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The Views of the Young Turks and the Conservatives about Foreign and Domestic Politics before the Balkan Wars

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A tanulmány célja, hogy bemutassa az ifjútörök mozgalom megítélését és annak változását az európai, török és magyar történetírásban. A közös elképzelések valamint eltérő álláspontok felvázolása, illetve ezek okainak és eredetének megvilágítása mellett szerepet kap annak vizsgálata, hogy a különböző európai felfogások és trendek hatása hogyan jelenik meg a magyar történetírásban az egykorú reakcióktól a legújabb kutatásokig. A magyar történetírásban az ifjútörök mozgalom önálló kutatási területként sohasem szerepelt: a keleti kérdés részeként csupán a diplomácia- és politikatörténeti vonatkozásai kerülnek említésre, a mozgalom előzményeivel, ideológiájával, céljaival, azok megvalósulásával, társadalmi háttérével magyar szerzők nem foglalkoztak, és a külföldi művek hozzáférhetősége is korlátozott maradt. Ezzel szemben a források zömének birtokában lévő török történetírás az 1970-es évek végéig éppen ezekre a kérdésekre fókuszált a nemzeti történelem részének tekintve a problémakört, és elhanyagolta a mozgalom nemzetközi vonatkozásainak tanulságait. A nemzetközi folyamatokra gyakorolt hatást illetően a magyar történészek nincsenek lemaradva a nemzetközi trendektől. Nyugat-Európában az ifjútörök mozgalomnak éppen azon vonásait érte kritika, melyekre a török történetírás annak erényeként tekint. A mozgalom ideológiájának gyökereit és társadalmi támogatottságát illetően máig nincs egyetértés a két csoport között, miként Törökországban is vita folyik arról, hogy az ifjútörökök elgondolásainak megvalósítása jelentette-e az egyetlen kiutat a helyzetből. 1908-1913 között ez nem volt olyan egyértelmű, mint 1918 után, éppen ezért vizsgálódásainkat az előbbi időszakra helyeztük, mely sokak szerint éppenhogy oka volt a későbbi szituációnak.

THE PROBLEMS OF EUROPEAN, TURKISH AND HUNGARIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

This contribution aims to examine the transformation of the interpretation of the Young Turk reform movement in European historiography by comparing the different approaches and their evolution. The common ideas and counterpoints of the Turkish and Western European authors are also investigated, as well as the influence of their interpretations on Hungarian historiography. Since the latter lacks separate, modern works based on reliable sources concerning this period, we also tried to compare the older opinions, contemporary to the movement itself. Our investigation mainly focuses

on the period between 1908-1913, in order to examine a situation where the positive effect of the Young Turk movement on the survival of Turkey was at least questionable. The positive political role played by Young Turks can be verified after 1923, but before it was more dubious. In order to differentiate between the origins of different political groups and their ideas about modernization, constitutionalism, liberalism and nationalism and their instruments, it is necessary to observe briefly the Young Ottoman period, 1876-1878.

Kemal H. Karpat claimed in 1975 that the Young Turks remained the least studied and understood power group in the history of the Balkans and the Middle East, though the movement itself was not negligible¹. It was the first case of seizure of power in an Eastern country by a young, westernized generation, the first defeat inflicted by an energetic and radical intelligentsia upon the Islamic 'ancien régime'².

As the original sources were usually written in Turkish language this gives a great advantage to Turkish historians. Therefore the Young Turk period is often regarded merely as a part of the national history of Turkey – even some Turkish historians think the same, although the CUP was established as a multi-ethnic and multicultural organisation in the Balkans³. Until this fact was realized, mainly Turks dealt with the issue. As the Young Turks after 1923 cut off the connections between the old Empire and the modern Turkish State, so Turkish historians tended to forget about the periphery and they considered the activity of the early Young Turks as the sole solution to save Turkey – just because that is what later events eventually seemed to show. Actually the activity of CUP in 1908-1913 was also responsible for the forthcoming events. The major early works in Turkish on this subject are written by A. B. Kuran. Kuran sympathized with the so-called liberals and conservative-liberals led by Prince Sabaheddin – influenced by the ideas of August Comte – and showed a strong bias against the CUP⁴.

Until the 1970s, Turkish scholars and researchers produced little on very late Ottoman histories because of the existence of an official state-sanctioned thesis of history that imposed ideological interpretation on this point. The authors avoided the objective discussion of sensitive subjects. These issues, like international reception and relations towards other Muslims were left almost entirely to foreign scholars, while the evolution of the movement was at the centre of interest according to M. S. Hanioglu⁵. Very little has been written about CUP policy towards the Balkan states. Over the last decades a new philosophy emerged to challenge these traditions (H. Ünal, A. Özcan)⁶.

According to Karpat, in Western Europe it was E. E. Ramsaur in 1957 (*The Young Turks: Prelude to the Revolution*) who rekindled some kind of interest in this period. This work was criticized by Turks as it did not use most of the available Turkish sources, and dealt with the activity of Young Turks in exile, exaggerating their role in forming the ideology of the movement. Turkish authors often questioned the role of the West in forming the ideas of Young Turks. It is claimed that while Young Ottomans and early Young Turks (1908) were driven by western liberal ideas, nationalism – which finally *saved* Turkey from total dismemberment, was adopted from the nationalism of the Balkan countries

as a result and a response to this challenge. Many of the books published before 1970 on this period fail to take into account and contrast the conflicting nationalism of Balkan peoples with the similar ideologies that appeared among the Muslim groups in the Young Turk era. In the early years a debate began between Turkish and European scholars.

Now both sides tend to accept that the Muslims' original anti-imperialistic self-defensive nationalism which culminated in the Pan-Islamism of Abdülhamid II was replaced by an aggressive linguistic and ethnic nationalism under the CUP and that the latter is partly responsible for the partial disintegration of the Ottoman State – though it was called to life to hinder, not to promote this process. The early books often fail to take into account the developing political conflict between the bureaucratic elite and the economic middle class, the pressing demand for development and education that played a mobilizing role among the population. These processes need further investigations.

