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**Intellectual Currents and the  
Practice of Engagement:  
Ottoman and Algerian Writers in  
a Francophone Milieu, 1890-1914**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2017

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# Abstract

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw a great increase in the use of the printed word and the press by non-European actors to express and disseminate ideas and to participate in the intellectual life of both their home societies and a wider international context. This thesis examines the French-language writings of Ottoman and Algerian writers between 1890 and 1914. The volume of engagement by these figures in the French-language intellectual and journalistic space is a historical phenomenon that reflects a particular mode of engagement with the West in the decades before the First World War. Rather than analyse these writings through the lens of their connection to particular specific groups, such as Young Turks or Young Algerians, this thesis aims to take this body of work as a unique category of textual production that performed a specific function. By tracing the works of a wide variety of Ottoman and Algerian writers across multiple platforms in this period, it is possible to conclude that these individuals were engaged in more than acts of political opposition. Rather, they were working to situate themselves within a specific cultural and intellectual space. The thesis is organised around four thematic chapters that appear throughout these writings across the timeframe. They are: the presentation and function of history, the nature of Islam, the question of identity and citizenship and the shape of reform. By analysing their commonalities, differences and development, we can draw conclusions about this type of intellectual activity that transcends political movements, religion and nationality.

## Notes on Transliteration

For spellings of Ottoman Turkish names I have opted to use modern Turkish usage and not strict transliteration. Due to the linguistic unity of the primary source material and the variety of names in different languages I have generally opted to maintain the spelling of proper names as they appear in the publications themselves.

## Acknowledgements

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# Introduction

Across the Ottoman and Arab world print journalism and the production of texts for popular consumption experienced expansive growth in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> These developments ran parallel and also helped to create increasingly complex networks that stretched across the Islamic world to Europe and beyond. The accelerating modernization programs of the latter half of the nineteenth century in Egypt, North Africa, the Ottoman Empire and Qajar Iran created an environment in which travel and communication become exponentially easier. This allowed for the creation of increasingly large networks between workers, intellectuals and merchants and their European and even North and South American counterparts.

The Islamic world was of course always closely intertwined with Europe and the Ottoman Empire had likewise maintained close connections with the West for centuries.<sup>2</sup> But in the latter half of the nineteenth century the impact of the world capitalist system and the spread of transnational ideologies and politics further enmeshed the Ottoman-Arab and wider Islamic world with the West.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, activists and intellectuals used the advancement of communications and printing technology to bind together large diaspora networks across vast distances and to use the emerging international institutions to put forward their ideas and

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<sup>1</sup> Ayalon, Ami. *The Press in the Arab Middle East: A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Inalcık, Halil. *Turkey and Europe in History*. Istanbul: Erek, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Khuri-Makdisi, Ilham. *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radical Culture, 1860-1914*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

concerns.<sup>4</sup> These were intellectual as well as political movements and the balance depended on a myriad of factors, including religion, social status and geography.

Many of the intellectual developments within the Ottoman-Arab sphere in this period and the engagement with European ideas have been well studied by scholars such as Albert Hourani and Şerif Mardin.<sup>5</sup> These works delved deeply into the various ideas that were circulating in this period and focused on the central role that mass print culture played in facilitating the absorption, refashioning and dissemination of these ideas. Both also emphasize the diversity of sources and inspiration that drove the intellectual production of the Young Ottomans and their Levantine and Egyptian Arab contemporaries. This combination of transnational networks and intellectual engagement and indeed conversation with the West was a fundamental part of the experience of modernity across the Ottoman and wider Arab world in the decades leading up to the First World War.

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<sup>4</sup> See for example Fahrenthold, Stacy. "Transnational Modes and Media: The Syrian Press in the *Mahjar* and Emigrant Activism During World War I", *Mashriq & Mahjar*, 1 (2013), 30-54, Arsan, Andrew, "'This age is the age of associations': Committees, Petitions, and the Roots of Interwar Middle Eastern Internationalism", *Journal of Global History*, 7/02 (2012), 166-188.

<sup>5</sup> Hourani, Albert. *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789-1939*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962, Mardin, Şerif. *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962. See also Hanssen, Jens and Max Weiss eds. *Arabic Thought Beyond the Liberal Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

This thesis will explore the relationship between intellectuals from the Ottoman Empire and Algeria who wrote and published in French in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These individuals were an important part of the emerging networks that spread out from the Islamic world throughout the nineteenth century. But unlike many of their counterparts, these writers primarily strove to connect not to wider diasporic networks, but to a European reading public with whom they hoped to engage on an intellectual and political level. They desired to make their voices heard and to bring to the attention of a European audience a variety of issues on which they felt themselves to be the authority.

In studying these individuals and their textual output this thesis will examine the historical connection between intellectual environment and the production of ideas or, as Lloyd S. Kramer refers to it, “the ambiguous intersection of lived experiences and written texts...”<sup>6</sup> Many of the writings of these groups and individuals have been studied before, but generally as elements of a larger nationalist narrative or as the study of a particular political group or organisation. With this work I aim to bring an analysis of the texts of these figures out of the framework of French anti-colonialism or Ottoman political and intellectual history, and instead see these works as common examples of a specific way of negotiating with modernity within a Francophone linguistic *milieu*. The main aim of this project will be to trace the consumption and diffusion of ideas within this Francophone environment and to examine how

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<sup>6</sup> Kramer, Lloyd S. *Threshold of a New World: Intellectuals and the Exile Experience in Paris, 1830-1848*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988, pg. 2.

these ideas were presented back to both a European audience and to those members of their own communities who were fluent in French. The overarching question under consideration in this thesis is: how did the question of audience impact the content of these works?

In many ways these Ottoman and Algerian intellectuals represented a hybrid group. They were at once representatives of their own states, empire or ethno-religious group, writing and publishing in a city outside their own homelands, yet through their French-language writings they engaged primarily with a European reading public. At this point it is important to state that the sources examined in this dissertation will be entirely in French and not in Arabic, Ottoman Turkish or other language commonly used in the Ottoman Empire. Firstly, I maintain that the publications produced in the French language by these groups represented a certain type of cultural production aimed at a specific audience. These texts represented a particular way of negotiating with European modernity and were meant to reflect the particular aims of these intellectuals. Secondly, my primary interest is in texts that were produced within a specific and clearly bounded cultural and linguistic space. It will not be a political history of the Young Turk and Young Algerian opposition movements. Rather, it will be a study of ideas produced and consumed within a shared intellectual context. This thesis will examine a particular facet of cultural production and engagement that took place between two different, but related groups and Europe within a common intellectual space and a common language.

This thesis examines the textual output of a variety of Ottoman and Algerian writers, across the political and ethnic spectrum. I will speak in more detail about the source material below. In choosing to focus on both Ottoman and Algerian figures I will be able to conduct a comparative analysis of the ways in which these two groups participated in this Francophone print environment. These figures, such as the Young Turks Ahmed Rıza and Murad Bey and Algerians such as Ismael Hamet and Chérif Benhabilés were very astute observers of the culture that surrounded them and thus were able to create a strong identity in reaction to their surroundings and the increasing extension of European power into the political, economic and cultural spheres of their home countries. In tracing the relationship between experience and ideas, the social and organizational interactions of these writers will be paired to an analysis of the texts that they were producing. An analysis of this kind will provide the clearest and most concise examination of the topic. This method will also make apparent the heterogeneity within these groups. The cross-section of figures and journals will demonstrate that a variety of programs and aims were expressed within the same spatial and linguistic framework and using much of the same vocabulary. Different groups and individuals evaluated their relationship with France, and more generally with Europe, and emerged with different ideas about how this relationship should progress. These sources will show this and illustrate the borrowing and reworking of concepts between these groups. The source material that will comprise this thesis includes a wide variety of newspapers, pamphlets, books and other material published, both by these writers themselves, and in the pages of established European publications. By moving outside the bounds of particular opposition groups such as the Young

Turks or Young Algerians, a much broader cache of material becomes available for analysis. Ostensibly pro-palace figures such as Nicolas Nicolaides published three newspapers under his own name and a further two under a pseudonym in order to criticize Sultan Abdülhamid II between 1888 and 1912. Many figures, such as the Ottoman Jew and Young Turk Albert Fua, returned to opposition publishing following disillusionment in the wake of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. Other self-proclaimed Young Turks, like Yusuf Fehmi, never returned to the Empire even after their stated goal of the restoration of the Constitution of 1876 and the return of the parliament had been achieved. This thesis will show that a source profile like this can offer valuable insight into the motivations and incentives that drove many of these writers to continue publishing throughout this period. Ottomans and Algerians too made use of many of the same sites of engagement, such as the French journals *L'Islam* and the *Revue du Monde Musulman*. Together they shared these spaces with French journalists and academics. From the scholarly article to the manifesto and from the printed interview to the party program, these writers were engaged in a specific type of interaction that transcended intent and political affiliation.

The dates, 1890-1914, have been chosen because they encompass the period when the individuals and groups that this thesis is interested in began to emerge, define themselves as opposition figures with specific political agendas. It is also when they more regularly and frequently came to be defined by members of their home and host societies as everything from liberals to pan-Islamists, and they began writing regularly in the French language. Following the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, the Ottoman opposition culture changed as formerly exiled

figures returned to Istanbul. Some of those who had been outside the dominant CUP opposition camp, such as Prince Sabahaddin and Yusuf Fehmi, remained, and they provide another interesting example of continuity within this culture of engagement for examination. Similarly, much of the work produced by the Young Algerians emerged in the second half of the first decade of the twentieth century. There is also a marked shift in the type of writing that emerged in the post-war period among Algerian intellectuals and activists.<sup>7</sup>

### **Literature Review**

The field of Ottoman history has long been subject to a rise-decline/stagnation paradigm within Western scholarship. Bernard Lewis and others argued that the Ottoman Empire's inability to evolve and reform at pace with its European neighbours was the primary cause of its decline.<sup>8</sup> This view has been persuasively challenged by an abundance of more recent works such as Caroline Finkel and Benjamin Fortna, who argue that reform and modernization continued and even increased during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See Colonna, Fanny. "The Nation's "Unknowing Other": Three Intellectuals and the Culture (s) of Being Algerian or the Impossibility of Subaltern Studies in Algeria", in *Nation, Society and Culture in North Africa*. James McDougall ed. London: Frank Cass, 2003 and Aissaoui, Rabah. "Exile and the Politics of Return and Liberation: Algerian Colonial Workers and Anti-Colonialism in France During the Interwar Period", *French History*, 25/2 (2011), 314-231.

<sup>8</sup> Lewis, Bernard. *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.

<sup>9</sup> See Fortna, Benjamin C. *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011 and Finkel, Caroline. *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923*. London: John Murray, 2005.

In terms of the intellectual production of the late Ottoman period works by Şerif Mardin and Albert Hourani represent probably the most wide-ranging and influential.<sup>10</sup> Both authors sought to explore the background, inspiration and development of the political thought of a particular group of thinkers. Similarly both authors made the link between the political thought of the nineteenth century and later developments in both Turkish and Arab nationalism. These works focussed on the influence of European thought on the writings of these Ottoman and Arab intellectuals and sought to trace networks of communication and how certain ideas were absorbed and adapted to suit particular local and regional contexts.

This approach has also tended to inform the field of the Young Turk history. This field has historically been dominated by works that describe the period after the 1908 Revolution, which brought the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), the dominant Young Turk organization, to power in Istanbul. Ernest Ramsaur's work remains the first influential attempt in English at a comprehensive look at the activities of the Young Turks prior to the 1908 revolution. His work, however, suffers greatly from its nearly exclusive reliance on European source material.<sup>11</sup>

Bernard Lewis, and Feroz Ahmad focus on the Young Turks as a political organisation during and after the revolution of 1908 and the role of western

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<sup>10</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789-1939*. Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*.

<sup>11</sup> Ramsaur, Ernest Edmondson. *The Young Turks: prelude to the revolution of 1908*. Beirut: Khayats, 1965.

ideas in their success.<sup>12</sup> Other works have looked at the journalistic output of the post-1908 period, both as a way to trace the development of particular strains of thought and as a space for political opposition.<sup>13</sup>

It was not really until the works of Şükrü Hanioglu that the pre-1908 Young Turk movement was treated comprehensively from both a social and intellectual-political perspective.<sup>14</sup> Hanioglu sought to emphasize the heterogeneity of the movement and situate its relations with Europe within the larger context of diplomatic and political history, while also exploring the evolution and impact of the political ideas of the main Young Turk factions and individuals. He also traced continuities in ideology between the earlier writings of the Young Turks in Paris and Cairo and the official ideology of the CUP in the post-1908 period.<sup>15</sup> His work suffers, however, from its scope. Hanioglu's desire to provide the most thorough and wide-ranging analysis of the pre-1908 Young Turk movement leaves ample room for more in-depth treatments of specific modes of intellectual activity or comparative studies.

The intellectual production of Algeria and Tunisia in the two decades before the First World War has been well studied, but is often situated as a prelude to more

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<sup>12</sup> Lewis, Bernard. *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961, Ahmad, Feroz. *The Young Turks: the Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.

<sup>13</sup> See for instance Arai, Masami. *Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era*. Leiden: Brill, 1992 and

<sup>14</sup> Hanioglu, Şükrü. *The Young Turks in Opposition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, Hanioglu, Şükrü. *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

<sup>15</sup> See for instance Hanioglu, Şükrü. "Turkism and the Young Turks, 1889-1908", in *Turkey Beyond Nationalism*. Hans-Lukas Keiser ed. London: I.B. Tauris, 2013.

in-depth studies of Algerian and Tunisian nationalism in the interwar and post-war periods. For my specific area of focus, the elites of Algeria in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the main concern is the place of these groups within the nationalist historiography. Too often the multitude of voices are homogenized or misrepresented to fit within the accepted nationalist narrative. This is especially the case in Algeria, where the writing of Algerian history as the inexorable progression from colonial repression to liberation sidelines the contributions of a variety of actors.<sup>16</sup> James McDougall argues against adhering to the dominant narrative and seeks to bring out aspects of Algerian history that have hitherto been sidelined. His aim is to dismantle the foundational 'master-narrative' of Algerian historiography and re-establish much needed plurality.<sup>17</sup> This 'master-narrative' has also impacted the way in which the Young Algerians have been studied, as it locates them within the larger evolution of Algerian nationalist thought. In addition, McDougall importantly emphasizes the importance of space and the relationship between spaces – colony and metropole, French and Arabic - in the production of texts and in the engagement with Europe.

There has been limited interest in the Young Algerians in the years before the First World War as either an independent subject of study or as part of a wider intellectual movement even within French language scholarship. Charles-Robert Ageron's work on Algerian history and the thought of the Young Algerians

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<sup>16</sup> McDougall, James ed. *Nation, Society and Culture in North Africa*. London: Frank Cass, 2003, McDougall, James. *History and the Culture of Nationalism in Algeria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

remains one of the strongest and most thorough works on the subject that focuses specifically on the period prior to the First World War. He sees these Young Algerians as representing a specific step in the development of the more anti-colonial nationalism that would emerge in the post-war period. The conditions and context of this thought, however, remain, by design, largely unexplored outside the context of colonial subjects caught between the Islamic and European worlds.<sup>18</sup>

Historians like Ali Merad have analysed the role of the press in helping to negotiate the debate between Islam and nationalism that was being undertaken at the time.<sup>19</sup> For Merad, the Muslim press in the period prior to the First World War was extremely rudimentary and was too focused on a narrow elite, however he is primarily focused on the ability of the press to reach Muslim Algerians, rather than a wider French reading public.<sup>20</sup> This position is echoed by Phillip Zessin who highlights the relatively conservative nature of these early publications and their focus on better integration of the elite into the colonial system.<sup>21</sup> According to Merad, one of the reasons for this paucity of local press culture was the lack of a link between the Maghreb and the Ottoman Empire, which left them out of the major politico-religious debates of the nineteenth

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<sup>18</sup> Ageron, Charles-Robert. *Les Algériens Musulmans et la France (1871-1919)*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968, Ageron, Charles-Robert, "Le Mouvement jeune-algerien", *Etudes Maghrebines*, (1964), 217-243, Ageron, Charles-Robert, *L'Anticolonialisme en France de 1871 à 1914*. Paris: Presses Universitaires Française, 1973.

<sup>19</sup> Merad, Ali, "Islam et Nationalisme Arabe en Algérie à la Veille de la Première Guerre Mondiale", *Oriente Moderno* 49/4-5 (1969) 213-222.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 216.

<sup>21</sup> Zessin, Phillip. "Presse et journalistes <indigènes> en Algérie coloniale (années 1890-années 1950)", *Le Mouvement social*, 236 (2011), 35-46, 37.

century, a view that has been challenged by works by Julia Clancy-Smith, who has emphasized the interconnections between writers and intellectuals throughout the Mediterranean region.<sup>22</sup>

Works on the Young Algerians, such as those by Belkacem Saadallah and Salah el Din el Zein el Tayeb, study their subjects in isolation as part of the national history, leaving little room for comparative inquiry.<sup>23</sup> These authors tend to focus on the specific social characteristics of these elite Algerians and look more at their specific political demands rather than analyse them as part of a broader intellectual strategy to engage with Europe. The relations between the Young Algerians and the Young Turks for instance, both physically and intellectually, are given only the lightest treatment with both authors painting the relationship as inconsequential and imitative.

