

## **3- OTTOMAN INTELLECTUALS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

### **3.1. General Consideration**

It is important to examine the rise of modern intellectuals in order to evaluate the intellectual milieu at the beginning of the twentieth century in the Ottoman Empire on the grounds that the main characteristics of the intellectuals, who were operating from 1900 to 1918 and their discussions were mostly determined by the developments that occurred after the Tanzimat period.

As emphasized before, the domination of officials in the Ottoman government and society was challenged by a new middle class, which played an important political role in the latter half of the nineteenth century. However, even when large portions of the imperial wealth were shifted into private hands, the members of the ruling class were the owners of most of the land. However, starting with the rise of the notables in the eighteenth century and continuing on an accelerated basis in the nineteenth century, new political and economic factors led to the rise of private land as well as commercial wealth in the hands of what was to become a new middle class.<sup>229</sup>

Changes in the basic institutions of the Ottoman government were accompanied by corresponding alterations in the Ottoman social fabric. The old ruling class was replaced by a new class of bureaucrats who tried to liberate themselves from the insulating characteristics of traditional ties.<sup>230</sup> The concept of Western civilization penetrated Ottoman discourse and paved the way for a reassessment of the Ottoman social structure. As Ottomans compared the West with their own society, there appeared a distinct vision and aspiration. The principles and priorities of Ottoman social groups began to change gradually and transformed their visions of what

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<sup>229</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire, Volume II*, pp. 105-106

<sup>230</sup> *ibid.*, p. 114

Ottoman society should resemble.<sup>231</sup> The other important development was the increased number of Ottoman social groups with access to goods and social resources that, in that time, were partially out of the control of the sultans. In addition, after the officials acquired cultural capital and minority merchants accumulated merchant capital, a social environment was created for the emergence of a new social group: Ottoman intellectuals.<sup>232</sup> After the Tanzimat period, and the spread of Western ideas, social and political attitudes among the Turkish intellectuals caused the rise of modern Turkish literature.<sup>233</sup> These intellectuals worked for the new journals and newspapers, wrote novels, taught at the Western-style schools, and, in general, used their newly acquired skills to make their livelihood. The last stage of the Tanzimat period witnessed the first marks of innovation in language and script, journalism and liberal political ideas.<sup>234</sup>

There seemed to be a search for new modes of thinking and cultural values among Ottoman elites. The works of Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Fénelon, Fontenelle and Volney attracted particular attention.<sup>235</sup> Consequently, the Ottoman Society of Science was established that aimed to focus on the secular field of knowledge. The society published the Journal of Science (*Mecmua-ı Funun*), and presented a series of university courses in the form of public lectures from 1852 to 1865. On the other hand, with the penetration of foreign commercial and missionary interests in the nineteenth century, foreign schools were established.<sup>236</sup> Consequently, the thinking of the Ottoman intellectuals began to change. Göçek describes this process as follows;

The Ottoman epistemological transition from such Western imitation to interpretation occurred through the agency of the newly group of Ottoman intellectuals. Before the late eighteenth century, such intellectuals had mostly existed within the official household structure and had an independent standing only within the context of religious foundations. By the end of the eighteenth century, a

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<sup>231</sup> Göçek, Rise of the Bourgeoisie p. 117

<sup>232</sup> *ibid.*, p. 117

<sup>233</sup> Lewis, The Emergence, p. 133

<sup>234</sup> Berkes, The Development of Secularism in Turkey, p. 192

<sup>235</sup> *ibid.*, p. 199

<sup>236</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire, Volume II, pp. 106-112

sufficient number of new institutional forms had appeared to sustain their social position independent of the sultan. Employment as instructors in the new Western-style schools, as journalists and columnists in the newly emerging newspapers and periodicals both in the Empire and abroad, as novelists, essayists, poets, and actors provided them with enough resources to be independent of the sultan and the households. The first group of Ottoman military and medical students and faculty trained in the Western-style state schools were taught that the epistemological origins of knowledge were not located in Islamic moral principles but instead in the secular, rational maxims of the Enlightenment. Some tried to merge Islamic ethics and Western morality; others became militantly secular and materialist. All constantly debated Western science, philosophy, and its implications for Ottoman society. The Ottoman minorities strove alongside the Muslims to create a truly multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. Many served as faculty in the newly established Western-style state schools, some wrote novels and plays, others founded and acted in theater companies, and still others founded and managed newspapers.<sup>237</sup>

