



## **AN EXAMPLE TO THE QUEST OF IDENTITY OF THE SECOND CONSTITUTIONALIST PERIOD: THE CHARTER, STRUCTURE AND AIMS OF COMMITTEE OF THE UNITY OF OTTOMAN ETHNIC ELEMENTS\***

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### **ABSTRACT**

Three main doctrines were put forth and debated on account of their usefulness so as to save the state in the phase of the decline of the Ottoman Empire. The first one was Pan-Islamizm (İttihâd-ı İslâm) at which aimed reorganizing the Empire by Islamic rules in real terms. According to the Pan-Islamists, the Empire and society were in collapse for the last ages due to the ignorance of the real essence and rules of Islam. So, the thing had to be done was to adopt the Islamic Law (Şeriat) to the conditions of the day. The second one was Westernization idea and its goal was to imitate the Western civilization specific areas and scales, perceive what kind of dynamics on the Western societal, economic, political and intellectual ideas are arising and use this in the Empire as modernization instrument. And the last ideas was *İttihâd-ı Anâsır* (Unity of the Ethnic Elements) which was designed upon the union of all Ottoman subjects. Its purpose was to unite every person under "Ottoman" supra-identity. Thus, citizens would use their sub-identity in the private spaces and they would have been regarded as Ottomans by their supra-identity in the public spaces. By this way, a sense of unity was going to be founded amongst the subjects which formed the country. In this sense, as an institution in the Second Constitutionalist Period's political life, Committee of Unity of the Ottoman Ethnic Elements was to endeavor for the union of Ottoman subjects without distinguishing sect, idea, nation, personality or gender. This article aims to enlighten the purposes and ideas of Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements by considering its charter.

**Key Words:** Ottoman Empire, Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements, The Second Constitutionalist Period, Jeunes Turcs, Pan-Islamism, Westernism, Pan-Turkism, Ottomanism.

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## II. MEŞRUTİYET'İN KİMLİK ARAYIŞLARINA BİR ÖRNEK: İTTİHÂD-I ANÂSİR-I OSMANİYE HEYETİ, NİZAMNAMESİ, YAPISI VE AMAÇLARI

### ÖZET

Osmanlı İmparatorluğu çökerken, devleti kurtarmak için başlıca üç ana doktrin öne sürüldü ve işe yararlılıkları bakımından tartışıldı. Bu fikir akımlarından ilki, İmparatorluğu gerçek anlamıyla İslâmi kaideler çerçevesinde yeniden düzenlemek amacını güden İttihâd-ı İslâm'dı. İttihâd-ı İslâmcılara göre, İmparatorluk ve toplumun son yüzyıllarda sürüklendiği yozlaşma, İslâm'ın öz prensiplerinden uzaklaşılmasının bir ürünüydü. Bu nedenle, İslâmi kaideler bütünü olarak Şeriat günün gereklerine uyarlanmalıydı. İkincisi Batılılaşma düşüncesi idi ve bu akımın gayesi de belirli alanlarda ve ölçülerde Batı uygarlığını taklit etmek, Batı'nın ne tür bir toplumsal, ekonomik, siyasi ve entelektüel birikimin üzerinde yükseldiğini kavramak ve bunu, İmparatorluğun modernizasyonu bağlamında bir araç olarak kullanmaktı. Son fikir akımı da, aynı zamanda Türk milliyetçiliğine de içkin olan ve İmparatorluktaki tüm unsurların birliği fikrine dayandırılan İttihâd-ı Anâsır'dı. İttihâd-ı Anâsır düşüncesinin ereği, Osmanlı sınırları dâhilinde yaşayan herkesi ortak bir "Osmanlı" üst kimliği altında bir araya getirmektir. Böylelikle, vatandaşlar alt kimliklerini özel alanlarda kullanırlarken, kamusal alanlarda herkese yalnızca Osmanlı gözüyle bakılacaktı. Bu yola başvurulurken, ülkeyi oluşturan tüm unsurlar arasında bir birliktelik duygusu oluşturulacaktı. Bu bağlamda, II. Meşrutiyet döneminin birçok kuruluşundan biri olarak İttihâd-ı Anâsır-ı Osmaniye Heyeti, Osmanlı unsurlarının mezhep, düşünce, ulus, şahsiyet ya da cinsiyet ayrımı yapılmaksızın bir araya getirilebilmesi için çabalayacaktı. Bu makale, İttihâd-ı Anâsır-ı Osmaniye Heyeti'nin amaçlarını ve düşüncelerini, yine Heyet'in nizamnamesinden yola çıkarak aydınlatmayı amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, İttihâd-ı Anâsır-ı Osmaniye Heyeti, II. Meşrutiyet, Jön Türkler, İttihâd-ı İslâm, Batıcılık, Türkçülük, Osmanlıcılık.

### Introduction

Ottoman Empire preserved its dominating condition upon the West until the surprising material leap, seen in the European countries, after Renaissance, Reform and Industrial Revolution. However, the Empire was started being shaken by the boost of mass production which was a consequence of industrialization and secularization in the Western Europe. Subsequently, the Empire began to turn its face to the West on which located its foundation the individual rights and the machine of secular progress. In addition to these developments, the Empire witnessed that all of the elements of the Empire were affected by the sentiment of nationalism and started to claim the right of *self-determination* after the *Great French Revolution*. These kinds of requisitions were indicating the beginning of the end for the multi-national and multi-religious Empire. Whereas the economy of Empire was not capable of competing with European markets and becoming dependent upon outside financial economies, the emergence of separatist movements was deteriorating the internal affairs on the other side.

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The Ottoman Empire, like the other multi-national, multi-religious empires, now had become an anachronism in a Europe dominated by nation states. Its rulers tried to meet the challenges of industrial capitalism and a rapidly emerging world market by reforming their own state and society.<sup>1</sup> For this purpose, three months after ascending the throne, young Sultan Abdulmecit promulgated Tanzimat in the 3rd of November in 1839.<sup>2</sup> The *Khatt* built on the innovations of Mahmud II, in the later years of whose reign the term *Tanzimât-i Khayriyye* (beneficent orderings) had already designated administrative changes. So, the *Khatt* repeated some earlier government statements of intent, but in a more formal manner. It made promises in three broad areas: there should be security of life, honour, and property, all classes of people to be treated alike, trials to be public, no-one to be put to death except after a regular sentence, and all confiscation abolished; a system of collecting fixed taxes should replace tax-farming; military conscription should be regularised and the term of service reduced from lifetime to four or five years. The edict further promised good administration, limits on military spending, adequate salaries for bureaucrats so that bribery would disappear, and a new penal code for all subjects. The most striking promise was that the reforms would apply without exception to “the people of Islam and other peoples among the subjects of our imperial sultanate”.<sup>3</sup>

This policy was preserved, used and served well from the *Tanzimat* Era to *II. Meşrutiyet* (The Second Constitutionalist Period). *İttihâd-ı Anâsır-ı Osmâniyye Hey'eti* (Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements) was coalesced to this end in 10 of July, 1325 (23 of July, 1909) and defended the idea of Ottomanism, even the state was going to pieces. In this sense, we will debate about the idea of Ottomanism which tangled with Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism as the political ideas of the Second Constitutionalist Period in one hand, and shed light on the duties and structure of Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements through its charter of which consisted 57 clauses, on the other. In addition to this, we think that it is important to examine this subject in terms of the political life of the Second Constitutionalist Period. Because as an organization, Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements was not mentioned much in the documents of the period. Also, it was not examined before, too. So, it may be thought that this examination shall be useful to the Ottoman political literature.