More recent works like that by Peter Dunwoodie have sought to emphasize the importance of the linguistic context of Algerian writers as not simply indicative of their assimilationist tendencies, but also of their efforts at active participation in a particular political and intellectual realm and its importance in creating a

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<sup>22</sup> Clancy-Smith, Julia Ann. *Mediterraneans: North Africa and Europe in an Age of Migration, c. 1800-1900*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Saadallah, Belkacem. "The Rise of the Algerian Elite, 1900-1914", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 5/1 (1967), 69-77, Salah el Din el Zein el Tayeb. "The Europeanized Algerians and the Emancipation of Algeria", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 22/2 (1986), 206-235.

group consciousness.<sup>24</sup> This idea is of central importance for this work and will be discussed in more detail at the end.

The treatment of the Young Tunisians follows a similar pattern as that of the Young Algerians. The activities of the Young Tunisians tend to sit more comfortably within the nationalist narrative as they were far more uncompromisingly in favour of independence than many of their Algerian contemporaries. Works by Nouredine Sraieb and Mahmoud Faroua situate the Young Tunisians within the narrative of Tunisian nationalism and emphasize the social and cultural importance of educational institutions in creating bilingual elite.<sup>25</sup> Mahmoud Faroua makes some attempt to fit the idea of a specific linguistic environment into a study of the French Left's reaction to the colonisation of Tunisia, but spends little time including the voices of Young Tunisians themselves.<sup>26</sup> These works all attach importance to the influence of the French language and further education in the metropole on the political thought of the Young Tunisians, but by and large don't try and fit them into a wider pattern of political and intellectual engagement outside of a French North African and colonial context. The relationship is entirely causal and does not really go beyond this paradigm.

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<sup>24</sup>Dunwoodie, Peter. *Francophone Writing in Transition: Algeria 1900-1945*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2005, Dunwoodie, Peter. *Writing French Algeria*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

<sup>25</sup>Sraieb, Nouredine. *Le College Sadiki de Tunis, 1875-1965: enseignement et nationalisme*. Paris: CNRS, 1995 and Ayadi (Taoufik). *Mouvements Reformiste et Mouvements Populaires a Tunis (1906-1912)*. Tunis: Publications de l'Universite de Tunis, 1986.

<sup>26</sup>Faroua, Mahmoud. *La Gauche en France et la Colonisation de la Tunisie (1881-1914)*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003.

## Groups and Individuals

I have elected to focus on primarily writers from the Ottoman Empire and Algeria both because of their similarities and their differences. Members of both of these groups were generally the product of French-style education and possessed fluency in the French language.<sup>27</sup> An additional component to this similarity is that both these things were likely to have occurred in their country of origin. Thus these groups tended to possess a familiarity with France and its culture prior to arriving there. This was also the case with many Persian and Egyptian intellectuals and they could also have been included in this study. Yet, I contend that the Ottomans and Algerians can provide the most illustrative and concise case for my research. The relationship between Algeria, France and the Ottoman Empire as former and current colonies is highly relevant to how they viewed their intellectual counterparts.<sup>28</sup> Following this, comparing the experiences and textual production of those coming from a colonial environment and those who were not will also likely provide valuable insight into the development and evolution of political ideas in a Francophone setting. Ultimately though it is the common experience of an educated elite absorbing and re-

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<sup>27</sup> See Ageron, Charles Robert. *Les Etudiants Algériens de l'Université Française, 1880-1962*. Paris: CNRS, 1984, Ageron, Charles Robert, "Le Mouvement jeune-algérien", *Etudes Maghébines*, (1964), 217-243, Bousquet, G.H. "Les elites gouvernantes en Afrique du Nord depuis la conquete française", *Die Welt des Islam*, 3/1 (1953), 15-33, and Evered, Emine Ö. *Empire and Education Under the Ottomans: Politics, Reform, and the Resistance from the Tanzimat to the Young Turks*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2012.

<sup>28</sup> See for instance Çaycı, Abdurrahman. *La Question Tunisienne et la Politique Ottomane (1881-1913)*. Paris: Imprimerie de la Societe Turque D'Histoire, 1992, and Moreau, Odile. "Echoes of National Liberation: Turkey Viewed from the Maghrib in the 1920's", in *Nation, Society and Culture in North Africa*. James McDougall ed. London: Frank Cass, 2003.

purposing the linguistic and intellectual material of Europe to create their own intellectual framework and voice that binds these figures together.

While the fields profiled above are seemingly quite distinct and separate it is possible to identify a couple of major commonalities between them. Firstly there has been a growing emphasis on plurality. In studying any intellectual or artistic community, whether in a émigré or exile context or not, there is a strong desire not to let weaker voices get drowned out. Hanioglu, McDougall and others all emphasize the need for plurality and the necessity of exploring a variety of historical threads to produce a work of sufficient depth. A second commonality is the emphasis on social and cultural environment and the idea of context to provide determining factors in the development of intellectual or artistic thought. Dunwoodie and Hanioglu too reflect on context as an important factor in the development of political thought. These figures sought to engage with European ideas, but also directly with European public opinion.

### **Chapter Organization**

This thesis will be comprised of four chapters, each exploring a different theme common to the relevant publications of the period. These themes were selected due to their prevalence within the written material produced by the individuals under consideration and also for their importance to both writer and audience as a topic of conversation. Chapter 1 will look at the ways in which these Ottoman and Algerian writers addressed their own history. It will look at how they structured the past and to what extent it represented an attempt to create legitimacy in the eyes of their readers. It will argue that the historical narratives

produced in this context had a specific function and were intended to advance a particular agenda.

Chapter 2 looks at the way religion, specifically Islam, was addressed in the writings produced by these individuals. Building on the first chapter, it explores how these writers used the defense of Islam as a means to both legitimate their societal structures and their place within the teleological progression of nations. It will argue that a defense of Islam, even to non-Muslims and those who possessed largely materialist and rationalist views, was crucial to their autonomy within the French language sphere. Islam became a fundamental part of their intellectual identity within the pages of their journals. Chapter 3 looks at how the rest of this identity was articulated within the press. It asks along what lines society was divided and what ethnic and linguistic markers attached themselves to certain identities. Finally chapter 4 looks at a discussion of the means through which this cultural, institutional, religious, and historical legacy would be sustained, restored, created or improved. What were the main features of successful reform and how were they articulated by these writers?

# Chapter 1

## Repurposing the Past: Historiography in Ottoman and Algerian Texts

### Introduction

*J'ai loué le passé du peuple ottoman non pas pour atténuer les lourdes fautes du présent, mais avec l'intention de régulariser l'avenir sous le poids croissant du passé.<sup>29</sup>*

(I praised the past of the Ottoman people not to mitigate the gross negligence of the present, but with the intention to regularize the future under the growing weight of the past.)

*Il est indispensable de donner à cette question la précision que réclame son importance et, par conséquent, de décrire le peuplement indigène de l'Algérie, tel qu'il était, antérieurement à l'occupation française, et avant que le contact de la civilisation l'ait modifié.<sup>30</sup>*

(It is essential to give this question the accuracy demanded by its importance and, therefore, to describe the indigenous population of Algeria, as it was, before the French occupation, and before the contact with civilization changed it.)

The development of Ottoman and Algerian intellectual and political thought in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was largely bound up with the question of how to negotiate with Europe and western culture in general. From the overt colonial occupation of North Africa to the less overt, but still highly influential, European presence in the Ottoman Empire, the issue of western influence and encroachment weighed heavily on the minds of those in the elite. One section of the elite in particular felt itself best positioned to address the questions of imitation, integration, synthesis and rejection that they believed

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<sup>29</sup> Ahmed Rıza, Bey. *La Crise de l'Orient: ses causes et ses remèdes*. Paris: Comité Ottoman d'Union et de Progrès, 1907, 6.

<sup>30</sup> Hamet, Ismael. *Les Musulmans Français du Nord de l'Afrique*. Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1906, 15.

were central to the Islamic world's relationship with Europe at this time. This section was comprised of men who were generally members of one of the liberal professions, especially in Algeria and Tunisia,<sup>31</sup> or employed in the state bureaucracy in the Ottoman case.<sup>32</sup> In all cases these figures had a familiarity with European languages and had been exposed to European thought.<sup>33</sup> Many had also undergone further education in Europe itself, mainly in Paris.<sup>34</sup>

Many members of this elite soon became loosely grouped around the labels of 'Young Turks' and 'Young Algerians'. These groups combined intellectual and political activity and many had clear agendas for reform. With many prominent Young Turks in exile in Europe and many Young Algerians spending formative years in French universities, the opening up of a dialogue with European societies was inevitable. With the desire to present their ideas within a European context, a large number of journals, books and pamphlets were published in the French language during this period. These works were clearly aimed at an interested European population in addition to the small percentage of French-literate elite in these countries.<sup>35</sup> Writing about the *indigène* newspapers of the Young Algerians for instance Peter Dunwoodie claims that these publications were an alternative way of exercising agency within a colonial framework.<sup>36</sup> Publishing these papers in French, often in Paris or Geneva, but also in the active centres of Istanbul, Cairo, and Algiers or Bone allowed these elite Algerians and

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<sup>31</sup> Saadallah, "The Rise of the Algerian Elite, 1900-1914," 70.

<sup>32</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 25.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 71.

<sup>34</sup> Saadallah, 69.

<sup>35</sup> Dunwoodie, Peter. *Francophone Writing in Transition: Algeria 1900-1945*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2005, 56

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 49.

Ottomans to engage with European society and to actively construct an identity that could be presented back to Europe.<sup>37</sup> Dunwoodie limits his analysis of textual engagement and participation with the European intellectual and political milieu to the Algerian colonial context, but the Ottomans in the Empire, France and elsewhere in Europe were certainly attempting the same thing. Both of these groups were writing in French with the aim of: "...addressing a community beyond local, ethnic boundaries, a community of which they were, imaginatively, part."<sup>38</sup> Those writers from the Ottoman Empire likewise sought to carefully manage the European perception of their culture and their country. Their works were in many ways propaganda, but propaganda aimed at a specific audience and projecting a specific worldview. The use of the French language in books and journals was not necessarily evidence of a belief in the superiority of European culture, but rather a deliberate tactic of engagement and a way to situate themselves in the European intellectual conversation.

This chapter will address the role of the presentation and analysis of history within the French-language writings of Ottoman and Algerian writers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It will show that the treatment of history by these writers, while mirroring many of the developments, functions and patterns of histories produced in their native languages, they served a unique purpose as Francophone texts. This chapter will focus primarily on standalone works of historical inquiry and long-form articles that appeared in French publications rather than historical commentary that appeared in

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 57.

newspaper columns. The reasons for this are twofold: first, these longer texts represented a clearer attempt at creating a coherent historical work and second, they allow for a more effective comparison and analysis across groups and time periods.

The advent of 'modern' history writing, at least in the Arab world, is generally agreed to be a phenomenon that emerged in the nineteenth century.<sup>39</sup> Across the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, Egypt and North Africa new historical works were being produced that took a more clearly defined territorial entity as its subject of inquiry and began to make clear distinctions between a 'modern' and a pre-modern period.<sup>40</sup> For many this new mode of history writing was inextricably bound up with modernity and the idea of the nation-state. By adopting Western conventions of history writing these writers reacted to a new type of reasoning and a new way of writing about the past.<sup>41</sup> This represented what Yoav Di-Capua calls 'historicism'. In his work on modern Egyptian historiography he writes: "More than anything else, however, historicism sought to understand the past from the point of view of the final outcome of progress: that is, the *future*. As such, historicism accounts for many of the above mentioned

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<sup>39</sup> See for instance Choueiri, Youssef. *Arab History and the Nation-State: A Study in Modern Arab Historiography 1820-1980*. London: Routledge, 1989.

<sup>40</sup> For the majority of the Ottoman and Algerian writers the 'modern' period begins with the reign and reform efforts of the Ottoman Sultan Selim III at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the French colonial presence in Algeria in 1830. A similar periodization can be seen in Egyptian historiography during this period that sees 'modern' Egyptian history as beginning either with the French invasion in the 18<sup>th</sup> century or the start of the reign of Mehmet Ali in the early 19<sup>th</sup>. See Di-Capua, Yoav. *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past: Historians and History Writing in Twentieth-Century Egypt*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2009.

<sup>41</sup> Di-Capua, 29.

ideologies, ideas, and collective aspirations, including, but not limited to, nationalism. It conditioned them and was simultaneously reformulated by them once they became operative. Evidently, the nature of this relationship was a two-way traffic."<sup>42</sup> This new appreciation among the Egyptian intellectual elite of the power of historical narrative as a political act can be applied just as easily to the Ottoman and Algerian writers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The function of the historian and history writing in French, however, adds an additional layer of complexity to this analysis. For the writing of one's own history, be it Algerian or Arab, Ottoman or Islamic, in the French language represented a greater desire than the legitimation of their own personal narratives. It also represented a deliberate act of participation and contribution to the production of European academic history. These writers wanted to use history writing to express their own particular positions, but they also wanted to be a part of the conversation and production of their own history within this French-language intellectual space. They took themes common both to Ottoman, Arab and Islamic history and combined them with narrative structures and practices that emerged in Europe and produced historical works that formed a unique body of Francophone writing.

### **Decadence and Fanaticism: Halil Ganem and the Ottoman Sultans**

In 1901 the Syrian Christian and member of the Young Turks, Halil Ganem (1847-1903), published his two-volume work on the Ottoman Royal House entitled *Les Sultans Ottomans*.<sup>43</sup> Ganem founded several newspapers during his

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>43</sup> Ganem, Halil. *Les Sultans Ottomans*. Paris: Librairie Marescq Ainé, 1901.

lifetime, including the long-running *Mechveret* with Ahmed Rıza in Paris.<sup>44</sup> The work was published by the French publishing house, *Librairie Marescq Ainé*, and also had a portion of its preface reprinted in the pages of *Mechveret*.<sup>45</sup>

Halil Ganem in many ways exemplified the multi-lingual character of the Ottoman and Algerian intellectual community in Western Europe. He was active across multiple linguistic platforms with the aim of engaging a diverse readership. His output in all three languages, French, Arabic and Ottoman Turkish, was in aid of advancing his reform agenda. Ottoman history for Ganem was a means through which he could articulate his positions on reform and the Ottoman state.

Halil Ganem had been involved in both the Ottoman émigré publishing scene in Paris<sup>46</sup> and the broader opposition movement against Sultan Abdülhamid II as early as the 1880s.<sup>47</sup> One of the main ways in which we can analyse the work Halil Ganem is to look at not only the subjects of these works but also at how this historical content was organised and interpreted. Halil Ganem divides his work into three sections on the Ottoman Sultans. He divides the Sultans into three main groups – the conquerors and founders of the empire, the destroyers of the

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<sup>44</sup> Hanioglu, Şükrü. *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 78.

<sup>45</sup> See *Mechveret Supplément Francais* 15 April, 15 May and 1 June 1901.

<sup>46</sup> See for instance Ganem's paper *La France Internationale* which ran between 1889 and 1891 (59 issues) and dealt with a variety of European and international questions and was focussed almost exclusively on diplomatic and political issues. It included contributions from multiple European journalists and intellectuals.

<sup>47</sup> Hanioglu, Şükrü. *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 46.

empire or the Sultans of decadence, and the reformers.<sup>48</sup> In this work he praises the early Sultans for their role in creating, expanding and enriching the empire and then goes on to condemn the middle sultans for allowing the empire's fortunes to fall. Ganem writes:

*Dans l'étude de l'histoire du Moyen Age, comme dans celle de l'histoire ancienne, il est nécessaire, suivant l'opinion émise par le savant écrivain Heeren, de séparer les états qui, par leur constitution, ont donné un grand développement à l'homme lui-même, de ceux ou l'homme, considéré uniquement comme esclave, ne jouit d'aucun droit individuel et ne s'élève au-dessus des autres que par la faveur du maître.*<sup>49</sup>

(In the study of the history of the Middle Ages, as in that of ancient history, it is necessary, following the opinion expressed by the learned writer Heeren, to separate states which, by their constitution, have given a great development of man himself, or of those man, considered solely as a slave, does not enjoy any individual right and rises above the other by the favour of the master.)

Ganem is one of the few authors who offers anything approaching a historical philosophy. He believes firmly in the importance of rulers in the historical development of any state. He seems deeply aware of the fact that the Ottoman Empire lacks comparable figures to those found in classical Greece and Rome.<sup>50</sup> This is an important distinction for, as we shall see on Chapter 2, links to the classical past were a key element of these writer's discussions of Islam and its place in society. However Halil Ganem did believe that rulers could be shaped and that the Ottoman Empire would be able to raise itself up to the level of other nations.

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<sup>48</sup> Ganem, II.