Voluntary associations were the channels of penetration of Western ideas into the Ottoman Empire. As new ideas, thoughts and interpretations started to penetrate into the Empire, individuals interested in new thoughts began to establish voluntary associations. Ottoman newspapers were crucial in transmitting Western ideas into Ottoman intellectual circles as they reported on international news items from European newspapers. These newspapers often portrayed social, economic and spiritual developments in the West, which in turn were founded on the European experiences of change.<sup>238</sup>

The first Ottoman reformers believed that the failures of the state and military defeats stemmed not from the insufficiency of the cultural, religious, economic, political and social structure of the Ottoman Empire, but from the lack of science and technology. Consequently, they became the advocates of Western science and technology as they tried to establish military and civil servant schools. This perception brought about changes in the meaning of traditional concepts of *ilim* and *funun*. The unique classification of science in the Islamic world became evident especially after encountering Egyptian, Greek and Indian civilizations and translating these cultures into Arabic. In these classifications, *ilim* and *hikmet* were the most often used

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<sup>237</sup> Göçek, Rise of the Bourgeoisie, p. 124

<sup>238</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 127-128

concepts to imply philosophy, religious science, technique etc.<sup>239</sup> Although the concept of *fen* was not used as often as *ilim* and *hikmet*, it was used for *science of music* (*fenn-i musiki*) and *calligraphy* (*fenn-i hat*). Ottomans used this classification until the beginning of Westernization and modernization. The classical meaning of these concepts changed with the reforms and acquired new connotations, being affected by modern science. Especially after establishing modern schools and sending students to Europe, modern science and philosophy became very effective and *à la mode* among the Ottoman educated class.<sup>240</sup> Finally, *ilim* and *funun* was used to imply modern science when the classical meaning of this concept disappeared.<sup>241</sup>

Before evaluating and examining the origins of the Islamists and their ideas, it would be relevant to discuss their intellectual heritage and the intellectual circles in which they interacted.

### **3.2. Young Ottomans and Young Turks**

Young Ottomans and Young Turks have a major importance in the political and intellectual history of Turkey. This importance stems mostly from the role of these movements in constituting the main characteristics of Turkish political thought. It is also important to evaluate these movements in order to understand liberalism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century, because these movements represent the intellectual background of the second constitutional period. As will be shown later, both liberalism and Islamism are related to these movements from the point of view of intellectual heritage. Indeed, the practical cooperation of Islamists and liberals with the Young Turks at the beginning of the second constitutional period makes examining the Young Turks movement especially necessary. The emergence of Islamism in the Ottoman Empire has been

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<sup>239</sup> Kemal Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History*, pp.8-15

<sup>240</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>241</sup> İsmail Kara, *Din ile Modernleşme Arasında*, Dergah Yayınları, 2003, pp. 128-142

mostly dated after the proclamation of the second constitution (1908). However, the origins of Islamism can be found in the forty-year period just before its strong appearance.<sup>242</sup> That is to say, the thoughts of the Young Ottomans and the Young Turks are crucial in order to understand and examine “second constitutional Islamism” and liberalism.

There was a discontent with the reforms, which was first expressed over the Tanzimat Charter and later again with the Islahat Edict. The Young Ottomans mostly stressed this dissatisfaction. They later became the representatives of the provincial forces and the bureaucratic circle.<sup>243</sup> The Young Ottoman movement appeared as a protest against the inability of Tanzimat diplomats to restore the Empire’s political and economic stability, and in opposition to their compliance with the European Powers, whose chancelleries were dominating the Porte.<sup>244</sup> The movement was born in the famous *Tercüme Odası* (Translation Bureau) of the Porte, where young clerks learned foreign languages, particularly French, and through these languages, encountered European ideas. Although these liberal notions played a very important role in the formation of Young Ottoman thought, the essence of the ideology was nonetheless imbued with Islamic principles. In Islam, Young Ottomans found many of the ideas that had become prominent during the European Enlightenment, such as liberty, justice and patriotism.<sup>245</sup> In their opinion, Locke’s ideas regarding representative government were already anticipated in the Koran under the concept of *mushawara* (consultation).<sup>246</sup> In addition, according to the Young Ottomans, early Islamic policy was, in theory, always drafted according to decisions made in the *şura* or by a representative council. These ideas were best expressed in the writings of the best-known Young Ottoman, Namık Kemal (1840-1888), who established a

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<sup>242</sup> Mümtazer Türköne, *Siyasi İdeoloji Olarak İslamcılığın Doğuşu*, İstanbul, 1994, p. 33