### 1) Tanzimat or the *Heel of Achilles*

The Ottoman Empire lived and preferred to act with the idea of being supreme than the West from 1300s till 1700s. Needles to say that there were some reasonable dynamics for this kind of a behaviour. If perchance we say that the first of these dynamics was Islam, we are not wrong on that. Ottoman government and society was shaped by Islam itself and according to this, the West was infidel (*kâfir*) which was to be put on the circle of otherization. Yet, some societal and cultural leaks happened from this circle to the Ottoman communal living. Again, we know that lots of newly things had been taken from the Ottoman Empire and moved to the West when the Ottomans were at their peak, as well. So, there was a secret or sometimes compulsory interaction between the Ottomans and Western countries. But the Ottomans, as good Muslims, believed and regarded that Muhammed was the final, the perfect, and the best of the messengers whom God had sent to make His will known to man. The Muhammedan revelation contained all that man needed to know for this life and the next. The Muslim shari'ah, or law, was perfect and unchangeable. The Muslims,

<sup>1</sup>Feroz Ahmad, “The Late Ottoman Empire” *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire* (ed: Marian Kent). London: Frank Cass, 1996, pp. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Ch. Barthélémy de Paris, *Histoire de Turquie Depuis les Temps les Plus Reculés Jusqu'à Nos Jour* (Deuxième Edition). Tours: Mame, 1859, pp. 396.

<sup>3</sup>R. H. Davison, “Tanzimât” *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (volume: 10&ed: P. J. Bearman, T. H. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs). Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2000, pp. 201.

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then, were the best of peoples and had no need to learn from the infidels.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, during the standstill period and in the first years of the recession era, Ottoman's looking at the West was in this perspective. As a natural result of this situation, it may be easily seen that the first modernization movements in the Empire was aiming to go back to the glorious *kânun-ı kadîm* (*ancien régime*) era, instead of learning what was going on in the Western world at that time.

As it is well known, in the end of the 16th and in the beginning of the 17th centuries, feudalism was disengaged in the West. After it, a new merchant group emerged in the rampart of the cities. Besides, we see that the power which was taken from the seigneurs absorbed by the kings and so the central dominance was in a swift increase in this period. People who worked for seigneurs now some were being forced to work for the king, and in order to get the king more powerful, *Enclosure Acts* implemented, too. By these acts, work forces of the seigneurs were being taken from them and serf groups were being moved to the big cities. The serf groups made an army of unemployed people in the cities after a time and they became low-pay-workers in the factories aftermath the Industrial Revolution. When it is looked at the economic structure of the Ottoman Empire, for that time, we see that it had never been a feudalism-like system in itself. In spite of the fact that the *ayans*, who were the powerful ones of the local notables were bearing resemblance to the seigneurs of the Western socio-economic structure, but it is sure that there are some certain differences between them. Henceforth, the Ottoman economy moved upon a different way from the Western style feudal system. While the feudalism was starting to end gradually in the West, and some developments such as secularization, technical inventions, formation of the big cities as were being seen, the Ottoman Empire fell far behind of these developments, already.

In this sense, the era of reign of Mahmud II has a special meaning. Genuinely, he was a sultan who perceived the real need of reformation in the Empire, profoundly. Thence, in order to be successful, he acted cruelly during his reformation movements. Also, Mahmud moved wisely and began to regain the central power, too. First thing he had done was neutrelazing the *ayans* with *Sened-i İttifak* (The Charter of Alliance). Mahmud knew that his army could not cope with the army of disobedient Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt. So, he formed a new army, named *Asâkir-i Mansûre-i Muhammediye* (The Victorious Soldiers of Muhammad). In contrast to the general idea, Ottomanism which is referred mostly to being a product of the era of Tanzimat was in effect confidentially Mahmud's period. Furthermore, the idea of Ottomanism was adopted in spite of its changing features as a determinant factor during the reign of Mahmud II and lasted after 1918. As a matter of fact, the idea of creating an Ottoman nation marks back to the words of Mahmut II who stated "I identify my Muslim subjects in the mosque, Christian subjects in the church, and my Jewish subjects at the synagogue, indeed. There is no difference between them. For, all my justice is equal and all of them are my true children".<sup>5</sup> The aim of the Ottomanist state ideology was to guarantee equality between Muslim and non-Muslim citizens, thus ensuring the integrity of the state and preventing the birth of separatist nationalisms among the constituent communities of the Empire. Paradoxically, it would also give birth to the national identity of the Turkish community, which in the Western imported medium of the press was described as the *millet-i hâkime* (dominant nation).<sup>6</sup>

It is possible to find the initial inspirations of Tanzimat in the 17th century, when the Ottoman decline had already become obvious. Military defeats of the Ottoman armies enforced the

<sup>4</sup>C. Ernest Dawn, "From Ottomanism to Arabism: The Origin of an Ideology" *The Review of Politics*, vol: 23, issue: 3, 1961, pp. 380.

<sup>5</sup>Yelda Demirağ, "Pan-Idelologies in the Ottoman Empire Against the West: From Pan-Ottomanism to Pan-Turkism" *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, Ankara University Press, vol: 36, 2005, pp. 145.

<sup>6</sup>Erol Köroğlu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity Literature in Turkey During World War I*. New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007, pp. 24-25.

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monarchs to realize Western superiority and admit the need for renovations.<sup>7</sup> The Ottomans in particular faced many obstacles to the process of modernization, democratization, constitutional self-governance, centralization, and industrialization which characterized the rise of the European nation states and produced in them feelings of societal commonality and citizenship.<sup>8</sup> After 1800, the attention of the Ottoman government was forcibly directed toward the question of equality in several ways. First, as Christian groups in the Empire absorbed Western ideas of liberty and nationality, and as education and literacy increased among them, they complained more frequently and loudly about the lack of equality. Second, they found ready hearers among the several great powers who traditionally acted as protectors of Christians in the Near East and who, for mixed motives of humanitarianism and power politics, magnified the volume of these complaints in the *Bâb-ı Âli's* (Sublime Porte) ear and pressed for changes. Third, Ottoman statesmen who were concerned to check the territorial disintegration of the Empire, and its internal decline, embarked on a program of reorganization and incipient Westernization which inevitably brought them up against the same problem of equality as they moved to adopt or adapt elements of the Western state's political pattern.<sup>9</sup> Eventually, among all of these conflicts, the famous *Khatt-ı Şerif* of 3 November 1839 was declared.<sup>10</sup>