<sup>49</sup> Halil Ganem, *Les Sultans Ottomans Vol 1-2*. Paris: Librairie Marescq Ainé, 1901, I.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, II.

This is echoed in his 1895 work, *Education des Princes Ottomans*. In it Halil Ganem hoped to illuminate the historical roots of the despotism currently affecting the Ottoman Empire.<sup>51</sup> This work broadly fit with the idea of the Ottoman Sultanate as being corrupt and largely confirmed European beliefs about Oriental decadence and incompetence in government. However, for Ganem this is not inevitable or irreversible. He reaches back to the pre-Islamic past to demonstrate a particular historical continuity between their societies and the wider world:

*La Turquie a connu tous les despotismes. Elle a eu ses Attila, ses Tamerlane, ses Genghis-Khan, comme elle a eu ses Tibères et ses Constantins. Le moment est peut-être venu pour elle de sortir de l'ornière pour marcher hardiment dans la voie du progrès à la suite de ses chefs transformés par une éducation intelligente et virile.*<sup>52</sup>

(Turkey has experienced all despotisms. She has had her Attilas, her Tamerlanes, her Genghis Khans, as she has had her Tiberius and Constantines. The time has perhaps come for her to get out of the rut to walk boldly into the path of progress as a result of its leaders transformed by a smart and manly education.)

Here Halil Ganem maintained that the development of Ottoman history was one determined by its rulers. Thus allowed him to frame his opposition to Sultan Abdülhamid II as something that was ultimately historically justifiable. This conception of history was also, in many ways, mirrored by Ganem's Algerian counterparts.

Chérif Benhabilés and Ismael Hamet were members of the French-educated Algerian elite and could both be called 'Young Algerians' by virtue of their French

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<sup>51</sup> Ganem, Halil. *Éducation des Princes Ottomans*. Bulle: Imprimerie Émile Lenz, 1895.

<sup>52</sup> Ganem, Halil. *Éducation des Princes Ottomans*, 7.

education and their firm belief that integration with French society was both desirable and inevitable.<sup>53</sup> Ismael Hamet (1857-1932) was born in Algiers and had been an *Officier interprète principal à l'État Major de l'Armée* and worked for the French state before becoming a member of the *Académie des sciences coloniales* in 1923. In many ways he epitomised the *evoulé* Algerian and published extensively throughout his long career, contributing to the type of knowledge production that helped to sustain French colonial domination in Algeria.<sup>54</sup> In 1906 he published his work on the history of Algeria and its current political, social, and economic situation. His book was published by French academic publisher, *Librairie Armand Colin*, and was received quite well with one American reviewer stating that the author's: "...wide reading and familiarity with modern thought admirably qualify him to serve as interpreter between East and West."<sup>55</sup> Chérif Benhabilés (1885-1954) was born in Constantine came from a family of notables that had maintained their status through the transition from Ottoman to French colonial rule. He worked as judge in the Islamic section of the dual legal system of colonial Algeria and then went on to obtain a doctorate in law at a French university.<sup>56</sup> Unlike Hamet his work was much more overtly political, while at the same time keeping the personal opinions of the author

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<sup>53</sup> Ageron, Robert. *Les Algériens Musulmans et la France (1871-1919)*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968.

<sup>54</sup> Trumbull, George R. *An Empire of Facts: Colonial Power, Cultural Knowledge and Islam in Algeria, 1870-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 2.

<sup>55</sup> Les Musulmans Français du Nord de l'Afrique by Ismael Hamet. *Journal of the Royal African Society*. 6/22 (1907), 220-221. He was also well known enough to have caught the attention of the *American Political Science Review*, see: Balch, Thomas Willing, "French Colonization in North Africa", *American Political Science Review* 3/4 (1909) 539-551, 546.

<sup>56</sup> Ruedy, John. "Cherif Benhabyles and the Young Algerians", in *Franco Arab Encounters*. Carl L. Brown & Matthew S. Gordon eds. Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1996, 353.

somewhat obscure. He re-printed the manifesto of the Young Algerians along with the texts of letters of petition to various French political figures, but failed to offer any clear or detailed opinion on the content of these re-produced texts.<sup>57</sup>

For these and many other Ottoman and Algerian writers, the past becomes something that is reviled or idealised, but ultimately reconstructed from a particular vantage point.<sup>58</sup> This was especially true for those individuals writing for audiences within their host societies. In his 1847 work *La Russie et les Russes*, the Russian émigré Turgenev, writing from Paris, often used the Russian past to provide context for his reform proposals.<sup>59</sup> Similarly Chateaubriand used his 1797 work, *The Historical Essay on Ancient and Modern Revolutions*, to frame his discussion of the political situation in France and to help make the case for constitutional monarchy.<sup>60</sup> In all of these cases how the past was presented made a statement on how these writers both viewed themselves and wanted to be viewed by others. For Algerians and Ottomans writing in French thoughts about the past informed their discussions of the future.

The past figures prominently in all of these works, both as an explanation for the current state of the Muslim world and a justification of its potential for progress, advancement, and overall equality with Western states. All of the analysis of the

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<sup>57</sup> Ageron, Charles, "Le Mouvement jeune-algerien", *Etudes Maghrebines*, (1964), 217-243, 220.

<sup>58</sup> Kramer, Lloyd S. *Threshold of a New World: Intellectuals and the Exile Experience in Paris, 1830-1848*, 10.

<sup>59</sup> Miller, Martin A. *The Russian Revolutionary Emigres: 1825-1870*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986, 42-43.

<sup>60</sup> Carpenter, Kristy. *Refugees of the French Revolution: Émigrés in London, 1789-1802*. London: Macmillan Press, 1999, xvii.

current political and social situation of both Algeria and the Ottoman Empire is informed by the past, more specifically the Islamic past. The dominant theme that underpins all analysis of the Islamic past in these works is the ‘Golden Age-Divine Decline’ paradigm. This paradigm was a way of looking at history in the Islamic world that was popular both among Western Orientalists of the time and Muslim scholars themselves.<sup>61</sup> The “Golden Age-Divine Decline” paradigm looked at the Islamic world as having experienced a Golden Age of development and expansion in its early years before beginning its inexorable decline. In the Ottoman context the Golden Age-Divine Decline paradigm is generally associated with military decline and with the loss of power as a result of this. Analyses of Ottoman decline were often presented as analyses of this military decline in contrast to the concurrent rise in military power of Europe.<sup>62</sup> Continued loss of territory and a decline in military prestige was presented as inevitable in the face of superior Western technology by many authors.<sup>63</sup>

Chérif Benhabilés provides a good example of how the “Golden Age-Divine Decline” paradigm emerges in his discussion of French Algeria:

Muslim civilization... for a few moments lighted this earth and, while those who dwell in it today are several centuries behind their neighbours, one must not forget that they are the descendants of a race whose letters, arts and sciences, and whole historic past bespeak finesse and taste.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> For a good example of this belief see H.A.R Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1. London: Oxford University Press, 1950.

<sup>62</sup> Grant, Jonathan. “Rethinking the Ottoman “Decline”: Military Technology Diffusion in the Ottoman Empire, Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries”, *Journal of World History*, 10/1 (1999), 179-201, 180.

<sup>63</sup> See Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* and, more recently, Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert eds, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

<sup>64</sup> Benhabilés, Chérif. *L’Algérie française vue par un indigène*. Alger, 1914, 138.

Benhabilés' assessment nicely captures the general feeling towards the early Islamic period held by these authors. All four took great care to emphasize the achievements of the Islamic world, especially intellectual and technological areas. The primary difference in the way the Islamic past was conceptualized by these authors lies in which elements are highlighted and how that serves the political purposes of the authors. In this way the Young Algerians strengthened their case for equality with the French, while the Young Turks gathered support for the restoration of the Ottoman parliament and constitution. Ismael Hamet highlights very specific aspects of 'Algerian' and 'Islamic' society. Rather than highlighting civilizational or political aspects of the Golden Age, Hamid highlights rather the advances of early Islamic societies in science and philosophy and Algerian skill in trade and commerce.<sup>65</sup>

The Young Algerians had a specific interpretation of the Islamic Golden Age and it is telling that Ismael Hamet's main chapter on the past is called 'Arab Muslim Civilization'. For Hamet the Golden Age of Islamic history is inextricably linked to the Arabs. Throughout his chapter he almost exclusively refers to the early Muslims solely as Arabs. Hamet makes mention of the fact that first philosophical studies of the Arabs were inspired by the works of Aristotle and devotes several pages to the mathematical and scientific achievements of the early Islamic period. To complement this he also mentions the facility with which the Arabs absorbed and expanded upon the medical knowledge taught to them by the Jews and the Greeks.<sup>66</sup> When Hamet approaches the Algerian past he discusses the

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<sup>65</sup> Hamet, *Les Musulmans Français du Nord de l'Afrique*, 66.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 68.

arrival of the Arabs and their fusion with the Berbers. He paints the Berbers as a semi-barbaric race and celebrates the arrival of the Arabs and the cultural benefits that they brought with them. He writes about the how the Berbers assimilated the language, culture, and science of Islamic civilization.<sup>67</sup> Hamet is very keen to demonstrate the potential of assimilation to benefit a people without having them become subjugated. He mentions that although the Berbers had become Arabized they remained the dominant element following the Arab conquest.<sup>68</sup> Here the case for a certain type of relationship between France and Algeria is being made using historical analogy. By showing how the Berbers were able to absorb the benefits of Arab civilization without losing their independence Hamet makes the case that the Muslim population of Algeria, or at least a certain segment of it, would be able to effectively absorb the benefits of French civilization while maintaining a level of equality. Like the French ethnographers working to establish facts on the ground, Hamet was establishing his own, and crafted his text to support his own political goals of equality for Muslim Algerians.<sup>69</sup>

In the Algerian context the focus on these past achievements and practices served a variety of purposes: the first is to reinforce the idea that Islamic civilization, and specifically the Arab-Islamic civilization from which the Algerians are descended, was and therefore is still capable of a high degree of intellectual and technological development, and secondly it provides justification for the position that Islam is not in and of itself a barrier to progress. For Hamet

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>69</sup> Trumbull, 33.

the term 'Arab civilization' referred to a linguistic and cultural designation and not to an inherent or immutable ethnic identity.<sup>70</sup> Arab civilization can best be reflected in arts and architecture of the region, which Hamet sees as one of the defining features of civilization more generally.<sup>71</sup> The progress of the Islamic world for Hamet stops in the fifteenth century when the discovery of printing allowed the Western nations to race ahead of their Islamic counterparts.<sup>72</sup> This is an important point as it ties into the larger belief in the power of the printed word to engender and spread progress.

In ignoring the achievements of Ottoman civilization Hamet and Benhabilés further emphasize the break with a backward past that French colonization represented. Underlying this presentation of the past is the idea that Muslim Algerian society would be perfectly capable of absorbing the cultural and technological advancements of the French, of attending French schools and technical colleges and participating in a meaningful way in the administration of the country while still maintaining an Islamic identity. This is highlighted also in an article Hamet wrote for the *Revue du Monde Musulman* that looked at the commercial aptitude of the Muslim Algerian populations. He uses the past to trace continuities between contemporary Algerians and the great North African civilizations that came before them.<sup>73</sup> There is conscious effort to de-legitimize the Ottoman state as a commercial entity but it also diminishes the achievements of the Byzantine Empire, to which the Ottomans felt themselves the natural

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<sup>70</sup> Hamet, *Les Musulmans Français du Nord de l'Afrique*, 55.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 72.

<sup>73</sup> Hamet, Ismael. "Le Commerce et les Indigènes Algériens", *Revue du Monde Musulman I*, 1907, 472.

successors.<sup>74</sup> Hamet then goes on to state that during the Ottoman and Regency periods a focus on warfare at the expense of trade diminished the capacity of the Algerians to flourish and cut them off from their natural relationship with Europe.<sup>75</sup>

The emphasis on past achievements was not, however, part of any desire or program to emulate or return to this period of Islamic grandeur. Both Benhabilés and Hamet were committed to modernization and integration with the French and saw the achievements of their coreligionists as proof of Islamic society's ability to produce, but also to absorb and utilize the most up-to-date science and technology. Benhabilés writes of the Algerian Muslim's "genius" and his ability to "readily absorb the benefits of French civilization".<sup>76</sup> For Benhabilés and Hamet the Golden Age of Islamic civilization is utilized to serve the assimilationist agenda. It doesn't argue for the superiority of that era or even of the societal model, but merely seeks to remind the reader that Islam had at one time been an intellectual and technological force in the world. The contextual nature of Islamic dominance, rather than its universal nature is mentioned by Hamid. He states that the writing system and scientific methods of Islamic civilization were well suited for the time, but that failure to keep up with European technology, such the printing press, contributed to its decline.<sup>77</sup> Both Benhabilés and Hamet take pains to emphasize the positive elements of Islamic history in terms of personal

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 473-4.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 477.

<sup>76</sup> Benhabilés, 139.

<sup>77</sup> Hamet, *Les Musulmans Français du Nord de l'Afrique*, 72.

characteristics, such as intelligence, which could be effectively utilized within the colonial context.

For the Young Turks the Islamic past appears in their works much as it did in the works of their immediate predecessors the Young Ottomans. The Young Ottomans were a group of reformers, including Namık Kemal, Ziya Paşa, and others who were active primarily in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>78</sup> Like the Young Turks many of the Young Ottomans came from a professional background in the state bureaucracy, especially the Translation Bureau.<sup>79</sup> They too conceived of an Ottoman-Islamic Golden Age, but unlike earlier reformers did not advocate a wholesale return to a semi-mythic state of Ottoman purity, but did use this Golden Age to build up their arguments for reform along Ottoman lines.<sup>80</sup> The Young Ottomans looked to early Ottoman practices to demonstrate that certain Western ideas had domestic roots, such as legislative assemblies.<sup>81</sup> Like the Young Turks, the Young Ottomans also blamed the stifling of these positive elements of early Ottoman administration on corrupt officials and rulers.<sup>82</sup> The use of the past to provide a foundation for arguments about the present, especially in matters of statecraft and governmental structure pervades the work of the Young Turks as well, both with regards to the early Islamic past and the Ottoman era.

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<sup>78</sup> Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 10-13.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 133.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 134.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

One of the Young Turks to tackle the questions of Islamic and Ottoman history in the French language was Murad Bey (1854-1917). Murad Bey was an early member of the Young Turk opposition movement in Paris, but reconciled with the Sultan in 1897 and returned to Istanbul. While in Europe he published two works in French that addressed the topic of Ottoman and Islamic history.<sup>83</sup> In his 1897 work *La Force et la Faiblesse de la Turquie: Les coupables et les innocents* he stresses that historically Islamic societies had urged the faithful to pursue science and the arts, and not only that but urged Islamic rulers to support their development.<sup>84</sup>

He writes:

*Les sciences en Orient ne sont pas nées et ne sont pas développées dans les monastères, ou dans des laboratoires particuliers, à l'abri de toutes "ingérences officielles". Avant d'arriver à leur maturité, avant d'avoir acquis leur indépendance, les lettres sont transférées dans les palais.*<sup>85</sup>

(The sciences in the East were not born and were not developed in monasteries, or in private laboratories, free from all « official interference ». Before they reached maturity, before they had acquired their independence, the letters were transferred to the palaces.)

For the Ottomans an analysis of the past also served to inform readers of Islamic civilization's intellectual pedigree, but in contrast to the Young Algerians the emphasis is shifted from intellectual pursuits in isolation and to the structural elements that allowed these developments to progress. This reflects the different contextual situations of the Young Turks, who desired to precipitate political

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<sup>83</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 37.

<sup>84</sup> Murad, Bey. *La Force et la Faiblesse de la Turquie: Les coupables et les innocents*. Genève: J. Mouille, 1897, 10.

<sup>85</sup> Murad Bey, *La Force et la Faiblesse de la Turquie*, 14.

changes within their own independent state, and the Young Algerians, who were looking to achieve a greater degree of equality within a colonial framework.

Murad Bey laments the decline of the liberalism of the early Muslims and their loss of civic pride and intellectual independence.<sup>86</sup> For Murad the early Islamic ruler guided and supported the great developments of the early Islamic period and it was with the corruption and decline of these rulers that Islamic civilization declined. According to Murad as long as the rulers remained virtuous then intellectual and scientific activity flourished.<sup>87</sup> He emphasized the role of rulers in protecting scholars, but also pursuing scholarship themselves. He writes that: “The palaces were... the repository of intelligence.”<sup>88</sup> To emphasize this point he wrote:

*C'est d'ailleurs à cette époque de la période abbasside que le Monde vit pour la première fois, régler les contributions de guerre, non pas en argent, mais en ouvrages manuscrits des philosophes grecs et romains.*<sup>89</sup>

(It is also at this time of the Abbasid period that the world saw for the first time, the settlement of war contributions not in money, but in manuscript books of Greek and Roman philosophers.)