<sup>243</sup> Ju. A. Petrosjan, *Der Islam in der Ideologie der Jungtürken*, Mitteilung des Instituts Für Orient Forschung, I, Band XV. 1969, Berlin, p. 99

<sup>244</sup> Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis*, p. 326

<sup>245</sup> *ibid.*, p. 326

<sup>246</sup> *ibid.*, p. 333. However, according to Türköne, Young Ottomans were exploiting Islam as an intermediary for their opposition. According to him, exploiting of Islam for political aims was a common case in the Ottoman history. Islam will become a current issue as a medium for opposition a few decades later, in the opposition against Abdulhamid’s II regime. Türköne, *Siyasi İdeoloji Olarak İslamcılığın Doğuşu*, p. 116

newspaper of his own after his return from London.<sup>247</sup> He based his political thought on his adaptation of European liberal ideas to Islamic principles. He introduced two new concepts in Islamic political thought by contributing the words *vatan* (fatherland) and *hürriyet* (freedom). Namık Kemal declared that only a constitutional regime could restore the former strength and prestige of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>248</sup> According to Namık Kemal, although the Tanzimat Charter, the Islahat Edict and some other recent imperial decrees contained some legal principles, they were not enough to solve the problems of the Ottoman Empire. To him, a constitutional regime was not only necessary to assure a fair administration for Ottoman subjects but also to prevent Russia from any opportunity to assert any pretexts to protect the Sultan's Christian subjects. It would also convince Europe about the fairness of the Ottoman administration.<sup>249</sup>

Kemal's patriotism was concretized in Pan-Ottomanism and his loyalty to the Islamic heritage. For him, the concept of fatherland was not limited to the Ottoman lands but encompassed all Islamic realms, which were united by the memory of a common and brilliant past. Namık Kemal's vision of a fatherland was influenced by nostalgia and romanticism. Nevertheless, despite his strong emphasis on Islam as the basis of his patriotism, Namık Kemal did not exclude non-Muslim elements of the Empire from his construction of the fatherland. He was strongly committed to the feasibility of a pan-Ottoman union, which would include the Empire's non-Muslim communities. In Namık Kemal's opinion the different religions, languages, and races existing in the Ottoman Empire did not form an obstacle to the formation of an Ottoman nation.<sup>250</sup> He concluded that a proper education would be the key to reducing cultural differences among diverse elements of the Empire. This policy would include a uniform syllabus, which would instill patriotism in the minds of the new generation. The summary above shows how Namık Kemal's ideas on Ottoman nationalism were of an ambivalent nature. While asserting the equality of all Ottomans irrespective of

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<sup>247</sup> Ahmed Emin, *The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by Its Press*, New York, 1914, p. 39

<sup>248</sup> *ibid.*, p. 237

<sup>249</sup> Türköne, *Siyasi İdeoloji Olarak İslamcılığın Doğuşu*, pp.116-118

<sup>250</sup> Mardin, *The Genesis*, p. 328

ethnicity or religion and upholding the idea of Ottoman citizenship as a secular concept, he nevertheless considered Islam to be the glue that would hold together the empire and its diverse nationalities.<sup>251</sup>

Namık Kemal was the first Muslim thinker in Islamic history to advocate a parliamentary regime. Although liberal European thinkers, such as Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau had an influence on his thoughts,<sup>252</sup> he formulated his ideas within an Islamic discourse.<sup>253</sup> He believed that the concept of representative government had already found its expression in the Koran and its application in early Islamic history. The same observation could also be made for the political system of the Ottoman Empire before the centralizing reforms of Mahmud II. Namık Kemal regarded the classical Ottoman political structure as a precursor of the modern representative regime. The separation of powers Montesquieu argued for in his *Spirit of the Laws* was already in force in Ottoman politics. Indeed, it was based on a system of checks and balances: for example, the Ulema and the Janissaries restrained the sultan's authority.<sup>254</sup>

Another Young Ottoman thinker who took an Islamist approach was Ziya Pasha (1825-1880). Like Namık Kemal, he made an administrative career in the Translation Bureau where he was exposed to the ideas of the Enlightenment. Although he was a member of the same intellectual circle, Ziya Pasha differed from Namık Kemal in many aspects. Unlike Kemal, who spent most of his life in exile, Ziya Pasha occupied an important position during his long administrative career. Besides, he was closely connected with the Palace and identified himself with the imperial administration. These associations had an undeniable impact on his political thought, which, in comparison to Kemal's ideology, is conservative in nature. One of the most striking divergences between these two Young Ottoman thinkers lay in Ziya Pasha's aloofness from the concept of liberty. Despite his conviction regarding the necessity

