarım yoluyla bazı mantıksal sonuçlar elde edebilmek için keskin bir zeka ve muhakeme kabiliyeti. 3.Bu suretle doğruluğuna kanaat elde edilen monizm felsefesine tamamıyla ve sürekli sadık kalabilmek ve düalizm, plüralizm taraftarlarının hasmane taarruzlarına kulak asmamak için gerektiği kadar ahlak kuvveti. 4. Çocukluğumuzda sarsılması imkansız birtakım ilhamlar gibi hafızamıza telkin edilen, dine dair her türlü batıl inançları ve özellikle boş, anlamsız inançları atacak kadar metanet ve anlayış."

<sup>195</sup> Haeckel. p. 108-109. "Biyoloji vasıtasıyla tabiata daha ziyade nüfuz ve vukuf kazanılınca bu sözlerimizin hakikati daha iyi anlaşılacaktır. Özellikle Darwin, "yaşamak için mücadele" kanununu ve yine bu kanuna dayalı seleksiyon teorisini kırk üç sene önce ortaya koyarak bu hususta bizi daha ziyade ikaz etti. O zamandan beri biliyoruz ki, gezegenimizin organiklere ait tabiatı her ferдин genele karşı sonuçsuz mücadelesidir. Birkaç seçilmiş ve kuvvetlinin yaşaması ve hayattan zevk duyması için binlerce hayvan ve bitkinin her gün yok olmaya mahkum olması her tarafa bol bol rast gelinen hadiselerden birisidir. Bu birkaç seçilmiş ve kuvvetlinin hayata devam etmeleri de her taraftan kendisini tehdit eden birçok tehlikelere karşı yine bir mücadeleden başka bir şey değildir."

<sup>196</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*. P. 209.

Evolutionary History of Man).<sup>197</sup> In this book, Haeckel divides the human races into categories and ranks them from the most to least evolved and claims that the least evolved races cannot be evolved further, and any attempt at trying to educate those races would be in vain. Furthermore, Haeckel argues that only the Mediterranean races would survive in the never-ending struggle for existence.

Haeckel divided humanity into twelve species and thirty-six races on the basis of differences in speech and hair-type, which he regarded as the most reliable indices of race. These species and races could be arranged in a hierarchy according to their degree of proximity to the apes. The most primitive peoples were almost indistinguishable from the latter, eating wild fruit and living in herds containing no trace of marriage and family life which, to Haeckel, were the building blocks of civilization. (...) The former were 'incapable of a true inner culture and a higher mental development' even when they inhabited a civilised milieu like the USA. The Mediterranean species, in contrast, had always been the most physically and mentally advanced type, and, with the exception of the Mongolians, the only one with a history and a civilisation. The English and Germans were the best representatives of this species, and were laying the basis for a new era of even higher mental development. His views on inequality were summed up as follows: 'The most primitive races, such as the Veddahs of Ceylon, or the Australian natives, are very little above the mental life of the anthropoid apes. From the highest savages we pass by a complete gradation of stages to the most civilised races.'<sup>198</sup>

While this book was not translated to Turkish, Ernst Haeckel argued similar points in his other works as well. For instance, in *Die Welträtzel* (Kainatın Muammaları), which was translated and published by Baha Tevfik in *Felsefe Mecmuası*, Ernst Haeckel mentions the same categorization. Hans Lukas Kieser argues that the Unionists had been tremendously influenced by this book, and it marked a transition of monotheist universalism to biological monism for the Unionist elite.<sup>199</sup> That being said, I believe that this side of Haeckel's ideology had another underlying effect on the Unionist elite. Considering that in Haeckel's categorization the Turks were ranked low, and according to Haeckel, in the perpetual struggle for existence, only the Mediterranean races would survive, this idea fueled the fear of extinction in the Unionist worldview. In my opinion, this effect of Haeckel on the Ottoman intelligentsia was much more crucial than any other aspect of Haeckel's popularization in the Ottoman Empire, since the fear of extinction characterized basically the last decade of the Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>197</sup> Suavi Aydın, "Cumhuriyet'in İdeolojik Şekillenmesinde Antropolojinin Rolü: Irkçı Paradigmanın Yükselişi ve Düşüşü," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt II: Kemalizm*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekin (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009). p. 347.

<sup>198</sup> Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). p. 140.

<sup>199</sup> Kieser, *Türklüğe İhtida 1870 – 1939 İsviçre'sinde Yeni Türkiye'nin Öncüleri*. p. 41.

One other influence of Haeckel's ideology that resonated itself in the Unionist ideology was elitism and the rule of the elite in order to ensure survival of the states. Haeckel claimed that the brain of an intellectual like Mozart and the brain of a common peasant cannot be the same, hence, a society must be ruled by the elite. Abdullah Cevdet even claimed that a man with a skull smaller than forty centimeters would be imbeciles.<sup>200</sup> While the majority of the Unionist elite did not go as far as Abdullah Cevdet did in this subject, it was clear that they were assuming themselves as the elite that must rule the Empire in order to make sure that the Ottoman Empire would survive the never-ending struggle for existence.

Another important source on Social Darwinism was Ludwig Büchner's best seller book *Kraft und Stoff* (Madde ve Kuvvet). This book was translated to Turkish by Baha Tevfik and Ahmet Nebil in 1911, and according to the translators themselves, after the publication of *Vahdet-i Mevcud*, the readers themselves demanded from Baha Tevfik and Ahmet Nebil to translate *Kraft und Stoff* next.<sup>201</sup> This can be deemed as a perfect example of how these materialist and Darwinist works were surprisingly popular in the Ottoman Empire, considering that the translators themselves claimed that they were not expecting the Ottoman readers' great interest in *Vahdet-i Mevcud*.

Baha Tevfik and Ahmet Nebil's translation of *Kraft und Stoff*, translated to Turkish as *Madde ve Kuvvet* was not the first time the Ottoman intelligentsia had met with Ludwig Büchner and his ideas. The first translation from Büchner in the Ottoman Empire was Şibli Şumayil's Arabic translation of *Sechs Vorlesungen Über die Darwinsche Theorie*, followed by Abdullah Cevdet's translation of some parts of *Aus Natur und Wissenschaft* to Turkish.<sup>202</sup> Later Abdullah Cevdet translated some parts of *Kraft und Stoff* under the title of *Fenn-i Ruh*, which Baha Tevfik and Ahmet Nebil gave credit in their complete translation of *Kraft und Stoff*.<sup>203</sup> According to Rıza Tevfik, this interest

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<sup>200</sup> Hanioglu, *Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi*. p. 16.

<sup>201</sup> Ludwig Büchner, *Madde ve Kuvvet*, ed. Kemal Kahramanoğlu and Ali Utku (Konya: Çizgi Yayınevi, 2012). p. 39. "Bundan evvel neşr etmiş olduğumuz Vahdet-i Mevcûd zann ettiğimizden pek ziyâde müşteri buldu ve bizi sür'atle bu kitâbı da neşre teşvik etti. Vâkı'â, daha evvel kütübhanemizin üçüncü cildi olan Teceddüd-i İlmî ve Edebîyi neşr etmek icâb ederdi. Fakat aldığımız birçok mektûblarda, "Mâdde ve Kuvvef'in takdimi ârzû ediliyordu."

<sup>202</sup> Can Karaböcek, "Türk Düşüncesinde Büchner Etkisi Ya Da 'Felsefenin Sefaleti,'" *Kutadgubilig Felsefe-Bilim Araştırmaları Dergisi* 22 (2012). p. 165-66.

<sup>203</sup> Büchner, *Madde ve Kuvvet*. p. 204. "Hakim-i muktedir Abdullah Cevdet Beyefendi Fenn-i Rûh ismiyle Madde ve Kuvvet'in "Dimâğ ve Rûh", "Tefekkür", "Vidân" bahislerini tercüme etmişlerdir.

in Büchner and his works started before the full translation of *Kraft und Stoff*, and he claims that during his time in *Mekteb-i Tıbbiye*, he was imprisoned because he had read Büchner's *Kraft und Stoff*.<sup>204</sup> Rıza Tevfik explains the general popularity of *Kraft und Stoff* as follows:

After the nineteenth century many of the German philosophers followed the path of D'Holbach. The old idealism completely fell from grace and materialists gained great popularity and power. Büchner's book titled Force and Matter – despite being a superficial book, affected the minds of the scholars.<sup>205</sup>

Unsurprisingly, Rıza Tevfik was not the only Unionist that read and influenced by Büchner's *Kraft und Stoff*. According to Kieser, Abdullah Cevdet's interest in Ludwig Büchner and his works had started during his student years in *Mekteb-i Tıbbiye*. Kieser claims that Abdullah Cevdet read *Kraft und Stoff* from its French translation by title of *Force et Matière* when he was a first-year student in this school.<sup>206</sup> As seen in the following quotation from a letter written by Doktor Sabri Bey to Abdullah Cevdet, Büchner, especially his book *Kraft und Stoff*, had been one of the most discussed books among the students of *Mekteb-i Tıbbiye*.

I started Military Medical School in 1307. At that time, Sükûti, you [Abdullah Cevdet] and Şerafeddin Mağmumi were still students in the school. I cannot remember Temo. There were many discussions on Force and Matter... What were the reasons behind the idea of establishing the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress? The discussions on materialism that was happening in the Medical School since way before are not enough by itself in order to explain these reasons...<sup>207</sup>

According to Hans Lukas Kieser, the reason why Büchner was so popular among the students of *Mekteb-i Tıbbiye* was due to Büchner's own journey in Germany. He

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Bu bâbı tercüme ederken mezkûr kitâbdan pek çok istifâde ettiğimiz için kendilerine teşekkür borçluyuz.”

<sup>204</sup> Kahramanoğlu and Utku, “Madde ve Kuvvet: Osmanlı Popüler Materyalizminin Elkitabı.” p. 7-8.

<sup>205</sup> Rıza Tevfik, *Mufasssal Kâmûs-ı Felsefe* (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1913). p. 498-99. “... on dokuzuncu asır ahirinde Alman feylesoflarının pek çoğu D'Holbach'ın mesleğini ihya etdiler. Eski idealizm külliyyen itibardan sakıt olarak maddiyun ziyadesiyle rağbet ve kuvvet kazanmıştır. Büchner'in Kuvvet ve Madde nam eseri – derin bir kitab olmamakla beraber ezhân-ı ulemaya tahakküm itdi, ulum-u tabiiyenin ve usûltecrübiyyenin terakkisi ile serbesti-i itikad, hatta meyl-i ilhâd arasında münasebet görenler oldu.”

<sup>206</sup> Kieser, *Türklüğe İhtida: 1870 – 1939 İsviçre'sinde Yeni Türkiye'nin Öncüleri*. p. 57.

<sup>207</sup> Cited in: Hanioglu, *Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi*. p. 22. “...Ben 1307 senesinde Mekteb-i Tıbbiye'ye girmişdim. O tarihte Sükûti, sen [Abdullah Cevdet] ve Şerafeddin Mağûmî henüz mektebde talebe idiniz. Temo'yu hatırlayamıyorum. Kuvvet ve Madde üzerine pek çok disküsyonlar oluyordu. Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin teşekkülüne takaddüm eden ve bu cemiyetin teşekkülü fikrini uyandıran âmilleri ne idi? Tıbbiye muhitinde öteden beri cereyan eden materyalizm münakaşaları bu âmilleri tek başına bir izaha kâfi değildir...”

claims that due to the fact that Büchner was deemed a radical materialist in his country and thus was persecuted by religious, traditional authorities, he was a perfect role model for the rebellious students at the Military Medical School.<sup>208</sup> In an article published in the newspaper *Servet-i Fünun*, the importance of Büchner and *Kraft und Stoff* was deemed as one of the most important turning points of the “ideological revolution” among a group of Ottoman intellectuals, who were open to receive Social Darwinist ideas from the West.

If an intellectual reform were to take place here, and there would be an examination on this reform, then Professor Büchner’s name would be brought up regardless. Because since many years ago, in the schools of the Ottoman Empire, Büchner’s book *Force and Matter* was seen in our enlightened students’ hands, and perhaps the first seeds of the idea of an intellectual reform had been sown by this book.<sup>209</sup>

It can also be suggested that the reason behind this popularity of Büchner in the Ottoman thought derived from Büchner’s own views regarding religion. Similar to Haeckel, Büchner was also suggesting that religions were manufactured by people in order to make sense of the world around them, and later manipulated by the clergy in order to gain more power.<sup>210</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, there was an underlying suggestion in the Unionist worldview that blamed Islam as a reason for the Ottoman Empire’s backwardness, hence, Büchner’s stance on religion could possibly play a role in the ardent support he received from a group within the overall Ottoman intelligentsia.<sup>211</sup> Similar to Haeckel, Büchner also claimed that religion and religious beliefs must be eliminated from science, and claimed that religion was the biggest obstacle in front of progress. For a generation that had, as Hanioglu put it, claimed there had been “a tug of war between science and religion”, Büchner’s *Kraft und Stoff* was a gold mine waiting to be exploited.<sup>212</sup> Combined with the simplicity of the theory

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<sup>208</sup> Kieser, *Türklüğe İhtida 1870 – 1939 İsviçre’inde Yeni Türkiye’nin Öncüleri*. p. 58.

<sup>209</sup> “Önemli Şahsiyetler: Profesör Ludwig Büchner,” *Servet-i Fünun*, July 11, 1911. p. 252. “Eğer burada bir inkılab-ı fikrî hasıl olur da bunun da tedkik ve tahlil-i tarihine girilirse o zaman ister istemez Profesör Büchner’in namı yad olunacak. Çünkü hayli senelerden beri, mekâtib-i aliyyede olan münevver gençlerimizin elinde Büchner’in *Kuvvet ve Madde* eseri görülmeğe başlamış, belki de inkılab-ı fikrinin ilk hatimlerini buraya bu eseri saçmıştır.”

<sup>210</sup> Büchner, *Madde ve Kuvvet*. p. 522. “Tabiatın kanunlarına vakıf olmamak ve korkmak insanlara ölümden sonra diğer bir hayat tahayyül ettirmiş ve yine bu gibi hadiseler, yani tabiatın çoğunlukla ezen ve öldüren şiddetli hareketleri, ilk insanlara biraz düşündükten sonra âlemin metafizik bir kuvvet, yani bir Allah tarafından yaratıldığı ve idare edilmekte olduğu kanısını vermiş ve sonra şöhret, kudret, egemenlik ve saltanat hırsı taşıyan birtakım rahipler bu fikirden istifade ederek binlerce felaketin ve insanlığın bütün elemelerinin, bütün gözyaşlarının sebebi olan dinleri kurmuşlardır.”

<sup>211</sup> Karaböcek, “Türk Düşüncesinde Büchner Etkisi Ya Da ‘Felsefenin Sefaleti.’” p. 167.

<sup>212</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*. p. 21.

itself and the language Büchner used in his work, it was an inevitable for the Unionists to hang onto this book tightly.<sup>213</sup> Büchner's work had been praised greatly by the Ottoman intellectuals, often considered as a book that damaged the traditional beliefs and superstitions.

