

FORMATION OF THE MODERN ARAB IDENTITY
MUHAMMED KURD ALI: A REFORMIST THINKER

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İSTANBUL BİLGİ UNIVERSITY

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Modern Arap Kimliğinin Oluşumu
Reformist Bir Düşünür Muhammed Kürt Ali

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*This thesis is dedicated to
muhterem validem Muesse Kekilli.*

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ABSTRACT

In the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire went through a deep political, social, economic, bureaucratic and religious transformation and transformed many of its traditional institutions and practices within the context of 'reform.' A new type of intellectual emerged as a product of the transformation experienced within the context of the 'reform' process which characterizes the last century of the Ottoman Empire. They criticized politics and bureaucracy through a new mean of communication, press, and expressed their opinions about society, history and religion. Throughout the process, many different movements of thought including Islamism and nationalism emerged. They also ascribed different meanings to important subjects of that period, such as 'reform,' 'Islamic civilization,' 'Western civilization,' 'education,' 'caliphate,' the 'Unification of Islam,' 'Abdulhamid II' and 'the Committee of Union and Progress.' Arab subjects of the Ottoman Empire, which is a state with multiple religions, languages, nationalities, and cultures, were heavily influenced from this transformation. In Syria, one of the provinces of the Ottoman Empire which was influenced from the 'reform' process, different movements of thought discussed the same subjects, but put forward different ideas. Muhammed Kurd Ali, a Kurdish journalist who originated from Damascus published a journal called *Al-Muqtabas* in Cairo between 1906-1908 and in Damascus between 1908-1914, got into contact with all movements of thought of that period and expressed his opinions about that period's discussions. The publication policy of *Al-Muqtabas* aimed to recover Arab culture and civilization and to express the intellectual and political accumulation of the modern European civilization in Arabic. Moreover, it also served as a platform for many important thinkers, who played significant roles in the formation of an Arab national identity, to express themselves. Although Kurd Ali had close relationships with many prominent intellectuals of Islamist movement, and although he partly brought the same topics with Islamists into agenda considering the content, regarding the publication policy of *Al-Muqtabas* and his opinions expressed in the journal, as the point of view, it is seen that, he stayed closer to the nationalist movement.

Keywords: Muhammed Kurd Ali, Al-Muqtabas, the Ottoman Empire, Syria, Islamism, Reform, Islamic civilization, Western civilization, Education, Caliphate, Islamic Union, Abdulhamid II, the Committee of Union and Progress, Formation of Arab National Identity and Arab nationalism.

ÖZET

Osmanlı Devleti, 19.yy’da derin bir siyasal, sosyal, ekonomik, bürokratik ve dini dönüşüm yaşamış, birçok geleneksel kurum ve pratiklerini ‘reform’ süreci kapsamında dönüştürmüştür. Osmanlı’nın son yüzyılını karakterize eden ‘reform’ süreci kapsamında yaşanan dönüşümün ürünü olarak yeni bir entelektüel tipi ortaya çıkmış, yeni bir iletişim aracı olan basın üzerinden, siyasete ve bürokrasiye eleştiriler yöneltmiş, topluma, tarihe ve dine dair görüşlerini ifade etmiştir. Süreç içinde İslamcılık ve milliyetçilik gibi farklı düşünce akımları belirmeye başlamış, dönemin öne çıkan tartışma konuları olan ‘reform’, “İslam Medeniyeti”, Batı Medeniyeti”, “Eğitim”, “Hilafet”, “İttihad-ı İslam”, “İkinci Abdulhamid” ve “İttihat ve Terakki” kavramlarına farklı anlamlar yüklemişlerdir. Çok dinli, çok dilli, çok uluslu ve çok kültürlü bir Devlet olarak Osmanlı imparatorluğun Arap tebaası yaşanan bu dönüşümden derinden etkilenmiştir. ‘reform’ sürecinden etkilenen Osmanlı vilayetlerinden “Suriye’de” farklı düşünce akımları aynı konuları tartışarak farklı düşünceler ortaya koymuştur. 1906-1908 yılları arasında Kahire’de, 1908-1914 yılları arasında Şam’da *el-Muktebas* adlı bir dergi çıkaran Kürt asıllı Şamlı gazeteci Muhammed Kürt Ali, dönemin bütün düşünce akımlarıyla yakın ilişki kurmuş, dönemin tartışmalarına dair görüş ve düşüncelerini ifade etmiştir. *El-Muktebas* dergisinin izlediği yayın politikası; Arap kültür ve medeniyetinin ihyası, modern Avrupa medeniyetinin entelektüel ve siyasi birikimini Arapça olarak ifade etmek yönünde olmuştur. Ayrıca Arap ulusal kimliğinin inşasından önemli rol oynayan birçok önemli düşünürün kendini ifade ettiği bir platform vazifesi görmüştür. Kürt Ali’nin, İslamcı akımın öne çıkan birçok entelektüeliyle yakın ilişkisi olmasına ve yer yer İslamcılarla içerik açısından aynı konuları gündeme getirmesine rağmen, *el-Muktebas*’ın yayın politikası ve dergide ifade ettiği düşünceler dikkate alındığında, bakış açısı olarak Arap milliyetçisi akıma daha yakın durduğu görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Muhammed Kürt Ali, el-Muktebas, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Suriye, İslamcılık, reform, İslam Medeniyeti, Batı Medeniyeti, Eğitim, Hilafet, İttihad-ı İslam, İkinci Abdulhamid, İttihat ve Terakki, Arab Ulusal Kimliğinin Oluşumu ve Arap Milliyetçiliği.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	10
I. OTTOMAN EMPIRE in the 19th CENTURY.....	26
I.1. Ottoman Empire and the Great Powers	28
I.2. Reform in the Ottoman Empire.....	41
I.3. Syria in the Reform Process	54
I.4. Conclusion.....	65
II. ISLAMISM as a REFORMIST IDEOLOGY	68
II.1. Birth of Islamism and Islamist Thinkers.....	69
II.1.1. Young Ottomans	71
II.1.2. Arab Islamism	77
II.1.3. Islamism in the Ottoman Capital.....	81
II.2. The Press and Islamism	84
II.3. Basic Topics of Islamism.....	88
II.3.1. Reform.....	88
II.3.2. Western Civilization.....	94
II.3.3. Islamic Civilization	98
II.3.4. Caliphate and Islamic Unity	101
II.3.5. Education.....	105
II.3.6. Abdulhamid II	108
II.4. Conclusion	109
III. LIFE OF MUHAMMED KURD ALĪ.....	111
III.1. Where He Grew Up	112
III.3. His Education	115
III.3. His Duties	116
III.4. The Period He Lived in and his Contemporaries	119
III.5. His Publications.....	122
III.6. His Journeys	126
III.7. Conclusion	129
IV. POLITICAL and RELIGIOUS VIEWS of MUHAMMED KURD ALĪ.....	131
IV.1. Kurd Ali and the Political and Religious Character of Al-Muqtabas.....	133
IV.2. Reform.....	143

IV.3. Western Civilization.....	147
IV.4. Islam/Arab Civilization and Arabic Language	153
IV.5. Caliphate and Constitutionalism	160
IV.6. Education	161
IV.7. Abdulhamid II	165
IV.8. Political and Nationalist Discourse	169
IV.9. Conclusion.....	172
CONCLUSION.....	175
BIBLIOGRAPHY	186

INTRODUCTION

The deep historical transformation, which created the ‘modern European civilization’ and which had a social and political influence on the French Revolution and had technological and economic affects on the British Industrial Revolution, brought Europe to the center of the world as a political, economic and technological power. When the Ottoman Empire realized that they lost power vis-a-vis Europe - namely the ‘land of heathens’ (*küffar diyarı*) – they decided to restructure the traditional system and all sustenances of this system. The 19th century, as the era that a new diplomatic order emerged in Europe, became a resolution and diffusion period for the Ottoman Empire. It lost most of its lands in the Balkans due to rebellions; some of its lands in North Africa and Middle-East due to invasions and had to withdraw from Anatolia after World War I. At the beginning of the 19th century, administrative, economic and military problems, which started to be felt deeply in the Ottoman Empire, made the Ottoman statesmen realize the Empire needed an extensive ‘reform.’ The first systematic expression of this ‘reform’ movement became the New Order (*Nizam-ı Cedid*), and with the declaration of the Rescript of Gülhane (*Tanzimat Fermanı*) ‘reform’ became the definitive character of the 19th Century. In context of the ‘reform’ movement, the financial system of the Ottoman Empire was changed radically at the beginning of 19th century, with the General Directorate of Foundations (*evkaf idaresi*) all foundations were gathered under the same rule in 1826; the press was included in the Ottoman political life in the later 19th century, the Janissaries (*Yeniçeri Ocağı*) were abolished and a modern army was formed instead and modern schools of teaching in the European style were opened instead of madrasahs. Instead of the traditional ‘*millet system*,’ a new political vision, dependant on citizenship, was adopted, and with the same vision framework, Ottoman central and rural organisations were re-designed in accordance with the European model. Power wanted to be gathered in the center, and in this sense, the legal system evolved into a standard

form. With the Code of Laws for Lands (*Arazi Kanunnamesi*), the land system was restructured, as a new notion, banking, entered Ottoman economic life, the constitution came onto the agenda, and for the sake of constitutionalism (*meşrutiyet*), one sultan was dethroned and another was enthroned. In the period of the ‘despotic’ (*müstebid*) sultan, Abdulhamid II, the ‘reform’ movement continued without slowing down and some radical changes were made to the judicial system, courts, and legal procedures. The Ministry of Justice was established, given the authority to examine commercial suits, and with the Ottoman Code of Civil Law (*mecelle*), the Ottoman Empire obtained a modern, civilized legal system. The ‘reform’ process was implemented in the Ottoman Empire’s Syria province. In this sense, Syria’s socio-economic structure transformed deeply. Throughout the process, since a new political system could not be formed, bloody conflicts between traditional and modern elites and religious and ethnic groups occurred.

The transformation that the Ottoman Empire started with the ‘New Order,’ and the ‘Rescript of Gülhane’ is analyzed through the notion of ‘reform’ in modern literature. At this point, when we look at the previous works, it is possible to see some works which used the word ‘reform’ directly, such as “*Tanzimat Dönemi: Osmanlı Merkez ve Taşra Teşkilatında Reform* (Tanzimat Period: Reform in the Ottoman Central and Rural Organisations),¹” “*History of The Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey (1808-1975)*,”² “*Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922*,”³ and “*Ottoman Reform and Müslim Regeneration*.”⁴

¹ Akyıldız, Ali. *Tanzimat Dönemi: Osmanlı Merkez ve Taşra Teşkilatında Reform*. İstanbul: Eren Yayınları, 1993.

² Shaw, Stanford J. and Ezel Kural Shaw. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey (1808-1975)*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

³ Carter, Vaughn Findley. *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980.

⁴ Weise, Itzhak ve Fruma Zachs. Ed. *Ottoman Reform and Müslim Regeneration*. New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2005.

Moreover, in works such as “*A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*,”⁵ “*The Politicization of Islam*,”⁶ “*İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*” (The Longest Century of the Empire),⁷ and “*Emperyalizm Karşısı Bir İmparatorluk: Osmanlı Tecrübesi Işığında 19. Yüzyıl Dünyası Düzeni*” (An Anti-Imperialist Empire: Ottoman Lessons on the Nature of the 19th Century World Order),⁸ the notion of ‘reform’ plays a central role to understand the deep transformation that the Ottoman Empire went through.

In this sense, movements of thought occurring in the ‘reform’ process dealt with the subjects and problems which occurred in that period. Since the time and space context in which the traditional conceptualization had emerged had changed, discussed subjects and problems altered and a new conceptual basis emerged. Yet, in the end, from the Young Ottomans to the Young Turks, from the Islamists to the nationalists, all movements of thought thought about ‘reform.’ When the literature is analyzed, works such as “*Intellectuals and Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Young Turks on the Challenges of Modernity*,”⁹ “*Siyasi İdeoloji Olarak İslamcılığın Doğuşu*” (The Birth of Islamism as a Political Ideology),¹⁰ “*İslamcılık Akımı*” (Movement of Islamism),¹¹ and “*İslamcıların Siyasi Görüşleri*” (Political Opinions of Islamists)¹² elaborated on the movement of Islamism and the New Ottomans movement in the Ottoman capital within the context of ‘reform.’ Moreover, in “*Jamāl Al-Dīn Al-Afghāni: a Muslim Intellectual*,”¹³ “*Muhammad Abdu*,”¹⁴ “*Rashed Rıda and the West*,”¹⁵

⁵ Hanioglu, Şükrü. *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008.

⁶ Karpaz, Kemal. *The Politicization of Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

⁷ Ortaylı, İlber. *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004.

⁸ Aydın, Cemil. “Emperyalizm Karşısı Bir İmparatorluk: Osmanlı Tecrübesi Işığında 19. Yüzyıl Dünyası Düzeni.” *Divan Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 12: 22 (2007):39-85.

⁹ Taglia, Stefano. *Intellectuals and Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Young Turks on the Challenges of Modernity*. New York: Roudledge Press, 2015.

¹⁰ Türköne, Mümtazer. *Siyasi İdeoloji Olarak İslamcılığın Doğuşu*. İstanbul: Etkileşim Yayınları, 2011.

¹¹ Tunaya, Tarık Zafer. *İslamcılık Akımı*. İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2007.

¹² Kara, İsmail. *İslamcıların Siyasi Görüşleri*. İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2001.

¹³ Moazzam, Anwar. *Jamāl Al-Dīn Al-Afghāni: a Muslim Intellectual*. New Delhi: Nurang Rai Press, 1984.

¹⁴ Sedgwick, Mark. *Muhammad Abdu*. Londra: Oneworld Press, 2010.

¹⁵ Shabin, Emad eldin. *Reşid Rıza ve Batı*. Trans. Erkan Saka. İstanbul: Ekin Yayınları, 2000.

“*İslami Yenilenmenin Kökenleri*” (Roots of Islamic Renovation),¹⁶ and in one of the most definitive works of its field, “*Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1939*,”¹⁷ it can be seen that, Arab Islamism was interpreted within the framework of the notion of ‘reform.’ Yet, in the works which deal with Arab nationalism and partly our research topic Muhammed Kurd Ali, namely, “*Intellectual Life in the Arab East: 1890-1939*,”¹⁸ “*The Origins of Arab Nationalism*,”¹⁹ “*Arab Nationalism: A History*,”²⁰ and one of the newest and most important works named “*Formation of Modern Arab Identity*,”²¹ we see that the nationalist movement is also discussed within the framework of the notion of ‘reform.’ But, the common point for both sides, ‘reform,’ was understood as ‘Arabic becoming a modern scientific language and the revival of Arab culture and civilization’ by the nationalists and was perceived as ‘with the reform in religion, making it the new identity of the Empire’ by the Islamists. At this point, Wanis al-Harasha writes in Arabic about my thesis subject Kurd Ali namely “*Fıkru Muhammed Kurd Ali wa Da’vatuhi’l-İslahiyye*” (Muhammed Kurd Ali’s thoughts and Call for Reform).²² Besides him, Samir Seikaly in his article “*Damascene Intellectual Life in the Opening Years of the 20th Century: Muhammad Kurd Ali and al-Muktebas*”²³ elaborates on ‘reform’ as well. However, both al-Harasha and Seikaly thought that Kurd Ali was closer to the nationalist camp. In fact Seikaly expressed that the opinions of Kurd Ali put forward in *Al-Muqtabas* were advanced and fully crystalized nationalist thoughts. Moreover, he added that, while the other Arab intellectuals were trying to identify the ‘Arab’ identity, he clearly described what Arab identity was.

¹⁶ Ramazan, Tarık. *İslami Yenilenmenin Kökenleri*. Trans. Ayşe Meral. İstanbul: Anka Yayınları, 2005.

¹⁷ Hourani, Albert. *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1939*. Londra: Oxford University Press, 1962.

¹⁸ Buheyri, Marwan R. ed. *Intellectual Life in the Arab East: 1890-1939*. Beirut: Beirut American University Press, 1981.

¹⁹ Rashid Khalidi, Lisan Anderson, Muhammed Muslih ve Reeva S. Simon. *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*. New York: Colombia Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1991.

²⁰ Choueiri, Youssef M. *Arab Nationalism: A History*. Massachusetts: Blakwell Press, 2000.

²¹ Sheehi, Stephen. *Foundation of Modern Arab Identity*. Florida: Florida University Press, 2005.

²² Al-Harasha, Wanis. *Fıkru Muhammed Kurd Ali wa Da’vatuhi’l-İslahiyya*. Umman: Yazurı Press, 2006.

²³ Seikaly, Samir. “Damascene Intellectual Life in the Opening Years of the 20th Century: Muhammad Kurd Ali and al-Muktebas.” *Intellectual Life in the Arab East: 1890-1939*. Ed. Marwan R. Muheiry. Beirut: Beirut American University Press, 1981.

The starting point of this thesis is to question whether Kurd Ali can be assessed within the context of Islamist reformist thinking or not, because in the literature about Islamism, the nationalist movement, and modern Arab thinking, Kurd Ali was characterised as ‘reformist thinker.’ However, he was not precisely considered in the nationalist camp as Seikaly did. Considering Kurd Ali’s deep admiration of Muhammed Abdu and his close relationship with Rashed Rıda, and regarding his opinions in his writings parallel with the Islamist movement, the question of ‘Was Kurd Ali a thinker in line with the *reformist* Islamists? comes up. Thus, in this dissertation, I am going to question whether Kurd Ali belongs to the Islamist movement or not by analyzing Muhammed Kurd Ali’s opinions in the monthly journal, *Al-Muqtabas*, which was published in Cairo between 1906-1908 and in Damascus between 1909-1914, within the context of reformist thinking.

Literature Review

In order to understand whether *Muhammed Kurd Ali: A Reformist Thinker* is an Islamist or not, Islamism; in order to understand Islamism, the movements of thought in the 19th century Ottoman Empire; and in order to understand the basis of how these movements of thought emerged, the last period of the Ottoman Empire should be analyzed shortly. Thus, I first dealt with the ‘reform’ movement by analyzing the Ottoman Empire’s domestic and foreign political situation in the 19th century. I analyzed the emergence of movements of thought which came into existence in the ‘reform’ process context and the birth of Islamism as an ideology. In this way, I tried to give answer to the question of how Islamism corresponds with the transformation. Then, I dealt with some of the core concepts of Islamism such as ‘reform,’ ‘Islamic civilization,’ ‘Western civilization,’ ‘education,’ the ‘caliphate,’ and the ‘Unification of Islam.’ From this point of view, I tried to determine the resemblances and differences between Kurd Ali and Islamists by analyzing how Kurd Ali dealt with the same subjects. In this way, I had the chance to discuss where Kurd Ali, both as a part of the

transformation and as an intellectual, showed resemblances and differences with the Islamist movement. I drew attention to the common points of Kurd Ali and Arab nationalists by referring to works about Arab nationalism in order to show how Kurd Ali got closer to the Arab nationalist movement and where he separated from the Islamists. This enabled me to scrutinize where Kurd Ali separated from the Islamists and where he got closer to the nationalists.

Islamists understood the 'reform' concept as saving Islam from squeezing into traditional patterns as well as they expected it to be presented as a new identity for the Empire, which went through a big reform process. They discussed terms such as 'Islamic civilization,' 'Western civilization,' 'education,' the 'caliphate' and the 'Unification of Islam' in this context. Islamic civilization, as a religion which is open to innovation and encourages development, includes all of the beauties of 'Western civilization.' At this point, if one returns to the core of Islam and if a well-understood and compatible caliph represents Islam, Islamic Unity can be established and well-educated Muslims can have a voice in the world. However, Kurd Ali perceived the concept of 'reform' as making Arabic the modern scientific language just like the Arab nationalist intellectuals. For Kurd Ali, the Islamic civilization means the Arab civilization and Arabic, and Turks prevented the development of Arabic and held back Muslims. Thus, Arabs should make Arabic a scientific language which can express all of the accumulations of Western civilization. For this, all the intellectual and political accumulation of Western civilization should be translated into Arabic and should be rearticulated in Arabic. In fact, Arabic is a rich language and sufficient for a civilization, but this needs effort. In this sense, the publication policy of *Al-Muqtabas* served this purpose and acted as a platform for the restoration of Arab cultural heritage and the expression of modern Western thought. Because of this point of view, Islamists remained silent about the core concepts of Ottoman policy such as the 'caliphate' and 'Islamic Unity' and made political

discussions based on the Ottoman Arab relations. Because of these reasons, although he had close relations with Islamists and had the same discussions, it is not possible to say that Kurd Ali was an Islamist. Kurd Ali was a reformist thinker with predominant nationalist tendencies, considering both the nine year publishing policy of *Al-Muqtabas*, and his opinions expressed in *Al-Muqtabas*.

In one of the academic works in Arabic about Kurd Ali, namely “Muhammed Kurd Ali’s Thoughts and Call for Reform,” al-Harasha discussed about Kurd Ali’s late period opinions and does not mention about his thoughts in *Al-Muqtabas*. Iyad Alı Tabba’, in his work “*Muhammed Kurd Ali: al-Muarrikhu ’l-Bahhasatu wa ’l-Sahafiyi ’l-Adib*” (Muhammed Kurd Ali: Researcher, Journalist and Man of Letters)²⁴ dealt with Kurd Ali’s life and Works, but did not include his thoughts and opinions. While his life and works are discussed, the period that Kurd Ali lived, intellectual discussions and literature were not discussed in English. Just a summary was presented with the inclusion of some of his works by using Kurd Ali’s memoirs. Shafiq Jabri in his work “*Muhadarat an-Muhammed Kurd Ali*” (Conferences on Kurd Ali)²⁵ dated in 1957, presented a summary of the intellectual adventure of Kurd Ali, which was expressed in his memoirs. In this work, in which there were no discussions about where Kurd Ali stood within the intellectual movements, it is possible to see some nationalist interpretations due to 1950s conjuncture. Jamaladdin Alusi, in his work called “Muhammed Kurd Ali,”²⁶ generally depicts Kurd Ali from his birth to his death. However, in this work, it can be seen that, topics such as Islamism, nationalism, the Ottoman Empire and the reform process were not included at all; and just Kurd Ali’s memoirs and works were summarized. In the published version of the conference organized by the Arab Academy of Sciences called “*Muhammed Kurd Ali: Muassisu ’l-Majma ’il-i ’lmi ’l-Arabi*” (Founder of Arab Academy of

²⁴ Al-Tabba’, Iyad Ali. *Muhammed Kurd Ali: al-Muarrikhu ’l-Bahhasatu wa ’l-Sahafiyi ’l-Adib*. Damascus: Dar al-Qalam Press, 2008.

²⁵ Jabri, Shafiq. *Muhadarat an-Muhammed Kurd Ali*. Beirut: Risale Press, 1957.

²⁶ Alusi, Jamaladdin. *Muhammed Kurd Ali*. Baddad: Dar al- Jumhuriyya, 1966.

Sciences: Muhammed Kurd Ali)²⁷ there are expressions of respect and praise instead of deep analysis. The only work which mentions Kurd Ali's thoughts in *Al-Muqtabas* is Samir Seikaly's article called "*Damascene Intellectual Life in the Opening Years of the 20th Century: Muhammad Kurd Ali and al-Muktebas.*" Seikaly, in this article, analyzes Kurd Ali's opinions in *Al-Muqtabas* in detail, but does not question his relation with the Islamist movement. Besides, the reform process in the Ottoman Empire, this process' reflections in Syria and Kurd Ali's stance within various movements of thought of that period were not dealt with the way dealt with in this thesis. In this sense, this dissertation presents a whole different approach from the existing literature considering embracing and discussing Kurd Ali.

All issues of *Al-Muqtabas* journal were gathered as yearly volumes and prepared for publication by Dr. Muhammed Yusuf Najm as 9 volumes, and published in Beirut in 1992. Many other works of Kurd Ali were published at different dates. While I am dealing with Kurd Ali's life and his period, I will refer to these works when necessary. However, I will use the memoirs of Kurd Ali published in 1948 while discussing specifically his private life. In this sense, while analyzing Syria, where Kurd Ali's thoughts and opinions came into existence, within the context of the Ottoman Empire's reform process, Tibawi's "*A Modern History of Syria*"²⁸ is the most significant work in order to understand the political developments and center-periphery relations. Although Tibawi's work dates back to 1969, which is pretty early, most of the works written lately do not analyze that period of Syria which is important for us. For instance, McHugo's work called, "*Syria: A History of the Last Hundred Years*,"²⁹ shortly mentions the period of Syria that is discussed here, but mainly deals with the post World War I period. In the work of Sluglett and Weber called "*Syria and*

²⁷ Sabbah, Husni. Ed. *Muhammed Kurd Ali: Muassisu'l-Majma'i'l-'lmi'l-Arabi*. Damascus: Hijaz Press, 1977.

²⁸ Tibawi, A. L. *A Modern History of Syria*. Edinburg: Macmillian St.Martins's Press, 1969.

²⁹ McHugo, John. *Syria: A History of Last Hunderd Years*. New York: The New Press, 2015.

Bilad al-Sham under Ottoman Rule,³⁰ Ottoman Syria and Damascus in the 18th century are analyzed in many aspects, the Syrian economy and city history in the first half of 19th Century were discussed, but issues regarding the period studied here were not analyzed in this work. The work of Pipes, namely “*Greater Syria*,”³¹ deals with post-World War I Syria. Provence’s work, “*The Great Syrian Revolt: The Rise of Arab Nationalism*,”³² deals with the period that is worked with here, but mainly focuses on the Druzes of Havran. Examples can be augmented about the books on Syria, but I preferred to use Midhat Sertoglu’s “*Mufasssal Osmanlı Tarihi*” and Tibawi’s work due to the similarities with the way discussed in this thesis. In order to understand the transformations in that period’s Syria, I used Khoury’s work, “*Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus: 1860-1920*,”³³ and to grasp the intellectual transformation, I used David Commins’ “*Religious Reformers and Arabist in Damascus, 1885-1914*.”³⁴ I supported the abovementioned works with many other articles dealing with the social, political and intellectual situation in Syria. I did not refrain from referring to classic Ottoman history books in the subjects regarding Ottoman history. Kayalı’s work called “*Yong Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism and İslamism int the Ottoman Empire*”³⁵ is quite significant about the later years of Syrian history. Although I referred to the book about the subjects that intersect with my thesis, since my thesis mainly deals with intellectual history, I did not discuss that adequately. Yet, I have to mention that, in order to perceive that period, I benefited from that book. Even though I discussed the work of Zekeriya Kurşun, which is one of the first Turkish works about this subject, namely “*Yol*

³⁰ Sluglett, Peter ve Stefan Weber. *Syria and Bilad al-Sham under Ottoman Rule*. Leiden: Brill Press, 2010.

³¹ Pipes, Daniele. *Greater Syria: The History of Ambition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

³² Provence, Michael. *The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Arab Nationalism*. Texas: Texas University Press, 2005.

³³ Khoury, Philip S. *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus: 1860-1920*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

³⁴ Commins, David Dean. “Religious Reformers and Arabist in Damascus, 1885-1914.” *International Journal of Middle East* 18: 4 (1986): 405-425.

³⁵ Kayalı, Hasan. *Yong Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism and İslamism int the Ottoman Empire*. California: California University Press, 1997.

Ayrımda Türk Arap İlişkileri,”³⁶ within the context of my thesis, since this work is one of the main reasons that I headed towards this topic, it bears more importance than a reference. Moreover, to understand the formation of Arab national identity, one of the most important works written lately is Sheehi’s “*Foundation of Modern Arab Identity*,” and it is quite beneficial to perceive the mental codes of Arab nationalism. I referred to this work in order to identify where Kurd Ali got separated from Islamism and got closer to Arab nationalism. At this point, Dawn’s work called “*From Ottomanism to Arabism*”³⁷ is very significant for grasping the intellectual discussions and emergence of Arab national identity; but I did not refer to the parts when a rebellion against the Ottoman Empire by the Emeer of Mecca and Abdullah took place. Of course, I have read and referred to many works of Abdellatif Tibawi, Elie Kedourie, Zeine N. Zeine, Sylvia Haim, Suleiman Mousa, William Cleveland and William Ochsenswald about Arab nationalism and the emergence of Arab national identity. Yet, since the subject of the thesis is not Arab nationalism, I did not feel the need to discuss it in detail. However, Rashid Khalidi’s article called “*Ottomanism and Arabism in Syria Before 1914: A Reassessment*”³⁸ provides a detailed literature discussion about this subject.

Islamism is still one of the most discussed topics in English literature. Many important articles are being written in English literature, especially about political Islam. Many related articles concerning the Islamist movement of thought in the post-World War II period were collected by Barry Rubin in his works called “*Political Islam: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies*”³⁹ and “*Islamic Political and Social Movement: Critical Concepts in Political*

³⁶ Kurşun, Zekeriya. *Yol Ayrımda Türk Arap İlişkileri*. İstanbul: İrfan Yayımevi, 1992.

³⁷ Dawn, C. Ernest. *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Orgins of Arab Nationalism*. Illinois: Illinois University Press, 1973.

³⁸ Khalidi, Rashid. “Ottomanism and Arabism in Syria Before 1914: A Reassessment.” *The Orgins of Arab Nationalism*. Ed. Khalidi, Rahhid, Lisa Anderson, Muhammed Muslih, ve Reeva S. Simon. New York: Colombia Universtiy Press, 1991.

³⁹ Rubin, Barry. Ed. *Political Islam: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies*. Londra: Roudledge Press, 2006.

Science.⁴⁰ Furthermore, many books can be mentioned, but since they are not related to my topic, I did not make any discussions about current Islamism. Since Türköne claimed that Islamism must be started with the Young Ottomans, his work called “*Siyasi İdeoloji Olarak İslamcılığın Doğuşu*” (Birth of Islamism as a Political Ideology) is quite important. Besides, Taştan’s PhD dissertation called “*Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Sembolik Kaynakları: Yeni Osmanlıların Siyasal Söylemleri, 1860-1867*”(Symbolic Sources of Turkish Nationalism: New Ottoman’s Political Discourse, 1860-1867)⁴¹ discusses the same topic on a different stage and provides a comprehensive point of view. Furthermore, Karpat’s work called “*Politicization of Islam*” focuses and deeply analyzes Ali Suavi and the relation of Islamism with the press. Moreover, the works of Şerif Mardin are seminal to perceive the Young Ottomans and Islamism. Besides, to grasp Arab Islamism, Hourani’s classic work called “*Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*,” is one of the most referred works. However, there are tens of works dealing with Islamist intellectuals such as Moazzam’s “*Jamāl Al-Dīn Al-Afghāni: a Muslim Intellectual*,”⁴² İşcan’s “Muhammed Abdu’s Religious and Political Remarks” (Muhammed Abdu’un Dini ve Siyasal Görüşleri),⁴³ and Kavak’s “*Modern İslam Hukuk Düşüncesi: Reşit Rıza Örneği*” (Modern Islamic Thought of Law: Example of Rashed Rıda).⁴⁴ I referred to this, and similar works, but since discussing the whole literature about the early periods of Islamism would exceed the limits of my thesis, I confined myself to just referring to them. For the Islamist movement in the Ottoman capital, Tunaya’s “*İslamcılık Akımı*” (Movement of Islamism)⁴⁵ and Kara’s “*İslamcıların Siyasal Görüşleri*” (Political Thoughts of Islamists)⁴⁶ works are classic. Besides, there is the recent research such as

⁴⁰ Rubin, Barry. Ed. *Islamic Political and Social Movement: Critical Concepts in Political Science*. Londra: Roudledge Press, 2013.

⁴¹ Taştan, Yaşar Kemal. “Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Sembolik Kaynakları: Yeni Osmanlıların Siyasal Söylemleri, 1860-1867.” Ph.D. Diss. U of Gazi, 2010.

⁴² Moazzam, Anwar. *Jamāl Al-Dīn Al-Afghāni: a Muslim Intellectual*. New Delhi: Nurang Rai Press, 1984.

⁴³ İşcan, Mehmet Zeki. *Muhammed Abdu’un Dini ve Siyasal Görüşleri*. İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1997.

⁴⁴ Kavak, Özgür. *Modern İslam Hukuk Düşüncesi: Reşit Rıza Örneği*. İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2012.

⁴⁵ Tunaya, Tarık Zafer. *İslamcılık Akımı*. İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2007.

⁴⁶ Kara, İsmail. *İslamcıların Siyasal Görüşleri*. İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2001.

Doğan's PhD dissertation called "*The Origins of Liberalism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire: 1908-1914*"⁴⁷ where he depicts intellectual discussions in the Ottoman capital. Furthermore, there are many works about that periods' Islamists such as Yıldırım's "*Mehmet Akif'in İslam Tasavvuru*" (Mehmet Akif's Perception of Islam),⁴⁸ Bein's "*Ulama and Political Activizmin the Late Ottoman Empire: The Political Career of Şeyhülislam Mustafa Sabri Efendi*,"⁴⁹ Bülbül's "*Said Halim Paşa'yı Yüz Yıl Sonra Yeniden Okumak*" (Rereading Said Halim Pasha After A Hundred Years)⁵⁰ and Bostan's "*Said Halim Paşa'da İslamlaşmak Düşüncesi*" (Thought of Islamization in Said Halim Pasha).⁵¹ I both referred to many works that I mentioned here and those I didn't, but since discussing the whole literature would exceed the capacity of a master thesis, I tried to keep it within limits.

For political developments in the last period of the Ottoman Empire in which all of these discussions gained significance, there are works such as Quataert's "*The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922*,"⁵² Aydın's "*Emperyalizm Karşıtı Bir İmparatorluk: Osmanlı Tecrübesi Işığında 19. Yüzyıl Dünyası Düzeni*" (An Anti-Imperialist Empire: Ottoman Lessons on the Nature of 19th Century World Order), Uyar and Erickson's "*A Military History of the Ottomans: From Osman to Atatürk*,"⁵³ Shaw's "*History of The Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey (1808-1975)*,"⁵⁴ Zürcher's

⁴⁷ Doğan, Necemettin. "The Origins of Liberalism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire: 1908-1914." Ph.D. Diss. U of Frein, 2006.

⁴⁸ Yıldırım, Ramazan. "Mehmet Akif'in İslam Tasavvuru." *Diyanet İlmi Dergisi* 47: 4 (2011).

⁴⁹ Bein, Amit. "Ulama and Political Activizmin the Late Ottoman Empire: The Political Career of Şeyhülislam Mustaa Sabri Efendi" *Guardians of Faith in the Modern Times: Ulama in the Middle East*. Ed. Meir Hatina. Leiden: Brill Press, 2009.

⁵⁰ Kudret Bülbül. "Said Halim Paşa'yı Yüz Yıl Sonra Yeniden Okumak." *TYB Akademi Dergisi* 1:3 (2011).

⁵¹ Bostan, M. Hanefi. "Said Halim Paşa'da İslamlaşmak Düşüncesi." *TYB Akademi Dergisi* 1: 3 (September 2011).

⁵² Quataert, Donald. *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

⁵³ Uyar, Mesut, ve Edward J. Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans: From Osman to Atatürk*. California: Greenwood Press, 2009.

⁵⁴ Shaw, Stanford J. and Ezel Kural Shaw. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey (1808-1975)*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

“*Turkey: A Modern History*”⁵⁵ and Armaoğlu’s “*19.yy Siyasi Tarihi: 1789-1914*” (19th Century Political History: 1789-1914).⁵⁶ There are also works about specific subjects which occurred in that period. In this sense, works dealing with the Balkans such as Koliopoulos and Veremis’ “*Modern Greece: A History Since 1821*,”⁵⁷ Boyar’s “*Ottomans, Turks and the Balkans: Empire Lost, Relations Altered*,”⁵⁸ Adıyeke’s “*Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Girit Bunalımı: 1896-1908*” (Ottoman Empire and Crete Depression: 1896-1908),⁵⁹ Hanioglu’s *The Young Turks in Opposition*⁶⁰ and “*Preparation For a Revolution*,”⁶¹ McCarthy’s “*Death and Exile*,”⁶² and Öke’s “*The Armenian Question*”⁶³ can be shown as examples. I had the chance to discuss these, and many similar works. I benefited from Hanioglu’s “*A Brief History of Late Ottoman Empire*”⁶⁴ work considering the Ottoman’s reform process. Ortaylı’s “*İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*” (The Longest Century of the Empire) and Lewis’ “*The Emergence of Modern Turkey*”⁶⁵ are beneficial and alive examples in order to understand the reform process. Considering understanding the economic reform process, Pamuk’s work called “*Osmanlı-Türkiye İktisadi Tarihi: 1500-1914*” (Ottoman-Turkey Economic History: 1500-1914)⁶⁶ and considering perceiving the legitimacy and image in the reform period, Deringil’s work called “*Well Protected Domains*”⁶⁷ are also quite important. Frequently referred works of Karpas are highly valuable to understand the reform process in the Ottoman Empire. I did not refer to the work edit by Reşat Kasaba called “*Cambridge History of*

⁵⁵ Zürcher, Erik J. *Turkey: A Modern History*. New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2004.

⁵⁶ Armaoğlu, Fahir. *19. yy Siyasi Tarihi: 1789-1914*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2003.

⁵⁷ Koliopoulos, John S., and Thanos M. Veremis. *Modern Greece: A History Since 1821*. London: Blackwell Press, 2009.

⁵⁸ Boyar, Ebru. *Ottomans, Turks and the Balkans: Empire Lost, Relations Altered*. New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2007.

⁵⁹ Adıyeke, Ayşe Nükhet. *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Girit Bunalımı: 1896-1908*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2000.

⁶⁰ Hanioglu, Şükrü. *The Young Turks in Opposition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

⁶¹ Hanioglu, Şükrü. *Preparation for a Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

⁶² McCarthy, Justin. *Ölüm ve Sürgün*. Trans. Bilge Umar. İstanbul: İnkılap Yayınları, 1998.

⁶³ Öke, Mim Kemal. *The Armenian Question*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2001.

⁶⁴ Hanioglu, Şükrü. *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008.

⁶⁵ Lewis, Bernard. *The Political Language of Islam*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991.

⁶⁶ Pamuk, Şevket. *Osmanlı-Türkiye İktisadi Tarihi: 1500-1914*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003.

⁶⁷ Deringil, Selim. *The Well Protected Domains*. New York: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 1998.

Modern Turkey,⁶⁸ while I was writing, because I efficiently used many works of some of the writers of the volume such as Şükrü Hanioglu, Hasan Kayalı, Feroz Ahmed and Şevket Pamuk in my thesis.

Organization and Scheme

In this context, in the first chapter of this thesis, I will deal with the rebels in Balkans starting with the Greek Revolt and ending with the loss of Serbia, Romania, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Albania by analyzing the situation that the Ottoman Empire stood in in the international arena. In these rebellion processes, I will touch upon the important turning points of Ottoman-European diplomatic relations and I will scrutinize the invasion processes of France into Tunisia, Great Britain into Egypt, and Italy into Libya. I will deal with how Ottoman statesmen inferred this international conjuncture and how the ‘reform’ idea emerged. I will analyze the radical reform process starting with Selim III and how it escalated with Mahmut II; and I will assess the importance of the Royal Edict of Reform, the Rescript of Gülhane, the Ottoman constitution, the First and Second Constitutional Period within this reform and the reconstruction process. I will question the relations of movements of thought and new social classes with the radical political, bureaucratic, economic, social, urban and ideological transformation that the Ottoman Empire went through. In this way, the central meaning of the ‘reform’ concept will come up, and the basis in which ‘reformist thinking’ got its meaning will be enriched. At the end of the first chapter, I will deal with how Syria, the land that our main subject Kurd Ali grew up in, was influenced from this ‘reform’ process. I will draw attention to the reflections of Islamist and nationalist movements in Syria and scrutinize these movements of thought’s relations with political and social actors. Thus, I will try to question how Kurd Ali’s thoughts corresponded with the Islamist and nationalist thoughts, which I tried to describe in its political and social context.

⁶⁸ Kasaba, Reşat. Ed. *Cambridge History of Turkey*. Vol. 4. Edinburg: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

In the second chapter of this dissertation, in order to answer the question on whether it is possible to assess Kurd Ali within the Islamist reformist context, I will deal with the ideas of prominent Islamist thinkers. I will shortly touch upon the birth of Islamism, and I will point out how Islamism as a new phenomenon differed from traditional Islam. I will focus shortly on how the prominent thinkers of Islamism developed after the Second Constitutional Period in the Ottoman capital, and touch upon important thinkers of the New Ottomans and Arab Islamism. I will deal with how the ‘reform’ concept occupies a central role for Islamism, as a modern ideology, and I will focus on how this movement discussed the core problems that the Ottoman Empire experienced during that period. In order to understand how the Islamic civilization and European civilization concepts were perceived within the context of ‘reform,’ I will discuss thoughts about ‘reform.’ I will analyze how much Islamists cared about the historical experience of the Islamic civilization and how they underlined the necessity of ‘reform’ in order to return back to the good old days. I will include their implications about Western civilization, which they approved concerning its superiority, is the reference point of reform. And on the other hand, I will point out my concerns about the Christian nature of Western civilization and its moral weaknesses. I will scrutinize how the discussions on the caliphate and the unification of Islam gained a new interpretation in the 19th century, and how important this was for the new identity which was desired to be formed for the Empire. I will especially focus on the emphasis on the necessity of ‘reform’ in education and the discussions on the improvements on madrasahs. I will deal with the relations between Abdulhamid II and Islamists and analyze how Islamists used the press, as a modern medium of communication, for opposition. By doing so, I will show how much the ‘reform’ subject is central for Islamists and how they discussed concepts such as Islamic civilization, Western civilization, education and the caliphate within the framework of ‘reform.’

In the third chapter of thesis, I will mention where Kurd Ali grew up, which intellectuals influenced him and their significance in the reformist movement. I will tell about what kind of education he received, how he launched out into journalism and which duties he became a part of. By dealing with his relations with his contemporaries, I will try to show how close he was with his period's discussions, how he got to know that period's Arab intellectual knowledge and how close he observed problems. For the sake of giving general information about Kurd Ali's intellectual history, I will briefly mention his works and deal with his trips to Europe. Thus, by shortly describing Kurd Ali's life, I will have a chance to assess his comments in the *Al-Muqtabas* journal.

In the fourth and the last chapter of the thesis, since it is the topic, I will deal with how Kurd Ali described *Al-Muqtabas* and which charge he loaded it with. By doing so, what this journal, in which Kurd Ali's writings gained their meanings, meant among the intellectual discussions of that period, will come up. I will analyze how Kurd Ali dealt with the subjects that Islamists discussed, such as reform, European civilization, Islamic civilization, the caliphate and Abdulhamid II. Thus, I will try to show at which points Kurd Ali showed similarities and differences with the Islamists. I will touch upon what kind of similarities he bore with the Arab nationalist movements and how he interpreted the subjects that Islamists did not discuss. As a result, the possibility of whether Kurd Ali can be considered as an Islamist reformist or not will be seen, how close he stayed to the nationalist movement will be determined and in which reformist movement he should be regarded will be revealed.

I. The OTTOMAN EMPIRE in the 19th CENTURY

At the very beginning of Chapter I, I will try to evaluate the period when the Ottoman Empire began to lose territory in the Balkans, which started with the Greek Revolution in 1821, within the context of European diplomacy. I will discuss why the ‘Peace’ developed within the framework of the European diplomatic system that had been established in the 1815 Congress of Vienna could not be extended to the Ottoman hinterland; and how the Ottoman Empire lost Serbia, Romania, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Albania during the period which was sparked by the Greek revolt. I will also examine which treaties, within the context of international balance of power, the Ottoman Empire was forced into due to the Revolt of Mehmed Ali Pasha of Cavalla; and how the Ottoman statesmen put these alliances through ideological interpretations. Then, there will be a short summary on the Russian-Ottoman relations, from both retrospective and prospective approaches within the context of the Crimean War; how the Bosnian Uprising turned into an international issue; and the development of the period that led to the Balkan Wars. I will then briefly review the process of the Committee of Union and Progress’s seizure of power and the path that led to World War I.

In the second part of the chapter, I will try to assess the changes which were brought into the traditional political, bureaucratic and economic system of the Ottoman Empire due to this phase the Empire was going through within the context of international power balances; and how the Ottoman statesmen interpreted the outside events. In pursuit of this assessment, I will talk about the radical reform process that started with Selim III and its exacerbation with Mahmud II; and what the *Islahat Fermani*, *Tanzimat Fermani*, *Kanun-u Esasi*, First Constitutionalist Period and Second Constitutionalist Period stand for within this comprehensive reform and restructuring period. I will then elaborate on how the “educated absolutist Ottoman bureaucrats” gained more effective power, how it was intended to

strengthen the centralist structure of the Empire through the reforms, and the restructuring process of the Ottoman bureaucracy within the context of centralization; and the reactions of the rural population to the centralization reforms. During the course of this comprehensive transition of the Ottoman Empire, the establishment of the new educated-intellectual class, the empowerment of the press and the new educated-intellectual class's move to use the press as a tool for opposition will also be mentioned briefly. Where Abdulhamit II stood during the course of the Ottoman reforms, as well as where the Committee of Union and Progress stood during this process, and how other opposition groups started to emerge at this point will also be discussed.

In the last part of this chapter, I will revolve more around Syria, then a province of the Ottoman Empire, which was struggling to survive as an entity in the international arena while going through a reform process, with a focus on how Syria was affected by the centralization reforms. Then, I will continue with the regional policies of the European states which began to pay a special attention to the Ottoman territory in the Arab Peninsula. Next, I will deal with the relations between the ethno-religious minority groups and the European states, how the parity policies of the Ottoman Empire, which were applied under the reforms, 'disturbed' the Muslim groups in Syria, and the Druze-Maronite Conflict in Lebanon. Then, I will address the policies of Abdulhamid II with regards to Syria, the opposition against his rule in Syria, and the stance of the modern Arab elites who got education from modern education institutions against the Ottoman central rule. Last but not least, I will summarize the establishment of a new Arabist/Islamist camp in Syria and their attitudes against the Committee of Union and Progress, with a final mention on debated issues on Syria's agenda prior to World War I.

I.1. The Ottoman Empire and the Great Powers

New political, technological, economic, religious, cultural and bureaucratic systems emerged in the late 18th and beginning of the 19th century in Europe, changed the already existing power balances of the previous ages and placed Europe at the very center of these balances. The Ottoman Empire started to adopt a method, which involved reformation, in order to stay strong against its “old enemy” that was now confronting it in a new form. Thus, the “Ottoman reformation process” is nothing but a set of reactions of a traditional empire to survive as an actor against ‘modern Europe.’

The Westphalian system, established with the Westphalia Treaty in 1648 after the Thirty Years’ War, led to the birth of nation-state and provided a legal framework to the power definitions built on this new formation. Nation state formation found its philosophical base through the large-scale theoretical frameworks developed in the aftermath of the French Revolution in the 19th century and became the most basic realpolitik power unit and actor through the unification movements and exploitative competitions during the same period.⁶⁹ In other words, a diplomatic relations web was established between the European states within the framework of the European public law, founded through Westphalia, a political and legal framework for dispute resolution among these units was developed, and a mutual security system for Europe was envisaged. The 1789 French Revolution put the ‘right to self-determination of peoples and nations’ on the European agenda and put a philosophical and political meaning on popular sovereignty.⁷⁰ Henry Kissinger suggests that ‘European Peace’ was attained with the 1815 Congress of Vienna following the Napoleonic Wars and that there

⁶⁹ Ahmed Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2004), p. 16.