*Khatt-ı Şerif* (The Noble Rescript) proclaimed such principles as the security of life, honour, and property of the subject, the abolition of tax-farming and all the abuses associated with it, regular and orderly recruitment into the armed forces, fair and public trial of persons accused of crimes, and equality of persons of all religions in the applications of these laws.<sup>11</sup> Gradually, increasing pressure by the European Powers in favour of the Ottoman Empire's Christians, along with subsequent growing nationalist sentiments among various ethnic groups, led to improvements in the status of non-Muslims and non-Turks.<sup>12</sup> In this context, the most unequivocal expression about Tanzimat could be found in the Engelhardt's words, below:

“Cependant, sous un certain rapport et si bien définie qu'elle fût dans son principe, dans ses tendances, comme dans ses procédés, la Réforme se précisait plus nettement encore, en tant qu'expression d'une nécessité politique de circonstance. Acceptée et résolue par un gouvernement aux abois que serrait aux flancs l'activité brûlante de l'Europe, elle devait avant tout satisfaire et désarmer l'Europe, et ce besoin impérieux signifiait: réhabilitation des Rayas, reconnaissance et application graduelle du principe de l'égalité entre conquérants et vaincus, entre mahométans et chrétiens”.<sup>13</sup>

In the Empire of the Caliph of the Muslims, non-Muslim groups also numbered among the elite of the state and society. And traditional Ottoman diversity became even more evident following the Tanzimat. Jews and Muslims could not have acquired such a distinguished place in any Christian country, with not even the Anglo-Saxon traditions of the United States and Britain allowing for such diversity in society and administration.<sup>14</sup> From without there, now came a new

<sup>7</sup>Seçil Akgün, “The Emergence of Tanzimat in the Ottoman Empire” *OTAM (Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi)*, issue: 2, Ankara, 1991, pp. 2.

<sup>8</sup>Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 233.

<sup>9</sup>Roderic H. Davison, “Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century” *The American Historical Review*, vol: 59, issue: 4, 1954, pp. 845-846.

<sup>10</sup>Val. Parisot, *Petite Histoire de L'Empire Ottoman*. Paris: L. Hachette, 1843, pp. 70-71.

<sup>11</sup>Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Third Edition). New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 107.

<sup>12</sup>Jacob M. Landau, “Ideologies in the Late Ottoman Empire: A Soviet Perspective” *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol: 25, issue: 3, 1989, pp. 406.

<sup>13</sup>E. D. Engelhardt, *La Turquie et le Tanzimat ou Histoire des Réformes dans L'Empire Ottoman Depuis 1826 Jusqu'à Nos Jours*. Paris: A. Cotillon, 1882, pp. 4.

<sup>14</sup>İlber Ortaylı, “The Last Universal Empire and Abdülhamid II” *The Turks* (vol: 4&ed: Hasan Celâl Güzel, C. Cem Oğuz, Osman Karatay). Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Publications, 2002, pp. 262.

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influx of Europeans, seeking to benefit from new opportunities and, it was to be hoped, new permanent advantages. On the other hand, the non-Muslim subjects within the Empire itself, eager as they were for any improvement in their status, were distinctly guarded in their response to the new charter. Its much-vaunted privileges were counterbalanced by new obligations, incumbent upon them as fully qualified citizens. They were now liable for military service, from which they had hitherto earned exemption through the payment of poll tax. This faced them with the unwelcome prospect of fighting against other Christians, just as the Muslims were faced with that of fighting alongside them, perhaps under the command of Christian officers.<sup>15</sup>

As it is pointed out before, Tanzimat Rescript was a text to pave the way of better opportunities to especially non-Muslim people, put a fair justice system on effect and provide security along with economic and commercial prosperity to them, as well.<sup>16</sup> It was a crucial step in the process of secularization, which continued until the dissolution of the Empire and beyond. While it undermined the principle of the traditional *millet* system, based on privileges for religious communities, the communities were unwilling to abandon their privileges at the same time as welcoming the equality.<sup>17</sup> From the very start of the reform movement in the Ottoman Empire, the *Porte* strengthened the centre at the expense of ethnic and religious communities, put the individual rather than the community at the focus of its attention and tax revenues, and tried to create a new identity of Ottomanism that would replace community identity. This novel formulation reflected the 19th century concept of the modern state.<sup>18</sup> Its main purpose was to grant equality to Christians, as promised in 1839. But 'equality' had limited grounds for implementation because of a lack of institutions and a legal framework whereby this concept could acquire tangible meaning. In fact, the 'democratic' processes it wanted to implement in the Ottoman Empire were hardly known in Europe at the time.<sup>19</sup> The Decree of Gülhane was not, thus, in any way an Ottoman constitution that limited the powers of the Sultan, because he issued it and could abrogate it at will. But he did promise to limit his authority by accepting any law produced by the legislative machinery that he was creating, and it was the first step toward such a limitation. And the Decree did formalize the new interpretation of the scope and responsibility of the state to include the protection of security of life, honor, and property and the provision of equal justice for all subjects, regardless of religion. Though presented in the context of the Ottoman experience and expressing particular goals rather than abstract principles, the Decree of Gülhane thus encompassed many of the ideals contained in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of 1789.<sup>20</sup>

## 2) The Last Hope of Abdülhamid II: *İttihâd-ı İslâm* (Pan-Islamism)

The nationalist outbreaks and the egemergence of freedom demands that supported by some foreign powers gave birth to the idea of Ottomanism. Its purpose was to unite all the nations in the Empire. Persons who defended this idea had chosen the constitutionalism as a progressive system, while they were going for their common goal. As an outcome of the acts of the Young Turks group, Abdülhamid II ascended the throne and declared the Second Constitutionalist Period of the Ottoman Empire by promulgating *Kanun-ı Esasi* (The Constitution of 1876). The

<sup>15</sup>Lord Kinross, *The Ottoman Centuries The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire*. London: Perennial&HarperCollins, 2002, pp. 475.

<sup>16</sup>Soubhy Noury, *Le Régime Représentatif en Turquie*. Paris: M. Giard&E. Brière, 1914, pp. 126.

<sup>17</sup>Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey The Quest for Identity*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2003, pp. 33.

<sup>18</sup>Zafer Toprak, "From Plurality to Unity: Codification and Jurisprudence in the Late Ottoman Empire" *Ways to Modernity In Greece And Turkey Encounters With Europe, 1850-1950* (ed: Anna Frangoudaki&Çağlar Keyder). London&New York: I.B.Tauris & Company, 2007, pp. 27-28.

<sup>19</sup>Kemal H. Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History Selected Articles and Essays*. Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2002, pp. 47.

<sup>20</sup>Stanford J. Shaw ve Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp. 61.