In this book Büchner was showing the basics of a philosophy that was in coordination with the medical sciences in terms of its new theses and findings, as well as its overall harmony. He had not deemed the matter as eternal and the force as everlasting. Büchner's capability to explain his science and knowledge in a way that can be understood by everyone gained him great reputation. Büchner inflicted a great hit on various ideologies that could not get rid of the influence of the clergy, which resulted in many superstitious beliefs' continuity. He created a new field in which science can be researched and examined undeniable freedom.<sup>214</sup>

The supporters of Büchner among the Ottoman elite, especially Abdullah Cevdet, considered him as such an important figure that they wanted to be the Büchners of the Ottoman Empire. Abdullah Cevdet tried to explain Büchner's views on matters such as materialism and Darwinism as simply as possible to his readers, similar to Büchner's own style. According to Şükrü Hanioglu, Abdullah Cevdet can be deemed as an intellectual who wished to play the same role as Büchner in the east. However, a big obstacle in front of Abdullah Cevdet was the necessity of reconciling the views of Büchner with Islam.<sup>215</sup> He claimed and tried to prove that materialism and Islam were not conflicting, and to do so, he often tried to make connections between materialism and Muslim ulama and fiqh.<sup>216</sup> For example, in the preface of his translation of *Natur und Geist*, he claimed that he was translating this book simply because hadith commended it.<sup>217</sup>

Several arguments in *Kraft und Stoff* draw attention the most regarding the similarities between Büchner and the Unionist elite. Firstly, Büchner's attitude towards the religions and the theory of creation should be explained here. Büchner claims that

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<sup>213</sup> Hanioglu, p. 21.

<sup>214</sup> "Önemli Şahsiyetler: Profesör Ludwig Büchner." p. 252. "Büchner bu eserinde ulum-u tıbbiyenin tedkikat ve keşfiyat-ı cedidesiyle hem- ahenk olarak umumi bir felsefenin esasatını gösteriyordu. Maddeyi ebedi, kuvveti layemut görmüyordu. Büchner'in ulum ve fününu her zekanın az çok kavrayabileceği bir şekl-i ibdâkârânede tasvir ve tarif idebilmek kudreti kendisine büyük bir şöhret kazandırmışdır. (...) Büchner, tesir-i rehâbînden kurtulamayan, anânât-ı kadîme diye itikâdât-ı bâtilenin idamesine sebep olan usule pek mühim bir darbe urmuş, ulum ve fünunda tedkîkât ve tettebbuatın hürriyet-i kamile ile icra idilebilmesi için bir saha açmıştır."

<sup>215</sup> Hanioglu, *Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi*. p. 13-15.

<sup>216</sup> Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri 1895-1908*. p. 234.

<sup>217</sup> The hadith Abdullah Cevdet refers to is: "...hikmet ve hakikat mü'minin gaib olmuş malıdır, nerede bulursa ahz-ü-tasarruf eder...". cited in: Hanioglu, *Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi*. p. 14.

contrary to what primitive tribes were believing, the universe was not created by a single creator.<sup>218</sup> Throughout the book, it is an eye-catching detail that Büchner was considering the belief in creationism as equal to primitiveness of a society. Compared with how the Ottoman elite deemed Büchner and his ideas as a road to high civilization,<sup>219</sup> it is not a far-fetched argument that their tendency to consider civilization as the synonym of theory of evolution was somewhat derived from Büchner's own views. Considering that Büchner was also arguing that the majority of the civilized nations embraced science and knowledge instead of old superstitions,<sup>220</sup> these Ottoman intellectuals' interpretation does not surprise.

As a staunch Social Darwinist, in *Kraft und Stoff* Büchner explains how the law of nature is also applicable to the human life. According to Büchner, same as all the other parts of the nature, a human would come into the world, live, and eventually die. In addition to that, Büchner also underlines that the fact that a diseased organism would eventually die from this disease is a law of the nature.<sup>221</sup> This side of Büchner's *Kraft und Stoff* is particularly important in understanding the Unionists' tendency to view themselves as the self-appointed "social doctors" of the Ottoman Empire. Combined with the "sick man of Europe" discourse surrounding the Ottoman Empire and

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<sup>218</sup> "Tabiatın ebedi olan hareketlerini ve sürekli geçmişten geleceğe geçme işlemlerini, her türlü oluşumlarını ve her türlü bozuluşlarını idare eden kanunlar, vaktiyle bazı ilkel kavimlerin tahayyül ettikleri gibi kâinatın dışında yer alan bir kanun koyucu tarafından tertip ve tanzim edilmemiştir. O ilkel kavimler tarafından farzolunan bazı hurafeler hâlâ zayıf fikirlileri ve cahilleri iğfal edebilmesine rağmen, tabiatın kanunları, tabii şeylerin kesin ve zorunlu olan bir "ifade"sinden başka bir şey değildir." Büchner, *Madde ve Kuvvet*. p. 428.

<sup>219</sup> Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük*. p. 40-41.

<sup>220</sup> "Vaktiyle açıklanamaz gibi görünen birçok hadiselerin, mucize ve kerametlerin, metafizik bir kuvvet tarafından vücuda getirildiği zannolunan bütün bu şeylerin, birtakım keşifler sayesinde, tabiatın henüz tanınmamış bazı kuvvetleri olduğu meydana çıktı. Bilimin art arda darbeleri altında birtakım ruhların ve ilâhların kuvveti hızla çöktü. Medeni kavimler arasındaki bâtil itikatlar yerlerini bilime ve vukufa terk ettiler. Bugün bütün itimadımızla ve büyük bir kesinlikle iddia edebiliriz ki, bu dünyada sebepsiz hiçbir şey olmadığı gibi, hiçbir mucize ve hiçbir keramet de yoktur. Vaki olan, vaki olmuş bulunan, vaki olacak olan her şey, basit bir tabiatın içinde, yani ezeli-ebedi olan madde ve kuvvetin kanunları altında olmaktadır, olmuştur ve olacaktır. Dünya'nın ve gökyüzünün -ne kadar müthiş olursa olsun- hiçbir dönüşümü yoktur ki, tabiiiliğin dışına çıkabilsin." Büchner, *Madde ve Kuvvet*. p. 429.

<sup>221</sup> "Ve herhangi bir hastalıktan muzdarip olan organik bir yapı, hastalıktan kurtulamadığı halde mutlaka mahvolacak, hayatını kaybedecek. Bu hakikatlerden kim şüphe edebilir? Tabiatı gayet yüzeysel bir bakışla olsun gözlemleyen bir kimse, etrafında cereyan eden hallerde bilimin başarılarından ve bize tanımlayı belirlediği hadiselerden başka ne görebilir? Mutlaka inanması gerekir ki, tabiat kanunları kesindir ve değişmez. (..) İnsanların mukadderatına gelince: Bunun da tabiat hadiselerinden farkı olmadığı malumdur. Her şey gibi bunlar da birtakım sebeplerin sonucu ve tabii ilişkilerdir ki, bütün varlıkların üzerinde etki icra eden ve eğilme kabul etmeyen kanunların iradesi altında bulunurlar. Doğmak, yaşamak, ölmek, bunlara ait esasların önemlisini teşkil eder." Büchner. p. 430.

Haeckel's theory of the elite, Büchner's views could only support the Unionist belief on how they were the only ones that could save the Empire.

Similar to Haeckel, Büchner is also arguing that the civilized nations had bigger brains and skulls than the uncivilized, barbaric nations. He suggests that an average person from the white race's skull would be more than two hundred centimeters, while Indians' skulls were around one hundred and fifteen centimeters, closer to apes, whose skulls were about eighty-five centimeters, than the white race.<sup>222</sup> While this tendency to use the measurement of a skull was also present in Abdullah Cevdet's works as well, Büchner's theory presents another issue for the Ottoman elite. Considering that the European Social Darwinists usually considered Turks as one of the lower races of the humankind, this presented a problem for the Ottoman intellectuals to tackle, since the intellectuals they so loved and promoted deemed them as one of the inferior races. Despite this problem, and despite various criticism towards Büchner and Haeckel on matters such as their arguments against Islam or the Turks in general, they were being promoted in the Ottoman intellectual life as the groundbreaking thinkers who explained the truths of existence. Even a fierce Turkish nationalist such as Ömer Seyfettin was deeming them as such.<sup>223</sup>

However, you Easterners, live indifferently as if you are experienced in all knowledge and sciences and do not see any necessity in discussion. You show such a silliness that you attempt at proving your superstitious ideas to us while using the sciences of the West, which you learned superficially and incompletely. There is not a single word in your language from great thinkers like Hegel, Büchner, Darwin, Novel, Ribot, Karl Vogt, Romansi, Rossi, Sanson, Skodler etc., who explained the realities of existence to the entire humanity. For you, even mentioning their names are deemed as blasphemy. You are completely ignorant towards science and natural sciences.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> "Halbuki beyaz ırkta beyin boşluğu ortalama olarak doksan pouce küp gelir (...) Hindistan kabilelerinin bazılarından ise pouce küp miktarı kırk altıya kadar inmiştir ki, bu kabilelerin fertlerinin kafatasları insansı (antropoide) denilen maymunların en büyüğü olan "goril" in dâhili genişliği otuz dört pouce küp tahmin olunan kafataslarına yaklaşıyorlar." Büchner. p. 539.

<sup>223</sup> Hanioglu, "Felsefesiz Bir Toplumun Felsefe Olmayan Felsefesinin İlmihâli: Madde ve Kuvvet." p. 26-27.

<sup>224</sup> Ömer Seyfettin, "Beşeriyet ve Köpek," *Piyano*, no. 7 (1910): 78. "Halbuki siz Şarklılar, bütün hakayık-ı ilmiyye ve fenniyye vukuf ve münakaşaya asla lüzum görmeyecek kadar müstağni yaşarsınız. Yarım yamalak öğrendiğiniz fûnun-ı garbiyenin esaslarını musirren kendinize atf ve onların da semaviyattan muktebes olduğunu iddia ile efkar ve itikad-ı batılanızı bizim fûnumuz ile bize ispata kalkacak derece garabet ve sersemlik gösterirsiniz. Bugünkü hakayık-ı mevcudenin ekserisini beşeriyete şerh eden Hegel, Büchner, Darwin, Novel, Rabod, Karl Vogt, Romansi, Rossi, Sanson, Skodler ve ilh... gibi muharrir ve mütefekkirlerden bir kelime lisanınıza geçmemiştir. Onların isimleri bile sizce küfür addolunur. Fûnun ve ulum-ı tabiyyeden tamamıyla bihabersiniz"

## 2.2 Von der Goltz and *Millet-i Müselleha* (Nation in Arms)

Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz, or rather known as Goltz Paşa during his tenure in the Ottoman Empire, had been one of the most important figures that influenced the Unionist worldview and policies. Appointed by Kaiser Wilhelm II to reform the Ottoman army, Goltz Paşa spent the 1880s and 90s both as a commander and a teacher for the cadets of the Ottoman Military School. After his return to Germany, Goltz Paşa became an authority on Ottoman Empire in his homeland,<sup>225</sup> and left a legacy in the Ottoman Empire that did not only affect the final decades of the Empire, but also continued its effect in the new Republic of Turkey as well.

It can be argued that a huge chunk of the Unionist ideology derived from Goltz Paşa and his time in the Ottoman Empire. During his tenure, Goltz Paşa not only helped the Ottoman Empire to modernize and regulate the military schools and the army, but he also created a group of cadets that became his staunch followers.<sup>226</sup> When most of these cadets graduated and became officers, they formed the *Osmanlı Hürriyet Fırkası*, which later on, joined forces with the Young Turks to form the CUP. Considering that these officers gave the CUP its military and revolutionary sense, it can be suggested that Goltz Paşa had a great influence on the 1908 Revolution and its aftermaths. The military officers within the Unionists had been trained by Goltz Paşa and admired him greatly, and especially after the Babıali Raid of 1913, it is obvious that certain Unionist policies show undeniable similarities with Goltz's views on society and military's role in society.

Goltz Paşa's popularity among the Unionists is a peculiar subject. It is known that many of the Unionists were hesitant and somewhat resentful towards Germany due to their support to Abdulhamid II's regime. Considering that Goltz Paşa, like many other German advisors during that time, worked for Abdulhamid II, it is interesting that the Unionists glorified him and his ideology so much. One of the reasons behind this can be due to the clashes between Abdulhamid II and Goltz Paşa, which significantly increased while Abdulhamid II was trying to regain the control of the Empire.

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<sup>225</sup> Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914*. p. 69.

<sup>226</sup> Erol Akcan, "Colmar von Der Goltz Paşa'nın Osmanlı Ordusu Ve Asker-Sivil Aydınlar Üzerindeki Etkisi," *Atatürk Dergisi*, no. 4 (2015). p. 18.

According to François Georgeon, in 1890, only a few years after his appointment to the Ottoman Empire, von der Goltz Paşa was complaining about how he could not reach to the sultan and was not able to make the reforms he planned. Goltz's main issue with Abdulhamid II was the sultan's limitation of his authority over the military schools.<sup>227</sup> It is known that Abdulhamid II disliked the military cadets, especially the ones from the military medical school,<sup>228</sup> and since Goltz Paşa's suggested reforms would only make the military stronger, it makes sense that the Unionists idolized and respected Goltz Paşa to an utmost level. In the journal *Asker*, it can be seen how his departure from the Ottoman Empire deemed as a disappointing loss among the Unionist elite.

Like the sun itself, you wanted to shine onto the minds of your students with the lights of education. However, the dark clouds that cumulated around the star were breaking the lights of knowledge and wisdom you were spreading, hence, they were torturing the ones that were desperately wishing for your perfection. Similar to how it is not possible to completely hide the sunlight, the enemies of education, who tried to block the lights of knowledge, could not succeed as well.<sup>229</sup>

Another reason behind this admiration could be derived from how Goltz Paşa's reforms in the military schools shaped the cadets in a more Europeanized and more elite way. As discussed previously, the Unionists were seeing themselves as the elite that must rule the Empire to ensure its survival. Combined with the overall political atmosphere of the Ottoman Empire, it can be argued that both Goltz's reforms in the military schools and his *Millet-i Müselleha* ideology fueled this sense of superiority in

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<sup>227</sup> François Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2020). p. 368.

<sup>228</sup> "Bu mektep Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Garp alemine karşı açılmış ilk penceresiydi. Burada okuyan tıbbiyelinin yüzü garba çevrilmişti. Tıbbiyeli garp ile şarkın farkını bilen ve geriliğimizin derin acısını duyan insandı. Bu sebepten Tıbbiye Mektebi vatanseverliğin, hürriyet aşkının, şark meskenetinden kurtulma, ilerleme, bir an önce yüksek bir medeniyet seviyesine ulaşmış memleketlere yetişme cehdinin bir yuvası olmuştu. Tıbbiyeliler Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun son Padişahlarının gerici ve müstebit idaresine karşı daima isyancı bir durum almışlardı. Bunun içindir ki, Abdülhamit Tıbbiyelileri sevmez, onlardan korkar, çekinir ve onlara karşı şiddetli bir baskı yapardı. İşte Tıbbiyedeki terör idaresinin sebebi bu idi. Terör rejimi Tıbbiyeliyi yıldırma şöyle dursun, Tıbbiyeli ruhunu bir kat daha pekiştirmiş, onu zulme, istibdada karşı yalnız bir kale haline getirmişti." Tevfik Sağlam, *Nasıl Okudum?* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Cerrahpaşa Tıp Fakültesi Atatürk'ün Yüzüncü Doğum Yılı Kutlama Yayınları, 1981). p. 41.