⁷⁰ Berdal Aral, “Batı Uygarlığı, Uluslararası Düzen ve Uluslararası Hukuk,” *Modernite ve Dünya Düzenleri*, ed. Mesut Özcan and Muzaffer Şenel (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2010), pp, 57-83.

were no wars in Europe, with one exception of the 1854 Crimean War.⁷¹ Yet, this system framed in Europe could not be constituted in the Ottoman hinterland. This period of the Ottoman Empire is defined as the ‘longest century of the Empire’⁷² in the literature and witnessed the dissolution of it. When the European states supported the nationalist Greek insurgents in 1821,⁷³ it proved that this new diplomatic system they developed was not an international one,⁷⁴ and especially the crises between 1890 and 1914 led to its collapse and sparked the beginning of World War I.⁷⁵

The Ottoman Empire was exposed to many attacks on its political and territorial sovereignty during this period referred to as the ‘century of peace in Europe.’ The most important among these attacks is, as mentioned before, the Greek Revolution which emerged in 1821.⁷⁶ Although the UK and Austria suggested that the Ottoman Empire and its territory would be protected within the framework of the Congress of Vienna due to their concerns about the possibility of Russia to proceed in the Balkans and reach the Mediterranean, Russia’s diplomatic maneuvers prevented this suggestion from becoming a reality.⁷⁷ Although having agreed on supporting legitimate governments against nationalist revolts, the European states did not support the Ottoman Empire during the Greek Revolution; and thus started to show that this new system they developed was exclusive to Europe and was bound to stay

⁷¹ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomasi*, trans. İbrahim H. Kurt (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları,2004), p. 70.

⁷² Please See. Ortaylı, *En Uzun Yüzyıl*, 2004.

⁷³ Eric Hobsbawm, *Devrim Çağı*, trans. Bahadır Sina Şener (Ankara: Dost Yayınları, 2003), p. 117.

⁷⁴ Mim Kemal Öke, *The Armenian Question* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları,2001), p. 18.

⁷⁵ Paul Kennedy, *Büyük Güçlerin Yükselişi ve Düşüşü*, trans. Birtane Karankçı(İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2005), p. 304.

⁷⁶ Please see. Koliopoulos, S. John ve Thanos M. Veremis. *Modern Greece: A History Since 1821*. London: Blackwell Press, 2009.

⁷⁷ Fahir Armaoğlu, *19.yy Siyasi Tarihi:1789-1914*(Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları,2003), pp. 97-98.

within the borders of the continent. The Greek Revolution, which succeeded by getting the support of the European states,⁷⁸ became an important cornerstone in Ottoman history.

The Ottoman Empire's territory got narrowed due to territorial losses that came with the wars in the 18th and 19th century. Yet, what the 19th century territorial losses have in common is that the Christian population in the Balkans gained their independence from the Empire. This separation process, which started with the Greek Revolution, was going to continue with Serbia, Romania, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Albania.⁷⁹ According to the Ottoman historians of the time: Russia's support to the insurgents was a major factor in the territorial losses in the Balkans. Therefore, it is not wrong to say that the Greek Revolution is an exogenous revolt and should be analyzed within the framework of Ottoman-Great Powers relations.⁸⁰ Donald Quataert also accepts this argument and claims that, "the Greek Revolution is the clearest-cut example of the relationship between insurgency against the Sultan and international politics."⁸¹

Noting that the nationalist insurgencies in the Balkans are the most significant feature of the last century of the Empire, and that the Ottomans lost almost all of their territory during this period, we could underline two very influential and important diplomatic events: The Revolt of Mehmed Ali Pasha of Cavalla which took more than ten years and the occupation of Arab provinces by the European states. The period that started with the occupation of Egypt by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798, continued with the French occupation in Algeria in 1830.⁸² Since the Empire was busy with the Greek Revolution, it could not step into the occupation in

⁷⁸ Koliopoulos and Thanos, *Modern Greece*, p. 15.

⁷⁹ For the creation of national conscious among Balkan nations and their relationship with the please see. Slobodan G. Marković. "Patterns of National Identity Development among the Balkan Orthodox Christians during the Nineteenth Century." *Balkanica*, 2013. 209-254.

⁸⁰ Ebru Boyar, *Ottomans, Turks and the Balkans: Empire Lost, Relations Altered*(New Yor: Tauris Press, 2007), pp. 66-67.

⁸¹ Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922* (New York: Cambridge Press, 2005), p. 57.

⁸² Please see. Cleveland, William L. and Martin Bunton. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Philadelphia: Westview Press, 2013.

Algeria; and though the local population tried to stand up against the French, they could not succeed.⁸³

Mehmet Ali Pasha of Cavalla, who is noted to have served as a lowly enlisted commander in the region during Napoleon's occupation of Egypt gained more power by taking advantage of the authority gap, which emerged as a result of the French attack. Mehmet Ali Pasha, who was assigned as the Governor of Egypt, ruled the province for the next 40 years and he changed the entire administrative, martial, bureaucratic, and economic structure of Egypt during his rule. Sultan of the time Mahmud II asked Mehmet Ali to suppress the Wahhabi uprising in the Hejaz region and after succeeding in the suppression, Mehmet Ali Pasha's forces began to control the whole region. The process of taking Sudan under control, which started in 1820, also ended in success.⁸⁴ The Ottoman Empire asked for Mehmet Ali Pasha's help to suppress the Greek Revolution, yet the Greek rebels won in the end, after the issue gained an international dimension.⁸⁵ When Mehmet Ali Pasha's help was asked to suppress the revolts, Crete was pledged to him. Mehmet Ali Pasha also demanded Syria. When this demand was rejected by the Empire, forces of Mehmet Ali Pasha started to move towards Syria in 1831 under the command of his son Ibrahim Pasha, and concurrently passing the Taurus Mountains, defeated the Ottoman troops in Konya and started to move towards Istanbul. Mahmud II, who was worried about the situation asked for the Western states' and Russia's help against Mehmet Ali Pasha. Due to concerns of having a new, potential powerful state as their neighbor, Russia gave a positive response to this cry for help and Russian troops arrived in Istanbul following the Treaty of Hunkar Iskelesi signed between the two states. During the 1830s, Mehmet Ali Pasha's forces kept control of southern

⁸³ Armaoğlu, *19. yy Siyasi Tarihi*, pp. 187-193.

⁸⁴ Cleveland, *Modern Middle East*, pp. 59-69.

⁸⁵ Bruce Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, 1516-1918: A Social and Cultural History* (New York: Cambridge Press), pp. 144-146.

Anatolia.⁸⁶ During this period, following an agreement with Mehmet Ali Pasha, in addition to Egypt and the Crete provinces, Adana and the Syria provinces were transferred to remain under his control. Yet, Sultan Mahmud II became worried about these new privileges Mehmet Ali Pasha gained and he wanted to take advantage of the insurgencies among Syrians in the region against Ibrahim Pasha's ruling power. Mahmud II sent the army to attack Ibrahim Pasha in 1839, got defeated in Nizip and as a result, Mahmud II died and his son Abdulmecid inherited the throne. However, the UK, which raised concerns on the increasing power of Mehmet Ali Pasha in Egypt and that it could harm the UK's advantages in the region, supported the Empire and the British troops occupied Lebanon. So, Ibrahim Pasha's soldiers retreated back to Egypt and after the London Treaty, signed in 1841, Mehmet Ali Pasha was forced to withdraw from all of the regions he occupied, except Sudan. It was set as a condition that the Egyptian army would not exceed 18,000 in number; yet, the rule was assigned to Mehmet Ali Pasha to descend from him to his sons. Therefore, the Mehmet Ali Pasha dynasty ruled Egypt until 1952.⁸⁷

The Rescript of *Gülhane (Tanzimat Fermanı)* was declared on 3 November 1839, and after suppressing the Revolt of Mehmet Ali Pasha of Cavalla, the Ottoman Empire went through a rather calm period until the 1853 Ottoman-Russian War.⁸⁸ Cemil Aydın describes the Rescript of *Gülhane* as “the recognition and partial acceptance of the Europe centered imperialist international community and its universally claiming, legitimizing discourse on civilization by the Ottoman elites.” While stating that the Ottoman statesmen who established the *Tanzimat* reforms wanted to be a part of the Eurocentric international order, Aydın suggests that these elites hoped that the European alliance would act according to the general

⁸⁶ Quataert, *Ottoman Empire*, pp. 57-58.

⁸⁷ Armaoğlu, *Siyasi Tarih*, pp. 193-216. For an extensive study on comprehensive reforms of Mehmet Ali Pasha of Cavalla on Egypt government and notably in military field please see. Fahmy, Khaled. *All The Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt*. Cairo: Cairo American University Press, 1997.

⁸⁸ Quataeret, *Ottoman Empire*, p. 66.

principles and would not act in an exclusivist way. During this period, Ottoman intellectuals fictionalized the modern civilization, which emerged in Europe as a universal civilization, trying to perceive it free from Christianity, as one, which emerged with contributions from all civilizations in the world. Aydın claims that this perception made them believe that they could adapt to the European institutions and methods without leaving Islamic traditions.⁸⁹ The Ottoman Empire found itself in the middle of the Proto-World War, 14 years after the declaration of the Rescript of *Gülhane*. The events that led to the Crimean War were the consequences of Russia's ambitions to control strategic parts of the Ottoman Empire. Russia sparked a crisis by using the holy places in Jerusalem and the aim to protect Orthodox Christians as an excuse. Despite the defeats at the conflicts between the Ottoman-Russian wars of 1768-1774, 1787-1792, 1806-1812 and 1828-1829, the Ottomans did not give in to this new threat, and what is now referred to as the Crimean War started. France and the UK allied with the Ottoman Empire in this war. The conflict resulted in victory for the Ottoman Empire and its allies. The Treaty of Paris, signed in 1856, led to the retreating of forces from occupied lands.⁹⁰ Cemil Aydın points out this alliance against Russia during the Crimean War as an important success for Ottoman diplomacy and argues that the acceptance of the Ottoman

⁸⁹ Aydın, "Emperyalizm Karşıtı Bir İmparatorluk," pp.39-85. Selim Deringil states that the Ottoman Empire struck a colonial attitude against its people in the provinces, in the later 19th century. Deringil indicates that the Ottoman Empire might be seen similar to Russian imperialism, while it's hard to compare with aggressive industrial empires of the West. Please see: Deringil, Selim. "They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery: The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45:02 (2003), pp. 311–42. Furthermore, Eugene Rogan uses the same method as Deringil by evaluating the Empire's attempts to gain legitimacy and loyalty through *Asiret Mektebi*. Please see: Rogan, Eugene. 1996. "Asiret Mektebi: Abdulhamid II's School for Tribes 1892-1907." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28, 83-107. With reference to these works, Cemil Aydın's assertion of 'an anti-imperialist empire' becomes contradictory. But, I think Aydın's conceptualisation is correct, if interpreted as "the Ottoman Empire's efforts to survive" in a century where Europe colonized whole world. Because Deringil describes the Ottoman colonialism as a tactical move. But Western imperialism is a move arising from industrial capitalism, not a tactical move.

⁹⁰ Uyar, Mesut and Edward J. Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans: From Osman to Atatürk* (California: Greenwood Press, 2009), pp. 157-158.

Empire on the 'European states' team' created the perception that the *Tanzimat* reforms were being useful.⁹¹

Regarding the Serbia issue, as one of the most harmful problems for the Ottomans, which occurred in the aftermath of the Treaty of Paris, Markovich states that the emergence of Serbia as a separate nation coincided with the Greek "Revolution." Although Greeks gained their independence between 1831-1832, he states that Serbians gained their *de facto* independence in 1815. Markovich, who describes "the Serbian Uprising (1804-1813) as Serbian Revolution," argues, "This uprising involves national and social aspects within."⁹² The Ottoman Empire, which officially recognized Serbia's self-determination with Treaty of Edirne in 1829, had to completely retreat from it in 1867 following the Treaty of Paris. Yet, Serbia's independence was not recognized until the 1878 Berlin Conference.⁹³

Another Balkan state, which got separated from the Ottoman Empire, was Montenegro. Anti-Ottoman and anti-Turkish political movements started in the 1850s in Montenegro led to independence in 1878, with the Treaty of Berlin⁹⁴. Ilber Ortaylı claims that it is not right to interpret these nationalist insurgencies in the Balkans as direct consequence of the 1789 French Revolution since the national conscience of the Balkan nations is inherited from their state and culture in the middle Ages. He argues that the nationalist movements of the Balkan Slavs were developed primarily by the church, the trade bourgeoisie, which got stronger after the 18th century, and then with the involvement of the peasants.⁹⁵ Yet, for whatever reason, the nationalist movements in the Balkans have resulted in serious territorial losses for the Ottomans since the 19th century.

⁹¹ Aydın, "Emperyalizm Karşıtı Bir İmparatorluk," p. 55.

⁹² Marković, "Balkan Orthodox Christians," p.215.

⁹³ Aleksandar Fotic, "Serbia," Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire. 2009 ed.

⁹⁴ Armaoğlu, *Siyasi Tarih*, pp. 275-277.

⁹⁵ Ortaylı, *En Uzun Yüzyıl*, pp. 60-12.

Then, in 1874, the Herzegovina Revolt broke out.⁹⁶ The events that started with the revolts of Slavic peasants against their Muslim landlords brought an end to the post-Crimean order that Ottomans wanted to found. The program's reforms were not enough to establish stability after the situation got worse and other ethnic elements started new uprising against the Empire in 1876 in the Plovdiv region of Bulgaria. Despite Austria's inaction against the events, Serbia and Montenegro wanted to take advantage of the situation and declared war against the Empire. Although the Ottomans repulsed Serbia and Montenegro (1876), they could not apply any measures on either of the two states due to international intervention⁹⁷. During these uprisings, the Ottoman Empire lost the support gained during the Crimean War, news against the Ottomans started to affect public opinion in Europe, and the Ottoman Empire was slowly isolated from the international system.⁹⁸ The Serbians, who were defeated, reached out to the representatives of the European states in Belgrade and asked for their help to intervene for a ceasefire. The UK was actively involved in the process; however, Russia, which was afraid that the UK would control Bulgaria, made a pro-active move to “save” Bulgaria and started a military operation against the Ottoman Empire. The subversion of the Ottoman Empire was not aimed at, but the seizure of Istanbul was added to the plan as a last resort move.⁹⁹ When representatives of the European states had a meeting in Istanbul to discuss the recent events, the First Constitutional Period (*Meşrutiyet*) - an important milestone for the Ottoman Empire- was declared. European states took many heavy decisions for the Ottomans to obey regarding Herzegovina and Bulgaria, but the Ottoman Empire declared that

⁹⁶ For a detailed evaluation of the revolt from the Ottoman Empire’s perspective, please see: Rashed Chowdhury, “Pan-Islamism and Modernisation During the Reign of Sultan Abdulahmid II, 1876-1909,” Ph. D. Diss., U of McGill, 2011, pp. 54-64.

⁹⁷ Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, pp. 110-111.

⁹⁸ Uyar and Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans*, p. 183.

⁹⁹ Armaoglu, *Siyasi Tarih*, p. 507-509.

it was not possible to abide by these rules on 20 January 1877.¹⁰⁰ This is how the Ottoman-Russian War, which is referred to as ‘the ‘93 War’ in Turkish history books, broke out.

It was a major concern for the Ottoman statesmen that Russian forces seized Edirne, therefore, they offered a ceasefire. Russians accepted the offer; however, they came all the way to Yeşilköy, which is now considered as a part of Istanbul since it is very close, and wanted to negotiate a 29-point agreement here. Due to the importance of the events, the Treaty of San Stefano was discussed after the negotiations with the Ottoman Empire in Berlin by the signatory states of the Treaty of Paris (1856).¹⁰¹ Due to the Berlin negotiations, the Empire lost 287,510-km² lands, and started to establish close relations with Germany -instead of the UK- especially with Wilhelm II, the German Emperor. Also, on the pathway to World War I, rival groups started to become evident, especially the German-Russian opposition.¹⁰²

The process, started with the Berlin Congress, was a process that the disasters it went through since the beginning of the century exacerbated and continued. The UK occupied Cyprus (1878), Austria occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina (1878) and an uprising broke out in Albania. Ottomans had to remain silent against the occupation of Cyprus. Bosnia-Herzegovina was left to Austria.¹⁰³ The UK, which settled in Cyprus in 1878, occupied Egypt in 1882. Although Egypt was acting as an independent state, legally it was still Ottoman territory; however, the Empire had to remain silent against the occupation. The France-UK rivalry over Egypt had been going on for a long time. The activities of nationalist groups under Arabi Pasha’s leadership were bothering the British. So, they arrested Arabi Pasha after

¹⁰⁰ Shaws, *History of The Ottoman Empire*, pp. 178-180.

¹⁰¹ Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*(New York: Tauris Press. 2007), pp. 74-75.

¹⁰² Armaoğlu, *Siyasi Tarih*, p. 531.

¹⁰³ *İbid.*, p.542.

landing troops on Port Said in 1882. Both the Ottomans and French kept their silence regarding the occupation by the UK.¹⁰⁴

Following the San Stefano and Berlin Treaties, the Ottoman Empire faced two significant issues: the Crete and Armenian issues. Greece stated at the Berlin Congress that they wanted Crete under their rule; although they had acquired Lassia and Taselya and expanded towards the south, they did not recall their demand on Crete. On the other hand, Crete became an issue of competition between England and Russia; Greece provoked the Cretan Greeks against the Ottoman Empire and paved the way for riots. The insurgencies that started in 1878 continued with ups and downs until 1895, yet the terrorist incidents by Armenians which broke out in 1895 in Anatolia, encouraged the Cretan Greeks again for another riot. When the Crete Greeks, which used the weakness of the Ottoman Empire as an advantage, broke out in a riot, Greece used the opportunity to declare war against the Ottomans. The Ottoman Empire also declared war against Greece (1897). Although the Ottoman Empire's forces were superior to the Greek forces, due to the involvement of European states, the Empire had to assign a governor from a Greek dynasty to Crete. The Crete issue came to the agenda again during the London Conference in 1913, and the Ottoman Empire gave up its rights on Crete with the London Treaty.¹⁰⁵

Enver Ziya Karal states that during the Ottoman-Russian wars, in the Caucasus among the Russian troops, there were Armenian private soldiers, sergeants and officers. Furthermore, after the Ottomans lost the war, the Armenian Church in Istanbul asked the Russian Czar to

¹⁰⁴ Cleveland and Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2013), pp. 92-93. Timothy Mitchell describes the British invasion in Egypt as 'colonial invasion,' while analysing the process by discussing establishing a new army, starting a formal educational system and restructuring the Egyptian cities. As one of the most referred works in the literature on Britain's invasion into Egypt, please see: Mitchell, Timothy. *Colonising Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

¹⁰⁵ Ayşe Nühket Adıyeke. *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Girit Bunalımı: 1896-1908* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2000), pp. 138-208.

gain some acquisitions from the Ottomans for the advantage of Armenians.¹⁰⁶ Mim Kemal Öke claims that, the beginning of nationalist ideas was the first steps towards the establishment of an independent Armenian state and there were many unions formed targeting Armenian independence. The first of the series of revolts which carried the Armenian issue to the second stage happened in *Erzurum* in 1890 and the process continued with the *Kumkapı* protests (1890), *Kayseri* (1892), *Yozgat* (1893), *Çorum* (1894), *Merzifon* (1894), *Samsun* (1895) riots, *Van* Riot and attack to the Ottoman Bank (1896), Second *Samsun* riot (1903), assassination attempt to Abdulhamid (1905), and the *Adana* riot (1909).¹⁰⁷

The Macedonian issue, which was very challenging for the Ottoman Empire, appeared very complicated in 1897. Due to the Cretan and Armenian issues, the Ottoman Empire could not pay sufficient attention to this unsafe region. Yet, after this date, the Macedonian issue also turned into an international one because of the involvement of the big powers, primarily Russia and Austria. This issue continued until the 1912-1913 Balkan wars and continued for many years after Macedonia was partitioned in a different form.¹⁰⁸

Difficult situations, following the San Stefanos and Berlin Treaties, political and ideological movements across Europe, transformations that occurred during the restructuring of the Ottoman Empire -which will be elaborated more in the next chapter- led to the establishment of a new middle class among the Ottoman society. These new middle class formed different organizations around the framework of ideas they developed regarding the future of the Empire. The Committee of Union and Progress, as one of these organizations

¹⁰⁶ Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi* Vol. 7 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2000), p. 129.

¹⁰⁷ Öke, *The Armenian Question*, pp, 80-83. For the evaluation of Armenian issue, considering the Young Turks movement and conditions of the period, please see. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 91-124. For the evaluation on the Armenian issue from the ‘genocide’ perspective, please see: Melson, Robert. *Revolution and Genocide*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996. For a detailed work on the subject, comprising views of various academicians, please see: . Hovannisian, Richard, G. Ed. *The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies*. New Jersey: Transaction Press, 2007.

¹⁰⁸ Armaoğlu, *Siyasi Tarih*, p.589. For a detailed work on Macedonia issue, please see. Hacısalihoğlu, Mehmet. “Jön Türklerin Balkan Politikası: 1908-1913” *Divan Disiplinler Arası Çalışmalar Dergisi* 13:24 (2008): 99-127.

which gained power during the process, forced Abdulhamid II to declare the Second Constitutional Period by using the conjuncture of the period and then by using 31 March Incident as an excuse, they dethroned Abdulhamid II in 1909. After this event, the CUP turned into a political party and took control of the government; Talat Bey became the Minister of Interior and Cavid Bey became the Minister of Finance.¹⁰⁹

During the second constitutional period, two diplomatic events occurred: Austria occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina and Bulgaria declared its independence.¹¹⁰ According to Armaoğlu, after the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1909, Austria and Russia entered into a serious battle; Russia wanted to unify the Slavic states in a Balkan league against Austria as a barrier, and the 1912-1913 Balkan wars were consequences of these activities. One day before the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria, on 5 October 1908, Bulgaria declared its independence. The Ottoman Empire could not avoid this declaration too and had to recognize it on 19 April 1909.¹¹¹

The occupation of Ottoman territory in North Africa by European states, which started, with the English occupation in Egypt continued with the Italian occupation in Libya in 1911.¹¹² Although the Ottoman troops fought against the Italians for a long time, the Ottoman Empire provided self-determination to the Tripolitan people with the Lousanna (*Oushy*) Treaty and retreated from Libya. Yet, although the Ottoman forces retreated officially, Ottoman soldiers continued to fight against the Italian troops for a long time with the locals. Libyans' struggle against Italians continued until the end of World War II and Ömer Muhtar

¹⁰⁹ For detailed information on Committee of Union and Progress please see. Hanioglu, Şükrü. *The Young Turks In Opposition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995 and Hanioglu, *Preparation For a Revolution*, 2000. Especially the second book provides detailed information by using primary resources on the structural organization of the Committee and its relations with other oppositional political groups of its time (Armenian groups).

¹¹⁰ Uyar and Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans*, p.219.

¹¹¹ Armaoğlu, *Siyasi Tarih*, pp. 625-627.

¹¹² For Muhammed Kurd Ali's evaluations on Italy's occupation in Libya please see: "Jununu'l-Is'timar." *Al-Muktebas*, 7:1 (1330-1912).

became a symbolic name for this resistance against the Italians.¹¹³ While the Ottoman Empire had to deal with these external issues, on the internal political stage, the Progress and Union Party lost its prestige; however, it still became the leading party after the 1912 elections by using state power.¹¹⁴

In 1911, the year the Italians occupied Libya, a *de facto* population exchange happened. Most of the Caucasian Muslims were settled in the Balkans. According to Justin McCarthy the Balkan wars were answering the question of who would take control of the Balkans with fire and guns. The treaties of 1912 determined the destiny of the Ottoman Empire in Europe. Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro, with the help of Russian diplomatic servants, agreed on scattering the last pieces of Ottoman land in the Balkan region. On 8 October 1912, Montenegro declared war against the Ottoman Empire, other Balkan states followed the same path and the Ottoman Empire was defeated. Due to many militaristic and technical problems, the Balkan states defeated the Ottoman Empire.¹¹⁵ Following this defeat, when the Balkan armies made a move towards Istanbul, the conflict became internationalized. On the other hand, when Bulgarians were unsuccessful against the Ottomans in the Çatalca Conflict, they had to give in to an agreement, and on 3 December 1912, a ceasefire agreement was signed between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire. While the issue continued, on 28 November 1912, Albania declared its independence.¹¹⁶ This ceasefire between Bulgaria and the Ottomans began to be discussed in London. When Ottoman diplomats did not accept the harsh terms and conditions of the Balkan states, the conflict started again. But this time the Ottoman Empire had to give in for peace with the Balkan states and agreed to give Edirne away.

¹¹³ Please see: Kologlu, Orhan. *500 Years in Turkis-Libyan Relations*. Ankara; SAM Yayınları, 2007. For Italy's occupation of Libya within the context of the period, please see: Hasan Kayalı, *Yong Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism and İslamism in the Ottoman Empire*(California: California University Press, 1997), pp. 107-108.

¹¹⁴ Kayalı, *Young Turks*, p.117.

¹¹⁵ Justin McCarthy, *Ölüm ve Sürgün*, Trans. Bilge Umar(İstanbul: İnkılap Yayınları, 1998), pp. 146-147.

¹¹⁶ Zurcher, *Turkey*, pp.106-107.

The retreat of the Ottomans from the Balkan region resulted in deep crises which would last for many more years ahead. In fact, a few years later, the second Balkan war broke out due to the Macedonian issue. The conflict that started in June 1913 between the Serbia-Greece alliance and Bulgaria mobilized the Ottoman diplomats, who had just lost Edirne. After long discussions in the Ottoman cabinet, by using the chaos in the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire took Edirne back on 20 July 1913.¹¹⁷ When Serbia emerged as a rising power in the region after the Balkan wars, Austria was concerned and started to follow a very strict foreign policy towards Serbia. The weakness and defeat of the Ottoman Empire during the Balkan wars encouraged Russia for reaching the Straits. Therefore, Serbia and Russia got closer when Germany stood next to Austria against their alliance. The Serbians were uncomfortable with the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and on 28 June 1914 a Serbian man named Princip killed the Austrian crown prince François-Ferdinand in Sarajevo.¹¹⁸ Following this event, what is now being referred to as World War I in world history broke out. This war was going to predestine the future of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey on a smaller scale, while shaping the following century of the whole world on a larger scale. The Ottoman Empire went into the war along with the Central Powers led by Germany, with Austria- Hungary, and Bulgaria, and lost the war.

I.2. Reform in the Ottoman Empire

At the end of the 18th century, the military, economic, and administrative problems that the Ottoman Empire confronted made the Ottoman statesmen realize that the Ottoman Empire was in need of extensive reforms. Regarding the necessity of reforms for the Ottoman Empire, Selim III demanded reform proposals from the Ottoman statesmens, the *ulama*, the French military consultants, and an Armenian intellectual, Muradcan Tosunian (Mouradge

¹¹⁷ Armaoğlu, *Siyasi Tarih*, p. 688.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

d'Ohsson), and then 20 different reform proposals were prepared, which were known as 'Islahat Layihaları' in history. The reform proposals, those of which generally focused on military and fiscal reforms, were implying that the way for the Ottoman Empire to gain its old power was coming from administrative reform and a reorientation in foreign policy.¹¹⁹ In the Ottoman Empire, the reform movement starting with Selim III, was called *Nizam-ı Cedid* (The New Order) and constituted a turning point, even a beginning for the reconstruction process of the Empire.¹²⁰ However, anti-reformists who were gathered around the Janissary dethroned Selim III; thus, the reform movement was interrupted for a short period.¹²¹ After the reign of Mustafa IV for 14 months, 33 years of sultanate by Mahmud II, who was enthroned (1808) as a result of the raid on Istanbul done by Ruscuk Ayanı Alemdar Mustafa Paşa, was a turning point for the Ottoman Empire to evolve from a traditional territorial empire to a modern, central, bureaucratic state. The most important step of Mahmud II, throughout the reform process of the Ottoman Empire, was the abolishment of the Guild of Janissaries. However, Mahmud II acted precariously throughout this process; while he was forming an army to replace the Janissary on the one hand, on the other hand, he set Janissary Aghas who were close to him in order to keep Janissaries under control. He went into action by taking advantage of the sympathy of the public to a modern army, after the failure of the Janissaries in the Greek Revolution in 1826 and the success of Mehmed Ali Pasha's modern army. The Janissaries revolted and brought their *kazans* to *Etmeydanı* in Sultanahmet three days after Mahmud II officially announced that he had formed a modern army under the name of 'Eşkinici Ocağı' on June 11, 1826. But with the support of the *ulama*, Mahmud II, called the public who took the *Sancak-ı Şerif* out to fight against the Janissaries. All of the guilds except the Janissaries declared their loyalty to the Sultan. With the participation of the students of the

¹¹⁹ Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, p. 42.

¹²⁰ Betül Başaran, *Selim III, Social Control and Policing in Istanbul at the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill Publisher, 2014), pp. 77-82.

¹²¹ Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, p. 54.

madrasahs and volunteers from the public, a bloody fight started against the Janissaries. The Janissary barracks located in *Etmeydanı, Aksaray* were shelled, more than 6,000 Janissaries were killed, and around 2,0000 rebels were arrested. The Janissaries vanished on 16 June 1826, and a new army was founded under the name of *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*.¹²² The dramatic closure of the Janissary corps, which passed into history as ‘the Auspicious Incident’ (*Vakıay-ı Hayriye*), was a crucial turning point for both the whole of Ottoman history, but more specifically, for the history of the reforms.

The abolishment of the Janissary corps, and the formation of a modern army, which was directly connected to the Palace, caused a significant change in political balance in the Ottoman Empire. The Janissaries, which had such a power to enthrone or dethrone the sultan for many years, constituted a powerful and legitimate line with the opposition of the *ulama* against the Palace.¹²³ With the abolishment of the Janissary corps, the *ulama* lost one of its important supporters vis-a-vis the Palace and bureaucracy; and since it lacked military power, it had to take a more reconciliatory stance against the reform demands of the bureaucracy. Dispersement of the alliance against the palace caused by the abolishment of the Janissaries empowered the Ottoman Palace. Prior to 1908, Ottoman politics turned into a contest between the bureaucracy and the Palace.¹²⁴ However, in order to apply the extensive reform program initiated by Mahmud II, the bureaucracy mechanism had to be expanded. When Sultan Mahmud II died in 1839, the bureaucracy mechanism was expanded and dominated Ottoman political life and the Ottoman Palace became weak. Even if grand viziers get the authority for some points of Ottoman history, in the years following the declaration of the Rescript of

¹²² Ibid., p. 59.

¹²³ For a detailed work on the characteristics of Janissary revolts and the legitimacy practices during the revolts, with an evaluation of the technical stages of Janissary revolts which extended over the abolition of the Janissaries and the four major revolts which broke out in the Ottoman capital together, please see: Kırca, Umut Deniz. “The Furious Dogs of Hell”: Rebellion, Janissaries and Religion in Sultanate Legitimation in the Ottoman Empire.” M.a. Diss. U of Bilgi, 2010.

¹²⁴ Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, p. 69.

Gülhane (1839), the grand vizier and a group of bureaucrats around him dominated the administration. Until this point in Ottoman history, the Sublime Porte (*babı ali*) bureaucrats had dominated the political life; after the First Constitutional Period, *Yıldız* Palace, and after the Second Constitutional Period, the Committee of Union and Progress dominated political life.¹²⁵

Throughout this process, the Ottoman Empire evolved from a traditional state organization into a modern and central type of state. People, who ran these reforms were educated and absolutist statesmen. Centralisation reforms caused a change in law; and since the law started to be organised for the subjects' secularisation tendencies started to be seen.¹²⁶ These centralist reforms, which were applied in accordance to the general model that can be seen in any of the European countries at that period, can be summed up as: dividing the state bureaucracy into classes, paying salaries to state officers and calculating the Treasury's income and expenses combined, and establishing financial control.¹²⁷ In order for the reforms to function, the Ottoman Empire started to empower the political and financial, Istanbul's power had to reach the rural areas, and the power of the rural elements had to be limited. Therefore, financial and economic sources of the rural elements who were opposing the reforms were demanded to be removed. For the landed proprietor¹²⁸ in the Ottoman Empire (*Ayan*), the most significant source of power was to collect taxes on behalf of the state; thus, this authority to collect taxes was taken from local notables (*ayan*) and was started to be given to others. The *Iltizam* (tax farming) system was abolished and with the formation of the

¹²⁵ Ortaylı, *En Uzun Yüzyıl*, p. 89.

¹²⁶ On the transformation of the Ottoman law system please see: Rubin, Avi. *Ottoman Nizamiye Courts: Law and Modernity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan Publishers, 2011.

¹²⁷ Ortaylı, *En Uzun Yüzyıl*, p. 125. For reflections of the Ottoman Empire on central and rural organization please see: Akyıldız, Ali. *Tanzimat Dönemi: Osmanlı Merkez ve Taşra Teşkilatında Reform*. İstanbul: Eren Yayınları, 1993. Also, for the social structure of new bureaucratic elites emerged with centralization please see: Karpaz, Kemal. *Osmanlı Nüfusu. 1830-1914*. Trans. Bahar Tırnakçı. İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010.

¹²⁸ For detailed information on landed proprietors please see: Özkaya, Yücel. *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Ayanlık*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1994.

General Directorate of Foundations (*Evkaf İdareleri*), all foundations were gathered under the same administrative roof.¹²⁹ The use of means of communication had a great importance on pushing the centralist reforms through to the people. In 1831, the first official newspaper of the Ottoman Empire began to be published under the name of “*Takvim-i Vekayi*” and after the establishment of the mail system in 1834, this newspaper started to be distributed among state institutions. By doing this, the objectives and goals of the Ottoman Sultan were directly told to his subjects.¹³⁰ Moreover, some radical changes were done in the Ottoman education system. After the abolishment of the Janissaries, the most important problem occurred in the lacking of qualified crafts. Two organisations, *Mühendishane-i Berri Hümayun* and *Mühendishane-i Bahri Hümayun*, were established before the *Tanzimat* processes, and were restructured throughout the *Tanzimat* period. In 1827, Mahmud II sent many students to Europe in order for them to be trained in technical subjects. In the *Tanzimat* period, a large number of students were sent to the West for education.¹³¹ The need for doctors for the army was tried to be filled with the school named *Tıphane* and *Cerrahhane-i Amire*, which was founded in 1827. After many alterations, it took the name of *Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Askeriye-i Şahane* and moved to *Galatasaray* in 1839. In between 1831 and 1834, *Muzikay-ı Humayun Mektebi* and *Mekteb-i Ulum-u Harbiye* were established.¹³²

In November 3, 1839, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mustafa Resid, announced the *Hattı Humayun*, which was prepared for the sake of the Ottoman Sultan to the public gathered in Gülhane in the presence of Abdulmecid, Prince de Joinville, the *ulama*, bureaucrats,

¹²⁹ Şevket Pamuk, *Osmanlı-Türkiye İktisadi Tarihi: 1500-1914* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003), p. 201.

¹³⁰ Lewis, *The Emergence*, p. 95. On the spread of new communication systems throughout the Ottoman Empire please see: Bektas, Yakup. “The sultan’s messenger: Cultural constructions of Ottoman telegraphy, 1847–1880.” *Technology and Culture* 41:4 (2000): 669–696.

¹³¹ For detailed information on students who were sent to the West please see. Şişman, Adnan. *Tanzimat Döneminde Fransa’ya Gönderilen Osmanlı Öğrencileri: 1839-1876*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2004.

¹³² Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp.158-163.

foreign diplomats, and high state officials.¹³³ Şükrü Hanioglu states that, this Hattı Humayun which is known as the *Tanzimat Fermanı* (the Rescript of Gülhane) in history, signified a change in the official ideology of the Ottoman Empire. According to the vision stated in the Hattı Humayun, various religious fractions structured in accordance with the Ottoman *Millet* System¹³⁴ were demanded to be restructured on the basis of Ottoman citizenship.¹³⁵ Statesmen who came from different backgrounds considering their sociological roots and education conducted this reform process, which was told to be a change in the Ottoman Empire's political ideology. People like Mustafa Reşid Pasha, Serasker Rıza Pasha, Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha, and Kececizade Mehmed Fuad Pasha were the significant statesmen who were born because of the reform process and conducted this process.¹³⁶ These statesmen played a significant role in the administrative stage of the Ottoman Empire until Abdulhamid II.

The Tanzimat bureaucrats, who implemented many reforms in the central Ottoman organization, tended towards rural districts¹³⁷ in order to make administrative reforms, in the years following 1858. With the new regulations, all of the local governments within the Empire were demanded to be restructured in a unified form. Since restructuring the local governments according to a single standard way would be a significant step towards realizing the centralist reforms, a strong riot coming from the rural areas was probable. In order to prevent this threat, participation to local governments was encouraged. For local

¹³³ Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, p. 72.

¹³⁴ For detailed information about the non-Muslim subjects in the Ottoman Empire and traditional system please see: Kenanoğlu, M. Macit. *Osmanlı Millet Sistemi: Mit ve Gerçek*. İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2012.

¹³⁵ Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, p. 74.

¹³⁶ Ortaylı, *En Uzun Yüzyıl*, p.98. Also please see: Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, pp.151-155. Please see also: Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, pp.151-155. For detailed information about Mustafa Resit Pasha, Ali Pasha, Fuat Pasha and many statesmen from *Tanzimat* period, please see: İnal, İbnülemin Mahmut Kemal. *Osmanlı Devrinde Son Sadrazamlar*. İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2013.

¹³⁷ For details about the Ottoman Empire's ruling structure in provinces please see: Çadırcı, Musa. *Tanzimat Döneminde Anadolu Kentlerinin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapısı*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1997. Also for details about the Ottoman provinces governance system at *Tanzimat* period, please see: Ortaylı, İlber. *Tanzimat Devrinde Osmanlı Mahalli İdareleri: 1840-1880*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2000.

governments' reform, by taking the example of the French system '*Prefecture de la ville*,' and the Beyoglu Municipality of Istanbul being a model founded in 1854, the municipal system wanted to be moved towards rural areas.¹³⁸ Donald Quataert confirms the abovementioned and following words of ours by saying: "One of the core aims of the Tanzimat reforms is to put across the central authority to all Muslim rural districts that resist against reforms."¹³⁹ Within the framework of these reforms, centralization of the power and standardization of the law disturbed the Ottoman Empire's nomadic subjects.¹⁴⁰ One of the important changes was in the economic system in the relations between the Ottoman central rule and the rural areas. The Rescript of Gülhane, demanded to build the economic relations on a more egalitarian basis. In this context, reorganising the relation between landowners and farmers, the abolishment of the old tax system, the creation of the new tax system, and the collection of the taxes in cash can be considered as important steps concerning the financial reforms.¹⁴¹ For the reform attempts regarding the economy, the state's military and fiscal priorities played a great importance in the Ottoman Empire. In this sense, the state established many capitalist firms mostly around Istanbul in order to create Ottoman middle-class capitalists. After the state's control over guilds disappeared, the competitive capacity of the craftsmen, who were organised around these guilds, decreased.¹⁴² This transformation in the economy and bureaucracy, and an emerging bureaucratic class, who were regularly paid from the state budget instead of earning revenue from the soil, caused a significant change in Istanbul's social structure. The huge

¹³⁸ Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, p.86. For a detailed information about the municipality history in Ottoman Empire, please see. Rosenthal, Steven. "Foreigners and Municipal Reform in Istanbul: 1855–1865." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 11:02 (1980): 227–45. In this work, Rosenthal analyzed the developments in Istanbul. Mainly, he discusses changes in daily life, the incapability of current city institutions, new institutions such as *Ihtisap Nezareti* and *Şehremaneti*, *Intizam-ı Şehir Comission*, the Sixth region (*Beyoglu*) and its activities; within the frame of how the influence of European citizens and non-Muslim Ottoman citizens situated around Galata-Beyoglu region, affected transforming of the city and municipal institutions.

¹³⁹ Donald, Quataert, "The Age of Reforms: 1812-1914," *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire: 1300-1914*, Ed. Halil İnalcık ve Donald Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 759-934.

¹⁴⁰ Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, p. 87.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

¹⁴² For reform and centralisation in Ottoman economy please see: Pamuk, *İktisat Tarihi*, pp. 202-213.

flow of the tax revenue towards Istanbul, and the expense of this money in cash resulted in an increase in the population and a rise in the food-drink shops.¹⁴³

Kemal Karpat, in his article dealing with the Ottoman Empire's structural transformation between 1789-1908, indicates that the Young Ottomans, which are going to be elaborated on in the second chapter, were the Muslim interpreters of the new order. He puts forward that, Young Ottomans were trying to form the theoretical legitimacy and ideology in accordance with the Islamic political view and the Ottoman state tradition and an understanding of state constructed on modern institutions. He further argues that, the problem that the Young Ottomans discussed in their writings was generally the restructuring of the state institutions, but there are Islamists such as Jamaladdin al-Afgani, Muhammed Abdu, and Rashid Rida who wrote in Arabic and pondered about Islamic reforms. We are going to deal with the Young Ottomans and Islamists who were writing in Arabic in the second chapter, but the important point here is the fact that the centralization reforms caused political belonging problems; and in the process following the Young Ottomans' answers to this problem caused ideological fractionalization.¹⁴⁴

The Land Code of 1858 (*Arazi Kanunnamesi*), characterised by Kemal Karpat as the implementation of Western economic liberalism by Ottoman bureaucrats¹⁴⁵, played a significant role in the modernization period of the Ottoman Empire. With the Land Code of 1858, the desire was to merge some of the property principles of western law and some core principles of Ottoman old land law. However, with some changes in the Law of Successions,

¹⁴³ For detailed information see: Karpat, *Osmanlı Nufusu*, pp. 165-223.

¹⁴⁴ Kemal Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History* (Boston: Brill Press, 2002), pp. 49-50. Describing the *Arazi Kanunnamesi* as "implementation of Western economic liberalism" is naturally open to question. Due to the limits of the thesis, I find it sufficient to just make mention of this topic which is the profession of economic historians.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

disengagement with the Islamic succession law started to be experienced.¹⁴⁶ Throughout the *Tanzimat* period, one of the newest implementations was the banking system. The state encouraged the establishment of the banking system in order to increase its control over the economy and to break the monopoly of the traditional loan agents. In 1856, the Ottoman Bank, as a private enterprise, was founded and opened many branches in the Empire.¹⁴⁷ This deep transformation that the Ottoman Empire was passing through, paved the way for a new phenomenon which occurred in Europe to enter the Ottoman Empire: the 'Press.' It was previously mentioned about the press as a mechanism to express the state's stance. In addition to this, in the advancing years after the *Tanzimat*, it became a very significant device to express thinkers', who were working on political belonging and the institutional transformation of the Ottoman State, views.

It was mentioned that, with the Rescript of *Gülhane*, the Ottoman bureaucracy started to gain power vis-a-vis the Palace, and even the reforms were conducted by *Tanzimat* bureaucrats. Abdülaziz (1861-1876), enthroned after the death of Abdülmecid in 1861, empowered *Tanzimat* bureaucrats more; thus, throughout the 1860s, bureaucracy became the dominant power. Nevertheless, the maturation of Abdülaziz day-by-day and Ali Pasha's, one of the symbols of *Tanzimat* reforms, death in 1871 strengthened the Palace. But, the bureaucracy was disturbed from this progress of the strengthening of the Palace, and it ended up by dethroning Abdülaziz in 1876. Sultan Abdulhamid II, who was enthroned with a promise of a 'constitution' by *Tanzimat* bureaucrats and supporters of constitutionalism (*meşrutiyet*), declared *Meşrutiyet* 'Constitutional Monarchy' on 23 December 1876. The idea of a constitution occurred because a gap came up after the change in traditional power relations because of the abolishment of the Janissaries. In the following decades of the *Tanzimat*, initially the the Young Ottomans, there was an increase in demand for limiting the

¹⁴⁶ Ortaylı, *En Uzun Yüzyıl*, pp.215-218.

¹⁴⁷ Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, p. 90.

power of the central authority. According to Şükrü Hanioglu, the demand of a ‘constitution’ was a reaction against a bureaucratic dictatorship. Besides, it was seen as a symbol of the modernization period by secular elites.¹⁴⁸ Kemal Karpat puts that Islamic rhetoric was used against bureaucratic centralization tendencies and to regain its old power, the ulama, supported the demand for the ‘constitution.’¹⁴⁹ However, it would be hard to consider the first years (1876-1878) of the ‘First Constitutional Period’ as constitutional. Although the Sultan maintained its power over the constitution, he thought that the process was going to get out of control. Thus, he suspended the constitution and abolished the parliament.¹⁵⁰

After the suspension of the constitution and the abolishment of the parliament, the first action of Abdulhamid II was to break the impact of the bureaucracy, which was empowered in the *Tanzimat* period. Bureaucracy, throughout the period, turned from being an independent organ of the government to a servant of the state’s administrative apparatus.¹⁵¹ In fact, it was desired to govern the Empire with a bureaucracy composed of technocrats serving for the Palace.¹⁵² In this context, we might say that Abdulhamid II established a state within the state with the bureaucrats that he gathered in the Yildiz Palace. At that time, reforms in areas such as administration, law and education reached its peak.¹⁵³ The first years of Abdulhamid II were the most active change and reform years of the Ottoman Empire since the beginning of the century. At that time, reforms in areas such as administration, law and education reached their peak.¹⁵⁴ François Georgen puts that, the most important reform initiatives done in the Abdulhamid II period were about education, and adds that the number

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 109- 113.

¹⁴⁹ Karpat, *The Politization*, p.126.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 164-167.

¹⁵¹ Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, p. 123.

¹⁵² Karpat, *The Politization*, p. 168.

¹⁵³ Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, p.125

¹⁵⁴ Lewis, *The Emergence*, pp. 178-179.

of colleges and college students increased strikingly.¹⁵⁵ The *Mülkiye* School, established in 1859, had been revised under Abdulhamid II, and many departments such as Finance (1878), Law (1878), Fine Arts (1879), Commerce (1882), Engineering (1884), Veterinary (1884) etc. opened. In 1875, in order to raise students for the military academy, Military *Rüşdiyes*, were founded.¹⁵⁶

In the first years of Abdulhamid II, besides the extensive education reform, a comprehensive law reform was also followed; in fact, the reforms initiated in the Tanzimat period were maintained. Some radical changes were done in the legal system, courts and legal procedures. The Ministry of Justice was founded and the authorization to rule commercial cases was given to it.¹⁵⁷ Ottoman Code of Civil Law (*Mecelle*), started to be prepared in 1869 by a committee including famous intellectual/statesman Ahmed Cevdet, was finalized in 1888, and the Ottoman Empire finally got a modern civil law system.¹⁵⁸ On the other hand, an extensive railroad network was built all around the Empire and especially the Hejaz Railway project had an important place within the frame of modernization goals.¹⁵⁹ Press, which came up to agenda in *Tanzimat* period, highly developed in the Abdulhamid II period, and turned into an important actor. Efforts by Abdulhamid II to control the press miscarried and the press became an opposition instrument against his despotic rule, *Istibdad*.¹⁶⁰ The press, emasculated and weakened by the Abdulhamid II government, contributed a lot to the Ottoman Empire's modernization process. Books, copied in great numbers by printing facilities, enabled the development of various debates between Ottoman intellectuals.