Before examining the situation and role of Hungarian historiography, recent major European trends and works which are available in English in this topic are worth mentioning too. A general history covering Turkey in this period is written by B. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (1968), and updated by E.J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (1993), and by F. Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (1993). B. Niyazi in *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (1964), covers similar ground, but concentrates on the development of ideas. An attempt of R.E. Ward and D.A. Rustow (eds.), *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey* (1964), to use a comparative method to understand the distinctive but successful modernization induced by the pressure of Powers, has valuable essays on general themes. W.F. Weiker in *The Modernization of Turkey* (1981) covers the period beginning in 1923. R.H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876* (1963, reissued 1973); and C.V. Findlay, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922* (1980), discuss the Tanzimat era. R. Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutional Period* (1963), is a careful study of the 1876 crisis and the establishment of the first Ottoman parliament and S. Mardin in *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* also studied the Young Ottomans; studies of the Young Turks include E.E. Ramsaur, *The Young Turks: Prelude to the Revolution of 1908*; F. Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914* (1969); E.J. Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement 1905-1926* (1984); and M.S. Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (1995); *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (2001). In the 1970s Ahmad's book, relying mainly on the consular reports of the British Public Office but also including Turkish sources, was the best according to Karpat, although his work paid scant attention to social, economic and ideological currents⁷.

Uriel Heyd published *The Foundations of Turkish Nationalism* (1950). David Kushner in *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism, 1876-1908* (1977) has won acclaim for its consideration of ideological aspects. Hasan Kayali – investigating the transformation of Middle Eastern political identities from empire to nation-states in his work *Arabs and*

Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918 (1997) – deals with the ideological opposition between the Islamic centre and periphery. Kayali denies that schism between Turks and Arabs arose because of the attempt to Turkify the population. Instead, he argues, that the CUP dismissed Arabs from administrative positions in order to get rid of incompetent leaders and the supporters of the old regime. The weakness of the author's case – according to Commins – is that Hanioglu quotes the private correspondence of Turkish leaders, which is contrary to Kayali's opinion⁸.

The Hoover Library in the USA has numerous works on the topic⁹. Among these books only the ones written by Mardin, Zürcher, Lewis, Kayali (internet) Hanioglu (internet) and Niyazi are – in a limited way available for researchers in Hungary. Nor can we find a concise history at least of the Eastern Question or the Balkans written by Hungarians from the period after 1945, and only one concise history of the Balkans is translated into Hungarian language – the one written by Jelavich, which does not focus on the question that concerns us here. Though the Eastern Question – or at least its independent part, the Balkans – has already been conscientiously examined in Hungary by Horváth, Balanyi and Lajtor just after the first World War, due to the context in which they wrote, they are not impartial. Their descriptive works, based on the news of daily press witnessing the events, met the standards of higher education, but they are now forgotten.

In comparison to Western Europe and especially to Turkey the question of Young Turks' reform movement remained underestimated, underexamined and almost unrepresented as a separate research area in the last eight decades of Hungarian historiography. Hungarian books about Young Turks are not based on original sources, they are compilations. The authors usually give a short description of events without evaluating them, rarely is there an attempt at synthesis. Nonetheless a comparison with foreign works might be interesting in order to investigate their influence and also to measure the lag with respect to mainstream studies and new results. As the number of works written in Hungarian is quite limited, as is the number of books translated into Hungarian, foreign works available in Hungary (i.e. H.A. Gibbons) had to be taken into consideration in order to collect the necessary data to examine the differences between interpretations appearing in the Hungarian works. This topic has always been treated as part of the wider problem of the Eastern Question. This was a consequence of the fact that historians in Hungary examined Turkey (and the Balkans) merely in the context of the Balkan policy of the Monarchy and not as a separate unit. The latest Hungarian works proved to be usable for higher education and comparative history-teaching¹⁰, sometimes far-sighted, but these are still general works based merely on some well-selected publications, without the deeper knowledge and use of other important and specific works.

The fate of Turkey might have been a lesson for the Dual Monarchy and for Hungarian national development – concerning both the problems of nationality and the failure of different solutions adopted to keep the state together – but these lessons were

neglected. However, early in the 19th century the conservative politician Gentz had warned the Hapsburgs, that after the fall of Turkey the Monarchy would be the next victim, because with the collapse of Turkey the circumstances which allowed and made necessary the existence of the Monarchy would disappear – but no comparative work about the two empires was published.

This underestimation in Hungary is partly because the leftist historical tradition claims that the modern democratic Hungary is not the successor of Austria-Hungary: it is held that it is a brand new state formed together with Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, in order to avoid being considered as a defeated country. But cutting all connections and common responsibility with the past of the Monarchy meant that it was considered merely as an imperialistic state, therefore the examination of Balkan policy was not seriously studied in the communist period, unlike domestic policy. The national movement of small states in the Balkans was considered positive in comparison to the role played by Habsburg Monarchy and Turkey. This also meant that if Young Turks ever appeared on the pages, they were considered as oppressors with respect to the role of the small Slavic states engaged in building Yugoslavia, – and sometimes as victims, if the Monarchy or Power Policy appeared on the other side. So judgements on the Young Turks were ambivalent – at least they enjoyed positive features in comparison to conservatives and liberals. The decentralising-federalistic tendencies of the latter were also underestimated (in case of the Slavs in Yugoslavia they were welcomed), since they promoted the interference of the Grand Powers.

The conservative historical tradition in Hungary also neglected the Young Turks. Those who estimated highly the role of the Monarchy and agreed with its Balkan policy, considered the Young Turks' constitutionalism as a challenge to the Monarchy's political claims. Those conservatives who opposed the Balkan policy that they identified merely with the interests of Austria and Germany, also underestimated the Young Turks as they proved to be too weak to stop the events in the Balkans (indeed, they were accused of promoting them because of their acts), therefore giving space to the imperialistic ambitions of the Monarchy.

These statements can be corroborated by some examples. In the work of Horváth, the Turkish reform movement does not appear in a separate chapter, but it is divided between different events considered as foreign policy. The crisis of 1908 is incorporated in the problem of the Sanjak Railway, which not only induced the Powers to oppose the Monarchy, but also spurred the action of Young Turks. The annexation crisis and the declaration of independence in Bulgaria were responses for the Turkish reform movement according to the author.¹¹ The second time the Turkish political situation is mentioned, it is incorporated into an illustration of the consequences of the Bosnian crisis, which led to the crisis of the Turkish government.