<sup>229</sup> Osman Senai, "Von Der Goltz Paşa Hazretlerine", *Asker*, tarihsiz, S. 17, C. 2, s. 193. Quoted from: Fatih Özasan, "Osmanlı Basınından Türk ve Almanların Karşılıklı Hayranlığına İlişkin Bir Kesit: Asker Mecmuası Örneği," *Stratejik ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 2, no. 1 (2018). p. 39-40. "Siz güneş gibi talebenizin ezhânına nûr-ı maârif serpmek istiyordunuz. Halbuki yıldız etrafında tecemmû' eden kara bulutlar neşr eylediğiniz şuât-ı ilm ve irfanı kesr ederek müşâk-ı kemâliniz olanları kısmen zulmette bırakıyordu. Bununla beraber ziya-i şemsi büsbütün setr etmek kabil olamadığı misülli daire-i şümul ve nüfuzu bî-pâyân olan envâr-ı marifet önüne sed ve hail vaz etmekte düşman maarif bulunanlarca tamamıyla kabil olamıyordu."

the Unionist worldview. A graduate of the military school explained how Goltz Paşa's presence changed even the physical appearance of the cadets as follows:

After that, von der Goltz Paşa, who we all know, was brought in. He started to regulate and educate in Harbiye. After one or two years, the style, posture, and walk of the students of Harbiye had completely changed. The students of Harbiye became noticeable even if they were wearing civilian clothes, due to their posture and walk. The officers who were sent for additional training in Germany by Goltz Paşa's suggestion became completely different in shape and style. After this, and experiencing the student committees and children's troops I have seen during the short period of time I spent in Berlin, I realized that the people of a nation could only be awakened with great religious, national, virtuous, and social values if they protect their body, shape, strength and health with physical training.<sup>230</sup>

Goltz Paşa's understanding of military and society makes itself visible in his famous book *Das Volk im Waffen*, later translated to Turkish as *Millet-i Müselleha*. It is obvious that Goltz Paşa explained the world around him in a Social Darwinist sense of struggle to survive and explained the importance of the military in accordance with this theory. The book was translated to Turkish by a captain in the Ottoman army, Yüzbaşı Tahir Bey, in 1884, only a year after its publication in Germany. The book's second edition was published only four years after its first edition, which was a sign of huge popularity in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>231</sup> This is not surprising considering that the book was deemed as a must-read among the military students, and even promoted by the War Office.<sup>232</sup> According to the translator of the book, Yüzbaşı Tahir Bey, *Millet-i Müselleha* was a compulsory reading in the French army, which showed just how important it was for the Ottoman military students to read this book as well.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> "Hulusi Beyefendi'nin Mektupları," *İdman*, no. 2 (1913): 18. "Sonra günün birinde Almanya'dan hepimizin tanıdığı von der Goltz paşa getirildi. Harbiye mektebini tensik ve talime başladı. Aradan bir iki sene geçer geçmez harbiye mektebi talebesinin biçimi, duruşu, yürüyüşü büsbütün değişti. Başı bozuk Avrupası giyen bir harbiye mektebi talebesi hiç söylenmediği, bilinmediği halde duruşundan, yürüyüşünden "ben harbiye mektebi talebesiyimdir" diye hüküm idecek kadar bir fark gösterdi. Hele Goltz Paşa'nın tavsiyesi üzerine Almanya'ya ikmal-i tahsile gönderilip gelen zabıtlar büsbütün başka bir şekil ve kıyafet aldı. Bundan ve bâhusus bir müddetçik Berlin'e giderek talebe cemiyetlerini, etfal taburlarını gördükden sonra bir millet efradının ancak terbiye-i bedeniye sayesinde endâmını, biçimini, kuvvetini, sıhhatini muhafaza edebileceğine ve bunları öğrenirken dini, milli, ahlaki, içtimai hislerin daha derin, daha metin bir surette uyanacağına iman itdim."

<sup>231</sup> Altınay, *The Myth of the Military-Nation: Militarism, Gender and Education in Turkey*. p. 14.

<sup>232</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*. p. 211.

<sup>233</sup> "Aslı olan Almancasının iki sene zarfında üç defa ve Fransız lisanına dahi iki defa tercüme edilmiş olması ve ba-husus "Revue Des Dux Mondes" nam mecmua-i meşhurenin bu babda yazmış olduğu bir makale-i takriziyede "Harbiye nazın eğer vatanına gerçekten büyük bir hizmet ifa etmek isterse bu kitaptan her zabite birer nüsha ita etmelidir." cümlesini irat etmesi eserin derece-i ehemmiyetini ispata kafidir sanırsınız." Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz, *Millet-i Müselleha*, ed. İsmet Sarıbal (Antalya: Otorite Kitap, 2013). p. 21.

While Haeckel, Büchner, and the other Social Darwinist thinkers contributed to the philosophical foundation of Social Darwinism in the Unionist ideology, it can be argued that Goltz Paşa and *Millet-i Müselleha* had a more direct effect on the promotion of Social Darwinism in their ideology. As it can be understood from *Millet-i Müselleha*, Goltz Paşa was an undeniable Social Darwinist and militarist. Combined with the already existing legend of Goltz Paşa among the military elite of the Ottoman Empire, Goltz Paşa's worldview increased his popularity and influenced these officers on matters such as the importance of the army and necessity of war.

The realms that are built up and made great by the sword last, it is true, but their time, like everything else that has ever been or will be in this world. "The destiny of nations is like that of men; they arise, they grow, they bloom, they decay, and cease to be." But it is worth more to make good use of the time, than to overlive it like dried flowers in the spring.<sup>234</sup>

Goltz's main argument in *Millet-i Müselleha* was that wars were the inescapable realities of the world order after 1871. According to him, in order to ensure the nation's survival, a sense of military-nation had to be embraced and the societies had to organize themselves under the control of the military elite.<sup>235</sup> Goltz's sense of inevitable war and the impossibility of an eternal peace was visible in the Ottoman publications and found its supporters around the Empire. In some cases, it is even obvious that Goltz's arguments were directly copied in the Ottoman elite's own writings. For instance, Goltz's own argument regarding the necessity of wars were almost exactly the same arguments in articles published in journals such as *Asker* or *Mecmua-i Ebızziya*.

We must make the best of what the Gods send. True it is: wars are the lot of mankind; are the inevitable destiny of nations. Eternal peace is not the lot of mortals in this world.<sup>236</sup>

The excerpt from *Millet-i Müselleha* above resonated with the Ottoman elite so much that Major Ali Fuad's article *Felsefe-i Harb*, which was published in 1908 in the journal *Asker* argued the exact same thing with Goltz Paşa. This is particularly important to understand the extent of Goltz Paşa's influence on the Unionist elite, especially the Unionist military elite.

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<sup>234</sup> Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz, *The Nation in Arms* (London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1887). p. 389.

<sup>235</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioglu, "İttihatçılık," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce IX: Dönemler ve Zihniyetler*, ed. Murat Gültekin and Tanıl Bora (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009). p. 256.

<sup>236</sup> Goltz, *The Nation in Arms*. p. 386.

Of course, us soldiers wish for an eternal peace, where all people to be gathered under the same flag of brotherhood, and the history of the generations whose pasts consisted of only wars to be covered up with a cloak of oblivion. However, this dream is still quite afar and up until it happens, the law of the strong ones being victorious will continue vigorously for centuries. (...) However, the destiny of the living creatures is already tough and harsh. The topic that is mentioned is not a case of justice, but instead, in the greatest and most humanistic sense, a case of strength and capability. There is no justice or law that can force a living creature to give up on their necessary living conditions. These living conditions can only be achieved with strength, and strength brings out the resistance. When there is a matter of life for an individual or a nation, the theories of rights and strength must be examined alongside. Strength means rights. (...) Living means fighting.<sup>237</sup>

In the preface of his book, Goltz Paşa was claiming that, as Kaiser Wilhelm II put it in a previous speech, the army of Prussia would be the Prussian nation in arms.<sup>238</sup> In another article published in the same issue of the same journal, Ali Fuad argued a similar case for the Ottoman Empire, and suggested that the Ottoman army must be the Ottoman nation in arms, and this idea had to be embraced wholeheartedly by everyone who deemed themselves as an “Ottoman”.<sup>239</sup> When taking the fact that a sense of nation in arms would mean the military elite playing a more increased role in the society into account, the Unionists’ ardent promotion of *Millet-i Müselleha* to support their rule is not that surprising. After all, as Şükrü Hanioglu put it, the Unionists wished for “the military to gain power “not to conquer lands,” but to play an active role in society”,<sup>240</sup> which made itself visible in the society in the shape of organizations such as *Türk Gücü Associations*, or new trends such as dressing children in naval uniforms.<sup>241</sup> The importance of shaping up the society in a more militaristic sense had been promoted in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars as well.

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<sup>237</sup> Ali Fuad, “Felsefe-i Harb,” *Asker*, no. 1 (1908). p. 109-10. “Bütün insanların aynı livay-ı uhuvvet altında toplanarak ve tarihi harbdan ibaret olan nesillerin mazileri üstüne bir ridây-ı nisyan örterek bir sulh-u daimenin en’amı içinde hayatgüzar olmalarını biz askerler de temenni ideriz. Lakin bu gaye-i emel henüz pek uzaktır ve tahakkuk idinceye kadar mürur idecek asırlar zarfında kuvvetin hakka galebesi kanûnu gayet şiddetli surette hükümran olacaktır. (...) Lakin, zî-hayat harb-i mahlukun mukadderatı zaten sert ve haşındır. Hayat, merhametsiz, gaddar bir mücadeleden başka bir şey değildir. Mevzuu bahsolan mesele, hak meselesi değil, belki en âli ve en insânî manasıyla, kuvvet, iktidar meselesidir. Bir zi-hayatı kendisine lazım olan şerait-i hayatiyyeden sarf-ı nazar itmeğe icbar idebilecek bir hak, bir kanun tasvir idilemez. Bu şerait-i hayata ancak kuvvet ile istihsal olunur. Kuvvet ise mukavemet tevliid ider. Bir ferdin veya bir heyet-i ictimaiyyenin hayatı mevzubahs olduğu zaman hak ve kuvvet nazariyeleri beraberleriyle tetabbuk iderler... kuvvet, hak demek olur. (...) Yaşamak, kavga itmek dimekdir.”

<sup>238</sup> “‘Nation in Arms!’ A poetical saying, and a royal saying as well, spoken at a critical time. ‘The Prussian army will be also in the future the Prussian nation in arms!’” Goltz, *The Nation in Arms*. i.

<sup>239</sup> “Osmanlı ordusu, Osmanlı millet-i müsellehası olmalıdır. Bu bir (...) amaldır ki şimdiden itibaren Osmanlı nam mübeccelini taşıyan her insanın amak-ı kalb ve vicdanına nakış olunmalı; bütün emeller, bütün gayretler, bütün fedakarlıklar bütün hatveler hep bu gaye-i ulviye doğru tevciye idilmelidir.” Ali Fuad, “Ordu ve Millet,” *Asker* 1, no. 1 (1908). p. 16.

<sup>240</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902 – 1908*. p. 294.

<sup>241</sup> Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk’s Turkey*. p. 112.

The youth will take shape in their mothers' wombs, with their mothers' blood, and then will grow with their mother's milk. The mothers who are unhealthy and unstrung sow the first seeds of an army's disorder. (...) In addition to that, the classes in schools that are tiring children's brains should be swapped for classes that will help children to become iron-bodied and strong-willed individuals. Leaving the youth that graduated to be rotten in the corners of the coffee shops means consenting to thousands of defeats in the future. For every single individual and government that is bothered by the defeats of the army, it is a sacred duty to encourage the nation to bravely compete in open air in events like scouting, mountaineering, shooting, races, games, and various competitions.<sup>242</sup>

As discussed in the previous chapter, the military identity of the CUP had been one of the most crucial aspect of their existence, which also played a determinant role in the Unionist policy making as well. When we look at the role Goltz was appointing to the officers in *Millet-i Müselleha*, the military characteristic of the CUP stands out even more. Goltz quoted Ernst von Röchel, a general of the Prussian army, and claimed that "the soul of the Prussian army is in its officers".<sup>243</sup> The type of officer Goltz was describing in *Millet-i Müselleha* was befitting to the officers of the CUP, which could only fuel their belief in being chosen to be the people that must save the Empire.

The corps of officers must accordingly be chosen from the best classes of the people, who exercise even in ordinary life a natural authority over the masses. (...) An especial value is, and is rightly, laid upon education, because it is the basis of noble and moral qualities. But we ought not to cling exclusively to scientific education, but pay also proper regard to the qualities of the heart and character. It is required of an officer that, in the interest of his service, he should forego personal advantage, lucre, and prosperity. Hence only such fractions of the population as are not, by reason of their vocation, compelled to prefer personal advantage to great and public ends, are fitting persons to recruit the corps of officers.<sup>244</sup>

The importance of officers in the society was elaborated greatly in Binbaşı Hafız Hakkı's book *Bozgun*, which deals with the defeats the Ottoman Empire faced during the Balkan Wars. He argued that the officers would be the ones who treat the society's problems, but in order to do so, the society had to be educated and trained accordingly. Hafız Hakkı claims that the Ottoman Empire had to have a national ideal, and the national ideal he explained was similar to the nation in arms theory of Goltz Paşa.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Hafız Hakkı, *Bozgun* (İstanbul: Tercüman, 1972). p. 70-71. "Yetiştirilecek gençler ana karnında, ana kanıyla teşekkül edecek, sonra ana sütüyle büyüyecektir. Sıhhsiz, sinirleri bozuk olan analar, ordu bozgunluğunun ilk tohumlarını hazırlarlar. (...) Sonra mekteplerde zihinleri yoran fazla dersler yerine, çocukların demir vücutlu, sağlam sinirli olmalarına bakmaktır. Mektepten çıkan gençleri siyasi kulüplerde kahve köşelerinde çürümeye bırakmak, istikbalde binlerce bozgunluğa razı olmak demektir. İzcilik, dağcılık, atıcılık, yarışlar, oyunlar, muhtelif müsabakalarda milletin açık havada mertçe uğraşması için her türlü teşvikten geri durmamak ordunun bozgunluğundan müteessir olan her fert için ve hükümet için en mukaddes vazifedir."

<sup>243</sup> Goltz, *The Nation in Arms*. p. 36-37.

<sup>244</sup> Goltz. p. 37.

<sup>245</sup> Mustafa Aksakal, "Not 'by Those Old Books of International Law, but Only by War': Ottoman Intellectuals on the Eve of the Great War," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 15, no. 3 (2004). p. 525.

Before anyone and anything else, it is the group of military officers who will treat the age-long mental diseases of the nation. It is not enough for the ones that will be treating the nation to be just healthy and nothing else. They also have to have great spirits that will predominate over the nation's spirit. A military officer must hold onto the great ideal that the nation is worshipping more than the nation itself, so that he can advice tenacity and strength to the rotten hearts he came across. An officer must be used to any kind of sacrifices and look down on humanity from the topmost level, and from the beginning, must be determined to give his life for their holy ideal. This way, he can awaken a sense of despal towards life, so that the soldier can be ready to die gladly.<sup>246</sup>

In addition to that the importance of the officers during wartime, Goltz argues that the reserve officers play a massive role in strengthening the sense of nation in arms and creating ties between the army and the nation.<sup>247</sup> Goltz argued that the wars of their time was not only the conflicts between the armies, but a struggle between the nations as a whole.<sup>248</sup> Hence, his great emphasis on the unity between the nation and army make sense in this context. This is a particularly important subject in the Unionist ideology, considering that the ties between the army and the common people were severed for centuries. This damaged relationship between two sides was best described in Ali Fuad's article *Ordu ve Millet*. Ali Fuad was arguing that due to the circumstances of the previous decades, the Ottoman army and nation were alienated to one another, but in order to revive the Ottoman Empire, the army and the nation must be reunited once again.<sup>249</sup> In another article, Ali Fuad was claiming that in exchange of the army's

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<sup>246</sup> Hakkı, *Bozgun*. p. 131. "Her şeyden evvel milletteki asırlık ruh hastalıklarını tedavi edecek subaylar heyetidir. Bu tedaviyi yapacak olanların yalnız hasta olmaması kâfi gelmez. Milletın ruhuna hâkim olacak yüksek bir ruha sahip olması lazımdır. Subay milletin taptığı yüksek mefkureye, herkesden fazla kuvvetli bir iman ile sarılmış olmalıdır ki, eline geçecek çürük kalplere azim ve metanet verebilsin. Subay, her türlü fedakarlıklara alışarak ve insanlığa pek yüksek bir noktadan bakarak, mukaddes ideali için canını feda etmeye ezelden azmetmiş olmalıdır ki, asker de seve seve ölüme yürüyecek derecede hayatı hakir görme duygusu uyandırsın."