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<sup>251</sup> *ibid.*, p. 329

<sup>252</sup> *ibid.*, p. 333

<sup>253</sup> Ju. A. Petrosjan, *Der Islam in der Ideologie der Jungtürken*, Mitteilung des Instituts Für Orient Forschung, I, Band XV. 1969, Berlin

<sup>254</sup> Mardin, *The Genesis*, p. 310

of establishing a constitutional government in the Ottoman Empire, Ziya Pasha stressed preservation of the imperial privileges of the Sultan.<sup>255</sup>

At this point, it is necessary to make some remarks to clarify the Islamic discourse of the Young Ottomans. Although many scholars attribute Ottoman reforms and the eventual Turkish adoption of European institutions as a tacit recognition of the superiority of Western civilization, the Ottomans and most of the Turks in the modern Republic, except a few so-called Westernists, never believed their culture was inferior; they merely acknowledged its economic under-development.<sup>256</sup> Young Ottomans were an example of this political attitude. According to Karpaz;

Nineteenth century Ottoman intellectuals agreed that the West had advanced in technology, administration and organization but that their own society was morally and ethically superior to that of Europe, and only the positivist Young Turks did not include Islam in that favorable assessment. It is not bewildering that Ziya Gökalp, the father of Turkish nationalism, modernism, and secularization, still defended even at the first two decades of the twentieth century, the superiority of the Turkish culture, which was unique, national and could not be borrowed, from civilization, which consisted of the positive sciences and technology and was international or common to all, regardless of origin.<sup>257</sup>

Among the bureaucratic elite of the Ottoman administrator class and military commanders who deposed Sultan Abdülaziz (1861-1876), the ideas of the Young Ottoman thinkers received considerable attention. The coup d'état, which took place on 20 May 1876, came as an answer to the political and economic crises, which had determined political life in the Empire for five years. On the same day, the leading figures of the time, namely Midhat, Hüseyin Avni, Süleyman and Mütercim Mehmed Rüştü Pashas, installed Murad V (30 May -7 September 1876) on the throne in order to execute their plan to establish a constitutional regime. In the end, the constitution and the parliaments of 1876-78, although originating in the struggle for power between the Sultan and the bureaucracy, were also part of the intent to establish Ottomanism. Midhat Pasha (1822-1884) and the constitutionalists believed that a parliamentary system and popular participation in government decisions would

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<sup>255</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 340-344

<sup>256</sup> Kemal Karpaz, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History*, p. 12

<sup>257</sup> *ibid.*, p. 12



strengthen the unity of the land. The constitutionalists believed that the multi-religious Ottoman state could be turned into a cohesive political unit if the population were properly informed about the advantages of Ottomanism. Therefore, they tried to convince the Muslim population that constitutionalism and the parliament actually conformed to Islamic principles and institutions, such as the *cemaat* (local congregation), *şura* (council), *ijma* (opinion of the community) and *meşveret* (consultation-deliberation).<sup>258</sup>

On March 19 1877, the first Ottoman Parliament was opened. However, with the enthronement of Abdulhamid II in 1877, the first constitution was removed, the parliament closed, and the Young Ottoman movement disappeared. However, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, there appeared the Young Turk movement, which would determine its political and social destiny until its complete dissolution. The Young Turk movement was composed of different groups, even at the primary stages of its formation. There were many different political ideas between Young Turks. The Young Turks outside of the Ottoman Empire borders published 95 Turkish, 8 Arabic, 12 French, and 1 Hebrew newspaper. Between them, there were Turkish, Arabic, and Albanian nationalists.<sup>259</sup> Their common interest was to oppose the regime of Abdulhamid II. The Young Turk movement can be dated back to 1889, when it emerged as an intellectual opposition to the regime of Sultan Abdülhamid II, but it did not enter into the political life of the Empire until the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. Until this change, it had possessed the peculiar characteristic of being a political opposition movement that had no clear political aims other than replacing the Sultan's regime with a parliamentary one. Parliamentary government was not itself the most important aspect of the Young Turks' ideal regime; indeed, under the strong influence of European elitist theories of the late nineteenth century, they tended to look down on a parliament as a heterogeneous crowd. Thus, Young Turk propaganda, which reflected a strong commitment to Social Darwinism, positivism, and elitism, and promoted an ideal society based on these concepts, could

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<sup>258</sup> Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, p. 316