Balanyi was of the opinion that the second meeting at Reval in 1908 led to the activity of Young Turks. He claimed that the Memorandum of Curzon had revealed that the Triple Entente intended to reorganize the Asian parts of Turkey with a centre

in Mecca, while the European parts would have been split between the Powers, although the Triple Entente claimed that the talks had been about giving international forces to strengthen the position of Hilmi Pasha against the bands of Macedonia and to carry out reforms¹². Lajtor – contrary to Balanyi – thinks that the CUP feared the success of the Macedonian reform movement, which would have resulted in creating an autonomous province and thus the possibility of permanent intervention of the Powers. This would have led to the total independence of the province as the example of Eastern Rumelia showed, and therefore – unlike Turkish authors – he claimed that the Young Turks had shown centralist tendencies from the beginning of their movement in 1908. Lajtor wrote that the Young Turks' movement had intended to form a nationalist and democratic constitutional monarchy from the feudal and clerical Empire. This movement – since the Empire lacked a bourgeoisie – could not aim to achieve the results of the European revolutions of 1648 and 1789. The movement of the Young Turks was not supported by huge masses, it was the consequence of the debut of some idealist intellectuals¹³. Lajtor also tended to call the Young Turks anti-Islamic in the sense that they were not only anticlerical but also non-religious. This might be because the Young Turks disliked the idea of Pan-Islamism, that Abdülhamid used to gain support.

Balanyi claimed that the Young Turks originally represented democratic tradition against Abdülhamid's despotism. The author thought that Turkey would be able to solve her problems without foreign intervention thus stabilizing her position. In his work, the problem of modernization in Turkey is considered in the context of international affairs. The successful boycott against Austrian merchandise was the only case when Balanyi admitted that the CUP had support from broad classes of society. The latest books published in Hungary concerning the history of Eastern Europe in the early 20th century did not even mention the events in Turkey between 1908-1913. The books used in higher education also omit this period: 20th-century World History has a separate chapter about Turkey only after 1945. The latest sourcebook also lacks sources on Turkey, although events in the Balkans are involved, while older sourcebooks have separate volumes on the Balkans and Turkey¹⁴.

THE INTERNAL ASPECTS OF THE REFORM MOVEMENT

The Young Ottomans – who were both constitutional reformers and revolutionaries, but not nationalists – are considered as the predecessors of Young Turks, and although they had different ideas on modernization, the two groups are usually fused together in Hungarian historiography. For the period of Tanzimat the only book available in the Hungarian language is written by İlber Ortaylı. The author claims that the constitution of 1876 was established due to internal pressure and not as a result of external political events – contrary to the opinion of Davison¹⁵. Young Ottomans were not necessarily friendly to ideas of western nations, but at least they knew them and prepared to respond to the challenge. When they started their constitutional reform movement,

they wanted the renewal of the whole Empire, not only of Turkey, as it exists today. But many Turks thought then that constitutionalism would be Turkey's gravedigger¹⁶ and some Turkish historians – knowing the results of the futile efforts – believe that the Young Ottomans should have dealt only with the central areas.

The Hamidian regime was not receptive to bourgeois, nationalist ideas, as it lacked a bourgeoisie¹⁷. Ortaylı recognised that the reforms were initiated by a narrow group of idealists, noblemen working in the bureaucracy – the same happened in the East European societies, where revolutionary movements were often led by the elite of the old regime. Unlike the, at least declaredly, democratic Young Turks, the Young Ottomans did not want universal suffrage, but the two movements had a common idea, that they must fight against despotism and foreign intervention, not against the Sultanat. According to Ortaylı, Europe was not interested in Turkish constitutionalism in 1876: its reception in Austria and Russia was hostile, France and England thought that it would not be suitable for Turkey. Constitutional government did not hold back small states and Russia (which did not have a constitution) from declaring war on Turkey. Moreover, Europe supported Turkey not because of its constitutional regime, but to stop Russia¹⁸.

Hungarian historiography (and Gibbons) – with the exception of Matuz – did not judge correctly the significance of the liberal groups between Old Turks and Young Turks, and usually it considers them together with conservative elements. Liberals were considered renegades, who came from the conservative bureaucracy, and became supporters of the Young Turks in order to save their own power, then to return to their roots. Although in 1911 when the secession between the liberals and the “main stream” of the CUP occurred, the former included many educated members from different Balkan nations fighting for decentralism, parliamentarism, constitutionalism against the increasing chauvinism and centralisation of the CUP. Those liberals, who originated from the common intellectual heritage of the CUP, and then joined to the conservatives, are judged in the same way¹⁹. According to Kuran this is a misinterpretation. For many historians, liberalization and modernization are parallel and complementary concepts, and any trend of liberalization is accepted by them as a pledge to modernization, whereas any restrictive measure is seen as an expression of traditionalism²⁰. Kuran, Lewis and Balanyi consider Küçük Said Pasha – who persuaded the Sultan to restore constitutionalism instead of initiating a civil war in 1908 – as a conservative who was a modernist too²¹. Therefore the above mentioned approach of Hungarian historians to the liberals is not correct – it is still misleadingly confused by searching for a ‘good guy’ and a ‘bad guy’ in the story of 1908-13.

In 1877 Said opposed the implementation of reforms urged by Midhat Pasha because he thought it would hasten the disintegration of the Empire, and he further remarked that the satisfactory operation of a constitutional regime necessitated the existence of large group of well-educated deputies having enough knowledge. In 1908 he might have thought that time had come for parliamentarism. His concept is worth further investigation, because the Young Turks were driven by just the opposite opinion, that only

reforms could have hindered the dismemberment of the Empire. Young Turks thought that decentralization urged by the liberal flank would hasten disintegration, while secessionist liberals thought the same about centralization. Among Turkish historians both concepts appear.

Said Pasha seemed to have been the first statesman who realized that the policy of Ottomanism, aiming to create an Ottoman nation (including not only ethnic Turks) through a fusion of different ethnic communities, was doomed to failure. Therefore two other ways seemed to be applicable: creating a homogenous Turkish state (with the constant threat of losing the periphery), or favouring a policy based on strengthening the loyalty of Muslims subjected to the Sultan as Caliph. Accepting the latter strategy Said became the precursor of Pan-Islamism, though he opposed Abdülhamid's plan to make Arabic the official state language²². The other "conservative" (also Grand Vizier in the era of the CUP), Kiamil Pasha, refused the despotism too, but sympathized more with the decentralising ideas of liberals²³.

According to recent Turkish opinion, Özcan's analysis shows that Ottoman Pan-Islamism was not an aggressive ideology created by Abdülhamid II and there is no evidence that he ever claimed political sovereignty over the Muslims outside his dominion. It was an important device in the Ottoman state's relation to those Powers that had Muslim subjects, and a tool to unite Arabs, Turks and Albanians among whom nationalist sentiments were also growing.