<sup>247</sup> "Even in time of peace, the officers of the Reserve have important duties to perform. They stand with one foot in the military system, of the material working of which they understand much more than the private soldier, and with the other foot among the people. On this account they are especially capable of extending and keeping alive in wider spheres attachment to, and understanding for, the profession of arms. They can be energetic representatives of all the interests of the army." Goltz, *The Nation in Arms*. p. 43.

<sup>248</sup> "War is now an exodus of nations, and no more a conflict between armies, All moral energy will be collected for a life and death struggle, the whole sum of the intelligence residing in either people will be employed for their mutual destruction." Goltz. p. 380.

<sup>249</sup> "Hâsıl-ı mutlak, tam, behimi bir inkiyad ve mutavaat esasına müstenid bir meslek-i terbiyye tâkip idilirdi. Ordu bu suretle milletden tecrid idilince artık millet âlâm ve ıztırabatına, amal ve menafiine lakayıt kalmış, millete karşı olan bütün borcunu unutarak, bütün şeref ve hukundan sarf-ı nazar iderek müstebitlerin hevesatına tabi ve esir olmuşdur. (...) Ancak bu irtibatı daha kuvvetli, daha samimi bir şekilde vâz itmeli... genç nesillerin fikirleri, kalpleri maksad-ı âli-i hürriyet ve âhâde göre terbiye ve tanzim olunmalı... Satvet ve şevket-i tarihiyyemizi tekrar-ı iktisab itmek için, yine otuz milyon Osmanlının timsal-i amali, merkez-i kuvvet ve ittihadı olacak; her Osmanlı ordusu her Osmanlı millet-i müsellahası olacaktır." Fuad, "Ordu ve Millet." p. 14-16.

sacrifices to ensure the nation's freedom and salvation, the nation would make sacrifices to create an army which is undeniably strong and devastating.<sup>250</sup>

One final aspect of Goltz's *Millet-i Müselleha* that is visible in the Unionist ideology is Goltz's interpretation of politics as a reason behind the struggle of existence.<sup>251</sup> Considering that the Unionist military elite wanted to play an important role in the politics, it can be suggested that this desire to always be in power could be derived from the Goltz's interpretation of struggle of existence in the international system. The main purpose of the Unionists was to be in power in the government in order to keep the Empire intact, and to do so, the Unionists did not hesitate to use other ways to eliminate their opposition.<sup>252</sup> The establishment of *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*, the Babıali Raid of 1913, warmongering, and various other propaganda methods that had been used during the CUP regime can be explained with Goltz's interpretation of politics and struggle of existence as interrelated subjects. Goltz's *Millet-i Müselleha* did not only give the CUP a great chunk of its ideology, but it also, to some extent, create a legitimacy for their rule. In addition to that, this legitimacy was not only there for a limited period of time, instead, it was rather obscure and eternal. After all, as Goltz Paşa argued, as long as the nations were looking for more both for present and the future, there would be wars.

So long as earthly nations strive after earthly goods, so long as they aim at securing for all future generations both room for development and peace and respect, so long as they, led on by great spirits, strive beyond the narrow compass of everyday needs towards the realisation of political and civilising ideals, so long will there be war. What use is it to dispute whether war has an ennobling or degrading effect upon mankind? Certainly, the frequently quoted simile, that war is like a thunderstorm, which clears the air under great convulsions, must be only conditionally applied.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> "Bütün bu büyük emellerin tahkiki, kuvvetli olmamıza, dünyanın en kuvvetli ordularından birine sahip olmamıza mütevafıktır. Ordunun, milletin temin-i hürriyet ve necati için fedakarlık göstermiş olmasına mukabil, milletin de ordunun ilay-ı satveti için her nev'i fedakarlıkları ihtiyar eyleyeceğine şüphe yoktur." Fuad, "Felsefe-i Harb." p. 112.

<sup>251</sup> "In a certain sense, we approach an original state of nature, when wars between neighbours were only the result of enmity; but this is the difference which obtains now, namely, that the enmity is not a purely instinctive one, but springs from the collision of ideal interests, to which both power and respect in a prominent degree belong. Both are political moments. Further, politics determine the way in which war shall be begun. (...) Politics, again, as a rule, determine the moment for the outbreak of hostilities, upon the happy choice of which much depends. They, in short, create the general situation, in which the State enters into the struggle, and this will be of material influence upon the decisions and attitude of the commander-in chief, and even upon the general esprit of the army." Goltz, *The Nation in Arms*. p. 115-16.

<sup>252</sup> Köroğlu, *Türk Edebiyatı ve Birinci Dünya Savaşı (1914-1918)*. p. 205.

<sup>253</sup> Goltz, *The Nation in Arms*. p. 386.

## CHAPTER IV

### UNIONIST COUNTER-ARGUMENTS AGAINST SOCIAL DARWINISM

One other crucial aspect of Social Darwinism must be discussed when examining the extent of Social Darwinism in the Unionist ideology. As pointed out in the previous chapter, both Ernst Haeckel and Ludwig Büchner claimed that the Turks were one of the inferior races of the humankind. This is an important aspect of the Social Darwinism which presented the Unionists another hurdle to overcome. Considering that the Unionists' main problem was making sure that the Ottoman Empire would survive in the perpetual struggle for existence and deemed the foreign politics as a matter of "struggle for life",<sup>254</sup> it almost seems impossible for the Ottoman intelligentsia, specifically the Unionist elite, to accept Social Darwinism as a valid way of interpreting the world around them. However, as discussed throughout this thesis, Social Darwinism's popularity among the Ottoman intellectuals, and mainly in the Unionist ideology is undeniable. These two aspects of Social Darwinism's journey in the Ottoman Empire bring the question of how the Ottoman intellectuals overcome Social Darwinism's belittling attitude towards the Turkish race along.

Social Darwinists' overall attitude towards Turks derived from none other than Charles Darwin's own ideas. Whether Charles Darwin himself was a Social Darwinist or not is a subject that is debated to this day, but his views on the Turkish race is apparent in his private letters. Later published by his son, Francis Darwin, Darwin was claiming that the natural selection contributed greatly to the civilization. According to Darwin, the previous centuries marked a time where European nations were overwhelmed by the Turks, but as of present, the more civilized Caucasians finally started to defeat the Turks.<sup>255</sup> This sense of deeming the Turks as one of the inferior races became widely

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<sup>254</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902 – 1908*. p. 304.

<sup>255</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin - Volume I*, ed. Francis Darwin (Moscow: Dodo Press, 2008). p. 263. "Lastly, I could show fight on natural selection having done and doing more for the progress of civilization than you seem inclined to admit. Remember what risk the nations of Europe ran, not so many centuries ago of being overwhelmed by the Turks, and how ridiculous such an idea now is! The more civilised so-called Caucasian races have beaten the Turkish hollow in

known especially because of Haeckel's categorization of the races, thus became a topic of debate in the Ottoman Empire.

In addition to being a matter of a self-realization for the Ottoman Empire, this aspect of Social Darwinism is also important for its aftermaths. First of all, as suggested by Şükrü Hanioglu, the Social Darwinist attitude towards the Turks prohibited the Unionists to wholly embrace a race-based nationalism.<sup>256</sup> Combined with the Empire's multiethnic structure, this situation established an environment in the Ottoman Empire where nationalism, especially race-based nationalisms deemed as the most dangerous threat to the Empire's survival. However, while the Unionists were having these fears, the Balkan nations were finalizing their own nationalist agendas. This created another paradox for the Unionist ideology, on one hand, the lateness of the Turkish nationalism can be in relation with Social Darwinism, but on the other hand, this lateness caused an urgency to close the gap for the Unionists. The urgency to close the gap presented itself in a wide range of policies from cultural propaganda to downright violence, fueled by Social Darwinism itself.<sup>257</sup>

Another importance of this subject is how its effects were not only limited to the Ottoman Empire but also spilled over to the Republic of Turkey as well. The Social Darwinist attitude towards Turks was also apparent in European historiography, which portrayed the European civilization as the most superior race. While various philosophers explained this so-called superiority in accordance with different theories, there were others like Gobineau who explained this superiority in civilization in relation with the superiority of the European race.<sup>258</sup> This is a particularly important subject, since one of the first points in the agenda of the newly founded Republic of Turkey was to create an alternate for this European historiography and prove to the rest of the world, and also to themselves, that they belonged to the European civilization. Known as the *Türk Tarih Tezi* (Turkish Thesis of History), the thesis' main purpose was to prove that the Turkish identity was more than just the deserts of Islam or the steppes of the Inner Asia. While the Turkish Thesis of History is a particularly

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the struggle for existence. Looking to the world at no very distant date, what an endless number of the lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilized races throughout the world."

<sup>256</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*. p. 209.

<sup>257</sup> Bora, "Türk Ulusal Kimliği Üzerine Bazı Tezler." p. 53-55.

<sup>258</sup> Doğan Avcioğlu, *Türklerin Tarihi 1* (İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1978). p. 8-9.

important characteristic of the first decades of the Republic of Turkey, it should not be mistakenly assumed that it had no connection to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>259</sup> The Turkish Thesis of History is connected with the Social Darwinist attitude towards the Turks, not only because the thesis was created to fight the image of the Turks the theory created, but also because many of the Turcology works the thesis used dated back to the final decades of the Ottoman Empire.

On this subject, a similarity between the Germans and the Ottoman intellectuals draws the attention. While German intellectuals such as Haeckel and Büchner was defending a ranking of races, their so-called ancestors, the Germans, were deemed as the “barbaric” and “uncivilized” tribes, similar to how Europe was considering the Turks. As can be seen in the example of the Germans, their history was also written by their more “civilized” neighbors, mainly the Romans,<sup>260</sup> which is similar to how the Turkish history was written by mainly the Chinese. It is striking, however, that while the Germans held onto Social Darwinism to prove their superiority, a phenomenon that peaked during Adolf Hitler’s reign, the Unionists, especially the Turkist Unionists were in a constant battle with the Social Darwinism. Among the Unionists, Social Darwinist arguments such as “struggle for life” and “survival of the fittest” were generally accepted, but they were in a never-ending fight against the fact that the same theory insisted on their inferiority.

As mentioned above, this dilemma characterized the first decades of the Turkish Republic but started way before than that. In this chapter, I will elaborate on how the Ottoman intelligentsia, mainly the Unionists, faced with this aspect of Social Darwinism and defended themselves. In this regard, I will divide the Ottoman intellectuals’ arguments into three categories. First, I will delve into the Japanese argument the Ottomans so dearly loved and embraced. Secondly, the cultural aspect of this quest of self-realization will be examined, mainly the increased works on Turcology, specifically in the *Turkish Homeland* journal. Thirdly, the counterarguments of the Ottoman elite will be elaborated, which were way more

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<sup>259</sup> Büşra Ersanlı, “Bir Aidiyet Fermanı: ‘Türk Tarih Tezi,’” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce IV: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekin (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2020). p. 803.

<sup>260</sup> Aydın, “Cumhuriyet’in İdeolojik Şekillenmesinde Antropolojinin Rolü: Irkçı Paradigmanın Yükselişi ve Düşüşü.” p. 345-36.

hostile and aggressive towards the West. While the second category was aiming to prove the civilized nature of the Turks, the third category was, rather harshly, claiming that the actual civilized race was the Turkish race, and compared with the Turks, the Westerners were rather the uncivilized ones.

### 3.1 The Japanese Example

The Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 provided a fresh breath for the Ottoman intelligentsia and the Unionists. The Japanese people were also considered as one of the yellow, inferior races in Haeckel's categorization of the races of humankind, a similar situation with the Turks in this regard. Due to this similarity, Japan's victory over Russia was a gold mine for the Unionists. For them, it proved that the categorization of the races was faulty in this aspect, due to the fact that the Russians were considered as one of the members of the Aryan race as well.<sup>261</sup> This victory resonated so much with the Ottoman intellectuals that the press would give Japan as an example to keep the hope for a better future alive.<sup>262</sup>

There were a few lessons that were taken by the Unionists on the subject of the Japanese example. The first lesson the Unionists had taken from Japan's success was simple: if Japan could resist the European imperialism and expansionism, then so could the Ottoman Empire. They took Japan as a role-model, admired their resistance against the European imperialism, and wanted to be "the Japan of the Near East". According to Şükrü Hanioglu, many of them even applied to fight as a volunteer in the Japanese army.<sup>263</sup> The prayer for the Japanese nation and army had been vastly emphasized in the press, especially the ones that were either connected with or sympathetic towards the Young Turks.

On the other side is Japan, newly brightened and risen, a state which learned to have confidence in their essence and faith in their future, wants to rule the Far East's regions and be in the ranks of the world's great powers, despite being already a great, strong state. (...) It is not possible

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<sup>261</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902 – 1908*. p. 302.

<sup>262</sup> "Me'yus Olmalı Mı?" p. 62. "Akvamın hilkatlerini birbirinden tefrik ile ayrı ayrı tabakalarda taksim iden bazı Avrupalılar ve her gördüklerine bilmiyerek taklid iden bazı Osmanlılar bizleri ecnas-ı aliye-i insaniyenin madununda bir kavım addediyorlar. Türkçe söyleyelim. Türkleri insan cinsinin aşağı kısmından sayıyorlar. Bu iftira-i tabiatı bu bühtan-ı hilkatı velhasıl bu fikr-i sakamı bugün sarı cinsinden olan Japonyalılar memleketlerinde terakkileriyle, Mançurya'da topları tüfenkleriyle yıkıyorlar."