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Constitution was repeating the ideal of Ottomanism as: “Clause 8- Subjects of all of the Ottoman Empire are called Ottoman (Osmanlı), without regarding of religion and sect” and “Clause 17- All Ottomans are equal in the presence of law no matter of what religion or sect they are”.<sup>21</sup> Probably the most beneficial aspect of the Constitution was its emphasis on the equality of all Ottoman subjects again an extension of the *Osmanlılık* doctrine characteristic of the Tanzimat period. The enumeration of civil liberties was subject to no qualifications as to race or creed. To be sure, Islam was designated the state religion, and the Sultan of all Ottomans was also named caliph of all Muslims and defender of the faith.<sup>22</sup> However, Ottomanism as a state policy was unsuccessful. Since it was the Turks who had the greatest interest in preserving the Empire, they emerged as the most sincere adherents of Ottomanism. This attitude was one of the reasons for the belated emergence of Turkish nationalism.<sup>23</sup>

As we may see, at first, Abdülhamid tried to unite the people around the idea of Ottomanism. He gave various jobs to the non-Muslims at the Palace and some official departments. Even the Armenians became one third of the Ottoman officials. But at the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian War some certain changes of the attitude of non-Muslims caused the burst up of the idea of Ottomanism *de facto*. Any section and community go in the search of freedom. Ottomanism was no more the fulcrum of idea for Abdülhamid II.<sup>24</sup> Abdülhamid preferred to rely on the ideals more akin to the nature of the Turks, and without further attempts to win the support of his Christian subjects, he sought to strengthen the Empire on the fundamental principles of Mohammedan supremacy and the revival of the faith.<sup>25</sup> So, Abdülhamid gave up on the idea of Ottomanism and began to defend Pan-Islamizm. Now, like the registration of the failure of Ottomanism which tried to unite the elements of the Empire in one structure, Pan-Islâmizm was trying to unite all the Muslims around the Sultan. And this idea was becoming the most common doctrine of the Second Constitutionalist Period.<sup>26</sup>

Sunite perception of Islam of which was generating the ethos “powerful state” in the Ottoman Empire was the dominant code of Turko-Islamism with its modernist or recovering oscillations. Correspondingly, entrance of Islamism into periodical sayings/articulations with ease was possible not only thanks to the connection of identifications of the prevailing paradigm, but also the opportunities given by invention of Sunnite tradition, too. Because of the materials from which derived the classical age, aside from how successful they were interpreted, has a considerably abundant variety, Pan-Islamist political discourses were supporting both the authoritarian/totalitarian and democratic tendencies.<sup>27</sup> Due to this characteristic of it, Islam was seen as an accessory by the liberal thinkers and it was evaluated as a shield by the Pan-Islamists.

On the other side, Islamic components are inherent in all of the doctrines put forth to save the Empire. Not that, the fully emergence of Pan-Islamism occurred at the same time as the Second Constitutionalist Period. There is no doubt that there were Islamists before that time. Yet, they were

<sup>21</sup> Halil İnalçık, “Tanzimat Nedir?” *Tanzimat Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu* (2nd Edition&ed: Halil İnalçık and Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu). Ankara: Phoenix Publication, 2006, pp. 31.

<sup>22</sup> Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963, pp. 387-388.

<sup>23</sup> Selçuk Akşin Somel, “Ottomanism” *Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire*. Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2003, pp. 221.

<sup>24</sup> Ramazan Hurç, “Osmanlılarda Son Devir Fikir Hareketleri” *Fırat Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, issue: 2, 1997, pp. 268.

<sup>25</sup> Edward S. Creasy, *Turkey*. Philadelphia: John D. Morris and Company, 1906, pp. 490.

<sup>26</sup> Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Hürriyetin İlâmi İkinci Meşrutiyetin Siyasî Hayatına Bakışlar*. İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1959, pp. 73.

<sup>27</sup> Burhanettin Duran, “Cumhuriyet Dönemi İslâmcılığı İdeolojik Konumları, Dönüşümü ve Evreleri” *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasî Düşünce: İslâmcılık* (vol: 6). İstanbul: İletişim Publications, 2004, pp. 130.

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scattered and did not have their own press institutions. They were not able to express their ideas.<sup>28</sup> It is probable that the autocratical years of Abdülhamid II were effective on that. Yet again, Abdülhamid came closer to Pan-Islamizm idea in the last years of his reign. Thus, Pan-Islamizm adopted, defended ve carried out as a policy in the reign of Abdülhamid II; *caliph* was used instead of using titles like *padishah*, *sultan*, *sovereign*, also an emphasis was put on caliphate's dignity and strengthening, religious education institutions were increased, some influential scholars and sheikhs were invited to İstanbul.<sup>29</sup>

The Ottoman imperial tradition of statehood made it a sacred duty for a sultan to assure the survival and integrity of the state inherited from his predecessors. However, unlike his predecessors, who had believed in the state's miraculous ability to survive forever, Abdulhamid realized that the Empire was economically weak and torn by internal strife and that a resurgent Islam could not alone overcome the country's material backwardness. He initiated a variety of remedial administrative, economic, educational, and similar measures without even developing a formal theoretical, philosophical, or ideological explanation for his "modernism" which was simply a de facto *dünyevilik* (worldliness)—that is, an interest in the material aspects of human life.<sup>30</sup> In this period, some of Islamist journals entered the Ottoman press by the support of Abdülhamid. Many Islamist writers, such as Mehmed Akif Ersoy, Eşref Edip and Sait Halim Paşa, evaluated the causes of recession of the Ottoman Empire by their very own ideas. Sultan, as the Caliph of all Muslims, was holding onto Pan-Islamism now and calling for Muslims to rally around to the flag of Islam. Nevertheless, few Muslims accepted of this invitation. Indeed, the wave of nationalism which had been spread in the Arab lands showed its influence, and the Arabs firstly started revolts and then turned their back at the Ottomans in the World War I. And therefore, the dream of taking the control back of Abdülhamid II was forgotten for good.<sup>31</sup>

### 3) The Rise of *Pan-Turkism* and the Quest of Identity: *Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements*

The rise of Turkish nationalism was contingent upon two conditions: the disintegration of the Ottoman *millet* system, and the decline of the idea of *ümmet* and of the Islamic *din-ü-devlet*. The beginnings and development of nationalism were conditioned by the degree to which the concepts of *millet* and *ümmet* were secularized.<sup>32</sup> So, the development of Nationalism among the Turks was a natural phenomenon. Starting in the West, the movement had been spreading for a century through Central Europe, Hungary, and the Balkans, till from the Turks' former subjects it has passed to the Turks themselves.<sup>33</sup> Treaty of Berlin's (1878) verdicts about Macedonia gave rise to accelerate the process of disintegration in the Balkans on the long view, and as a result of the rise of Balkanic nationalism, seperatist movements and underground revolutionary activities began to ascend. A witness of all these incidents was saying:

"At present it looks as if Turkey were on the eve of being partitioned among the powers of Europe. The Constitution, instead of strengthening the Empire, has seemed to weaken it. In spite of the many reforms introduced by the Young Turks, subject peoples do not want to remain subject peoples if they can help it. Macedonia is crying for release, albania is in constant revolt, Arabia is

<sup>28</sup>Osman Tiftikçi, *İslamcılığın Doğuşu Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Türkiye'de Gelişimi*. İstanbul: Akademi Yayınları, 2011, pp. 199.

<sup>29</sup>Ismail Kara, *Türkiye'de İslamcılık Düşüncesi Metinler/Kişiler 1*. İstanbul: Dergâh Publications, 2011, pp. 28-29.