Like the ideological bases, Turkish constitutionalism is not much researched in Hungary. While in 1876 the Parliament recognised the Sultan as the Supreme Executive, in 1908, he had to take an oath to preserve the constitution, and when he objected to it in 1909, the Sheik-ul Islam forced him to resign. This was a real constitutional revolution: a member of the ancien regime used his constitutional and traditional power to defend the constitution. Lajtor constantly uses the term revolution for the events of 1908, counter-revolution for 1909 and military mutiny for the events of 1912, which means that first the Young Turks were accepted with enthusiasm in Hungary, but all the other events are considered coups d'état. This decline in acceptance and evaluation of the events symbolises that the Young Turks lost the benevolence of foreigners. The same opinion can be traced and derived from the daily press²⁴.

Concerning the relationship between Muslims and Christians before 1908 the following facts can be stated. Christians absorbed western ideas of liberty and nationality first, therefore they were always viewed with suspicion; several Great Powers acted as traditional protectors of the Christians thus interfering into the internal affairs of the Empire, which also angered Muslims. So Christians were not trusted but were also fond of modern ideologies, which helped the Young Turks²⁵. The Young Turks might have thought that if Christians preserved their special rights or gained more, it would further encourage the Powers to interfere, thus decreasing the stability of the state. The constitution of 1876 affirmed, that "all Osmanli are equal before law... without distinction to religion". But Christians did not want to be called Osmanli, they felt that they

were Greeks, Bulgarians etc. They thought that constitutionalism was the beginning of some kind of homogenization. Therefore, from 1876 western ideas of the liberalism of Young Ottomans and the nationalism of Christians were necessarily opposed to each other. Ottomanism, the brotherhood of imperial subjects, was refused by most non-Muslim peoples. Although in 1876 these peoples became equal with the ruling elite, they lost their nationality, their self-identification. The demand e.g. in Crete was basically for autonomy or for union with Greece, not for equality. When Midhat Pasha began to work on the scheme of a federalist State in 1872, the Balkan nations refused his plan. The ecclesiastical hierarchies that ruled a Christian millet also refused equality: for them Ottomanism would have meant a decrease in their authority and income. Nationalism, fed by the self-supporting statehood of peoples subjected to the Empire, proved too strong to be contrasted by liberal efforts. This challenge called into life the Turkish nationalism manifested in the Young Turks' activity.

Cavour declared nationality to be the most potent force in the political world of the 19th century and the political weakness of the Treaty of Berlin seems to derive from the fact that its authors failed to recognise this truth²⁶. Early in 1904 Y. Akçura pointed out that both Pan-Islamism and Ottomanism had already failed as Christians did not respect equality, nor the modern State as the successor of the Empire. For them both meant oppression. Turkish nationalism was the logical choice for survival and modernization against the nationalism of Balkan peoples²⁷. Even the early Ottomanists concealed the idea of Turkish superiority. "The Turkish nation – wrote the Tanin, the paper of the CUP in 1908 – is and will remain the ruling nation"²⁸.

Until the defeat of 1912-1913 Anatolia was neglected in the movement, which concentrated on the European territories. Arabs, Vlachs, Jews and Greeks were also the members of the CUP. The Jews of Saloniki and Freemasonry played an important role, the Vlachs cooperated with the Turks, because the small scattered nation feared the nationalism of Greeks and Bulgars²⁹. But the fanaticism of Young Turks unified the Balkan Peoples against the Turks in a way unimaginable few years before. It may be true, as Batzaria, one of the Christian leaders of the CUP believed, that whenever Christians cooperated with Muslims and Turks in the framework of the CUP, they did so with the hope that this cooperation would hasten the downfall of the Ottoman State, and promote their own nationalist aspirations more rapidly. Liberalism was a device used by each ethnic group merely to fulfil its own political ambitions, although Batzaria himself believed that if the Young Turks had remained faithful to their original programme they might have succeeded in holding the state together. According to him, as a witness, after the revolution of 1908 the Christians soon began to feel that the constitution was only a device to hinder the political interference of the Powers without real contents. The policy of denationalization arrived too late: the old system of tolerance and privileges had already developed strong national consciousness among the nationalities³⁰. Turkification was doomed because the Turk was the weakest element of the Empire culturally.

EXTERNAL FACTORS IN THE TURKISH REFORM MOVEMENT AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON DOMESTIC POLICY

As Hungarian authors consider the domestic policy of Turkey too as the part of the Eastern Question, and deal with Eastern Question only when it has a connection with the Monarchy, we must discuss two questions briefly: first we must place the Young Turks in the context of the Eastern Question, and then present an overview of the aims of and reasons for Turkish domestic policy. Apart from tracing the historiographic background, this contribution examines the attitude, strategies and tactics of the leading Parties in trying to create circumstances which would allow Turkey to survive, while including both the European and Asian parts of the Empire. The statesmen of Turkey from 1856 saw two ways to counterbalance the challenge caused partly by the Powers and partly by the Balkan States and the unrest of Christians subjected to the Turkish yoke: first, by initiating new waves of reforms or, second, through a permanent alliance with a Great Power – which definitely meant economic subjection too in order to make such a Power interested in financing and supporting Turkey. These were the solutions to legitimate the existence of the state. The latter proved to be impossible, since if, in the tense situation after the establishment of the two rival European blocks, the militarily weak Turkey had joined with one of these blocks, the other block would have considered this a hostile step, and would have tried to hinder economic penetration even in the cost of a war. Therefore economic subjection and peaceful competition within Turkey among one another was better for Germany, Britain and France than an alliance. The Hungarian historian Elek Fényes wrote in 1854 about the Crimean War that, the Powers “are not worrying because they like the Turks so much ... but because they instinctively feel that the forthcoming partition of the heritage of the dead (Turkey) might cause a world war ...”³¹.

So conservatives had to give up the idea of gaining a faithful ally. Abdülhamid promoted the idea that the controversies between the two groups of Powers would enable Turkey to survive as the Powers were afraid of disrupting the equilibrium. The Turks did not believe that there would be war. “Italy will not draw the sword, because she knows that, if she does attack us, all Europe will be eventually drawn into the bloodiest struggle of history – a struggle that has always been certain to follow the destruction of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire”, pointed out Hakki Pasha, Grand Vizier, in 1911. Mahmud Shevket also joined this optimistic opinion which exaggerated the importance of the Ottoman state in maintaining equilibrium: “the million bayonets of Turkey will decide the fortunes of Europe”³². Abdülhamid incorrectly thought that the existence of Turkey ensured the balance, but the truth was that Turkey was considered only as a prey.