<sup>259</sup> A. Bedevi Kuran, *İnkılap Tarihimiz ve Jön Türkler*, İstanbul, 1945, p. 43

not convince its sympathizers of the need for revolution.<sup>260</sup> The Young Turk movement transformed from an intellectual movement into a political one in 1906. The more the Young Turk organizations developed into political organizations, the more their focus on intellectual ideas decreased. Although they believed in these ideas, their organizations became pragmatic political committees. As a result, in contrast to the period between 1889 and 1902, the gap between the Young Turks' imagined ideal society and their pragmatic political agendas widened considerably between 1902 and 1908.<sup>261</sup>

The Revolution of 1908 was realized by the majority of the population and the military, affected by the ideas of the Young Turks. There were many disturbances in different regions of the Ottoman Empire in 1907 among different groups, which aimed at dethroning Abdulhamid II. The most important revolutionary groups were the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.<sup>262</sup> Before the revolution of 1908, there emerged many rebellions in different regions of the Empire. On the other hand, the rivalries between European powers in the Balkans paved a way for the autonomy of Macedonia.<sup>263</sup> By the beginning of July 1908, reports of dissent and revolt within the army in Salonica and throughout Macedonia were a daily affair. The dissemination of revolutionary propaganda among junior officers, and the repeated revolts among the troops led to even further disobedience and revolt.<sup>264</sup> The revolution began with Major Niyazi's uprising in Resna, which resulted in the proclamation of the second constitution on July 23, 1908.<sup>265</sup> All Ottoman citizens, including Turks, Arabs, Greeks, Armenians and Jews, welcomed the proclamation of the second constitution.<sup>266</sup> Ahmed Emin, an eyewitness of the celebrations, describes the reactions as follows:

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<sup>260</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 3

<sup>261</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4

<sup>262</sup> Aykut Kansu, *The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey*, 1997, p. 78

<sup>263</sup> Mehmet Hacısalihioglu, *Die Jungtürken und die Mazedonische Frage (1890-1918)*, München 2003, p. 164

<sup>264</sup> Aykut Kansu, *The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey*, p. 87

<sup>265</sup> Mehmet Hacısalihioglu, *Die Jungtürken und die Mazedonische Frage*, p. 165

<sup>266</sup> Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks, Ottomanism, Arabism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918*, University of California Press, 1997, p. 52

The effect was amazing. The sleeping city became at once ablaze with excitement and enthusiasm. The streets, where people did not usually even feel free to walk fast, lest they attract the attention of spies, were filled with noisy crowds, listening joyfully to the revolutionists' speeches, or making demonstrations in front of public buildings, newspaper offices, and foreign embassies... People belonging to different races and creeds that had always avoided friendly intercourse, took delight in fraternizing with one another. Blame for the unconciliatory attitude they formerly showed was ascribed to the policy of the old government. "*We loved each other, but the despotic government did not let us become aware of it*", were words to be heard in every part of the city, on that first day of enthusiasm.<sup>267</sup>

The Young Turks and the most of the intellectuals supported the constitutional regime at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century in the Ottoman Empire. There were different reasons for this support but one of the reasons was their strong belief in the parliamentary regime and individual freedom.<sup>268</sup> Şükrü Hanioglu remarks on the same subject below;

The concept of constitution has different meanings. Once constitutionalism was a criterion for modernity, when Young Turks demanded a constitution. But there was another reason bringing about the demand for constitutionalism of Young Turks. The traditional Ottoman government system, millet system, failed after 1789 because of increasing nationalism across the Ottoman border. Constitution and parliament were considered a measure, which would hinder disintegration of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>269</sup>

As remarked before, not only Muslims and Turks but also non-Muslim citizens of the Empire demanded the proclamation of the constitution. Because of the fact that realizing the unity of the Empire was the main task of the Ottoman Muslims and intellectuals, it is hardly surprising that different thinkers, including Islamists, supported the constitution.

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<sup>267</sup> Ahmed Emin, *The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by Its Press*, p. 87

<sup>268</sup> See; Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri*, p. 219.