<sup>30</sup>Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 156.

<sup>31</sup>L. de la Garde de Dieu, *Histoire de L'Islamisme et de L'Empire Ottoman*. Bruxelles: Société Belge de Librairie, 1892, pp. 247.

<sup>32</sup>Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*. London: Hurst&Company, 1998, pp. 318.

<sup>33</sup>Arnold Toynbee, *Turkey: A Past and A Future*. New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1917, pp. 15.

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disloyal; and on top of all these difficulties Italy precipitates a war in the endeavor to grab a slice of territory”.<sup>34</sup>

Current state, brought a new kind of interior nationalism and race-based Pan-Turkism to the agenda. Yusuf Akçura, a Turkish intellectual who transmigrated from Russia to the Ottoman Empire, made this new nationalism notion a popular issue with his *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (Three Kinds of Policy) in a newspaper named *Türk* in Egypt. According to this, he put forward that there were three kinds of policies to salvage the Ottoman Empire, and race-based Turkish nationalism was the most realistic one.<sup>35</sup> Thence, nationalism was seen as an alternate remedy for the Empire against Ottomanism and Pan-Islamism.<sup>36</sup> Another important representative of Turkish nationalist idea was Ziya Gökalp. He stressed nationalism as the most powerful ideal of the modern age and nations as the most highly developed species on the scale of culture groups. In the nation he thought it was possible to integrate Turkish culture, Islam, and Western techniques.<sup>37</sup> If we say his ideas with his very own terms:

“The need of modernization commands us to quote the scientific and pragmatic apparatus and technology from Europe. Like in our country, in Europe there are some spiritual needs which are nascented from religion and nationality that we do not need to borrow as apparatus and technologies from the West. Therefore, we should accept all the three of them by settling the domination circles; or rather, we should understand that these are the three multifarious phase of only one need and create (A Modern Islamic Turkishness)”.<sup>38</sup>

It is no mean achievement to have laid out the only plausible, comprehensive cognitive map for Turkey’s passage from a six-hundred-year empire to a new nation-state. In constructing his synthesis of Turkism, Islamism, and Modernism, Gökalp’s genius was able to do justice to all these elements. He could handle the dichotomies of tradition-modernity, continuity-change, nationalism-internationalism, and Islamism-secularism much better than his contemporaries.<sup>39/40</sup>

Opposition to the Hamidian order had began almost immediately after he took power. Largely based abroad, this opposition fervently rejected the ‘despotism’ of Abdülhamid and demanded the restoration of the constitution. The Committee of Union and Progress (or the ‘Young Turks’, as they were labelled by the French press) garnered a considerable following among

<sup>34</sup>Stanwood Cobb, “The Difficulties of the Young Turk Party” *The North American Review*, vol: 195, issue: 674, 1912, pp. 103.

<sup>35</sup>Fahri Yetim, “II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde Türkçülüğe Geçişte Kapsayıcı Formül: “Millet-i Hâkime” Düşüncesi ve Etkileri” *SDÜ Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 2008, issue: 18, pp. 78.

<sup>36</sup>Jacob M. Landau, *Pan-Turkism From Irredentism to Cooperation*. London: Hurst&Company, 1981, pp. 14.

<sup>37</sup>Halil İnalcık, “Ziya Gökalp” *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* (Volume 1&ed: David L. Sills). USA: The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1968, pp. 195.

<sup>38</sup>Ziya Gökalp, *Türkleşmek, İslâmlaşmak, Mu’âsırlaşmak*. İstanbul: Yeni Mecmû’â Matbaası, 1918, pp. 9-10.

<sup>39</sup>Taha Parla, *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp 1876-1924*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985, pp. 22.

<sup>40</sup>Another Turkish nationalist, Ağaoğlu Ahmed was giving the content of the Young Turks’ nationalist ideas as: “Le principe-conducteur qui inspirait alors les chefs Jeunes-Turcs, consistait dans la généreuse, noble idée de former un Etat moderne, qui s’appuierait sur une nationalité homogène Ottomane, laquelle, à son tour, se formerait, grace à la vertu intrinsèque du régime parlementaire, c’est- à-dire, de la liberté, de l’égalité, et de la fraternité. Pour réaliser le plus vite possible cet idéal, on poussa à l’extreme d’une part, le régime parlementaire, de l’autre, l’idée de la Souveraineté nationale. On proclama une série de lois édalitaires, comme la loi sur le service militaire, celle sur l’instruction publique etc. etc. Et c’est alors, que le passé, les réalités Ottomanes se montrèrent, se redressèrent avec toute leur force. Ce qu’on faisait, parut aux partisans du courant İslamique etre une rupture définitive avec le passé -ce qu’ils ne pouvaient guère admettre- quant aux différents les nationalités elles virent dans l’idéal d’une nationalité Ottomane, comme un coup sérieux dirigé contre leur propre personnalité, et dans les lois égalitaires, des atteintes portées à leurs immunités et privilèges. Ces nationalités commencèrent à crier à l’injustice, à l’oppression, à ce qu’on voulait les dénationaliser”, Agha Oghlou Ahmed, “Le Mouvement Nationaliste Chez les Turcs” *La Pensée Turque*, année: 1, no: 1, 16 Decembre 1916, pp. 7.

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younger members of the Ottoman bureaucracy and military still based in the Empire.<sup>41</sup> The Second Constitutionalist Régime lasted longer than the first, but it too ended in failure, bitterness, and disappointment. The dangers and difficulties, at home and abroad, were too great; the defenders of the Constitution were too few, too weak, too inept. Though the constitution remained in force and elections were still held, the régime degenerated into a kind of military oligarchy of the Young Turk leaders, which ended only with the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1918.<sup>42</sup>

### 3.1. The Main Aims and Duties of *Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements*

In the days of the *Meşrutiyet*, the Constitutionalist Régime, which founded by the Young Turks after the 1908 Revolution, The Turkish intelligentsia was torn between three conflicting ideologies: the liberalism of the *Tanzimat* period, which demanded assimilation to the West and hoped to save the multi-national Ottoman Empire by granting equal rights to all citizens without distinction of religion and race (*Ottomanism*); the clericalism of the orthodox Muslims who insisted that Islam must retain its dominating influence on politics, culture and social life and serve as an indissoluble link between the Muslim nations inside the Empire, particularly Turks and Arabs, and those beyond its borders (*Islamism* or *Pan-Islamism*); and Turkish nationalism which in its first, romantic period fought for closer relations between all peoples of Turkish race in the hope of eventually uniting them in one Empire (*Pan-Turkism* or *Turanism*).<sup>43</sup>

The desire to create an Ottoman nation was not prompted actually, by some lofty, abstract ideal or some great expectation. The real aim was to accord the Muslim and non-Muslim inhabitants of the Ottoman State the same political rights and to make them subject to the same obligations; to give them absolute freedom of thought and religion, and taking advantage of this equality and freedom, despite their religious and ethnic differences, to intermix and give coherence to the inhabitants in question, thus bringing into existence a new nation, an *Ottoman nation*.<sup>44</sup> One of the organizations that worked for this purpose was *Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements*. This Committee was formed to consolidate all of people who had the tag of Ottoman without distinguishing them by their nation, religion and sect. This purpose was particularly stressed in the first clause of the charter of Committee:

“The 1st Clause - Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements was formed by basing on instructive principles with the aim of strengthening the bound among the people who have the tag of Ottoman without distinguishing them by their nation or sect, and fulfilling the necessary measures, stressing the equality among the people, also respecting the basis of equality by overseeing the current and future legislations of the Constitutionalist Ottoman Government”.<sup>45/46</sup>

As it is seen in the first clause, the Committee was formed on the purpose of unite all of the Ottoman ethnic elements under the flag of one goal: being *the Ottomans* again, as in old glorious days. It can be said that this was some kind of a hypochondria for that time. Because, no matter how hard they tried, the Empire was being partitioned by slow degrees then. Because of some reasons, like the defeat of Tripolis, the Ottoman Empire was defeated in the Balkan Wars and most of the territories belonged to the Ottomans were lost to the Kingdoms of Bulgaria, Serbia, Grèce

<sup>41</sup>Ryan Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores Violence, Ethnicity, and the end of the Ottoman Empire 1912-1923*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 14.

<sup>42</sup>Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Third Edition). New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 211.

<sup>43</sup>Uriel Heyd, *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism The Life and Teachings of Ziya Gökalp*. London: Luzac&Company veThe Harvill Press, 1950, pp. 71.

<sup>44</sup>Yusuf Akçura and İsmail Fehmi, “Yusuf Akçura’s Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset (Three Kinds of Policy)” *Oriente Moderno*, year: 61, issue: 1/12, 1981, pp. 5.

<sup>45</sup>Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements, *İttihâd-ı Anâsır-ı Osmaniye Heyeti Nizamnamesi*. Kostantiniyye: Matbaa-i Ebüzziya, 1328, pp. 3.

<sup>46</sup>It will be called *Nizamname* (The Charter) hereafter.

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and Montenegro. Albania also declared its independency. In midst of all these partitionary developments, thinking about getting the elements of the Empire back together as an option, was able to be a pipe dream, nothing else.

As for the duties of the Committee, they were listed in order between the 2th and the 10th clauses:

“The 2nd Clause - The Committee generally works for its aims, without pursuing the goal of sect, party, nation, personality and gender”.<sup>47</sup>

The Committee was declaring that it would not pursue some particular ways to distinguish people from one to another. As it is seen, women could participate the fullfilment of aims. It was, in actual fact, an important side of the Committee. For, Ottoman women were not allowed to be side with men by societal works or activities. In this regard, we can say that the Committee had a progressivist structure. One of the most important clause was about involving the current policies:

“The 3rd Clause - The Committee does never deal with political issues unless they are attached with the unity of the Ottomans in terms of their equality, justice and freedom”.<sup>48</sup>

The 4th and 5th clauses were about what it was going to do if any opposition would have emerged against the aims of the Committee:

“The 4th Clause - With the grace of God, in the cover of union and constitution, the Committee prepares what conditions and needs should be used for the Ottomans to reach to the absolute bliss and do what kind of sacrificies to dispose of the obstacles in the way of doing this. The 5th Clause - When it hears about any attempt or violence against the justice, equality and one of the principles of brotherhood, by what sort of elements they belong, after the investigation, if a consensus appears on the accuracy of the situation, the Committee announces, condemns it...”.<sup>49</sup>

The 6th Clause was about punishing the people who shows a disrespect to the general peace:

“The 6th Clause - People who act disrespectfully towards the common peace by manipulating the religions and sects or insult them will be stated to the government in require and be punished”.<sup>50</sup>

The Committee was stressing that it was not going to apply some solutions as above. It was also declaring that it would arrange conferences and establish librarires as well, in the 7th clause:

“The 7th Clause - The Committee arranges some conferences and establish librarries to deliverance of country and the prosperity and bliss of the Ottomans in general, and overseeing the duties of the government about protecting the rights and justice of them and the obedience and duties which the people owes to the government in the presence of people”.<sup>51</sup>

The Committee was asseverating that it would open night schools, publish boks and newspapers to enlighten the public opinion:

“The 8th Clause - Eradicating the sickness and disunion of ignorance and to complete the union, also to reach the constitutional government to its perfection, some night schools will be

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<sup>47</sup> *Nizamname*, pp. 3.

<sup>48</sup> *Nizamname*, pp. 3.

<sup>49</sup> *Nizamname*, pp. 4.

<sup>50</sup> *Nizamname*, pp. 4.

<sup>51</sup> *Nizamname*, pp. 4-5.

open. To enlighten the public opinion, night classes will be started and books and newspapers published in which contain plain expressions for everyone in general languages...".<sup>52</sup>

The Committee was not only expressing that it would work in the way of education or securing the general peace, but it was also proclaiming to work for industrialization and development in terms of agricultural ways of the country. Besides, the Committee would help the unemployed persons and patients, too:

"The 9th Clause – The Committee will bring about some museums which attached to craft and agriculture and publish booklets for encouraging and embarking upon the people to education, agriculture, craft and commerce in the every corner of the Ottoman lands. Additionally, it will build hospitals for the patients and the poor, fraternal associations, factories and workshops in the interest of workers".<sup>53</sup>

The 10th clause was showing a parallelism with the idea of the Young Turks' Party, *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Committee of Union and Progress), in point of the economics. This clause shows us that Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements was in the aim of creating a new bourgeoisie by the hand of the state, as Committee of Union and Progress was:

"The 10th Clause - The Committee struggles for the circularization of craft and commerce, and of the progression of our general national wealth, also the betterment of productivity of the constitutionalism. And the success is from God".<sup>54</sup>

To create the Turkish bourgeoisie, Committee of Union and Progress gave up on the liberal ideas, as of Smith, Ricardo, Bastiat, Beaulieu and adopted the national economic ideas, like the ideas of List, Carey, Rae and Cauwès. Accordingly, the state joined the economic life directly, and *étatisme* or with the Unionists saying "economics of the state" composed the basic path of the national economics.<sup>55</sup>

### 3.2. The Board of Administration and its Incumbencies

There were five kinds of member of Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements:

"The 11th Clause - Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements consists of *subject members, elected members, supplementary members, assistive members and honorary members*".<sup>56</sup>

More important than that, according to the 12th Clause, the Committee was composed of lots of different persons who belonged to several nations. 3 Armenians, 5 Roums, 3 Turks, 2 Jews, 2 Latins, 1 Chaldean, 1 Circassian, 2 Syrians, 1 Prutian, 1 Albanian and 1 Bulgarian.<sup>57</sup> This variety shows us that the Committee was giving a real importance so as to become a union from which consisted all the Ottomans citizens.