Young Turks chose a different way. Both parties wanted Turkey to survive, but the different instruments and tactics they used caused rivalry and as a consequence, there was unrest and a lack of stability in domestic policy. For the Powers and the small states, events suggested just the opposite of what the Turks wanted to emphasize: the collapse

and unsustainability of the Empire was near, thus they became more aggressive and impatient. The constant internal fights promoted the development of the Balkan League which proved that the conservative Turkish calculations concerning external relations were wrong.

As the opposition between the Young Turks and conservatives deepened, the methods applied in the fierce fight for political predominance sharpened further including genocide and coups d'état. After the victory of the revolution, the liberals, who seceded from the moderate wing of the Young Turks because they refused violent methods, became the real opponents. They announced decentralisation in order to correspond to the wishes of Europe, and to save the integrity of Turkey. Decentralisation met with the approval and support of France and England because a weak and partially disintegrated Turkey was in their interests. In order to exploit and maintain the possibility of economic subjection. Till 1918 the Powers agreed that a dismembered Turkey was bad, and a strong one is even worse. The Young Turks, on the contrary, insisted on centralisation and, by making the Turkish element predominant, on the homogenisation of the Empire, which induced the resistance of Christians and Muslim Arabs. Centralisation applied by Young Turks was suitable for the German economic and railway interests, though the latter did not believe that the periphery could be saved, but hoped that the central Turkish areas could be maintained. Therefore Germans supported the Young Turks while England and France supported the liberals³³. As a consequence, the different ideas of modernisation not only set the two parties against each other but domestic policy was also influenced by the Powers, and it also deepened further the existing fault line in Power policy between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, according to Hungarian historians.

The Balkans became important because the Powers were afraid that the 'balance of power' would suffer because of the decision of the small states, that is to which party they want to belong in order to obtain territorial and economical advantages. Winning the whole of Turkey to one of the European Power groups would have forced the other group to insist on the dismembering of the country, while in case of the Balkan League the confrontation between the Powers was not necessary. This was a further factor which the Turks had to deal with. Contrary to the expectations of the conservatives, Turkey felt the Great Powers lining up. According to the new policy of Great Britain, Grey in 1906 gained Sinai Peninsula from the Ottoman Empire, then in 1907 divided Persia with the Russians into spheres of influence. Grey declared war on the Mürzsteg programme of Austria and Russia, demanding that the Turkish army leave the three Macedonian vilayets.

Bulgaria, the Hapsburg Monarchy and Greece were afraid of the rejuvenation of Turkey; if thanks to constitutionalism Turkey was able to maintain administration and win the benevolence of the population in those provinces which were about to secede, these states would have had to abandon their claims or give back territories³⁴. This fear resulted in the annexation of Bosnia, the declaration of independence in Bulgaria, and a revolt in Crete. But the Powers did not want Turkey to lose three provinces at the same

time, so they refused to accept the union of Crete and Greece. The crisis, which the Young Turks tried to face, is not comprehensible without taking into consideration the importance of the Albanian, Cretan and Macedonian and the Straits Questions; just as the date of the outburst of tensions is not understandable without taking into account the penetration of the alliance systems into the peninsula, established and fueled by the divergences between the Great Powers. The symbolic meaning of the Tripolitanian War, which must be added to the list, was not only a fight for a useless province, but in fact, a precedent for the disruption of the status quo by a Power that had previously promised to maintain the integrity of Turkey. This event meant that if a state was allowed to violate the integrity of Turkey *by force* (in 1908 this did not happen), then others could also attempt to insult it. That was a great opportunity and an excuse for Balkan States to settle the bill. The danger coming both from the small states and from the intervention of the Powers forced the Young Turks to turn to the programme of centralisation. Among them the European element was dominant, therefore they considered the Balkan provinces to be part of the homeland. Originally, centralisation did not appear in their programme, so at an early stage they were able to win over those who later seceded as liberals.

Exposed to the partly external and partly internal problems mentioned above, it was hard to initiate real reforms. As usual in the Eastern part of Europe, external problems could not unite the state or the nation, and the parties in opposition always tried to exploit the situation against the ruling party to bid for power in these difficult times. Although Lybia was not an important province of Turkey – especially since Egypt de facto was under English rule – the Young Turks could not abandon the fight and surrender, because in this case they would have been accused by betrayal by the other side. After the July 1912 mutiny when the conservative-liberal coalition came into power, it insisted on carrying on the struggle because of ideological reasons. The Lybians were Muslims and the Sultan was the caliph of all Muslims, it was his duty to take care of his subjects. If conservatives had surrendered, they would have lost their ideological base and the support of the ‘public opinion’, as actually happened in January 1913 when they decided to accept the peace terms dictated by the Balkan League. When Enver Bey’s coup d’état succeeded and the Young Turks removed the conservative-liberal coalition from power, they did not make the same mistake: they insisted on waging war against the “infidels” to save sacred Edirne. Thus they were able to mobilize the religious Turks and those officers who sided with the conservative-liberal coalition and to continue the war.

According to the opinion of some Hungarian daily papers the main reason for continuing the war was to stabilize their internal position: during the battle of Bulair Young Turks managed to get rid of some officers who formerly supported the liberals as they died under the fire of Bulgarian machine guns. After only one month of fighting, as they had got rid of the dangerous political elements, in March the Young Turks asked for peace too, accepting most of the terms including the loss of Edirne. Matuz claims that the assassination of Mahmud Sevket Grand Vizier in June was a revenge of the liberals for making peace.

The CUP was divided between those who worshipped England and those who worshipped Germany, according to many authors. Ünal denies this: the CUP mistrusted all Grand Powers and the assumptions many researchers have made about the Young Turks' Anglophilia are over-simplifications. The CUP did not prefer either group. It has been suggested that the counter-revolution constituted a watershed in Britain's relations with Turkey marking the end of the honeymoon³⁵. In fact, the CUP may have taken power in 1908 with greater anti-British and anti-French leanings than any other Ottoman government³⁶. These tendencies were identified by Hungarian authors early in the 1980s; they tended to judge the late Young Turks as Germanophiles.

Hungarian researchers cannot get rid of the suspicion that if the Powers had not been so cruel to Turkey between 1903-1908, the Young Turks would not have chosen the path toward homogenisation that ended in genocide. Leftist tradition considers the Monarchy partly responsible for the subsequent events (and this might be an other reason for neglecting Turkey). In this period the Powers tried to solve the antagonism between the will of small states and the needs of Turkey by forcing Turkey to reform, rather than by exerting pressure on the small states. This solution was chosen because Turkey could not be won over to a system of alliances, because the other alliance system would have opposed it, but the small states could have been won over, partly by fulfilling their demands and partly – by reforming Turkey – by making their demands, as weapons of interference into Turkish internal policy, irrelevant.

THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN IDEAS AND ACTION OF THE YOUNG TURKS

The upsurge of enthusiasm soon disappeared as the Young Turks in power initiated their new programme, which, especially after their return in 1909, differed markedly from that of drawn up while they were in exile and under persecution. They wanted total unity and reform in the Western European meaning of this term, in a country which due to its origin lacked Western European traditions³⁷. The Young Turks studied in Western European universities, but they had to face the fact that probably only 5% of the population of the Empire had ever known what a constitutional regime meant³⁸. Democratic elections were only a piece of theatre to amuse Europe. In Hungary this movement of 1908 is sometimes taught as the blossoming of the reform process, a reform coming from below, deriving from the pressure of society contrary to the constitution established in 1876 and its predecessors of 1839 and 1856. The latter came from above, from the Sultan, forced to act by external political events (the attack of Muhammad Ali of Egypt, the Crimean War, the Turco-Russian War of 1877-1878). We saw the latter challenged by many writings (i.e. Ortayli). And the support of broad classes of society is also questionable [see Source 1, Part 1]. The CUP lacked the support of social classes and relied only upon the Army. (Staff officers led the military revolution in 1960, too). They stood at the peak of the military elite, differing from the corrupted civil bureaucracy³⁹. In Turkey, intellectuals could only make a career in the army or in the bureaucracy, where people had enough power to bring about their ideas. "From the very beginning the genuine Young Turks who

were honest and consistent in their idealism had to make a compact (and a compromise) with the higher army officers and with the corrupt civil officials of Abdul Hamid. When the real Young Turks controlled the Cabinet, disasters were those of theorists (not terrorists) and visionaries. When they yielded the control of affairs to men more experienced than they, it was simply the renewal of the tyranny of Abdülhamid” – wrote Gibbons⁴⁰. The radicalism of the Young Turks was influenced by the permanent threat of counter-revolution⁴¹. The threats to the new regime came from different directions as had already been predicted in 1909 [Source 1, Part 2]. Of the two possibilities delineated by Trotsky neither became reality: the Young Turks tried something different. A democratic Balkan Federation remained a dream.

In 1909 a law concerning the freedom of assembly and union came into effect, but with this act all kind of movement based on the principle of nationality too was forbidden [Source 2, §§ 9-10] Contrary to these rights, to defend the new regime the movement of conservatives to grab power was smashed by 60 arrests in July 1910. Participation of soldiers in political activity was punished with dismissal and 2-4 months imprisonment for the officers. A tax paid by Christians as a military contribution (kharadj) was abolished, but from that time Christians who had earlier been excluded from being soldiers were also enlisted in the army⁴². It is true that the older solution was not the best choice: because of military service the Turkish peasant was kept in a condition of economic serfdom while his Christian neighbours progressed. It is also true however that Turks thought that Christians could not be trusted.

Hungarian authors, like Kayali, admit that the Young Turks, as they tried to create a state in which Turkish was the official language both in offices and schools, lit the flames of nationalism [Source 2, §§7 and 17] even in Muslim places where earlier it had seemed impossible for such a thing to happen (i.e. Yemen)⁴³. It further strengthened the opposition, which was formerly ideological between the Muslim caliphate and the secular state: from 1910 on the same forces (Muslim nationalism based not only on religion) appeared in the other side. Young Turks pointed out that every European country had gone through the process that they had just initiated in Turkey, and that this was the only way in which a strong nation could be built⁴⁴. But in Europe the processes of centralization and homogenisation took hundreds of years to reach success – not 2 or 3 years – and besides European states had been unable to avoid revolutions and counter-revolutions, while the entire process was coupled with the enrichment of the existing bourgeoisie.

The nationalism of Young Turks alienated the Albanians too, though formerly they had been considered the main supporters of the Empire. According to the leftist politician Pogány, the behaviour of Albanians was fully acceptable: Albanian autonomy meant tax immunity and the refusal of military service and any other obligations. In Pogány’s view, theirs was an instinctive revolt of a nation which gained nothing from the Turkish nation and state⁴⁵.

The Young Turks also claimed that ecclesiastical autonomy was necessary under despotism, but the constitution guaranteed equal rights irrespective of religion. Therefore, the

Greek Church, which gave protection to the Greeks and had been treated as a permanent threat because of the Megali Idea, must resign from its prerogatives of a political nature. What the Turks truly attempted was to destroy the privileges of the Orthodox Church (in contradiction to §10). No religious organisation was allowed, under a constitutional regime, to be a state within a state and enjoy peculiar privileges and immunities, but this demand of the Young Turks contradicted their own previous proclamation.

In 1909, the cabinet, with a mixture of shortsightedness and modernity, nationalism and liberalism, abolished the possibility of creating societies based on the principle of nationality at the first sight with the intention of modernization and egalitarianism according to Balanyi. With that step, they were successful in destroying the legal basis of the Macedonian paramilitary organisations (i.e. IMRO) too, but not the organisations themselves. These responded with terrorism in order to provoke the intervention of the neighbouring states between 1911-1912; the massacres at Shtip, Kochane, Doyran and Kichevo committed by Muslims were provoked by Christian terrorists/freedom fighters. As the Turkish constitution indicated that the state should control schools (which was a natural step, the same happened in whole Europe), with that act the Turks prohibited the operation of schools organized on national basis, especially if the money to maintain them arrived from foreign Balkan countries. The state bought up arable lands to distribute them to Muslim muhadjirs who settled down and formed paramilitary organizations in order to counterbalance the similar activity of Christian komitadjis. In November 1909 laws against banditry were born, which made possible to accuse whole villages and deport the population if one of them was suspected of supporting an IMRO terrorist. The Young Turks and conservatives tried to use the “divide et impera” principle against Greek and Bulgarian bands, which resulted in banditry becoming more common. Instead of giving preference to commercial interests and an outlet for Bulgaria to the Aegean Sea as England proposed, the Porte insisted on sharpening the rivalry of Balkan States against each other’s claims, knowing that they would thwart each others’ plans⁴⁷. This strategy might have been successful, except for the fact that it did not take into account the capability of these states to cooperate against their common enemy, despite the hatred among them.

According to Karpat the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 had a profoundly demoralizing effect on the Young Turks, not because they ended in a defeat, but primarily because the defeat was inflicted on them by the former subject peoples who started work together with them. Their victory was convincing proof that nationalism and modernization had to carry on, and this led to the Arabian revolt and the loss of peripheries after 1918.