Here Murad was, like his Algerian counterparts, tying the grand sweep of history from the classical period, through the early Islamic period and up to the late Ottoman present. Murad Bey divides Turkey into la Turquie officielle and la Turquie nationale, placing the blame for Ottoman decline on the actions of

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Murad Bey. *La Force et la Faiblesse de la Turquie*, 12.

official Turkey.<sup>90</sup> It is not the system itself but certain negative elements, such as corrupt officials and practices, bureaucratic inefficiency, and fiscal incompetence, of it that contributed to the Ottoman Empire's decline.

Another major Ottoman figure to delve into the question of history was Ahmed Rıza (1859-1930) was a leading figure in the Young Turk movement in Paris and subsequently went on to become president of the Chamber of Deputies in the reformed Ottoman parliament after 1908.<sup>91</sup> He had started his career in the translation bureau of the Ottoman government and settled permanently in Paris in 1889.<sup>92</sup> Ahmed Rıza was a devoted follower of the positivist Auguste Comte and this materialist outlook impacted how he came to conceptualise Ottoman and Islamic history.

Ahmed Rıza stresses that the enormous progress made by Muslims in the Middle Ages is proof that the Islamic society was not hindered by religion, but rather by incompetent rulers. He also reminds his readers that Muslims of the Middle Ages were in many ways more civilized, learned and more free than other peoples of the time.<sup>93</sup> Ahmed Rıza's engagement with French press culture in Paris began in earnest in the 1890s.<sup>94</sup> In addition to publishing the French-language newspaper *Méchveret Supplément Français* he also published frequently in European

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<sup>90</sup> Murad Bey, *Le palais de Yildiz et la Sublime porte*, 6.

<sup>91</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 40.

<sup>92</sup> Taglia, 91-92.

<sup>93</sup> Ahmed Rıza, *La Crise de l'Orient: ses causes et ses remèdes*, 14, 37.

<sup>94</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 79.

publications, such as the Positivist organ *La Revue Occidentale*.<sup>95</sup> In this publication Ahmed Rıza explored Islamic and Ottoman history as a way of both educating his French readers and advancing his political goals. In his book he writes:

*Le progrès humain ressemble à un véhicule poussé par derrière et non trainé par devant. En cas d'un obstacle insurmontable, la résistance n'est possible qu'à la condition de s'appuyer sur l'âge d'or de l'Histoire. C'est là que réside l'âme d'une nation. Une des forces vives de l'Islamisme a été précisément la glorification des grandes œuvres de l'antiquité, quelles qu'en fussent les origines.*<sup>96</sup>  
(Human progress resembles a vehicle pushed from behind, not dragged from in front. In the case of an insurmountable obstacle, resistance is only possible by standing on the Golden Age of history. That is where a nation's soul is to be found. One of the most active forces of Islamism was precisely the glorification of the great works of antiquity, whatever their origins.)

For Ahmed Rıza it is precisely the achievements of the Islamic Golden Age that will ensure the ability of the Ottoman Empire to continue to progress towards modernity.

For Benhabilés and Hamet the advancements of Golden Age allowed them to demonstrate their society's willingness and ability to utilize modern technology and ideas based on past accomplishments. Hamid makes clear that in areas such as the manufacture of arms Europeans borrowed many techniques from Muslim craftsmen in the past.<sup>97</sup> Likewise Murad Bey and Ahmed Rıza used the Golden Age to demonstrate that the presence of an enlightened ruler and system of government was responsible for the proliferation of intellectual activity during

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<sup>95</sup> Between 1896 and 1906 Ahmed Rıza wrote 14 articles for this publication on a variety of subjects including Islam and Islamic history, Positivism and Ottoman politics.

<sup>96</sup> Ahmed Rıza. *La Crise de l'Orient*, 6.

<sup>97</sup> Hamet, *Les Musulmans Français du Nord de l'Afrique*, 67.

this time. The Young Algerians and the Young Turks both used the achievements of the past to strengthen their case for reform. The Young Algerians looked to the intellectual and technological achievements of the Golden Age to demonstrate the potential for Algerian Muslims to integrate successfully into French society. The Young Turks on the other hand focus much more on the qualities of the early Islamic and Ottoman state in order to show that a nominally Islamic state like the Ottoman Empire is perfectly capable of participating as an equal within Europe.

The second half of the Golden Age-Divide paradigm sought to explain the reasons for the apparent 'stagnation' of Islamic society relative to Western Europe. In the case of Algeria decline is presented in the context of their position as a peripheral province of the Ottoman Empire. There is a keen sense of marginalization in the way that the more recent Algerian past is presented. Benhabilés describes the state of "disorder" and "anarchy" that existed under the Ottomans.<sup>98</sup> He paints the state of Ottoman Algeria in a very primitive light, standing in stark contrast to the praise heaped on the earlier "Arab" Islamic past. Hamid as well characterizes the Muslim world of North Africa as living "in a chaotic mess where a state of war overshadowed all other forms of human activity."<sup>99</sup> This portrayal of Algerian society as completely lacking in structure and order provides a standard against which to measure the French influence. For Benhabilés and Hamet the discussion of decline takes on a more personal character than the discussion of the Golden Age. Decline is examined in a specifically Algerian context.

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<sup>98</sup> Benhabilés, 7.

<sup>99</sup> Hamet, *Les Musulmans Français du Nord de l'Afrique*, 229.

Hamet uses the Ottoman period as a yardstick against which to measure the achievements of the French. He mentions that the Turks would employ armed force to collect “heavy taxes” and that the average Algerian was unable to maintain his home.<sup>100</sup> Later on while outlining the achievements of the French in the areas of agriculture and education he makes sure to hold these against their Ottoman equivalents. Benhabilés too asks the question: “Can the *indigènes* justifiably look back regretfully to the ‘good old days’?” His answer is an emphatic no and he declares that anyone who, after a careful examination of the situation before and after 1830, still wishes to return to the former state is an: “... Imposter whose conclusions are unsustainable.”<sup>101</sup> For the Algerians the more recent past is used to reinforce the positive aspects of modernization while still allowing that further progress needs to be made.

The Young Turk view of decline contains two parts: decline in the early pre-Ottoman period and decline in the Ottoman period. For Murad Bey decline in the pre-Ottoman period is linked explicitly to corrupt and despotic rulers. The corruption of rulers in the Islamic world resulted in a resignation to fatalism and blind obedience within Muslim societies.<sup>102</sup> Islamic decline becomes tied to despotism alone, not to religion. For Murad this blind obedience became: “...the marble cover which overlays the tomb of progress in the East.”<sup>103</sup> Ahmed Rıza is less concerned with decline in the pre-Ottoman era and instead focuses on the decline in the Ottoman period. He places the beginnings of *La Turquie actuelle* at

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Benhabilés, 9.

<sup>102</sup> Murad Bey, *La Force et la Faiblesse de la Turquie*, 15.

<sup>103</sup> Murad Bey, *Le palais de Yildiz et la Sublime porte*, 16.

the start of the Russo-Turkish War of 1878.<sup>104</sup> Like decline in the pre-Ottoman period the root of Ottoman decline can be found with the state. Ahmed Rıza writes:

*Qu'est-ce donc qu'un demi-siècle dans l'histoire du progrès humain ? Il y a eu des époques où l'Europe chrétienne est restée plusieurs siècles en arrière sur le monde musulman. Aux XIVe et XVe siècles, les Turcs étaient supérieurs, à tous égards, à plusieurs peuples de l'Occident devenus plus tard civilisés. Aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles, l'Allemagne, et même la France entrevoyaient à peine les réformes déjà réalisées en Angleterre.*

(What, then, is half a century in the history of human progress? There have been times when Christian Europe has remained centuries behind the Muslim world. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Turks were superior in all respects to several peoples of the West, later civilized. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Germany, and even France, barely foresee the reforms already carried out in England.)

*Je ne connais pas une loi de nature, une règle de l'évolution obligeant tous les habitants de la terre à marcher côté à côté dans la voie du progrès. Au contraire, l'histoire de la civilisation nous montre que le progrès n'est en aucune façon une règle générale et que de prodigieux efforts ont été déployés pour y arriver.<sup>105</sup>*

(I do not know a law of nature, a rule of evolution obliging all the inhabitants of the earth to walk side by side in the path of progress. On the contrary, the history of civilization shows us that progress is by no means a general rule and that prodigious efforts have been made to achieve it.)

Ultimately for Ahmed Rıza, as for Ismael Hamet, history is a long process and that reflects the particular contexts of the dominant civilizations of the moment. What both of these writers wanted to accomplish was to show to their European audiences that Islamic civilization was at once both historically great and also capable of greatness again.

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<sup>104</sup> Ahmed Rıza, 8.

<sup>105</sup> Ahmed Rıza, 4.

Yoav Di-Capua stresses in his discussion of the development history-writing in Egypt in the nineteenth century that one cannot simply divide the historical texts produced during this period into the categories of 'modern' and 'traditional'. Many works of history incorporated elements that bridged both traditions.<sup>106</sup> Many works of history being produced in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish in the mid and late nineteenth century incorporated traditional elements, such as a reliance on popular folklore as source material and ornate language into what were ostensibly 'modern' works of history.<sup>107</sup>

On the surface the history produced by Ismael Hamet appears to fall decidedly into the modern camp. In his 1906 book, *Les Musulmans Français du Nord de l'Afrique*, he devotes a third of the work to *Le Passé*. His approach to history is a blend of the religio-cultural history of Islam from its beginnings and a more geographically based history of Algeria itself, which stretches back to antiquity.<sup>108</sup> This approach reflects Ismael Hamet's position as a member of a specific Muslim Algerian elite hoping to communicate a specific vision of Algeria's history to his European audience.

Hamet's focus on Algeria as a distinct territorial entity with a continuous history going back to antiquity also mirrors developments that had been occurring in the Islamic world in the realm of history writing. In places such as Egypt there was a very clear shift from earlier forms of Islamic history writing to dealing with the

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<sup>106</sup> Di-Capua, 36.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Hamet, *Les Musulmans Français du Nord de l'Afrique*, 56.

long-term history of Egypt as a “distinct geographical unit.”<sup>109</sup> However despite relying almost exclusively on European secondary source material to construct his history his history does not come at the expense of his own people. Ismael Hamet remained very clear about the purpose of presenting the Algerian and Islamic past to his readers:

*Tels étaient la composition et l'état social des populations musulmanes de l'Algérie, au moment de la conquête française. Ce qu'ont été, dans le passé, les éléments composant de cette population, l'histoire nous le dira et nous laissera entrevoir les destinées qui les attendent, au contact de la civilisation moderne.*

(Such were the composition and the social condition of the Muslim populations of Algeria, at the time of the French conquest. What were, in the past, the component elements of that population, history will tell us and let us glimpse the destiny awaiting them in contact with modern civilization.<sup>110</sup>)

History provided a template for development for the Ottoman and Algerian writers. They were able to use history to both reflect their own pasts to a European audience and to place themselves within a more global historical progression from antiquity to the present. Different combinations of the Ottoman and Algerian pasts were articulated within the pages of these publications. A unique combination of Islamic, territorial, Imperial, dynastic and regional histories were offered in order to ground the experience of the Ottoman and Algerian writers in the intellectual currents of France. The writing of history allowed these writers to stress continuity and legitimacy within their historical narratives and provided a foundation for a defence of Islamic history and the faith that underpinned it.

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<sup>109</sup> Choueiri, Youssef M. *Modern Arab Historiography: Historical Discourse and the Nation-State*, 25.

<sup>110</sup> Hamet, *Les Musulmans Français du Nord de l'Afrique*, 231.

## Chapter 2

### **In Defense of Islam: Providing ‘Authentic Perspective’**

En théorie, il n’y a rien dans l’Islam qui soit contraire à l’humanité...  
(In theory there is nothing in Islam that is contrary to humanity...)<sup>111</sup>

*Le Orient demeure pour l’Occident le pays des mystères.*  
(The East remains for the West a country of mysteries)<sup>112</sup>

The previous chapter showed that the Ottoman, Algerian and Islamic past helped Ottoman and Algerian writers and intellectuals grapple with the task of articulating in their writings the shape that their societies should take in the present and the path that they needed to take to achieve these goals. However, in doing so they were confronted by one of the most overwhelming perceptual differences that separated these societies from their European counterparts: Islam. For their European audience it was the Ottoman Empire’s identity as an Islamic Empire that most clearly set it apart from the rest of the continent. Likewise the Muslim identity of the majority of France’s Algerian subjects represented probably the largest barrier to French citizenship and therefore inclusion into French society.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Murad Bey, *La Force et la Faiblesse de la Turquie*, 9.

<sup>112</sup> Ahmed Rıza, “Le Calife et ses devoirs”, in *La Revue Occidentale* Tome IV, 1896, 94.

<sup>113</sup> Ruedy, John. *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2005, 42.

In the nineteenth century European Orientalists and other writers sought to divide and categorize the various peoples of the East along racial, linguistic, and religious lines. In both the Ottoman and the Algerian context Islam represented an overwhelmingly important aspect of their identity by European observers.<sup>114</sup> Islam defined them as different from Europe and by extension was considered a barrier to certain values and institutions associated with Europe.<sup>115</sup> Given the centrality of Islam, in the eyes of Europe, as a fundamental part of the identity of many of these Ottoman and Algerian writers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it is hardly surprising that it emerged as a frequent topic in their French language writings during this period. The prevalence of this theme was in part due to the specific function that these French language writings served, the audience at which they were aimed and the entrenched beliefs they hoped to counter. Among these writers there was a desire, even among those who openly embraced ideologies that were theoretically strongly anti-religious in nature such as Positivism and other forms of Materialism, to provide a defense of Islam to their primarily European audience. This defense was generally framed in liberal and humanistic terms and was focused on refuting the commonly held belief in Europe that Islam was incompatible with liberalism and democracy.

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<sup>114</sup> See Almond, Philip. "Western Images of Islam, 1700-1900", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 49/3 (2003), 412-424 and Balch, Thomas Willing. "French Colonization in North Africa", *The American Political Science Review*, 3/4 (1909), 539-551 for a more contemporary viewpoint.

<sup>115</sup> See *Islam in European Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991 and Kharchi, Djamel. *Colonisation et Politique d'Assimilation en Algérie 1830-1962*. Alger, Hydra: Casbah Editions, 2004.

In the nineteenth century European perceptions of Islam and Islamic civilization began to move away from the more Universalist ideology of the Enlightenment to one rooted in the hierarchical and essentialist realities of Eurocentrism and Imperialism. In this earlier Enlightenment period: "...the desire to understand exotic worlds was linked to the classical, universalist vision that hoped to find in the East, as elsewhere, those human qualities that transcended time and place."<sup>116</sup> As the nineteenth century progressed, however, the study of non-European cultures and civilizations in this period was marked by an increased specialization in history and philology and the growth of new fields such as anthropology and sociology. These disciplines attempted to discover observable scientific explanations for the apparent decline and stagnation of certain civilizations as well as ones to explain Europe's current superiority.

In France it was the work of scholars like Ernest Renan and Gustave Le Bon that characterized many in French intellectual's changing view of and relationship to Islam in the nineteenth century. Elected to the French Academy in 1878 the philologist and philosopher Ernest Renan was a highly influential figure at the time and Ottoman and Algerian writers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were most certainly aware of his writings on Islam.<sup>117</sup> Renan believed that Islam was a barrier to science and progress and saw the religion as a 'spent force in history'.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Rodinson, Maxime. *La fascination de l'Islam*. Paris: Librairie François Maspero, 1980, 53.

<sup>117</sup> See Ernest Renan, *L'Islamisme et le science*, Paris: 1882.

<sup>118</sup> Quinn, Frederick. *The Sum of All Heresies: The Image of Islam in Western Thought*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 98.

Additionally he dismissed Islam's role in the dissemination of earlier Greco-Roman knowledge claiming that this was driven by Aryan Persian scholars who were only superficially Islamic.<sup>119</sup> In fact Renan broadly refused to countenance that Islam had been anything but an enemy of science and progress and it was this belief more broadly that these Ottoman and Algerian writers fought most vigorously against.<sup>120</sup> Similarly the French sociologist and anthropologist Gustave Le Bon defined the progress and development of the early Islamic Empire as an Arab achievement rather than an Islamic one.<sup>121</sup>

Islamic intellectuals did have their allies in Europe, such as David Urquhart, the Scottish aristocrat whose time with the British mission in Istanbul in the 1830s and subsequent visits to the Ottoman Empire in later decades imbued him with a strong affinity for Ottoman and Islamic culture enhanced by an intense Russophobia. Urquhart was staunchly opposed to what he perceived as the Westernizing reforms of the *Tanzimat* and he believed that a revitalization of the Ottoman Empire must be based firmly on Islamic principles and institutions rooted in the pure application *Şer'iat*.<sup>122</sup>

Muslim intellectual responses to European perceptions of Islam in the nineteenth century became more common as the spread of secular education, translation of European works and familiarity with foreign languages increased.

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<sup>119</sup> Kohn, Margaret, "Afghani on Empire, Islam, and Civilization", *Political Theory* (37/3) 2009, 398-422, 407.

<sup>120</sup> Puig, Josep Montada, "Al-Afghani, a case of religious unbelief?", *Studia Islamica* (100/101) 2005, 203-220, 220.