<sup>263</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902 – 1908*. p. 304.

to not be in awe with the dignity and determination the Japanese nation had shown, and the caution and the undeniable strength the Japanese state presented in the couple of past couple of weeks.<sup>264</sup>

The idea of becoming “the Japan of the Near East” had been a common trend among the Unionists, despite their tendency to ignore the vast differences between the two empires. Yusuf Akçura’s *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (Three Types of Politics), one of the blueprints of the Unionist/Turkist agenda, shows us just how significant the desire to become a new Japan. Akçura’s plan was simple, unifying all Turks scattered around Asia and Europe, and since the Ottoman Empire was the biggest and most civilized of them all, they would play a similar role that Japan played in the Far East Asia.<sup>265</sup> This sense of Ottoman superiority against the other Central Asian states was also visible in other Ottoman publications as well. In this regard, David Kushner cites an excerpt from an Ottoman journal *İkdam* on this matter. In this excerpt, it is argued that the Turkish language was extremely progressed and adequate to comprehend even the scientifically and philosophically complicated matters, yet the languages of peoples of Crimea, Khiva, Caucasus, Bukhara, and Afghanistan lacked this trait, which made the Turkish language a “valuable treasure” for them.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> “Rusya-Japonya,” *Türk*, no. 11 (1904). “(...) Ötede Japonya yeni parlamış, yükselmiş, nefesine itimadı, ikbaline itikadı yeni öğrenmiş bu devlet, büyük, kavî bir devlet olduğu halde ekâlim-i aksay-i şarka hükmünü geçirmek, düvel-i muazzama-i cihan sırasına geçmek istiyor. (...) Şu birkaç hafta içinde Japonların kavmiyet itibariyle gösterdikleri veکار ve metanete, devlet suretiyle de izhâr itdikleri tedbir ve satvete hayran olmamak mümkün müdür? Daha bu münakaşanın ibtidalarında bütün meclîs-i mebusan ittihâd-ı ârâ ile Rusların akvâl-i vâhiyesine itibar idilmeyerek Japonya’nın hakk-ı sarîhi kılıçla müdafaa-i muhafaza olunmasına İmparatoran, hükümetten metalibe eyledikten sonra ihtîşâm ile dağıldı”

<sup>265</sup> Akçura, *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*. p. 36-37. “But the main service of such a policy would be to unify all the Turks who, being spread over a great portion of Asia and over the Eastern parts of Europe, belong to the same language groups, the same ethnicity and mostly the same religion. Thus there would be created a greater national political unity among the other great nations. In this greater national unity the Ottoman state as the most powerful, the most progressive and civilized of all Turkish societies, would naturally play an important role. There would be a Turkish world in between the world of the Caucasian and the East Asian ethnicities. Recent events suggest that such a division of the world into two great blocs is imminent. In between these two blocks the Ottoman state could play a role similar to that which is played by Japan among the East Asian ethnicities.” Translation by: David S. Thomas, [http://vlib.iue.it/carrie/texts/carrie\\_books/paksoy-2/cam9.html](http://vlib.iue.it/carrie/texts/carrie_books/paksoy-2/cam9.html), (Last accessed: 12.08.2021)

<sup>266</sup> David Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism 1876-1908* (London: Frank Cass, 1977). p. 48. “Whereas most of the dialects spoken by the peoples living in Central Asia do not possess even a grammar, our language possesses all the scientific and technological terms and is able to express the most complicated descriptions and the most refined views. Considering this, and the fact that aforementioned peoples [Crimea, Caucasus, Khiva, Bukhara and Afghanistan] have recognized the need for literacy as the chief means for progress, it is necessary that the Ottoman language assume, in their eyes, the position of valuable treasure.” (Terbiye, *İkdam*, no. 727, July 27, 1896)

This acceptance of Japan's superiority can be seen in Ahmet Agayef's series titled *Türk Alemleri*, published in *Türk Yurdu* journal during 1911. Agayef, one of the most important figures in the *Türk Yurdu* journal and the Turkist movement in the Ottoman Empire, wrote several articles in this journal in order to inform their readers on the great and glorious history of the Turks. In the second part of his article, Agayef is claiming that a nation's quality and capabilities must be examined in comparison with the other nations in their continent. According to Agayef, comparing the Ottoman Empire to the British, French or Russian Empires would be a mistake in this regard since the Ottoman Empire had to be compared with the other Asian nations. He argues that while Turks were backwards against the European nations, they were the most superior nation in Asia, set aside Japan.<sup>267</sup> In this context, whether Agayef accepted the superiority of Japan because it was an undeniable fact or because their endless desire to become "the Japan of the Near East" can be a topic of debate.

In the Ottoman Empire the Japanese admiration went so far as to an anonymous author was claiming that the Japanese and the Turks were from the same race. In an article published in the newspaper *Balkan*, the writer was talking about the Russo-Japanese War and claiming that the Japanese and the Turks were from the same race, same family, and pointing Japan out as an example to be followed for the Turks. He claimed that thirty years ago Japan was basically nothing, but since they embraced a just constitution and liberty, combined with their tenacious and zealous national characteristic, Japan became a great nation. According to the author, in the future, the Turks could go through the same path as Japan and show the same capabilities as Japan.<sup>268</sup> In this excerpt, two points draw the attention the most. Firstly, it is quite

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<sup>267</sup> Ahmet Agayef, "Türk Alemleri II," *Türk Yurdu* 1, no. 2 (1911): 30–32. "Bir kavmin evsâf ve mezâyâsı, aynı kitada bulunan diğer akvam ile mukâyese neticesinde belli olur. Türkler, Fransızlara, Almanlar, İngilizlere hatta Ruslara nispeten pek geridedirler. Fakat Türkleri işbu akvam ile mukâyese etmek kıyâs-ı maa'l fârik kabilindedir. Zîrâ ne tarihimizin sûret-i cerayânı, ne vaziyet-i coğrafyamız ve ırkımızın mensup olduğu kıta, ne de merbut bulunduğumuz medeniyetin avâmil-i esâsiyyesi garp akvâmı ile mukayeseye müsâittirler. Türkleri ancak içinde bulunduğu Asya akvâmı ile karşılatılarak tetkik etmek kâbilidir. Böyle bir tetkik ise hem akıl ve hikmete ve hem de fenne muvâfık olur. Öyle bir tetkik neticesinde acaba Türkler ne gibi bir vaziyette bulunabileceklerdir? Bu suâle cevap olarak diyebiliriz ki bütün Asya akvamı arasında, Japonlar istisnâ edildiği halde, en müterakkî ve en medenî kavim, Türk kavmidir."

<sup>268</sup> "Musahabe," *Balkan*, no. 109 (1906): 2. "Türklerle Japonlar bir cinsden, bir ırkdandır. Japonlar otuz sene evla kadar hiçbir şey değildiler. Fakat otuz sene ol sahib ve malik oldukları kanun-u adil ve hürriyet, azim ve gayret onları bugün değil yalnız kahramanlıkta insanlıkda, namus ve edeb hususunda da en büyük bir millet ad itirdi. Ya yarın zavallı Türklerin, o âli nejat milletinin de bu hakka ma(...), aynı istidadı gösteremeyeceğini kim iddia idebilir."

obvious that the reason why the author was suggesting that the Turks and the Japanese were from the same race was because of the Japanese victory against the Russians. There is little to no doubt that this so-called kindredness with Japan would not be mentioned if Japan was defeated by Russia. Secondly, while it is not directly related to the subject of racial theories, the emphasis on how Japan advanced after declaring a constitution and embraced liberty. The Unionist determination to reinstitute the constitution is well known, and their tendency to think that their problems would be magically solved the moment the constitution would promulgate is visible in this excerpt as well.<sup>269</sup>

The second lesson that the Unionists drew out of the Japanese victory over Russia was the possibility of adapting a race-based nationalism and incorporating it into their own ideology. As suggested previously, the Unionists were hesitant to promote a race-based nationalism due to both the multiethnic structure of the Empire and the positioning of the Turks in the racial hierarchy. However, as the other nations of the Empire, especially the Balkan nations, started to split from the Empire's fold, their hesitancy decreased to some extent. With the Japanese victory over Russia, the obstacle of racial hierarchy had been overcome as well, which paved the way of a Turkish nationalism garnished with "scientific" racial theories. Yusuf Akçura was an important figure among the Unionist intelligentsia that argued in favor of a race-based nationalism, and he gave great emphasis on the Japanese example in order to provide legitimization to his argument.<sup>270</sup> In the journal *Türk*, Yusuf Akçura published Herbert Spencer's letter to the Japanese Kaneko Kentaro, in which Spencer gave recommendations to Japan in order to ensure the nation's progress and survival. In this letter, Spencer was advocating for the Japanese to keep the other races apart from their own, and not mixing two races together in order to ensure the purity of the Japanese race.<sup>271</sup> This sense of creating a race-based nationalism had been the most popular and most vocalized among the Russo-Turk intellectuals who were supporting the importance of the unification of the Turks to create the "Turan".<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük*. p. 40-41.

<sup>270</sup> M. Sükrü Hanioglu, "Turkism and the Young Turks 1889 – 1908," in *Turkey Beyond Nationalism: Towards Post National Identities*, ed. Hans Lukas Kieser (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006). p. 9-11.

<sup>271</sup> Akçura, "Spencer'in Japonlara Vasiyetnamesi." For the original version of Spencer's letters to Kaneko Kentaro, see: David Duncan, ed., *Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer* (London: Methuen & Co., 1908). p. 319-23.

<sup>272</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902 – 1908*. p. 67-68.

In addition to creating a basis for the race-based nationalism in the Ottoman Empire, Ahmet Yıldız also suggests that the Japanese victory marked the shift from Ottomanism to Turkism in the Unionist ideology.<sup>273</sup> While this shift had been denied by the Unionist decision makers at least until the end of the Balkan Wars in order to keep the Empire intact, it was at least apparent among the intellectual circles. In this context, it can be argued that the Japanese example did not only help the Unionist to make peace with Social Darwinism's tendency to deem the Turks as one of the lower races, but it also provided a basis for Turkism to be adopted in the Unionist ideology. In other words, Japan's victory in 1905 could be well played a role in the two most crucial characteristics of the time Unionists spent in power: Social Darwinism and Turkism.

### **3.2 Cultural Arguments and Popularity of Turcology**

Apart from embracing the Japanese example as a valid way of disproving Social Darwinist argument on the inferiority of the Turks, the Unionists, mainly the Unionist Turkist intellectuals also tried to prove their place in the higher ranks of the categorization of the races. The Ottoman intellectuals were well aware of how the Turks were perceived in Europe, and this sense of being misunderstood characterized the cultural activities of the Empire's final years. As Tanıl Bora suggested, considering the image of Turks in the European perspective, it is not surprising that the Turkists' first big project was to demolish the negative views towards the Turks.<sup>274</sup> While doing so, their main goal was to prove that they belonged to the same category as the European civilizations. This was important not only to underline that the Turks would survive in the eternal struggle for life, but it was also important to promote the ever-growing Turkism in the Unionist agenda.

There were several sides of these attempts at proving that the Turkish race belonged to the higher ranks of the racial hierarchy. Firstly, the intellectuals that took upon the role of proving the worthiness of the Turks aimed to create an alternative historiography that emphasized heavily on the pre-Islamic times of the Turks. There

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<sup>273</sup> Ahmet Yıldız, "*Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene*": *Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları (1919-1938)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2019). p. 72.

<sup>274</sup> Bora, "Türk Ulusal Kimliği Üzerine Bazı Tezler." p. 55.

was a tendency among these intellectuals to blame the negative portrayal on the European historiography, as can be seen in the examples of Ahmet Agayef and Yusuf Akçura. Their main purpose was to prove that the Turks had great contributions to the culture and civilization and refuting the Eurocentric claims that portrayed Turks as the nation that knows nothing but wars and destruction.<sup>275</sup> Ahmet Agayef's *Türk Medeniyeti Tarihi*, published in *Turkish Homeland* is particularly interesting regarding how the Turkists were perceiving the narrative surrounding the Turks. In this article, Agayef was arguing that because the Turks did not wholly demolish and assimilate the nations they conquered and showed them mercy, the result was the Turks forgetting their own cultures, languages, and history, and they even went as far as accepting the slanders against themselves manufactured by others.<sup>276</sup> In another article in the same journal, Yusuf Akçura was arguing that the Turks were looking into their own past through the European perspective, and in order to evaluate their own history correctly, they had to throw away these goggles and accept the documents and historical artifacts their ancestors left behind as the source for their works.<sup>277</sup>

Ironically, while the Turkists were in a cultural quarrel with the Eurocentric views on their own racial qualities and origins, their biggest help to refute their arguments was the European turcologists that worked on especially the pre-Islamic Turkish states.<sup>278</sup> The works on turcologists from countries such as France, Germany, Hungary, and Denmark helped not only to create a national awakening among the Unionists, it also helped them to find an alternative narrative regarding their own past, one that would

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<sup>275</sup> Umit Kurt, *Türk'ün Büyük, Biçare Irkı: Türkü Yurdu'nda Milliyetçiliğin Esasları (1911 – 1916)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012). p. 159.

<sup>276</sup> Ahmet Agayef, "Türk Medeniyeti Tarihi," *Türk Yurdu* 4, no. 40 (1913). p. 293. "Halbuki işte biz Türkler bu fazileti de nakîsa derecesine vardırđık. Başkasının şahsiyetine riayet ve hürmet düşüncesi bizi kendimizi unutmak, içinde bulunduğumuz muhitin esiri olmak derekesine vardırđı. Bu tarikde Türk o kadar ileri gitti ki, galip iken hakikatte mağlûp oldu. Kendi lisanını, an'ane-i tarihiyesini, mefahir-i ecdadını unuttu. Sayesinde akvam-ı saire ihya edilirken, lisanları, edebiyatları, faaliyet-i iktisadiyeleri inkişaf bulurken Türk kendi kendini unuttu ve yalnız bunların yaşamasını düşündü. Daha ileriye gitti: Mağlûp ve tâbi olan, lâkin hiçbir zaman kendilerini unutmamış ve hâl-i tabîyet ve mağlûbiyetlerini ad etmemiş olanlar tarafından kendisi hakkında icad ve tasni edilen isnadâtı, tahkirâtı bile kabul etti. Kendi lisanına aldı. Kendi zihniyetine soktu, yukarıda işaret etmiş olduğumuz "Etraki bî-idrak, Tatar-ı bed-gerdar" gibi tezyîfkâr terkiplerin kâffesini biz, bu işte kapılmış olduğumuz mağlûp ve münfail muhitlerden aldık."

<sup>277</sup> Yusuf Akçura, "Müverrih Leon Cahun ve Muallim Barthold'a Göre Cengiz Han," *Türk Yurdu* 1, no. 1 (1911): 18–19. "Biz kendimize, kavmimize, ırkımıza, yabancıların gözümûze taktığı gözlûkle bakıyoruz. Eğer Türkleri, Türklerin mâzisini olduđu gibi görmek istersek, yabancıların taktığı gözlûğü kırıp atarak, vekâyia, öz Türk gözümüzle bakmalıyız; yani babalarımızın bıraktığı eser ve vesikalan bizzat tetkik ile ona göre bir hüküm vermeye çalışmalıyız."

<sup>278</sup> Uriel Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism The Life and Teachings of Ziya Gökalp* (London: The Harvill Press, 1950). p. 105.

demolish the negative narrative surrounding the Turks.<sup>279</sup> One of the most important sources for these circles in their quest of creating a new history for the Turks was Leon Cahun's *Introduction a l'histoire de l'Asie: Turcs et Mongols des origines a 1405*, translated to Turkish by Necip Asım under the title of *Asya Tarihine Giriş: 1405'te Türklerin ve Moğolların Kökenleri*. In this book, Leon Cahun was mentioning a superior *Turan* race, who were the founding fathers of the other world civilizations.<sup>280</sup> Famous Turkists such as Yusuf Akçura and Ziya Gökalp gave great importance to this book, claiming that it increased Turkism's popularity in every corner of the Empire and posed as one of the most important ideological components of Turkism.<sup>281</sup> An example of this would be Ahmet Ağayef, who argued that the *Turani* peoples history dated back to even before the Christianity and Islam.<sup>282</sup> Jacob Landau is also suggesting that this book was most probably read by the ideological leaders of the CUP, such as Dr. Nazım,<sup>283</sup> and considering the popularity of *Turan* ideal that was ever-present in the Unionist ideology, this situation does not surprise.

As seen in the examples of the journals *Türk* (The Turk) and *Türk Yurdu*, the majority Ottoman intelligentsia, mainly the Turkist Unionists, were in a quest of disproving the European perception of the Turks. These journals, especially the *Turkish Homeland*, had numerous articles on either the European turcologists or the translations of the said turcologists. In Yusuf Akçura's article on the division of the Turkish history in eras, he refers to Leon Cahun's book and quotes the author on how the Turkish history should be divided into three categories: pre-Islamic Turks, post-Islamic Turks, and Turks after nationalism.<sup>284</sup> This type of categorization was important for the Turkist

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<sup>279</sup> Uzer, "Ambiguities of Turkism Cultural and Intellectual Manifestations of Turkish National Thought." p. 246.

<sup>280</sup> Fatma Müge Göçek, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Oluşumu: Sosyolojik Bir Yaklaşım," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce IV: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekin (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2020). p. 72.

<sup>281</sup> Yusuf Akçura, *Türkçülük* (İstanbul: İlgü Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2007). p. 107.

<sup>282</sup> Ahmet Ağayef, "Türk Medeniyeti Tarihi II," *Türk Yurdu* 4, no. 41 (1329) p. 293. "İşte görüyorsunuz, efendiler! Turanîler tayini gayr-i kabil olan zamanlarda değil, yalnız İslâmiyetten ve hatta Hristiyanlığın zuhûrundan birçok asırlar mukaddem bile asıl vatanları olan Asya-yı Vüstâ yaylalarından şimale, şarka, garba ve cenuba doğru yürüyerek elyevm Baltık Denizi ve Karpat Dağları ile Hint ummanı ve Sarıdeniz arasındaki azîm sahada akvam-ı şâire arasında bazan hâl-i ekalliyette ve bazan da ekseriyeti teşkil ederek yaşamaktadırlar."