¹⁵⁵ François Georgen, *Sultan Abdulhamid*, Trans. Ali Berktaş (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), pp. 348-349.

¹⁵⁶ Lewis, *The Emergence*, pp. 181-182.

¹⁵⁷ Shaws, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, pp.216-218.

¹⁵⁸ Lewis, *The Emergence*, p. 184.

¹⁵⁹ For Abdulhamid II's Hijaz Railway project and considering Abdulhamid II's modernization aims, please see: Chowdhury, "Pan-Islamism and Modernisation," pp.276-330.

¹⁶⁰ Karpas, *Politization*, pp.117-119.

The youth, newly trained in relation to the extensive reforms implemented in Abdulhamid II period, moved to opposition since they felt discomfort in Abdulhamid II's way of governing. Besides the Islamists' open opposition in public, the declaration of the Second Constitutional Period, as a result of a secret organization¹⁶¹ of the Committee of Union and Progress, has a very complicated background.¹⁶² The political environment, formed by bureaucracy, which remained under Abdulhamid II's pressure, and the transformation of the Palace and a small group gathered around the Palace into the single element which decides the Ottoman Empire's destiny, gave the CUP ground to declare the Second Constitutional Period¹⁶³ This system caused the economy to corrupt and created discomfort in the army and bureaucracy. When the Western countries' imperialist expansion policies towards the Ottoman Empire added to this, the situation got even worse.¹⁶⁴ Even if they were gathered under the same roof of the Committee of Union and Progress, the opposition against Abdulhamid II, in fact, was even wider. Although the intellectuals, bureaucrats and nationalists did not share the same agenda, they were united against a common enemy.¹⁶⁵ The Young Turks, who desired the reform process and development in Japan, and who were influenced from the constitutional movements in Russia and Iran, took action in order to establish a constitutional system in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶⁶ The Young Turk revolution, as the name suggests, was neither a movement with an extensive public participation around the Empire, nor a liberal reform movement, contrary to general opinion. The Young Turk movement was an initiative to rescue the Empire from being destroyed, by taking over the

¹⁶¹ For how the Committee of Union and Progress organised through the way to 1908 revolution, what kind of ideological formations did they have and what kind of alliances did they do, please see: Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preperation for Revulation*.

¹⁶² Feroz Ahmed, *From Empire to Republic*, Vol. 1 (İstanbul: Bilgi Universitesi Yayınları, 208), p.1.

¹⁶³ Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*(New York: Oxford University Press,1995), pp. 23-28.

¹⁶⁴ Ahmed, *From Empire*, p. 1.

¹⁶⁵ Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, p. 144.

¹⁶⁶ Ahmed, *From Empire*, p. 2.

administration of the Empire through military power.¹⁶⁷ Concepts, such as freedom, equality and justice put forward by the Young Turks were used as means of opposition against the Abdulhamid government and a monarchical regime based on a constitution was promised.¹⁶⁸

A parliamentary democracy, a bureaucracy which was structured in accordance with responsible government, and a qualification system was targeted. A political arena, in which traditional state institutions were slowly coming off of the stage of history, political parties were formed, individual freedoms were respected and where there was democratic participation and a free press was targeted. The government, appointed with the 1908 Revolution, arranged the election calendar necessary for the transition to parliamentary system and elections were held in November-December 1908 in a carnival-like atmosphere. Since the elections were held in a very free environment, open-minded deputies were able to come to parliament and started to oppose the CUP. However, the CUP struck an authoritarian attitude against liberal ideas. Moreover, even fundamental freedoms were blocked within the context of ‘perpetuity of the state against domestic and foreign enemies.’ In this period, bureaucrats, who wanted the Sublime Porte (*Bab-ı Ali*) to turn into a more effective power, nationalist groups who were not comfortable with the definition of being Ottoman by the CUP, local actors who were disturbed by the centralization movements, Islamic groups who were not comfortable with the secularization tendencies of the new regime, and the newly emerging socialist groups composed the opposition against the CUP.¹⁶⁹

When the anti-CUP movements started to gain power and articulated their opposition openly, the rebellion movement called the 31 March Incident took place. The *Hareket* Army, pro-CUP, came to Istanbul in order to squash the opposition composed of supporters of the

¹⁶⁷ Lewis, *The Emergence*, p. 212.

¹⁶⁸ Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Hurriyetin İlanı: İkinci Meşruiyet’i Siyasi Hayatına Bakışlar* (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2004), pp.4-5.

¹⁶⁹ Hanioglu. Young Turks. 150-153.

old regime, Islamists, liberals and ethnic nationalists. The riot was squashed, but the CUP started to adopt a more authoritarian method day-by-day.¹⁷⁰ Despite this situation, the opposition's existence continued and they formed the Freedom and Association Party (*Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası*) in 1911. In the election, which was held 20 days after its establishment, they achieved a significant success.¹⁷¹ However, the CUP took some precautions in order to control the election results held in February-April 1912.¹⁷² They became directly involved in election campaigns, made arrests of the opposition, prevented opposition demonstrations, and closed down opposition newspapers.¹⁷³ After the elections, Committee of Union and Progress took control, and until the end of 1914, deputies were not able to meet again. A de facto single party regime was established. Union and Progress rule, which held the power of legislation and execution as a single power, existed until the beginning of World War 1.

I.3. Syria in the Reform Process

The Ottoman government sent Necip Pasha to Damascus after the announcement of the *Rescript of Gülhane* to implement the reforms.¹⁷⁴ Implementation of the *Tanzimat* reforms increased the central control over rural areas and enabled the administration to be centralized in Syria. The interest of the European powers towards Syria started at the same time with the *Tanzimat* reforms. At the beginning of the 1860 Civil War, after the Egypt invasion, this impact started to be seen. European powers put pressure on the Ottoman government through their ambassadors in Istanbul to get what they wanted in Syria. On the other hand, they were

¹⁷⁰ Ahmed. *From Empire*. 18-20.

¹⁷¹ Lewis. *The Emergence*. 221-222.

¹⁷² For reflections of the Committee of Union and Progress and 1912 elections in Arab districts, please see: Kayalı, *Young Turks*, pp. 116-122.

¹⁷³ Hanioglu, *The Young Turks*, pp. 155-156.

¹⁷⁴ A.L. Tibawi, *A Modern History of Syria*(Edinburg: Macmillian St. Martins's Press, 1969), p. 96.

trying to find local partners.¹⁷⁵ Sources on the *Tanzimat* period show that around 500 inhabitants were transferred to the Balkans, Hacıoğlu Pazarcık, from Syria.¹⁷⁶

In this period, the United Kingdom was quite influential in the politics of the Middle East especially in Syria. For instance, in 1847, the Ottoman governor of Syria was dismissed because of the reports of British Consulate. In fact, Ottoman government stated that, they were going to inform the UK whenever they appointed a new governor. In this sense, the UK's embassy in the Ottoman Empire was considered to be a protector of all of the Protestants in the Empire.¹⁷⁷ The Ottoman Empire sent its most qualified pashas to Syria, which highly attracted European states. However, implementation of the reforms for Syria that the Ottoman Empire projected, was not as efficient as desired due to the traditional structure of the state institutions. Moreover, there were a couple of obstacles in front of the reform process such as the existence of conflicting interest groups and European countries' conflict of interests on Syria.¹⁷⁸ In this context, the *Tanzimat* reforms caused new tensions between ethnic and religious groups in Syria. Furthermore, it turned the social relations, which emerged throughout the history and found a balance within the national system, upside down.

Twenty years following the *Tanzimat*, non-Muslims gained equality before the law with Muslims. Muslim subjects, especially the Arab subjects of the Empire were disturbed by this process, and thought that the reform process was developing in favor of the non-Muslim communities. Civil and religious reforms oriented towards non-Muslims developed their social levels and enabled their economic and educational standards to increase. While the

¹⁷⁵ M.E. Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Middle East: 1792-1923* (London: Longman Press, 1993), pp.131-133.

¹⁷⁶ Kabadayı, Erdem. "Mobility and Resistance in the Light of Ottoman Settlement Policies in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century: The Transfer of Agricultural Labourers from Syria to Dobruđja." *Ottoman Rural Societies*. Ed. Mohammad Afifi, Rachida Chih, Brigitte Marino, Nicolas Michel, Işık Tamdoğan. Cairo: IFAO, 2005.

¹⁷⁷ Tibawi, *Syria*, pp.110-112.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.115-116.

Crimean War (1853-1856) was coming to an end, all of the indications of social discomfort became visible in Syria. Yet, it would not be correct to associate this discomfort and dissatisfaction, which can be seen in many forms, to the *Tanzimat* directly.¹⁷⁹ The most important indicator of the unrest in Ottoman Syria was the clashes between the Druzes and Christians. The Druzes and Christians, who had lived in the same neighborhood historically, moved to safer regions with their moveables, after the clashes had started. Accumulated discomfort broke out in a Druze neighborhood called *Ayn' Zara* in May 1860, and only a couple of hundreds of Druzes' troops defeated the Christian troops who were more in number.¹⁸⁰ In the Druze-Christian clashes, many inhuman activities occurred and numerous innocent civilians were killed. Due to Druze provocateurs' -who went to Damascus from Havran and Lebanon- provocations of Muslims towards Christians, the Muslims and Druzes attacked the Christians. After all of this, Christians began not to feel safe in Damascus.¹⁸¹ With the Ottoman Empire's intervention, an agreement between the Christians and Druze was signed, the war came to an end, and the order was partially established, but the re-establishment of the order maintained its existence as a problem.¹⁸²

These problems came up in the agenda in the capital of the Ottoman Empire and foreign missions as well as Beirut. After many diplomatic maneuvers, the European powers decided to send 12,000 soldiers to Beirut in order to establish the peace.¹⁸³ According to the protocol signed by the Ottoman Empire, the commander of the European troops had to be in coordination with the Ottoman Empire's governor of Syria, Fuad Pasha. Fuad Pasha took some precautions immediately, in order to prevent the commander of the European troops from intervening in the process. Moreover, in order to remove the concerns of the European

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 121-122.

¹⁸⁰ Sertoğlu, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, pp. 3105-3106.

¹⁸¹ Tibawi, *Syria*, pp. 127-129.

¹⁸² Sertoğlu, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, p. 3107.

¹⁸³ Tibawi, *Syria*, p.130.

powers towards the Syrian Christians, he took some really harsh measures.¹⁸⁴ Within the framework to establish the peace around the region, the Mountain of Lebanon (*Jabal-ı Lubnan*) was decided to be governed by a Christian governor who was going to be appointed by the Ottoman government.¹⁸⁵ Thousands of people were killed, lost their houses, and the culture of living together was heavily damaged. Furthermore, trade was stopped in a trading city, Beirut, and the decrease in the number of visitors coming from Europe had a bad affect on the economy. Besides, the hostility between ethnic and religious groups was deepened, Muslim subjects started to bear hostile feelings towards Europe, and traditional relations between Arab subjects and the Ottoman Palace began to be tarnished.¹⁸⁶ The abovementioned conjuncture occurred when the foreign factors were added to the political, social, cultural, and economic environment, which came up after the implementation of reforms, which started in 1838. The encouragement and provocation of the European states motivated some of the Christian subjects to be extremists against the Ottoman Empire. On the one hand, ethnic and religious groups were trying to create autonomous regions, and on the other hand, while they wanted to have the same rights as Muslims, they desired to be exempted from the responsibilities necessary for Muslims. In the process following 1856, while the Syrian Christians expected more priviledges and less responsibility, Muslim people faced heavy responsibilities without any exemptions. In fact, it is possible to describe this process as expansion of the minorities' power domain and a shrinking of the majority's power domain. Although the *Rescript of Gülhane* (1839) and the *Royal Edict of Reform* (1856) (*Islahat*

¹⁸⁴ Philip S. Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus, 1860-1920* (Cambridge: Cambiridge University Press, 1983), p.8.

¹⁸⁵ Sertoğlu, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, p. 3108.

¹⁸⁶ Following the incidents in 1860, especially after the 1870 commerce crisis, relations between the Ottoman central rule and the Syria districts changed dimension. Most of the reform policies implemented in the Abdulhamid II period were implemented in Syria, yet the desired success could not be achieved. For detailed information, see: Khoury, *Urban Notables*, p. 53.

Fermani) were declared in order to establish social justice, even its partial practice in Syria caused social unrest.¹⁸⁷

The extraordinary development in communication, the expansion in the telegraph, the mail system, the railroad network, and many other points increased the center's influence on Syria.¹⁸⁸ Military precautions on desert borders decreased the number of attacks by bedouins on travellers. The Ottoman Empire imposed heavy sanctions on bedouins who attacked trade caravans or farmers. The civilizing of the bedouins,¹⁸⁹ making them settled, recruiting them into the military, and their participation in local governments composed some of the precautions as well. Besides all of these precautions, industry machines imported from industrialized European countries affected the craftsmen class, which was based on a labor force, negatively. Throughout the civil war that we previously mentioned, Syrian merchants located in European cities such as London, Manchester, Liverpool, and Marseilles, who turned the European merchants' withdrawals from the region into an opportunity and provided goods to the Syrian market. Syrian tradesmen, who provided goods to the region via their relatives in Syria, were empowered considerably in this period.¹⁹⁰

In the First Constitutional Period, an elected parliament was formed as well as with the appointed one. In the First Parliament (*Meclis-i Mebusan*), 9 people from Syria's prominent families represented Syria. Syrian deputies did not form a special bloc; even an Arab bloc was

¹⁸⁷ Tibawi, *Syria*, p. 132-133.

¹⁸⁸ Yapp, *Modern Middle East*, p. 134. Claim of increase in Center's effect on Syria should be re-evaluated through Dick Douwe's work. Please see: Douwes, Dick. *Ottomans in Syria: A History of Justice and Oppression*. Londra: I.B. Tauris Press, 2000. In this work, Douwes evaluates the actors in the Syria province and their relations with the Center of the Ottoman Empire, considering various parameters.

¹⁸⁹ Makdisi evaluates the *Tanzimat* reforms and the affects to the provinces, through Lebanon. Please see: Makdisi, Ussama, "Rethinking Ottoman Imperialism: Moderniy, Violence and the Cultural Logic of Ottoman Reform," *In The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Ed. Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber (Würzburg: Ergon in Kommission, 2002), pp. 29–48. In this work, Makdisi describes the Ottoman reforms after the *Tanzimat* as 'modern imperialism.' He asserts significant ideas on intellectual background of the Ottoman bureaucrats' centralization practices for the rural provinces.

¹⁹⁰ Tibawi, *Syria*, pp. 136-139.

not even formed in the First Parliament.¹⁹¹ Mithat Pasha, who served in Syria and held the presidency of the survey mission about the administrative and economic problems in Aleppo and Damascus, was appointed as governor of Syria in 1878.¹⁹²

Mithat Pasha described Syria as such:

“*Vilayet Law*, which was brought into force in 13.6.1863-4.6.1864, was desired to be enforced in Syria for a period, and in this sense, some adjustments were made. Necessary administrative settlement and regulations were done by parcelling Syria district as ‘sanjak,’ ‘township’ and ‘demos out. By doing so, financial situation of Syria got a little bit better, some regulations were made according to necessities and improvements were recorded. New implementations enabled some positive and promising developments; yet, as happened in some other regions, administration took some steps sometimes to retrench and sometimes to establish useful rules and made the system put out of commission. Deficient implementations of the administration caused the creation of a tradition, where new practices put into force without considering the qualifications of the country or implementation tools. At that point, a bizarre and odd appearance of ruling occurred in Syria. As known, before the *Vilayet Law*, the local businesses were pretty few compared to now, and according to the local government system at that period, governor and accompanying bureaucrats were responsible and authorized to solve local problems. However, although the local workload increased, bureaucrats in governorship were decreased. Thus, they could not handle local problems. On top of it, a new implementation put into force, where they had to notify every decision that they made to center. So, they became unauthorized and had to report to center. Because all of these, the bad situation occurred in Syria that the entire world talks about.”¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 150.

¹⁹² Gökân Çetinsaya and Tufan Buzpınar, “Mithat Paşa: 1822-1884,” (DİA, 2005).

¹⁹³ Fethi Gedikli, “Mithat Paşa’nın Suriye Layihası,” *Divan İlmi Araştırmalar*, 4: 7 (1999): 169-189. Turkish Version of Text; “[18.6.1863-4.6.1864] tarihinde vaz’ ve tesis olunan Vilâyât Nizâmâtının buraca dahi bir aralık icrasına teşebbüs olunarak o kuvvetle hâlin tedennisine bir fâsıla verilmiş ve vilayetin sancak ve kazâ ve nevâhiye taksimiyle teşkilatı ve ona müteferri‘ nizamâtı icra olunmuş ve umûr-ı maliyesi dahi bir dereceye kadar tashih edilmiş olduğundan refte refte bazı icraat ve fiiliyatı icabât ve ihtiyacât-ı mevki’iye tatbikan tashih ve tadil olunmak üzere bu usulün devamı epeyce ümid-bahş olmuşken sair vilayetlerde olduğu gibi buradaki kurulmuş olan çarh-ı idare dahi gâh masrafca tasarrufât mülâhazasıyla ve gâh ondan daha nâfi‘ kaide koymak niyetiyle bozularak yoldan çıkmış ve idarenin bu vechile kusur ve noksanları görüldükçe ne memleketin istidâd ve kâbiliyeti ne de icraya vasıta olacak vesâil ve âlâtın kifâyeti mülâhaza edilmeyerek yeniden birçok usuller ve nizamlar yapılmış olduğundan idare-i memleket acîb ve garîb bir suret kesbetmiştir. Malûm-ı fehîmâneleri buyrulduğu vechile vilâyet nizamâtından evvelki usul-i eyalet iktizasınca bir eyaletin işleri şimdikininki onda biri derecesinde değil iken valinin hiç olmaz ise kethûda ve divan katibi gibi maiyetleri olduğu ve usul-i vilayetin tesisinde ihtirâ‘ edilen birçok mesâlihîni merci’i olmak üzere mütenevvi‘ memurlar tertib edildiği hâlde bunların

After the abolishment of the parliament by Abdulhamid II, disturbances against Ottoman Government between Christian and Muslim subjects in Syria began to increase. In fact, in the following years of 1860, local actors emerged who conformed to the New Order (*Niazm-ı Cedid*). However, these groups demanded a more decentralized government, and Arabic to be accepted as the official language. Christian and Muslim Arabs began to be romantically interested in the bright Arab history, and in this sense, started to focus on Arabic literature. In the following years of 1860, even if it was not clear enough, there was an emerging idea of common identity between Christian and Muslim Arab intellectuals. While Arabic was one of the common fundamental principles, for the next step, the idea of common land started to occur. Muslim intellectuals, even if they were limited with a very narrow intellectual environment, began to shift from the idea of Islamic Empire to a regional motherland. Christians were more prone to these kinds of ideas than Muslims.¹⁹⁴ On the ground that the *Tanzimat* reforms established, in the fields such as commerce, social and cultural relations were developed between Muslims and Christians, and common literature clubs were founded.¹⁹⁵

The possibility of Syria's independence, even if Ottoman statesmen took it into consideration, was thought to have a low chance. Some documents, preserved by the UK Consulate in Beirut, record that: some intellectuals started to describe Syria as the homeland

cümlesi tağyir ve tenkih olunarak halbuki o vesâitin gördüğü işler tamamiyle ifa edildikten başka birçok ihtirâ'ât dahi zammedilmesiyle mesâlih-i câriye-i vilayet memurîn-i mevcudenin kudret ve tahammüllerini kat kat geçmiş ve bu ahvâle munzam olarak cüz'i ve külli her bir husus için merkez-i devlete müracaat etmek usulü vaz' ve ittihaz olunarak bu dahi memurîn-i vilayetin bütün bütün iktidarlarını selb ile her şeyi bittabi merkeze atfetmek mecburiyetini intâc eylemiş olduğundan işte bu vilayetçe işitilen ve dünyanın hedef-i ta'n ve teşnî'i olan su-i idarenin hakikaten menşei bu ahvâldir."

¹⁹⁴ About the emergence of Arab nationalist tendencies in Syria and the Arab world, please see: Youssef M. Choueiri. *Arab Nationalism: A History*. Massachusetts: Blakwell Press, 2000., Eliezer Tauber. *The Formation of Modern Syria and Iraq*. London: Frank Cass Press, 1995., Stephen Sheehi. *Foundation of Modern Arab Identity*. Florida: Florida University Press, 2005.

¹⁹⁵ For an attentive work on economic transformation in Syria during the process starting from *Tanzimat*, and a discussion of Christian middle classes and intellectuals in the context of this transformation, please see: Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World*, pp. 189-200.

of Arabs and claimed that Syrians are the grandchildren of big conquerors and intellectuals. It was expressed that, a decentralized administration and the acceptance of Arabic as the official language were two of the main demands, and the unjust and authoritarian administration of Ottoman government was criticized. In some of the documents, there were complaints about Turks seizing the Caliphate, the abolishment of Sharia, the misruling of the religious institutions, exercising power over Arabic, and keeping the Arabic people out of government. However, these demands, underlined in documents, were unrequited in real life.¹⁹⁶ Various secret groups, organized on the demand of autonomous governments in Arab regions¹⁹⁷ were acknowledged but not seriously taken into consideration by the Ottoman government. Tibawi indicates that only a few people in a very narrow framework expressed the same mentioned demands in documents, but could not find any support from the public. Nevertheless, these demands influenced social leaders for the coming periods. These demands began to be called out by Arab subjects in Ottoman lands through the First World War.¹⁹⁸ Dawn supports Tibawi by stating that nationalists did not have influence on the developments, before the First World War.¹⁹⁹ Throughout the Abdulhamid II period, relations between the central rule of the Ottoman Empire and the rural areas acquired a new dimension. Reforms, led by the 1869 Law of Educational Reform, were almost totally implemented in Syria. Modern state schools were opened in various grades in all cities of Syria, and students, who finished primary and secondary education in Syria, were sent to Istanbul for a college degree. Particularly, state, military, and medicine colleges began to enroll students from all around the Arab world,

¹⁹⁶ Tibawi, *Syria*, pp. 163-169. A war crimes tribunal was established in Damascus during the First World War, and members of Arab associations which were claimed to be separatist, were tried based upon the intercommunication, confessions, and documents found in the French consulates in Damascus and Beirut. Informations in these documents are in parallel to the ideas I stated above. For detailed information, please see: Kayra, Cahit. Ed. *Aliye Savaş Mahkemesi Notları: Arap İhtilali ve Şam Mahkemesi*. İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınları, 2008.

¹⁹⁷ For these organisations. please see: Gelvin, James L. *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at Close of Empire*. California: California University Press, 1998.

¹⁹⁸ Tibawi, *Syria*, pp. 163-169.

¹⁹⁹ Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*, p. 155.

especially from Syria. Students, educated in Turkish and French, remained unsuccessful in Arabic.²⁰⁰

Abdulhamid II put a great effort into keeping Syria as an Ottoman land within the frame of an Islamic Unity policy that he followed as *Khalifa/Sultan*.²⁰¹ The tradition of appointing qualified bureaucrats to Syria continued under Abdulhamid's ruling, and Hamdi Pasha was appointed as governor to Syria instead of grand vizier Mithat Pasha. Abdulhamid rewarded prominent religious and social actors in society, such as Sheikh Abu'l Huda or Ahmed İzzet Pasha, so that they supported Abdulhamid's policies. Important posts such as the Minister of Foreign Affairs were given to Syrian Christians.²⁰²

The rule of Abdulhamid came to an end with the revolution in 1908, and switched to a constitutional period again. Due to the arrival of the news of the re-declaration of the Second Constitutional Period to Damascus, Islamists, Arab nationalists and Westernists cheered in the streets. On the official declaration date of the constitution, August 13, the leading intellectuals and opinion leaders of Damascus met in the house of Sheikh Salem Kuzbarı and celebrated. In the political atmosphere of the first days of the revolution, Islamists and Arab nationalists gave themselves out. The Committee of Union and Progress' order to the Syrian governors about the dismissal of governors who were supporters of Abdulhamid made Arab nationalists and Islamists pleased.²⁰³ Pressure on the government officials of Abdulhamid II by the CUP pushed them to oppose to new rule with the traditional ulama. The *Ulama*, by criticising the

²⁰⁰ For the situations of Arab students in Istanbul and claims about causing to forget Arabic, please see: Eliezer Tauber, *The Emergence of the Arab Movements* (London: Frank Cass Press, 1993), pp. 45, 57-58., Yasir Suleiman, *The Arabic Language and National Identity: A Study in Ideology* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2003), pp. 85-87.

²⁰¹ Georgen, *Sultan Abdulhamid*, p. 254.

²⁰² Kurd Ali argues that, Ebul Huda was not intellectual enough and not as influential in Syria as he claimed. But he speaks highly of Ahmed Izzet Pasha and claims that he is an Arab nationalist. For details see: Kurd Ali, *Muzekkirat*, Vol.1, pp. 242-251.

²⁰³ David Commins, "Religious Reformers and Arabist in Damascus, 1885-1914," *International Journal of Middle East*, 18: 4. (1986), pp. 405-425.

CUP's modern practices which had no place in tradition, wanted to gain the support of the people against this new rule.²⁰⁴ Islamist intellectual Rashid Rida, who came to Damascus in those days, made the opposition stronger against the CUP. However, the opposition could not find the desired support from people; criticisms and discussions could not go far from being elitist. In the first day of the First Parliament, December 17, 1908, the Union of Arab Reform²⁰⁵ opened a public coffee house.²⁰⁶ With a high participation of people, the opening ceremony turned into a pro-CUP demonstration, and people walked in the streets singing freedom songs. The Commander of the Ottoman Military made a vote of thanks. The celebrations continued all day, and members of the Union talked about the benefits of the public coffee houses. Muhammed Kurd Ali was a member of this Union, thus he found the opportunity to reach the members of *Al-Muqtabas*. The first issue of *Al-Muqtabas* was published on the first day of the First Parliament. *Al-Muqtabas* covered the Union's activities.

On the other hand, the opposition against the Committee of Union and Progress' composed of the old bureaucrats, the traditional *ulama*, and the Islamic organizations organized demonstrations and published notices. In contrast, when the 31 March incident happened, Syrian intellectuals welcomed Abdulhamid II's dethronement positively. In the issue of *Al-Muqtabas* on April 28, Suleyman al-Kasimî, wrote a thank-you note to the *Hareket* Army who took the constitution, which prevented the people from despotism, under protection. The political arena occurred in the period following Abdulhamid II's dethronement enabled Islamists and Arabist camps to express their opinions and *Al-Muqtabas* became one of the platforms for that. In the two years following the proclamation of the constitution, the Islamists gained some important advantages. James L. Gelvin states that, in

²⁰⁴ Khoury, *Urban Notables*, pp. 56-57.

²⁰⁵ For detailed information about the Union please see: Tauber, *The Emergence*, pp. 43-51.

²⁰⁶ Muhammed Kurd Ali is a member of this union, and became prominent after 1908. Please see. Iyad Halid el-Tabba', *Muhammed Kurd Ali: al-Muarrikhu 'l-Bahhasatu wa 'l-Sahafiyyi 'l-Adib* (Şam: Dar el-Kalem Press, 2008), p.28.

the following years of 1908, intellectual Arab youth started to discuss subjects such as the use of Turkish in Arab districts, bureaucratic posts given to Syrian people, and on the Arab/Ottoman identity.²⁰⁷

Three months following the proclamation of the constitution, public celebrations took place, and opinions underlining the harmony between Islam and constitution were stated. In the period from October 1908 to April 1909, the Islamist-Arabist camp confronted the opposition of the traditional *ulama* and bureaucrats; however, with the 31 March Incident, this confrontation disappeared. Beginning from the 1909 summer, the Islamist-Arabist camp started to support the CUP. By the end of 1909, the centralization policies of the CUP started to disturb the Islamist-Arabist camp. A conflict started between the Islamist-Arabist camp in Syria and the CUP, which wanted to implement centralist reforms in Syria.²⁰⁸ Choueri, who shares the same opinion with Commins, states that, from the end of 1909, Arab reformists began to become distant from the CUP, and after 1911, because of their pro-decentralization opinion, they started to take a joint action with the *Entente Liberale (Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası)*.²⁰⁹

In the 1912 elections, the Islamist-Arab nationalist camp became a part of the opposition against the Committee of Union and Progress and supported *Entente Liberale*. In the meantime, the traditional *ulama* supported the CUP against the Islamist-Arabist bloc. Confrontations between the CUP and the nationalist-Islamist modern intellectuals enabled the CUP to get closer with the traditional *ulama* and society. The CUP decided to work with traditional elites who were stronger, compared to the nationalist-Islamist camp. The CUP won the 1912 elections in many provinces of the Empire, including Syria. *Entente Liberale*, which could not be as successful as desired, moved their effort from Damascus and Istanbul to Cairo

²⁰⁷ Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties*, p. 52.

²⁰⁸ Commins, "Religious Reformers," pp. 405-425.

²⁰⁹ Choueiri, *Arab Nationalism*, p. 89.

and other cities in Egypt. Prominents in the nationalist-Islamist camp stayed and worked in Damascus, but paid attention not to confront with the CUP.²¹⁰ In the meantime, it was recorded that, Rashid Rida, a student of the Islamist thinker Muhammed Abdu, kept in touch with all of the opposing groups in Syria.²¹¹ The Ottoman Party for Administrative Decentralization (*Ademi Merkeziyetçi Osmanlı idaresi Partisi*) formed in Cairo in 1913 was only supported by Syrians and opened a branch only in Damascus. The Ottoman Party for Administrative Decentralization, with a majority of Muslims, tried to project a secular image. They wanted a decentralized government to be established in the Arabic-speaking provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Even if this party could not impress the society, they had an influence on intellectuals. The CUP attempted to remove the dissatisfaction in Syria, and declared that they were going to make reforms, and called the social and political elites to opine about reforms.²¹² However, these attempts failed, and ideological dissatisfaction amongst political and social elites in Syria became more apparent. From liberals to Islamists, everyone started to express about the rights of Arabs, and opposition movements began to gain power on the way to World War I.²¹³

I.4. Conclusion

The Ottoman Empire, after Greece gained its independence with the Greek uprising in 1821, began to confront a crisis, with the arrival of the armies of the Governor of Egypt, Mehmed Ali Pasha, who was asked for help in the Greek uprising, to Konya, which would last until World War I. Although, the Ottoman Empire allied with the European states against Russia and even the Ottoman statesmen and intellectuals thought about getting involved in the

²¹⁰ Commins, "Religious Reformers," pp. 405-425.

²¹¹ Yapp, *Middle East*, p. 206.

²¹² Tauber, *The Emergence*, pp.121-135.

²¹³ For the discussions on Arab nationalist movements, the opposition against the Ottomans in Syria on the way to World War I, please see: Dawn, C. Ernest. *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism*. Illinois: Illinois University Press, 1973., Khalidi, Rashid, Lisan Anderson, Muhammed Muslih and Reeva S. Simon. *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

Eurocentric international system, they realized that the process starting with the Crimean War was short term, when the Ottoman Empire had to withdraw from Serbia in 1867. Following the Bosnian Revolt, the Ottoman Empire was isolated from the Eurocentric international system. And, the attempts to turn this revolt into an opportunity resulted in the breaking out of the famous '93 War. The arrival of the Russian army to *Yeşilköy* resulted in a conference held in Berlin with the participation of the European countries, and Serbia and Montenegro gained their independence officially, and Bulgaria became an autonomous principedom. The process, starting with the Conference of Berlin, became disastrous for the Ottoman Empire, which was in trouble from the beginning of the century. The United Kingdom invaded Cyprus (1878), Russia took over Kars, Ardahan and Batum, Austria invaded Bosnia and Herzegovina (1878), France invaded Tunisia (1881), Italy invaded Libya (1911) and a revolt broke out in Albania. The Ottoman Empire confronted the Armenian revolts, which started in the 1890s, and had to deal with the Cretan depression (*Girit Bunalımı*) and the Macedonian issue in 1896. In this process towards the beginning of World War I, the Empire exhausted due to the Balkan Wars, managed to save Edirne with one last move.²¹⁴

The Empire, which experienced a deep political and diplomatic crisis, evolved from a territorial empire to a modern, central bureaucratic state. It abolished the Janissary corps, which was its central army for centuries, formed a regular army educated in the western style, created a central bureaucracy dependent on a paid bureaucratic group by transforming the loose federal political system, and opened modern and western primary and secondary schools in order to provide qualified workers for the bureaucracy. The central Ottoman organization was restructured by taking the French model with the '*Prefecture de la ville*' system. In local governments, again by taking the French model called '*Prefecture del la ville*,' municipal rule

²¹⁴ For a brief evaluation on the land losses of the Ottoman Empire on the way to the First World War, please see: Aksakal, Mustafa. *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914: The Ottoman Empire and the First World War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

was started to be applied and the financial system of the Empire was totally changed. The 'Press' occurred as a tool for expression for the new social classes, which emerged due to these transformations, and became one of the indispensable elements of Ottoman society. New intellectual elites emerged, who were trying to form the understanding of a central state constructed on modern institutions, theoretical legitimacy, and ideology in accordance with the Islamic political thought and Ottoman state traditions. This new intellectual elite, from the Young Ottomans to the Second Constitutional Period Islamists, handled the subjects such as restructuring the state institutions. However, Islamists, writing in Arabic, such as Jamaladdin al-Afgani, Muhammed Abdu, and Rashid Rida, even if they did not act with the same motives shifted to different fields.

Syria, as a province of the Ottoman Empire, was inevitably influenced by the developments in the center and there were traditional, social, and political developments, which changed the society as well. Although the Ottoman Empire sent its most qualified Pashas to Syria in order to get the support of the people for the implementation of the reforms, they could not prevent the Durzi – Maruni conflict and the emergence of the pessimistic view that Mithat Pasha, the governor of Syria, put. The identification of Turkish as the official state language in the Ottoman Constitution (*Kanun-u Esasi*) was criticised by the intellectuals who graduated from the modern Syrian education institutions, and a group of intellectuals who were positioned between the Islamist reformists and the Arab nationalists began to be crystallized. Even though the declaration of the Second Constitution was celebrated, the gap between the CUP and the new political and social elites in Syria started to be widened day-by-day. Even if the new social and political elites were not effective until World War I, they played an important role in designing the future of Syria in after the war.

II. ISLAMISM as a REFORMIST IDEOLOGY

In the first part of this chapter, I will mention the emergence of ‘Islamism’, which started to discuss Islam on the political stage through a new language and modern communication tools in 19th century, when the base that the Empire legitimized itself on started to become more and more fragile. I will try to touch upon the discussions of the creation of Islamism and assess the importance of the Young Ottomans, Jamaladdin al-Afgani, and Arab Islamism and the discussions of Islamist writers in Istanbul in the aftermath of 1908 for Islamism. I will focus on the consequences of the Ottoman Empire’s restructuring, its relation with its citizens with the *Rescript of Gülhane (Tanzimat Fermanı)* and the *Edict of Reform (Islahat Fermanı)*, the effects of these consequences on Islamist thinkers, discussions of Arab Islamism, and the similarities as well as its differences to the discussions among the Ottoman central rule.

In the second part of this chapter, by taking into account the birth of the media and press, as a continuation of the new political and cultural structure, which emerged as a result of the transformation the Empire, went through, I will examine the inclusion of citizens in politics and press as a tool for public opinion. I will try to assess the new intellectual class, which gained power through the press when the ulama’s power started to decline, and where they stood on the transformation process. By analyzing how Islamist thinkers used the press, I will question the meaning the Ottoman government assigned to this concept.

In the third part of this chapter, I will assess the important concepts which Islamists brought to the agenda such as reform, Western Civilization, Caliphate, Islamic Union and Politics, from the perspectives of the Young Ottomans, Jamaladdin al-Afgani, and Arab Islamism, and post-1908 Ottoman Islamism. I will elaborate on the discussions of all of the concepts that emerged in the history of Islam under ‘religious reform,’ how it was necessary

to establish relations with the Western Civilization, referred to as the ‘Infidels World (*Kuffar Diyari*)’ and the discussions about how to protect Islam as a religion within this framework. I will analyze the new meaning the Ottoman Caliphate attained, how this happened and was interpreted by the Islamists, and how Abdulhamid evaluated the caliphate claims. I will question the importance of modernization of both the religious and bureaucratic education for the Islamists.

II.1. Birth of Islamism and Islamist Thinkers

As a religion believed by Muslims as having been revealed to Muhammad, called for justice since the day it emerged, this new historical experience defined as ‘Islamic Civilization’ distinguished itself from previous and following civilizations with Islamic Jurisprudence (*fikh*) and its methodology. While the distinguishing feature was ‘philosophy’ in Greek civilization and ‘technology’ in the modern Western civilization, it was ‘Islamic Jurisprudence (*fikh*)’ and ‘*usul-u fikh*’ for the Islamic civilization.²¹⁵ Besides ‘Islamic jurisprudence (*fikh*)’, ‘*nahiv*’ and ‘*sarf*’ (conceptualization of the Arabic language), ‘*kelam*’ (conceptualization of Islamic theology), ‘*hikmet*’ (Islamization of philosophy) started to emerge as a new science and drew a framework for Muslims in which they defined themselves. This point of view, which found its base through these sciences, became socialized in Islamic philosophy/cults and led to the birth of Ottoman popular wisdom.

During this process, the political rule regarded the state law based on Islamic jurisprudence (*fikh*) as the determining factor. As the Ottoman Empire regarded itself as a part of the Islamic civilization and aimed to establish a political/religious system by depending on its historical experience, the Ottoman rule wanted the leading intellectual of the

²¹⁵ For a conceptualisation of prominent elements of the Islamic civilization’s historical experience, please see: Mohamed Abed al-Jabri. *Takwinu’l-Aqli’l-Arabi*. Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 2011.

time, Sharaf al-din Dawūd al-Qayṣarī, to build a madrasah in *İznik* (1336).²¹⁶ In time, new madrasahs were developed in this tradition and got enriched with scholars who came from all over the Islamic world. These *madrasahs* continued to be places where Islamic jurisprudence was discussed and recreated within the framework of time and space. Scientist who were educated here became law makers in the Ottoman central and rural governance with the title ‘*kadi*.’²¹⁷ While the Empire located itself on the *kadis’ decisions*, the Sufi paths acted within the systematic borders drawn by madrasahs and the *kadis*. Ebu-l Hac, states that Ottoman Islam was an ideology and the Ottoman *ulama* gained all of their privileges through the religion of Islam. He also underlines that since Islam is the core of Ottoman ideology, the *Ulama’s* societal and political privileges and power during the Empire’s history should be systematically analyzed.²¹⁸

Therefore, these movements called “Islamism” started to claim new ideas, besides the abovementioned institutions and practices, aiming at different objectives through its original language and communication tools. Leading Islamist thinkers chose to address the people through a Western and new communication tool, the press, instead of becoming a hodja for *madrasahs* or a ‘*kadi*’ for the Empire. They tried to find solutions to the difficult positions Ottomans found themselves in by using Western concepts, instead of the types of information produced by the traditional *ulama* on Islamic jurisprudence. Kemal Karpat defines this process as the breaking of religious, political and administrative monopoly.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ İhsan Fazlıoğlu, “Türk Felsefe-Bilim Tarihi’nin Seyir Defteri,” *Divan İlmi Araştırmalar Dergisi* 10: 18. (2005):1-57.

²¹⁷ For a detailed discussion on Muslim Judges in the Ottoman Empire, please see: Ekinci, Ekrem Bugra. “Osmanlı Devleti’nde Mahkemeler ve Kadılık Müessesesi Literatürü.” *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 13: 1 (2005): 417-439 Ayrıca Osmanlı adalet düzeni için Please see: İnalçık, Halil, Bülent Arı, ve Selim Aslantaş, yay. Haz. *Adalet Kitabı*. Ankara: Kadim Yayınları, 2012.

²¹⁸ El-Haj, Rıfa’at Abou. *Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005.

²¹⁹ Kemal Karpat, *Politicization of Islam*, p. 117.

II.1.1. Young Ottomans

We mentioned before that the Ottoman Empire went through a serious transformation of traditional economic, social, political and cultural order due to the developments in the 18th and 19th century; and in the post-era of this transformation, a different intellectual class emerged, besides the traditional social actors, to find different solutions. I tried to put a light on the historical background of the context this intellectual class emerged into, draw attention to different philosophical movements of the time, and stated Islamism was one of these movements. Yet, it needs to be identified that Islamists did not aim to discover new areas as members of the Islamic civilization, and referred to old texts instead; therefore, the basic arguments, which would enable Islamism to be defined as a new movement, are open to discussion. In addition to this, there have been long discussion regarding when and where Islamism was born. Among the Western researchers, it is a common belief that Islamism was established by Jamaladdin al-Afgani.²²⁰ However, Mümtazer Türköne, who wrote his PhD dissertation on the subject, states that claiming Islamism started with Jamaladdin al-Afgani is a major mistake and it was actually the Young Ottomans who gave birth to the movement.²²¹ Another expert on the topic, İsmail Kara, on the other hand, thinks that Mümtazer Türköne's statement should not be considered as entirely wrong, but the Young Ottomans were not the only fathers of Islamism, but they were pioneers of also nationalists, Turkists, promoters of Westernization, even globalization and secularism. Yet he argues that the emphasis on the time period, being the Second Constitutional Period, is right and he accepts that the Islamists inherited significant strategy and content from the Young Ottomans and the Young Turks.²²² However, taking Islamism all the way back to the Young Ottomans is not a very common idea

²²⁰ About this subject, for one of the most significant work in international literature, please see: Keddie, Nikki. K. *An Islamic response to imperialism: political and religious writings of Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn al-Afghānī*. California: California University Press, 1983.

²²¹ Mümtazer Türköne, *Siyasi İdeoloji Olarak İslamcılığın Doğuşu* (İstanbul: Etkileşim Yayınları, 2011), pp. 38-42.

²²² İsmail Kara, *İslamcıların Siyasi Görüşleri* (İstanbul: Dergan Yayınları, 2001), pp. 22-25

among Western researchers such as Nikki K. Reddie²²³ or among the Turk researchers such as Tarık Zafer Tunaya.²²⁴ Yet, in the book titled “*Politicization of Islam*” by Kemal Karpat, in the chapter “*Information, Press and Politicization of Islam*,” discussions on the political and social transformations of the 1860s and the Young Ottomans on a larger scale, and on the press strategies of Ali Suavi in *Basiret* and his ideas on a smaller scale, shows us that Karpat also thinks that Islamism started with the Young Ottomans.²²⁶ Also, Şerif Mardin claims that the Young Ottomans’ ideas contain primarily Islamist thoughts.²²⁷ I personally agree with İsmail Kara the most and think that Mümtazer Türköne’s finding is to the point. However, in my opinion, basic separations occurred in Abdulhamid II and Islamism developed as an ideology in the aftermath of the Second Constitutional Period.

When describing the Young Ottomans, Şerif Mardin says that, “they worked occasionally at the translation office of the Sublime Porte and had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the way diplomatic relations were regulated, as well as to get to know the European political system.”²²⁸ In fact these people that Şerif Mardin refers to in this passage are six people who gathered behind the Bosphorus hills in 1865 and decided to mobilize for the future of ‘the Ottoman Empire, which was on the verge of a disaster.’ Yet, among these six people only Namık Kemal’s (1880-1848) name would go down in history within the context of Young Ottomans. İbrahim Şinasi (1826-1871), Ziya Pasha (1825-1880), and Ali Suavi (1839-1878), who were later on addressed as the Young Ottomans by

²²³ Abu-Rabi, Ibrahim M. *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World*. New York: New York Devlet University Press, 1996., Enayet, Hamid. *Modern İslamic Political Thought*. New York: Tauris Press, 2005.

²²⁴ Please see: Tunaya, Tarık Zafer. *İslamcılık Akımı*. İstanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2007.

²²⁵ Yet in one of the latest works on this topic, Çağlayan, Selin. *Müslüman Kardeşler'den Yeni Osmanlılar'a İslamcılık*. İstanbul: İmge Yayınları, 2011., discusses the new Ottomans in her work. Yet the influence of Mümtazer Türköne is visible in these discussions.

²²⁶ Karpat, *The Politicization*, pp. 117-136.

²²⁷ Şerif Mardin, *Yeni Osmanlı Düşüncesinin Doğuşu*, Trans. Mümtazer Türköne, Fahri İnan, İrfan Erdoğan (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), p. 73.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

historians, would join this group afterwards, but they would make their names heard through the newspapers they published in London and Paris with Mustafa Fazıl Pasha's support. However, it is possible to extend Şerif Mardin's evaluation of the six people who had the meeting to the other names as well.²²⁹ All members of the group (except Namık Kemal who was born in *Tekirdağ*²³⁰) were Istanbul-born. After they learned Arabic and Persian when they were young, they worked as clerks at state level positions (except for Ali Suavi).²³¹

A middle ground for İbrahim Şinasi,²³² Namık Kemal and Ali Suavi was their occupation: journalism. İbrahim Şinasi established *Tasvir-i Efkar*, had to leave it to Namık Kemal, and escaped to Paris while Ali Suavi was the lead editor and writer in the *Muhbir* newspaper, despite his traditional education on religion and served as a preacher in mosques. Especially Namık Kemal mentioned the 'constitution and parliamentary system' frequently in his writings. Ali Suavi criticized the rulers with harsh language. Ziya Pasha²³³ also wrote in *Muhbir* in an anti-government approach.

Statesmen of the time wanted to send the Young Ottomans away from Istanbul and assigned them to positions in rural areas. So, the Prince of Egypt, Mustafa Fazıl Pasha, who lived in Paris yet still followed the events at the Ottoman central rule closely, invited the group to Paris and pledged to cover their expenses for their newspaper through which they could express their thoughts openly. Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha met Suavi on their way

²²⁹ For the interpretation of the Young Ottomans from a nationalist perspective, please see: Taştan, Yaşar Kemal. "Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Sembolik Kaynakları: Yeni Osmanlıların Siyasal Söylemleri, 1860-1867." Ph.D.Diss., U of Gazi, 2010., For an extensive research about Şinasi, which can be considered as first hand, please see: Tevfik, Ebuzziya. *Yeni Osmanlılar*. İstanbul: Pegasus Press, 2006.

²³⁰ For Namık Kemal's situation in religious thought after Tanzimat, please see: Özer, Kamil. "Tanzimat Sonrası İslam Düşüncesi ve Namık Kemal." Ph. D. Diss., U of Dokuz Eylül, 2004.

²³¹ For an extensive research about Ali Suavi, please see: Çelik, Hüseyin. *Sali Suavi ve Dönemi*. İstanbul: İmge Yayınları, 1994.

²³² For an extensive research about Şinasi, which can be considered as first hand, please see: Ebuzziya, Ziyad. *Şinasi*. Ed. Hüseyin Çelik. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999.