<sup>121</sup> Quinn, *The Sum of All Heresies*, 100. See Gustave Le Bon, *La civilisation des Arabes*, Paris: 1884.

<sup>122</sup> Çiçek, 63.

These developments increased the familiarity of European works on Islam of a new generation of Ottoman and other Islamic intellectuals. The overtly Christian attacks on Islam coming from the missionaries and others within the religious establishment were often familiar and “fortified as before with arguments from the Middle Ages, but with modern embellishments”.<sup>123</sup> Yet many Muslim intellectuals in the Islamic world largely directed their refutations towards those secular and materialist thinkers who represented the modern establishment of European thought. Among the Young Ottomans, for instance, Namık Kemal responded in his Ottoman language publications to the French philologist and philosopher Ernest Renan who saw in Islam the reason for the lack of scientific progress in the Islamic world. This was based on a belief that the Islamic world suffered from the fact that it did not have a major tradition of secular thought independent of religion.<sup>124</sup> Like many later writers Kemal’s defense of Islam involved an appeal to the content of the faith’s foundational texts, pointing out that Islamic doctrine in no way forbid the study of exact sciences.<sup>125</sup> For Kemal the larger issue was that knowledge not be artificially divided into spiritual and material categories.<sup>126</sup> Like many of the responses to criticisms of Islam from Muslim intellectuals at the time Kemal’s came from a place of sincere belief, addressed to an overtly Islamic audience in order to reassure them of the strength of their faith.

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<sup>123</sup> Rodinson, 66.

<sup>124</sup> Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 324.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> York, Norman A., “Disputing the “Iron Circle”: Renan, Afghani, and Kemal on Islam, Science and Modernity”, *Journal of World History*, 22/4 (2011), 693-714, 699.

The Young Ottomans conceived of the Ottoman Empire very much as an Islamic state, indeed Namık Kemal rejected any basis for the state other than the *Şer'iat*, and they responded to European criticisms from a much more sincerely religious position than the late nineteenth and early twentieth century writers.<sup>128</sup> By the 1890s, however, many of the Ottoman writers, especially those who fell into the rather fluid category of Young Turks, were coming from a position that was heavily influenced by Materialism and Positivism.<sup>129</sup>

Many Algerians and Ottomans writing in French faced a deeply entrenched perception of Islam that was potentially hindering the effectiveness of their political and intellectual work. The centrality of Islam as the perceived main factor impacting the development of their societies is reflected in the topic's importance in their writings. This approach formed the basis of a large number of articles and pamphlets by Ottoman writers, both Young Turk and otherwise, who were highly conscious of their empire's identity as an Islamic state.

Similarly a major element of the Young Algerian platform was the belief that the renouncing of their status as Muslims was an unnecessary condition to acquiring French citizenship.<sup>130</sup> Both groups felt very strongly about their Islamic identity in the mind of Europe and regardless of their actual beliefs both were hesitant to admit to an outright rejection of Islam within their French-language writings.

In analyzing the output of both groups it will be possible to shed some new light on how these intellectuals, both Muslim and non-Muslim, felt the role of Islam in

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<sup>128</sup> Mardin, 324, 400.

<sup>129</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 208.

<sup>130</sup> Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 45.

history and contemporary politics ought to be viewed by their European readers. It will show that the intellectual and linguistic context in which these works were produced had a strong impact on their content and aims. These writers engaged with Europe in the intellectual arena and language that they had determined and in that sense were performing a very different role in their French language publications than in those published in non-European languages.

In his works on the Young Turks Şükrü Haniolğu draws the distinction between the “heavy Islamic rhetoric” found in the public writings of the Young Turks and their more honest opinions about religion that are present in their private papers.<sup>131</sup> He portrays this apparent contradiction as reflecting the desire of the Young Turks not to alienate their more religious allies in the Ottoman Empire, especially those among the *ulema* who were opposed to the Sultan.<sup>132</sup> Stefano Taglia likewise suggests that it is we must consider the audience of these articles and “...the ways in which they promoted a type of secularism that developed the relationship between modernity and religion that did not consider the two as incompatible.”<sup>133</sup> While it is certainly true that those Young Turk newspapers being published in Turkish or Arabic in Cairo and elsewhere were very conscious of the need to maintain their Islamic credentials to avoid drawing the ire of religious supporters at home, it is unlikely that catering for domestic audiences can exclusively explain the religious rhetoric in their French-language publications, especially if we consider that the Young Turks intended their

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 200.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 201.

<sup>133</sup> Taglia, *Intellectuals and Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 23.

writings in French to be “a contribution to European politics.”<sup>134</sup> This assessment of Ottoman engagement with European press culture and the conception of the press as creating a particular reality provides us with a more useful framework for analyzing the motivation and function of articles that deal with Islam.<sup>135</sup> By ‘creating reality’ I refer to the belief held by many of the Young Turks at the time that the mere publication and repetition of information about the situation in the Ottoman Empire would translate into concrete action.<sup>136</sup>

It is my contention that this belief can be extended to all of the writers profiled in this study. In their French language publications these Ottoman and Algerian writers were participating in a dialogue about Islam with the European intellectual community and in doing so were intending to change a set of firmly held beliefs about Islam. By ascribing the primary motivation for examples of pro-Islamic writings to the desire of the Young Turks to affirm their status as committed believers in order to appease their more conservative supporters Hanioglu misses some of the nuance of intent inherent in groups and individuals with one foot in two different intellectual spheres.

I argue that the desire to defend Islam’s compatibility with modernization was governed by the particular dynamic of the intellectual exchange with a European audience. David Fieni writes that responses to European attacks on Islam in this

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<sup>134</sup> Kaynar, Erdal. “The Almighty Power of the Written Word: Political Conceptions of the Press at the Turn of the Twentieth Century”, in *Penser, agir et vivre dans l’Empire ottoman et en Turquie*. Nathalie Clayer and François Georgeon eds. Paris: Peeters, 2013, 162.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 166.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

period were “rooted in the realities of colonial European and late Ottoman geopolitics.”<sup>137</sup> In this sense many Muslim writers who were publishing in French felt constrained in terms how they could engage with the subject of Islam and Islamic institutions. Rather than seeing their support for and defense of Islam in their French-language writings as merely a further example of a reluctance to alienate potential Muslim supporters in Algeria and the Ottoman Empire, it is more useful to analyze it as a reluctance to admit to an essentialist argument concerning the superiority of European civilization.<sup>138</sup> These writings performed a function similar to those in the Arabic and Ottoman Turkish journals in that both were focused on maintaining support and legitimacy. The French-language writings were, however, about securing the intellectual legitimization of the European intellectual community as these writers implicitly recognized that their intellectual projects required this legitimacy. This is furthered justified by the number of articles concerning Islam published in European journals that were a further step removed from any potential supporters back home. In this case a defense of Islam was mounted in the French language not to assuage indigenous doubts about their commitment to Islam but to defend the inherent fitness of their civilizations to become modern nations not in spite of but because of their Islamic identity.

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<sup>137</sup> Fieni, David, “French Decadence, Arab Awakenings: Figures of Decay in Arab *Nahda*”, *Boundary 2* (39/2) 2012, 143-160, 146.

<sup>138</sup> It is not my intention to try and address the relative sincerity of these beliefs or the relative uprightness of the individuals concerned, but rather to examine the function of these writings within a specific historical, intellectual and linguistic context.

This chapter will analyze the development of articles concerning Islam in this context through two main periods: 1890-1902 and 1903-1908. The first period was dominated by the early writings of the Young Turks, a few other Ottoman writers outside of that movement as well as French language Young Algerian papers, such as *El Hack*.<sup>139</sup> The second period saw the emergence of further Young Turk and Ottoman writing following the First Congress of Ottoman Opposition in Paris in 1902 and the division of the Young Turk movement into more clearly defined opposing factions. It also saw a growth in Muslim Algerian and Tunisian publications specifically aimed at educating a European public about Algerian society and Muslim society more generally. The dividing lines between the periods are of course far from absolute and several authors, publications and themes span across them. I believe, however, that the emergence of new author-groups and the historical developments within these periods are defined enough to make them useful categories for analysis.

### **1890-1902: Early Writings in Defense of Islam**

Articles on the subject of Islam in the French language that are the focus of this study began to emerge in the 1890s. The movement to Paris and Geneva of members of the newly created Young Turk movement spurred an increase in newspaper and pamphlet publication, especially in French as well as contributions to French language publications.<sup>140</sup> There was an awareness of the way the press was utilized by émigré and exile groups from Poland, Russia, Italy

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<sup>139</sup> *El Hack* was one of the first bilingual papers produced by the Muslim community in Algeria. It provides an instructive template for the increase in participation after 1900.

<sup>140</sup> Haniolğu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 78.

and elsewhere in addition to an awareness of the power of the press in impacting domestic politics and public opinion as seen during the Dreyfus affair.<sup>141</sup> In these publications many of the authors sought to portray Islam, and Islamic society, as amenable to modernization and progress.<sup>142</sup> Their books and articles maintained that Islam was at its root an inherently liberal and rational faith and sought to correct what they believed were the erroneous perception of Islam as anti-science and anti-progress held by many Europeans and epitomized in the writings of men like Ernest Renan, Gustave Le Bon and Gabriel Charmes. An early work to address the negative impact of European perceptions was by the Young Turk Ahmed Rıza in an 1891 issue of the journal of the Positivist Society, *La Revue Occidentale*, in which he questions ability of a believer to write “*avec sang froid*” about religion, whether it be his own or another.<sup>143</sup>

Ahmed Rıza was one of the most influential and prolific members of the Young Turk movement in Paris. He was also a committed Positivist, which makes his writings on Islam in French all the more relevant for this chapter. During this period Ahmed Rıza would publish frequently in this positivist journal, contributing nine articles to *La Revue Occidentale* between 1891 and 1902. The place of publication of these articles alone should provide sufficient evidence as to its intended audience and the motivation behind its pro-Islam content. It is highly unlikely that Ahmed Rıza would set out a defense of Islam and to

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<sup>141</sup> Kaynar, Erdal. “The Almighty Power of the Written Word: Political Conceptions of the Press at the Turn of the Twentieth Century”, 160.

<sup>142</sup> See articles by Ahmed Rıza in *La Revue Occidentale* and *La Revue Positiviste* as well as his book *La Crise de l’Orient: ses causes et ses remèdes*. Paris: Comité Ottoman d’Union et de Progrès, 1907.

<sup>143</sup> Ahmed Rıza, “Le Positivisme et l’Islamisme”, in *La Revue Occidentale* Tome III. Paris: Société Positiviste, 1891, 115.

emphasize its compatibility with the tenets of Positivism, an ideology he was openly supportive of in the pages of this publication, to protect himself from possible claims of anti-Islamic or anti-religious beliefs from religious thinkers within the Ottoman Empire. Additionally he is claiming by writing this article that he then in fact possesses the necessary *sang froid* to write about Islam, implicitly revealing that he then does not count himself as a 'believer' as such.

Rather in his introduction this Positivist intellectual sets himself up as the ideal unbiased insider to present and justify the merits of Islam, not necessarily as a totalizing faith, but as a set of underlying principles that reflect its compatibility with modern civilization, to his European audience.

Ahmed Rıza's aim in his early writings was to stress the value of Islam in its idealized and abstract form and to try and relate the institutions and practices of this Islam to modern Western institutions. He begins his defense by stating that: "Islam created liberty and equality in the East."<sup>144</sup> Like many of the similar treatments of Islam, Ahmed Rıza's approach is highly originalist in the sense that it appeals to Islam in its ideal and original form, stripped of the historical and outside embellishments that have resulted in its corruption. This fact has been noted by Hanioglu, among others, and who note some similarities between the writings of the Young Turks and those of the followers of 'Abduh and al-Afghānī.<sup>145</sup> There is a strong belief that stripped of centuries of decadent developments the basic intellectual framework of Islam would provide a more

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 116.

<sup>145</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 202.

than adequate foundation for modernization. This is supported further on in the article where Ahmed Rıza states that:

*L'Islamisme n'est nullement hostile à la République; au contraire, il ne connaît, en principe, comme chef que celui qui est élu par la décision de l'assemblée nationale (idjma-i-ummet); c'est la dictature la mieux organisée et la plus rapprochée de la République.*

(Islam is by no means hostile to the Republic; on the contrary, it recognizes, in principle, as leader only he who is elected by the decision of the National Assembly (*ijma-i Ummet*); it is the best-organized form of government and the one most similar to the Republic.)<sup>146</sup>

It is quite striking that Ahmed Rıza here reinterprets a thoroughly classical Islamic principle of jurisprudence in a way that speaks to a European audience. For this is not about stitching modern reforms into an Islamic jacket in order that they are accepted by religious conservatives and the ulema at home<sup>147</sup>, but rather to try and reinforce the legitimacy of his civilization and culture in the eyes of Europe.

Although Ahmed Rıza and the majority of Young Turks in Paris at this time saw their vision for the future of the Ottoman Empire in European liberal-democratic terms and in no way sought to return to an early or idealized form of Islamic governance it was vital to stress a connection to an earlier version of these concepts. This early ideal Islam was to remain at a safe chronological distance so that its symbolic power could be effectively drawn upon without being held responsible for any negative aspects of Ottoman society. In doing this, the Young Turks and their fellow Ottoman and Algerian writers were attempting to create a justifiable historical and intellectual link to a form of democratic politics, not

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<sup>146</sup> Ahmed Rıza, *Le Positivisme et l'Islamisme*, 116.

<sup>147</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 201.

unlike Europe's attachment to the political traditions of Greece and Rome. This was extremely important given both the classical tradition's centrality as a model for European political thought at the time, but also the role that classical thought played in contemporary conceptions of the Orient as backwards and degenerate. As early as the eighteenth century the works of classical Greece and Rome were held up against their Eastern counterparts to emphasize the superiority of the Greco-Roman tradition. By the nineteenth century the influence of a classical education allowed the European colonial powers to categorize the Orient as something inherently different and approach it with the confidence that a supposed unbroken ideological and cultural link back to the classical period.<sup>148</sup>

It is certain that Ahmed Rıza would have been aware of the power and importance that the link to classical Greece and Rome held for Europe. Therefore in the article he draws on the power of the early Islamic *ijma al-ummah*, or community consensus, in the same way that European intellectuals drew on the power of the Roman senate or Greek agora. This perceived link was very important and Ahmed Rıza uses it to explain the failure of Catholic missionaries in the Ottoman Empire to make any significant progress with the Muslim population.<sup>149</sup> For Ahmed Rıza Islam the work of Christian missionaries in Ottoman territory was unnecessary and indeed counterproductive as Islam already contained within it the fundamental principles of modern civilization. In

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<sup>148</sup> Toner, Jerry. *Homer's Turk: How Classics Shaped Ideas of the East*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2013, 164. See also Peter E. Pormann, "Classics and Islam: From Homer to al-Qa'ida" in *Journal of the Classical Tradition* (6/2) 2009, 197-233.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*, 117.

his mind a strong Western and secular education program would blend effectively with the fundamental tenants of Islam. The combination of these elements would then lead to a change in the behaviour and outlook of Muslim Ottomans. As he wrote:

*Avec la liberté et une solide instruction laïque dans le monde musulman, on arrivera avec le temps à faire des déistes ou des positivistes, suivant le degré d'intelligence des esprits auxquels on s'adressera, et ces élèves seront tout portés à joindre à leur culture nouvelle la sévère dignité, le respect mutuel et la douceur de mœurs qui caractérisent l'Islam.*

(With freedom and a strong secular education in the Muslim world, we will manage with time to make them deists or positivists, according to the degree of intelligence of the minds which we will address, and these students will be inclined to join to their new culture the serious dignity, mutual respect and gentleness of manners that characterize Islam.)<sup>150</sup>

This was characteristic of Ahmed Rıza's desire to demonstrate through his writings on Islam that it contained the original elements necessary to facilitate modernization along Western democratic lines. Like many Muslim reformers of the time he believed firmly in the power of education to shape the character of a nation.

The method of dealing with Islam in the French-language writings of these individuals conformed to certain structures and tactics. Thus we can see that even writers who were in opposition to each other dealt with Islam in similar ways despite ostensibly holding very different ideas about the road to reform. After a falling out with the Sultan *Mizancı* Murad Bey left the Ottoman Empire for Europe in 1895. Murad Bey initially refused to join the CUP, the main Young Turk organization, but had been known in European circles as a liberal for some

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

time.<sup>151</sup> Murad Bey was also in near constant competition with Ahmed Rıza over the aims and methods of the Young Turks. Unlike Ahmed Rıza, Murad felt that the solution to the current problems in the Ottoman Empire could be solved by foreign intervention by the Great Powers.<sup>152</sup> Murad Bey saw the path to reform in the Ottoman Empire in a very different way than Ahmed Rıza and the motivation for his defense of Islam was clearly in part based on genuine religious devotion.<sup>153</sup> His engagement with Islam in the context of émigré engagement was, however, bound by the same intellectual framework as Ahmed Rıza. Murad Bey sought to both educate and enlist the West with his writing and thus drew on many of the same themes and comparisons as his fellow writers, especially the Islamic past reformulated as an era of liberal democracy.