<sup>283</sup> Jacob Landau, *Pantürkizm* (İstanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1999). p. 49.

<sup>284</sup> Yusuf Akçura, "Türk Tarihinin Devirlere Taksimi," *Türk Yurdu* 8, no. 82 (1915): 112. "Bu taksimi Türklüğün cereyanı pişvâlarından birisine anlattığımız zaman, bazı cihetlerle Leon Cahun'un *Asya Tarihine Medhal* unvanlı maruf eserinde kabul olunmuş taksimata benzeyen diğer bir taksim teklif etmişti. Bu taksime göre Türk tarihinin edvârı ber-vech-i atıdır.: 1. Kable'l-İslâm Türkler, 2. Ba'de'l-İslâm Türkler, 3. Milliyet fikrinin intibahından sonra Türkler."

Unionists, since the classical Ottoman historiography tended to leave the pre-Islamic periods of the Turks out of the mainstream narrative, it provided a basis for the Turkists to create a national identity separate from Islam as the main character. This was particularly crucial for especially the Unionists who were blaming Islam on the inferiority of the Turks against the Europeans. The emphasis they gave on the pre-Islamic period of Turkish history can be explained in this context. Embracing the pre-Islamic identity of the Turks gave them ammunition against the Westerners who were deeming Islam and backwardness as synonymous and therefore suggested that Turks were uncivilized as well. This also posed a cultural foundation for the *Turan* ideal, which was widely supported and embraced by the Turkists. While the former was useful in the fight against the Social Darwinist perception of the Turks,<sup>285</sup> the latter was important to replace the lost territories in the Balkans.<sup>286</sup>

Another aspect of this quest of erasing negative views on Turks was to simply argue the opposite. In Unionist publications, the trend of defining the Turks with adjectives such as “civilized”, “noble”, “brave”, “heroic”, and “morally superior”. The main target of these intellectuals was erasing the negative connotations that were appointed to the term “Turk”, a term usually used as an insult to describe barbaric, uncivilized people. The first usage of “Turk” as the name of a nation dated back to Mehmet Emin Yurdakul’s poem *Anadoludan Bir Ses Yahud Cenge Giderken* in 1897, in which he declared himself as a “Turkish Son”.<sup>287</sup> Mehmet Emin Yurdakul’s poem marked a new beginning for the Ottoman intellectuals, from then on, especially the Turkist intellectuals’ publications showed great similarities in their characterization and description of Turks.

This tendency to portray Turks as the superior, civilized, and heroic went hand in hand with the Turkist historiography that gave great emphasis to the pre-Islamic period. While in the West, the Turks were deemed uncivilized and barbaric mainly due to their past nomadic lifestyles, the Turkists aimed to prove the opposite of the same argument. According to them, the nomadic lifestyle gave the Turks not only a great mobility

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<sup>285</sup> Kurt, “1911-16 Arası Dönemde Türk Yurdu Dergisinde Türk Milli Kimliğinin İnşası.” p. 25.

<sup>286</sup> Georgeon, *Osmanlı Türk Modernleşmesi 1900 – 1930*. p. 6.

<sup>287</sup> Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism The Life and Teachings of Ziya Gökalp*. p. 108. “Ben bir Türküm dinim cinsim uludur/Sinem, özüm ateş ile doludur/İnsan olan vatanın kuludur!” cited in: Tevetoğlu, *Mehmet Emin Yurdakul: Hayatı ve Eserleri*. p. 30.

which helped them to become more heroic and braver, but it also gave them the opportunity to keep their blood pure since they did not mix with other races.<sup>288</sup> This emphasis on the military qualities of the pre-Islamic, nomadic Turks can also be connected with the popularization of von der Goltz's nation in arms theory. Considering that the nomadic Turks were basically a primitive model of Goltz's envisaged nation in arms, it is not far-fetched to assume that the emphasis given on the nomadic lifestyle of the past Turks could also be connected to trying to establish a nation in arms in the twentieth century.

The praising of the pre-Islamic Turks is not limited to their military qualities and racial purity. They also argued that the pre-Islamic Turks were highly civilized and contributed greatly to the world civilization. While arguing this, they used the works of the European turcologists greatly, especially Wilhelm Radloff and Vilhelm Thomsen's decipher of Orkhon inscriptions. According to Yusuf Akçura, these two scholars paved the way of correcting the mistakes made regarding the Turkish history and contributed greatly to fill a gap in Turcology.<sup>289</sup> In another article in *Turkish Homeland*, they were referring to how three English travelers, Mr. Douglas Carruther, Mr. J.H.Miller and Mr. M.P.Price traveled to inner Asia in order to find the "cradle of the Turkic race". According to this article, these three travelers found enormous stone buildings, monuments, and sculptures, but the people living there currently were uncivilized, unindustrialized nomadic people.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Umit Kurt and Dogan Gurpinar, "The Young Turk Historical Imagination in the Pursuit of Mythical Turkishness and Its Lost Grandeur (1911-1914)," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 4 (2016). p. 566.

<sup>289</sup> Akçuraoğlu Yusuf, "Türkolog W. Radloff," *Türk Yurdu* 1, no. 6 (1327) p. 98-99. "Yarım asır akdem, Türklerin kadim hayatlarına âit malumat ulemâ ve müverrihler arasında bile azdı. Eski Türk âsârı, yazıları henüz keşfedilmemiş olduğundan, Türk târîh-i kadiminin me'hazı İran ve Çin hikâyelerine, Avrupa'da Hun korkusuyla yerleşmiş masallara inhisar eder gibiydi. Mağlup kavimler tarafından naklonunan hikâyeler, tabii hep Türklerin aleyhine olurdu. Bugün çocuklarımızın ellerinde bulundurduğumuz tarih kitapları hep bu yarım asır eskimiş me'hazlardan alınıp yazıldıkları içindir ki büyük milletimizin hayât-ı mâziyyesine dair verdiği mâlumat hem az, hem de aleyhimizedir. Millî tarihimizin Türklerle pek zararlı bu azim noksanının izâlesine ilk yolu açan, kısmen izâleye muvaffak da olan ve bu suretle Türklüğe büyük fayda dokuduran Alman Radloff ile Danimarkalı Thomsen olmuştur."

<sup>290</sup> "Türk Irkının Beşiği," *Türk Yurdu* 1, no. 7 (1327) p. 119. "Taştan yapılmış pek geniş ve büyük binalar bulduk.", bu nevi binalara, Mongol medeniyetinin tesiri altında bulunmuş olan Çin'in şimal-i şarkisinde de tesadüf olunuyor. Taştan kesilip yapılmış âbidelere, pek ziyetli ehlamlara, mermerden yontulmuş ve kayalar üzerine dikilmiş türlü türlü kuş heykellerine, bu yerlerde çok rastgeliniyor. Halbuki bugün buraların sâkinleri, her türlü sanayiden mahrum, göçebe hayatı ile yaşayan ve son derece fakir ve ihtiyaç içinde bulunan bedevilerden ibarettir."

In the quest of proving the contributions of the Turks to the world civilization, Ahmet Agayef went further ahead and claimed that without the Turks, the world would not be able to benefit from the works of important scholars such as İbn-i Sina, Celaledin Rumi, Firdevsi, and Farabi. According to Agayef, in order to have cultural and scientific progress, there must be political stability, which Turks provided for these scholars during their prime times. Ahmet Agayef claims that after the Turks left Iran, for example, the Iranian literature did not peak as it peaked during the Turkish reign in that geography.<sup>291</sup>

Bursalı Mehmet Tahir, Mustafa Celalettin Paşa and Ali Suavi are also important figures in the Turkist quest of proving the superiority of the Turkish race. Bursalı Mehmet Tahir's book *Türklerin Ulum ve Fünuna Hizmetleri*, published in 1898 aimed to disprove the European perspective on the Turks that suggested the Turks were nothing more than barbaric warriors, and to highlight the Turkish contributions to the world.<sup>292</sup> Bursalı Mehmet's work was on the cultural contributions of the Turks, and similar to Bursalı Mehmet, Ali Suavi aimed to prove that the Turks were more than a military nation, especially in his articles published in journals such as *İkdam* and *Muhbir*. On the other hand, Mustafa Celaledin's work *Les Turcs Anciens et Modernes* directly targeted to prove that the Turks belonged to the same level as the Aryan race and disproving Gobineau's famous work *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races*.<sup>293</sup> According to Yusuf Akçura, this book served two purposes, the first one was to prove to the Wallachians, Bulgarians, Serbians, and Greeks the superiority, ability, and esteem of the Turkish race. Secondly, Akçura argues, its aim was to prove the Aryan

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<sup>291</sup> Ahmet Agayef, "Sabık Trabzon Valisi Süleyman Nazif Beyefendiye," *Türk Yurdu* 4, no. 45 (1329) p. 378. "İlim, fen, fikir, edebiyat ve sanayi sahasına gelince -Türkler olmasaydı beşeriyet ne İbni Sina'yı, ne Celâleddin-i Rumî'yi, ne de Şems-i Tebrîzî'yi ve Farabî'yi görecekti! Muhtasar olmak için yalnız bunlar ile iktifa ediyorum. Fakat beşeriyet yalnız bu mahrumiyetle de kalmayacaktı. Ne Firdevsî'yi görecekti, ne de bugün sizin ve benim de meftunu bulduğum o Sadîleri, Ömer Hayyamları ve şâirlerini bulacaktı! Benim bu iddiam size pek garip görünüyor değil mi? Halbuki biraz tahkik edip de imal-i fikir etmek tenezzülünde bulunsanız pek haklı olduğumu tasdik edeceksiniz. İlim, fünûn, edebiyat, öyle şükûfelerdir ki, her yerde neşv ü nemâ bulmaz. Bunların tenmiye ve tekâmülü için muayyen şeraiti hâiz muayyen muhit lâzımdır. Anarşiye mahkûm, herşeyi kırıcı, faaliyet-i dimağiye ve kalbiyeyi ezici bir muhitte bedihidir ki, ne ilim, ne fen, ne de edebiyat neşv ü nemâ bulur. İran tarihinde Türk devrinden evvel ve sonra birçok edvar gelip geçmiştir. Fakat o devirden ne evvel ne de sonra edebiyat-ı Farisiye hiçbir zaman Türk devrindeki parlaklığı, azameti, itilayı bulamamıştır."

<sup>292</sup> Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism & The Armenian Genocide*. p. 71.

<sup>293</sup> Kurt, *Türk'ün Büyük, Biçare Irkı: Türkü Yurdu'nda Milliyetçiliğin Esasları (1911 – 1916)*. p. 112.

racess that claimed the Semitic, Turanid, and Hamitic races as the inferior races that the Turks belonged to the same race as the Aryans. As suggested by Mustafa Celaleddin Paşa, Turanid and Aryan races were essentially the same races, and considering that the Turks were from the Turanid race, it also meant that they were Turco-Aryans.<sup>294</sup>

The final leg of disproving the placement of the Turks in the lower ranks of the racial hierarchy was much more subtle and indirect than the other methods that were discussed above. The obsession with science and scientific theories among the Unionist elite can be connected to this aspect of Social Darwinism as well. According to Fuat Dündar, science was not only a tool that was used in order to gain the sympathy of the intellectuals towards the Unionist cause, but it was also a tool to give their nationalist agendas an “objective” forefront. But perhaps most importantly, the Unionists aimed to present their Turkist, nationalist policies as a matter of universal civilization, and tried to legitimize themselves in the international arena.<sup>295</sup> The obsession with science in the Unionist worldview was important in these senses, but it was also important because they generally viewed science as equal to civilization, and the Unionists tended to exploit science and scientific theories as a method to fuel their arguments. If the Westerners were praising themselves for their cultural and material superiority, then the Unionist had to prove that the Turks were also culturally and materially superior and belonged to the same level as them. While works of the Turkist intellectuals like the *Turkish Homeland* circle aimed to culturally prove the worthiness of the Turkish race, the excessive emphasis on science and scientism in the Unionist ideology constituted the second leg of this quest. As Şükrü Hanioglu suggested, the acceptance of the race theory and scientism were inseparable in the Unionist ideology.<sup>296</sup>

### 3.3 Counterattacks towards the West

As explained in the previous chapters, the Unionists relationship with the West had been complicated from its foundation to their dissolution. While in some cases they

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<sup>294</sup> Yusuf Akçura, *Türk Yılı 1928* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2009). p. 320-21.

<sup>295</sup> Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi: İttihat ve Terakki'nin Etnisite Mühendisliği (1913-1918)*. p. 430-31.

<sup>296</sup> Hanioglu, “Turkism and the Young Turks 1889 – 1908.” p. 11-12.

were deeming West and westernism as the only way to progress and prosper,<sup>297</sup> there were also negative attitudes towards the West due to the political circumstances and West's belittling attitude towards the Ottoman Empire. As Taner Akçam put it, the Unionists' relationship with the West was more hatred and jealousy than love,<sup>298</sup> and one of the reasons behind this hatred could be derived from the Social Darwinist ideology that put the Turks as the inferior races category. While the negative views on the Balkan nations could be sourced from mainly the sense of betrayal from these nations, the attacks on the West in the Unionist circles could be due to the defense mechanism that they produced to prove the opposite of what the West was arguing. This went hand in hand with the preaching of the Turks as the superior, most noble, most civilized, bravest, and cleanest race. In this regard, the intellectuals tried to promote the contrary to popular belief, and tried to paint the West as the barbaric, uncivilized ones.

One of the most ardent supporters of this was Mehmet Emin Yurdakul, who defended the purity of the Turkish race and the corruption of the West vehemently in his poems and stories. His story *Türk Yurdu*, published in the journal *Turkish Homeland* is particularly interesting in this regard. In this story, there are a couple of Christian travelers who had to stay in a Turkish village as guests. Mehmet Emin described the village and its villagers as poor and destitute, and the Christian guests as the opposite. In this story, one of the guests were warning the other to pay attention to the Turks, since they carry a hefty amount of money and diamonds with them, the poor Turks could steal them. After hearing the guests talking, the Turkish host says that even though in that village, there was no police, no gendarmerie, and no courts or judges, the Christians could be as comfortable as they could be in their own temples. He claims that the Turks living in that village were as strong as bulls but at the same time, they were as innocent as gazelles. Finally, perhaps in the most striking part of the story, the host warns the guests and advises them after they returned to their countries, they must remember the village they were staying, and tell their fellow citizens: "The Turks are not barbarians!".<sup>299</sup> Here the portrayal of the Christians and the Muslim Turks catches

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<sup>297</sup> Hanoğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*. p. 17.

<sup>298</sup> Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism & The Armenian Genocide*. p. 89.

<sup>299</sup> Mehmet Emin Yurdakul, "Türk Yurdu," *Türk Yurdu* 2, no. 18 (1912): 293–94. "O zengin şehirleriniz de hakimlerinizin, polislerinizin kuvvetlerine karşı kasaların soyulduğunu, yatakların kirlendiğini işittiğiniz zaman siz şu yoksul, şu ıssız Türk yurdunda geçirmekte olduğunuz bu geceyi

the attention the most, while Mehmet Emin characterized the Christians as “suspicious” and “sneaky”, the Turks portrayed as the opposite: honest, innocent, brave, and despite their non-ideal conditions, still civilized and superior.