²³³ For Ziya Pasha's interpretation of the Young Ottomans within the context of conservative theory, please see: Meşhur, Ferhat. "The Orgins of Conservatism in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire: Social and Political Thought of Ziya Paşa." Ma. Diss., U of Bilgi, 2010.

and reached Paris on 31 May 1867. İbrahim Şinasi was there too with Mustafa Fazıl Pasha to welcome them.²³⁴ The Young Ottomans, whose opinions and solutions are elaborated, published the first issue of *Muhbir* on 31 August 1867.²³⁵ Although the *Muhbir* newspaper involved discussions about promoting ‘reforms to be conducted in an Ottoman and Islamic way,’ Mustafa Fazıl Pasha wanted the newspaper to be shut down and then *Hürriyet* started to be published instead.²³⁶ However, the personal problems among the Young Ottomans and their conflict of ideas led to their separation.²³⁷ It is seen that the Young Ottomans, who returned back to their homeland in the following years after these events, did not continue their work in the press.²³⁸ Still, the Young Ottomans, who followed Western discussions by using their French knowledge attained state level positions, developed discussions regarding the reform process, and created significant accumulation of ideas and information for upcoming generations. They became important figures cited by the Islamist and Nationalist intellectuals.

As mentioned earlier in the previous chapter, when the Ottoman Empire restructured its relations with its population in the *Rescript of Gülhane* and the *Edict of Reform* and when it brought egalitarian policies to contain separatist orientations, this disturbed the Ottoman Empire’s Muslim population. The Young Ottomans also criticized the Empire’s egalitarian policies. However, their rejection of egalitarianism contradicted their general approach. Therefore, we could say that the Young Ottomans were giving voice to the Ottoman Muslim population. According to the Young Ottomans, equality could not be in question since the

²³⁴ Mardin, *Yeni Osmanlı Düşüncesi*, pp.54-56.

²³⁵ Taştan, *Yeni Osmanlıların Siyasal Söylemleri*, pp. 320-328.

²³⁶ Mardin, *Yeni Osmanlı Düşüncesi*, pp. 56-58.

²³⁷ Taştan, *Yeni Osmanlıların Siyasal Söylemleri*, pp. 320-328.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 328-336.

situation was not equal at all, and with the new regulations, non-Muslims gained more rights than Muslims.²³⁹

Although the Young Ottomans supported the *Rescript of Gülhane*, they regarded it as the beginning of separation from Islamic Law (*Şer-i Hukuk*) and criticized it. Because, according to them, with the *Rescript of Gülhane*, there appeared new regulations such as making laws besides sharia law. It was argued that Ottoman rulers were slowly abandoning sharia law and were criticized for trying to imitate the Western rules; whereas according to them, Islamic jurisprudence was sufficient for the Ottoman Empire.²⁴⁰ As mentioned earlier, the Young Ottomans, as almost all of them being journalists, were under the strong influence of the Western ideas, yet they discussed the period's important topics by using traditional concepts. For example, 'democracy,' which was born in the West as a concept, was accepted by almost all of the Young Ottomans and was advocated by using a traditional Ottoman notion: '*meşveret*.'²⁴¹ Instead of 'parliaments' (which gives its meaning to 'democracy') '*şura*,²⁴² and instead of public opinion, '*ehl-i hal vel akd*' was used.²⁴³ In other words, the Young Ottomans used traditional concepts to cover the modern concepts, which were regarded as inevitable to adopt. Of course it was discussed what was the source of sovereignty while discussing democracy. While some writers pointed to the people, others supported the argument that 'sovereignty belongs to the God.'

While most of the political discussions of the time revolved around how the state was supposed to be ruled, what would be the source of constitutionalism, and how would the legal system be planned, the Young Ottomans brought up the 'submission (*biat*)' and 'obedience (*itaat*)' concepts. So it was questioned who to take as the 'authority.' Namık Kemal answered

²³⁹ Türköne, *İslamcılığın Doğuşu*, p.74.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 80.

²⁴¹ Taştan, *Yeni Osmanlıların Siyasal Söylemleri*, pp. 366, 384.

²⁴² Ibid., pp. 382-387.

²⁴³ Türköne, *İslamcılığın Doğuşu*, p.130.

these questions as: the people. So, in the tradition meaning public opinion (*ehl-i hal ve akd*²⁴⁴) is the determinant of authority, whereas among the Young Ottomans' idea it is the 'people' who are the determinant. We have also stated that the Young Ottomans opposed the increasing impact of secular law in the Ottoman Empire and supported Islamic law. Because the Young Ottomans believed that Islamic jurisprudence would address all of the needs of the period. Namık Kemal, Ziya Pasha, and Ali Suavi criticized the new secular rulings in the aftermath of 1867 established by the statements of the bureaucrats of the period; yet it was seen in the background of their writings that Islamic law would not be sufficiently covering the needs of the time.²⁴⁵ Kemal Karpat argues that between the years 1875 and 1880 Islamism went under a serious transformation regarding content and orientation and it in fact is a modern ideology. He grounds these arguments on Ali Suavi, who came back from a long journey in the West to İstanbul, and his opinions he voiced in *Basiret*, a newspaper he published after 1876. However, Ali Suavi's opinions, which Karpat cites, such as "that Islamism, Westernism and nationalism complement each other, the caliphate has no place in Islam and was being used by the Sultan and the British," as well as Suavi's definition of himself as, "he has democratic populist and progressive thoughts and uses press to spread these thoughts"²⁴⁶ does not show parallelism with the Arab branch of Islamism and its post-1908 period. Therefore, Muhammed Abdu and Rashıd Rıda's thoughts, which they evolved within the *Al-Manar* journal, started to become more influential on Islamist thinkers in the following period.

²⁴⁴ For an impressive work about what the notion of "*Ehl-i hal ve Akd*" means for the Islamic civilization's historical experience, please see: Ludwig Ammann, "Private and Public in Islamic Civilization," *Islam in Public: Turkey, Iran and Europe* Ed. Nilüfer Göle ve Ludwig Ammann (İstanbul: İstanbul ilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2006), pp. 77-127.

²⁴⁵ Türköne, *İslamcılığın Doğuşu*, pp. 135-139.

²⁴⁶ Karpat, *The Politicization*, pp. 117-136.

II.1.2. Arab Islamism and Arab Nationalism

Second-generation Islamists, in other words the intellectuals who developed their opinions in the Abdulhamid II period and prescribed an ‘Islamic’ identity for the Ottoman Empire in a systematic way, used different concepts and opened new discussions. We will elaborate on Jamaladdin al-Afgani, Muhammed Abdu, Rashid Rida (who wrote in Arabic) and Şehbenderzade Filibeli Ahmet Hilmi, Said Halim Paşa, Babanzade Ahmet Naim, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Muftafa Sabri Efendi, and Said Nursi (who wrote in Turkish). These names also discussed reclamation and reform. They put forward new arguments on the decline in Islamic civilization, inaction, and the reasons for this situation within the context of ‘the West’ - a topic Ottomans thought about thoroughly during that period. Of course, the main reason behind these discussions was the aim to enable the Empire, which was losing territory everyday and had domestic conflicts, to attain a new, strong political identity against the new political identities in the West. In other words, the aim was to find a new, common identity for the Ottoman Empire. It was also aimed to establish an understanding of Islam that would enable the state, which was built on ‘Islam’ as the common identity, to survive within the newly established international system, while reaching the first aim.

Jamaladdin al-Afgani,²⁴⁷ who is referred to as the founder of Islamism by the international academia, was born in 1838. There are discussions about his actual birthplace; whether it was Iran or Afghanistan. The general perception is on Iran, yet he claimed he was born in Afghanistan to hide his Shia roots. Afgani, whom we do not have much information on his childhood and teenage years, came to Istanbul in 1870,²⁴⁸ after he was expelled first to India and then to Egypt, following his deportation from Afghanistan (1868) where he was serving as a consultant to the state administrators. Mümtazer Türköne claims that Afgani was

²⁴⁷ For a work, which was referred to almost all discussions on Jamaladdin al-Afgani, please see: Keddie, *Jamal al-Din “al-Afghani.”*, for the al-Afgani’s contemporaries and students commitments on him, please see: Salesh, Ali. *Jamal al-Din al-Afgani*. Kahire: Dar el-Şuruq, 1987.

²⁴⁸ See. Hayreddin Karaman, “Efgani Cemaleddin,”(DÍA.1994).

affected by the previously mentioned discussions of the Young Ottomans during his stay in Istanbul until 1871, and then presented these ideas as his own.²⁴⁹ When he expressed his thoughts in Istanbul, he was criticized by the leading religious figures, and had to leave Istanbul and go to Egypt. He stayed in Egypt between 1871 and 1879 and then gathered many important names of Egypt and the Arab region around himself, including Muhammed Abdu. Afgani had to leave Egypt due to political developments and he was expelled to India first. He was only allowed to leave India with the condition of not stepping in an Islamic country for five years. Afgani first went to the UK and then France. He published a journal named “*Urvetu’l-Vusqa*” in Paris after inviting his student Muhammed Abdu (1884). They published eighteen issues before the English closed it for feeling that the ideas spread in the journal were posing a threat to their advantages. Afgani, who was involved in political work in Russia and Iran later, went to Afghanistan and after Abdulhamid II invited him, he went to Istanbul in 1892. Abdulhamid II assigned Afgani to a house and salary there. He died in 1896 in Istanbul. Afgani actually did not leave any pieces with deep discussions about the Islamic world’s problems or solutions; yet his importance stems from his lifelong struggle and his students who respected him deeply. Especially Muhammed Abdu, who is regarded as the pioneer of Islamic modernism, respected Afgani significantly.²⁵⁰ Muhammed Abdu, who was the main reason for the identification of Islamism with Afgani and who expressed the main arguments of Islamic modernism in a systematic way, was born in 1849 in Egypt. He was enrolled in *al-Azhar*, Egypt’s renowned science of religion school, in 1886. He graduated in 1877 and started to give lessons at this school, became the editor of a legal newspaper named *al-Vaka-iu’l-Mısriyye*, and came together with the most successful educated people of the time at his house to discuss the main issues of Egypt and the Islamic world. When Jamaladdin al-Afgani was forced to leave Egypt in 1879 by the Egyptian rulers since his political

²⁴⁹ Türköne, *İslamcılığın Doğuşu*, p. 40.

²⁵⁰ Salsesh, *al-Afgani*, p. 9.

activities were regarded as a threat, Muhammed Abdu was forced to leave Cairo. In 1882, Abdu was forced to leave Egypt as well due to claims of supporting the insurgency against the British; so he went to Lebanon. He was involved in educational activities for a while there, and in 1884 he went to Paris with Jamaladdin al-Afgani's invitation and published a journal named "*Urvetu'l-Vusqa*." When he came back to Lebanon in 1885, he devoted himself to education and to improve toleration among community members of different religions.

Muhammed Abdu, who went back to Egypt in 1888 had important roles in the next chapter of his life, became the mufti of Egypt, and remained at this position until his death.²⁵¹ Among Muhammed Abdu's students, there are many important names that were involved in the discussions on the problems of the Islamic world in line with his ideas and opinions. Albert Hourani lists Muhammed Farid Vajdi, Mustafa Abdurrazzaq, Qasim Amin, and Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid as some examples. Hourani argues that the thought, which was aimed to be spread to the Islamic world by Muhammed Abdu and Jamaladdin al-Afgani via *Urvetu'l-Vusqa*, had reflections and there appeared a small intellectual class, which was ready for these ideas expressed in *Urvetu'l-Vusqa* in the Arab peninsula. He states that Hayraddin Pasha's students in Tunisia, and the Alusi family in Iraq developed similar thoughts in line with Afgani and Abdu, and Rashid Rida in Syria agreed with the opinions expressed in *Urvetu'l-Vusqa*. Besides Rashid Rida, he argues that Tahir al-Jazairi, Abdulqadir al-Maghribi, Amir Shakib Arslan, and Muhammed Kurd Ali were some names involved in this movement.²⁵²

Many names can be mentioned in the same direction with Afgani and Abdu, but Rashid Rida appears as the second-generation pioneer of the movement. Rashid Rida was born in Lebanon in 1865. After he was educated at a Turkish school in the region and at modern institutions, he was inclined to *tasavvuf* (Islamic Gnosticism); he got closer to an anti-

²⁵¹ M.Sait Özevarlı, "Muhammed Abdu," (DIA. 2008)., For one of the latest and most extensive research about, please see: Mark Sedgwick. *Muhammad Abdu*. Londra: Oneworld Press, 2010.

²⁵² Albert Hourani. *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 160-192.

commentary approach like Ibnı Taymiya and Muhammed Abdulwahab in time. However, after he had a long meeting with Muhammed Abdu in 1894 in Lebanon, he shaped his own thoughts in accordance with Abdu's ideas and opinions. Rashıd Rıda, who went to Cairo in 1897, started to publish a journal named *Al-Manar* with Muhammed Abdu one year later and continued this work until he died in 1935.²⁵³

Dawn asserted that Arab nationalism originated from the modernist view, which was expressed by Afghani, Abduh and Reza, and had a discourse of 'Muslims fell behind and needed a revival.' He stated that Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, who was seen as a milestone in Arab nationalism, gave reference to the idea of 'Islam fell behind,' like Afghani and Abdu. From this point, al-Kawakibi stressed the importance of Arabs in revival of Islam and developed the idea of an 'Arab Caliphate,' according to the Dawn. He said that some Christian Arabs argued secular Arab nationalist ideas, but Muslim intellectuals were distanced to the separation of Islam from Arab identity, like Ibrahim Yazici said. During the 1910s, unlike Ibrahim Yazici, Christian Arab intellectuals like Nadrah Matran had ideas in parallel to Abdu and Rashed Reza, and saw Islam as an inseparable part of an Arab nation, Dawn said.²⁵⁴ Choueri agreed with Dawn on the idea that 'Islamism and Arab nationalism were aroused on the same ground.' Along with the works of thinkers such as Abduh and Afghani, encyclopedic works of Christian Butrus al-Bustani (1819-1883) and Ahmad Faris Shedyaq (1805-1887 – the first Maronite Christian, then protestant, and later Muslim) are the basis of the cultural Arab nationalism, according to Choueri. He states that 'returning to Golden Age of Islam' of Abdu and Afghani goes shoulder to shoulder with 'Arab culture and civilization,' stressed Shedyaq and Bustani. In this context, stresses on Arab ethnic values and cultural achievements gained wide currency in the 19th century, Christian and Muslim intellectuals

²⁵³ M. Said Özevarlı, "Reşid Rıza," (DİA. 2008)., For the latest and significant work about Reşid Rıza please see. Kavak, Özgür. *Modern İslam Hukuk Düşüncesi: Reşit Rıza Örneği*. İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2012.

²⁵⁴ Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*, pp. 139-144

got on the same page on this topic, he said. Choueri evaluated the works of Muslim intellectuals like Muhammad Abdu and Christian intellectuals such as Butrus al-Bustani (1819-1892), Nasef al-Yazici (1800-1871), Salim Takla (1849-1892) Faris al-Shedyaq (1805-1887), Yaqub Sarruf (1852-1927), Faris Nimr (1860-1952), and Jurji Zeidan (1861-1914) under the title of cultural nationalism.²⁵⁵ Dawisha stated that Muslim intellectuals did not like the idea of separation from the Ottoman Empire, but Christian intellectuals, like Najib Azuri, started to voice the separation idea. He said that Arab nationalism was an intellectual construction and had no actual aspect.²⁵⁶ I think similarities between the line of Afghani, Abdu, Reza and the line of Bustani, Shedyaq and Sarruf should not be evaluated as ‘having the same world-view.’ Because Abdu and Reza had a traditional Islamic education and they can be seen as intellectuals in the Islamist movement. Even the intellectual issues caused by the era’s conditions motivated Christian and Muslim intellectuals to focus on the same topics; the Islamist movement’s approach and the answers to the issues were quite a change from the nationalist movement. Muslim intellectuals in the nationalist movement were quite different from the way of Afghani, Abdu and Reza in terms of methods and aims. In this context, I will discuss in detail the discrepancies between the Muslim and Christian Arab nationalists and Islamist thinkers in terms of method and aims in tackling the period’s issues, in this thesis.

II.1.3. Islamism in the Ottoman Capital

This new intellectual movement in the Arab world had some impacts on the Ottoman capital as well. İsmail Kara mentions that Said Nursi states Cemaleddin Afgani and Muhammed Abdu as his leaders. Besides these names, he names Ali Suavi and Namık Kemal among his leaders and according to Kara, these names are often cited in Islamist writings.²⁵⁷ Therefore, we could say that Islamist ideas, which were outlined at the end of 1860s by the

²⁵⁵ Choueiri, *Arab Nationalism*, pp. 65-70

²⁵⁶ Dawisha, Adeed, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 25-28

²⁵⁷ Kara, *İslamcılar*, p. 24

Young Ottomans, then expressed openly in *Urvet el-Vusqa* in 1884, were built in a more systematic way in 1898 in *Al-Manar*. In the next period following these developments, both between the Ottoman central rule and the Arab provinces of the Empire, many Islamist thinkers expressed their ideas and thoughts in a variety of newspapers and journals.

I have tried to address the leading names of Islamism in the Arab world and the Ottoman capital before the period of Muhammed Kurd Ali -who will be elaborated in this thesis. Contemporaneous names as Muhammed Kurd Ali, who wrote in Turkish and had Islamist thoughts, are Şehbenderzade Filibeli Ahmet Hilmi (1865-1914), Said Halim Pasha (1863-1921), Babanzade Ahmet Naim (1872-1934), Mehmet Akif Ersoy (1873-1936), Şeyhülislam Mustafa Sabri (1869-1954), and Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (1878-1960).²⁵⁸ The writers all belonged to different social classes, yet expressed their views in Istanbul-based journals in the post-1908 era. For example, Said Nursi was a *Hizan*-born Kurd. He started to get a madrasah education; however, he decided to raise himself later and continued his education by himself. His knowledge and intelligence was noticed and accepted after his discussions with the most important religious men in the region. Said Nursi, who is known for not speaking Turkish that well, wrote his first important pieces in Arabic and came to Istanbul in 1907. He wrote articles in Turkish in the *Volkan* journal after 1908, which was published by the Dervish Vahdeti, he was involved in political activities, and he took part in some societies. It is also stated that he was in touch with the CUP and even had a position.²⁵⁹

Another person who had a close relationship with the CUP was Said Halim Pasha. Said Halim Pasha was the grandson of the governor of Egypt, Mehmed Ali Pasha of Cavalla, and he got his primary education in Cairo, learned Arabic, Persian, French, and English; then he went to

²⁵⁸ For the intellectual movement in the Ottoman capital in this period, please see: Doğan, Necmeddin. "The Origins of Liberalism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire:1908-1914." Ph.D. Diss., U of Frein, 2006.

²⁵⁹ Alparslan Açıkgöç, "Said Nursi," (DİA. 2008)., Moreover, for a deep and sociological analysis about Said Nursi's growing up period, please see: Mardin, Şerif. *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*. New York: New York University Press, 1989.

Switzerland and got an education in politics for five years. Said Halim Pasha served in important positions at the state level and published a book named “*Our Depression (Buhranlarımız)*,” which was a compilation of his articles published in different newspapers and journals in the post-1908 era.²⁶⁰ Babanzade Ahmet Naim was also a writer with Islamist writings in Istanbul-based newspapers after 1908. Naim, whose scientific work was more under focus, was interested in logic, word, philosophy, and psychology and gave courses at the university.²⁶¹ But one of the most famous faces of Islamism was Mehmet Akif Ersoy. Ersoy, who wrote in Istanbul-based newspapers after 1908 like the others, worked as a civil servant at different state level positions. It was stated that Ersoy, who had a strong emphasis on ‘Islamic Union (*ittihad-ı İslam*)’ in his writings, worked for the Ottoman intelligence service ‘*Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*.’²⁶² Mustafa Sabri Efendi, as a religious scholar, was very much interested in politics towards the end of Abdulhamid’s rule and although he was involved in the CUP for a period, later he positioned himself in the opposition of it. After the CUP ended up being successful as a result of the political developments, he left the country to live abroad. Arrested and brought back to Turkey, Mustafa Sabri gained his independence back after a while, and continued his political activities again. Mustafa Sabri was assigned as shaykh al-Islam in 1919 and lived in Egypt until his death due to his opposition against Mustafa Kemal.²⁶³ Actually, many others share Mustafa Sabri’s story, a man who died in Egypt.

²⁶⁰ M. Hanefi Bostan, “Said Halim Paşa,” (DİA. 2008). For detailed information about Said Halim Pasha, please see: Şeyhun, Ahmet. “Said Halim Paşa: Osmanlı Devlet Adamı ve İslâmcı Düşünür.” *TYB Akademi Dergisi* 1: 3 (2011).

²⁶¹ İ. Lütfi Çakan, “Babanzade Ahmed Naim,” (DİA. 2008)., For Babanzade Ahmed Naim’s philosophical thoughts, please see: Kara, İsmail. *Bir Felsefe Dili Kurmak: Modern Felsefe ve Bilim Terimlerinin Türkiye’ye Girişi*. İstanbul: Dergah Yayınlar, 2012.

²⁶² M. Orhan Okay - M. Ertuğrul Düzdağ, “Mehmed Akif Ersoy,” (DİA. 2003)., For an interpretation of Mehmet Akif Ersoy’s religious thoughts, please see: Yıldırım, Ramazan. “Mehmet Akif’in İslam Tasavvuru.” *Diyanet İlmi Dergisi* 47: 4 (2011)., M. Suat Mertoğlu. “Doğrudan Doğruya Kur’an’dan Alıp İlhamı: Kur’ana Dönüş’ten Kur’an İslamı’na.” *Divan Disiplinler Arası Çalışmalar Dergisi* 15: 28 (2010).

²⁶³ Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, “Mustafa Sabri Efendi,” (DİA. 2006)., For Mustafa Sabri Efendi’s political career, please see: Bein, Amit. “Ulama and Political Activizmin the Late Ottoman Empire: The Political Career of Şeyhülislam Mustaa Sabri Efendi” *Guardians of Faith in the Modern Times: Ulama in The Middle East*. Ed. Meir Hatina. Leiden: Brill Yayınları, 2009.

Because all Islamist writers were involved actively in the political struggle, from 1908 until the end of World War I, came into conflict with Mustafa Kemal and had to spend the rest of their lives either in prison or in exile. Said Nursi is a good example to this since he was sent to exile by the government in 1925 and lived in exile and in prisons until he died in 1960. Mehmet Akif Ersoy also had to stay in Egypt for many years due to political conflicts. So the Islamist movement had a defeat after the National struggle, and secular pro-Western/pro-enlightenment groups ruled Turkey. Islamist movements were unsuccessful in the Arab world as well and continued their existence as opposition movements.²⁶⁴

II.2. The Press and Islamism

Kemal Karpat analyzes the emergence of the press and its relations with Islamism through a sociological perspective and underlines the press' complimentary influence on the transformation, which resulted in the new political and cultural structure that the Ottoman Empire went through after the second half of the 19th century. Karpat, who points out the lack of qualified workers for the state's newly emerged units and services, indicates that bureaucracy, which began to develop in the Abdülmecid period, got stronger and took control of state issues. According to Karpat, Abdülaziz, after deaths of two prominent bureaucrats of the *Tanzimat*, Fuat and Ali Pasha, with the support of conservatives, attempted to empower his authority (Sultan/Caliphate). Then, bureaucratic/intellectual elites wanted to limit the authority of the throne by demanding a constitution. Elites, mobilized with constitutional demands in 1876, were in search of a new legitimacy grounded by using the term 'nation.'²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ For an extensive analysis about Islamic thought, and its point about the transformation in the Islamic world, please see: Davutoğlu, Ahmet. "İslâm Dünyasının siyasi dönüşümü: Dönemlendirme ve Projeksiyon." *Divan Disiplinler Arası Çalışmalar Dergisi* 7: 12 (2002).

²⁶⁵ Bernard Lewis analyzed the period from the usage of the notion 'nation' to usage as an equivalent of 'Ottoman minorities' (*Anasırı Osmaniye*). Please see: Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991), pp. 39-43.

The Palace thought that the initiatives of constitutionalists to include ‘people’ (*halk*) into politics were done for their own interests.²⁶⁶

Said Halim Pasha characterizes these attempts of the reformists as for the sake of changing or developing the autocratic rule, using the third element called ‘people’ which was previously ignored or forgotten.²⁶⁷ People (*halk*), which was not seen as a source of legitimacy in the historical development of the Islamic civilization, turned to an element, which determined legitimacy, after the political transformation. Intellectual groups occurred within the context of social, political, and cultural transformation, and started to use a means of expression, which emerged with the same reasons. They started to address people differing from the traditional *ulama*, informed them about politics, and began to demand from the political authority on their behalf. Moreover, they started to develop ideas about the essence of politics and society. Especially after Abdulhamid II’s declaration of a constitution, bureaucratic/intellectual elites began to see themselves as representatives of the people and wanted to use the parliament as a means for this. According to them, the people they represent can not be divided due to their class, welfare or occupation; it is composed of everyone under Ottoman rule. Kemal Karpat indicates that, the press, developing throughout the transformation period, played a significant role to disseminate information and states that it served to disseminate Islamic ideas and contributed to them being internationalized with the acceptance of lower and middle classes. Moreover, the traditional *ulama*’s influence went down as a result of widespread press, he argues. This was because the newly formed elite gained a new position with access to information originating from the West and used the press as a tool to create ‘public opinion.’ In the following period, the Palace had to accept the ‘public opinion’ also known as ‘*efkar-ı umumiye*.’ The press made the notion of ‘nation’

²⁶⁶ Karpat, *Politicization*, pp. 117-119.

²⁶⁷ Kudret Bülbül, “Said Halim Paşa’yı Yüz Yıl Sonra Yeniden Okumak,” *TYB Akademi Dergisi*, 1: 3 (2011), p. 132.

(*millet*) popular, but constitutionalists identified the notion of ‘nation’ with ‘public opinion.’ The Young Ottomans defined ‘nation’ as a political community with religious roots.²⁶⁸

The press, as a newly emerging notion, popularised the concept of “nation” and the Palace had to accept the “nation” as a fact. We can say that, Mümtazer Türköne agrees with these opinions of Kemal Karpat. Because, according to Türköne, after Şinasi started to publish *Tercüman-ı Ahval*, politics had stopped being *raison d’etat* (*hikmet-i hükümet*) and people had begun to think about politics and had thought that it was an acquired right. With almost the same words like Kemal Karpat, he says “There is an emerging group undertakes being spokesperson of people. This intellectual group, described as journalists represent people against rulers.”²⁶⁹ The language of the newspapers became simpler. Because in order to interact with the masses, speaking in the same language was necessary. Thus, newspapers made daily language the writing language of the paper. This new intellectual group, who began to write in the daily language, saw itself as representative of people. Türköne, who joined the issue of ‘public opinion’ just like Kemal Karpat, argues the emergence of the topic by referring to first hand source. Yet, concerning the content, he expresses the same ideas with Kemal Karpat. Moreover, by underlining the newspaper’s determinant role in the birth of Islamic ideology, he shares the same thought with Kemal Karpat. Bernard Lewis, who characterises the newly emerging Ottoman intellectual elites as ‘liberals,’ states long before Karpat and Türköne that they aimed to create ‘public opinion’ and used the press for this. Lewis points out the new audience and states that the Western influences on the press are highly visible.²⁷⁰ Because, in the period that the state started to structure its institutions according to their Western counterparts, the transformation of ideas, expression of thoughts, and dissemination of thoughts was inevitable. Islamists thought that, expression and

²⁶⁸ Karpat, *Politicization*, pp. 117-119.

²⁶⁹ Türköne, *İslamcılığın Doğuşu*, p.61.

²⁷⁰ Lewis, *The Emergence*, p. 170.

dissemination of thoughts of Islam, as the legitimate source of the state, which underwent a radical transformation with all of its institutions, were insufficient. Thus, they wanted to discuss in the newspaper with a new style and tell the people about discussions going around in the West. For this, they started to argue political and religious matters in the daily language.

Ismail Kara, who devotes a section to this subject, quotes the views of Islamists from primary sources as such: “The newspaper was no more a negative, disturbing and light thing and became a tool for responding to the attacks against Islam, serve, advice and invite to religion; a solution occasion for problems of Muslims in need; a defending self and telling the complaints ground; a tool for lighting the darkness of ignorance; and an occasion for strenghtening ties of religious fellowship and meeting the Muslims around the world.”²⁷¹ One of the important features of Islamists is their tendency to break old taboos. Because, with the Islamists’ methods, the distinction between commons (*avam*) and educated (*havas*) would disappear, people would be able to reach religious information directly, and the right to comment on religion held only by ulama would be shared with intellectuals educated in Europe. Kara indicates that, notions such as “go towards the people,” “say to the people” emerged due to the political incentives and he underlines the simplification of the language used.²⁷² Şükrü Hanioglu, who agrees with Türköne and Kara about the simple language of newspapers, points out the “public opinion” (*efkar-ı umumiye*) discussion and shares the same opinion with Karpat and Lewis. Hanioglu, who thinks that discussing the ruling or deficiencies of the state in newspapers can not be patriotism; thus some limitations were applied (1864) on the press, and it indicates that, deep relations of bureaucratic elites with the

²⁷¹ Kara, *İslamcılar*, p. 80. The Turkish Version of the text: “Gazete menfi, bozucu, hafif bir şey olmaktan çıkmış, “hizmet, “nasihat”, “hidayete davet”, İslam’a olan saldırıları “red ve tekzib”, “ihtiyaç ve mazlumiyet” içinde bulunan Müslümanların “lisan-ı hallerine tercüman, dertlerine derman”, “zalam-ı cehli tenvir” “natkıa-i şekva”, “vasıta-i müdafaa”, “uhuvvet ve rabita-i diniyeyi takviye”, dünyada yaşayan Müslümanların ve coğrafyaların “tearüfüne vesile”, “rehber-i millet...”

²⁷² Ibid., p. 83.

Western culture caused some significant changes in the intellectual environment of the Ottoman Empire.²⁷³

Although the state approached the press, in which some opposing news was published, cautiously; the press was used - especially in the Abdulhamid II period - to empower loyalty to the state. In this process, Caliphate/Sultan occurred as a cult, and the tradition was rediscovered. In short time, the state authorities began to use the press in order to express their opinions to the people. In fact, the press slowly replaced the traditional ways that the state used to interact with people.²⁷⁴ Selim Deringil, in his book about Ottoman elite's reactions to their environment²⁷⁵ and Abdulhamid indicates that, after dealing with the notion of the Caliphate, which was restructured in the Abdulhamid II period, via the press, which has the opportunity to reach wide masses, the concept of an 'official religion' wanted to be disseminated. It started to use the press in order to get into interaction with the actor recognised by both intellectual groups and the state called 'nation' or 'people' which occurred at the end of 19th century.

II.3. Basic Topics of Islamism

II.3.1. Reform

In a period, in which all of the traditional forms suffered from erosion, a change in the state with all of its institutions and practices took place, the state's self legitimacy tools differentiated, the notion of 'nation' or 'people' as a new reference point emerged, a change in the state's means of communication with its subjects occurred, traditional Islam and the foundations based on it began to be questioned. Islamists started to criticize the *ulama's* educational institutions, discussed traditional notions in a different context, got into

²⁷³ Hanioglu, *A Brief History*, p.95.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 125-126.

²⁷⁵ Deringil, *Well Protected Domains*, p. 49.

interaction with newspapers, which had a different way of communicating with the people, argued on the state and politics, and expressed their demands about change. The demands of Islamists were not only about reforms considering traditional institutions and practices; rather they were about the production, teaching, and understanding of Islamic knowledge. Mehmet Akif Ersoy's demand, "We should be inspired directly by the Koran, we have to interpret Islam for the contemporary civilization," (*Doğrudan doğruya Kur'an'dan alıp ilhamı, Asrın idrakine söyletmeliyiz İslam'ı*)²⁷⁶ would become one of the core themes of Islamism. Maybe we can even describe the history of Islamism as a reformation of Islamic knowledge.

What "modernist" meant, as a notion used by modern researchers dealing with Islamist thinkers, was thinkers who embraced the reform of Islamic knowledge and concentrated their research on this. For instance, we frequently witness the use of "modernists thinker"²⁷⁷ for Muhammed Abdu and Rashid Rıda. Reform in Ottoman state institutions, i.e the process starting with the *Tanzimat* and *Islahat* could not be considered as out of politics. Although the idea of reform in religion was not openly expressed, different meanings attributed to notions were signals of a reform demand. The Young Ottomans opposed the use of modern law in the Ottoman Empire by claiming that, the sharia was being abandoned, irreligion was causing the Islamic government to weaken, irreligion was being fashioned and Islamic law was enough for that time.²⁷⁸ The Young Ottomans, which we can consider as reformist Islamists, used terms such as consultancy (*meşveret*) instead of democracy, council (*şura*) instead of parliament, people's government (*hakimiyet-i halk*) instead of sovereignty and brought forward terms such as *biat* (allegiance), *huruç hakkı* (right to protest) and *tabii hukuk* (natural law). Young Ottomans, who brought forward discussions that we do not discuss here with terms

²⁷⁶ Mertoğlu, "Doğrudan Doğruya Kur'an'dan Alıp İlhamı," *Divan Disiplinler Arası Çalışmalar Dergisi* 15: 28 (2010).

²⁷⁷ For an extensive description of "Modernist Islamist Thinker" and for the evaluation of modernist thinking involving the whole Islamic world, please see: Kurzman, Chaler. *Modernist Islam: 1840:1940*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

²⁷⁸ Taştan, *Yeni Osmanlıların Siyasal Söylemleri*, pp. 225-226.

such as versicle, hadith, Islamic rule, discussed in modern discussions these terms, and indicated that the traditional context should be changed in which these terms were used before. Ziya Pasha, from the Young Ottomans, objected to the efforts of the *Tanzimat*, which tried to modernize the law within the framework of Western law. Yet, he accepted the fact that, since jurisprudence was no more an instrument for jurisdiction, Islamic law was inadequate to give the right answers to today's subjects, and this became one of the significant topics of Islamic reformists.²⁷⁹ Because according to the Islamists, Islamic law was sufficient enough to solve current problems; but since there was no jurisprudence, Islamic law was unable to be updated.

In Jamaladdin al-Afgani and Muhammad Abdu, the idea of 'reform' is more obvious and theoretical than we first saw in the Young Ottomans. But Rashid Rida took a different path, even if he expressed some opinions, which could be considered within the framework of reform. A reduction of sectarian distinctions, which is a legitimacy tool of political dissidence in the Islamic world, with a unity theme or a call for unification of the Shiites and Sunnis against Western imperialism could easily be seen in Jamaladdin al-Afgani. In fact, we can say that the idea of unification was at the center of Afgani's opinions. Afgani, who claimed that the traditional splits between Shiism and Sunnism could be tolerated and removed, called Iranian Shiites and Afghan Sunnis for unification. In fact, he wanted a reform for the two traditional interpretations, which declared each other as 'abnormal' within the context of the political conjuncture.²⁸⁰ Jamaladdin al-Afgani called for a return to 'real Islam,' and indicated that a real reform movement was necessary for that, and that the *ulama* needed to turn to real Islam. He pointed out that, the Islamic civilization could only be revived and strengthened by

²⁷⁹ Türköne, *İslamcılığın Doğuşu*, pp. 80-81.

²⁸⁰ Jacob M. Landau, *Middle Eastern Themes: Papers in History and Politics* (New York: Routledge Press, 2013), pp. 1-7.

turning to real Islam.²⁸¹ Moreover, he thought that Islam needed a Luther, and maybe casted this role to himself. Afgani put forward that, after its reform period, Islam would play a moral arbitrator role like other religions, and claimed that, the history of Islam supported this claim.²⁸² Afgani, who expressed his opinion about natural law brought by the Young Ottomans, argued that, the law inspired by Muhammad was the same thing as natural law. However, if the natural law, which was developed by human reason, was the same with Islamic law, then a question occurs: Why do we need a religion? At this point, Afgani points out the human reason's frailties, and underlines the importance of divine guidance.²⁸³ In order for his discussions to be continued on a steadier basis, he objected to the idea of the 'reinterpretation of Islamic law is not possible' by the traditional ulama, and claimed that the reinterpretation of Islamic law could be applied, and argued that with interpreting the Koran solving problems was their responsibility. He added that, 'Taklid' and 'Cumud' (i.e repeating previous interpretations and being imprisoned at that interpretation's era) should be rejected, and that this situation harmed religion as much as irreligion.²⁸⁴

Muhammed Abdu, one of Afgani's closest students, analyzed reform in religion more detailed than he did, and brought the subject of returning to '*selef akidesi*' (the prophet's friends' understanding of Islam) up, in order to make religious reform. Mehmet Zeki İşcan expressed that, Abdu's call for returning to "*selef akidesi*" was a tool for social reform, and claimed that Ibnu Taymiya and Muhammed Abdulwahab influenced him.²⁸⁵ Abdu, at some point, objected to traditional Islamic understanding by saying that, returning to "*selef akidesi*" was necessary in order for religion to be refined from superstitions. Hısham Sharabı claimed that, Abdu's call for returning to "*selef akidesi*" was an escape from the problems of Islamic

²⁸¹ Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, pp. 119-120.

²⁸² Anwar Moazzam, *Jamāl Al-Dīn Al-Afghāni: a Muslim Intellectual* (New Delhi: Nurang Rai Press, 1984), p. 7.

²⁸³ Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, pp. 126-128.

²⁸⁴ Moazzam, *Al-Afgani*, pp. 15-16.

²⁸⁵ Mehmet Zeki İşcan, *Muhammed Abdu'un Dini ve Siyasi Görüşleri* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 1997), p.224.

society and the last challenge that Islamic thought faced. In other words, the call for returning to ‘*selef akidesi*’ was an attempt to rescue Islam, which was finally interpreted in previous centuries but unable to solve Muslims’ political, social and economic problems due to Islamic thought.²⁸⁶ The rejection of ‘*Taklid*’ (imitation) seen in other thinkers could also be seen in Muhammed Abdu. Abdu, who criticized ‘*Taklid*’ (imitation) emphasized the reason and its determinant role in social and religious matters. Islam, according to Abdu, did not limit the reason to analyze what was created. The Koran took reason into consideration and activated thoughts. Thus, one of the core conditions of social reform was opening the dogmas, which were considered as taboos by the religious authorities for centuries, to the criticism of reason. So, the ‘thought’ will be freed, and will understand the purpose of God on earth. In fact, it was necessary to give up thinking on an imitative basis and understand the religion as the predecessors (*selef*), returning to first sources, and interpreting the first sources with reason. Because God created reason to prevent people from exaggerating. The reform project of Abdu aimed to refine religion from adscitious elements and what did not belong to its core, and re-interpret religion to enable it to be able to answer daily problems.²⁸⁷ It is possible to see the same themes in Rashid Rida as well. Because in Rashid Rida’s system of thought, the idea of developing a legal system for people living in the modern world occupied a wide space. Rida wrote an article to designate the guidelines of this legal system. In his main work “*al-manar*,” it is possible to see the same theme.²⁸⁸

Discussions about religious reform, made by the Young Ottomans and prominent Arab Islamists, was also made in almost the same way by Islamist thinkers in the center of the Ottoman Empire after 1908. Discussion on ‘*huruç*,’²⁸⁹ which can be seen in the Young

²⁸⁶ Hisham Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), p. 36.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 240-248.

²⁸⁸ Kavak, *Reşit Rıza*, pp. 115-119.

²⁸⁹ ‘Limits of obedience to authority’ has been one of the most controversial subjects during Islamic history. Moreover, it has formed one of the reasons for the differentiation between denominations. It is still a debate

Ottomans, stating that, people can be mobilized against governments, which do not act fairly, was expressed by Abdülaziz Çaviş and Eşref Efendizade Şevketi. It was also stated that, if the Caliphate deviates from the way of God, it is necessary for all Muslims to kill or prevent him to abuse, within the provisions of Sharia. The subject of “*meşveret*” (consultancy) was expressed by prominent thinkers of Islam such as Mardinizade Ebuül’ula, Ali Haydar Emin, and Musa Kazım. ‘*Şurayı Ümmet*’ (Council of Muslim People), which was dignified by referring to some verses in the Koran and the sayings of Muhammed and allowing people’s control, was recorded as the predecessor of today’s parliament.²⁹⁰ The issue of ‘*taklit*’ (imitation), which occupied a central role in Arab Islamism, came to the agenda in the capital in a different way. Islamists such as Şehbenderzade Ahmed Hilmi objected to imitating the West, and claimed that, it would even be impossible to be a human by doing so, let alone being westernized.²⁹¹ In fact, in Arab Islamism, imitating the traditional Islam without criticising or updating was criticised; but in Istanbul, imitating the West was mentioned. Islamists said that, rescuing the Islamic world was impossible with the Western political and social thoughts. Islamists, who claimed that the majority of Muslims were superstitious and unaware of the core of Islam, argued that ignorance and laziness became the morals of society.²⁹² Moreover, they gave clues about the necessity of religious reforms found in Arab Islamists. Yet, the idea of religious reform is not explicit, as seen in Arab Islamism.

Islamists thought that turning back to the strong old days of the Ottomans would only be possible by Islamization due to the Ottoman Empire’s political, economic, social, and bureaucratic predicaments. Said Halim Pasha used these words while describing Islamization:

today, between Sunni, Shia, and Salafî sects. For a research on the subject considering the Islamic denominations, please see: Asifî, Muhammed Mehdi. *Kimin İkdidarı; Gücün mü, Hakkın Mı? Ehli Sünnet ve Şia’da Devlet Teorisi*. Çev. Sedat Baran. İstanbul:Önsöz Yayınları, 2012., Camii, Muhammed Mescid-i. *Ehli Sünnet ve Şia’da Siyasi Düşünce’nin Temelleri*. Çev. Ejder Okumuş. İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2012.

²⁹⁰ Tunaya, *İslamcılık*, pp. 29-30.

²⁹¹ Doğan, “Orgins od Islamism and Liberalizm,” pp. 108-111.

²⁹² Tunaya, *İslamcılık*, pp. 9-11.

“It must be accepted that, Islam is a social religion which includes materiality, spirituality, religion and the world. Islamization is to interpret it in accordance with Islam’s beliefs, morals, social, and political system with the requirements of time and place.”²⁹³ In fact, Said Halim Pasha meant the same thing with Mehmet Akif Ersoy, as we quoted above. What it was meant showed a parallelism with the statements of Arab Islamists about religious reforms. But, Arab Islamists drew a more clearly theoretical framework. It should be stated that, in Said Halim Pasha and others, Westernization is criticised by calling it “imitation” different from Arab Islamists, and reading the Ottoman Empire’s problems through Western thought was vilified. According to Said Hali Pasha, the individual and state, who were Islamized, will remove all of its rights and responsibilities from social to political, the system believed, and principles such as freedom and justice from Islamic principles. These principles will be removed from Islam’s belief system, so that people will not feel inferiority with their admiration of French and British people.²⁹⁴ Both Said Halim Pasha, by saying ‘Islamization,’ and Akif by saying ‘Islam of the Koran,’ were efforts to restructure the traditional religious setup by reforms and make it able to answer the Ottoman Empire’s identity problem. In fact, reform in religion was an attempt to re-interpret and give a new form to Islam within the context of Westernization and the reform discussions by the Young Ottomans and Islamists in the capital. However, Arab Islamism adopted a more theological and theoretical method about religious reforms, and did not pay as much attention as the Islamists in the capital about the Ottoman Empire’s perpetuity problem.

II.3.2. Western Civilization

Tanzimat statesmen, who were turned into a target by the Young Ottomans, were reckless and cruel in executing the process of the political, social, and intellectual

²⁹³ M. Hanefi Bostan, “Said Halim Paşa’da İslamlaşmak Düşüncesi,” *TYB Akademi Dergisi* 1: 3 (September 2011), pp. 81-101.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-101.

Westernization of Turkey, as Şerif Mardin puts forward. Mustafa Reşit Pasha believed that, Turkey's rescue would be realized with a thing he called 'the way of civilization.' However, the New Ottomans were accusing Tanzimat statesmen, notably Ali and Fuat Pasha, by accusing them of adopting the shallowest aspects of Western civilization and describing this situation as immoral. Şerif Mardin states that, the decisiveness of Islamic law by Tanzimat statesmen and the establishment of political institutions without control created an imbalance in the Ottoman Empire.²⁹⁵ At this unbalanced situation, the Young Ottomans called for a return to Islamic law and accused the state of breaking off from Islamic principles. But according to Hasan Kayalı, the Young Ottomans had the same formation with the Tanzimat bureaucrats that they criticized, because of their Western educational method and professional background. This is because the abovementioned topics were the indicators that they were totally westernized, since they spent a lot of time in European countries and expressed themselves in a Western way. Although the Young Ottomans objected to Westernization efforts of the Tanzimat statesmen, they themselves talked within the context of West.²⁹⁶ In fact, Western civilization sucked the criticisms and included them in its format. The inevitable decisiveness of Western civilization began to set the Young Ottoman opposition.

Jamaladdin al-Afganı was aware of the industrial and technical revolution that happened in the West. He knew that the accumulation and implementation of Western knowledge empowered them. He thought that, the Islamic world should acquire branches of art developed in the West. But how should these be acquired? Because according to him, acquiring them in the Islamic civilization could not be possible by imitating Western civilization since Western civilization meant a system of thought and moral sentiments.²⁹⁷ Muhammed Abdu, who accepted the West's superior skills, wanted to separate Christianity from Western civilization.

²⁹⁵ Şerif Mardin, *Yeni Osmanlı Düşüncesi*, pp.

²⁹⁶ Kayalı, *Young Ottomans*, pp. 22-23.

²⁹⁷ Moazzam, *Al-Afgani*, pp. 56-57.

In a discussion that he entered with his prominent contemporary Farah Antun, he put forward that, Christianity was against reasoning and free questioning in its nature and thus, modern Western civilization owes nothing to Christianity. He stated that, Western civilization was constructed with European scientists and thinkers who rejected Christianity and accepted materialism instead. Yet, he also mentioned that, Islam is a rational religion from the beginning, and thus, with modern sciences, without acquiring Christianity, relations can be established with the West.²⁹⁸ Rashid Rida, who followed the footsteps of Afganı and Abdu, asked, “Why all Muslim countries lagged behind in all matters of civilization?” He clarified the subject by putting forward the idea that, with the true understanding of Islam, welfare can be achieved all around the world. With the true perception of Islamic doctrines and practicing Islamic orders, success can be achieved in this and the afterlife, he claimed. He added, with the true perception of Islamic doctrines and practising Islamic orders, power, respect, and civilization can be achieved; but with a false perception or not practicing, weakness, barbarism and regression will occur. He indicated that, with a true perception by Islamic society, they can be the center of civilization for the world. Although Muslims lagged behind in science and civilization, one should not compare Middle Eastern Muslims with Western Christians today; instead Middle Eastern Muslims should be compared with Middle Eastern Christians, he argued.²⁹⁹

In Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, which deeply felt the power of Western civilization in every sense, Islamist intellectuals, who defined the West as the ‘land of infidels’ (*Kuffar Diyarı*), attempted to re-define the West within the context of Islamic thought. They did this because the Islamic world was declining, and the West was extremely successful in civilization vis-a-vis the Islamic world. Tunaya indicates that, Islamists accepted

²⁹⁸ For a detailed analysis on this discussion, please see: Stephen Sheehi. *Foundation of Modern Arab Identity* (Florida: Florida University Press, 2004), pp. 149-158.