As of the 17th Clause, the organization and incumbencies of the Board of Administration were started to line up. If we take a look at those:

"The 17th Clause - The center of the Board of Administration is in *Dersaadet*<sup>58</sup> and it is assembled by gathering the subject and elected members. One more of the better part of these members is enough to deem and consider that the Committee is ready. The Committee takes it

<sup>52</sup>*Nizamname*, pp. 5.

<sup>53</sup>*Nizamname*, pp. 5.

<sup>54</sup>*Nizamname*, pp. 6.

<sup>55</sup>Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de "Milli İktisat" (1908-1918)*. Ankara: Yurt Publishing, 1982, pp. 20.

<sup>56</sup>*Nizamname*, pp. 6.

<sup>57</sup>*Nizamname*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>58</sup>It means "The Gate of Happiness", which is one of the former names of Istanbul.

decisions one more vote by the better part of these members, also. But during the debates, the issues that show an extreme important are decided by the majority.<sup>59</sup> The 18th Clause - The Board of Administration will be elected among the members as one headman, one vice of headman, one general secretary, one assistant of general secretary, one accountant, one benevolent-jobs person by a secret ballot and majority”.<sup>60</sup>

The subsequent clauses are about the duties of the members above-mentioned, in general. But there are also some important points in these clauses to be mentioned as well. For example, The 26th Clause states that:

“The 26th Clause - In every end of 6 months or when it is necessary, a five man commission which elected with the secret ballot of the Board of Administration will inspect and examine the papers and registries and cash on hand of the accountant and the benevolent person. Then, the commission will submit the report of its observations to the Board of Administration”.<sup>61</sup>

Apparently, the Committe was highly strict on the possible fraud incidents. The Committee was also strict about its gatherings and the rules of act:

“The 27th Clause - The Board of Administration will assemble once in a week at least.<sup>62</sup> The 29th Clause - Neither the headman and nor each of the members can not act against the Board’s decisions and if one of these persons is not charged by the Board of Administration, he can not act or talk in behalf of the Committee.<sup>63</sup> The 34th Clause - If one of the members of the Committee will not attend the invitation following one after another, he is deemed as resigned.<sup>64</sup> The 35th Clause - No matter who the member is being accused of opposition to the Broad Commission or the Board of Administration upon a petition for redress which submitted to the chairmanship will be invited to resign after an investigation that carried out by a five person commission which is elected by the Board of Administration. After the defence of the member is received and examined by the Board, if the Board decides that the member is guilty and he did what he did on purpose by majority of the Board, the situation will be open to discuss and in case he is found guilty in the General Assembly as well, he will resign. Or if he does not submit his defences and objections until 15 days from the time he was being accused, he will be deemed as resigned”.<sup>65</sup>

### 3.3. The Tasks of the General Commission

The General Commission was coming out of the subject members, elected members and supplementary members and it had to get together for one time at least in 6 months. In accordance with the 38th Clause:

“The General Commission (which results from the subject members, elected members and supplementary members) will assemble during every 6 months leastways and in the times of extraordinary situations, the headman will be able to invite the general assembly by the decision of the Board of Administration”.<sup>66</sup>

The 39th Clause was giving the tasks of the General Commission in short:

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<sup>59</sup>Nizamname, pp. 8.

<sup>60</sup>Nizamname, pp. 9.

<sup>61</sup>Nizamname, pp. 10-11.

<sup>62</sup>Nizamname, pp. 11.

<sup>63</sup>Nizamname, pp. 11.

<sup>64</sup>Nizamname, pp. 12.

<sup>65</sup>Nizamname, pp. 13-14.

<sup>66</sup>Nizamname, pp. 15.

“In the assembly of the General Commission, first of all, the explanations of current situations will be heard. Secondly, the budget will be examined and accepted. Thirdly, the issues which has extraordinary importance will be debated. Fourthly, the petition which amended by the Board of Administration will be studied and approved”.<sup>67</sup>

The 40th Clause was about the quorum of the General Commission:

“The General Commission will be able to begin its debates with one more of the better part of its members”.<sup>68</sup>

Another clause was about the newspapers of the Committee and the share holders of these:

“The people who are the holders of benefices of the newspapers and also the members of the General Commission’s membership would be disappeared in case of their newspapers would have closed certainly”.<sup>69</sup>

### 3.4. Duties of the Branches, Assistive Members and Miscellaneous Clauses

According to the 44th Clause, where the Board of Administration would decide to be, there would some openings of branches of the Committee. Besides, the members of branches would be elected among the elements in that neighbour multifariously and the number and amount would be decided by the center as well.<sup>70</sup> There was also a clause in the charter to decide who would be the initiator of the branches and the term of office of the members:

“The 45th Clause - To organize the Committee of Branches, in the first instance the imam, the bishop and the chief rabbi of that neighbour and also five notable persons will be in demand, and the center will decide to form a local board of administration which will be consisting of one headman, one general secretary, one assistant of general secretary, one benevolent-jobs person and if it needs, one second headman.<sup>71</sup> The 46th clause - The Members of the branches have a 2 years office term. At the end of the office term, they will be elected as mentioned in above 44th and 45th clauses”.<sup>72</sup>

The tasks of branches are generally mentioned in the 47th Clause, but not in detail:

“The Branches are obliged to fulfill the decisions of the Center and report the ones who are in need of help of the Committee in written documents, and also prepare and send a detailed report about the general situations in the end of every month. In addition to that, it has to collect donations with the seal of the Committee, register some members and give receipts to people whom helped, and send them to the Center”.<sup>73</sup>

Seemingly, the Committee was strict again on the branches it would open. The 49th Clause shows that the center of the Committe was very powerful and had no patience autocephalous movements without being instructed:

“The 49th Clause - The person who has a complaint about the branches, one or a few of the members of the Board of Administration, or on a spesific subject should apply to the Center. In

<sup>67</sup>Nizamname, pp. 15-16.

<sup>68</sup>Nizamname, pp. 16.

<sup>69</sup>Nizamname, pp. 16.

<sup>70</sup>Nizamname, pp. 17.

<sup>71</sup>Nizamname, pp. 17.

<sup>72</sup>Nizamname, pp. 17.

<sup>73</sup>Nizamname, pp. 17-18.

case of his applying to the branch chairmanship, the branch has to send the complaint letter to the Center without doing anything about it".<sup>74</sup>

The person who wanted to be a supplementary member of the Committee, either apply to the center or the branch in his neighbour according to the 50th Clause.<sup>75</sup> There was some financial obligations and prizes for a supplementary member, too:

"The 52st Clause - The person who demanded to be a supplementary member has to pay for entrance fee, 5 Guruş, at least. And the aforementioned is obligated to pay from 1 Guruş to 200 Guruş every month.<sup>76/77</sup> The 53rd Clause - According to the degree of the need of cooperation for the Unity of the Elements, madals and certificates of gratitude memory are given in certain degrees".<sup>78</sup>

In the end of the all clauses of the Charter, there were some additional and various clauses. For example, the 54th Clause was giving the names of the elements in Constantinople at that time:

"The 54th Clause - These are the Ottoman elements in Constantinople (Turk, Roun, Catholic Armenian, Jewish, Syrian, Circassian, Arabian, Albanian, Kurd, Caldenian, Prutian, Latin, Bulgarian, Serbian, Catholic Bulgarian, Wallachian). Like Maronites and Nestorians, groups who do not have an organization, in case they prove they have, will be able to be a member of the Committee as well".<sup>79</sup>

And the 55th Clause was about the conferences:

"The person who will arrange the conferences be held in the name of the Committee has to submit the situation to the Board of Administration at first, and then if the Board accepts, it will be declared".<sup>80</sup>

And 56th Clause stated that the club which would be formed by the Committee was going to be administrated by a special regulation.<sup>81</sup> And the final clause, the 57th was ending the Charter by stressing that the Committee was concerned of all the clauses were located in it.<sup>82</sup>

### Conclusion

It is crystal clear that redefining the Ottoman identity and offering new models for the survival of the Empire were the most problematic issues facing Ottoman intellectuals of the late 19th century. "Pan- Islamism" "Ottomanism", "Pan-Turkism", and "Turanism" were among the ideologies put forth to solve the problem of national identity for the remaining nucleus of the Empire.<sup>83</sup> 'Intellectuals', who initiated both the reformist and the revolutionary movements, were that stratum of the bureaucracy who received a higher education, either abroad or in the newly established schools. In contrast to their Western counterparts, they were often products of a technical or military education designed to serve the state, but they were also influenced by the contemporary currents of European political tradition.<sup>84</sup> Eventually, as an ideology, Ottomanism

<sup>74</sup>Nizamname, pp. 18.

<sup>75</sup>Nizamname, pp. 19.

<sup>76</sup>Nizamname, pp. 19.

<sup>77</sup>Guruş or Kuruş is a currency unit which is worth for one in a hundred Turkish Liras.

<sup>78</sup>Nizamname, pp. 19.

<sup>79</sup>Nizamname, pp. 20

<sup>80</sup>Nizamname, pp. 20

<sup>81</sup>Nizamname, pp. 20

<sup>82</sup>Nizamname, pp. 20

<sup>83</sup>Arzu Öztürkmen, "Individuals and Institutions in the Early History of Turkish Folklore 1840-1950" *Journal of Folklore Research*, vol: 29, issue: 2, 1992, pp. 178.

<sup>84</sup>Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey A Study in Capitalist Development*. London&New York: Verso Publishing, 1987, pp. 50.

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was finalized by the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkan Wars. Besides, it was criticized by Yusuf Akçura and Ziya Gökalp for delaying the formation of Turkish national identity after the Second Constitutionalist Period. After all, there were no circumstances to make people believe to the applicability of this idea.<sup>85</sup> Besides, the ideological currents were not mutually exclusive either; many Young Turks rationally supported the idea of Ottomanism, were emotionally attached to a romantic pan-Turkish nationalism and were devout Muslims at the same time.<sup>86</sup> The Young Turks, however, did not attempt to reconcile Islam with modern sciences and ideas, and they developed a positivist, materialist ideology by deliberately misinterpreting Islamic sources. Theirs was an original and extreme contribution to the traditional Ottoman political thought, and it distinguishes them from members of other liberal movements among Muslims who were also trying to use Islam as a device for modernization by claiming the Islamic roots of modern European laws.<sup>87</sup> Their idea of Ottoman citizenship, so far as themselves were concerned, was to avoid all the obligations of that citizenship, while enjoying all the rights conferred by it and retaining all their special privileges intact. They seemed to think that the government of Turkey should be in their hands.<sup>88</sup>

Between 1902 and 1908, the political ideas of the Young Turks who occupied leading positions in major organizations shifted from grand theories aimed at reshaping the world order to simpler and more narrowly political doctrines and tactics. While the faith of the leading Young Turks in “science” endured as an underlying element, the more the Young Turk movement engaged in practical political activity, the less its earlier yearning for a society shaped by scientific doctrines is evidenced in its activities and propaganda. By 1908 these ideas were almost completely abandoned in favor of purely political doctrines and tactics. The object of these was initially to carry out a revolution and later to administer an empire, the maintenance of which was dependent on delicate political balances and not on grand theories of long-term global organization.<sup>89/90</sup> They were therefore committed to constructing a capitalist society out of the existing order. That involved creating new classes among the Turks, especially a bourgeoisie which would provide the social basis for the new state. Young Turk intellectuals like Yusuf Akçura, who being from Tsarist Russia had watched Russia’s capitalist transformation, kept issuing the warning that ‘If the Turks fail to produce among themselves a bourgeois class by profiting from European capitalism, the chances of survival of a society composed only of peasants and officials will be very slim’.<sup>91</sup>

Along with this facts, the Young Turks were trying to put the unity by supporting the individuals and organizations like Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements, too. It is true that the aim of unity was prolonged almost after the Balkan Wars. Indeed, on account of the delayed evolution of the Turkish nationalism, the Young Turks did not see it as an instrument to be the key of the salvation until then. So, they encouraged and gave the Ottomanists a leg up, by the

<sup>85</sup>Şerif Demir, “Tanzimat Döneminde Bir Devlet Politikası Olarak Osmanlılık” *Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol: 29, 2011, pp. 343.

<sup>86</sup>Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey A Modern History* (Third Edition). London&New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009, pp. 128.

<sup>87</sup>M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 203.

<sup>88</sup>E. F. Knight, *Turkey The Awakening of Turkey the Turkish Revolution of 1908* (vol: XXI). Boston&Tokyo: J. B. Millet Company, 1910, pp. 221.

<sup>89</sup>M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation For A Revolution The Young Turks, 1902-1908*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 289.

<sup>90</sup>As Feroz stressed, the Unionists, who constituted the most radical wing of the Young Turk movement, represented what may be described as Gramsci’s ‘subordinate class’. In the late Ottoman Empire, this class had become politically organized and articulate, demanding a place for Ottoman Muslims in the social and economic structure, a constitutional state, and a new intellectual and moral order to go with it Feroz Ahmad, “War and Society under the Young Turks, 1908-18” *The Modern Middle East* (2nd Edition&ed: Albert Hourani, Philip Khoury, Mary C. Wilson). London&New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004, pp. 127.

<sup>91</sup>Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*. New York: Routledge, 1999, pp. 43-44.

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time they faced the realities of defeat more closely. Hereby, Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements, actually, was the final breath of the Ottomanist idea.

The Committee was particularly stressing on the diversify of its members. As if it was intending to show that the Empire would not be fallen and taken apart in spite of they had seen otherwise long before. So their struggle could be named one of the last standings and emphasis on the unity of the Ottomanists in the Empire.

As a result, Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements was a Young Turk institution and one of the many organizations of the Second Constitutionalist Period. It contained lots of different elements of the Empire as its members and it had a highly strict structure as well. It could be possible to think that this structure was coming from the military principles of the Young Turks. For, as it is known, the Young Turk Party (The Committee of Union and Progress) also had a center that worked by military rules. Then, as a Young Turk institution, it is normal to assume that Committee of the Unity of Ottoman Ethnic Elements was alike mostly to the Young Turk Party in terms of its administration rules and mentality of governance.

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