The criticism against the West was obvious during the Battle of Tripoli as well. While in Ömer Seyfettin’s story, *Primo: A Turkish Boy*, Kenan’s wife Grazie, an Italian woman, was portrayed as weak and deceitful, in Ahmet Ferit (later Ahmet Ferit Tek) was elaborating on the war in Tripoli in the journal *Turkish Homeland*. According to Ahmet Ferit, while the Turks were fighting with sword, the Italians, the grandchildren of Machiavelli, Borgia, and other intellectuals, were fighting with poison. Ahmet Ferit was claiming that the Italians were a defeated, ruined nation all through their new life, but the Ottomans, on the other hand, were the opposite. The Ottomans were strong and perseverant even in their retreat, and while the Italians remained standing only because of the help of the foreigners, the Ottomans were fighting with an alliance of their enemies.<sup>300</sup> In this article a few points draw the attention instantly. Firstly, Ahmet Ferit is underlining Italians’ usage of poison in the war, which is deemed as the method of the weak and feminine. Here it is obvious that the author is giving the Italians a feminine character, similar to how Ömer Seyfettin portrayed the Italians as feminine and weak in *Primo*. Another point that needs to be underlined here is Ahmet Ferit’s argument of how the nation that produced intellectuals like Machiavelli and Borgia in the past was now resorting to poison in the war.

The emphasis on the usage of poison being an uncivilized a barbaric mean of war was present in Hamdullah Suphi’s *Çanakkale* story. In this story, the underlying emphasis on how using poison and poisonous gas during wartime was an uncivilized, cowardly way of attacking your enemies. According to Hamdullah Suphi, after the war was over, the British, French and the others would be spiritually tortured because of the poisonous bombs they used, the temples and mosques they destroyed. Furthermore, as

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hatırlayınız. Şunu da unutmayınız ve ellerinizi vicdanlarınızın üzerine koyarak vatandaşlarınıza söyleyiniz ki, "Türkler barbar değildirler!..."

<sup>300</sup> Ahmet Ferit, “Kuvvet ve Siyaset Muharebesi,” *Türk Yurdu* 2, no. 13 (1912): 217–19. “Bir tarafta Osmanlı evladı, diğer tarafta Makyavelli, Borciya, Kavur ahfadı; Türkün elinde kılıç, İtalya’nın elinde zehir... Şu vaziyet, esasen iki milletin an’anât-ı tarihiyelerini musavverdir. İtalya, hayat-ı cedidesinde daima mağlup, daima münhezim ve daima iane-i ecanib ile teşekkül etmiş bir cemiyettir. Osmanlılar ise, bilâkis, en büyük ric’atlerinde bile kuvvet ve salâbet irâe etmiş, fakat ekseriya, ittifak-ı a’dâ ile yere vurulmuş bir millettir..”

Hamdullah Suphi suggested, the Turks would no longer feel inferior against the British and French and would be able to hold their heads high.<sup>301</sup> As Erol K rođlu suggested, the emphasis on the illegal war methods of the Entente was for propaganda purposes,<sup>302</sup> and while the main reason behind this propaganda was to create a unity among the Ottoman public and mobilize the nation against the Entente, it can also be suggested that this propaganda was made in order to prove the worthiness, superiority and civility of the Turks as well.

Perhaps the most obvious example of this criticism against the West can be seen in an article published in *Turkish Homeland* under the title of *Őark Őarklılarındır*. In this article the author was blaming their usage of the terms like “civilization” and “humanity” in vain. The author argues that the West was using these terms but doing nothing to contribute civilization or humanity in the slightest. The author goes further ahead and claims that the civilization the West loved so dearly was only a faade for them to hide the murders they committed, and their so-called civilization would not go beyond the Ural Mountains.<sup>303</sup> This article was published in 1912, while the Battle of Tripoli was still going on and the Balkan Wars were about to start. In another article published in the same journal, a similar argument was made regarding the World War I in 1916, which shows us that the perception of the West among the Turkists stayed similar throughout the years. In this article, the author was blaming the Europeans on deeming themselves as the “civilized” and considering the rest, the ones that they themselves labelled as “uncivilized” as legitimate warzones.<sup>304</sup> Considering that the

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<sup>301</sup> Hamdullah Suphi Tanrı ver, *Dađyolu ve G nebakan'dan Semeler* (İstanbul: Milli Eđitim Basımevi, 1971). p. 187-88. “Harb bittiđi zaman İngilizler ve Fransızlar, T rkler arasında evvelce haiz oldukları h rmete mukabil, muhakkar olduklarını g receklelerdir. Bombalarını zehirleyenler, bir kemiđi doksan paraya ayıracak patlar kurŐun kullananlar, t rbeler, camileri topa tutanlar, cezalarını asıl manen ekeceklerdir. Biz, bir Fransız bir İngiliz yanında Őimdiden sonra kendimizi k  k g rmekten tamamiyle halas oldu.”

<sup>302</sup> K rođlu, *T rk Edebiyatı ve Birinci D nya SavaŐı (1914-1918)*. p. 203-04.

<sup>303</sup> Turgut Alp, “Őark Őarklılarındır,” *T rk Yurdu* 2, no. 16 (1328) p. 262.. “İnsaniyet, diyorsunuz, medeniyet, hak diyorsunuz "umum  uhuvvetten bahsediyorsunuz... Fakat onlar iin alıŐmıyorsunuz... BaŐınızın  zerinde h l  o meŐ m kanat dalgalanıyor. Medeniyet, cinayetlerinizi setretmek iin kullandığınız s sl  bir gaz; hak, pek zavallı bir Őekle soktuđunuz bir kelimeden baŐka bir Őey deđil... Umum  uhuvvet, Avrupa hududunu geemiyor. Sizin anladığımız insaniyet Ural dađlarını aŐamıyor!”

<sup>304</sup> Safes, “Devletler Arasındaki M nasebetlere Dair: ‘Dar lharb ve Muvazenet-i Siyasiye,’” *T rk Yurdu* 10, no. 110 (1332) p. 93\*94. “Eski Yunanlılar, eski Romalılar gibi bug n n Avrupalıları da kendilerini diđer  demođullarından ayrı, imtiyazlı ve kendilerinin mabud tarafından seilmiŐ olduđuna inanırlar. Avrupaı olmayan kavimlerin v cudunu umum  medeniyete pek de l zumlu saymazlar. Onları h k m ve idareleri altına almak, mahk m ve esir deđilse bile muti ve ec r hizmetiler haline getirmek isterler. Avrupa hududunun harici hala istil  ve istiml k olunacak bir sahadır. Bir nevi “dar lharb”tir. Avrupa haricinde yaŐayan kavimler, ma’bud tarafından seilmiŐ,  lemi temedd ne memur edilmiŐ Avrupalılardır (Amerikalılar da Avrupalılardır)’ın h kimliđine,  mirliđine,

political circumstances of the Ottoman Empire became even more bleak in this period, this attitude is not surprising. What could be deemed as important here is that the author was also claiming that the Europeans would wish the so-called uncivilized nations to either be their servants or submitters, which can be evaluated as the author's caution to his readers. Since this article was published during the World War I, it can be evaluated both as a criticism against the West in their actions by the name of "racial superiority", and as a warning to the Ottomans of what would happen if they did not defend themselves.

As Ümit Kurt correctly pointed out, in the *Turkish Homeland* journal, their main argument was the West's attempts at creating a Turkish image that presented the Turks as the "monsters" and "enemies of the Christianity" was due to their desire to corner the Ottoman Empire.<sup>305</sup> As can be seen in the example of *Türklük – Osmanlılık* article published in *Turkish Homeland*, the Turkists were arguing that even during their most powerful years, Turks and Turkists were never as cruel and chauvinist as the other races. In addition to that, the author of the article was claiming that the Turks never forced the people they conquered to change their language or religion or forced the non-Muslims to go to the Turkish schools and mosques.<sup>306</sup> In another article, the author Kazım Nami (later, Kazım Nami Duru), who was a frequent contributor of *Türk Yurdu* and a high school teacher at the same time, was describing the Turks as a peaceful and fair nation, despite the fact that they were being crushed in between the fingers of the Europeans. According to Kazım Nami, the Turks had already deserved an eternal peace and happiness but could not find these because of the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire and the West itself.<sup>307</sup> The non-Muslim side of this argument would be much more visible in certain political decisions made regarding mainly the Greek and

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efendiliğine rıza gösterinceye kadar yahut ma'budlarına secde edip medeniyetlerini tamam ve mutlak bir sûrette kabul edinceye değin hasım telâkkî olunacaklardır. Bir Avrupalı nokta-i nazarından âdemoğullarının hepsi ya Avrupalılığa temessül etmeye, Avrupalılaşmaya, Avrupa medeniyetinin ehlik haklarını kazanmaya yahut zamanımızın bir nevi esir veya parçası demek olan muti ve zelil bir müstemleke zinciri olup kalmaya mahkûmdurlar."

<sup>305</sup> Kurt, *Türk'ün Büyük, Biçare Irkı: Türkü Yurdu'nda Milliyetçiliğin Esasları (1911 – 1916)*. p. 185.

<sup>306</sup> İsmail, "Türklük - Osmanlılık," *Türk Yurdu* 6, no. 69 (1329) p. 359. "Türkler ve Türkçüler sair bazı ırklar gibi hiçbir vakit şoven, galebeci ve zâlim olmadılar. En iktidarlı zamanlarında, bütün dünyayı alt üst ettikleri devirlerde bile hiç bir milletin lisanına, edebiyatına, medeniyetine, hususiyetine, ticaretine mâni olmadılar. Her zamanda, her iklimde müsait bulundular. Hatta kendileri zararlanmaktan bile çekinmediler. Ne cebren mekteplere, ne cebren camilere gayrileri celbetmediler. Hiçbir milletin dinine, açık ya ki hafi mümânaatta bulunmadılar."

<sup>307</sup> Kurt, *Türk'ün Büyük, Biçare Irkı: Türkü Yurdu'nda Milliyetçiliğin Esasları (1911 – 1916)*. p. 185.

Armenian communities, both during the CUP rule and the first years of the Republic of Turkey. The West side of the argument, however, changed character in the Republic of Turkey and the main purpose of Turkey, after declaring its independence, was to prove that the Turks belonged to the same status as the Western countries. In order to find a place for Turkey among the international hierarchy, this criticism and hatred towards the West had to be toned down, yet it can be suggested that the characterization of the Turks as a noble, brave, clean, and superior nation had continued in the Turkish politics and public opinion. One particular example of this would be Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, who had strong ties with the Unionists in Switzerland in Geneva but did not become an important figure until the opening of the new parliament in 1920. According to Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, the Turkish nation had a stronger, more civilized, more superior history than any other nation in the world, and similar to a cultured, noble man who became financially troubled, they kept their nobility and good qualities with them.<sup>308</sup> Mahmut Esat's definition of the Turkish nation is noteworthy to see how the Unionist/Turkist struggle to prove the Turkish race's worth did not end with the Ottoman Empire, but it leveled up in the new Turkish Republic.

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<sup>308</sup> Tanıl Bora, *Türk Sağının Üç Hali: Milliyetçilik, Muhafazakarlık, İslamcılık* (İstanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 2003). p. 26.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The Committee of the Union and Progress officially started to dissolve itself on November 5, 1918, however, they left such enormous footprints in every corner of the Turkish public opinion and policymaking that some aspects of the Unionist ideology are still visible to this day. As stated by Ayşe Gül Altınay, certain sides of the CUP mentality, especially Goltz Paşa's nation in arms theory, became an important part of the Turkish nationalism and was integrated into official ideology in 1930s.<sup>309</sup> From the mantra of "Her Türk Asker Doğar!" to the mainstream history narrative that had been taught to the school children for almost a century, the traces of Unionist ideology had been an integral part of the Turkish politics and society, despite the leaders of Turkey's obvious attempts at disintegrating themselves from the Unionist identity. While many components of the Unionist ideology continued their existence in the Republic of Turkey, Turkism and Social Darwinism, especially the German understanding of Social Darwinism persisted in the Republic of Turkey.

The most obvious example of this influence can be seen in the literary works of Ömer Seyfettin, which are still recommended readings to the school children in Turkey. In *Beyaz Lale* (A Pure White Tulip), Radko, a captain of the Bulgarian army, whose biggest dream and purpose of life is to work for the Great Bulgaria, is the narrator of Social Darwinist ideas of Ömer Seyfettin. Through Radko's monologue, Ömer Seyfettin was giving the readers what the reality of the world they were living in. Radko, being the textbook example of what a Social Darwinist would think like, was claiming that the Turks and Muslims in the places they conquered were threats that had to be eliminated, despite the fact that they already surrendered. "Turks have also become incapable of grasping the simplest truths. Somehow, they failed to eradicate the races inhabiting the lands that they conquered," said Radko, and claimed that because the Turks failed to wipe out or assimilate the nations they conquered entirely,

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<sup>309</sup> Altınay, *The Myth of the Military-Nation: Militarism, Gender and Education in Turkey*. p. 14.

now they were facing the Bulgarian threat, and Bulgarians would not do the same mistakes the Turks had made.<sup>310</sup> In another story, *Hürriyet Bayrakları* (Flags of Liberty), Ömer Seyfettin was arguing that there was no way different nations in the Ottoman Empire could coexist together, now that the Greeks, and Serbs, and the Bulgarians had their national awakenings. The protagonist of the story was trying to convince a young lieutenant that there was no way these nations would not seek revenge from the Ottoman Empire, and at the end of the story, the protagonist would be proven right.<sup>311</sup> Similarly, in another story, *Nakarat* (The Refrain), a young Turkish officer who was stationed in Macedonia, would be fooled by a Macedonian girl, wasting his days fantasizing a great love he could have with this girl. However, at the end of the story, the girl would be revealed as the daughter of a *komitadji*, and the song the officer was foolishly thinking as a love song turned out to be a *komitadji* song, praying for the day they would capture Istanbul.<sup>312</sup>

To this day, it is a constant debate among scholars whether the CUP was a Turkist organization from the beginning or not. However, I strongly believe that even though the Unionists did not adopt a Turkist agenda from the very first day of their rule, they were still open to Turkism. It is logical to assume that the Unionists wanted Ottomanism to work in order to keep the Empire intact. Considering that the Ottoman Empire was still hanging onto certain parts of Rumelia by a hair, there was no chance for the Unionists to cast aside those people without at least attempting to keep the non-Muslim, non-Turkish nations in their fold. In addition to that, at least in the first few years of their rule, the CUP had the support of the komitas from various ethnic groups within the Empire. While it makes sense for the Unionists to at least adopt Ottomanism as a forefront, claiming that they did not embrace Turkism up until the Balkan Wars would be a mistake. Even if the official policy was to keep the Empire intact through adapting an Ottomanist agenda, the Unionists, especially the Unionist intellectuals such as Hamdullah Suphi, Mehmet Emin Yurdakul, Ömer Seyfettin, Yusuf Akçura, and Ahmet Agayef promoted Turkism and Turkish nationalism in their publications. Arguing that Turkism became influential only after the Balkan Wars would be

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<sup>310</sup> Seyfettin, "A Pure White Tulip." p. 1-6.

<sup>311</sup> Ömer Seyfettin, "Flags of Liberty," in *Ömer Seyfettin: Bütün Eserleri*, ed. Hülya Argunşah (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1999). Translated by: Halil Berktaş.

<sup>312</sup> Ömer Seyfettin, "The Refrain," in *Ömer Seyfettin: Bütün Eserleri*, ed. Hülya Argunşah (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1999). Translated by: Halil Berktaş.

restrictive and overall diminishes the effect of intellectual circles such as the *Turkish Homeland* circle on the CUP regime.