²⁹⁹ Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, p. 228.

the fact that they needed the West in order to develop the Islamic world, but there were discussions about the fields in which they would profit from the West. According to Islamists, many elements that the West served as values today were existent in the Islamic world centuries ago. For instance, ‘a ruling system which respects public opinion’ was existent in Islam centuries ago. Moreover, the West was far behind considering morality and spirituality. The subjects that the West dominated were science, machinery, and commerce. Thus, it was possible to acquire the necessary methods for development from the West. Islamists expressed that; Western civilization is corrupt as much as they were developed in technology. They also added that, political and historical processes occurred in different patterns in the Islamic world and the West, and the historical developments in the West forced the political and religious spheres to be separated, which was not valid for the Islamic world. Sheikh Abdulhaq Bagdadı, in his work called “Last Words of Islam to Europe” (*İslamiyet’in Avrupa’ya Son Sözü*), expressed that; politics refined from religion and morality was a disaster.³⁰⁰ According to Islamists, the West invaded and exploited many Eastern countries in guise of “civilizing.” Yet, it was accepted that, the Islamic world needed Western development tools in order to be developed. Tarık Zafer Tunaya sums up the attitudes of the Islamists against the West as such: “On the one hand, preventing ourselves from the West’s moral crisis and ignoring the morality, spirituality, and sociology of the West; on the other hand, acquiring science and development. Distinguishing and explaining these positive and negative facts and acting cautiously. Islamists did not oppose the idea of Westernization, but imposed some important principles on this point. The first principle was to refrain from imitating the West, which meant not to imitate everything seen in the West. Şemsettin Günaltay indicated that, the things that needed to be acquired from Western civilization should be determined according to Islam’s development principles and necessities. He argued that, attempts to transfer

³⁰⁰ Tunaya, *İslamcılık*, p.63.

everything seen in the West to the Islamic world without questioning would cause destruction. He accepted the Islamic world's necessity of a radical and certain intellectual reform and adds that, throughout these reforms, Islam's moral and social values should be obeyed.³⁰¹ İsmail Kara expressed his disturbance with the claims of Islamists that, Islam is the obstacle in front of the Islamic world to develop, since the Islamic world can't adopt European civilization while preserving its values. He said that, they defend an opinion, which states, Islam involves everything good including European civilization. Said Nursi's sentence, such as, "Islam, either openly proposed or pointed or allowed the real beauties of civilization or offered better,"³⁰² indicates this perception clearly. One of the other claims of Islamists about Western civilization was that, Western civilization was nourished from the values of the Islamic civilization; and most of these values that Western civilization was constructed on were originating from the Islam civilization.³⁰³

II.3.3. Islamic Civilization

The Young Ottomans were the intellectual group, rather than other Islamist intellectuals, that handled the thesis of Jabri that we quoted as "Islam is a civilization of Islamic jurisprudence (*Fıkıh*)." Because they claimed in their writings that, Islamic jurisprudence was rich enough, so that transferring the laws from the West was unnecessary. In fact, they claimed that, Islamic jurisprudence was able to fulfill the needs of the Ottoman Empire without acquiring the West's legal principles. Namık Kemal said, "We would like to enact Sharia law instead of a constitution."³⁰⁴ He put forward that: a constitution is only a couple of articles written by some ignorants. In this sense, he added that, Islamic jurisprudence fulfilled the necessities of people for a thousand and five hundred years. He also

³⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 64-65.

³⁰² Nursi, Bediuzzaman Said, *Asar-ı Bediyye* (İstanbul: İttihad Yayıncılık, 1999), p. 819. Turkish Version of text: "Hiçbir hakiki mehasin-i medeniyet yoktur ki İslamiyet sarahaten veya zimnen veya iznen onu ya da daha ahsenini mütekeffil olmasın."

³⁰³ Kara, *İslamcılık Akımı*, pp. 25-26.

³⁰⁴ Turkish Version of the Text; "Dustur'a bedel bir kanunu Şer'i yapmak istiyoruz."

claimed that, the legal system based on Islamic law would be more qualified than the legal system of Western civilization.³⁰⁵ It will be possible to see below that, the same topics were repeated in different sentences by Islamist thinkers after 1908. Those of which meant, all of the rules and principles that Islamic civilization provided, covered all of the principles that Western civilization produced.

Albert Hourani expressed that, Jamaladdin al-Afganı perceived Islam as civilization more than a religion. Jamaladdin al-Afganı, who was influenced by the definitions of the French statesman and historian François Pierre Guillaume Guizot, tried to develop an ‘Islamic civilization’ definition based on Guizot’s ‘Western civilization’ descriptions. Civilization as a principle in which all historical events must be judged by it, is a process conducted by people who always move forward with change. It is a process, which also enabled social and individual development. The individual rules the world with ideals, anticipations, moral, and intellectual attributes. The condition of the society is closely related to the individual’s moral condition. These terms that Guizot used to describe Western civilization attracted Afganı’s attention, and based on those, he tried to describe Islamic civilization. According to Afganı, Islamic society had all of the features such as social development, individual development, belief in reason, unity, and solidarity to establish a civilization in its bright days. Nevertheless, it lost them afterwards. The military success of the Islamic society was the outpouring of Islamic civilization at the beginning. Thus, what had been achieved can be achieved again. The way for that was the accepting of Western sciences and the unification of the Islamic society.³⁰⁶ Rashid Rıda believed that, progress in Europe depended on education, with Europeans’ developments in science and the knowledge acquired from the Islamic civilization. He believed that, the roots of the modern European civilization were in the Islamic civilization and developed arguments to defend his thesis. Rıda argued that, Muslims

³⁰⁵ Türköne, *İslamcılığın Doğuđu*, p. 135.

³⁰⁶ Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, pp. 114-115.

used to be civilized and contributed to the West's developments and wanted to mention that the modern West was a part of Western civilization.³⁰⁷

Islamists, just like Rıda in the Ottoman capital, argued that, the Islamic civilization was the source of Western civilization. İsmail Kara analyzed this topic in detail in quotes from Shaykh of Kelami Derğahı Esad Erbilli, Faruki Ömer, Babanzade Ahmed Naim, and Ali Tayyar. Islamists claimed that, the material development and high technology of the West was nourished from the point of view provided by the religion brought by Muhammed. When the law is analyzed, which is considered to be the power of the West, he put forward that, it will be seen that Islam already covered those. He mentioned that, the civilization process of Islam was the greatest in human history, and added that, the French Revolution looked smaller compared to Islam's revolution. He argued that, the Declaration of Human Rights was inspired by Islamic law. Moreover, he also put forward that, notions brought by Europe such as freedom, justice, equality, and fraternity, were used in the Islamic society for centuries.³⁰⁸ According to Islamists, Islam adopted revolutionary social principles centuries before the West. It established the state and society centuries before Europe saw them as new. There was no irrational or unnatural superstition in Islam. Islam was more developed than other religions considering administrative, political, and moral principles. Islam contained the principles necessary for establishing a state and life at a Western level. Because it was a social religion, people had a right to speak, it prioritized principles such as freedom, justice, equality, and fraternity; there was no place for spirituality and oppression; and it had some social and political dynamics such as revolting against oppression.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁷ Emad eldin Shabin, *Reşid Rıza ve Batı*, Trans. Erkan Saka (İstanbul: Ekin Press, 2000), pp. 51-52.

³⁰⁸ Kara, *İslamcılık Akımı*, pp. 26-27.

³⁰⁹ Tunaya, *İslamcılık*, pp. 16-17.

II.3.4. The Caliphate and Islamic Unity

After the second half of the 19th century, regions where Muslims lived were rapidly colonized. Muslim people and the political elites began to ask for help from the Ottoman Empire, which had been the most powerful state for five centuries, against the West's colonialist policies. Many representatives from Central Asia, Kashgar, and Sumatra where Muslim communities lived came to Istanbul and ask for help from the Ottoman Empire. These events caused Ottoman Muslims to look at Muslims living outside of the Ottoman Empire and the idea for the unification of all Muslims around the world emerged. For instance, in 1850, Aceh repeated its loyalty to the Ottoman Empire by sending a mission; Sultan Abdülmecid, on the other hand, enacted two rescripts, which said that Aceh was in the tow of the Ottoman Empire.³¹⁰ The Ottoman Caliphate gained the complaisance of the Muslim world and even the Muslim Sultans living in the Indian Ocean obeyed Caliph Abdulhamid II on the one hand;³¹¹ but on the other hand, with the *Rescript of Gülhane*, the Caliphate of Ottoman became contentious.

On the other hand, the idea of Islamic Unity brought initially by the New Ottomans constituted the central place of the caliphate discussions.³¹² Mümtazer Türköne stated that, the New Ottomans were the ones who brought the institution of the caliphate to the public agenda. He also indicated that, discussions of New Ottomans about the notion of the caliphate were the products of searching for new politics before the idea of the unity of Muslims. The Young Ottomans attributed importance to the concept of the 'caliphate' in the four-caliph period.³¹³ For instance, in the book of Esad Efendi called "Unity of Islam," published in 1873, he analyzed the thesis of the unity of the Muslim people in detail. Ottoman intellectuals

³¹⁰ Türköne, *İslamcılığın Doğuşu*, pp.156-165.

³¹¹ Chowdhury, *Pan-Islamism*, p. 263.

³¹² For the situation in which the Ottoman Empire found itself when Abdulhamid II gained power and the evaluation of Islamic union within this context, please see: Zekeriya Kurşun, *Yol Ayrımında Türk Arap İlişkileri* (İstanbul: İrfan Press, 1992), pp. 33-38.

³¹³ Türköne, *İslamcılığın Doğuşu*, p. 192.

began to think about Islamic Unity based on the failure of unity of the Ottoman Empire after the incidents happened in the Balkans. At this very point, the post of caliphate started to gain importance as the leader of Islamic Unity.³¹⁴ However, as we can see, Ottoman intellectuals were not totally clear about this. Ismail Kara agreed with Mehmed Fehmi Ülgener's arguments stating that, in the Second Constitutional Period, Islamists did not have a wholistic political understanding about the state and were not able to offer a working state model. In fact, Islamists could not form coherence due to the discussions started in the 1870s, when they came into the Second Constitutional Period.³¹⁵

Afgani, who tried to gather the Islamic world around the Ottoman Caliph, offered for Iran to recognize the Ottoman Caliph as caliph; and offered for the Ottoman Caliph to recognise the Iranian Shah as independent and give sacred Shiite places to him. He also offered for Muslim leaders to gather in Istanbul and unify against the West's attacks. Afgani, who indicated that Muslim leaders should give up discussions regarding political splits and the sultanate and unify for the sake of the Islamic religion, expressed his opinions supporting the idea of the unification of the Islamic world under a single caliph as in the first periods. What he meant by 'caliphate' was a person who could be the spiritual leader of the Islamic world. He indicated that, since there was the spirit of acting together, there would be no problem about the existence of more than one state, and unless this unity was established, Muslims could conform to their own rulers.³¹⁶ Abdu thought that, people perceived the caliphate as a divine privilege with metaphysical references due to the external elements of Islam and tried to erase the traces of the divine sultanate opinion. For Abdu, who developed ideas around the notion of 'reform', people, who were the last stage of social reform, had to gain political consciousness and participate in politics; thus, the notion of the caliphate must

³¹⁴ Ibid., p. 220.

³¹⁵ Kara, *İslamcılık Akımı*, p.143.

³¹⁶ Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, p.116.

be understood correctly. For the correct formation of Islamic identity a newly formulated concept of the caliphate was necessary. According to Abdu, the caliph was a power who sustained the law for social order. Abdu indicated that, the law should be revised, and this revision could only be possible with the reconstruction of the caliph's spiritual and moral function. He said that, the caliph had to earn the respect of the Islamic society and there was no necessity for the Islamic society to be ruled by him. The unity of the Islamic society was a spiritual unity, and there was no harm to found national states. Furthermore, the caliph/sultan decided the domestic and foreign policies, and religious intellectuals only gave advice.³¹⁷ Muhammed Ammara said: in the last years of Abdu, he thought that the 'Caliphate should be transformed into a spiritual post.' In fact, the Ottoman Caliphate should be reformed by being turned into a spiritual caliphate.³¹⁸ Rashid Rida, in his book about the caliphate published after the abolishment of the caliphate called "*al-Khilafa wa Imamah al-Uzma*," discussed the tension between religious loyalty to the caliphate and Arab nationalism. Although Rida stood up for the Ottoman Caliphate for the sake of Islamic universality, he objectively commented about the abolishment of the caliphate.³¹⁹

Mehmed Fehmi claimed that, the caliph came into power through elections, and Muslims had a right to elect their own rulers. Iskilipli Mehmet Atif criticized presidential descendency from father to son by bringing the theory of '*Hilafet-i Kamile*' and indicated that, according to Islam, a person who held the features to become a president must be elected by the Islamic society. He also added that, unless the elected person resigns or is dismissed, this person would remain in office only if he obeyed Islamic law. He argued that, the caliph had the right to rule his subjects' religious and material matters, and thus, separation of

³¹⁷ İşcan, *Muhammed Abdu*, pp. 320-323.

³¹⁸ Muhammed Ammara, *Al-Imam Muhammed Abdu* (Qairo: Dar Al-Shoruk, 1988), p. 110.

³¹⁹ Hamid İneyet, *Çağdaş İslami Siyasi Düşünce*, Trans. Yusuf Ziya (İstanbul: Yöneliş Yayınları, 1995), p. 133. Although the discussions that Reşid Rıza conducted in this work reflect his mature thoughts about the caliphate, since it was in his later period, we did not include these here.

religious and state matters (secularism) would be impossible.³²⁰ Ismail Kara, who recorded that he wanted to tell and characterised the opinions of the Indian intellectual Sayyid Abdulmajid, who compared the theories of the British constitution and the caliphate in a conference in the United Kingdom in 1910, as an unreal caliph portrait, indicated that, the issue of the caliphate was a paradoxical subject which occurred in the modernization period. He also discussed that, the attempts of modernization that the Ottoman Palace and bureaucracy guided, compelled the caliphate/sultanate system. On the other hand, the Islamic Unity policies presented new spheres of influence, which did not exist before, to the caliph. He also put forward that; Islamic unity was a narrower interpretation of the unity of elements (*İttihad-ı Anasır*). He mentioned that Islamic unity turned into an effective foreign and domestic policy in the Abdulhamid II period.³²¹ Chowdhury recorded that; Abdulhamid's perception of Islam enabled him to merge Islamic and modernizing elements.³²² Tarık Zafer Tunaya indicated that, the Islamists were aware that the idea of unification would not possibly be realized soon. Quoting from Azmzade Refik, he mentioned that, "Islamic unity will firstly be spiritual, then the bonds of religion will make Muslims come together." He argued that, after the reforms in education and religion, Islamic institutions would be reconstructed and these institutions would contribute to unification. He expressed that, after those processes in politics, Islamic unity would be possible. However, Islamists did not clearly express anything about the regime of these large countries and big masses, he added.³²³ On the other hand, Ismail Kara, based on Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır's article called "Islam and Caliphate and Shaykh al-Islam" (*İslamiyet ve Hilafet ve Meşihat-ı İslamiye*), stated that, Islamists presented a

³²⁰ Tunaya, *İslamcılık*, pp. 41-42.

³²¹ Kara, *İslamcılık Akımı*, pp. 153-154.

³²² Chowdhury, *Pan-Islamism*, p. 161.

³²³ Tunaya, *İslamcılık*, p. 81.

different perception of the caliphate from the traditional understanding, and put forward adverse opinions than the traditional sources.³²⁴

II.3.5. Education

There were some significant efforts, put officialy and unofficially, concerning the training of the necessary religious officials and to make reforms in the madrasahs in the Abdulhamid II period. These efforts show that, the educational system in the madrasahs was insufficient and there was a tendency to make reforms. It was also seen that, members of the madrasahs reported their offers and findings to solve the problems of madrasahs, and official authorities worked on this subject. Many documents belonging to this period stated the insufficiency and need for reforms of the madrasahs. These subjects, theoretically discussed in the Abdulhamid II period, were realized in the Second Constitutional Period, and the most radical madrasah reform was made.³²⁵ A project, which involved madrasahs' faults and offered to get rid of those, was presented to the Sultan by four *mudarris* working in Istanbul in 1898. In this project, the economic and administrative situation and scientific insufficiency of madrasah's were expressed, and tools were offered to solve all of these problems. In their suggestions, the *Muderris* put forward that, by giving the example of the implementations of the Ministry of National Education, the education that the instructors in the madrasahs provided, the situation of the students and the exams should be controlled.³²⁶

On the other hand, a modern educational system played a significant role in the ideological formation of a new middle class and became a promotive element for them to take political initiatives. This new middle class, which recieved a modern education, began to analyze social facts rationally rather than through a religious viewpoint. Kemal Karpat argued

³²⁴ Kara, *İslamcılık Akımı*, pp. 147-153.

³²⁵ Zeki Salih Sezgin, *II. Abdulhamid Dönemi Örgün Eğitim Kurumlarında Din Eğitimi ve Öğretimi* (İstanbul: Çamlıca Yayınları, 2009), p.119.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

that, the middle class, with a modern education, started to take on administrative and educational tasks instead of the traditional ulama educated in madrasahs, and took the leading role of establishing the unity between the ruler and ruled for the sake of science and progress. He also indicated that, attempts for change in the Ottoman state system, and reforms in traditional Islamic institutions or construction of parallel institutions had started long before Abdulhamid II. The Regulation of General Education, which foresaw radical educational reform in the Ottoman Empire, was published in 1869, but was realized only after the educational reform initiatives of Abdulhamid.³²⁷ With the radical change in the Ottoman Empire, the demand to construct modern looking and oriented Islamic institutions was expressed. For instance, it was stated that, ‘*Mekteb-i Nuvvab*³²⁸ schools established in 1853-1862 to educate judges who graduated from the madrasahs was named as ‘School of Judges’ (*muallimhane-i nuvvab*), and their graduates worked in religious courts. In 1911, the purpose of education and the names of these schools were changed to ‘*Medreset’ul Kuzat*’ and their graduates began to work in religious courts. Those who graduated from the new law schools started to work in state courts. A modern educational system occupied a central place in the political, social and intellectual history and especially in the center-periphery relations of the Ottoman Empire. In the rural parts of the Empire, families wanted their children to receive a modern education and to become a part of the rising political and bureaucratic elites. On the other hand, the state, with its modern educational institutions, wanted to impose its own ideology on the social spheres and increase the loyalty to the sultan. Despite the lack of necessary staff and all other malfunctions, modern educational institutions and modernist

³²⁷ Regulation of General Education (*Maarifi Umumiye Nizamnamesi*), became a turning point for both Ottoman education system and transition to modern Turkey, please see: Akyüz, Yahya. “Türkiye’de Öğretmen Yetiştirmenin 160. Yılında Darülmuallimin’in İlk Yıllarına Toplu ve Yeni Bir Bakış.” *Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi* 20: 2 (1990): 17-58.

³²⁸ Reorganisation of the muslim judges (*kadi*) system is the reflection of the deep mental breakdown in the Ottoman Empire. It is the most visible indicator that the meaning of Islam for the Ottoman Empire had changed. For the radical change in Ottoman muslim judges (*kadi*) system, please see: Akiba, Jun. “From Kadı to Naib: Reorganization of the Ottoman Shria Judiciary in the Tanzimat Period” *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies* Ed. Colin Imber, Rhoads Murphey, Keiko Kiyotaki. New York: Tauris Press, 2005.

aims paved the way for elites with a Western point of view to rise. Despite Abdulhamid's efforts about making madrasahs more effective, the rapid expansion of a modern educational system caused madrasahs to work inefficiently. People coming from the modern educational system, as intellectuals with a rational way of thinking, challenged Abdulhamid's despotism and the doctrines of the old madrasah system. At the beginning of the 20th century, madrasahs lost almost all of their effect, and the modern educational institutions gained a victory.³²⁹

Ramazan argued that, education occupied a big space in Muhammed Abdu's idea of reform, and added that he criticized the religious education in the schools in Egypt. Abdu believed in the priority of education, and the education of the people, and thought of a reform project considering this. According to him, the only way to rescue Muslim societies from ignorance and foreign invasion was to make a reform in education. Abdu did not foresee a religious education; instead, a modern education, which could improve people's skills, should be adopted. A rescue from the dullness and introversion of the old religious education was necessary.³³⁰ Tarık Zafer Tunaya expressed that, Islamists elaborated on the reasons why the Islamic world lagged behind and reached a consensus on the necessity of scientific research and reforms in education. In the Constitutional Period, the reform process of the madrasahs continued. According to the reform program adopted in 1910, the madrasah system was changed and modern courses, such as geography and history, were added to the curriculum. Moreover, philosophy and Turkish courses were decided to be instructed. In this process, the Islamists supported these reform movements and expressed that, madrasahs were established with high hopes, but at that point, since they were not able to work properly, a serious reform was necessary. Furthermore, they declared that, schools that taught commerce and art should

³²⁹ Karpat, *Politicization*, pp. 98-103.

³³⁰ Tarık Ramazan, *İslami Yenilenmenin Kökenleri*, trans. Ayşe Meral (İstanbul: Anka Yayınları, 2005), pp. 132-135.

be opened, besides madrasahs. This offer was considered as ‘*şayan-ı ehemmiyet*’ (favorable and significant) and sent to the Shaykh al-Islam (*Meşihat*) in order for it to be applied.³³¹

II.3.6. Abdulhamid II

Although the Islamists opposed Abdulhamid II until he was dethroned, the language that they used between the process of the declaration of the Second Constitutional Period and his dethronement differed. Ismail Kara indicated that, the difference of language and tone was a product of ‘the one, who holds the power, is good. If there is a malignity, it does not come from the top, it is because of people around’ understanding which is still valid in Turkey. He also argued that, the religious identity, because of him being caliph as the sultan, and the impropriety of direct opposition towards the president in terms of Islamic traditions, prevented the criticisms towards Abdulhamid II. But, in the dethronement fatwa of Abdulhamid II, there were many accusations against him such as: the removal of many important subjects, in terms of Islamic law, from religious books, the prohibition and even burning of many Islamic law books, the using and wasting of the treasury for unnecessary expenses, the killing and imprisoning of people without any legal explanation, and the attempts to disable Muslim rule without keeping his promise. Ismail Kara argued that, dethronement fatwa of Abdulhamid II included harsh accusations, but after his dethronement, in the writings of Islamists, there were even more serious criticisms against him. In the writings of Islamists, it was argued that, he pulled down the level of the science classes in order to keep his authoritarian rule alive and he put a lot of pressure on the madrasahs. Abdulhamid II was shown as a person who was against living a life in accordance with religion and sharia. Moreover, it was reflected that, even though he did not bear the name of caliph, he betrayed Islam and became the enemy of the religion and nation. Furthermore, it was argued that, he did not support Islamic unity and even became its enemy, and caused the

³³¹ Tunaya, *İslamcılık*, p. 77-80.

power of the Jews around Jerusalem to increase. Since he limited freedom, a society was produced where people were demoralized and no one trusted each other, was put forward. He also prevented books, newspapers, and journals from being published and became the enemy of the science.³³²

II.4. Conclusion

Islamism emerged, as a notion outside of traditional Islam, as a result of the transformation in the 19th century. Since Islamist intellectuals did not come from the madrasah tradition, the utilization of the press to interact with people and their efforts for dominating the political arena differed them from the institutions and practices of traditional Islam. The emergence date of Islamism as a political ideology was contentious, but the core of the Islamism could be seen in the Young Ottomans. The basics of Islamism were grounded theologically by Muhammed Abdu and Rashid Reda, and discussed in a political framework after the Second Constitutional Period in the Ottoman capital.

The traditional religion-state, religion-society and religion-law relations shaped in history within the context of reform processes started with the *Rescript of Gülhane* and the *Edict of Reform* were overcome in the Ottoman Empire. In this sense, the New Ottomans' claims about Islamic jurisprudence being sufficient to regulate modern state law and efforts to introduce modern notions such as democracy and parliament with *meşveret* and *şura*, pushed them to comply with the traditional borders of Islam. Muhammed Abdu and Rashid Rıda, on the other hand, tried to bring a new interpretation to the notion of Islam, in which the traditional borders were violated during the religious reform discussions. Islamist thinkers after 1908, by referring to the New Ottomans and Muhammed Abdu and Rashed Rıda, and by implicitly inheriting them, argued with an opposition movement like Westernism. On the

³³² Kara, *İslamcılık Akımı*, pp. 128-140.

other hand, the development of Western civilization in science was recognized and with the claims that their roots were in the Islamic civilization, a transition basis between the two civilizations was desired to be formed. Yet, the desire to protect the moral principles of Islam was underlined.

While the Muslim world started to ask for help because of the increasing colonialist policies of the West, Islamists thinkers criticized Abdulhamid II, who made history with his Islamist policies. Although Jamaladdin al-Afgani wanted to gather all Muslims under the Ottoman Caliphate roof within the framework of Islamic unity, he eventually contradicted with Abdulhamid II. Abdu and Rashid Rida acted precariously about the Ottoman Caliphate and did not start a discussion against the caliphate. Despite this, Islamists in the capital interpreted the caliphate differently from its traditional meaning with the influence of opposition against Abdulhamid II. Until the Ottoman Empire fell, a healthy framework could not be drawn including the caliphate, Islamic unity, and religious reform and setting their place in the Western and Islamic civilizations.

III. LIFE OF MUHAMMED KURD ALI

I will even deal with the whole life of Kurd Ali from his birth in 1876 until his death in 1953; this thesis' subject is Kurd Ali's *Al-Muqtabas* journal, which was published in Cairo between 1906 and 1908, and in Damascus during the 1908-1914 period. I find it proper to deal with his birth and growth process, for the opportunity to understand better his ideas in *Al-Muqtabas*. By shortly defining the process after 1914, I wanted to refer to the influence of Kurd Ali's ideas expressed in *Al-Muqtabas*, on his life in general.

In the beginning of this chapter, I will question the impact of the reformist ideas emerging in Syria on Kurd Ali, by taking into consideration the environment where Muhammed Kurd Ali was born and raised. By emphasizing on Taher al-Jazayiri's impact on Kurd Ali's life, I will mention what Tahir al-Jazayiri corresponds to in Arab-Turk relations, thus pointing out the position of Muhammed Kurd Ali within Arab-Turk relations. I will address the impacts of his education, his knowledge of Turkish and French on his intellectual development, and the Arab tradition of thought and his relationship with the modern European thought. I will analyze Kurd Ali's career, a man who received a good education and did interdisciplinary readings, how he started journalism, and how he got famous as a journalist. I will then focus on how he became the head of the Arab Academy of Sciences and the similarities between the Arab Academy of Sciences and *Al-Muqtabas*.

By mentioning the intellectuals he met in Egypt and also in Syria, and their place within modern Arab thought, I will try to position Kurd Ali's place within modern Arab thought. I will do this by telling about Muhammed Abdu -who had a very important position within Islamism- and Kurd Ali's relationship and how it started. Then I will continue with his relationship with Rashed Rida; therefore, indicating the point where Kurd Ali met Islamism. I will also address his relationship with orientalist and how he used them within the context of

his trips to Europe. I will scrutinize a major part of the important pieces of Kurd Ali (who started to write in his early years) and indicate their content. I will also mention his trips to Europe, with their reasons and consequences.

III.1. Where He Grew Up³³³

Muhammed Kurd Ali was born in 1876, when Serbia and Montenegro declared war against the Ottoman Empire, and during its struggle with the insurgency in Bulgaria's Plovdiv region. Kurd Ali, who stated that his ancestors came from Iraq's Sulaymaniyah province in the beginning of the 19th century to Damascus as a Kurdish family, was born to a family with a farming father named Khalifa Abdurrezzaq and a Cherkes mother with Caucasian origins, in the East Ghouta³³⁴ region of Damascus. Khalifa Abdurrezzaq was involved in commercial activity and bought a farm in Ghouta and with the profit he gained through commerce, paid utmost attention to the education of his children and bought a bookshelf for them. On the other hand, his mother, as a lady interested in scientific affairs, brought Ali with her to attend the discussions of Sheikh Muhammed Tantawi. Ali was acquainted with books there.³³⁵

Muhammed Kurd Ali defines himself as the following³³⁶:

“I am a Kurd, Arab and Muslim. My father and grandfather have Kurdish origins, and a person cannot choose his origins. I belong to the Kurdish race yet my mind, heart, and my language is Arabic. Islam is my

³³³ At the end of the 18th century, and at the beginning of 19th century, 12 families took the political leadership role in Syria. It is possible to gather these families under titles such as landowner/bureaucrats and landowner/ulama. Bureaucratic families were more powerful since they had positions in the civil bureaucracy. These 12 families can be described as the cream of political and social elite. They occupied significant places considering their lands and positions. For detailed information, please see: Khoury, *Urban Notables*, pp. 44-45. In the later 19th century, new social elite started to emerge apart from the traditional power parameters. Kurd Ali and many other intellectuals I studied on, were the members of average families different from those social elite. But these average families' members gained positions in the political and social area via new educational institutions and communication instruments, thus playing significant roles in the future of Syria.

³³⁴ Kurd Ali wrote something about Guta when he grew up, and noted 1949 Guta/Cesrin in the preface. Please see: Muhammed Kurd Ali. *Ghoutatu 'd-Dimashq*. Damascus: Teraqqi Press, 1952.

³³⁵ Muhammed Kurd Ali, *Muzekkirat*, 1. Cild (Damascus: Terakki Press, 1948), pp. 5-13.

³³⁶ I did all of the translations from the Arabic texts used in this thesis. I grounded on a general usage in Turkish literature for the translation and transfer.

religion. A person who wants to go into more depth in the Arabic language and make research on the civilization and history of Arab people has to have an Arabic heart, mind, and identity.”³³⁷

Vanis al-Harasha, in his book named “Muhammed Kurd Ali’s Thought: Call for Reform” in which he analyzed his ideas on reform and described the political environment before and during Kurd Ali’s birth as:

“After the 1830s, Western missionaries started to arrive in Damascus province and there started to emerge missionary schools and art-literature institutions in Lebanon. These schools and literature clubs enabled the national consciousness to increase starting from the second half of the 19th century in Damascus.”³³⁸

Another element of the ‘Arab Renaissance’ was the emergence of scientific and literary societies in Damascus with the participation of scientists, intellectuals, and men of literature. For example in 1868, the Syrian Science Society was established in Beirut and then was recognized as a branch of the Ottoman Science Society. Many important educated men emerged in this period and contributed to ‘Arab Renaissance.’ Among these men we could name Abdurrahman Kawakibi (1902) who tried to draw attention to despotism (*istibdat yönetimi*) and called for an awakening among the community, Nasif Yaziji (1871) who aimed at the betterment of the Arab culture, and Ahmad Fares Shıdyaq (1887) who was a pioneer of revival of Arab literature. Also, there were reformists scholars emerging and they also contributed significantly to the ‘Arab Renaissance.’ Butrus al-Bustani (1883), Muhammed Rashed Rıda (1835), Tahır al-Jazayırı (1820), and Muhammed Kurd Ali (1953) can be listed among these scholars. Harasha stated that during this period, movements of Arab nationalism also emerged, but the process of overall independence and self-identity conscience among Arab people evolved really slowly and could only appear at the beginning of the early 20th

³³⁷ Iyad Khalid al-Tabba’, *Muhammed Kurd Ali: al-Muarrikhu’l-Bahhasati wa’l-Sahafıyyi’l-Adıb* (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam Press, 2008), pp.11-16.

³³⁸ It is possible to find same interpretations regarding the period in Kurd Ali. Please see: “Nahdatu’l-Arabiyyeti’l-Akhıra.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 3 (1327-1909).

century. Within this context, research activities on Arab language, history, and civilization increased.³³⁹

Shafiq Jabri in his work named “Speaking about Muhammed Kurd Ali”, which is one of the first studies on Muhammed Kurd Ali, explained the environment in which Kurd Ali was born into as:

“Ottoman governors were not pleased with being in Syria. The pleased governor was the governor who just got assigned to somewhere else. The longest stay was a maximum of a couple of months and then the governors found their way back. When governors entered into reformist efforts in the region, they could not succeed due to orders and financial demands from the capital city. If a governor was angry with the people of a town, he would send troops there to burn down all of the trees. The best governor was the one who took poor people’s money and built a mosque or an Islamic monastery (*tekke*) and provided financial support to men of literature.”³⁴⁰

According to Jabri, when Kurd Ali was born, Syria was suffering from the oppression of Ottoman governors who shed blood and extorted people’s belongings. Jabri claimed that Kurd Ali was born into this persecution and once he grew up, he learned the cruelties of Ottoman governors (including Cezzar Pasha) through readings about the past.³⁴¹ Yet, when we take that Jabri made these arguments in the middle of the 1950s into consideration and thinking that in that period there was a prevailing anti-Ottoman discourse to build Syrian/Arab national identity, Jabri’s comments on Kurd Ali are mostly anachronistic.

Tahir al-Jazayiri can be named as the most important person who created the most influential impact on Kurd Ali, since his childhood. Tahir al-Jazayiri was working as

³³⁹ Wanis al-Harasha, *Fikru Muhammad Kurd Ali wa Da’watuhi’l-Islahiyya* (Omman: Yazuri Press, 2006), pp. 12-16.

³⁴⁰ Shafiq Jabri. *Muhadarat an-Muhammed Kurd Ali*. Beirut: Risale Press, 1957., Alusi also refers to the same; please see: Jamalleddin Alusi, *Muhammed Kurd Ali* (Bagdat: Dar al-Jumhuriye, 1966), p. 11.

³⁴¹ Jabri, *Kurd Ali*, p. 8.

representative of some newspapers of Beirut in Damascus when Kurd Ali was only a child.³⁴² When we take a quick look at Kurd Ali's memoirs, we can see that he discussed everything he did with Tahir al-Jazairi and cared about al-Jazairi's comments on the people he met a lot. It was noted that he was deeply impressed by Tahir al-Jazairi both in Islamic sciences and modern thought.³⁴³ It is an important example of the impact of Tahir al-Jazairi on Kurd Ali when we see that he spared forty pages for Tahir al-Jazairi, who was a contemporary name then, in his book where he examined the important scientists of the Middle Ages.³⁴⁴

III.3. His Education

Muhammed Kurd Ali noted that when he went to Muhammed Tantavi's house with his mother, he saw the books on the shelves, asked his mother what they were and since he was so impressed by the glorious looks of the books, he started to grow an interest in being involved with books. In 1882, the year the British landed troops in Egypt, when Kurd Ali was six, he was enrolled in the Cavalry School and learned reading, writing, elementary level physics, mathematics, and religious knowledge. He was enrolled in the Military High School the year the Ottomans signed the Bucharest Treaty (1886), started to learn Turkish and French. Since his French education remained weak, his father hired a private French teacher for him, and he got an education in French for three years at home. During this period, he improved his capabilities in translations in Arabic to French and French to Arabic. He graduated from high school with an average degree and never stopped during his working life and continued to improve himself. He read physics and chemistry in French to improve his French. Furthermore, he studied Arabic literature and religion and even took Persian courses;

³⁴² Kurd Ali, *Muzekkirat*, Vol. 1, p. 25.

³⁴³ Commins, describes al-Jazairi, as 'the bridge that connected the Young Turks and Arabists.' One of the prominents of the New Ottomans, Ziya Pasha, had been to Damascus for 4 months and became friends with Tahir al-Jazairi. In the following period, Tahir al-Jazairi, had close relations with Turkish statesmen working there. Please see: David Dean Commins. *Osmanlı Suriye'sinde Islahat Hareketleri*, trans. Selahattin Ayaz (İstanbul: Yöneliş Yayınları, 1993), pp. 182-188.

³⁴⁴ Muhammed Kurd Ali. *Kunuzu'l-Ajdad* (Damascus: Dar al-Fikir, 1983), pp. 9-48.

but then he did not stay on top of his Persian and forgot the language. It was during this period when he met Tahir al-Jazayırı, who left a significant impression on him, attended courses of scholars such as Sayyad Muhammed Mubaraq, Shaykh Salım al-Buharı, and studied Arabic language, the history of Islam, and philosophy.³⁴⁵ Within the context of his private readings, he read al-Harırı's "*Maqamat*," al-Harazmî's "*Rasail*," and the work of famous names of Islamic thought such as al-Sabı, al-Isfahanı, and al-Zamahsharı. He also produced work on the Koran, rhetoric (*Belagat*), and the Prophet Muhammad's sayings/deeds (*Hadiths*), memorized many Arabic poems (*divan*) such as *Muallaqat-ı Sab'a* and half of *al-Mutanabbı*. Kurd Ali says on the subject: "I burnt al-Gazalı, Ibnı Hazm, Ibnı Taymıya, Ibnı Qayyim to my memory, read spiritual sciences directly from the main resources."³⁴⁶ He read many French philosophers and thinkers like Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Bentham, Spencer, Füle, Renan, and Simon, and followed many literature, history and sociology journals.³⁴⁷ This education allowed Muhammed Kurd Ali a chance to develop an impressive and creative style in writing. He expressed Arab history, traditions, attitude, and community in the way as competent as the Arabic literature experts. So, Muhammed Kurd Ali affected his periods and the following periods' Arabic writers' styles. Also, what he learned from Western writers provided him a clearer and more descriptive writing style.³⁴⁸

III.3. His Duties³⁴⁹

After graduation from high school, Kurd Ali started to work at the Foreigners Office of the Damascus Governorate when the Ottomans were dealing with the Armenian insurgencies (1892) and started to improve his Turkish.³⁵⁰ After working there for five years, he started to

³⁴⁵ Muhammed Kurd Ali. *Khitatush-Sham*, Vol. 6 (Damascus: Al-Nuri Press, 1983), pp. 333-334.

³⁴⁶ Al-Tabba', *Kurd Ali*, p. 21.

³⁴⁷ Kurd Ali, *Khitatush-Sham*, Vol.6, pp. 334-335.

³⁴⁸ Jabri, *Kurd Ali*, p. 102.

³⁴⁹ For a chronologic bibliography of Kurd Ali please see. Appendix,1.

³⁵⁰ Al-Tabba', *Kurd Ali*, p. 19.

work as the Chief Editor of the first newspaper in Damascus “*Sham*” in 1897.³⁵¹ He left his position as a civil servant in 1898 and focused on his editorship for three years.³⁵² He was invited to Cairo in 1900 -when the Ottomans started to build the Hejaz railway- to be the editor of the biggest newspapers in the Arab world named “*al-Muqtataf*.”³⁵³ He started to publish *the Al-Muqtabas journal* in 1906 in Cairo. After 1908, when the Second Constitutional Period was established, he returned back to Damascus and continued to publish *Al-Muqtabas* in Damascus. Also, he published *Al-Muqtabas* as a daily newspaper there, which was a first for Damascus. *Al-Muqtabas* was prohibited by Nazım Pasha³⁵⁴, the Governor of Syria in 1914, but started to be published again with the encouragement of the new governor, Cemal Pasha³⁵⁵ until 1917. Cemal Pasha asked Kurd Ali to work as the editor of daily newspaper “*al-Sharq*” instead of Amır Shakıb Arslan in 1916. He finally escaped from the oppression of Cemal Pasha in 1918 and went to Istanbul to trade. Yet, when Cemal Pasha’s oppression continued in Istanbul too, he gave up on trade³⁵⁶ and continued publishing *Al-Muqtabas* in 1919 with the help of Amır Faysal bın Husayn.³⁵⁷ In 1918, the Damascus Military Governor, Rıda Pasha al-Raqabı, suggested to Kurd Ali the idea of establishing Education Council to contribute to the Arabic language and to protect the historical heritage of the Islamic community. Due to Raqabı’s persistence on Kurd Ali, he accepted this demand

³⁵¹ Sûriyye was the first official province newspaper to be published in Syria, in 1865. The Furât newspaper, which was published in Aleppo, followed it. Ğadîrû’l-Furât was another newspaper published in Aleppo in 1867. In the same year, the first private newspaper, eş-Şâm, was published in Dımaşk, and ed-Dımaşk followed it in 1878. Eş-Şehbâ, which was published by Abdurrahman b. Ahmed el-Kevâkibî and Hâşım Attâr in 1877, became the first newspaper in Arabic in Aleppo. After the declaration of Second Constitutional Period, the press found more space in Syria. Please see: Tomar, Cengiz. “Suriye”. DİA. 2009 ed.

³⁵² The owner and the last reader of the newspaper was the same person. Thus, he does not allow expressions which can push them into conflict with the Ottoman ruling. The newspaper of *Sham* was a turning point for Kurd Ali. His passion for journalism started there. Please see: Kurd Ali. *Muzekkirat*, Vol. 1, p. 51.

³⁵³ For Kurd Ali’s comments on Muktataf, please see: “Majallatu’l-Muqtataf.” *Al-Muqtabas* I: 4 (1324-1906).

³⁵⁴ For detailed information on Nazım Pasha and the reasons behind the prohibition of *Al-Muqtabas*, please see: Kurd Ali, *Muzekkirat*, Vol. 1, pp. 64-88.

³⁵⁵ For an extensive analysis about Cemal Pasha’s duty of governor in Syria, please see: Çiçek, M. Talha. *War and State Formation in Syria: Cemal Pasha's Governorate During World War I, 1914-1917*. New York: Routledge Press, 2014.

³⁵⁶ The relations between Kurd Ali and Cemal Pasha were pretty romantic/dramatic. For detailed information, please see: Kurd Ali, *Muzekkirat*, Vol. 1, pp. 108-111.

³⁵⁷ Kurd Ali, *Khitat al-Sham*. Vol. 6, pp. 331-347.

and was assigned to the head of this Education Council consisting of men of literature and the *ulama*. However, later, due to a conflict with Satı al-Husrı, he talked to Raqabı Pasha about a format change of the Council to turn it into a sort of Academy of Sciences. Although Raqabı Pasha accepted this offer, the authorities did not give sufficient support to the Academy. During the French mandate, the Academy started again to function; the number of its members was increased, and it became more active. Due to political problems, the relationship between Kurd Ali and the Academy of Sciences was full of ups and downs.³⁵⁸ When it was 1920, he became the Minister of Education, and had to leave this position in 1923 due to a misunderstanding between him and the French mandate government. He started to work as an Arabic teacher in 1924 at the Damascus University Faculty of Law, and then had to leave it due to some problems. He became the Minister of Education in 1928 to Shaykh Tajaddın Husrı's government.³⁵⁹ The Minister of Education of the time, Mustafa al-Shihabı, asked him to become the President of the Academy again, yet withdrew his request later. He was re-elected to the Arab Academy of Sciences in 1941 by French mandate representatives and local authorities, and remained at that position until his death in 1953.³⁶⁰

It first occurred to Kurd Ali to establish an Arab Academy of Sciences in 1909 when he visited the French Academy of Sciences during his stay in Paris. Kurd Ali expressed himself on the subject as, "I thought to myself if it was going to be possible for us to establish similar institutions. We always conduct work individually, yet can never implement collective, institutional studies."³⁶¹ The Arab Academy of Sciences under Muhammed Kurd Ali's administration conducted many important studies to develop the Arabic language and deepen the Arab culture. Its members produced and published important pieces. These studies were

³⁵⁸ Kurd Ali, *Muzekkirat*, Vol. 1, pp. 277-286.

³⁵⁹ Kurd Ali, *Khitatush-Sham*, Vol. 6, pp. 331-347.

³⁶⁰ Al Tabba', *Kurd Ali*, pp.23-26.

³⁶¹ Al-Harashe, *Kurd Ali*, p. 31., Al-Hareshe, cites these statements of Kurd Ali from his book named "Gharaibu'l-Gharb."

defined as the ‘revival of the *ulama* of Damascus in the 20th century’ and continued to develop cultural studies and publications without being influenced by the political events in Syria.³⁶²

III.4. The Period He Lived in and his Contemporaries

Muhammed Kurd Ali did not have good relations only with *ulama* of Damascus, but also in Iraq and Egypt as well; he even improved his affection with orientalists. Ali, who had his first visit to Egypt in 1901, developed good relations with the intellectuals and scholars of the time. Ali notes as:

“When I first went to visit Egypt, my friends Rafiq Beg al-Azm and Rashid Rida introduced me to Egyptian intellectuals. It was a pleasure to meet especially Muhammed Abdu and members of *Dar al-Ulum*. Muhammed Abdu attracted all sorts of people around him, since he was the mufti. *Dar al-Ulum* graduates were all very similar to each other and they were having their meeting each evening at Metatiya coffee house. Sheikhs, ‘*bey*s,’ ‘*effendis*’ and pashas attended the meetings. Other students of *Dar al-Ulum* who attended the meetings were: Muhammed al-Mahdi, Ahmad al-Iskandarī, Muhammed al-Hudari, Abdulaziz Chavish, Hasan Tawfiq al-Adl, Sultan Muhammed, Ahmed Ibrahim, Hasan Mansur, Muhammed Dıyab, and Muhammed Abdulmuttalib. Most of the participants of the meetings had studied at *Dar al-Ulum* or different madrasahs. Although some scholars and men of literature did not think in the same way with us, some were attending the meetings on and off. Some of these irregular participants can be named as Ali Bahchat, Ismail Rafat, Mustafa Lutfi Manfuluti, Muhammed Lutfu Jum’a and Ahmad Miftah. Although the journalists had another meeting place -*Isplandar Bar*- on Ibrahim Pasha Street, there were some journalists among the participants of the meetings as well; such as Muhammed Mas’ud, Hafiz Awad, Dawud Baraqat, and Yusuf al-Hazin. Among Syrian *ulama* and men of literature, Suleyman al-Bostani, Rafiq al-Azm, Shibli Shumayyil, Abdurrahman al-Kawakibi, Khalil Saada, Rashid Rida, Halil Matran, and Shaykh Tahir al-Jazairi attended the meetings. Sometimes two well-known scholars Ahmed Timur Beg and Ahmed Zeki Beg attended the meetings as well.”³⁶³

³⁶² El-Tabba’, *Kurd Ali*, pp. 34-35.

³⁶³ Kurd Ali, *Muzekkirat*, Vol. 2, pp. 251-259.

As one can see, Kurd Ali established good friendships with the well-known intellectuals of the time in Egypt and also the *ulama*, attained comprehensive knowledge on ideational problems of the Arab and Ottoman world, fuelled by the intellectual discussions there. Kurd Ali notes a long list of Egypt's renowned intellectuals, scholars, journalists and bureaucrats and tells how he met them, how he read their books, and exchanged ideas with them by praising them.³⁶⁴ Also, Kurd Ali, who had good relations with the states' dignitaries, knew King Fuad and Faruk. He was offered several different positions at the Egyptian Palace; yet, since he wanted to keep his relations with Egypt on an intellectual level, he refused any political ties.