To highlight this point he again holds the current situation in the Ottoman Empire up to the mirror of a supposed ideal Islamic past. “What has become of this liberal trend of the first Muslims, their civic pride, their independence of spirit?” he asks. ‘What has become of the marvelous harmony of the state of the first Caliphs?’<sup>154</sup> Again, like Ahmed Rıza, Murad draws on the symbolic importance of Islam’s democratic organizing principles and frames them in the language of Western republicanism:

*L’Islam a constitué une société nouvelle sur une base d’égalité parfaite, sans clergé, sans caste, sans classe quelconque de privilégiés. Cependant il n’a pas fermé le champ à ceux qui aspirent à la gloire et aux honneurs.*

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<sup>151</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 77.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 79.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid*, 91.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

(Islam created a new society on the basis of perfect equality, without clergy, without caste, without any privileged class. However, it has not closed the field to those who aspire to glory and honor.)<sup>155</sup>

In his 1895 publication *Le Palais de Yilidiz: Le véritable mal d'Orient* in which he argues for the necessity of returning power to the Sublime Porte at the expense of the Sultan he wrote in no uncertain terms about the role of Islam in the despotism of Sultan Abdülhamid II. In the introduction to this work Murad wrote:

*Avant tout, il faut écarter cette thèse insoutenable que le vice du système gouvernemental actuel viendrait du chef de la religion musulmane.*

(Above all, we must avoid this untenable thesis that the vices of the current governmental system come from the head of the Muslim religion.)<sup>156</sup>

Here Murad implicitly separates the Caliphate from the Sultanate by linking the problems in the Ottoman Empire to Abdülhamid as a temporal ruler, not a spiritual one. Murad refuses to admit that Abdülhamid's identity as a Muslim or as Caliph is responsible for the current governmental dysfunction in the Ottoman Empire:

*Le Coran est d'une admirable éloquence et d'une parfaite clarté dans ses commentaires des principes civilisateurs. Le mal a sa source dans la hiérarchie gouvernementale turque.*

(The Quran is admirably eloquent and perfectly clear in its commentary on civilizing principles. The source of evil is in the Turkish governmental hierarchy.)<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>156</sup> Murad Bey. *Le Palais de Yilidiz: Le véritable mal d'Orient*, 4.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 4-5.

According to Murad it is in spite of and not because of Islam that the Ottoman Empire find itself in such a relatively backward and corrupt position. The fault lies mainly on the shoulders of those in authority whom he sees as not representative of Islam at all. In a second work, entitled *La Force et la Faiblesse de la Turquie* published two years later in 1897, Murad Bey outlined what he saw as the necessity for mutual understanding between Christians and Muslims who, he claims, are not really that different and calls for both groups to “rise above vulgar prejudices and habits of education.”<sup>158</sup> The essence of his defense of Islam in this work can be found in the numbered conclusion where in point number one he declares:

*La religion musulmane n'est pas la cause directe de la faiblesse de l'Empire ottoman; elle ne constitue pas non plus un obstacle à son relèvement.*

(The Muslim religion is not the direct cause of the weakness of the Ottoman Empire; nor does it constitute an obstacle to its recovery.)<sup>159</sup>

Evoking the idealized intellectual character of the Greek city-states and the philosopher king Murad maintains that the palace in early Islamic times was “*le réceptacle de l'intelligence*”, and says that in every aspect of early Islamic court life the ruler was both a *prince politique* and a *prince de la pensée*.<sup>160</sup> Like Ahmed Rıza he wants to highlight the rational and enlightened aspects of early Islam. Again this did not indicate a desire to return to early Islamic norms or to base any future Ottoman government on explicitly Islamic principles. Murad is clear about the failures of the early Islamic state and what he sees as the negative

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<sup>158</sup> Murad Bey, *La Force et la Faiblesse de la Turquie*, 8.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*, 58.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid*.

progression from consultative decision making to the absolute ruler, whether he is a *prince de la pensée* or not. He laments the loss of individuality and the emergence of a culture of servility that the centralization of intellectual life created. For Murad the problem lay in the excessive centralization of intellectual life:

*Tout est devenu « officiel »: la science, les lettres, les arts, même l'amour de la liberté et de l'émancipation intellectuelle reçoivent ce cachet honorifique.*

(Everything has become "official": science, letters, arts, even the love of freedom and of intellectual emancipation receive this honorary stamp.)<sup>161</sup>

The benefits of the receptiveness to intellectual pursuits inherent in Islam could be put to their most effective use under a more enlightened system of government. Murad Bey stresses that the Ottoman Empire is more than capable of reforming and renewing itself and that it simply required a change in government that would be achieved with the assistance of Europe. The constant reiteration of the rational and progressive aspects of Islam sought to indicate to the European reading public that the religion was not a barrier to meaningful reform.

Murad was also highly skeptical of the ways in which the West used Islam as a pretext for a critical or aggressive stance towards the Ottoman Empire. He clearly recognizes the self-interest behind European claim that Islam was a barrier to reform. He highlights the fact that every time there is any resistance to Europeanization in the Ottoman Empire it is always blamed on the fanaticism of

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid, 10.

the people and the *ulama*. This was a crucial aspect of European opposition to Islam, which saw it as animating the backward and reactionary nature of the average Ottoman. Murad sees this as an unfair characterization of the general Ottoman attitude towards reform and emphasizes that:

*Les ulémas n'aiment pas ces imitations serviles de l'Europe exécutées pour le seul plaisir d'imiter.*  
(The *ulama* do not like these slavish imitations of Europe performed only for the sake of imitation.)<sup>162</sup>

This cynical appreciation of the realities of European Great Power politics suggested that Murad conceived of a more popular European audience who, once educated about the realities of Islam and the Ottoman Empire, could serve as a counterweight to their manipulative governments.

When Muslim Ottomans like Ahmed Rıza and Murad Bey called for an understanding between Christians and Muslims they were generally referring to those Christians in Western Europe. The Ottoman Empire, as the publications of many Ottoman Muslim writers pointed out, was very religiously diverse. For some of these non-Muslim Ottoman writers a defense of Islam was inextricably linked to a defense of the Empire. Those non-Muslim writers who believed in maintaining the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire could not ignore its Islamic foundations and character. To admit that Islam was antithetical to civilization and progress would be to admit the impossibility of a workable modern Ottoman state. Thus it became incumbent upon many of these non-Muslim Ottomans to ensure that Islam was perceived as neither more nor less

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 39-40.

amenable to modernity than Christianity or Judaism. In this sense it was not so much a defense of the religion as it was an attempt to make sure that it ceased to be seen as a barrier to reform by Europe. To this end an article appeared in 1899 in the French supplement of the Young Turk paper *Osmanli* entitled *L'esprit liberal de l'Islam* attributed to and presumably written by *Un Chrétien ami de l'Islam*. This article followed many of the well-worn arguments and Ahmed Rıza and Murad Bey in presenting Islam as being at its heart a liberal religion whose liberal spirit represents its true grandeur.<sup>163</sup> The article ascribes the apparent illiberality of certain Islamic rulers to a failure to follow the tenets of original Islam properly. This was a tactic of both the Young Turks and other Ottoman writers as it allowed them to detach their criticism of the regime of Abdülhamid II from a criticism of Islam. The article states forcefully that if the Sultan followed Islam properly he would be the head of liberal believers, a sincere friend of reforms and would respect the rights and religion of all his subjects.<sup>164</sup> The failure to utilize the potential of Islam as a force for the production and dissemination of knowledge is highlighted by referring to the role of earlier Islamic rulers in this process:

*... c'est à lui que l'on doit le merveilleux développement de la civilisation arabe au moyen âge, de cette civilisation qui éclaire l'Europe plongée alors dans la barbarie.*

(... it is to him that we owe the marvelous development of Arab civilization in the Middle Ages, this civilization that illuminated a Europe then plunged into barbarism.)<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> "L'esprit liberal de l'Islam", *Osmanli*, 5 January 1899.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

Not all Ottoman Christian assessments of Islam proved to be so openly favourable. Many Greek and Armenian Christian writers from the Ottoman Empire intensely opposed the Sultan and the pan-Islamic overtones of his reign. Those Greek and Armenian Christians that remained in favour of maintaining the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire felt it necessary to refute European critiques of Islam as they served to undermine an essential aspect of the legitimacy of the state they were trying to preserve. Conversely they needed to make sure that their articles denying the incompatibility of Islam with reform were not construed as being pan-Islamic or pro-Hamidian. The prevalence of separatist and irredentist sympathies among Greek and Armenian Ottomans during this period made it increasingly difficult to balance between the support of Islam required by a pro-Ottoman stance and their desire for secular reform. These writers largely achieved this by dealing with Islam as it existed in a contemporary context rather than as a set of abstract organizing principles and institutions.

In his newspaper *La Turquie Contemporaine* the Ottoman Greek Nicholas Nicolaidis, writing under the pseudonym Demetrius Georgiades, expressed his concern over the growing role that Islam was taking in the government of Abdülhamid II. His writings demonstrate the fine line that he was forced to walk as a pro-Ottoman and non-Muslim opponent of the Hamidian regime who was writing in support of Islam. Like his Muslim counterparts he is quick to emphasize that Islam is at its heart “...une religion très simple, très rationnelle, très peu surnaturelle...” (...a religion that is very simple, very rational, and hardly supernatural) but he is far more concerned with how things work in practice and

the ways in which Islam is used as a basis for government.<sup>166</sup> Nicolaides is intensely suspicious of the growing pan-Islamic character of the Sultan and sees this as a firm barrier to the Ottoman Empire's attempts to modernize. This attitude is similar to that held by many in the West who were wary of the dangers of pan-Islamism. Unlike many of his Western European contemporaries, however, this Ottoman Greek is not anti-Islamic and expresses his admiration for the role that Islam played in the creation and dissemination of knowledge during the Middle Ages. He does not see Islam itself as a barrier to reform but rather the institutionalized version of it promoted by the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II. Nicolaides is sure to draw the distinction between Islam and Islamism in his critique and that it is with Islamism as a formal and institutionalized form of government that the problem exists.<sup>167</sup> He sees much of the Islamic rhetoric coming from the Sultan as largely part of his personal ambition for power but is alarmed by the potential consequences for the Ottoman Empire if this institutional Islamism is taken to its logical conclusion. Nicolaides writes that:

*Et en tant que le Coran est la base, le principe fondamental de l'État, l'Empire ottoman ne pourra jamais se relever pour marcher en harmonie avec le reste des sociétés civilisées.*

(And as long as the Qur'an is the basis, the fundamental principle of the State, the Ottoman Empire will never rise to walk in harmony with the other civilized societies.)<sup>168</sup>

Like many of his Muslim counterparts Nicolaides believed that Islam was not in and of itself antithetical to progress but as the basis for a theocratic state was inherently unsuitable for the modern age. In this belief he mirrored many of his

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<sup>166</sup> D. Georgiades, "La Turquie Contemporaine II", *La Turquie Contemporaine*, 1 May 1891.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

Muslim counterparts who also believed that it was necessary to find a more secular and universal base for the authority of the Ottoman government. In later articles he would call for the separation of the office of Caliph and Sultan and for a formal distinction to be made between spiritual and temporal power.

From a very different segment of the Ottoman Empire's non-Muslim population came a similar assessment of the how the institution of the Caliphate would fit into an Ottoman reform program. This was found in an article entitled *L'avenir de l'Islam* in an 1896 issue of the newspaper *La Jeune Turquie*. The paper would only run for a single issue and was published by the *Comité Turco-Syrien*. This committee whose executive committee was composed of three Arab Christians, including the frequent contributor to Ahmed Rıza's *Mechveret Supplément Français* Halil Ganem and the Lebanese Druze notable Amīr Amīn Arslān, began their activities in Europe around the same time as the Young Turks and would eventually be absorbed into the CUP.<sup>169</sup>

For these authors the issue at hand is Islamism as a political ideology, which they claim is wanton.<sup>170</sup> Like many of their Muslim counterparts the authors claimed that the office of Caliph in Islam conferred no immunity on the holder of that office.<sup>171</sup> Like Nicholaidis these non-Muslim Ottomans want to see the Caliphate detached from the source of political power in the Ottoman Empire. They don't perceive Islam as any sort of barrier to the future progress of the Ottoman Empire. "Is there a way of raising Islam?" they ask. "Without a doubt" they

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<sup>169</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 45.

<sup>170</sup> "L'avenir de l'Islam", *La Jeune Turquie*, 5 June 1896.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

answer. They see in Islam a freedom emanating from a vibrant spirit that is constantly aspiring towards progress.<sup>172</sup> The Caliph for them should remain merely a religious figurehead and for them:

*Si un régime s'adapte au tempérament des Mahométans, et en général de tous les Orientaux, c'est bien le régime parlementaire.*

(If there is a regime adapted to the temperament of Muslims, and all Orientals in general, it is indeed a parliamentary regime.)<sup>173</sup>

In talking of a Muslim or Oriental temperament the authors skillfully avoid the issue of religion and instead alludes to a more general or universal set of shared traits that demonstrate the Ottoman Empire's potential for reform. Thus they carefully discussed the issue of how the Sultan as Caliph would fit into the new political reality they envisioned for the Ottoman Empire.

Abdülhamid's emphasis of his role as both Caliph and Sultan during this period resulted in increased European suspicion surrounding this dual role and its potential impact in the Islamic world. This negative perception was tied to the growing European preoccupation with pan-Islamism and its perceived potential to rally Muslims against colonial occupation. European governments saw the specter of pan-Islamism behind even purely local reactions to imperialism by Muslims.<sup>174</sup> Behind Muslim unrest in the colonies of Europe they saw an "illusory unity of purpose"<sup>175</sup> For Europe pan-Islamism was inextricably linked with the Ottoman Caliphate and Abdülhamid in his role as Caliph. Works such as those by

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Rodinson, 67.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

Gabriel Charmes emphasized the threat that the ideology of pan-Islamism, as encouraged by Abdülhamid in his role as Caliph posed the security of Europe and the stability of her Muslim territories.<sup>176</sup> The specter of Pan-Islamism in the nineteenth century, such as it was, emerged out of the increased politicization of Islam as a response to Western imperialism.<sup>177</sup> Intellectuals like Charmes, however, sought to link this phenomenon specifically with the figure of the Sultan-Caliph.

In response to this perception Ahmed Rıza wrote an article in which he sought to outline the duties of the Caliph and his role in Islamic society. For Ahmed Rıza the Caliph as an Islamic figure occupies the same space in the European imagination as that other exotic Islamic institutions, the palace and the harem that all: "...assume a character that is mysterious and hidden like souvenirs from *A Thousand and One Nights*."<sup>178</sup> Ahmed Rıza acknowledges that man is naturally seduced by the unknown and like many Young Turk writings on Islam from this period this one aims at education and enlightenment. In this article he attempts to separate the perceived absolutism and despotism of Sultan Abdülhamid II from any Islamic underpinning or justification. He writes that the Sultan appears in the West as the holder of total power, absolute master of the lives of his subjects, as a Roman dictator invested with boundless power and from this false conception the Sultan alone benefits.<sup>179</sup> Drawing on an idealized conception of

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<sup>176</sup> Charmes, Gabriel. *L'Avenir de la Turquie, Le Pan-Islamisme*. Paris: Calmann Levy, 1882.

<sup>177</sup> Sendesni, Wajda. "The Young Turks and Arabs in Egypt: Bewteen Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism and Nationalism", in *Penser, agir et vivre dans l'Empire ottoman et en Turquie*. Nathalie Clayer and François Georgeon eds. Paris: Peeters, 2013, 39.

<sup>178</sup> Ahmed Rıza, "Le Calife et ses devoirs", 93.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

the Caliph from the early Islamic period Ahmed Rıza stresses that the role of Caliph in early Islamic society bears little to no resemblance to the autocratic Sultan-Caliph figure of Abdülhamid II. Rather, in this article he claims that he will show the true origins of the Caliphate and reveal the true traditions that it is the Caliph's duty to observe.<sup>180</sup> This follows Ahmed Rıza's previous tendency to stress the value of Islam from an originalist position. He aims to demonstrate that the caliphate as it was originally conceived was an enlightened institution. Crucially as well Ahmed Rıza seeks to describe the Caliphate in the language of liberal democracy.