The second component of the CUP ideology that had been a determinant factor in their policymaking was the German influence on their overall mindset. While several academicians are suggesting that the Unionists were distant towards Germany and hoped to have an alliance with either Britain or France, due to political circumstances and the Unionist leaders' backgrounds, the end result was in favor of Germany. Similar to how Abdulhamid II had to forge an alliance with Germany due to Britain and France's unwillingness to side with the Ottoman Empire pushed Abdulhamid II to settle for Germany as their main ally, the CUP was forced to get back to where they started from. Abdulhamid II's alliance with Germany was not only limited to foreign politics, but it also brought German investors, advisors, bankers, and such to the Ottoman Empire as well, which caused the German influence to be present in every aspect of the Ottoman state. The most obvious example of this is the Unionists themselves, especially the military ranks of the Unionists, who were trained under German military advisors and embraced German philosophy deeply, which caused them to gravitate towards Germany more and more each passing day. In short, the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Germany had been tied so tightly and deeply that despite the initial negative reaction against Germany due to their alliance with Abdulhamid II, the German influence was quickly restored.

In Unionist ideology, Social Darwinism's influence should not be overlooked. As the common ground between Turkism and German influence, Social Darwinism's journey in the Ottoman Empire started during the late nineteenth century and affected the Unionist mentality greatly, to an extent that its aftermaths are still visible in today's Turkish society. Social Darwinist understanding of life, a way of perceiving life as an eternal struggle and war as a necessity to survive, resonated with the CUP elite greatly and became an undeniable aspect of the Unionist policies. Social Darwinism was introduced to the Ottoman elite by the translations of various European thinkers, as well as articles written by Ottoman intellectuals on these books, and later on, it became a common trend that is visible in articles debating everyday politics.

It can be suggested that Social Darwinism was more visible and directly discussed during in the period between the late nineteenth century to 1908, but during this phase, its effect was limited to certain people. Translations of Büchner and Haeckel, and various articles on Spencer, Darwin, Gustav Le Bon, and such were published in journals and newspapers, yet it is safe to assume that the subjects discussed in these publications were only appealing to a small group of readers that were able to find these publications. On the other hand, especially after the 1908 Revolution, there were an abundant number of articles filled with Social Darwinist themes but did not directly discuss Social Darwinism or Social Darwinist philosophers. Even though Social Darwinism was not directly referred in these articles, I argue that they succeeded more than the intellectuals of the first phase to spread Social Darwinist ideology. In this regard, the *Turkish Homeland* authors, especially Ömer Seyfettin, Mehmet Emin Yurdakul, Halide Edip Adıvar and such played a crucial role in creating propaganda against the non-Muslims remained in the Empire, the newly independent Balkan nations, and foreign governments, as well as giving Turkism a more action-oriented identity. Thus, claiming that Social Darwinism gained a more practical and more influential position in the Unionist ideology after 1908 Revolution would not be a far-fetched argument.

Turkism and the CUP had been influenced by Social Darwinism, and in order to understand why they embraced this theory so easily and wholeheartedly, one must take a closer look into several components that created the perfect environment for the Social Darwinism to take root. Firstly, the Unionist background is extremely crucial, considering that it created an ideological basis for the CUP elite to acquire Social Darwinism. The Western-type schools played a great role in this regard, the new curricula of these schools did not only teach the students and military cadets positive sciences, but it also created a group of young intellectuals who deemed scientism, materialism, and positivism above anything else. In relation to the Unionist educational background, their military characteristic played a great role in popularizing Social Darwinism, which is not surprising considering the general arguments of the theory paved the way for the CUP's ascendance to power. If there was a perpetual struggle for existence in the world, as Social Darwinists suggested, then in order to ensure a nation's survival, the most suitable rulers would be the military elite. The military background of the CUP and Social Darwinism may have

influenced one another in an endless loop, while the Unionists could have embraced Social Darwinism easily due to their militarist tendencies, Social Darwinism also increased the importance of militarism and a military nation in the Unionist ideology.

A second component that caused Social Darwinism to be widespread among a certain elite was the political environment. The defeats the Ottoman Empire faced continuously throughout the late nineteenth to early twentieth century created an atmosphere in the Empire where the idea of struggle to survive increased greatly. This perspective of “make or break situation” among the intellectuals deepened with the defeats in the Battle of Tripoli and Balkan Wars. Similar to the Unionists’ educational background, the political atmosphere had a two-way influence on the CUP’s ideology. While it is true that the constant defeats created an environment where Social Darwinist ideas could grow and prosper, the popularized Social Darwinist ideas caused several political decisions made by the Unionists, such as the Muslim Boycotts and various demographic engineering policies.

Thirdly, there were intellectual reasons that increased the popularity of Social Darwinism in the Unionist thought. As mentioned above, some of the young intellectuals of the Ottoman Empire spent the final decades of the nineteenth century in their shiny, new, western-type military schools, where they soaked in the Western ideologies like positivism, materialism, scientism, and Darwinism. These western ideologies found its way to the Ottoman press and publication as well, and surprisingly, during the *istibdat* regime of Abdulhamid II, they were discussed in great extent. Specifically, the intellectuals like Beşir Fuad, Ahmet Midhat Efendi, and Abdullah Cevdet aimed to teach these ideologies, a quest which subsequently helped Social Darwinism to be known in the Ottoman Empire. In addition to this, the lack of an extensive, through criticism against these ideologies caused Social Darwinism to go interrupted as well. While Social Darwinism was criticized by great philosophers like Karl Marx and Friedrich Albert Lange in Germany, in the Ottoman Empire the *ulema* took this role upon themselves, yet they failed to come up with a convincing and comprehensive counterargument against the supporters of these Western ideologies.<sup>313</sup> Lastly, the lateness of the Turkish nationalism created a convenience for

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<sup>313</sup> Hanioglu, “Felsefesiz Bir Toplumun Felsefe Olmayan Felsefesinin İlmihâli: Madde ve Kuvvet.” p. 28.

the Social Darwinism. Considering that any type of nationalism was deemed dangerous in the Ottoman Empire throughout the nineteenth century, it was no surprise that the Turkish nationalism was the last to emerge in the Empire. This situation, combined with the defeats against the Balkan nations, created an urgency to catch up with the other nations, and resulted in a nationalism in the Ottoman Empire that was prone to Social Darwinist themes.

After examining the reasons behind the popularization of Social Darwinism in the Unionist ideology from its most important perspectives, another question comes to mind. While there were certain articles published on Darwin and Spencer during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the majority of the Ottoman intelligentsia learned Social Darwinism from other sources. In order to understand the place of Social Darwinism in Ottoman Empire, the sources that were circulating in the Ottoman intellectual environment have to be thoroughly examined. In general, there were two main channels that draw the attention the most, which were the French and German thinkers. While the French thinkers had an undeniable influence on popularizing Social Darwinism in the Ottoman Empire, the German thinkers had more of an effect that can be pinpointed directly and overall had enormous impacts on the Unionist policies. In this regard, the German sources can be separated into two categories, the first one is the philosophical works by thinkers like Ludwig Büchner and Ernst Haeckel, and the second one is perhaps the most important and most influential one, Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz and his famous work *Das Volk im Waffen*.

Ernst Haeckel and Ludwig Büchner had been introduced to the Ottoman readers thanks to the intellectuals such as Baha Tevfik, Ahmet Nebil, and Abdullah Cevdet. The first translations from Ernst Haeckel were made by Baha Tevfik in 1908, as he translated Haeckel's *Die Welträthsel* under the title of *Kainatın Muammaları*. Baha Tevfik published this book chapter by chapter in the journal he published himself, *Felsefe Mecmuası*. However, Haeckel's most popular book in the Ottoman Empire was *Der Monismus als Band zwischen Religion und Wissenschaft*, which was translated by Baha Tevfik and Ahmet Nebil in 1911. The popularity of this book caused demands by the readers, who requested Baha Tevfik and Ahmet Nebil to translate Büchner's *Kraft und Stoff* next. While certain parts of *Madde ve Kuvvet* had been translated by

Abdullah Cevdet before, Ahmet Nebil and Baha Tevfik's translation included the entirety of the book.

Both Haeckel and Büchner's books show great similarities in terms of what they were arguing and how they were perceived in the Ottoman Empire. While *Der Monismus* was basically a summary of Haeckel's ideology, *Kraft und Stoff* was more extensive and elaborated on more subjects. In addition to that, in *Kraft und Stoff* there are various other thinkers that Büchner refers to, such as Carl Vogt, Ernst Haeckel, Feuerbach, and Moleschott. Consequently, it is possible to argue that through this book, the Ottoman readers of Büchner was not only introduced to the author, but they were also introduced to other German thinkers as well.

A common idea that was promoted in both authors' books was the legitimization of the rule of an elite class, which created a basis for the CUP's rule. In the initial years of the Young Turk organization, Abdullah Cevdet supported a similar elitism, however, the elitism that was suggested by both Abdullah Cevdet and Büchner and Haeckel gave great importance to intelligence and the size of one's brain, in later periods, the Unionist elitism became more intertwined with militarism and a military elite. Another common idea in both of these books was their attitudes towards religions, both authors claimed that the idea that the universe was created by a creator is something only ignorant, uneducated, and primitive people would believe. This created a problem for the Ottoman intellectuals, especially the translators of these books, considering that this argument would create great criticism by their religious readers, as well as by the *ulema*. Baha Tevfik and Ahmet Nebil tried to reconcile Islam with both of these books, and their general argument was that both Haeckel and Büchner were not well-informed about Islam, which was why they failed to leave Islam, the perfect religion, out of their arguments.

Both of these German thinkers, especially Ludwig Büchner, fueled the Unionist desire to become "social doctors" in order to "treat the sick man". However, while the Ottoman intelligentsia deemed Büchner and Haeckel as great scholars despite intense criticism they received all over Europe, both Büchner and Haeckel's attitudes towards Turks were negative. Especially Haeckel, who divided the races of the humankind into categories and ranked them from most to least civilized, deemed Turks as one of the

lower races, which created another obstacle for the Ottoman intelligentsia. After the popularization of these books, there came another phase of Social Darwinism's journey in the Ottoman Empire, which was the attempts at reconciling this aspect of the theory, a campaign that was mainly carried on by the Turkist intellectuals.

While translations of Büchner and Haeckel created the intellectual foundations of Social Darwinism in the Ottoman Empire, Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz's *Das Volk im Waffen* played a much greater role in the grand scheme of things. Translated by a major in the Ottoman army and suggested as a must-read to the cadets of the military schools, Goltz's theory of creating a nation in arms had an impact in perhaps all of the CUP leaders, especially the ones that were the students of Goltz Paşa. Apart from modernizing the military schools in the Ottoman Empire, Goltz Paşa and his ideology created a sense of superiority among the cadets and combined with Goltz Paşa's Social Darwinist claims of how life is an endless struggle, this resulted in a more militarized sense of elitism in the Ottoman Empire. Goltz Paşa explained the political situation after 1871 from a Social Darwinist perspective, and emphasized on not having an unmaintainable army, but instead having a professional, strong army that could be supplemented by a nation in arms. Certain Unionist policies that was implemented on the public, such as the foundation of *Türk Gücü Cemiyeti* or publications like *Asker* can be explained with Goltz's influence on the CUP elite.

In addition to these types of micro policies that were put into action by the CUP, it can be claimed that Goltz's overall understanding of politics became a deciding factor for the Unionists' political choices. Goltz's argument that life means war was cemented the fear of extinction that the CUP elite carried in their hearts for decades and resulted in the Unionist policies to be more violent, more persistent, and overall tainted with this dread of extinction. The foundation of *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*, the 1913 Babiali Raid, demographic engineering policies towards Greeks and Armenians, creating propaganda that was borderline warmongering can all be explained through the combination of Social Darwinism with the already existing political situation of the Ottoman Empire.

Throughout this thesis I aimed to elaborate on why Social Darwinism was popular in the Unionist ideology, as well as the German sources they learned Social Darwinism

from. However, the overall influence of Social Darwinism brings another question along, which is how the Unionists, especially the Unionist Turkists reconciled themselves to embrace the theory despite its negative attitudes towards the Turks. As mentioned above, both Haeckel and Büchner deemed the Turks as one of the inferior races of the humankind, an idea that was present in Darwin as well. Considering that Social Darwinism was suggesting that in the perpetual, universal struggle to survive, the less civilized, less progressed races would go extinct, this creates a dilemma for the Unionist ideology. After all, their main goal was to make sure that the Empire would survive and prosper, a goal that was clashing with Social Darwinism's most crucial aspect. The Unionists, especially the Unionist Turkists took the quest of disproving Social Darwinism on themselves, which constituted several different layers.

To start with, the Japanese victory over Russia in 1904 – 1905 posed as the perfect argument for the Unionists. According to them, if Japan, a nation that had been placed under the lower ranks of Social Darwinism's categorization, could defeat Russia, then it means Social Darwinism was wrong in this argument. The Japanese example had been so greatly emphasized in the Turkist and Unionist publications that in some cases, Japan was not only used as an example to disprove Social Darwinism, but it was also used as a roadmap for the Ottoman Empire's salvation and prosperity. As can be seen in the example of the newspaper *Balkan*, some Unionist intellectuals went as far as claiming that the Turkish and Japanese people were from the same race. They highly praised Japan in terms of how they were modernized and progressed in a short amount of time and took them as a role model and considered Japan as an example of how the Ottoman Empire could protect itself from imperialism if they played their cards right.

The second and third methods the Unionists used in order to disprove the Social Darwinists are, to some extent, intertwined with one another. Firstly, the Unionists and Turkists argued against Social Darwinist claims of Turks being barbaric, uncivilized, and uneducated. In order to prove Turks' superiority, Turcology became more and more important, and especially in the journal *Turkish Homeland*. According to these arguments, the only reason Turks were deemed as inferior was the Eurocentric perspective of the mainstream historiography, which failed to mention the Turks' great contributions in world civilization and painted the Turks as a nation that destroyed

everywhere they conquer. In order to argue against these claims, the Unionists aimed to create an alternative historiography that focused on the Turks' contributions to the world and focused more on the pre-Islamic period of the Turkish history. This is another dilemma in the Unionist quest of proving the Turkish race's worth, considering that Social Darwinism was considering nomadic, warrior tribes as barbaric. However, in order to overcome this obstacle, they focused more on the Western Turcologists' works and argued that the idea of pre-Islamic Turks being nothing more than a barbaric tribal confederation was baseless. In addition to that, they desperately wanted the Turkish history to focus on the pre-Islamic period due to the negative attitude towards Islam as well. In the Unionist ideology, there were certain arguments that blamed Islam as one of the reasons why the Ottoman Empire remained backwards. While this was not highly voiced during their time in power, it could also be the reason why they wanted to have a history that did not start with the Turks' acceptance of Islam but started in the steppes of the Inner Asia.

Another argument that was made by the Unionists in order to prove the Turkish race's worth was to give the Turks positive affirmations in their works. This went hand in hand with the third method that the Unionists applied, which was creating arguments against the Westerners. In other words, they argued that the Turks were noble, brave, strong, civilized, honest and virtuous, and attributed the negative perspective of the Westerners back to themselves. In the Unionist publications, especially in the works of the *Turkish Homeland* circle, it is obvious that the Turks and Westerners were portrayed as opposite to one another. They attributed the good qualities mentioned above to Turks, while characterizing the non-Muslim Ottomans, Europeans, and Balkan nations as deceitful, evil, weak, feminine, and uncivilized.

Throughout this thesis I aimed to focus on one of the most important aspects of the Unionist ideology, Social Darwinism, and how it was influenced from Germany. While there were several other components of the Unionist ideology that persevered in the newly founded Republic of Turkey, I argue that the many layers of Social Darwinism's journey in the Ottoman Empire played one of the most important roles in the identity that was created for the Republic. To some extent, it can be even argued that certain aspects of Social Darwinism became more integrated in everyday life, even though it was not addressed directly. From the mainstream history lessons that are

being taught in schools to dressing young boys as soldiers for important events, and even to the National Pledge that was repeated every day in elementary and middle schools, the traces of Social Darwinism are visible to this day.



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