NOTES

- ¹ K.H. Karpat, *The Memoirs of N. Batzaria: the Young Turks and Nationalism*, “International Journal of middle east Studies”, 6, 3, 1975, pp. 276.
- ² S.A. Zenkovsky, *The Young Turks – Prelude to the Revolution of 1908* (Review), “American Slavic and East European Review”, 17, 2, 1958, pp. 254-256.

- ³ Karpat, *The Memoirs* cit., p. 279.
- ⁴ A.B. Kuran, *Inkılâp Tarîhimiz ve Jön Türkler* (1945); *Inkılâp Tarîhimiz ve İttihâd ve Terakki* (1948); and *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda İnkılâp Hareketleri ve Milli Mücadele* (1959). Other important older works are: T.Z. Tunaya, *Türkiyede Siyasi Partiler 1859-1952* (1952) and S. S. Aydemir: *Makedonya'dan Orta Asya'ya: Enver Paşa* (1970-1972) include sources from the diary of Enver Pasha. C. Bayar, *Ben de Yazdım* (1967-1972), 8 vols; Y.H. Bayur, *Türk İnkılâbı Tarihi I-II*, (1940-1943); K.N. Duru, *İttihâd ve Terakki Hatıralarım* (1957); *Arnavutluk ve Makedonya Hatıralarım* (1959); A.F. Türkgeldi, *Görüp İşittiklerim* (1951); H.C. Yalsin, *Talat Paşanın Hatıralar* (1958); A.C. Emre, *İki Neslin Tarihi* (1960); H. Ertürk, *İki Devrin Perde Arkası* (1969); S. Külce, *Fırzovik Toplantısı ve Meşrutiyet* (1944); H. Amca, *Dogmayan Hürriyet* (1958); M. Selahattin, *İttihâd ve Terakki Cemiyetinin Maksadı Tesis ve Suretli Teşkili*. The memoirs of Djemal, Mukhtar Pashas are published in English, German or French.
- ⁵ M.S. Hanioglu, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, The Ottomans and Britain (1877-1924)*, Review of the book of A. Özcan, "International Journal of Middle East Studies", 31, 1, 1999, pp. 145-147.
- ⁶ See H. Ünal, *Ottoman Policy during the Bulgarian Independence Crisis 1908-9: Ottoman Empire and the Outset of the Young Turk Revolution*, "Middle Eastern Studies" 34, 1, 1998.
- ⁷ Karpat, *The Memoirs* cit., p. 278.
- ⁸ D. Commins, *Arabs And Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918*, "The American Historical Review", 104, 1999, pp. 1041-1042. and M.S. Hanioglu, *The Young Turks and the Arabs before the Revolution of 1908*, in R. Khalidi et. al. (eds.), *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, New York 1991.
- ⁹ S.J. Shaw - E. Kural, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*; D. Fromkin: *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*. A. Mango also wrote about Young Turks ("Middle Eastern Studies", 8, 1, 1972, pp. 107-117); V.R. Swenson, *The Young Turk Revolution*, Phil. Diss. 1968. Among Russians we have to mention A.F. Miller, *Pjatidesjatiletije Mladoturekoj Revoljucii*, Moscow 1958; E.I. Hasanova, *Ideologija Burzhuaznogo Nacionalizma v Turcii*, Baku 1966; H.Z. Gabidullin, *Mladotureckaja Revoljucija*, Moscow 1936; A.N. Mandelstam, *Mladotureckaja Derzhava*, Moscow 1915; G. Aliev, *Turcija v period pravljenija Mladoturok*, Moscow 1972; and the Bulgarian T. Vlahov, *Balgarija i Mladoturskata Revoljutsija*, "Godishnik na Sofijskija Univerzitet", 59, 3, Sofia 1960, pp. 1-80.
- ¹⁰ Especially J. Matuz, *Az Oszmán Birodalom története*, Budapest 1990.
- ¹¹ J. Horváth, *A Balkáni kérdés utolsó fázisa 1895-1920. Külügyi könyvtár II.*, Budapest 1921, pp. 57-61.
- ¹² Gy. Balanyi, *A Balkán-probléma fejlődése a párisi kongresszustól a világháború kitéréséig 1856-1914*, Budapest 1920, p. 230.
- ¹³ L. Lajtor, *A keleti kérdés története*, Budapest 1940, pp. 112- 113.
- ¹⁴ E. Palotás, *Kelet-Európa története a XX. század első felében*, Budapest 2003; I. Diószegi et al. (eds.), *XX. századi egyetemes történelem I. (1890-1945)*, Budapest 1999; I. Diószegi (ed.), *Egyetemes történeti szöveggyűjtemény. XIX. század*, Budapest 2001.
- ¹⁵ R.H. Davison, *Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim equality in the Nineteenth Century*, "The American Historical Review", 59, 1954, p. 850
- ¹⁶ I. Ortaylı, *Az Oszmán Birodalom legbosszabb évszázada*, Budapest 2004, pp. 245-248.
- ¹⁷ D. Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism 1876-1908*, London 1977.
- ¹⁸ Ortaylı, *Az Oszmán* cit., pp. 245-248.
- ¹⁹ H.A. Gibbons, *The New Map of Europe*, London 1914, p. 174.
- ²⁰ E. Kuran, *Küçük Said Paşa as a Turkish Modernist*, "International Journal of Middle East Studies", 1, 2, 1970, pp. 124-132.
- ²¹ B. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, London 1968. p. 179.