When Kurd Ali started to publish *Al-Muqtabas* in 1906, he was meeting with Iraqi intellectuals as well. The friends he attained during these meetings, which he initiated with Iraqi intellectuals in Egypt, continued after he returned to Damascus. An Iraqi Christian man of the cloth, Anestas Mari al-Karamli, was in contact with Kurd Ali since the day *Al-Muqtabas* started to be published and sent some writings to be included in it. Furthermore, Kurd Ali, who developed good relations with Iraq's outstanding poets, published poems of al-Rasafi and Jamel Sahawi Al-Zahawi. When Kurd Ali became the head of the Arab Academy of Sciences, it was seen that he offered membership to the Academy to Iraq's featured intellectuals and poets. One of these names he offered membership to, first were Mahmud Shuqru al-Alusi and Papa Anestas Mari al-Karamli.³⁶⁵

Similar to his good relations with Arab *ulamas*, men of literature and politicians, Kurd Ali also developed good relations with Orientalists. Shafiq Jabri stated on Kurd Ali's relations with the Orientalists:

³⁶⁴ Muhammed Kurd Ali, in his work called "*Muasirun*," analyzed the prominent intellectuals that we have mentioned here and made a description of the intellectuals of his period. Yet, since there is no direct relationship with this thesis, I did not give more details. For more, please see: Kurd Ali, Muhammed. *Muasirun*. Damascus: Abu Bakr Press, 1980.

³⁶⁵ Al-Tabba', *Kurd Ali*, pp. 52-54.

“He accumulated an impressive knowledge on Orientalists and their books. He knew a lot about the Western people who studied the Middle East and Arabs, and knew most of his contemporaries. He knew most of the contemporary Orientalists and made comments about them at private sessions. He did not know only the Orientalists in Europe, but also the USA, and followed publications of universities such as Princeton, Chicago, and Yale. Thus, it would not be an exaggeration to call Kurd Ali an expert on Orientalism. He visited Europe many times, met with the Orientalists, and attended their conferences and seminars.”³⁶⁶

And Kurd Ali stated regarding his meetings with the Orientalists:

“I had the chance to meet many important Orientalists in Egypt, Damascus, and Europe and I had the opportunity to spend time and work with them. Meanwhile, I observed their methods of research, writing, and publishing. Furthermore, they helped me to conduct research on Western civilization. Also, they shared the literature that they had on Orientalist studies with me.”³⁶⁷

“When I met with Orientalists, I felt quite comfortable since they know our traditions well and they were the ones who had extensive knowledge on our civilization and who were the closest to us among Western intellectuals. I was learning new publications, owing to them. I would not be exaggerating if I say that they are a bridge between the West and the East. If they thought it was going to be beneficial for them or for their country, they would offer treats to you. Since they know about our traditional habits, even though they are poor, they would invite us to their houses to offer treats. They place scientific activities above everything else, including serving their country.”³⁶⁸

The Duke of Sermonate, Leone Caetani (1869-1935), who developed many important pieces on Orientalism, had created a huge library on Orientalist studies. Kurd Ali, who had developed good relations with Caetani, went to Rome in 1914, gave him issues of *Al-Muqtabas* and studied for a month at Caetani’s legendary library. Then, he thanked him for his hospitality and asked for his permission to leave for Switzerland.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁶ Jabri, *Kurd Ali*, pp. 32-34.

³⁶⁷ El-Tabba’, *Kurd Ali*, p. 56., Tabba’, quoted Kurd Ali’s expressions from a writing of his in the Arab Academy of Sciences Journal.

³⁶⁸ Kurd Ali, *Muzekkirat*, Vol. 1, pp. 186-188.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 186-188.

In order to understand the connections of Kurd Ali with reformist/modernist Islamic ideas, we need to emphasize the important role of Muhammed Abdu in his life. He noted his admiration of Abdu as:

“I was in love with Muhammed Abdu those days, proud of my commitment to him, liked his speeches and rhetoric, surprised by his life and freethought. I was attending his interpretation classes he offered twice a week in Ezher, el-Revak el-Abbasi, and also to his private discussions at his house in Ain Shams. I encountered nothing but love during the first moment I met him, so this made me his slave. Shaykh introduced me to the community with praise. I do not think that he had any other purpose than taking a young, nameless man’s hand and carry him to fame, when he pulled me into what I did (journalism). I had the chance to meet a variety of people of scholars, judges, politicians, and others at Muhammed Abdu’s house in Ain Shams. Muhammed Abdu, besides his broad wisdom, was a politician who used politics to the advantage of the nation.”³⁷⁰

III.5. His Publications³⁷¹

Muhammed Kurd Ali, apart from *Al-Muqtabas*, left 43 books (21 being compilations, 6 investigations, 7 translations) and hundreds of articles behind. Furthermore, he gave speeches at symposiums, 64 times³⁷² at the Arab Academy of Sciences from 1921 until 1945. We can list Kurd Ali’s notable works as:

Islamic Administration under Arab Rule: is a book of collection of presentations he made during the Ramadan of 1933, at eight symposiums which leading intellectuals attended. In this book, which was published in 1934 in Egypt, administrative governments starting from Prophet Muhammed and Rashidun Caliphs period, to *al-Muqtadir* period were focused on.³⁷³

Islam and Arab Civilization: is a piece that describes the Arabs’ situation before and after Islam. The impact of Islam and Arabic language on the conquered territories were analyzed.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 251-252.

³⁷¹ For a chronologic list of Kurd Ali publications please see. Appendix,2.

³⁷² For an extensive research on Kurd Ali’s symposium speeches and articles published in the Arab Academy of Sciences, please see: Jamaledin Alusi, *Muhammed Kurd Ali* (Bagdad: al-Jumhuriya Press,1966), pp. 143-149.

³⁷³ El-Tabba’, *Kurd Ali*, pp. 88-90.

Some parts of this book were offered at a conference in Egypt, and at the Royal Geography Society building under the title of “Islamic Administration.” This book was first published in Cairo in 1934 and then was used as a study book at the Faculty of Literature.³⁷⁴ ***Our Word and Our Actions:*** Kurd Ali, who expressed his social, political, and historical opinion in articles, mentions a variety of topics in this book such as civilization, tradition, order, past and future, depression, revival, history, politics, sheikhs, east-west, caliphate, Arab unity, and women’s right. It was published in Egypt in 1946.³⁷⁵ ***Experts of Rescript:*** some parts of this book were offered at a conference of the Arab Academy of Sciences and then were published in the Journal of the Academy. It was a production of Kurd Ali’s twenty yearlong work. This contributed significantly to the development of the Arabic language and many experts in literature addressed it.³⁷⁶

Scientific Committee to Islam’s Center of Caliphate: during the first years of WWI, the Governor of Damascus, Cemal Pasha, sent a group among the Damascus *ulama*, in which Kurd Ali was involved, to Istanbul and Gallipoli and asked them to write a book about their visit. Kurd Ali published the book, which tells about Enver Pasha’s Damascus and Hijaz trips under his and three other journalists’ name. This book, which was published in Beirut in 1916, contains important information on Istanbul and Galipolli in that period.³⁷⁷ ***Arithmetics in Islam:*** this was his first symposium offered at the Arab Academy of Sciences and was

³⁷⁴ Kurd Ali dealt with many subjects such as alcohol, veiling, and interests which were discussed by Europeans lately. He also dealt with many ‘false’ interpretations of orientalist about Islam. He analyzed the situation of Arabs before and after Islam, their contributions to science, influences on Western science and the Andalusia Arab civilization. It is the most referred work of Kurd Ali considering perceiving modern Arab thought. Please see: Kurd Ali, Muhammad. *Al-Islam wa’l-Hadaratu’l-Arabiyya*. Qairo, 1968., Since this thesis topic is Kurd Ali’s thoughts published in Al-Muqtabas journal between 1906-1914, we will not discuss his opinions in this book.

³⁷⁵ El-Tabba, *Kurd Ali*, pp. 92-94.

³⁷⁶ Kurd Ali, *Muzekkirat*, Vol. 1, pp. 318-319. Book was finally re-published in 2003. Please see: Kurd Ali, Muhammad. *Umarau’l-Bayan*. Qairo: Afak al-Arabiya Press, 2003.

³⁷⁷ El-Tabba, *Kurd Ali*, pp. 96-98.

published in the Journal of the Academy.³⁷⁸ He published the same subject in 1908 in *Al-Muqtabas* under “Arithmetics and Four Operations in Islam.”³⁷⁹ ***Egyptian Rule in Damascus:*** a symposium he offered at the Arab Academy of Sciences in 1925 and discussed Muhammed Ali and when he seized power in Damascus.³⁸⁰ ***Khitatush-Sham:***³⁸¹ is one of Kurd Ali’s most outstanding and most cited works. “Writings about Damascus” can be defined as the biggest modern encyclopedia that involves historical and literary information about Damascus, and it was written with a technique that combined Kurd Ali’s two important features: his historian and literary sides. Once Kurd Ali noticed that he had to perform a serious literature review to write this book, he went to Rome and searched for a month at the library of great Orientalist, the Duke of Sermonate, Leone Caetani. His eight articles about the history of Damascus were published in the “Muqtataf” journal in 1899, which showed us that the idea of a book had been in Kurd Ali’s mind for a long time.³⁸² What Kurd Ali referred to as Damascus was the region between the *Nile* and *Euphrates* rivers, the Toros Mountains, and the *Badiye* region. He scrutinized the history of Damascus starting from the pre-Islamic period until the Ottoman times. ***City of Poem and Magic Damascus:*** the first publication of this book in which he tackled the history of Damascus from the pre-Arabic seizures to his own period, was in 1944 in Cairo, and the second was in 1984 in Damascus.³⁸³ ***Enver Pasha’s Journeys to Hejaz:*** this talked about Enver Pasha’s journeys to Medina, Syria, and Palestine. Within the book, Enver Pasha’s route map of journeys containing Aleppo, Lebanon, Beirut, Damascus, Al-aqsa Mosque, Bi’r Seb’a, Al-Khalil, Arikha, Amman, and Madina, were discussed.³⁸⁴ ***Sheikh of al-***

³⁷⁸ Alusi, *Kurd Ali*, p. 148.

³⁷⁹ “Al-Hisabatu fi’l-Islam,” *Al-Muqtabas* 3: 9 (1326-1908).

³⁸⁰ Alusi, *Kurd Ali*, p. 148.

³⁸¹ Please See. Appendix, 3.

³⁸² Even though Kurd Ali wanted to publish his work in Egypt, he published them in Syria. For the publishing story of the work, please see: Kurd Ali, *Muzekkirat*, Vol. 1, p. 314.

³⁸³ Kurd Ali, Muhammed. *Dimashq: Madinetush-Shi’ru was-Sihru*. Damascus: Dar al-Fikr Press, 1984

³⁸⁴ The book was translated into Turkish considering its Arabic, French, and Ottoman copies. Please see: Kurd Ali, Muhammed. *Enver Paşa’nın Ortadoğu Seyahati*. Trans. Derya Aydın, Ahmet Şenel ve Sibel Ilgın. İstanbul: Doğu Kütüphanesi Yayınları, 2007.

Azhar Allame Maraghi: Kurd Ali discussed Allama Maraghi at symposiums of the Arab Academy of Sciences in 1945. It was published as a book later on. It was the fact that Maraghi was the teacher of Muhammed Abdu that motivated Kurd Ali to analyze Maraghi.³⁸⁵

Impressive Parts of the West: Kurd Ali described the book in the introduction as: “a social, historical, economic, and literary book and tackles France, England, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Hungary, the Balkans, Greece, Istanbul, Egypt, Damascus, and East-West relations.” The book involved the journeys of Kurd Ali to Europe between 1908-1908 and 1913-1914, which were published in *Al-Muqtabas*, and his observations in the third round of these trips in 1921-1922.³⁸⁶ **Ghouta of Damascus:** Muhammed Ali addressed the rural parts of Damascus where his family resided in this book, which was published in 1949 by the Arab Academy of Sciences.³⁸⁷ **Tradition and Modernity:** A compilation of his writings in newspapers such as “*Al-Muqtabas*” and “*Muayyad*,” and was published in Egypt in 1925.³⁸⁸ **Treasures of the Ancestors:** Kurd Ali mentions about the outstanding authors and their works on Arab history in this book. He spared fifty pages to Taher al-Jazairi in this piece, which was dedicated to his teacher Taher al-Jazairi. It was first published by the Arab Academy of Sciences in 1950.³⁸⁹ **Muzakkirat:**³⁹⁰ in this book he discussed a variety of topics from his period and his contemporaries, his personal life to the politicians and journalists of the period. This book, which was published in four volumes, is Kurd Ali’s most cited book.³⁹¹ **Our Contemporaries:** In this book, in which he analyzed the

³⁸⁵ El-Tabba’, *Kurd Ali*, pp. 115-117.

³⁸⁶ El-Tabba’, *Kurd Ali*, pp. 117-119.

³⁸⁷ For the second edition of book, please see: Kurd Ali, Muhammed. *Ghoutud-Dimashq*. Damascus: Taraqqi Press, 1952.

³⁸⁸ Kurd Ali, *Muzekkirat*, Vol. 1, p. 309.

³⁸⁹ The second edition of the book was published in Damascus; please see: Kurd Ali, Muhammed. *Kunuzu ’l-Ajdad*. Damascus: Dar al-Fikru Press, 1984.

³⁹⁰ Please See. Appendix, 4.

³⁹¹ Kurd Ali, Muhammad. *Al-Muzekkirat*. Damascus: Tarakkı Press, 1948. The first volume of this book was translated into Turkish; please see: Kurd Ali, Muhammad. *Bir Osmanlı-Arap Gazetecinin Anıları*. Trans. İbrahim Tüfekçi. İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2006.

period's leading intellectual thinkers, apart from many names from Damascus, Egypt and Iraq, he analyzed some Orientalists as well. Many names which stuck in the Arab intellectual's memory such as Amır Shaqıp Arslan, Rafiq al-Azm, Ibrahim Yazıjı, Ahmad Fathı Zaglul, Amin Ma'luf, Khalıl Mitran, Shıblı Shumayyıl, Rashıd Rıda, Muhammed Abdu, and Mustafa Abdurrazzaq were mentioned in this book.³⁹²

III.6. His Journeys

Al-Harasha praised Kurd Ali's trips and finds similarities with works such as Ibnı Fadlan's Russian travel book (*seyahatname*), trips that al-Suudı told in *Muruj al-Zaheb*, and the travel books of Ibnı Jubayr and Ibnı Batuta. He indicated that, Kurd Ali took his trips without looking for interest and even spent his own assets. He stood the gaff and believed that those trips had more significant aims.³⁹³ Regarding this subject, Al-Kharasha quotes from Kurd Ali:

“The main motivation of my trips was getting to know Western civilization better, and to make scientific research in person. After a long theoretical work, I wanted to create my work in accordance with analyses made in the field.”³⁹⁴

About the trips to the West, Kurd Ali stated that:

“People, who are going to the West have mainly touristic or commercial purposes. These two kinds are not suitable for my purposes. Because a merchant traveler does not care about meeting a Western intellectual, listening to him/her or reading an Arabic writing in his/her library. At most, he/she meets with colleagues and talks to them. Those who make touristic trips have the same purposes too.”³⁹⁵

³⁹² Kurd Ali, Muhammed. *Al-Muasırın*. Damascus: Abu Bakr Press, 1980.

³⁹³ Al-Harasha, *Fikru Kurd Ali*, pp. 36-37.

³⁹⁴ As a significant analysis of the journeys to the West in the Ottoman period, please see: Carter, Vaughn Findley. “An Ottoman Occidental in Europe: Ahmed Midhat Meets Madame Gülnar, 1889.” *The American Historical Review* 103:1 (February 1998): pp. 15-49.

³⁹⁵ Kurd Ali, *Muzekkırat*, Vol. 1, pp. 184-186.

In 1901, with the intention of studying in Paris, he left Damascus and departed for Egypt. He also wanted to visit Egypt. In Cairo, he was offered work in the biweekly newspaper called “*Raid al-Misri*.” After his stay of ten months in Cairo, he gave up going to France and returned to Damascus; but because of the allegations about distributing leaflets against the Ottomans, he had to leave Damascus and stayed in the rural regions of Damascus for a while. Right after these allegations turned out to be slander, he returned to Damascus. He mentioned that, the biggest gain of this period was meeting with Sheikh Muhammed Abdu. Kurd Ali, who went to Egypt again in 1905, aimed to publish a journal called *Al-Muqtabas*. In this context, when he was offered to become an editor in daily newspapers such as “*al-Muqtataf*” and “*Zahir*,” he thought that it was a good opportunity. In the “*Zahir*” newspaper, owned by Muhammed Abu Shadi, he was promoted and became the editor in chief. He mentioned that, while he was editor in chief of the newspaper “*Muayyad*,” which he described as ‘Egyptian nationalist’ and ‘anti-invasion,’ he had close relations with many Egyptian nationalists and expressed Egypt as his second motherland.³⁹⁶ He founded a printing house when he returned to Damascus in 1908 and while continuing to publish the “*Al-Muqtabas*” journal, he began to publish the “*Al-Muqtabas*” daily newspaper.

After the “*Al-Muqtabas*” newspaper’s closure, due to harsh criticisms, Kurd Ali left Damascus to go to Europe in 1909. He departed from Lebanon to Paris by ship. When he had arrived in France, he visited the French Academy of Sciences, cultural institutions, and historical places.³⁹⁷ His visit to the French Academy of Sciences brought the idea of establishing an Arab Academy of Sciences.³⁹⁸ Kurd Ali, who returned to Damascus in 1914, continued to publish the “*Al-Muqtabas*” journal until 1914.³⁹⁹ When World War I had started,

³⁹⁶ Kurd Ali, *Khitatush-Sham*, Vol. 6, pp. 335-337.

³⁹⁷ El-Tabba’, *Kurd Ali*, p. 65.

³⁹⁸ Al-Harasha, *Fikru Kurd Ali*, p. 31.

³⁹⁹ Kurd Ali, after going to 1912 in Cairo and publishing the sixth issue of *Al-Muqtabas* in Cairo, returned to Damascus. For detailed information, please see: “Bayna Dimashq wal-Qahira.” *Al-Muqtebas* 7: 7 (1330-1912).

a group of people composed of intellectuals and men of letters, including Muhammed Kurd Ali, were invited to the capital of Ottoman Empire to make state's propaganda. After the return of Kurd Ali and his companions, the Governor of Syria, Cemal Pasha, wanted them to write about their trip to Istanbul. Moreover, Enver Pasha wanted from Muhammed Kurd Ali to write about his trip to Hedjaz. He made his second trip to Europe in 1914. In 1921, he made his third trip to Europe, this time as a Minister, but with students, who would finish their education in France, accompanying him. This time, he visited Belgium, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. In 1928, he took a trip to Europe again. He went to the UK, France and Belgium and met with orientalist's over there, and visited libraries.⁴⁰⁰

Kurd Ali gathered his trip writings, which were published in "*Al-Muqtabas*" and the Arab Academy of Sciences Journal under his abovementioned work called "*Gharabtu'l-Gharb*." Jabri, explained Kurd Ali's situation with his growing environment and showed Ahmad Faris Shidyayq's trips as an example.⁴⁰¹ Shidyayq wrote about his trips to Malta, the UK, and France in two books, recorded the good and bad sides of the West and wanted the society to use them in attempts of making reforms by taking these examples into consideration. In his books, he made judgements about the traditions, morality, and character between two societies and partly criticized the West. According to Jabri, Muhammed Kurd Ali was born in such a culture, and saw these trips as a tool for social reform.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰⁰ Kurd Ali, *Khatu al-Sham*, pp. 338-345.

⁴⁰¹ For Ahmad Fares Shedyayq's detailed analysis of his European visits within the context of the period, please see: Kamran Rastegar, *Literary Modernity Between the Middle East and Europe: Textual Transactions* (Newyork: Routledge, 2007), pp. 101-126.

⁴⁰² Jabri, *Kurd Ali*, p. 82.

III.7. Conclusion

Kurd Ali was born in an environment where the Ottoman Empire was making reforms, which were implemented throughout the process of transition from a traditional empire to a modern, central state, which were felt deeply in Syria; in a period, where local, social and political elites were trying to preserve their positions; and in an era where the emergence of a movement influenced by the Islamists, nationalist, and Western ideas had begun. Especially the education that he received, the ability to speak Turkish and French, which was ordinary for that period's bureaucratic/intellectual elites, and his interest in journalism, which was seen as a new tool to interact with the 'public' by Islamists, nationalists, and Westernists led him to improve.

Kurd Ali was a friend and contemporary of Rashid Rida who was one of the two most important and prominent theoreticians of theology and judiciary of Islamism, and was a big admirer of Muhammed Abdu. On the other hand, he was aware of the prominent thinkers who worked on European thought and who knew the Islamic thought tradition. He had close relations with the Ottoman governors in Syria and became a student of Tahir al-Jazayiri who was a bridge between Turks and Arabs. Moreover, he noticed the importance of trips to Europe, which was very common between Turkish intellectual and statesmen, and made three trips to Europe. He closely followed European orientalist; he learned methods from them and used their libraries.

Kurd Ali, who stood where all the lines met, knew modern Europe and European thought, how Europe perceived the Ottoman Empire, and how Arab civilization perceived Islam. He gained vision against the Islamic world's problems by being part of intellectual discussions with people coming from different places in the Ottoman Empire. At this point, Ottomans and Arabs started to publish subjects about the Islamic civilization, the Arab civilization, the education issues and reform ideas in the Al-Muqtabas journal. Furthermore,

by publishing the writings of intellectuals of that era, they wanted to transform Al-Muqtabas to an intellectual platform in the mentioned topics. Besides, he developed the subjects that he analyzed in Al-Muqtabas while he was presiding over the Arab Academy of Sciences, and presented in the Arab Academy of Sciences Journal and at many other conferences and seminars. This literature left from Kurd Ali was one of the most important witnesses of the intellectual evolution process beginning from the fall of the Ottoman Empire and resulting in the foundation of the modern Arab nation.

IV. The POLITICAL and RELIGIOUS VIEWS of MUHAMMED

KURD ALI

In this chapter, I will deal with Kurd Ali's definition of the *Al-Muqtabas* journal, which was published in Cairo between 1906 and 1908 and in Damascus between the years of 1908-1914, and how *Al-Muqtabas* carried an intellectual and political mission. By mentioning the discussions among Arab intellectuals in that period on turning the Arabic language into a modern scientific language, we will evaluate what kind of a contribution Kurd Ali aimed to provide to this vision with *Al-Muqtabas*. Within this context I will frequently mention Butrus al-Bustani, who was indisputably regarded as the pioneer of Arabic cultural identity and will compare him with Kurd Ali's intellectual journey. Also, I will point out the similarities as well as segregations of Kurd Ali's views with the 'Islamist' thinkers, which were mentioned in the previous chapters. Thus, I will question the place Kurd Ali occupied between the Islamist movement and Arab nationalism.

I will briefly talk about the role of *Al-Muqtabas* in being an intellectual platform, who its authors were and the places of the names, which Kurd Ali refers to for the revival of Arab thought, within the Arab cultural nationalism. Thus, I will try to point to the areas where he separated himself from Pan-Islamism and intersected with Arab nationalism. By referring to the study of both Islamism and nationalism under the concept of 'reformism,' I will discuss Kurd Ali's thoughts of the Ottoman Empire and Turks, with the aim to show that he was closer to the nationalism movement. I will spare a part to Kurd Ali's understanding of the *ümmet* and *millet*, his emphasis on the Arab nation and Arabic, and his thoughts on Arabic education. I will also include his criticisms against the Ottoman rule who announced Turkish as the official education language and his compliments to Mehmet Ali Pasha, who was remarked for his contributions to the development of Arabic. I will evaluate the reasons

behind the criticisms of Kurd Ali, who sometimes had an Ottomanist stance regarding foreign affairs, but was against the Empire regarding domestic politics.

How Kurd Ali imprinted ‘reform’ which is the central concept of Islamist thinkers, how he differentiated himself from Islamists at this point, and his thoughts on how to build a relationship with the modern Western science within the context of reformation will also be tackled. I will mention his thoughts on Western civilization, how he described Western capitals, how he regarded and evaluated the ontological, epistemological and social transformation in the West. At this point, I will try to point out where he separated from Islamists and where he coincided with the Arab nationalists. I will include his criticisms against non-Arab elements, which led the Islamic civilization to be defeated against Western civilization and to lag behind; such as the Turks. Also I will evaluate how he associated the revival of Islamic civilization, the betterment of Arabic cultural heritage, and turning of Arabic into a language of science. How he read the Islamic civilization on Arabic language and literature, and how he associated its lagging behind with the Ottoman rule that used Turkish as the official state language, will also be evaluated.

I will deal with the reasons of why he did not touch upon the concept of the caliphate - which was discussed by the Islamists a lot-, and the coinciding points of his criticisms with the Islamists against Abdulhamid, who was the target of Islamists. I will also talk about his thoughts on the Committee of Union and Progress that took down Abdulhamid II, how these thoughts changed over time and his evaluations of the Islamic Union Party (*İttihad-ı Muhammedi Fırkası*). I will address how much he valued education and how much value he put on the Western type of education in the era of science. I will evaluate Kurd Ali, who read the topic of education on Arab culture and the history of civilization, and his opinions on why and how to reach European standards in education.

IV.1. Kurd Ali and the Political and Religious Character of Al-Muqtabas

Butrus al-Bustani (1819-1883), who was defined as the founding father of the modern Arab identity by Sheehi, wrote a comprehensive encyclopedia⁴⁰³ which included fields of social sciences, theology, philosophy, civil, and political sciences like Islamic law, natural, civil and commercial law, ancient and modern geography, and the history of the church, archeology and Greek mythology, educational sciences such as calculus, engineering and finance, called “*Da’irat al-Ma’arif*.”⁴⁰⁴ Bustani can be named as one of the first generation intellectuals of self-expression of Arab thought besides the traditional form, in a completely new format. Kurd Ali, who was born and raised in a very close area to Bustani, stated when he first published *Al-Muqtabas*⁴⁰⁵ in Cairo:

“I name this Journal which will cover the featured values and events⁴⁰⁶ of the East and the West as *Al-Muqtabas* and its name and its content will be accordant with each other. It will include the international political discussions of a variety of different schools and it will always say the truth.”⁴⁰⁷

He described the Journal in the introduction part of its first issue in Damascus as:

“*Al-Muqtabas* is a journal comprising the fields of ‘Pedagogy, sociology, economy, politics, literature, history, archaeology, philologie, menagerie, hygiene, bibliography, civilization Arab and Occidental’ ”⁴⁰⁸

So, similar to Bustani, *Al-Muqtabas* emerged in the time period of the intersection of the East and the West, as an effort to create an encyclopaedic intellectual accumulation that

⁴⁰³ El-Bustani started the work named *Da’irat al-Ma’arif* in 1876, but could not manage to complete it before his death in 1883. The work was completed by his sons, Salim and Nacip el-Bustani, and his nephew, Suleymen el-Bustani. Please see: Sheehi, *Arab Identity*, p. 18.

⁴⁰⁴ Sheehi, *Arab Identity*, p. 21., For Bustani’s evaluation with regards to the Ottoman records, please see: Kurşun, *Türk Arap İlişkileri*, pp. 28-29.

⁴⁰⁵ For an important journal that emerged in the same period as *Al-Muqtabas*, yet then followed a more nationalist policy, please see: Rashid Khalidi. “Abd al-Ghani al-‘Urasi and al-Mufid: The Press and Arab Nationalism Before 1914.” *Intellectual Life in the Arab East: 1890-1939*. Ed. Marwan R. Muheiry. Beirut: Beyrut Amerikan Üniversitesi, 1981.

⁴⁰⁶ Journal covered an outstanding intellectual either from the East or West. For example, the first issue covered İbni Hazmı, and the second covered Thomas Carlyle. Please see: “İbni Hazm.” *Al-Muqtabas* 1: 1 (1324-1906)., “Caryle.” *Al-Muktabas* I: 2 (1324-1906).

⁴⁰⁷ “*Al-Muqtebas*” *Al-Muqtabas* 1: 1 (1324-1906).

⁴⁰⁸ “*Al-Muqtebas*.” *Al-Muqtabas* 6: 1 (1329-1911). Please see. Appendix,5.

included the historical backgrounds of both civilizations. Kurd Ali validated my argument in one of his writings, stating that:

“*Al-Muqtabas* aims to show the secret values of Arab civilization and the secret treasures of Western civilization. In this context, we will touch upon our history and Western history, to our men of literature and Western men of literature, and to what we do and what they do when needed. We published this Journal in the Nile Delta and it gained much interest. I hope that our publishing adventure in Damascus, that we start now, will give the expected results.”⁴⁰⁹

So, when being described by its content and its purpose, *Al-Muqtabas* is differentiated from Islamists for its purpose, yet coincided with them for its content. Because among the Islamists that we elaborated in the previous chapter, an emphasis on the Arab cultural heritage was very little or non-existent. However, *Al-Muqtabas* intersected with Bustani’s abovementioned piece for both its purpose and its content. According to Dawn, Arab nationalism was based on an Islamic argument, but it was influential until the end of the First World War. Dawn stated that Christian Arabs agreed on the East, that the Arab civilization was a great civilization. Yet Christian intellectuals such as Nadrah Matran argued that Islam was an inseparable part of Arabness. In other words, Arab nationalist Christians and Muslims had the same perspective on the importance and achievements of the Arab civilization, and the struggle for recovery of the cultural heritage of Arab nation. But Islamists read the history from the perspective of the Islamic civilization. That is to say, Islamists and nationalists were separated in terms of purpose, but coincided contextually. It is possible to see the traces of this coincidence in Kurd Ali’s ideas. But we see that Muhammed Kurd Ali was closer to nationalist movement, when we discuss *Al-Muqtabas* as a whole.⁴¹⁰ Certainly when the conditions of the period are taken into consideration, normally *Al-Muqtabas* had some technical issues; such as the absence of a colorful design to attract the reader. Although

⁴⁰⁹ “Sanatuna’l-Rabia’ti” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 1 (1327-1909).

⁴¹⁰ Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*, pp.184-187.

some of the newspapers of the period used photos and made the newspapers more colorful, *Al-Muqtabas* had a very simple design. This did not result from Kurd Ali's puritan point of view. On the contrary, Kurd Ali cared much about modern art and photography, yet he did not have the financial power to use these techniques in his newspaper.⁴¹¹

Bustani, who stated that the local press, libraries, and schools were the substructure of the public's reading of culture and their civilization, one period before Kurd Ali, predicted that he was going to introduce the children of the Arab population with modern books. Within this context, he praised Kurd Ali's newspapers which he started to publish in Egypt and noted that choosing Arabic as the language of the publication was going to be an important tool to spread 'modern knowledge.' He stated that the press served the Arab nation greatly by translating many books and articles into Arabic, and the publishers were enriching Arabic by using Arabic equivalents of foreign words.⁴¹² Kurd Ali, who shared the same opinions as Bustani on turning Arabic into the language of science and spreading modern information, expressed his thoughts on the contributions of the press to Arab culture and on Mehmet Ali Pasha's role within this context as follows:

"It has been seventy years since the first Arabic newspaper called '*Wakau'l-Misriyya*' and science journal of Rifa'a Tahtavi named '*Razatu'l-Madaris*' started to be published in Cairo, following the order of Muhammed Ali Pasha. Although '*Wakau'l-Misriyya*' has gone through some interruptions, it is still being published. However, our newspapers could not reach the level of international newspapers of well-developed nations neither for their content nor their impacts. Our intellectuals state that although it has been a long time since this process started, our journalism could not make the expected progress. It should be considered as normal that journalism cannot make the expected progress in a long time period, if those journalists that have to deal with a community which does not accept the issues other than the ones stated by the men of religion, who talk about ethereal issues and religious affairs, as proper knowledge. When men of literature confuse eulogy shows with

⁴¹¹ Samir Seikaly, "Damascene Intellectual Life in the Opening Years of the 20th Century: Muhammad Kurd Ali and al-Muqtabas," *Intellectual Life in the Arab East: 1890-1939*, Ed. Marwan R. Muheiry (Beirut: Beirut American University Press, 1981), pp.125-154.

⁴¹² Sheehi, *Arab Identity*, pp. 41-42.

literature, when writers regard transferring documents as authorship, ‘primary journalism’ may not have succeeded well. Since journalists were also into this intellectual level, it was not possible for them to exceed this level. The ones who study history of mankind know it well that the Easterners likes to imitate, especially once the conditions are available for them to. For example, a Syrian or an Egyptian does not abstain from learning new things on a foreign language he knows and to imitate what he learns. Especially the ones who got educated in European countries become fake Europeans. Regarding our journalism, it has been lagging us behind to imitate the European newspapers, because the original is always one-step ahead of the fake. Although periodical scientific journals publish useful things, they also cannot exceed being fake. Political newspapers, on the other hand, follow a prototype policy of writing and publishing. In the first period, most of the ones who were publishing newspapers were doing this to make a profit. In other words, they were not interested in spreading knowledge and wisdom, yet were merchants seeking a profit. Certainly Ahmed Faris Shidyayq should be exempted from this, because he was a person who understood journalism the best and who served greatly in language, literature, science, and politics. Or, Rifa’a Tahtavi’s “*Razatu’l-Madaris*” was an important journal, therefore Tahtavi contributed significantly to this region’s thought of reform.”⁴¹³

For contributions to thought of ‘reform’ as mentioned by Kurd Ali, *al-Muqtataf* published by Francis Nimr and Yaqub Sarruf, *al-Hilal* by Corci Zeydan, *al-Manar* by Muhammed Abdu and Rashid Rida, *al-Jinan* by Salim al-Bustani are also very important.⁴¹⁴ *Al-Muqtabas* was a platform for the outstanding intellectuals of the time to express their views and thoughts. Within this context, the following names can be listed as writing in *Al-Muqtabas*: “Ahmad Beg Timur (Cairo), Ahmed Zakı Beg (Cairo), Amin Afandı Rıkhani (New York), Shaykh Jamaledin Kasımı (Damascus), Jorjı Afandı al-Haddad (Damascus), Halil Afandı Far’at (Damascus), Halil Beg Sa’ad (Beirut), Rashid Afandı Baktus (Thessaloniki), Rafiq Beg al-Azm (Cairo), Zakı Afandı al-Khatıb (Sincar)Salahaddin Afandı

⁴¹³ “Al-Sahafatu’l-Arabiyya.” *Al-Muqtebas* 1: 2 (1324-1906).

⁴¹⁴ Sheehi, *Arab Identity*, p.72., Tibi names these names as the fathers of Arab cultural nationalism and says that nationalist thought that could not gain a political identity developed as cultural nationalism. Bessam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: Between Islam and Nation State*, Trans. Marion and Peter Sluglett (London: Macmillian Press, 1997) p.103., Please see also: “Ba’du Maahidu Beirut.” *Al-Muktebas* 4: 1 (1330-1912)., For an important evaluation on Arab thought of reform starting with Tahtavi and tracking down Ahmad Fares Shidyayq, Young Ottomans, Muhammed Abdu, Rashid Reza, Ebrahim Yaziji, and Abdurrahman Kavakıby, please see: Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*, pp. 122-147.

al-Kasımî (Damascus), Salım Afandî al-Buharî (Damascus), Shukrî Afandî al-Asalî (Damascus), Shaykh Tahîr al-Jazayırî (Cairo), Doktor Abdurrahman Shahbandar (Damascus), Abdulkadir Afandî al-Maghribî (Tripoli, Damascus), Abdullah Afandî Mukhlîs (Khayfa), Abdulvahhab Afandî al-İngilizî (al-Bab), İsa Afandî Iskandar Ma'luf (Zakhle), Faris Afandî al-Khurî (Damascus), Faîz Afandî Fayyaz (Damascus), Mahmud Shukru Afandî al-Alusî (Baddad), and Yusuf Afandî Jorjîs (Nebraska).⁴¹⁵

'Reform', as a concept, is significantly important to understand where Muhammed Kurd Ali, editor of a journal, where many important authors contributed, corresponded within modern Arab thought. Because, the Islamist movement that started with Jamaladdin al-Afgani and continued until Rashed Rıda, covered in different Arab provinces, as well as Istanbul, is described as being 'reformist.' Yet, at the same time, Butrus al-Bustani, Suleyman al-Bustani, Satı al-Husri, and Kurd Ali's contemporaries and *Al-Muqtabas* authors Shuqrî al-As'alî and Abdulhamîd Zahrawî are also studied under 'reformism.'⁴¹⁶ This is because both movements expressed their opinions and thoughts outside of the traditional form, in other words, in a 'reformed' format. During the period, which we are talking about, the line between nationalism and Islamism was rather blurred. Also, political thoughts could not be expressed very clearly due to political conjunctures. However, it was true that the Ottoman capital lost its former glory for Kurd Ali, compared to European capitals. Hence, Kurd Ali, who visited the Ottoman capital, Istanbul, during his visits in Europe, told about the irregularities in the city and how the traveller's couldn't be comfortable, while speaking highly of the natural beauties within. He argued that the architecture was not developed, apart from the palaces of the Sultans and the mosques. Kurd Ali, who voiced that the capital was much more developed than the Ottoman provinces, noted that:

⁴¹⁵ "Fatihatı's-Sanatus-Sadısa." *Al-Muqtabas* 6: 1 (1329-1911).

⁴¹⁶ Please see. Rashid Khalidi, Lisan Anderson, Muhammed Muslih ve Reeve S. Simon. *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*. New York: Columbia Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1991.

“The weight of the life of the residents in the capital city is carried upon the shoulders of the provinces. In order to cover the expenses of what they build in the Princes’ Islands and the Golden Horn, they destroy the provinces. I have spent twenty days in this capital and met with many intellectuals and politicians. After staying in Paris and seeing the best of everything, I am not impressed by what I saw in Istanbul. Yet, I still liked Istanbul as the capital of my country. Maybe, I could have thought differently, if I saw Istanbul first, before Europe.”⁴¹⁷

Kurd Ali visited the First Turkish Parliament and he stated that what he referred to as ‘our Parliament is not on the same level as the other parliaments in the world. He claimed that the situation would be better than the current after the next election. Kurd Ali complained about the disorder of the Parliament and once a new law was started to be discussed, the law, which was being discussed, was forgotten once another one had started to be discussed.’⁴¹⁸

As I will explain more in detail later, Kurd Ali appreciated the revolution of the CUP, yet during a visit to the Ottoman rule two years after the revolution; he expressed some implications for him losing his trust in the CUP. He described his observations from his visit to the capital rule as:

“There is no difference from the Abdulhamid reign, although they claim freedom. The rulers should immediately respond to the demands of the people. Either things will remain the same or there will actually be a real reform. However, the ones who will realize this reform are still not existent. The existing ones shall preserve what is present, but maybe a new generation which is free from oppressive rule will start a real reformist movement.”⁴¹⁹

Yet still, this hopelessness did not shake his faith to the Ottoman Empire. Because, Kurd Ali laid claims on the Ottoman Empire and its political and social problems on some matters, called the 1908 revolution as ‘our last revolution,’ defined Arabs as ‘Ottoman’ and noted that it was not possible for Arabs to survive without the Ottoman Empire. By referring

⁴¹⁷ “Gharaibu’l-Garb.” *Al-Muqtabas* 5:1 (1328-1910).

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., for another expression of the same thoughts, please see: “Bayna Dimashq wa’l-Qahira.” *Al-Muqtabas* 7: 7 (1330-1912).

⁴¹⁹ “Gharaibu’l-Gharb.” *Al-Muqtabas* 5: 1 (1328-1910).

to Switzerland, the USA, Germany, and Italy, he stated that unity brings power, so being unified under an Ottoman identity is needed. By mentioning that nationalism/patriotism should be learnt from Europe and America, a unity in Europe is on the agenda now, as well as a unity in Asia, he says, “Ottomans! Unify and promote your country shoulder to shoulder.”⁴²⁰ He evaluated the Balkan Wars at a speech he made, named “We and Europe.” He said that, “We will talk about Ottoman-Europe relations,” thus explaining that “We” refers to the Ottomans. He also called the Ottoman Sultan as “our Sultan.”⁴²¹ We see that Muhammed Kurd Ali did not use separatist statements in *Al-Muqtebas* issues until late 1914; his criticisms against Ottoman were mostly concentrated on the Turkish education in the schools of Syria. As I examine comprehensively below, Kurd Ali avoided using statements that hinted Arabs’ separation from the Ottoman Empire, even while he criticized the Ottomans for making Turkish as the official stated language instead of the Islamic civilization’s language, Arabic. He started to mention independent Syria after the ‘de facto independent Syria’ emerged following the First World War.

On the other hand, we can also see that Kurd Ali started to refer to Arabs from time to time when he said *ummah*⁴²² and created a portrait of an Arab *ummah*/nation from Yemen to Morocco. He started to question if an Arab *ummah* was in awakening on the way of development and stated that although Morocco was in very close geography to the West and was under French occupation, it did not gain from the civilization there. Although the Algerian cities were Frenchified, Algerians did not quite understand the European civilization and at the same time, started to forget Arabic’s most basic principles. “The way things are going does not signal good things for Algeria,” Kurd Ali said. He also argued that Libya was

⁴²⁰ “Al-Tarbiyatu’l-Avrubiyya.” *Al-Muqtebas* 5: 2 (1328-1910).

⁴²¹ “Nahnu wa’l-Avruba.” *Al-Muqtebas* 7: 9 (1330-1912).

⁴²² In 1916, the son of Mekke Emir Huseyin İbni Ali, who revolted against the Ottomans, Abdullah, started to say that the Arab nation deserved the right to be independent. Please see: Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*, p. 79.

very illiterate and they were lagging behind in education significantly. By referring to Egypt he said:

“Egypt, which is located on the intersecion point of the Arab world, which is a commercial center and is in trade with different nations, is the crucial point of the ummah’s future. It managed to preserve its own culture while adopting different features of European civilization. So, it could create an East/West synthesis by taking from both.” So what he gives as an example to making a synthesis of Eastern and Western values and building a new Arab identity, he shows Egypt.⁴²³ Kurd Ali argued that Syria was an original civilization and could save its language until the Turks occupied Syria; however, Syrians started to forget Arabic when they learned Turkish to reach higher governmental positions.⁴²⁴ He claimed that the rule⁴²⁵ that obligated Turkish education was following a ‘Turkification’ policy, especially in Syria and in Iraq, Yemen and Hejaz and in other Arab provinces of the Empire. He argued that the Turks’ civilization was not as developed as the British or the French.⁴²⁶

Kurd Ali who had strong criticisms against the Ottoman Empire’s policies in Arab provinces had a more pro-Ottoman attitude when it came to foreign affairs. Hence, in his writings, he wrote due to the Balkan Wars, he argued that what Europeans call as the ‘Eastern Question’ was related to the occupation of Andalusia by the Arabs and the defeat of the Crusaders by Muslims. According to Kurd Ali, Westerners could never forget these events. Today, what is going on in the Balkans is a result of Ottomans’ rule that did not step in the local community and only ruled them, after taking control of the region. Once the Ottoman

⁴²³ Seikaly, finds the arguments of compability of the Western civilization and Islam derivative and redundant and even states that he agrees with this. However, in his writings in *Al-Muqtabas* he notes that he is repeating the thoughts of previous writers and he is trying to modify basic principles imposed by Muslim reformists and the system built on this system. Please see: Seikaly, *Kurd Ali*, p. 133.

⁴²⁴ Kurd Ali repeated his same opinions in less than a year. Please see: “Al-Nahdatu’l-Fikriyya.” *Al-Muqtebas* 7: 1 (1330-1912).

⁴²⁵ For discussions on the Ottoman rule’s regulation of Turkish as the language of compulsory education and judiciary, please see: Kurşun, *Türk Arap İlişkileri*, pp. 59-62.

⁴²⁶ “Al-Umma Tuhıbbu.” *Al-Muqtebas* 6: 1 (1329-1911).

Empire started to lose its power, it lost its control over the Balkans as well, and therefore, today's 'Eastern Question' emerged. The conquests of Fatih the Conqueror and Suleyman the Magnificent in Balkans were the prevailing of the 'Crescent' against the 'Cross.' Whereas the defeat of the Ottomans against the Russians and the revolts of the Christian population against the Ottomans can be defined as the prevailing of the Cross against the Crescent. Europe, although separates religion and state affairs, could not get rid of its emotional reflexes. It was supporting a Christian population against a Muslim state. After the French revolution, which happened with cries for freedom, justice, and equality, a Christian solidarity started to occur against Muslims. Kurd Ali states that European states did not abide by their promise and says: "Although European states announced to provide military support to the Ottomans in case of an assault against them, as required by the Treaty of Paris signed after the Crimean War in 1857, they did not keep this promise in the 1877 Russian-Ottoman war. They remained in inaction in cold blood while people were dying." By conducting a comprehensive analysis on the regional policies of French, English, and Russians and by applying a serious retrospective analysis on European diplomacy, he associated the 1895-1897 Armenian incidents with Russia. He examined the violent interventions of Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria in Macedonia and reminded the pressures of the European states on the Ottomans to make reforms in the Balkans. Those European states which put pressure on Ottoman Empire with the claim on their non-modern rule in the Balkans, were now causing innocent people to die in Macedonia.⁴²⁷

Kurd Ali embraced the Ottoman Empire like Islamists, while paying much attention and care to the Arabic language and culture like nationalists. Thus, he always questioned the possibilities to preserve the Arabic language and culture. According to Islamists, the only way for Islam to survive was going back to the old, powerful days of the Empire; whereas

⁴²⁷ "Nahnu wa'l-Avruba." *Al-Muqtebas* 7: 9 (1330-1912).

according to Kurd Ali, in order for Islam to survive, the only way was to preserve the Arabic language and the betterment of the culture. In this context, in 1914 ‘nationalism’ was legitimately on Kurd Ali’s agenda. He touched upon the independency adventures of the countries, which attained a national identity, such as Greece, Belgium, and Poland and he said:

“In the capital city, Turks create some entities to preserve their language and culture, called ‘Home of the Turks (*Türk Yurdu*),’ ‘Turkish Association,’ and ‘*Türk Ocağı*’.” Kurd Ali refers to Ahmet Tevfik Bey’s writing in the *Tanin* newspaper on how Arabs preserved their culture even in America in a writing of himself, which he wrote for the *İkdam* newspaper -of Ali Kemal Bey - on Ottoman nationalism and Turkish nationalism, in which he emphasizes on the importance of Ottoman nationalism. He argued that although Russians put severe pressure on Turkistan’s Tatars and the Polish with the aim to Russify them, these populations preserved their own identity. Kurd Ali questioned the possibility of the French to Frenchify the Arabs in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia where they occupied; as well as aims to Italianize the Arabs in Libya by the Italians and said: “Regardless, these places are a part of Arab civilization. They will take what they have to take from European civilization and will fuse the Arab culture inside.” He gives an example to a German who writes in Arabic and an Arab who writes in Turkish; and blames the Arab for being Turkified.’ Kurd Ali emphasized the importance and the value of Arabic and expressed his thoughts as:

“We are proud of our language, as well as our nation and our history. The greatness of Arabs and Arab civilization is evident and if someone (Ottoman rule) is against us learning our own language, the religious brotherhood can come to an end. Whoever learns a foreign language - even if it is Maltese - is very important and valuable for us. Above all, learning Turkish, which is quite useful for us, is very important to learn. Yet our own culture and language and history is much more important than everything else.”⁴²⁸

⁴²⁸ “Kawmıyetuna wa Lughatuna.” *Al-Muqtebas* 7: 3 (1332-1914).