Ahmed Rıza frames the Caliphate as a limited monarchy in its ideal early Islamic conception. The early Caliph emerges as the enlightened monarch: "...a dictator, freely elected, clothed in absolute power, but accountable to the people."<sup>181</sup> What is important for Ahmed Rıza in this case is that the accountability and limits of the Caliph's power have a thoroughly Islamic basis. He frames the accountability of the Caliph in almost constitutional terms, showing that he was very clearly limited in the exercise of his power by the regulations contained in the Qur'an. The *ulama* are presented as the guardians of these regulations and are empowered to depose him if he strays from the regulations contained in the Qur'an. He also mentions the role of the early Caliphs in spreading and encouraging the study of Roman law and Greek science<sup>182</sup>, which again represents a direct refutation of the belief put forward by Renan that these disciplines flourished despite of Islam not because of it. He also stressed the role

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid, 97.

of the Caliph as the servant of the Muslim community and that no one was compelled to kneel and kiss his feet as they would the Pope.<sup>183</sup> Here Ahmed Rıza is not merely showing that Islam contains concepts within it that resemble those of both classical civilization and modern European civilization, but also that there is an ingrained, latent familiarity with these concepts among Muslims themselves. The practice of the power of a ruler being constrained by the rules contained in a supreme document, such as a constitution, would not be unfamiliar to Muslims in the Ottoman Empire.

In his attempts to fit Islamic political structures into the language of Western constitutional democracy he stresses the deliberative and consultative character of the early Caliphate, mentioning that the Caliph had a duty to consult leading men and scholars before undertaking any major decision.<sup>184</sup> In Ahmed Rıza's conception the Caliph is presented as the thoughtful and restrained classical statesman in contrast to the Western image of Abdulhamid as Oriental despot. He mentions the duty of the Caliph to respect the liberty of his people and to occupy himself with their wants and listen to their demands.<sup>185</sup> The mosque in the early Islamic period becomes a place of reasoned debate, bringing together isolated individuals to multiply the force of Islam. Ahmed Rıza even reframes the ablutions as a merely symbolic preparation:

*...à un office plus noble et plus civique, c'est-à-dire à la délibération publique sur les affaires du pays.*

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, 94.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

(...for a more noble and civic office, that is to say, in public deliberation on the affairs of the country.)<sup>186</sup>

For Ahmed Rıza the fact that Islam, at its roots, encouraged and nurtured an idea of civil society and communal responsibility allowed him to claim a parallel and concurrent connection with the classical virtues that Western Europeans had drawn upon in earnest since the eighteenth century. Just as those in the West “...tried to use the image of Roman republican ideals to establish a more unifying of individual freedom that was not incompatible with the notion of either aristocracy or constitutional monarchy”<sup>187</sup>, Ahmed Rıza drew on similar notions in early Islam. Many in Europe at the time considered Oriental governments as excessively feminized and held themselves and their governments in the Greco-Roman tradition “as possessing the internal moral strength to let public duty prevail over personal desire.”<sup>188</sup> To counter this perception Ahmed Rıza mentions that Mohammed himself consulted his companions, something that was advised by the quintessential eighteenth century enlightenment monarch Frederic the Great.<sup>189</sup> In this sense Ahmed Rıza was trying to insert Islam into the continuity between classical civilization and modern Europe. Islam represented not a break in that chain but an integral part of it with the early Caliph representing and sustaining many of the classical virtues of leadership that were so admired in Europe.

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Toner, *Homer's Turk*, 107.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>189</sup> Ahmed Rıza, “Le Calife et ses devoirs”, 94.

As with other aspects of Islam Ahmed Rıza deals primarily with the early and somewhat idealized conception of the role of Caliph in Islam. He does not address the current Ottoman possession of the Caliphate except to briefly mention that it was Sultan Selim that acquired the title in 1516<sup>190</sup>. This reluctance to discuss at any length the Caliphate as it existed at that time as an institution in the Ottoman can be partly explained by Ahmed Rıza's intentions in writing this article. As has been stated before, while Ahmed Rıza's discussions of Islam in his French-language writings were highly originalist in their emphasis on the purity of early Islamic practices, he was not advocating a return to a state modeled on the early Caliphate. The importance of the early Caliphate for Ahmed Rıza in these early writings is to demonstrate Islamic society's connection to concepts such as individual liberty, representative government and civic virtue. He writes that: "Arab civilization was the sum of individual progress" and the Caliph as enlightened leader was charged with ensuring the safety and independence of individuals.<sup>191</sup> As for the Caliph in his current incarnation Ahmed Rıza states that he now merely a religious figurehead, not unlike the Pope.<sup>192</sup> Ahmed Rıza's vision for the future of the Ottoman Empire was one of constitutional monarchy not a return to the Caliphal authority of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. For him the importance of the early Islamic state and its leader as he presents it is one of intellectual and institutional legacy. To emphasize this point he concludes the article by saying that Islam is not only preoccupied with spiritual matters and that it does not say:

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<sup>190</sup> Finkel, Caroline. *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1923*, 493.

<sup>191</sup> Ahmed Rıza, "Le Calife et ses devoirs", 96.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid*, 97.

*Laissez à César ce qui appartient à César, mais il enseigne à ses adeptes qu'ils ont un devoir civique à remplir ici-bas et notamment celui de contrôler la conduite de César.*

(Leave to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, but it taught its followers that they have a civic duty to perform here, especially that of controlling the conduct of Caesar.)<sup>193</sup>

This statement tries to credit Islam with imbuing its followers with a sense of civic duty, a claim that sought to combat the European belief that the Islamic world was held back by a crushing fatalism, which was directly linked to Islam. In addition to dealing with claims of stagnation brought on by Islamic fatalism a large part of their defense of Islam for both the Ottoman and Algerian writers in this period was focused on dispelling European beliefs concerning its apparent intolerance and fanaticism.

One of the most comprehensive defenses of Islam to emerge in this period was again offered by Ahmed Rıza in a lengthy article for *La Revue Occidentale* published in 1896 entitled *Tolérance Musulmane*. He outlines the aims of his piece quite clearly when he writes:

*Je me propose en écrivant cet article un double but: réfuter, dans l'intérêt de la vérité, l'opinion si généralement accréditée en Europe concernant l'intolérance des musulmans et laver ces derniers de l'accusation plus ou moins intéressée d'avoir exécuté par fanatisme religieux les récents massacres en Orient.*

(I propose for myself in writing this article a double goal: to refute, in the interest of truth, the opinion so generally given credence in Europe concerning the intolerance of Muslims and to wash them of the more or less self-serving accusation of having committed the recent massacres in the East through religious fanaticism.)<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>194</sup> Ahmed Rıza, "Le Tolérance Musulmane", in *La Revue Occidentale*, Tome VI. Paris: Société Positiviste, 1896, 304

For Ahmed Rıza the article serves a purpose both universal and immediate. In his role as an Ottoman intellectual he seeks to challenge and correct European beliefs about the inherent fanaticism and backwardness of Islam and as an activist he seeks to ensure that Islam is not blamed for the current sectarian conflicts in the Ottoman Empire. In the article Ahmed Rıza challenges the West for its inaccurate portrayal of Islam as an inherently fanatical religion that is inherently anti-modern.

To make his argument Ahmed Rıza uses the example of Algeria and claims that:

*Je montrerai ensuite les nobles qualités des populations musulmanes que la France a sous sa dépendance, et qui ont pris leur germe dans la religion islamique.*

(I will then show the noble qualities of the Muslim populations that France has under its control, and which took their root in the Islamic religion.)<sup>195</sup>

As in many of his other writings the focus is on emphasizing the specific strengths of Islam and its suitability to modernization. However the way in which he goes about this differs. He doesn't attempt to recast these "noble qualities of France's Muslim population that took root in Islam" in liberal democratic terms. Instead he attacks French antipathy towards Islam on theological, rather than intellectual grounds. His defense of Islam too is largely rooted in a combination of Islamic principles and historical and contemporary examples. This marks a change from his previous defenses, which tended to combine an appeal to Islamic principles that were then repackaged in liberal-democratic terms. This could partially be explained by the way that this article

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

makes us of the example of the French in Algeria, which necessitated a defense that was less abstract.

He is not openly critical of the French occupation of Algeria, but dismisses the idea that the Arabs of Algeria were resistant to modern ideas and could not be assimilated.<sup>196</sup> As in his earlier writings he sees the primary reason for the current antagonism between the French and their Muslim Algerian subjects as being a lack of knowledge about the realities of Islam. He mentions that:

*Dans ces derniers temps seulement et depuis Jules Ferry surtout, on a commencé à étudier sérieusement les Arabes, à s'intéresser à leurs mœurs et à leur caractère, au point de vue d'un rapprochement avec la métropole.*

(Only in recent times and mainly since Jules Ferry, we have begun to seriously study the Arabs, to have an interest in their manners and their character, from the point of view of a rapprochement with the urban center.)<sup>197</sup>

In his role as a writer in conversation with a European audience Ahmed Rıza sees himself as a participant in this effort to engender political change through writing. However, the targets of his attempt to explain Islam are not to be found within the pages of *La Revue Occidentale*. Ahmed Rıza sees the main drivers of anti-Islamic feeling in Algeria as being:

*...les commerçants, les industriels, les exploiters de toute sorte, aux allures hautaines et au langage dédaigneux, blessent ces fières populations, pendant que les missionnaires heurtent leurs sentiments religieux, en affectant de considérer leurs croyances comme des erreurs.*

(The businessmen, the industrialists, all sorts of exploiters, with their haughty manner and snobbish speech, harm these proud populations, while the missionaries affront their religious sentiments, feigning to consider their beliefs as errors.)<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

He believes education is a major element of reform in Algeria as in the Ottoman Empire and sees a lack of knowledge of about Islam and its principles as being a major obstacle to meaningful progress for France's Muslim Algerian subjects. Ahmed Rıza implores his French readers to be patient in dealing with a people with such proud and glorious traditions and that successful governance of Algeria depends on mutual understanding and knowledge.<sup>199</sup> This firm belief in the power of education to strip away the layers of superstition, combat ignorance and reveal a core set of Islamic principles perfectly compatible with modern civilization was frequently repeated by Young Algerians as their output increased in the early twentieth century. Like Ahmed Rıza they saw as means of offering proof that it was ignorance and not Islam that was the cause of the perceived backwardness of the Islamic world.

Ahmed Rıza is deeply critical of the prevailing European tendency at the time of ascribing the cause of every conflict or disturbance in the East to Islam. He claims that Europeans blame Muslim fanaticism for every instance of violence between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire and points out that the same reasoning is never applied to violence within predominantly Christian countries.<sup>200</sup> For Ahmed Rıza the situation in Algeria provided a useful case study with which to lead into a more general discussion of Islam and to make his case that Islam cannot be blamed for recent massacres of non-Muslims in the Eastern Ottoman Empire. He accuses the West of taking advantage of the recent disorders in Turkey and to use them as evidence of Islam's anti-modern nature

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid, 304-05.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid, 305.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

when it is clear in Ahmed Rıza's mind that the problem lies with the current government.<sup>201</sup> Ahmed Rıza of course accepts that fanaticism can be a feature of any religion but stresses that it is an aberration and not a condition that is inherently linked to Islam. Similar attempts to counter claims of Muslim fanaticism appear in another article by Ahmed Rıza in which he says that if Muslim Turks were actually serious about exterminating the infidels they would have done it after the conquest of Constantinople rather than allowing the conquered Byzantine Greeks to keep their religion, language and schools.<sup>202</sup> For Ahmed Rıza the supposed barbarity and intolerance of Muslims is not borne out by history. By claiming that missionaries are doing more harm than good in the Ottoman Empire he is again stressing that Islam alone will not prevent the Ottomans from becoming a modern nation.

For Ahmed Rıza a discussion of the roots of French antipathy towards Islam offers an indication of the shift in argument that emerges in this article. To understand this shift it is important to acknowledge that locates this antipathy in the Middle Ages (*Ces préjugés, ces préventions injustes datent du moyen Âge*).<sup>203</sup> Ahmed Rıza writes of anti-Islamic prejudice as being something that is deeply rooted in Christian nations and as something that will not be eliminated overnight.<sup>204</sup> What is so important about this article is that it Ahmed Rıza is reluctant to acknowledge the many modern attacks against Islam as a belief system that were currently in circulation, such as those by Renan and Charmes,

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid, 306.

<sup>202</sup> Ahmed Rıza, "Les Missionnaires en Turquie", in *La Revue Occidentale* Tome III, 1899, 129-30.

<sup>203</sup> Ahmed Rıza, "Le Tolérance Musulmane", 306.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

and instead focuses on anti-Islamic feeling as the result of the ignorance, in his mind maintained primarily by Christianity, of the common people. In fact at a later point in the article Ahmed Rıza would use Renan's work to his own advantage by including a lengthy quote from his *L'Islamisme et la Science* to provide: "...a striking example of freedom of thought and religious tolerance that Muslims agreed to even at the height of their greatness."<sup>205</sup> This approach reflects both Ahmed Rıza's faith in an enlightenment defense of Islam as well as his elitist beliefs, underpinned by his reading of the work of French sociologist Gustave Le Bon, about the dangers of the people (*la foule*) and the need for elite leadership.<sup>206</sup> He writes glowingly about how the prejudices of the Middle Ages were attacked by the efforts of the great writers (*grands écrivains*) of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but laments that:

*Malheureusement ces écrivains, dont le nom est cependant si souvent prononcé, ne sont plus guère lus aujourd'hui, et la foule continue toujours à juger d'après le témoignage de prêtres militants qui ont intérêt à dissimuler ou à fausser la vérité.*

(Unfortunately these writers, whose names are yet so often mentioned, are hardly read today, and the crowd continues to judge them by the testimony of militant priests who are interested in concealing or distorting the truth.)<sup>207</sup>

For Ahmed Rıza it is the easily misled masses that are the main source of anti-Islamic feeling and further blames certain journals and newspapers which have an interesting spreading these beliefs.<sup>208</sup> For him it seems that this antipathy must have a religious rather than an intellectual root. Conversely, as mentioned above, his defense in many rests largely on asserting Islam's superiority over

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid, 314.

<sup>206</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 206.

<sup>207</sup> Ahmed Rıza, "Le Tolérance Musulmane", 305.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

Christianity as a belief system best suited for the practical application of its principles in the real world. He accomplishes this, as was mentioned, by relying heavily on theological and historical examples from Islam and makes frequent use of the ignorant European as a straw man to advance his arguments.

Ahmed Rıza accuses the West of being naïve for thinking that such a large gulf separates them from the East. He writes:

*On constate aujourd'hui que l'Occident est plus ou moins débarrassé des querelles religieuses et des luttes violentes qu'engendre le fanatisme, et la foule en conclut volontiers qu'il en a toujours été ainsi.*

(Today we note that the West is more or less free from the religious strife and violent struggles engendered by fanaticism, and the crowd willingly concludes that it has always been so.)<sup>209</sup>

While still addressing a fundamentally intellectual audience within the pages of a European journal Ahmed Rıza seems more intent on reiterating the ignorance of the masses (*la foule*) than trying to portray Islam in a classical or liberal-democratic light. At one point when discussing the foundation of Islam he does mention that Mohammed was also inspired by: “...*des antiques traditions romaines dans la constitution des ses lois religieuses et civiles...*”<sup>210</sup> He claims that for the masses history is a dead letter and that they know nothing of the past.<sup>211</sup> Additionally he accuses them of interpreting events in the Christian and Islamic worlds based on their own religious prejudices and not by a rational analysis of the facts.

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid, 306.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, 307.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid, 306.

This belief in the ignorance of the masses underpins the main body of the text, which seeks through historical example to demonstrate Islam's tolerance and relative liberalism. Ahmed Rıza does not rely on the same overt comparisons to the classical period as he does in his other writings, but one underlying theme that remains is the emphasis placed on Islam as being a part of the upward progression of history.<sup>212</sup> In discussing the Islam from a historical point of view Ahmed Rıza touches upon themes common to many writing about Islam in the period, such as the historical context of early jihad, the tolerance and liberality of Muslim rulers in Baghdad and Spain and the sack of Jerusalem as an example of Christian fanaticism.<sup>213</sup> This broad treatment then moves quickly into a discussion of the Ottoman Empire. As was seen in Chapter 1 it was important for the Ottoman writers to link their civilization to certain aspects of early or Golden Age Islamic civilization while at the same time stressing the Empire's particular virtues. Ahmed Rıza sums this up when he says:

*Si les Turcs n'ont pas continué la tradition de la civilisation arabe, ils n'ont pas moins été imprégnés des idées morales que Mahomet avait semées dans tout l'Orient.*

(If the Turks have not continued the tradition of Arab civilization, they were nevertheless imbued with the moral ideas that Mohammed planted throughout the East.)<sup>214</sup>

He goes on to stress the Islamic roots of more modern developments in the Ottoman Empire, such as the Tanzimat reforms of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid, 309.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid, 309-312.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid, 314-315.

stresses the degree of toleration that the Ottoman government has for its non-Muslim subjects.<sup>215</sup>

It is also telling that the source material for his arguments tends to be exclusively European. In fact other than direct quotations from the Qur'an Ahmed Rıza does not employ any other Islamic sources in this article. This can largely be explained by the particular context in which he was writing and in many cases he employs these authors precisely to assure his readers of his lack of bias. For example when discussing the relative tolerance of the Ottoman state towards non-Muslims he writes that:

*Voltaire, qui n'est pas suspect de partialité à l'égard des Turcs, reconnaît cependant qu'ils usèrent à toute époque de la plus large tolérance envers les chrétiens.*<sup>216</sup>

(Voltaire, who is not suspected of partiality towards the Turks, recognises however that they showed in every era the greatest tolerance towards the Christians.)