- ²² Kuran, *Küçük Said Pasa* cit., p. 131.
- ²³ A.H. Lybyer, *The Turkish Parliament*, "Proceedings of the American Political Science Association", 7, 1910, p. 72.
- ²⁴ *Reichspost*, 26 July, 1908; and 22 July, 1912
- ²⁵ R. Davison, *Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim equality in the Nineteenth Century*, "The American Historical Review", 59, 4, 1954, pp. 844-864.
- ²⁶ *The Balkan Situation*, "The American Journal of International Law", 3, 3, 1909, pp. 688-690.
- ²⁷ Karpát, *The Transformation* cit., p. 280.
- ²⁸ R.G. Suny, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*. (Review), "Slavic Review", 55, 3, 1996, pp. 676-677.
- ²⁹ F. Ahmad, *The rise of Turkish Nationalism 1876-1908*, "International Journal of Middle East Studies", 12, 4, 1980, pp. 552-553; and E. Kedourie, *Young Turks, Freemasons and Jews*, "Middle Eastern Studies", 7, 1, 1971, pp. 89-104.
- ³⁰ Karpát, *The Memoirs* cit., p. 289-292.
- ³¹ E. Fényes, *Az orosz-török háború*, Pest, 1854, p. 6.
- ³² Gibbons, *The New Map* cit., pp. 231-234
- ³³ Matuz, *Az Oszmán* cit., pp. 200-202.
- ³⁴ Lajtor, *A keleti* cit., p. 113.
- ³⁵ H. Ünal, *Britain and Ottoman Domestic Politics: From the Young Turk Revolution to the Counter-Revolution 1908-1909*, in "Middle Eastern Studies", 2001, 37, 1
- ³⁶ H. Ünal, *Young Turk assesment of international politics 1906-9*, "Middle Eastern Studies", 32, 1, 1996.
- ³⁷ Balanyi, *A Balkán-probléma* cit., pp. 255-256.
- ³⁸ Lybyer, *The Turkish* cit., pp. 65-77; and Gibbons, *The New Map* cit., p. 173.
- ³⁹ K.H. Karpát, *The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908*, "International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies", 3, 3, 1972, 3, p. 277.
- ⁴⁰ Gibbons, *The New Map* cit., p. 174.
- ⁴¹ Balanyi, *A Balkán-probléma* cit., p. 259. The danger of abolishing the constitution in 1909 was the only factor which united the Young Turks and other opponents of Abdul Hamid in the Osman Union for a short time and even the conservative Mohamedan Union claimed that the existance of the constitution was not against the spirit of the Islam. As the counter-revolution was overcome, thousands of soldiers were sent to Macedonia to build railways. Those who work, have no time to think of revolts while promoting the economic development.
- ⁴² Gibbons, *The New Map* cit., p. 195.
- ⁴³ Balanyi, *A Balkán-probléma* cit., p. 264.
- ⁴⁴ Gibbons, *The New Map* cit., pp. 185-186.
- ⁴⁵ J. Pogány, *A Balkán-háború és az osztrák-magyar imperializmus*, Budapest 1913, p. 19.
- ⁴⁷ Gibbons, *The New Map* cit., p. 164.

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SOURCES

Source 1

Part I

“...But what is the secret of victory and what is the explanation of this astonishing success? ... In its real significance, a revolution is a fight for control of the State. That rests directly on the Army. This is why all revolutions in history sharply raised the question: on whose side is the army? In the case of the revolution in Turkey – and that gives it its specific features – it is the army itself which put forward these liberating ideas. Consequently, a new social class did not have to overcome the armed resistance of the Ancien Régime ... The unimportance of Turkish industry and low level of urban culture left the Turkish intelligentsia with hardly any other choice than a military or civil service career. So the State organized at its centre the militant vanguard of the bourgeois nation in process of formation: the critical and dissatisfied intelligentsia. The last few years have seen an uninterrupted series of disorders in the Turkish army due to non-payment of salaries or delays in promotions. ... Regiment after regiment, the army was taught in the school of rebellion... After the success of the revolt, numerous European politicians and journalists spoke of a mysterious ambience of brilliant organisation created by the Young Turks ... In fact, as Niazy Bey and Enver Bey themselves admitted, the revolt broke out when the Young Turks were “largely unprepared” for it. What helped them, was the automatic organization of an army ... The mechanical discipline of the army was transformed naturally into the internal discipline of the revolution. A collapse of the bureaucratic machine combined with the revolt of the army...”

Part II

“... After the success of revolution the different classes of the country had jointly fought to preserve the existing economic hierarchy, the economically dominant classes thus preserving their hegemony over the masses in the revolution – from whose efforts victory had come. ... Only a single state of all the Balkan nationalities, on a democratic and federal basis similar to the Swiss or United States model, can bring internal peace to the Balkans and ensure the conditions for a broad development of its productive forces... The “Young Turks” for their part definitively rejected this approach. Representing the dominant nationality and having their own national (muslim-Turkish) army, they remain national centralisers. The right wing consistently opposes self-government, even at the provincial level ... the right wing of the “Young Turks” will openly move to the side of counter-revolution... A fifth of the peasants are landless, ... reforms are urged by the Macedonian group of Sandanski and the Armenians... the party of “Young Turks”, in which Beys and landowners dominate, with a national-liberal blindness denies that there ever existed an agrarian question.

Obviously, the “Young Turks” hope that handing-over to a new administration, using the forms and procedures of parliamentarism, will be enough to satisfy the peasants. They are so wrong. Dissatisfaction... will find a greater reflection within the army which consists of peasants. And if a party which is based on officers, ... it could easily happen that the soldiers rise once again but this time against their officers...

Of the 240 deputies, the “Young Turks” have support from approximately 140. About 80 deputies, primarily Arabs and Greeks, form the block of the “decentralizers”. Prince Sabah-ed-Din seeks influence and a political base by an alliance with them... On the extreme left, are the Armenian and Bulgarian revolutionists who include in their rows some social democrats. ...This is why I maintain that the military revolt in Macedonia of last July, which led to the calling of Parliament, was only the prologue to the revolution: the drama is still before us. ... Victory for the revolution will mean the victory of democracy in Turkey, democratic Turkey would be the foundation of a Balkan Federation ... The restoration of the Sultan and his despotism would mean the end of Turkey, leaving the Turkish State to the mercy of those who want to carve it up”.

From: L. Trotsky, *The Young Turk*, “Kievskaya Mysl.”, 3, 3 January 1909.

Source 2

The Young Turks:

Proclamation for the Ottoman Empire, 1908

§7. The Turkish tongue will remain the official state language. Official correspondence and discussion will take place in Turkish. ...

§9. Every citizen will enjoy complete liberty and equality, regardless of nationality or religion, and be submitted to the same obligations. All Ottomans, being equal before the law as regards rights and duties relative to the State, are eligible for government posts, according to their individual capacity and their education. Non-Muslims will be equally liable to the military law.

§10. The free exercise of the religious privileges which have been accorded to different nationalities will remain intact”.

§17. All schools will operate under the surveillance of the state. In order to obtain for Ottoman citizens an education of a homogenous and uniform character, the official schools will be open, their instruction will be free, and all nationalities will be admitted. Instruction in Turkish will be obligatory in public schools. In official schools, public instruction will be free. Secondary and higher education will be given in the public and official schools indicated above; it will use the Turkish tongue. Schools of commerce, agriculture, and industry will be opened with the goal of developing the resources of the country”.

From: *The Young Turks*, trans. A. Sarrou, in Rondo Cameron (ed.), *Civilization since Waterloo*, Paris 1912, pp. 40-42.