In other words, he implied that Arabs would hold onto their own culture no matter which policy the Ottomans follow and when it came to the Arabic language and culture, even the religious brotherhood could not keep Arabs and Turks together.

IV.2. Reform

Reform, as mentioned earlier, is the topic which Islamists intellectuals paid utmost attention to. Furthermore, it would not be wrong to say that Islamists built their fundamental paradigms on ‘reform in religion.’ However, we see that ‘reform in religion’ did not work in the same way for Kurd Ali, meaning not long, deep, and with the same content as Islamists. What we can see is that Kurd Ali was mostly interested in Arabic becoming a language of science again in his writings in *Al-Muqtabas*. With this regard, Sheehi cites Abdullah Nadim saying that, “if Arabs lose their language, they lose their nation and religion,” and stated that Arabic was one of the most fundamental elements of *al-Nahdah* (Arab Awakening). He also claimed that Arabic constituted a special causal chain for the reform paradigm and the reform paradigm was very important for this chain.⁴²⁹ However, if we see that Sheehi talked about the ‘Formation of Arab National Identity’ here and he evaluated all names, including Afgani and Abdu within this context; we can argue that Sheehi’s reform was parallel to the Islamists’ reform, yet still, not the same. We can say that Kurd Ali used the concept of reform within the context of Sheehi’s usage; therefore, Kurd Ali’s opinions were more reasonable to be interpreted within the context of the ‘construction of Arab national identity.’

Furthermore, Kurd Ali should be differentiated from Taher al-Jazairi, Muhammed Abdu, Shibli Shumayyil, and Yaqub Sarruf for his education and formation. He was not informed about Islamic sciences as the first two names, nor secular as the latter two.⁴³⁰ However, he was a ‘reformist’ in any case. However, what we discuss here is not about

⁴²⁹ Sheehi, *Arab Identity*, p. 12.

⁴³⁰ Seikaly, *Kurd Ali*, p. 129.

whether Kurd Ali is on the line of reform or not, but rather whether he stood as a reformist within the context of the ‘formation of modern Arab identity’ or in ‘Islamism.’

Kurd Ali, who noted that he aimed to extract the accumulation of Arab and the Western civilization said:

“It is only a blockage when you lock yourself in the past. It is needed to communicate with what is modern. But, at the same time, if one does not have a past, one cannot have modern. We need to understand the Westerns’ science, because the main problem of the East is the inefficient use of the mind. It is the borders drawn by the close-minded people, morally, and materially. For this reason we will refer to the past, yet mention what is modern frequently.”⁴³¹

We see that Kurd Ali’s thoughts contradict with Arab Islamism and Islamists who wrote in Turkish. Because although both Arab and Turkish Islamists knew that they needed to take advantage of the Westerners for scientific knowledge, they always kept their criticisms against their morals and spirit. They argued that the main element in reform process was not Western science, but religious reform; so in this context, ‘religion should be understood correctly’ and ‘Muhammad’s period should be taken as an example.’

Ahmad Zaki Beg addressed the Damascus intellectuals of the period and said, “now there are no obstacles in front of serving for the reform/rearing ummah and the country that you are a follower of.”⁴³² Jamaladdin al-Alusi defined Muhammed Kurd Ali in his namesake piece as, “a person who was one of the leaders of the modern Arab Islamic reform movement, reformist and modernist, covered many topics on religious reform and also social reform.” He described him as a person who dedicated himself to serving Islam and someone who

⁴³¹ “Sanatuna’l-Rabi’ati.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 1 (1327-1909). Please see: Appendix,6.

⁴³² Ahmed Zaki Beg among Cairo *ulama*, gathered with intellectuals of Damascus in early 1909 in Kurd Ali’s house in Damascus and made a speech there on Constitution, Kurd Ali spread this speech in *Al-Muqtabas*’s first issue published in 1909. I found it appropriate to cite this speech for the fact that Kurd Ali published it, and also by taking the atmosphere of the time into consideration. Please see: Ahmad Zeki Beg. “Al-Sham wa Al-Hurriyya.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 1 (1327- 1909).

answered the scientific criticisms and groundless assumptions on Islam and Arabs. He said that Kurd Ali learned the reformist thoughts of Tahir al-Jazayiri, Muhammed al-Mubaraq, and Salim al-Buhari, and then Muhammed Abdu and Jamaladdin al-Afgani, and developed similar ideas.⁴³³ However Kurd Ali in that period we cover did not discuss Islamist reform as a topic especially in *Al-Muqtabas*, not enough to deserve the title of ‘leader of Islamic reform movement.’ But he put his signature under many theoretical and practical studies on ‘reform in Islam’ and ‘turning Arabic into a language of science again.’ It can be seen that in all of *Al-Muqtabas*, leading names of Arab cultural heritage, many important names are sent forth, many French pieces are translated into Arabic and the conceptual framework of translation activities for betterment of Arabic, were covered.⁴³⁴

In this regard, two pieces of Taha Husayn, who was one of the outstanding figures of Arab intellectual history, titled as “Will Arabic go back to its old, powerful days?” in *Al-Muqtabas* are important examples of the value the journal puts on Arabic.⁴³⁵ Of course, it is not possible to say that Kurd Ali never touched upon the topic of Islamic reform. Yet, ‘reform in religion’ was a topic, which was on the agenda of all intellectuals of the period, whether they were nationalist or Islamist. Kurd Ali stated that reformist thought has been exposed to severe oppressions since the brightest times of the history of Islam, the ones who had a populist approach stood against new changes in order to look nice to people and the administrators. He defined Ghazali, Suhrawardi, Amidi, Ibnu Jarir, Ibnu Taymiya, and Ibnu Rushd as reformist people and the ones who contradicted them went out of existence in history. Kurd Ali criticized the previous and contemporary anti-change people and argued that they were against reform, not for the sake of Islam, but for the sake of their own benefits. He

⁴³³ Alusi, *Kurd Ali*, pp. 11-13.

⁴³⁴ Tens of examples can be given on this issue from *Al-Muqtabas*. However, I think it is sufficient to look at *Al-Muqtabas*’s index rather than approaching it in a detailed and long way. Please see: Riyad Abdulhamid Murad. *Faharis Al-Muqtabas*. Beirut: Dar Sader, 1992.

⁴³⁵ “Hel Tasderittu al-Lughatu Majdaha al-Qadim.” *Al-Muqtabas* 7: 1 (1330-1912)., *Al-Muqtabas* 7: 2 (1330-1912).

argued that these anti-changes people absolutised what they knew and wanted to keep religious information consisting of only this information that they held.⁴³⁶ According to Kurd Ali:

“Islamic civilization occupied a very important role in world history, however, lost its position in time. It is not shameful for a powerful and bright civilization to weaken in time, on the contrary, usual, as can be seen in the examples of the Greeks and Romans. However, what is shameful is that the Islamic ummah cannot get back on its feet and can not realize its awakening (*Nahda*). During the Crimean War, Muslims realized that they were slowly falling behind and started to think about it in order to define the problem. In general, the thinkers of this topic agree on the ideas that “Islam was not understood correctly” and “although the principles of religion are very clear, they are not being followed. Because religion is the cause of happiness in two worlds.”⁴³⁷

Seikaly defined Kurd Ali as repeating Muhammed Abdu’s reconciliatory views⁴³⁸, and Kurd Ali said that:

“It is the ethical and honest *ulama* that can write pieces to make Islam to be understood correctly and contribute to the building of a just system. Therefore, religious reform means reforming the *ulama*, mosques, courts, schools, family, and the military. However, the *ulama* did not understand religion in the way that it fits the requirements of the then current time. Therefore, principle of justice started to be contravened, the spirituality of prayers got lost and the unity spirit among the family started to vanish. However, later on, very important men of religion leading the idea of reform started to emerge. Mustafa Reşit Pasha (Ottoman), Tunisian Hayrettin Pasha, Jamaladdin al-Afgani, Sayyid Ahmed Khan (Indian), Muhammed Abdu (Egyptian), Ismail Beg Gasprali (Crimean) and Abdurrahman Kawakibi (Syrian). Therefore, within this context, the emergence of Aligarh University in India, the entrance of modern sciences into *Al-Azhar* University, opening new universities in Egypt appeared as very useful for the scholars to fulfill the duties of the period that they lived in.”⁴³⁹

We can see in the abovementioned statements Kurd Ali did not only promote a ‘reform in religion,’ but thought of a more comprehensive reform that included a reform of religion in

⁴³⁶ “A’du’l-Islah.” *Al-Muqtabas* 6: 12 (1329-1911).

⁴³⁷ “Al-Kulliyatu’l-Salahiyya.” *Al-Muqtabas* 8: 8 (1332-1911).

⁴³⁸ Seikaly, *Kurd Ali*, p. 133.

⁴³⁹ “Al-Kulliyatu’l-Salahiyya.” *Al-Muqtabas* 8: 8 (1332-1911).

it as well. These mentioned intellectuals should not be understood only in the context of ‘the reform in religion,’ since Mustafa reşit Pasha was a bureaucrat, Sayıd Ahmed Khan was a lawyer, and Ismail Gaspıralı was an intellectual with nationalist orientations. When we consider that Kurd Ali was a close friend with Muhammed Abdu and Rashıd Rıda, we can say that he did not perform as expected to cover the most outstanding topics of his time such as ‘reform in religion.’ He was more interested in covering the ‘awakening of Arabic.’ In fact, it is possible to evaluate *Al-Muqtabas* in this regard. And it would not be wrong to say that the Arab Academy of Science was a developed application of *Al-Muqtabas* for its content and its field of activity.

IV.3. Western Civilization

‘Western Civilization,’ as mentioned earlier, was one of the most important problems for Islamists, which they had to place somewhere within the context of ‘reform in religion.’ Of course, this was an issue that kept the statesmen, leaders of thought, and intellectuals of the time very busy. Relatedly, Kurd Ali argued that the Islamic ummah did not experience a big dilemma between tradition and the new/modern until now, and modern had always prevailed over the traditional. He continued with complaints about the imitators who were contented with science and literature they had learnt from their ancestor and who were always opposing everything new. Furthermore, the ones who argued that it was sufficient to only imitate the modern sciences were as harmful as the first group. The conflict this separation caused led to the past to be forgotten and the new to not be learned, he says. At this point, a midway between the two poles should be chosen; and the advantageous features from both the traditional and the modern things should be adopted.⁴⁴⁰ Therefore, it can be seen that Kurd Ali had the same approach as the Islamists, on a basic level for the fundamental focal points.

⁴⁴⁰ “Al-Qadim wa’l-Hadısh.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 1 (1327-1909)., also please see. “Al-Tarbiyya al-Avrubıyya.” *Al-Muqtabas* 5: 2 (1328-1910).

However, when we look at his thoughts in the following paragraphs, we think that Kurd Ali's opinion would be seen more clearly and it would be more evident to see on which points he differentiated himself from the Islamists.

Also, it should be noted that until the Ba'ath regime (with their focus on nationalist orientations) that started with Tahtavi, the main concept that Arab intellectuals covered was that the power and glory has moved from the Muslim East to the Christian West. So, nationalists were also covering the same topic as Islamists, yet their discussion gained meaning on another basis. This rough usage of this glory that belonged to the Muslim East could not be accepted. The defeats that were going on since the beginning of the 19th century contributed to the development of this perception, and intellectuals who had a Western formation started to think about ways to protect this defeated identity.⁴⁴¹ However, the statements, which we will quote, now, are clear examples of the admiration of this defeated identity against Europe. Kurd Ali wrote the following after his visit to Paris:

“It is very difficult to portray the French cities which have beautiful details in every corner. If Ibn Hawkal lived and saw French cities, he would probably say that, “it is very difficult for us to describe this civilization.” Masudi would also have difficulties in describing these cities, despite all his wisdom and strong ability to write. If Ibn Batuta saw these cities, he would think that his long travels remained insufficient. Ibn Jubayr would think that what he saw could only be a dream. The city of Leon is a brilliant city with its natural beauties, architecture, schools, universities, the regularity of the roads, the palaces, gardens, music, museums, churches, factories, libraries, railways, electricity wires, bridges, centers, Rhone and Saone rivers. Paris is a city which is the home to reason, the world of peace and comfort, the spirit of political and social revolutions, the living way of civilizations of the East and the West... The city that teaches the method of getting rid of tyrants to the world, you taught everyone the advantages of science and how much of a pleasure it can provide to people.

⁴⁴¹ Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*, p. 184.

You are the first on the list of the capitals that value reason, and the reason is even idolized here and is put above anything else in the material world and people that value reason as a priority are held in great esteem.”⁴⁴²

So, the West had realized socially and politically important revolutions and overthrew the “cruel” administrations, and presented a new epistemology dependant on scientific knowledge. Reason was put on the highest level on ontological hierarchy and replaced God in ancient ontology. Here we see that Kurd Ali read the epistemological, ontological, and political transformation in Europe very carefully.

This transformation and change could be seen in every aspect of life in European cities. Kurd Ali noted regarding his visit to Switzerland:

“Switzerland is the heaven of Europe, even of the world, where the quality of work is the highest and the winter and summer are both experienced in the best way. It is a place where all religions and ideas are freely expressed and all the beauties of the modern civilization flow into a man’s heart. It is not possible for a mind to think of a more competent order than this order. Switzerland’s streets are very clean, and this does not stem from Swiss nature, but from their accumulation of civilization gained over many years.”⁴⁴³

Kurd Ali continued his portrayal of Paris as:

“All hail, Paris! The city of creativity, where the material is used at its most efficient form, where there are investments on all opportunities of the mind and where previous civilizations come to life. You have built such a civilization that all the other people aspire to reach your level of civilization and they find the beauty they cannot find, in you. All hail Paris, the city of human rights, who fight against oppression... Middle age heroes and the conservatives who long for Middle Ages cannot understand your value. All hail Paris, the city where the knowledge and art is created in its academies of sciences and universities. The city of institutions that serve for humanity and civilization, city of unions, museums, gardens, libraries, and exhibitions... All hail Paris, city of freedom, equality, and brotherhood; where social order is built on mutual advantage thus discrimination between different religious groups and generations is obstructed... The city where the difference between people only result from their talents, their dreams, and their work... All hail Paris which is far more advanced than the East,

⁴⁴² “Gharaibu’l-Gharb.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 4 (1327-1909).

⁴⁴³ “F1 Diyari’l-Gharb.” *Al-Muqtabas* 8: 4 (1332-1914).

if we share the feelings of the East and the Near East with you, we found a chance to get in touch with the Western cities, especially the French cities, to be more precise from Paris where the light of civilization rises. You buried the palaces built on the blood of people and palaces turned into the center of cruelty, and erected palace of justice and the light of science. All hail Paris, which kept Dekart, Kant, Russo, Voltair, Simon, Montesqu, Hogo, Pascal, Renan, and many others who served the mankind alive. You, the city that left the barbarities of the Dark Ages such as the Crusades, the Inquisition, Saint Bathelemy massacre and the insanities of Napoleon behind and wants to forget all of these... Your people are proud of the 1789 revolution and they have the right to be.”⁴⁴⁴

Kurd Ali observed that Europe interpreted all historical civilizations on a rational basis and built up a new system, emerged new concepts such as patriotism and human rights. This civilization gained life with a new city order and with universities, science centers, and modern art. Every reasonable person sees this civilization and aspires to become like it, yet the ones who admire the Middle Ages stand against this civilization. Although Kurd Ali used some statements similar to ‘Islamists’ against Western civilization, when we look at his trips in Europe and his descriptions of Europe, we can see that he was an admirer of Europe and did not abstain from the issues as Islamists against Europe. This admiration was not an ignorant admiration. Kurd Ali was aware that the West was going through a deep ontological, epistemological, social, and religious transformation; however, this transformation was something that every reasonable person would want to take as an example. He also read the emergence of the individualistic culture in Europe that was led by this transformation and noted: “What puts the West to the front and differentiates it from the East is that people live for themselves. The understanding of freedom is really admiring...” Kurd Ali who made many comparisons on the individualistic culture in Europe and the family-centered culture of the East stated that this understanding of the West made it stronger.⁴⁴⁵ Kurd Ali’s basic

⁴⁴⁴ “Gharaibu’l-Gharb.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 4 (1327-1909).

⁴⁴⁵ “F1 Diyari’l-Gharb.” *Al-Muqtabas* 8: 4 (1332-1914).

concern was to develop modern Arabic, which would be capable of describing this amazing culture. With this concern, we can say that he diverged from Islamists.

During a speech he made in Istanbul to a literature club established by Arab students, he said that Europe's most outstanding feature was its order and regularity, Western mind incarnates in developed architecture, and claimed that Europe's scientific capability, social and practical development served as an example to the rest of the world. He re-stated his abovementioned thoughts once again by mentioning the West's advanced industry, developing trade, regular agriculture, academies of sciences, academies of politics, civil society organizations, unions, schools, universities, museums, and libraries with admiration.⁴⁴⁶ Therefore, Arab students should go to Europe and get educated there, and make the Arab nation live the bright days they deserved.⁴⁴⁷ Arab students should go to Europe because those schools are where all of the accumulation of civilizations was gathered. Kurd Ali noted regarding the subject:

“It was the schools in Paris, ‘*Collège de France*’ which were the things that took my time the most. Because in these schools, all disciplines of science, one can think of, are being thought. These schools remind me of schools in the brightest time of our civilization in which each student who had the desire could learn science. And also do not even think that Parisians are keen on their comfort. Because they are working day and night to avoid another country's chance to defeat them. Competition is one of the core reasons of a country's development. French people who built this developed and enchanting civilization are really admiring...”⁴⁴⁸

We can see that Kurd Ali could comprehend the way that Europe defined people within the context of his visits in Europe. He could define especially the relationship between person and person, and person and nature:

⁴⁴⁶ “Al-Tarbiyatu'l-Avrubiyya.” *Al-Muqtabas* 5: 2 (1328-1910).

⁴⁴⁷ “F1 Diyari'l-Gharb.” *Al-Muqtabas* 7: 7 (1332-1914).

⁴⁴⁸ “Gharaibu'l-Garb.” *Al-Muqtabas* 5: 1 (1328-1910).

“Western civilization kills animals for the sake and benefit of people.” The spirit created by this reason emerged the Western mind, and this creative mind invented all of these magnificent inventions today. Because a power that is capable of making natural forces a servant of its advantages can enable a person to remain servant to another person, thus reach the top of power. In the West nobody is merciful to anyone who is not merciful to him/her. Westerners do not feel sad for the death of thousands, if it will lead to bigger benefits for the human race.”⁴⁴⁹

The Western judicial system, Western academies, Western social justice and science of physics were a source of admiration for the period’s Arab intellectuals. This admiration comprised of the wish to get ahead of the West and the feeling of being left behind of the West. In general the supremacy of the West was accepted. However, the different answers to the question of how to get politically located led to an emergence of different political and intellectual movements. Some evolved into Arabism by thinking that Ottomans cannot protect Islam, therefore the Arab identity; some Christian Arabs thought that the Muslim Arab identity could only be protected under the protection of the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁵⁰ In this context, although using statements involving the feeling of belonging to the Ottomans, Kurd Ali, as mentioned above, was quite unhappy with the language policy of the Ottoman administration. Also, the Ottoman capital was not attractive to him, because while European capitals represented the top point that the human kind can get, the Ottoman capital was an irregular and underdeveloped city. Whereas the European capitals were impressive cities which were the outpouring of a civilization that grew by including the accumulation of all civilizations.

⁴⁴⁹ “Fī Diyārī’l-Gharb.” *Al-Muqtabas* 8: 1 (1332-1914).

⁴⁵⁰ For the impact of Western culture on Ottoman Arabs and the intellectual reflexes, please see: Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*, pp. 180-207.

IV.4. Islam/Arab Civilization and Arabic Language

European civilization, even if it appeared to be the most advanced civilization today, the Islamic civilization went through very bright days. Kurd Ali commented on Islam as such:

“Religion mandates its members to learn Hebrew or Ethiopian language and to solve the mystery of the universe. Thus, after two centuries from the emergence of Islam, Muslims internalised all human knowledge and began to discuss it. If the Muslims had not borne the knowledge of the former world, the modern world could not be able to be aware of Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Persian or Indian knowledge and would start its civilization process from the very beginning. They could not be able to establish the civilization for twenty centuries, which they actually established in three centuries. Religion did not prevent the learning of philosophy and science conforms to that centuries’ zeitgeist. Religion is ordered to protect and defend the oppressed.”⁴⁵¹

Then, why did such a bright civilization lag behind and became like this today? Kurd Ali stated about the Islamic civilization’s lagging behind as such:

“Piety lessened, due to the administrative weaknesses of the Islamic Countries. In fact, one of the definitive elements is the politics in all of the countries, and if politics became weak, every other element weakens. For a thousand years, rulers are ignorant; thus hypocrits increased in the official *ulama*. These intellectuals teach people religious information, which was actually unnecessary for this or the other world, and established a domination on some people’s minds.⁴⁵² This situation continued since Hujjat-al Islam Gazali up to now. People, who just learned some parts of Islamic jurisprudence which they wanted, instrumentalized Islam and turned it into a weapon for their own interest. Gazali preached to Islamic jurists to learn medicine in his works *Ikhyāʾ Ulumuddīn* and *Tahafut al-Falsafa*. He also put forward that, the people, who claim the religious sciences and natural sciences negate each other and harm religion. The Islamic ummah struggled with its domestic affairs and weakened. Then, the Crusades and Tatar attacks harmed the Islamic nation. The Islamic ummah split into smaller groups, and when it was on the way to recovery, the Tatar Ottomans came, who have no idea about civilization and modern sciences. It took the power from soldiers, grandness from ambition, and greatness from including other countries. Fatih Sultan Mehmet, like Mamlukes’ trials in Egypt to make Cairo as

⁴⁵¹ “Al-Islam wa’l-Madaniyya.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 12 (1327-1909).

⁴⁵² It is possible to see Kurd Ali’s theme in Butrus al-Bustani. According to Bustani, modern Arab culture was in a resolution period and experiencing dullness. If the subjects would like to revive its passions about knowledge, they needed to do their best in order to achieve modern knowledge. Please see: Sheehi, *Arab Identity*, p. 25.

the center of science, wanted to make Istanbul the capital of science, founded madrasahs, formed foundations, but these initiatives vanished after him. After him, Istanbul was trapped in infertility about sciences, in the Abu Suud period, and descending the title of *alim* from father to son became official.⁴⁵³ Recent Sultans used religion for this world and included non-religious things in religion. Due to the corruption of the order, it would not be possible to reform this dull perception. Today, Ottomans, especially Muslim ones, stonewalled the progress. However, the Ottoman constitution removed most of these obstacles.”⁴⁵⁴

As seen, Kurd Ali argued that, Islam ordered people to learn different languages, get into interaction with the civilizational knowledge and create rational solutions regarding the universe. Because, Muslims took the accumulation of knowledge around the world and added its own essence, such that modern European science communicated with the old world through the Islamic civilization. However, at this point, Islam was experiencing regression and the reason was the politicians who ruled Islamic countries. For a thousand year, ignorant rulers were ruling the Muslim world. Especially the Crusades, the Mongol attacks and then the Turkish rulers had receded Islam. The Ottomans had transformed scientific positions to places, which could descend from father to son; thus, in the Islamic world, knowledge became dull and regression started. If attention were paid, it would be seen that, the reason for the regression in the Islamic world was the Crusades, the Mongols and the Turks, which were all non-Arab elements. Before their period, in which there were Arabs ruling, Islam experienced its bright periods. Even in the period of Suleyman the Magnificent, which was shown as the brightest part of the Ottoman Empire in world history, Islam was receding. In fact, Turks never understood Arabic and Islam. Kurd Ali, who claimed that since the ancient times, Persians were more talented than Turks to use Arabic as the language of science, argued that unless people learn Arabic as a language of religion, they could not be able to grasp and understood the Koran and sunnah. He put forward that, Persians spoke Arabic very well and

⁴⁵³ “Al-Qadim wa’l-Hadish.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 1 (1327-1909).

⁴⁵⁴ “Al-Islam wa’l-Madaniyya.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 12 (1327-1909)., Sati el-Husri mentions that, the *ulama* had to learn modern sciences in order to update sharia. Please see: Tibi, *Arab Nationlism*, p. 87.

they were very good at Islamic sciences, and added that, since Turks did not speak Arabic they could not understand Islamic sciences. He mentioned that, because of the barbaric rulers of Turks, the Islamic jurisprudence (*fikih*) and *kelam* weakened some parts of the Islamic sciences.⁴⁵⁵ Kurd Ali, who shared the same opinions with Islamists such as the bright history of the Islamic civilization, Islam's influence on European civilization, and Islam's non-negating nature of scientific knowledge, agreed with the nationalist discourse of that era about the opinions such as criticisms against Turks and Arabic rulers' representation with Islam's bright periods.

Jabri puts forward that, Kurd Ali became the part of the meetings of sheiks and religious intellectuals in Damascus, read books of old religious intellectuals, well understood the ideas of intellectuals about Islam being a reformist religion, grasped how old intellectuals depicted the creativity of Islamic civilization, and by doing these, grew up with the love of Islam and Arabic. He argued that, he was full of love of religion and Arab nationalism.⁴⁵⁶ In this sense, the arguments of Jabri about Kurd Ali being full of 'Arab Nationalism' and being a religious intellectual look accurate. It is possible to interpret his anti-Turk discourse, especially in his writings, as the expression of Arab nationalism. Kurd Ali, who claimed that the Ottoman Empire was the most rooted Islamic state since they did not use the Arabic as the official language, which was claimed to be the most significant bond between Muslims, said that "Turkish as a mixture of Arabic and Persian. A Turk, who does not speak any of these, cannot write anything. Turkish is neither a science nor a civilizational language. Arabic is one of the magnificent languages that the world has ever seen."⁴⁵⁷ In fact, Turkish was not a language compared to Arabic. It took the self-expression ability from Arabic and Persian. Despite this, Turks did not declare Arabic as the official language.

⁴⁵⁵ "Al-Qadim wa'l-Hadish." *Al-Muqtabas* 4:1 (1327-1909).

⁴⁵⁶ Jabri, *Kurd Ali*, p. 41.

⁴⁵⁷ "Al Arabiya wa al-Turkiya." *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 2. (1327-1909).

Kurd Ali, who seriously criticized the Ottoman Empire about Arabic, claimed that, Mehmet Ali Pasha contributed a lot to Arabic and put forward that:

“God helped this language, which did not find the sufficient support from his own children, through others. Arabic lived its brightest period in the Mehmet Ali Pasha period. Since he has a pure genesis and French consultants, he accomplished so many things and what he had done enabled him to make history. As everyone knows, Mehmet Ali Pasha could be considered as illiterate. Since he was Albanian, he spoke the daily Arabic he learned how to read and write in his elder ages. However, he did something that the latest rulers did not by choosing intelligent and qualified people, who finished their secondary education, and sending them to Europe for educational purposes. He was imprisoning returner in a castle on a mountain and giving them a book to translate; and for those who were successful about translation, were assigned to important duties and made comfortable. Then, if the translated book was approved by the board, it was printed in state’s press.”⁴⁵⁸

Kurd Ali mentioned these thoughts also in an issue of *Al-Muqtabas* printed in Cairo. By expressing the importance of languages between people for communication, he mentioned that, if a language of a country spreads, the influence area of politics, literature, and art would also spread. He also argued that, since Arabic is the language of the Koran, it was used as the language of science by all Muslims without any difference between Arabs, Kurds, Turks, and Persians.⁴⁵⁹

Kurd Ali, who underlined the importance of Arabic being the language of science in his writings and who had to be appraised in accordance with them, expressed the contribution of translations to the development of Arabic and stated that, even if the self accumulation of a language is a lot, it can not be a living language unless it is nourished by other languages. He counted many names such as Muhammed Abdu, Ahmed Fares Shıdyaq, Ibrahim al-Yaziji, Ibrahim al-Huranı, Tahir al-Jazayırı, Abdullah Fıkrı, Mahmud Sukru al-Alusı, Jamaladdin al-Kasımı, Yaqub Sarruf, Ibrahim Musawar, Sulayman al-Bostanı, Abdurrahman al-Kawakıbı,

⁴⁵⁸ “Nahdatu’l-Arabiyyati’l-Akhira”. *Al-Muqtabas* IV, 3. (1327-1909.)

⁴⁵⁹ Please see. “Malakatu’l-Arabiya.” *Al-Muqtabas* 1: 9 (1324-1906).

Shibli Shumayyil, Kasım Amin, Ahmed Fathi Zaghul, Rashid Rida, Rafiq al-Azm, Abdulhamid al-Zahhar, Abdulaziz Chavish, Salih Hamdi Hammad, Muhammed Farid, Ali Yusuf, Ahmad Timur Said al-Shartuni, Rashid al-Shartuni, Farah Antun, Jorji Zaydan, Ibrahim Najjar, Adib Ishaq, Hayraddin al-Tunusi, Muhammed Mehdi, Sukru al-As'ali, Shaqir al-Hanbeli, and Abdulwahab al-Ingilizi and expressed their contributions to the development of Arabic.⁴⁶⁰

Kurd Ali, who stated that Arabic, which developed a lot in Egypt with the contribution of the state, and improved with the contribution of individuals and private institutions in Syria, expressed that:

“French and Americans, who came to Syria and Lebanon, established schools teaching in Arabic and students learned Arabic very well. The founders of American/British College of Beirut became the biggest contributors of development of the Quraysh language. Students were first taught Arabic, then mathematics, natural and physical sciences were taught in Arabic. Butrus al-Bustani and his family became the biggest contributors of development of Arabic in Beirut. He published many important works on Arabic tradition, and put forward the wealth of Arabic language in both schools and newspapers. Moreover, many people like Yusuf al-Asir and Nasif al-Yaziji and their families contributed a lot to the development of Arabic. Dozens of students coming from Arabic-medium school are working as writers, journalists and preachers in places such as Damascus, Egypt, and the United States.”⁴⁶¹

As seen, Butrus al-Bustani and Sulayman al-Bustani and Choueiri, who were described as the founding fathers of Arab national identity by Sheehi, thanked Nasif al-Yaziji, who was seen as one of the prominents of Arab cultural nationalism because of his contributions to the development of the language. Besides, as previously mentioned, people who were characterized as Arab nationalists became writers in *Al-Muqtabas* and praised the ones who he did not. He mentioned that, one of the core aims of *Al-Muqtabas* was to make Arabic the

⁴⁶⁰ Tibi, discussed most of these names, considering their contribution to the formation of Arab cultural nationalism. Please see: Tibi, *Arab Nationalism*, pp. 96-122.

⁴⁶¹ “Nahdatu'l-Arabiyyati'l-Akhira.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 3. (1327-1909).

modern scientific language and he added that, to achieve this, traditional and modern should be processed together. Kurd Ali, for whom Arabic occupied a central place in his thinking, education in the mother tongue was highly crucial for a nation to preserve its presence. National education was the most advanced version of education, and it preserved nations, languages, and traditions. The French imposed their own language on Algeria, prohibited Arabic, and wanted to assimilate them. Moreover, by giving the examples of Germany/Poland and Japan/Korea, he was describing the prohibition of education in the mother tongue as trials to destroy a nation. Kurd Ali continued his opinions about this topic as such, “Today, there are huge problems in education in Egypt and Damascus. Even though they are the most civilized countries of Arab world and although Egypt put a lot effort to make Arabic as the educational language, education in English became widespread lately. Egyptians have to maintain their language, morals, and traditions. Specially, Syria should also preserve its identity. German, British, American, Russian, and French schools opened in Syria had their disadvantages as much as its advantages. Even though people in here learned the Western sciences, they became distant from patriotism, and started to love the lands which were not actually belonging to them. When we speak to people who were educated there, we see that they do not love anything about their own motherland or Arabic. We got funny answers from people, who took higher education in foreign schools, when they were asked very simple questions about their own history.”⁴⁶²

The Ottoman Rule got its share of Kurd Ali’s criticisms:

“For the people who graduated from the state’s schools, Arabic sounds like a foreign language... Because in the Palace School (*Mekteb-i Sultani*) Arabic was thought very shallow, education is in Turkish, since it is the official one. We are ashamed of saying, there are 500 military officers coming from Syria and can not speak

⁴⁶² In a writing that Kurd Ali wrote after two years, stated that, “Foreign schools opened in Damascus served to the development of Arabic. Besides, it contributed to the development of scientific relations with Europe.” Please see: “Al-Nahdatu’l-Fikriyya.” *Al-Muqtabas* 7: 1 (1329-1912).

Arabic. When they speak, they speak daily Arabic, and even so they are using many Turkish words. Graduates of these schools know the Ottoman Empire's history rather than Arab history. The Ottoman Empire would like to enforce all of the laws - written in the capital - in all districts, but conditions in all districts are different. Likewise, first and secondary school curriculum prepared in the capital is desired to be imposed in Syria. The Ottoman Ministry of Education is really ignorant about the situation in districts. For instance, in Damascus, they opened a teacher's school, but there is nothing about Arabic in curriculum and they put the all emphasis on Turkish. In short, Arabs did not benefit from the "freedom" that the constitution brought at all."⁴⁶³

Arab civilization, which expressed itself through Arabic, produced many important works in every field as a condition of being a civilization. For instance, in a writing of Kurd Ali about music, he emphasized the importance of music as a branch of fine arts for modern civilized nations, and put forward that, Arab civilization produced important pieces in the field of music. Referring to Ibn Khaldun about the importance of music in Arab civilization he mentions that, with the contributions of Arab rulers, music developed and spread a lot. Moreover, he added that, many scientists were involved in music and produced important pieces. He argues that Farabi reached a peak in music. While underlining being Arab, he was commenting about the prominents of 'Arab civilization:'

"Arabic philosopher Yaqub bin Ishaq al-Kindi wrote many articles (*risale*) such as introduction to music, information about music and a summary about music. Moreover, Ahmed Bin Tabib al-Sarhsi, as a qualified intellectual, wrote a book called "*Musiqā al-Kabir*" besides many other works of him. Sabit Bin Kurra wrote a book about music. Ali bin Yayha el-Munajjim wrote papers about music and some answers' paper for questions about music. One of the Muslim philosophers in Andalusia, Abu Bakr Muhammed Bin Tufayl, was earning good income just because he knew about music."⁴⁶⁴

Kurd Ali, in his work, was discussing many people who produced something about music, and would like to show that, music occupied an important place in Arab civilization as well as modern European civilization.

⁴⁶³ "Al-Talimu'l-Watani." *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 4 (1328-1910)., For further, please see. "Fı Dıyari'l-Gharb." *Al-Muqtabas* 8: 7 (1332-1914).

⁴⁶⁴ "Shoruqu'l-Musıqa." *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 2 (1327-1909).

IV.5. The Caliphate and Constitutionalism

In Muhammed Kurd Ali's writing, the caliphate was almost never analyzed. He supported constitutionalism and the Ottoman constitution, but did not bring the issue of caliphate into the agenda. Furthermore, he remained silent after the dethronement of Abdulhamid II while many Islamists were debating about the characteristics of the caliphate. He was not the only one who remained silent; all writers of *Al-Muqtabas* journal kept their silence about the caliphate. For instance, Ahmad Zaki Beg, who characterizes the period until Constitutionalism as despotic, welcomed the Second Constitutional Period by saying, "long live freedom." He expressed that, in Cairo of Fatimi, Kurtuba of Andalusia and Damascus, which is *Darul Islam*, 'Islamic Civilization' was continued by its ancestors. He expressed that, for the sake of Union Sign and Progress Sunnah, it should be continued like this.

In the following pages, he characterized the sultanate of Abdulhamid II as a single person dictatorship and expressed that, with the Ottoman constitution; a new period had started depending on the rule of Council (*Şura*). He mentioned that, the new period was very good for them, and argued that, the *Umayya* State experienced its brightest period when they paved the way for the freedoms and began to collapse when they imposed oppression.⁴⁶⁵ In fact, he implied that, the Abdulhamid II period was a dictatorship period, and the Committee of Union and Progress was a formation, which came from the fundamental perception of the Islamic civilization. He said that, like happened in the *Umayya* State, paving the way for freedom will strengthen the state; but limiting them will lead the state to collapse. The CUP took support from different fractions of the Arab world. For instance, one of the prominent secular Christian intellectuals and masters of modern Islamic historiography, Corji Zaydan, was a person who supported decentralization, and promoted Istanbul ruling even in the CUP

⁴⁶⁵ Ahmad Zeki Beg, "Al-Sham wa Al-Huriyya." *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 1 (1327- 1909).

period. Because he thought that, Ottomanism was the best way to preserve the rights of Christian Arabs.⁴⁶⁶

As we mentioned, Muhammed Kurd Ali, who never said anything about the caliphate, expressed his proud feelings about the revolution of the CUP, which he described as “our Ottoman revolution.”⁴⁶⁷ We perceived his faith that the parliament, which was formed after the elections held in 1908, would work well, from his words:

“If it we do our part and they do theirs, in this fortunate parliamentarian period we can achieve the status of developed countries. Today, we expect services from the state that an individual cannot do. For instance, the state has to construct railroads, which connects the Ottoman capital to furthest Arab regions. In this regard, Iskodra, Trabzon, Jarusalem, Cairo, Damascus, and Tripoli should be connected to each other. By doing this, Rumelia, Anatolia, and the Arab regions should become as integrated as the rings of a chain. Products of Malatya, Hakkari or Kurds might be sold in Cairo or Alexandria.”⁴⁶⁸

We saw Kurd Ali’s emphasis on the Ottoman identity with the positive atmosphere that the revolution of the CUP created, and faith that with the constitution, many issues could be overcome. However, in time, especially with the centralization policies and proliferation of Turkish education in Syria, Kurd Ali criticised the CUP ruling about the Arabic education.

IV.6. Education

Arab, political, social, and religious elites in Syria, focused on the education system in the period where the influences of Westernization had been felt. Traditional madrasahs were still existent. Both in schools in districts and the capital of the Empire, modern curriculum was used, and besides the military and medicinal education, law and political knowledge were

⁴⁶⁶ Sheehi, *Arab Identity*, p. 160.

⁴⁶⁷ “Al-Islam wa’l-Madaniyya.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 12 (1327-1909).

⁴⁶⁸ “Ghinu’l-Osmaniyyin.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 3 (1327-1909).

also taught. At the same time, in some European schools in Syria, there was the Western style of education.⁴⁶⁹ In fact, traditional education was abandoned and the Western style of education was carried into effect. Then, when did the Islamic world started to have problems about education? Kurd Ali stated that, after the collapse of the Abbasid State, science and literature had great difficulties, and added:

“When the Ottoman Empire had been established, it included many elements under its ruling. It perceived Arabs just with political purposes, and did not approach to either Arabs nor any other elements concerning scientific or sociological purposes. Egypt, which became freer after the “invasion” of the Ottomans, was able to preserve itself. Muhammed Ali Pasha rescued Egypt from the Ottomans, opened schools teaching in Arabic, and with the help of French orientalist, many books in European languages were translated into Arabic.”⁴⁷⁰

In fact, in the Abbasid period when Arabic rulers were in power and Egypt, which had initiatives to recover Arab culture after gaining independence from the Ottomans, made successful moves about education. According to Kurd Ali, who analyzed the issue of education through Arab culture and civilization, with the collapse of Abbasid ruling and the entrance of Turks into the Arab world, there were significant regressions about education and literature. For Kurd Ali, the most important question in education is Arabic, and thus, according to him, this attack, started by Mehmet Ali through education in Arabic, enabled the Arab awakening in Egypt; but in Damascus, Iraw, Hedjaz, Yemen, Tripoli, Tunisia, Algeria and Marrakech, the desired attacks could not be done. Although some Arabic-medium schools were opened in Syria and Tunisia, the oppression that the French exposed on Syria in the following period and the invasion of Tunisia prevented an Arab awakening. This is because,

⁴⁶⁹ Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*, p. 160.

⁴⁷⁰ Sati al-Husri, one of the founding fathers of Arab national identity, played an important role about these translations. Husri and his students translated hundreds of books from French to Arabic. Please see: Tibi, *Arab Nationalism*, p. 87.

the oppressive regime and the French occupation, “killed the soul of science and prevented national awakening.”⁴⁷¹

Kurd Ali stated that, recovering the Arab culture, science and order was the way for the ummah to return its bright days, and added that his ancestors were a treasure and this should be told to people. The history of Islam and world civilizations should be told, and since they were living in the age of science, the West should be caught. He argued that, modern civilization was constructed on knowledge and order, and they had done this before. They had to do this again, otherwise they would be cursed by the ummah, he added.⁴⁷² These expressions were the same with the editorial policy of *Al-Muqtabas*. And when they were considered together with Kurd Ali’s words, “education is a matter of existence for modern nations,”⁴⁷³ it should be said that, *Al-Muqtabas*’ contributed to the existence of the Arab nation.

Thus, serious developments must be done and European standards must be embraced. Regarding the education standards in Europe, Kurd Ali stated that:

“At the end of Middle Ages, and at the beginning of Modern ages, the first thing that developed European nations did was to reform the material and literary sciences education. Reform began in accordance with the necessities of that time; European schools took its shape in what we see today at the beginning of the last century. Student learns one, two or three languages after the beginning. Then, natural and social sciences, mathematics, literature, and economy courses are taught. After this basic education, in order to gain a new thinking and writing style, students go through encyclopaedical education.”⁴⁷⁴

After his detailed depictions about Western education, Kurd Ali continued as such:

⁴⁷¹ “Al-Arabiyya wa al-Turkiyya.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 2 (1327-1909).

⁴⁷² El-Tabba’, *Kurd Ali*, p. 43.

⁴⁷³ “Al-Talim al-Vatani.” *Al-Muqtabas* 5: 4 (1328-1910).

⁴⁷⁴ “Tarikat el-Talim.” *El-Muktebas* 4: 3 (1327-1909).

“This order and specialization in the education system enabled many important scientists to rise in human sciences in Europe. It is hard to find people like them here. We do not have any scientists or thinkers who have the same knowledge and experience as Descartes, Comte, Kant, Bacon, Spinoza, Emerson, Newton, Spencer, and Rousseau.”⁴⁷⁵

Kurd Ali, who expresses that the existent education system was retaining the East to raise scientists, continued as such:

“Very few people are aware of this fact in Egypt and the Ottoman Empire. But, there are more or less 150 students that the ministries of the Ottoman Empire sent to Europe. They were trained in fields such as military and medicine in Germany. Or there are students that the government of Egypt sent to the UK, France or Germany to take a career education. When the number of modern education fields increased, teaching by sitting at a pulpit no longer exists.”⁴⁷⁶

According to Kurd Ali, there was nothing more powerful than positive sciences and literature learned correctly. When the education system was reformed, students of theology would not spend many years on learning material sciences. In Rumelia, Anatolia and Damascus, students had been reading Arab grammar and logic books namely, *Amsile*, *Bina*, *Maqsud*, *Izzi*, *al-Marah*, *al-Avamil*, *al-Izhar*, *al-Kafiya*, *al-Shafiya*, *Samarqandiya*, *Sunisiyya* and *Isaghuci* for years. Such that, they could not pass to purposive sciences such as philosophy, commenting (*tefsir*), hadith (*hadis*), Islamic jurisprudence and kalam (*kelam*). Or students in *al-Azhar* were reading many grammar books such as, *al-Acrumiyya*, *al-Kufrawi*, *al-Azhariyya*, *Ibni Aqil*, *al-Hadaro* and *el-Sabban* for years. However, if they read *Ibni Aqil* and its explanation, it would be sufficient and there would be no time consumption. Because, in the end, language is a tool. The lengthy education on language both in Ottoman and Egyptian universities and madrasahs prevented students to pass to the next phase and learn practical sciences. Kurd Ali, who criticized the education in both in *al-Azhar* and Ottoman

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

madrasahs, argued that, even though there was this lengthy language education, graduates did not have a command of Arabic and did not understand Arabic writings. He mentioned that, the abolishment of explanation (*şerh*) and annotation (*haşiye*) with the latest reforms in University of *al-Azhar* was rewarding, and added that, a modern education style would be to the point.⁴⁷⁷

IV.7. Abdulhamid II

Kurd Ali also criticized Abdulhamid II, who was highly criticized by the Islamists,, similarly. Alusi described the Abdulhamid II period as one of the worst periods where centralization reached its peak.⁴⁷⁸ He mentioned that, all of the landed proprietors in the Ottoman Empire, either Arab or Turkish, demanded a reform of this order. He argued that, the Empire was punishing Arabs and other people with imprisonment or death penalty due to their expressions of thought. He also asserted that, Kurd Ali struggled with ignorant sheikhs, those who give fetwas in favour of dictatorship (cruel individuals and killers).⁴⁷⁹

Kurd Ali, who expressed that Abdulhamid II was the worst sultan of the Ottoman Empire in writing published after the dethronement of Abdulhamid II in *Al-Muqtabas*, stated that:

“Between both Islamic sultans and sultans of other countries, we did not see anyone like Abdulhamid. Yet, he was like Nasuriddin Abbasi concerning sleuthing, like *Fatıma Halım Bı-Amrullah* concerning ambition, like Hajjaj Bın Yusuf concerning delusions, and like the Ottoman Sultan Ibrahim concerning foundry. Abdulhamid, who was enthroned instead of his mentally ill brother Murat IV with an organization done by Mustafa Reşit Pasha and Mithat Pasha who were prominents of freedom, first seen as supporter of constitutional regime. But then, he abolished the Parliament and the Ottoman constitution. He began to work with Mithat

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ For a classical analysis of Abdulhamid II and period, from that period’s Arab nationalism perspective, please see: Zeine N. Zeine, *Arap-Turkish Relations and The Emergence of Arab Nationalism* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1981), pp. 53-73.

⁴⁷⁹ Alusi, *Kurd Ali*, p. 28.

Pasha, Namık Kemal, and Ziya Pasha, but they started to act scrupulous, expelled Mithat Pasha to Taif, imprisoned him there, and choked him.”⁴⁸⁰

Kurd Ali, in his writing about ranks and titles in the Ottoman Empire, indicated that, rank and title issue turned into tool for demoralization throughout the dictatorship period. He mentioned that, this ruling appointed specific people to some posts even if they did not fit. Kurd Ali, who said that, due to the ranking and title issues, many households were destroyed, asserting that the dictatorship ruling was so cruel about this subject.⁴⁸¹

About the considerations of Abdulhamid, Kurd Ali said that:

“He put so much pressure on his brother Sultan Murat, other members of the dynasty, especially heir to the throne Mehmet Han V. He discharged all the ministers or bureaucrats who were not as the way he wants, and by doing so spread fear to all prominents and politicians of the country. Thus, everyone started to act in accordance with the demands of Abdulhamid II; all the opposers were expelled, imprisoned or tortured. Every day after his enthronement, he began to do these more and more and acted more scrupulously for himself. He started to take control of everything, expelled all conscientious statesmen and appointed more convenient people instead who were unqualified. Esurient person thinks that, money can do anything. Thus, Abdulhamid II, in contrary to previous sultans, began to obtain public properties. Whenever he sees a field if it belongs to the state he obtained without paying, if it belongs to a person, he bought with extortion. He founded a Charity Company in Istanbul ports for his own ships, founded another company for his businesses in Baghdad and Basra, opened big warehouses in Istanbul, became merchant, farmer and draper, and did not care anything else but the news from spies. In order to hire these spies in Istanbul and many other districts, the treasury was emptied. He turned almost everyone into a spy. Those who do not spy for him, were not able to gain any posts. People started to think that, the way for promotion was passing through spying for him.”⁴⁸²

⁴⁸⁰“Sultan Abulhamid al-Makhlu’a.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 3 (1327-1909). Please see. Appendix, 7.