<sup>269</sup> Şükrü Hanioglu, *Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jöntürklük*, Istanbul, p. 70

### 3.3 Main Ideologies at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

In the beginning of the twentieth century, there were three main ideologies in the Ottoman Empire; Islamism, Turkism and Westernism. Because Islamists will be examined later in detail in a separate chapter it is at this point, better to underline the main characteristics of the other two ideologies. The *Turkist* school of thought appeared in the Ottoman State, firstly in literature and then in politics at the end of the nineteenth century, especially in Salonica. *Turkism* began to be used by a group, which came out of a literature movement and was influenced by pan-*Turkism* coming from Russia. The thoughts of the *Turkists* differed from both the view of Islamists and Westernists, although it borrowed many elements from both. Their thoughts were an attempt at a synthesis of the other schools.<sup>270</sup> Although Ottomanism promoted the idea of the motherland, with all subjects, regardless of religion and race, equal in the eyes of the law, and loyal to the same Ottoman dynasty; the success of national unity movements in Germany and Italy, and nationalist aspirations of non-Turkish Muslim groups in the empire paved a way for increasing awareness of the Turkish identity.<sup>271</sup> Ottomanism was gradually displaced by increasing Turkish nationalism after the proclamation of the second constitution.

The other influential movement of the second constitutional period was Westernism, criticized vigorously by the Islamists. The origins and tradition of Westernism can be traced back to reformist sultans like Selim III and Mahmud II, and even to the Sultan Ahmed III (1703-1730). Their aim was to modernize the Ottoman state by initiating military and bureaucratic reforms along the European model, and the reforms were to be undertaken under Western Europe's growing economic, military and political impact. Unlike their reformist predecessors of the Tanzimat era, supporters of Westernism during the second constitutional period were not content with modernizing the military and the bureaucracy. Nor did they limit the range of their reforms to commercial and criminal law. Instead, they attacked the very core of Muslim life such as the family and the role of women in society. To Westernist

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<sup>270</sup> Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, pp. 344-345

<sup>271</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, Volume II, p. 260

thinkers, one of the main reasons for the decay of Muslim civilization was the degraded status of women in Islam. One of the most prominent representatives of Westernism, Dr. Abdullah Cevdet (1869-1932), wrote in his journal *İçtihad*, “women should have the exact same rights as men concerning family affairs, inheritance and other matters”. He also advocated the unveiling of Muslim Ottoman women, which brought about vehement reactions among the Islamists.<sup>272</sup> Nevertheless, their radicalism laid not in their opposition against the veiling, but rather in the refusal of traditional values. The Westernists’ ideas were radically different from the prevalent view of Westernization. The essence of Westernization, according to them, would be a radical moral and mental transformation. The greatest problem was to remove the old system of values, in order to develop a new morality based on the Western system of values. In other words, according to them, modernization was a cultural and moral issue far more than a material one.<sup>273</sup> Abdullah Cevdet was deeply influenced by the materialism that prevailed in Ottoman intellectual circles and became a leading proponent of materialism in the Ottoman Empire. Like many Ottoman intellectuals of his day, Abdullah Cevdet believed that religion was one of the greatest obstacles to social progress and that it should be replaced by science.<sup>274</sup> As expected, a vehement discussion took place between Islamists and Westernists about these issues at the beginning of the twentieth century. Without consideration of the Westernists’ thoughts, it is not possible to conceive the position of Islamists. These discussions will be examined in the chapter “Feminism in the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century”.

Generally speaking, several major ideologies were competing with one another in the Ottoman Empire at the end of the twentieth century. One of them was Islamism. Secondly, towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, Pan-Turkism gradually became an influential ideology, especially during the second constitutional period. Each school argued that its way was the best, indeed

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<sup>272</sup> Şükrü Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Düşünür Olarak Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi*, İstanbul, 1981, p. 309

<sup>273</sup> *ibid.*, p. 338

<sup>274</sup> Şükrü Hanioglu, *Garbcılar: Their Attitudes toward Religion and Their Impact on the Official Ideology of the Turkish Republic*, *Studia Islamica*, 1997/2, 86, p. 134. Also see; Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Düşünür Olarak Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi*, pp. 325-327

the only way, to save the Ottoman Empire.<sup>275</sup> The other was Westernism, which aimed at transferring Western values and ideals, in order to save the state. However, until the proclamation of the Second Constitution in 1908, Ottomanism was the official ideology of the Ottoman Empire. During that period, Ottoman intellectuals advocated a unifying ideology against nationalism in order to prevent the collapse of the Empire. People living within Ottoman territories were considered Ottoman subjects and people of different cultures, religion and nations were assumed to connect to each other with this sense of Ottomanism. However, Ottomanism was not a well-constructed ideology capable of providing Ottoman unity. Consequently, nationalism spread to other regions of the Empire.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan Islam*, 1994, Oxford University Press, pp. 9-10

<sup>276</sup> *Foundations of Turkish Identity and Its Crisis*, Ankara Papers; 2004, Vol.15, Issue 1, pp. 49-50