⁴⁸¹“Al-Ruteb wa'l-Avsima.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 3 (1327-1909).

⁴⁸²“Sultan Abulhamid al-Makhlu’a.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 3 (1327-1909).

Kurd Ali, who stated that, the followings towards the Ottoman madrasahs and universities were too tight and with their wills, the education system became just a so-called education system,⁴⁸³ continued his criticisms against Abdulhamid II as such:

“The press was totally ignorant, against every idea and innovation. For the last thirty years, writers in the Ottoman ruling write only superstitions and false praises. Pressure increased so much in his period, such that, the usage of words such as justice, equality, the Ottoman Basic Law, republic, parliament and dynamite were prohibited and newspapers were doing nothing but praising and sanctifying Abdulhamid. Although some say that his grand viziers and bureaucrats did it, everything happened within his knowledge and will. In the Abdulhamid ruling, people who were opposing him about any subject suffered in a way. Many people were fired due to Sultan’s unwillingness, or had to compromise about his cruelties. Some weak-minded people saw Abdulhamid, who became famous for his grievance, as a genius due to his ambition romanticism. Sultan Abdümeccid loved his son Murad more than Abdulhamid II, because he knew that Abdulhamid II was a malign. When he grew up, this habit became more apparent. He was following other family members especially his uncle Abdülaziz and Sultan Murad. While Sultan Murad was into subjects such as poetry, music or European civilization, Abdulhamid was dealing with magic, spell and fortune telling. Thus, throughout his ruling, he was hard by superstitious sheikhs. According to information coming from witnesses of his own morality, his morality is even more ruined than his ruling.”⁴⁸⁴

Kurd Ali argued that, Abdulhamid II wasted public property and the ignorant part of the *ulama* praised their sultan at the cost of telling lies to God and the people. He also indicated that, spies were following everything, regardless of the size of the work of the *ulama*, especially the subjects concerning Abdulhamid II. Nevertheless, he claimed that Abülhamid was not paying attention to the development, industry, and agriculture of the country. In the Abdulhamid II period, Bulgaria, East Rumelia, Dobruca, and Bosnia and Herzegovina broke off from the Ottoman ruling; Greece and Serbia were annexed; Kars Ardahan and Batumi were annexed by the Russians; Cyprus and Crete broke off from the Empire; the British invaded Egypt he put forward, and added that Abdulhamid was an unsuccessful statesman.

⁴⁸³ “Nahdatu’s-Suriya.” *Al-Muqtabas* 5: 8 (1328-1910).

⁴⁸⁴ “Sultan Abdulhamid el-Muhlu’a.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4:3 (1327-1909).

Kurd Ali, who claimed that Abdulhamid II caused many innocent people to get hurt and made them lose their patriotism, described Abdulhamid II's dethronement as such:

“The ones, who dethroned Abdulhamid and dictatorship, were educated in Ottoman schools. People, who were desired to be bought by the sultan with property, money or positions to continue his ruling, made a revolution, took down this ignorant Sultan, and made the day July 1 one of the happiest days for Ottomans.⁴⁸⁵ Mahmud Nedim Pasha said to Sultan Abdülaziz that, they would like to scare you by the thoughtless and unaware people, by referring to Anatolia. Yet the consequence was Abdulhamid's dethronement and death. Ahmet Izzed Pasha al-Abid said, “Muslims do not recognize any Caliph or Sultan but you. Consider them as your subjects and rule them. Do not allow them to discuss what you do like they are free. Do not mind what Western states say to you. They can not do anything to us,” to Sultan Abdulhamid. Therefore, the overthrown sultan was able to implement such unlimited policies. The end of the line for the dictatorship towards the July 10 occurred as such. People were sick of this Sultan's cruelty, and waiting for their death to get rid of him. However, famous people came from the CUP⁴⁸⁶ and took the action to prevent the Ottoman Empire to lose what is left from the public property. So, Abdulhamid II had to proclaim the Ottoman constitution. Although the Ottoman constitution was enacted last July⁴⁸⁷, he started to work in order to bring back the old regime, to rule the country as a single person and to prevent being called to account. So that he wanted to prove to the European states that, Ottomans deserve nothing but a dictatorial regime. He wanted to create discord between Ottoman minorities. He gave some property to betrayers and wanted to gather some support. After the declaration of independence, minority associations emerged. Armenian associations were in the leading of them. Armenians demanded to extend their privileges, in other words, a kind of independence. Arabs claimed, “Turks were unfair to us. They did not give any posts that we deserved and isolated us from the state.” Or Albanians voiced some demands similar to the Armenians. The overthrown Sultan, wanted to use this since he was aware of the indignance that

⁴⁸⁵ Before the July Revolution, people from Damascus were generally ‘silent’ and happy with the Abdulhamid ruling. Prominent local politicians were reaping the fruits of thirty years of political stability. They were refraining from actions that could harm the established order. However, a very narrow intellectual group was expressing the rights that Syria has to have under the Ottoman ruling and trying to preserve these. But, when revolution happened, celebrations took place with broad participation. Because the groups, which were connected to the Committee of Union and Progress and had discomfort about Abdulhamid organized these celebrations. For detailed information, please see: Khoury, *Urban Notables*, pp. 55-57.

⁴⁸⁶ The relationship between Muhammed Kurd Ali and the Committee of Union and Progress was ruined in the following period. According to Alusi, the pressure of the Unionists against Arabs increased with the start of the World War I and Muhammed Kurd Ali started to be seen as a dangerous person. Please see: Alusi. *Kurd Ali*. 58.

⁴⁸⁷ For a classical interpretation of the 1908 Revolution within the context of Arab nationalism, please see: Zeine, *Arab Nationalism*, pp. 73-96. About how the 1908 Revolution was perceived by Arabs, please see: Kurşun, *Türk-Arap İlişkileri*, pp. 41-44.

these kinds of associations' demands created. He mobilized people under the cover of religion with an association that he founded in capital namely '*Ittihad-ı Muhammedi*,' and organized demonstrations against the Ottoman constitution by supporting sharia. This association opened up some branches in districts and provoked people under the cover of religion and tied them to the Sultan.⁴⁸⁸ Abdulhamid, besides the *Ittihad-ı Muhammedi* instigation, wanted to incite soldiers. On this, he wanted to create an unrest in order to re-establish 'sharia,' yet, only a few of the soldiers in capital tended to this. If they would have realized the plans that they desired, they would kill the free minds of the ummah and the pro-reform people. If Abdulhamid would have been successful with his evil plan, he would have caused a civil war for the sake of actualising dictatorship again. Maybe, there would be half a million of people hurt, the same with the French Revolution. However, God wanted prosperity for this ummah, and granted the people who wanted and cherished constitutional order to the ummah, and their pure intentions enabled this success. Mahmud Şevket Pasha Faruki el-Mahmudi, the hero commander of *Harekat* Army in Thessaloniki, who heard the news about the initiatives to abolish the constitution, came to Istanbul, captured barracks and arrested rebel soldiers involved. With the fatwa of shaykh al-Islam, it was proved that, Abdulhamid killed innocent people, removed holy books and wasted the property of the ummah. With these, it was obvious that he was the instigator and dethroned. Mehmet V was enthroned with the allegiance of the First Parliament, state dignitaries and landed proprietors.”⁴⁸⁹

Kurd Ali, who congratulated the army, which dethroned Abdulhamid II, mentioned that, the army is the primary reason for the Ottoman Empire's victories, and a significant tool for the development of this Great State (*Devlet-i Allıye*), and prayed for it.⁴⁹⁰

IV.8. Political and Nationalist Discourse

As we mentioned, according to Kurd Ali, the brightest periods of the Islamic civilization were the periods when Arabs were in power. In the Islamic world, when Abbasi rule became functionless and the Turkish Seljukians came to power in the last thousand years,

⁴⁸⁸ When 31 March incident happened, Saykh Abdulqadir al-Hatıb, Ahmed al-Kudmanı and Muftı Saleh Afandı made a declaration in Damascus, and announced that, they are going to ruin the courthouse administration, destroy the medical school, raid military freedom club, and kill the publishers of "*Al-Muqtabas*". In fact, in the 31 March incident, Kurd Ali and *Al-Muqtabas* were aimed directly. Please see: Kurşun, *Türk-Arap ilişkileri*, p. 54.

⁴⁸⁹ "Sultan Abdulhamid el-Muhlu'a." *El-Muktebas* 4:3 (1327-1909).

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid.

stagnation, ignorance, and a laziness period started. The Islamic world was pushed behind Europe day-by-day. But, it was possible to see an Ottomanist discourse in Kurd Ali's writings.⁴⁹¹ For instance, Kurd Ali, in his writing where he elaborated on the Ottoman Empire's wealth, mentioned that, the Ottoman Empire should tie Rumelia, Anatolia and Arab regions as rings of a chain, and continued by stating that, a product produced in Malatya should be sold in Cairo. Moreover, he argued that:

“Zabadanı, Bak'a, Ba'labak, Hums, Hama, Der'a, Halep and Beirut districts, Jarusalem and Mountaion of Lebanon lieutenant of governors, Tripoli, Yemen, Hidjaz, Basra, Baghdad, Musul, Diyarbakır, Mamuretul al-Azız, Tilis, Kastamonu, Van, Erzurum, Trabzon, Sivas, Ankara, Adana, Algeria, Meditteranean, Aydın, Hudavendiğar, İstanbul, Edirne, Selanik, Manastr, Yanya, Kasova, Ishkodra, Benghazı, Çatalca, and İzmit should be connected to each other.”⁴⁹²

The most important subject where we see nationalist thoughts of Kurd Ali was the Ottoman Empire's policies about education in Turkish. Kurd Ali, who heavily criticized the language policy of the Ottoman Empire, which was indicated in the Ottoman constitution, mentioned that it was a project of Turkification.⁴⁹³ He also asserted that:

“With the Ottoman constitution, Turkish was declared as the official language of the state, and wanted to be taught to all Ottoman minorities. By doing so, it was desired to create a common culture and strengthen political unity. In the primary and secondary education curriculums, nothing was included about Arabic. Learning Turkish sciences became compulsory for elders, youth, women, and men, Arabs, Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians and Albanians. For the ones willing to learn the basics of Arabic, Arabic books written in

⁴⁹¹ Syria / Arab interpretation of Ottomanism put forward the efforts of revitalizing and reunifying the Empire. However, the extra centralized method of ruling adopted by the Committee of Union and Progress, harmed local leaders' interests. Local leaders adopted Abdulhamid's interpretation of Ottomanism more. Because Abdulhamid II let the local leaders act more independently on their own lands. For detailed information, please see: Khoury, *Urban Notables*, p.58.

⁴⁹² “Ghınu'l-Osmanıyyın.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 3 (1327-1909). Kurd Ali's tendency to match the Islamic victories with Arabs, was voiced by Nadrah Matran, who was a Lebanese Christian Arab, during the first Arab Congress in 1913. Please see: Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*, p.143.

⁴⁹³ 'Nationalist' intellectuals of that period analyzed the issue of education in Arabic a lot. The Committee of Union and Progress was characterized as anti-Islamist since they prevented education in Arabic. Arabic was described as the salvation of all Muslim nations. Please see: Khalidi, “El-Mufid,” p. 47.

Turkish were made obligatory. People, researching about the country and minorities found out that these steps of the government can be considered as the “Turkification”⁴⁹⁴ of Arabs and other minorities. Even though this step was thought to be beneficial politically, there were no benefits regarding society and science. Because, even the smallest European nation preserves its language and culture. If the government makes the education obligatory and makes Turkish as the medium, there will be consequences and the desired output cannot be gained. Even if something was achieved in the short term, the country will be in deadlock. Because a person cannot be beneficial for his ummah or nation unless she learned sciences in her own language. If this article of the Ottoman constitution would be enacted, there will be a more cruel ruling than in the dictatorship period.”

Kurd Ali, who stated that, the Ottoman Empire did not pay attention to Arabic, which was a religion, literature, and civilizational language, put forward that, after its foundation, the Ottoman Empire made a huge mistake that the history would never forgive. He mentioned that, they made Arabic the official language by leaving their own languages aside just like the Mamelukes ruling in Egypt and Damascus, the Seljukians and the Buyids ruling in Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula, the Ayyubids ruling in Egypt and Damascus, but the Ottomans used Turkish as the official language. Kurd Ali, who increased his tone of criticism, asserted that, Turks, by abandoning Arabic, which was the language of the whole ummah, made their “bedouin language” the official language but could not make it reach a certain level for centuries.”⁴⁹⁵

Kurd Ali, brought Turkish being the official education language into the agenda in his following writings, and claimed that, some Syrians forgot Arabic after learning Turkish in order to obtain some posts and positions. In this regard, he puts forward three options:

“There are three ways to get rid of ignorance and reach the level of civilized nations. Either we are going to turn in our future to the Ministry of Education and wait for them to do the necessary things for our future, which is not a healthy way. Because the Ministry of Education (*maarif nezareti*) prepared the Turkish curriculum

⁴⁹⁴ The notion of ‘Turkification’ should be researched as the ideological installation of opposing groups which were opposing to the Ottoman ruling’s policies and acts. Please see: Kayalı, *Young Turks*, pp. 82-96

⁴⁹⁵ “Al-Arabiya wa al-Turkiye.” *Al-Muqtabas* 4: 2 (1327-1909).

for primary, secondary and higher education in convenience with the capital and some Anatolian districts. This curriculum is not appropriate for districts in the Balkans and Arab districts. The second way is to turn in our future to foreign schools. Although foreign schools are better than the schools in the capital considering their education and Arabic, graduates of these schools are being alienated from their own culture and civilization. Thus, we need to choose the third way. We must take care of our own schools, and strengthen their material and literal aspects. Because these schools will empower the word of nation, and revive the Arab language.”⁴⁹⁶

In this sense, Kurd Ali made these warnings to the Ottoman ruling:

“Turkification of Minorities of Ottoman (*Anasır-ı Osmaniye*), those of which speak their own languages for twelve centuries, can not be accepted. Minorities of Ottomans should show consent, and learn their mother tongue freely. In this way, people will be full of devotion for their nation, and attach to Ottoman unity wholeheartedly.”⁴⁹⁷

IV.9. Conclusion

Kurd Ali worked on the initiatives of Arabic becoming a modern scientific language, which took place in *Al-Muqtabas* journal with Butrus al-Bustani’s comprehensive explanation in ‘*Da’irat al-Ma’aref*.’ He tried to elaborate on the knowledge of Arab and Western civilizations such as pedagogy, sociology, economics, politics, literature, history, archeology, linguistics, and bibliography in Arabic. Because of their contribution to Arabic, he praised Egypt’s official newspaper ‘*Vaka-ı al-Misriya*,’ Rifa’ Tahtavi’s newspaper ‘*Rawzat al-Madares*,’ Ahmed Fares Shidyaq, Yakub Sarruf and Corji Zeydan, and Mehmet Ali Pasha’s contributions to revive Arabic. In this way, Kurd Ali separated from the Islamists with their emphasis on ‘Arab civilization’ and ‘Arabic being a modern science language,’ and he stayed closer to the intellectual flow described as Arab nationalist. In this context, they did not breach into the ‘reform in religion’ subject, and perceived the ‘reform’ issue through Arabic.

⁴⁹⁶ We see that, the same ideas are analyzed in different issues again and again. Please see: “Al-Nahdatu’l-Fikriyya.” *Al-Muqtabas* 7: 1 (1330-1912).

⁴⁹⁷ “Nahdatu’s-Suriya.” *Al-Muqtabas* 7: 8 (1328-1910).

Especially, they expressed opinions in which we can consider under the title of Sheehi's words, the 'formation of Arab national identity.'

For Muhammed Kurd Ali, Arabic was very important; because the Islamic civilization expressed itself in Arabic. For the ummah, turning back to the old bright days could be achieved by revivng Arabic culture and science. Because, the Islamic ummah had been collapsing until the Abbasid state collapsed and theTurks took power. Because the Turks did not recognize Arabic, which was one of the most magnificent languages around the world, as the official language, and recognized Turkish, which was neither a scientific nor a literary language. Since they could not learn Arabic, they did not understand Islam, and ignorant rulers made the Islamic ummah recede. In the end, with the Ottoman constitution, Turkish was imposed on Arabs, students in Syrian state schools were taught in Turkish, and Turkish and Ottoman history were taught instead of Arab and Islamic history. People were sending their children to these schools for the sake of posts and positions, and letting their children to be 'Turkified.' At this point, although Mehmet Ali Pasha was not an Arab, his services about enriching and making Arabic a scientific language was praiseworthy. At this point, even if there was religious fellowship, the fellowship of imposers of Turkish education on Arab people and Arabs could not be possible.

The Capital of the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul, was not attractive to Kurd Ali, like the European cities sparkling with their architecture, schools, universities, order of the roads, palaces, gardens, music, museums, churches, factories, libraries, railroads, electricity lines, bridges, and squares. They made social and political revolutions, and overthrew "cruel" rulings. The West, which served the new epistemology depended on scientific knowledge to people, put reason on top of the ontological hierarchy and created a level of civilization that every other nation desired to reach. Thus, what had to be done was to express the literature in the fieldes that this glorious civilization expressed itself in Arabic, and to bear Arabic to a

greater level. *Al-Muqtabas* was a voluntary initiative in this sense, but it was not sufficient. Arab children should be taught in Arabic and then, go to Europe and learn European civilization in detail. At this point, the reform that Kurd Ali mentioned was not the same 'reform' that the Islamists discussed. It is a cultural reform, which also included 'reform in religion.' Thus, although the opinions and ideas of Kurd Ali were parallel with the Islamists, they should be considered as 'Arab Cultural Nationalism' as Cheoueri conceptualized.

CONCLUSION

When it was the end of the 18th century, the power balances in the world had changed and Europe turned into a politically, economically, technologically and culturally determinant actor. Following the Vienna Congress held after the Napoleonic Wars, ‘the century of peace’ started for Europe and lasted until World War I. However, this century marked many disasters for the Ottoman Empire and when the European states supported the Greek uprising, it revealed that the diplomatic system established in Europe did not include the Ottoman Empire. The revolts of non-Muslim groups in the Balkans followed the Greek Revolt, which was the clear example of the relationship between international politics with revolts against the Ottomans. The ongoing problems did not remain limited to the Balkans and France occupied Algeria when the Ottoman Empire was busy with the Greek uprising. Khedive of Egypt Mehmet Ali Pasha, who was asked by the Ottoman Empire to help during the Greek uprising rioted against the Ottoman Empire, passed Konya and proceeded towards Istanbul. Thereupon, the Ottomans signed the Treaty of *Hünkâr İskelesi* with Russia and allied together against Mehmet Ali Pasha. Then they allied with the European states and defeated Russia during the process leading to the Crimean Wars and found the chance to become a member of the ‘European states club’ with the Treaty of Paris. So, the Ottoman Empire followed a very prompt diplomacy policy by allying with Mehmet Ali Pasha against the Greek revolts, with the Russians againsts Mehmet Ali Pasha, and with the European states against the Russians.

While the Ottoman Empire was following such a prompt diplomacy outside and a fast reform process inside, revolts in the Balkans led to its decline. European states were involved in the revolts in Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, and Bosnia-Herzegovina and when European diplomats gathered in Istanbul to discuss the subject matter; Ottoman statesmens made a new move and established the First Constitutional Period. However, this move of the Ottoman

Empire did not lead to the expected consequences, the Empire had to deliberate the consequences of the Russo-Turkish War of '93 in the Berlin Conference, Serbia, Montenegro and Romania announced their independency during this Conference and Bulgaria became an independent principality. In the following years, Britain occupied Cyprus first, and then Egypt; Austria occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina and a riot broke out in Albania. The Cretan Depression and the Armenian uprisings, the problems in Macedonia and the Balkan Wars came after. During this period, imperialist occupations started by France in North Africa continued with Tunisia and Morocco; while Italians occupied Libya. 1768-1774, 1787-1792, 1806-1812 and 1828-1829; the periods started with the Russo-Turkish Wars, continued with the Balkan revolts and tragedies caused by land losses in the Caucasus, was a restructuring of all of the institutions and practices for the Ottoman Empire at the same time.

The '*Nizam-ı Cedid*' 'reform' movement, which started with the demands of reform suggestions of Selim III from his statesmen, was a distinctive feature for the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. The Ottomans' official ideology was changed with the *Rescript of Gülhane*, which was one of the turning points of Ottoman modernization and the 'reform' period; and it was aimed to restructure different religious groups arranged in the '*millet* system' on the grounds of Ottoman citizenship. Thus, the Ottoman Empire redefined its surrounding world, itself and its relationship with its citizens. As a state which redefined itself, it naturally led to radical innovations in the judicial system and opened new modern law schools. With the *Rescript of Gülhane*, bureaucracy started to dominate the political realm and literate absolutist types of bureaucrats turned into the dominant power of the Ottoman reformation process. The new system that emerged as a result of the reformist movement in the center was moved to the rural provinces; close control of rural areas was enabled, especially through the web of mail and railway. After the dramatic demolishment of the Janissaries, which were serving like a 'private army' for the state for centuries, and the regular

army forces that were educated in the Western style were established. The state bureaucracy that was evolving into a modern, bureaucratic structure from a traditional structure was separated into branches, the inflows and outflows of the treasury were combined under one authority, and civil servants started to receive regular wages. First Western style primary, secondary, and higher education institutions were established in order to respond to the need of qualified staff for a centralized bureaucracy, which was being restructured in the Western style. While Ottoman central governance was being restructured upon the French model according to the system of 'ministries,' municipal practices were implemented in Istanbul and Beirut with the French 'prefecture de la ville' model on the local administration level, and the financial system of the state was changed entirely. The press became something essential to Ottoman public opinion as a platform in which new social classes emerging within the framework of the ongoing transformations could express themselves.

During the process of 'reform', when the Ottoman Empire redefined its surrounding world, itself and its people; and restructured all of its institutions and practices within this context, a new type of intellectual emerged as a result of this 'transformation' both in the rural areas and at the center. While the Committee of Union and Progress, which had emerged by the groups who had gotten educated in the European style of schools, was a product of this 'reform' process, Ottomanist, nationalist and Islamist movements were also products of this process. The main issue for both the Committee of Union and Progress and other political and ideological movements was the question of on which bases the collective identity of the state, that is under a transformation with all of its institutions and practices, should be built upon. While the Committee of Union and Progress searched for the answer of this question over political practices, Islamism and other movements searched for the answer on a more theoretical basis. Similar to the fact that 'reform' was a central concept for the statesmen, it was a central concept for intellectuals as well and the new identity of the transforming state

was discussed within the framework of ‘reform.’ Therefore, basic concepts of the discussions of Islamist thinkers such as ‘Islamic civilization,’ ‘Western civilization,’ ‘education,’ ‘caliphate,’ and ‘Union of Islam’ were also shaped within the framework of ‘reform.’ Furthermore, the words composing the name of the Committee of Union and Progress; ‘Union’ and ‘Progress’ also carried the marks of the period and reflected the deep impacts of concept of ‘reform.’ Reform had a central role in the discussions of Arab nationalists as well. It even seems possible to read all of the discussions of Islamist, nationalist, and pro-Western Arab intellectuals over the concept of ‘reform.’

During this period, Islamists started to criticize the education institutions in which the ‘*ulama*’ was being trained, began to discuss traditional concepts in a different context, communicate with the people through newspapers which was a different means of communication, made discussions about the state and politics, and expressed their demands for change. The demands of change of the Islamists were not only about the betterment of traditional institutions and practices, but at the same time the structure of production, understanding and wording of Islamic knowledge. This demand that was expressed in a call to ‘go back to real Islam’ of Jamaladdin al-Afgani was repeated in Muhammed Abdu’s ‘return to *Salaf aqeedah*’ and Mehmet Akif Ersoy’s ‘we should be inspired directly by the Koran, we have to interpret Islam for the contemporary civilization’ (*Doğrudan doğruya Kur’an’dan alıp ilhamı, Asrın idrakine söyletmeliyiz İslam’ı*) statements. ‘It was necessary to go back to real Islam’ because Muslims had been slaves of imitation and superstition and unaware of the fundamentals of Islam and laziness had turned into social conduct. It would only be possible to overcome these deep problems by getting ‘Islamised,’ in other words, by interpreting the beliefs, ethics, social and political systems of Islam according to the needs of the time and environment. Such that, an Islamised individual and state would pick their social and political rights and responsibilities, the systems they believe in, freedom and justice from Islamic

principles. Therefore, it would not be a mistake to interpret all of the discussions of Islamism from Afganî to Said Halim Pasha over the statement of the ‘betterment of Islamic knowledge.’

The ‘reform’ was unavoidable and the West, which had superior qualifications, as accepted by Islamists, was going to be an important reference point for the ‘reform’ movement. At this point, discussion of the relationship between Western civilization and Christianity by Islamists was a consequence of their efforts to separate the Western civilization from Christianity and to read it as a universal civilization. Only this would take the Western civilization taken as an example as a universal civilization by a Muslim state: the Ottoman Empire. Western civilization did not owe anything to Christianity, on the contrary, made use of the Islamic civilization’s experiences in many matters; therefore, there is no harm in adopting the positive parts of Western civilization by Muslim societies. However, if the Islamic civilization that had been in a period of stagnation for centuries due to an imitative approach, ‘turned to real Islam it could communicate in an easier way with Western civilization; therefore, it needed a radical ‘reform’ for religious interpretation. At this point, Arab Islamists interpreted ‘imitation’ as understanding Islam as a religion traditionally and restraining it to historical comments; the Islamists in Istanbul discussed it as adopting Western civilization as it was without thinking it through.

Syria, where Kurd Ali was born and raised, was affected by each stage of the reform processes of the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman rulers sent their most qualified statesmen to Syria to implement the ‘reform’ activities. These ‘reform’ activities led to a dislocation of some social values and caused social unrest since the new values were not substituted in a short time. The center was building mail and telegraph lines in order to increase its impact on Syria, while forcing the nomadic population into a settled life. This radical transformation caused an emergence of a new social class in Syria. Especially after announcing Turkish as the official

language in state institutions and schools in Syria with *Kanun-i Esasi*, Arab intellectuals started to feel uneasy. Muhammed Kurd Ali was born into these ‘reform’ movements in 1876 and found himself in the discussions which developed within this context. Kurd Ali, who learned good Turkish and French in his childhood years, could read many leading thinkers of modern European thought in French and could learn about intellectual movements in Europe. Furthermore, he visited European capitals, Paris foremost, and had the chance to observe Europe closely. Kurd Ali was following Orientalist studies in Europe closely, spent time with Orientalists during his visits in Europe, and took use of their knowledge, experience and libraries. Kurd Ali, who started his career as an author in 1898 in “*Sham*” Newspaper, worked in important newspapers in Cairo and continued to publish his journal namely *Al-Muqtabas*, which he started publishing in 1906 in Cairo, and in Damascus after the announcement of Second Constitutional Period. During this period, Kurd Ali established relations with intellectuals of Arab thought from all different movements and completed his ideological development with the discussions brought by the ‘reform’ process. When we take Muhammed Abdu, Sulayman al-Bostani, Rafiq al-Azm, Shıblı Shumeyyıl, Abdurrahman al-Kawakıbı, Rashıd Rısa, Halel Matran, Ahmed Timur Beg, and Ahmed Zekı Beg into consideration, whom he met in Cairo in different intellectual environments, it would not be wrong to argue that Kurd Ali was competent in all discussions of modern Arab thought.

As a productive intellectual, Muhammed Kurd Ali composed so many works until his death in 1953, but I discussed the ideas that he expressed in *al-Muktebas* newspaper, which was published in Cairo and Damascus between 1906-1914, due to the subject of this thesis. Thus, I discussed the process through 1906 and the political, social, and intellectual environment between 1906 and 1914 in this thesis.

The two most influential movements of the period’s Arab thought were Arab nationalism and the Islamism movements and it is sometimes difficult to draw a sharp line

between the followers of these two. The same names are discussed in both Arabic and international literature within the context of nationalism, as well as Islamism. Within this framework, when the opinions of Kurd Ali, expressed in *Al-Muqtabas*, are analyzed carefully, it is seen that he deserves the description of a ‘reformist’ well enough. However, when we question whether to evaluate Kurd Ali in a Reformist Islamist line or a Reformist Arab nationalist line, it seems not possible to evaluate him on the Islamist reformist line like Muhammed Abdu, who he mentioned with admiration, his close friend Rashed Rıda, and his teacher Taher al-Jazairi. Because the Islamist movement understood the concept of ‘reform’ as ‘reform of religious knowledge’ and both Muhammed Abdu and Rashed Rıda, as well as Said Halim Pasha and Said Nursi made lengthy and theoretical discussions on ‘reform in religion.’ Yet, Kurd Ali, similar to the founding names of Arab national identity and Butrus al-Bustani, understood turning Arabic into a modern language of science from the concept of ‘reform.’ In this context, Arabic culture and civilization was to be revived and a language of science should be built with reference to the richness of Arabic, which would be able to represent the experience of modern European civilization, by making translations from French and other European languages.

It is possible to evaluate *Al-Muqtabas*’s policy of publication within this framework. As a journal that included topics like pedagogy, sociology, economics, politics, literature, archaeology, philology, bibliography and Arab and Western civilizations, *Al-Muqtabas*, similar to Bustani, emerged as an effort to create an encyclopedic intellectual accretion that included historical the backgrounds of both Western and Eastern civilizations at a time when they coincided. When we consider that each issue of *Al-Muqtabas* was full of pieces and biographies from leading intellectuals of history of Islam and the modern Western world, as well as Kurd Ali and other Arab intellectuals’ discussions, we can see how important the journal was for the creation of ‘Arab cultural identity.’

Although his thoughts intersected content-wise with Arab Islamism and Islamists who wrote in Turkish for these reasons we mentioned, Kurd Ali differentiated from the Islamist thinkers in purpose and also in his views regarding Europe. Kurd Ali clearly stated that Europe had gone through a big political and cultural transformation; the styles of administration had been radically changed and adopted a new epistemology based on scientific knowledge.

He told that reason had replaced God, which it was placed at the top position in archaic ontology and this differentiation was solidified in the architecture and lifestyles of European cities. He was well aware that Europe reinterpreted all archaic civilizations with a rationalist point of view and developed a new political language composed of concepts of human rights and patriotism. Kurd Ali's main concern with regards to this context was the development of a modern Arab language that could express the accretion of this great European civilization. So Kurd Ali was not holding a timid approach against Europe like Islamists, and not discussing European civilization on the same line as them. At the same time, he did not understand the Islamic civilization in the same way as Islamists either. Kurd Ali meant Arab civilization when he mentioned the Islamic civilization and put much value into Arabic, as the language in which the Arab civilization could express itself. Islam was open to all innovations and development as a religion, yet according to him, non-Arab elements in Islam, meaning the Turks, caused the decline of Arabic, and relatedly Islam, since they did not know and did not learn Arabic. Islam was in decline for one thousand years, since the date that the Turks entered into the world of Islam, because their ruler were ignorant and kept his own people ignorant to cover his own ignorance. Even though all Muslim states embraced Arabic as the language of science, Turks declared the language of the bedouin, Turkish, as the official language instead of Arabic. This stance led to let-up of Islamic civilization and to its decline. Therefore, according to Kurd Ali, the golden ages of Islamic civilization were the periods

when Arab leaders were ruling the Muslim population. So, if the Muslims wanted to live their golden age again, Arab culture and civilization should be revived and the way to do this lay in the Arabic language. For Kurd Ali, *Al-Muqtabas* was a significant step in this honorable direction.

Kurd Ali, who differentiated himself from the Islamists by reading the Islamic civilization on Arabic, stood very close to the Arab nationalism movement due to the importance he put on Arabic. He preferred to remain silent regarding some of the most central issues of the discussions of Islamists such as 'Islamic Union' and the 'caliphate.' Islamists started to discuss the argument of Islamic union against European imperialism and the caliphate became a focal point within this context. Jamaladdin al-Afgani tried to gather the world of Islam around the Ottoman caliphate and discussed the caliphate issue in a more theoretical way for Abdu and Islamic identity to be created in the right way. Because within the context of the ongoing transformation, Muslims needed definition of a new identity and the caliphate was representing the political aspect to this. Although Islamists could not establish the theoretical framework of caliphate issue, they discussed it thoroughly while interpreting Ottoman politics and the new developments in the Muslim world. But the fact that Kurd Ali and the other writers of *Al-Muqtabas* remained silent on caliphate and Islamic union, showed that they did not read the Ottoman politics in the same way as the Islamists. While turning Arabic into a modern language of science was an issue that created a point of intersection for Kurd Ali and Arab nationalists, his silence on the caliphate is a point where he differentiated from the Islamists. He also strictly criticized the policy of adopting Turkish as the official language, stated in *Kanun-i Esasi* and defined it as an effort of 'Turkification.' Furthermore, obstructing development of Arabic meant to leave Islam 'underdeveloped.' At this point both Abdulhamid and Committee of Union and Progress became targets of Kurd Ali's criticisms, and the translation activities initiated by Mehmet Ali Pasha were honored and

praised. The Ottoman capital was not appealing for Kurd Ali anymore, since when compared to other European cities, Istanbul was a quite disorganized city. Although Kurd Ali embraced the Ottoman Empire in some of his writings and meant ‘Ottomans’ with ‘us,’ he started to mean the Arabs with the concept of the *ümmet*. While pro-Ottoman and Islamist elements can be seen in Kurd Ali’s writings, sometimes, when the nine year-long publishing policy of *Al-Muqtabas* is investigated and when Kurd Ali’s writings are read, it can be seen that he differentiated himself from the Islamist reformist thought and started to adopt a point of view that was in line with the newly emerging Arab nationalist camp. It will be revealed that the publishing policy of *Al-Muqtabas* coincided with the opinions of the intellectuals who ‘built the Arab national identity.’ Therefore, Kurd Ali was not a thinker of the Islamist reformist, he was a thinker who wrote in line with the founding thinkers of Arab national identity and who was in accord with the movement of the Arab nationalist movement.

In this thesis it’s discussed whether Muhammed Kurd Ali was a reformist Islamist thinker or not, and referred to the similarity to the Arab nationalist movement when necessary. Thus detection of the place of Muhammed Kurd Ali in the Arab nationalist movement in the context of building the Arab national identity was excluded from the extent of this thesis. In this context, discussing Muhammed Kurd Ali in the context of building the National Arab identity, considering him within the Arab nationalist movement may produce a different view. Defining the status of the non-Muslim Arabs and Muslim Arabs within the Arab Nationalist movement, discussing the intellectual and political relations between Muslim Arabs and Islamists may make a significant contribution to detecting the place of Kurd Ali in the Arab nationalist movement. On the other hand, in this thesis the *Al-Muqtabas* journal was discussed with regards to the intellectual progress of Kurd Ali, and an evaluation of *Al-Muqtabas* journal in a body was excluded. Thus it may bring out a more extensive view on the Arabic thought of this period, if one examined the *Al-Muqtabas* journal as a platform on which many

prominent intellectuals of the era expressed themselves. Alongside, thoroughly discussing the publishing policy of *Al-Muqtabas*, and comparing contemporaneous journals of the period may significantly contribute to understanding the intellectual environment of Syria of the era. Moreover, the intellectual adventure of Kurd Ali didn't come to an end with the *Al-Muqtabas* journal, he wrote many books and articles, and gave many conferences until his death in 1953. This thesis dealt with the opinions of Kurd Ali between 1906 and 1914; his life and works as a whole may be the subject of another work, and discussed concerning the political, social, and intellectual contexts. Thus, the effects of Syria's historical progress of becoming a national state on an intellectual may be detected, and the ideological and paradigmatic conversion in the region may be traced. I'd like to state once more, that while discussing the questions for which I sought an answer to throughout this thesis, I encountered the questions mentioned above, and avoided them as long as they were not necessary to the subject, since I figured pursuing them would violate the boundaries of this thesis, and those questions may be the subject of future academic work.

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ANNEX 1

Chronological Biography

1876: He was born in Guta region of city of Damascus.

1882: He was registered to the Cavalry Academy in Damascus.

1886: He was registered to the Military School in Damascus.

1892: He started to work at the Damascus Governorate

1897: He started a job as a General Publishing Director for “*Sham Newspaper*” published in Damascus.

1898: He resigned his position in the Foreigners Office of the Damascus Governorate and continued to occupy himself as a journalist.

1901: He arrived to Cairo prior to his arrival in Paris however he changed his mind to go to Paris and finally returned back to Damascus.

1905: He went to Cairo second time and worked as an editor in various newspapers.

1906: He started to publish “*Al-Muqtabas*” journal in city of Cairo.

1908: He returned back to Damascus and started to publish “*Al-Muqtabas*” journal in city of Damascus.

1909: He travelled to France through Lebanon and visited many French cities.

1910: He returned back to Damascus.

1914: The Syrian Governor Nazim Pasha banned “*Al-Muqtabas*” journal. The journal had not been published for eight months. Cemal Pasha gave permission to publish the journal again. The journal had continued to be published until 1917.

1914: He departed for his second European trip. He conducted researches in library of Leon Caetani in Roma.

1918: He desired to practice trade in Istanbul because of the pressure of Cemal Pasha however he failed and returned back to Damascus.

1918: He established “*Maarif Majlisi*” with recommendation of City Governor of Damascus Rıda Pasha al-Raqabi.

1920-22: He was appointed as the Ministry of Education of Faisal Bin Huseyin’s Syrian Arabic Kingdom.

1921: He visited the European countries such as France, Belgium, Holland, England, Spain, Germany, Switzerland and Italy third time as the Minister.

1924: He started to teach Arabic Language at University of Damascus.

1928-32: He worked as the Ministry of Education under ShaykhTajaddin Husni government.

1928: He visited Europe 4th time.

1941: He was appointed as the president of the Arab Academy of Science

1953: He died in Damascus.

ANNEX 2

- 1893: Turkish Nouns Translation (Tarjumatu'l-Asmau'l-Turkiyya).
- 1893: Translation on some sections of three different books on Freedom. (Ta'rib Badu Fusul Salaseti Kutubi fi'l-Huriyya).
- 1894: The translation of story An Orphans Under Jewish Lifman (Yetimetu'z-Zaman fi-Kuba'ti'l-Yahudi Lifman).
- 1907: The translation of "the Guilty and the Innocent" (Al-Mujrim wa'l-Beriu).
- 1908: The taranslation of "the Modern and Medieval History of Civilization" (Tarikhu'l-Hadara fil'l-Kuruni'l-Vusta wa'l-Hadisa).
- 1908: The edition of "Rasailu'l-Belaga"
- 1910: The curiosity of the West (Gharabu'l-Gharb).
- 1916: The *ulama* delegation to the Islamic Caliphate Center (Al-Ba'satu'l-Ilmiyya ila Dar'il-Khilafati'l-Islamiyyeti).
- 1916: Enver Pasha's Hejaz Cruises (Al-Rikhlatu'l-Anvariyya ila'l-As'ka'l-Hijaziyya).
- 1921: Geometry in Islam (Al-Hisabatu fi'l-Islam).
- 1923: The past and current status of Andalusia. (Ghabir al-Andulus wa'l-Hadiruha).
- 1925-1928: History of Damascus (Khitatu'sh-Sham).
- 1925: Tradition and Modernity (Al-Kadim wa'l-Hadis).
- 1926: Egyptian Governance in Damascus (Al-Hukumatu'l-Misriyya fi'sh-Sham).
- 1934: The Arabic Ruling in the Islamic Administration (Al-Idaratu'l-Islamiyya fi Izzil-Arab).
- 1937: Masters of Literature (Umara al-Bayan)
- 1939: The biograpghy of Ahmed Bin Tolun (Siratu Ahmad Bin Tolun)
- 1944: Damascus, the city of the magic and poetry (Dimashq Medinatu'l-Sihru wa'l-Shiru).
- 1946: Our words and our actions (Akwaluna wa Afaluna).
- 1946: The Al-Azhar Sheikh Allama Meraghi (Allamatu'l-Meraghi Shaykhu'l-Azhar).
- 1946: The publishing of "Al-Mustajad min F1'lati'l-Ajwad."
- 1946: The publishing of Bayhagi's History of Islamic Rulers (Tarikh Hukama al-Islam).
- 1947: The publishing of Ibni Kuteybe's "Al-Ashriba."
- 1948-1951: The Memoirs (Al-Muzakkirat).

1948: Oriental Scholars (Al-Musta'rabun min Ulami'l-Sharkiyat).

1949: The Gutas of Damascus. (Ghutatu Dımashq)

1950: The treasurers of Ancestry (Kunuz al-Ajdad).

1953: Publication of Bazyar Aziz Billah al Fatimi's "Al-Bazira."

---. Our Contemporaries (al-Muasirun).

١٢-١

١١
حِطُّ السَّمْعِ

تأليف

محمد كرد علي

الجزء الاول

الناشر
مكتبة النوري
دمشق

محمد كرد علي

المذكرات

الجزء الأول

تصفو الحياة لجاهل أو غافل عما مضى منها وما يتوقع
ولن يغالط في الحقائق نفسه ويسومها طلب المال فتطمع
(المتنبى)

خمسة ليرات سورية في سوريا ولبنان
ستون قرشاً مصرياً في مصر وسائر البلاد العربية
نعم الجزء الواحد

١٣٦٧ هـ مطبعة الترقى دمشق ١٩٤٨ م

المقتبس

مجلة تبحث في التربية والتعليم والاجتماع والاقتصاد والادب والتاريخ والآثار واللغة
وتدبير المنزل والصحة والكتب وحضارة العرب وحضارة الغرب

AL - MOKTABAS

Revue mensuelle paraissant à Damas (Syrie)

Pédagogie, sociologie, économie politique, littérature, histoire, archéologie, philologie, ménagerie, hygiène, bibliographie, civilisation arabe et occidentale.

تصدر في كل شهر عربي بدمشق

للمشترين

محمد كرد علي

المجلد السادس

١٩٢٩ - ١٩١١

قيمة الاشتراك في دمشق ريالان مجيديان ونصف

وفي سائر الجهات ثلاثة عشر فرنكاً

ABONNEMENT 13 FRCS

طبع بمطبعة المقتبس بدمشق

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

سنتنا الرابعة

4 يفتح المقتبس عامه الرابع بحمد الله جل ثناؤه والشكر على ما وفق اليه من نشر
الحقائق التي يهديه اليها البحث والدرس لاهجاً بالدعوة التي طالما دعا اليها مجملًا ومفصلاً
من ان مقصده نبث دفائن المدنية العربية وبث خزائن الحضارة الغربية مع ما يقتضي
لذلك من النظر في تاريخنا وتاريخ الغربيين وآدابنا وآدابهم ومناحينا ومناحيهم واعمالنا واعمالهم
ناعياً على الجامدين على القديم اذ الاقتصار عليه وحده هو العقم بعينه داعياً الى تناول
الضروري من الحديث لان القديم وحده يبلى ولا حديث لمن لا قديم له ومن لم يحرص
على جديده فهو اقرب الى الزهد كل حين بقديمه

﴿

ندعو الى الاخذ بمعارف الغربيين لان ما اصاب هذا الشرق من ضعف العقول
والملاكات نشأ عن انصراف القلوب عن الاهتداء بهديهم ونهج سبيلهم في مادياتهم
ومعنياتهم والوقوف عند حد ما رسمه المخرفون والمخرفون فصدونا عن سبيل الانتفاع
بالماضي وبال حاضر وحرموا بالتعصب الممقوت ما لم يجرمه عقل ولا نقل وسدوا الاذن
عن سماع داعي المدنية وغضوا الابصار عن النظر في بدائع العلم والصناعة

وان المقتبس ليعتبط اليوم بصدوره من ضفان بردي بعد ان انتشر على ضفاف
النيل ثلاث سنين ولئن كانت بردي بعض جداول النيل وترعه فان المسك بعض دم
الغزال ولئن قدر لمصر اليوم ان تسبق الشام في قوتها الادبية والعلمية فليس ذلك من
الجديد لما عرف به قديمها وان كان وادي النيل افسح واخصب فوادي جلق الفيحاء
اثر واعشب والسر في السكان لا في المكان فحسى ان لا تكون ارض الشام اقل استعداداً
لقطف ثمرات العلوم والمعارف وان يظل مؤازروننا على اتحاف هذه المجلة بنتائج عقولهم
فلا تعظم فائدة العمل اذا استقل به الفكر الواحد ولا تنوع بفرد افانين الفنون والآداب
ونسأله تعالى تسديداً وهدايتنا

الآخري فقد تدبرنا تراجم الوف من الملوك والعثماء ولم نشهد لعبد الحميد مثيلاً في أخلاقه وأعماله . بلى رأينا يشبه الناصر لدين الله العباسي بتجسسه وحرصه والحاكم بأمر الله الفاطمي بهديانه وتلونه والحجاج بن يوسف الثقفي ببطشه وسفكه والسلطان ابراهيم العثماني بسفاهته واسرافه . ومن جمع في شخصه هذه الصفات مجسمة كان جديراً بان يدعى طاغية الملوك والسلاطين .

تولى عبد الحميد زمام السلطنة وكيلاً عن أخيه مراد الخامس لمرض طراً على عقله وكتب على نفسه عهداً دفعه لمدحت باشا ناشر اعلام الحرية في المملكة العثمانية ثم ارسل على ما يقال من احرق دار مدحت باشا وحرق العهد في جملة ما حرق واخذ يستجلب قلوب اكثر اهالي الاستانة مدة وكالته حتى اجتمع الصدر محمد رشدي باشا ومدحت باشا فقررا دعوة رجال الدولة الى الباب العالي لانظر في توسيد السلطنة الى عبد الحميد اصالة فاجتمع نحو الف شخص من الكبراء وقرروا ان جنون السلطان مراد مطبق لا يرجي ان يفيق منه فافتى شيخ الاسلام بجل امامته وببيع لعبد الحميد الذي اظهر اولاً بأنه يميل الى الحكم الدستوري ومنع القانون الاساسي ثم سلبه واقفل مجاس الامة واتعب مدحت باشا في معاناة أخلاقه وكان اول عهد نكته معه انه اخذ على نفسه ان يعين لرئاسة كتاب الماين نامق كمال بك الكاتب الشاعر الشهير وضيا بك رئيس الماينية فعين غيرهما ثم اخذ يدس الدسائس ونفى مدحت باشا ثم ارسل به الى الطائف فمجن في حبسها مدة ثم امر بخنقه

واخذ السلطان يكثر من التضييق على أخيه السلطان مراد وعلى سائر افراد الأنزرة السلطانية ولا سيما ولي عهد السلطنة السلطان الجديد محمد خان الخامس الحالي ويشرد كل من عرف بالانكار عليه من الوزراء والعظاماء