Ahmed Rıza ultimately concludes that a combination of a weak government and foreign interference were responsible for the recent massacres in the Eastern Ottoman Empire and not Islam. Religion is detached from the historical and political context of the Ottoman Empire, but only to the extent that it furthers his argument. For Ahmed Rıza there is a clear distinction between the present and the early Islamic period when it comes to the role of religion in society. While the tolerance of eleventh century Spain can be comfortably brought forward as an example of the tolerance of Islam, the problems ongoing in the Ottoman Empire can be traced only to a series of secular causes. This approach would also be

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid, 315.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

utilized by Algerian writers, who were trying to navigate a defense of Islam within a colonial context.

For Algerians during this period a strong defense of Islam was likewise of paramount importance in their efforts to secure legitimacy in the eyes of Europe. The Young Algerians, like their Ottoman counterparts, were trying in their French language writings to mount a defense of Islam in order to correct what they saw as European misconceptions, especially those held by the strongly anti-Islamic French Algerian *colons*. They also hoped to appeal to the more enlightened sections of French intellectual life in the capital and to justify Islam's worthiness as a basis for modern civilization. Like the Ottomans they were keen to show that full integration into the European state-system, in this case the extension of French citizenship, did not require the abandonment or suppression of their religion. In the Young Algerian newspaper *El Hack*<sup>217</sup> in an article urging the French government to work towards further integration for the indigenous Muslim population the author writes that:

*La science, la philosophie, la médecine, l'astronomie, autant de mystères ont été légués aux infidèles par le peuple de Mahomet, peuple dont la splendeur rayonnait sur tout l'univers et qui au Moyen-Age avait atteint l'apogée de sa gloire et de sa magnificence.*

(Science, philosophy, medicine, astronomy; many mysteries were bequeathed to the infidels by the people of Muhammad, people whose splendor shone all over the world and in the Middle Ages had reached the height of its glory and magnificence.)<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> *El Hack* was founded and published in Bône in 1893 and was shut down by administrative decree in 1894. It reappeared in 1911 in Oran and ran until 1914. In its second incarnation it was largely opposed to the assimilationist program of the Young Algerians and were opposed to naturalization as French citizens.

<sup>218</sup> Zeïd ben Dieb, "En Avant", *El Hack*, 10 September 1893.

This reference to the glories of the *Moyen-Age* follows the script laid out by the Ottomans in their publications. Unlike their Ottoman counterparts, however, the Young Algerians did not draw on the past examples of Islam's role in intellectual development in order to advocate for a return to an originalist form of Islam, but rather to show that Islam contained the necessary elements for modernity. This was a defense born out of a desire to participate fully in French Algerian society. There was a need for legitimacy and an acknowledgement of Islam's role in the creation and evolution of 'modern' civilization. Like his counterpart in *Osmanli* the author explains why this appreciation of Islam's role in the transfer and production of knowledge is important:

*Parce que c'est nous qui avons été les civilisateurs et c'est nous qui, les premiers, avons donné l'exemple aux peuples barbares qui maintenant, hélas! Nous laissent bien loin derrière eux.*  
(Because it is we who were the civilizers and it is we who were the first to have set an example for the barbarians who now, alas! Leave us far behind.)<sup>219</sup>

Among both the Ottomans and the Algerians there is a palpable regret that the current relative state of Islamic civilization has made European observers wrongly credit Islam for the cause of that reality. As was addressed in the previous chapter there was a fixation on the decline of Islamic civilization relative to the rise of Europe in the writings of the Ottoman and Algerian writers. A part of combating this perception of decline was to counter the newer forms of anti-Islamic rhetoric coming from Europe that were cloaked in the language of science and rational thought. *El Hack* objected strongly to these new scientific explanations for the current state of Islamic civilization.

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

In an article entitled *Le Mektoub* the anonymous author addresses the fact that for many years scholars have approached the apparent fatalism of the Arabs as condition inextricably linked to Islam and, according to the author, given the name *fatum mahoméтанum*.<sup>220</sup> He complains that this theory has been easily and blindly accepted by Europe along with the belief that Islam prohibits all progress, suppresses science and destroys civilization. In fact, as the author says, Islam is presented as being essentially non-human leading Europeans to believe that:

*...en un mot, ceux qui oseraient la pratiquer ne seraient pas des êtres humains, mais de véritables brutes.*

(... In a word, those who would practice it are not human beings, but total brutes.)<sup>221</sup>

It has become, in the author's mind, far too easy for Europe to find in Islam the cause for the various ills afflicting the Islamic world. He says that the decline of Arab civilization into decadence was not because the Arabs were prevented from developing due to their fatalist Islamic character "but for other reasons that all the world knows".<sup>222</sup> The article closes with an exhortation to Muslim Algerians to rise up, reclaim their rightful place and throw off European perceptions of fatalistic lethargy.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Nouredin, "Le Mektoub", *El Hack*, 28 October 1893.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

### **Correcting the Orientalists: 1902-1908**

The period from 1902-1908 saw a shift in the numbers and focus of many Ottoman French-language journals. Many, such as *Le Croissant*, *Le Libérale Ottoman* and *La Turquie Contemporaine* had long ceased publication. The vast majority of the remaining Ottoman French language journals were dealing primarily with more immediate topics, such as separatism, political violence and the influence of the various Great Powers. In the major remaining French-language Young Turk journal, Ahmed Rıza's *Mechvéret*, the topics definitely turned more towards politics and issues concerning the Great Powers and conflict among the various minority groups in the Ottoman Empire.

It was clear however, that some in the Ottoman community still felt that the subject of Islam was important enough to necessitate further explanation to a European audience. This came in the form of Ahmed Rıza's work entitled *La Crise de l'Orient: Ses Causes et ses Remèdes* published in 1907 in which he sought to systematically dismantle European beliefs about Islamic practices and institutions and their ascribed role in the apparent decline of the Ottoman Empire. Around the same time the Algerian writer Ismael Hamet published his work on the history of the Islamic Maghreb, which also devoted considerable space to refuting negative perceptions of Islam. A third significant work that would be published in this period was entitled *L'Esprit Libéral du Coran*, by Abdelaziz Thaalbi (1876-1944), a Tunisian writer and politician who would go on to found the Destour Party in the interwar period.

The way that these authors approached Islam was in many ways determined by the context in which they were writing, but both reflected their positions as writers engaged in conversation with a European audience. These authors relied on a combination of European scholars and Islamic sources to bolster their arguments. Additionally they presented themselves as insiders who could provide an authentic perspective on Islam and Islamic society and in some cases they simply sought to provide an authentic interpretation of existing European writings on Islam.

What primarily sets these works apart from each other is the differing goals of the respective authors. Ahmed Rıza was seeking to refute European prejudices about Islam in part to justify the Ottoman Empire's ability to operate on the same level as other European states. Ismael Hamet on the other hand was working from within a French colonial context to argue for the possibility of integration and equality without the renunciation of Islamic status.<sup>225</sup> Abdelaziz Thaalbi was similarly eager to demonstrate the compatibility of Islam with modernity. Ismael Hamet, unlike his Ottoman, and especially Young Turk, counterparts was not defending Islam in order to legitimate a future reinvigorated state, but rather to show that Islam is not fundamentally incompatible with French republicanism. An analysis of these works will demonstrate some of the diversity of within defenses of Islam, but also the similarities in style and structure that this form of intellectual engagement involved.

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<sup>225</sup> Zack, Lizabeth. "French and Algerian Identity Formation in 1890's Algiers", *French Colonial History*, 1/2 (2002), 115-143.

Ahmed Rıza's 1907 work *La Crise de l'Orient: Ses Causes et ses Remèdes* was published in the same year as the Congress of Ottoman Opposition Parties in Paris and not long before the start of Young Turk Revolution in 1908. It was published by the official Young Turk organization, the Committee of Union and Progress, and is a more deliberate and polemical work than many of Ahmed Rıza's earlier writings. *La Crise de l'Orient* is an explicit attempt to communicate to a European audience the inaccuracy of their commonly held beliefs about Ottoman society and Islamic society more broadly, although the two in this work are generally held to be synonymous. Ahmed Rıza is adamant in his introduction that those who want clearly to understand the affairs of Turkey: "...will not be afraid to refuse to lend a sympathetic ear to the voice of a Turk."<sup>226</sup> Like his Algerian contemporary Ismael Hamet, Ahmed Rıza had great faith in the combination of rational analysis and insider perspective. This belief is reinforced when he states that most foreigners who have visited the Orient: "...collect only incomplete information."<sup>227</sup> He positions himself as one who will provide Europe with the correct information about Islam and the Ottoman Empire to counter the "handful of unscrupulous writers" who have sought to intentionally mislead their audiences.<sup>228</sup> Like his earlier works it is focused on educating a European audience. Despite being a much more overtly political publication than his writings for *La Revue Occidentale* it is still primarily an intellectual discussion of Islam and Islamic society with the aim of legitimating both.

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<sup>226</sup> Rıza, Ahmed. *La Crise de l'Orient: Ses Causes et ses Remèdes*, 1.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid, 2.

The work is comprised of refutations of negative European perceptions of various elements of Ottoman society and Islam in general. The main body of the text takes the form of eleven chapters dealing with a specific aspect of Eastern or Islamic society. These can be most succinctly divided into psychological/theological topics such as fatalism, intolerance and fanaticism, and institutional or ideological topics such as pan-Islamism, the Caliphate and Holy War. The final chapter deals with the Turks, acknowledging the racial nature of a great deal of European prejudice towards non-Western people as well as the growing increasingly Turco-centric worldview of the CUP at this time. This can also be seen by the frequent substitution in the text of the word “Turk” for the word “Ottoman”, which can be partially explained by Ahmed Rıza’s developing belief that those elements most interested in maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Empire are Turks.<sup>229</sup> The text’s body chapters offer a fairly comprehensive list of the topics most commonly addressed by writers when dealing with Islam.<sup>230</sup>

In his introduction Ahmed Rıza declares that Islam cannot simply be dismissed as a backwards and pre-modern religion. He states that: “Islam is not simply a religion in the vulgar sense of the word; it is at the same time a moral and civil code.”<sup>231</sup> As in his earlier writings Ahmed Rıza does not see Islam as in itself inimical to progress. He stresses that given the Islam’s prevalence and role in the Ottoman Empire the aim should not be its removal, but rather refashioning. For

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<sup>229</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, 299.

<sup>230</sup> The full chapter list in order is as follows: *Islam, Fatalism, The Caliphate, The Dual Powers of the Sultan, Pan-Islamism, Holy War, Fanaticism, Inequality, Intolerance, The Harem and Polygamy, The Turks.*

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

Ahmed Rıza the spreading of information about Islam to a European audience is an integral part of its evolution and adaptation to modern needs (*aux nécessités modernes*).<sup>232</sup> What is most important about the introduction to *La Crise de l'Orient* is that it explicitly draws attention to Ahmed Rıza's perception of himself as being uniquely positioned to comment on topics such as Islam. As was seen in Chapter 1, there is a palpable feeling of dismay on the part of Ahmed Rıza that the history of the Turks, as it is known in Europe, is largely a synthesis of the writings of European diplomats.<sup>233</sup> He writes in more general terms that:

*Un Anglais ne peut pas sentir comme un Arabe. La conscience et la mentalité d'un Russe ne se substitueront jamais à celles d'un Turc.*

(An Englishman cannot feel like an Arab. The mind and mentality of a Russian can never replace those of a Turk.)<sup>234</sup>

*La Crise de l'Orient* opens with a short description of the current situation in the Ottoman Empire. This section repeats earlier statements from both Ahmed Rıza and Murad Bey that Islam cannot be blamed for the injustices and absolutism of Sultan Abdulhamid and writes that: "Justice is also as much a myth for the Christians as for the Muslims."<sup>235</sup> In the short first chapter on Islam Ahmed Rıza reflects on the way that Islam remains a focal point in European assessments of Ottoman society. He repeats his belief that among European writers Islam is blamed for all of the shortcomings and evils in the Islamic world and states that:

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid, 6-7.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, 8.

*Partant de cette conviction absolue, toutes recherches nouvelles leurs paraissent superflues, sinon gênantes.*

(From this absolute conviction, all new research seems to them superfluous, if not harmful).<sup>236</sup>

This statement is especially important as it reflects Ahmed Rıza's claim to be writing from a privileged position. He discounts both the blatantly anti-Islamic writings of more conservative European writers, but also the work of those he sees as coming from a strong liberal background, but who nonetheless see in Islam an insurmountable barrier to progress.<sup>237</sup> Ahmed Rıza criticizes those 'eminent writers of the West' (*éminents écrivains de l'Occident*) who, convinced that all progress in the West occurred despite Christianity and the Church attempt to apply this same reasoning to the East and Islam.<sup>238</sup> Rather he reserves his praise for those European scientists who have studied the foundations of the social order in Turkey and "recognize the absurdity of these insinuations."<sup>239</sup> Ahmed Rıza sees himself in the company of these rational and methodical interpreters of Islam and Islamic societies. His position as rationalist and insider, an identity also claimed by his Algerian contemporary Ismael Hamet, is a key element to his projection of the realities of Islam back to Europe.

Ahmed Rıza sees an obvious political motivation behind the refusal of Europeans to acknowledge the contributions that Islam in the past has made to the

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

intellectual, moral and material development of both the East and the West.<sup>240</sup>

He also points out that:

*L'Europe se garde bien de faire, surtout dans les milieux musulmans, l'apologie de cette civilisation.*  
(Europe is careful, especially in Muslim circles, to make an apology for this civilization.)<sup>241</sup>

The reason for this reluctance, for Ahmed Rıza, can be found in Europe's fear that any open acknowledgement of the positive aspects of Islam and its contributions to civilization would incite the various Muslims under European control to rise up and question Europe's supposed supremacy over them.<sup>242</sup> Here we can see a shift in tone from his earlier writings, which sought to gently combat a genuine ignorance about Islam and Islamic societies to a much more adversarial approach intent on exposing European hypocrisy and self-interest. This shift is reflected in the format of Ahmed Rıza's discussion of Islam and its defense. There is a move away from discussions of Islam as a belief system and organizing force in an abstract sense. Instead the discussion is rooted firmly in the pragmatic defense of Islamic institutions as they exist in the Ottoman Empire. As Ahmed Rıza writes:

*En tout cas, dans l'Islamisme, ce ne sont pas la foi et le culte qui sont le plus attaqués, mais les institutions politico-religieuses ou des pratiques qui en découlent.*  
(In every case, in Islam, it is not belief and worship that are the most attacked, but the politico-religious institutions or the practices that result from them.)<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid, 14-15.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

In two chapters<sup>244</sup> Ahmed Rıza returns to the subject of the Caliphate, a subject that he had covered before in *La Revue Occidentale*. These chapters are especially important as they highlight a shift in the way he defends and legitimizes Islam in the face of changing contextual circumstances. As in this earlier article Ahmed Rıza acknowledges the singular importance that that Caliphate as an Islamic institution has in the eyes of the West.<sup>245</sup> Unlike his previous treatment, however, these chapters reflect an approach to the Caliphate more rooted in its contemporary form than in an idealized past.

The aim of the chapters is still decidedly educational, but the focus on the Caliphate as it currently exists in the Ottoman Empire altered the ways in which Ahmed Rıza seeks to explain and legitimate the institution. This work was intended to function as a more direct piece of propaganda for the CUP. Its intended audience remained largely the same as Ahmed Rıza's previous writings, but its intended purpose, as a publication that aimed to legitimate Ottoman and Islamic society, necessitated a more contemporary approach its topics.

This approach is evident from the way in which Ahmed Rıza treats negative European perceptions of the Caliph as like: "*...une sorte de dictateur romain investi d'une autorité sans bornes.*" (...a type of Roman dictator invested with boundless authority.)<sup>246</sup> In a reversal of his previous tactics Ahmed Rıza refutes a classical comparison made by Europeans. Rather than address these critiques by attempting to portray Caliphal authority in classical or more modern liberal-

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<sup>244</sup> *Le Khalifat and Les deux pouvoirs du Sultan.*

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

<sup>246</sup> Rıza, Ahmed. *Le Calife et ses Devoirs*, 93.

democratic terms Ahmed Rıza instead attacks the hypocrisy of the West in its singular obsession with this particular Islamic institution. He draws attention to the West's error in thinking that the titles usually attributed to the Caliph, such as the Deputy of God on Earth (*Ombre de Dieu sur la terre*) and Head of the Believers/Leader of the Faith (*Chefs de Croyants*) are somehow the sole property of Oriental monarchs.<sup>247</sup>

To support this claim Ahmed Rıza mentions several European thinkers, such as Bossuet, Fenelon and Hobbes, and reflects on their views on the relationship between God and kingship. He then goes on to highlight the religious titles held by a variety of reigning European monarchs, including England and Austria, in order to expose the belief in Europe that: “...*le chimère du droit divin n'est plus de notre temps.*” (...the chimera of divine right is no longer of our time.)<sup>248</sup> Ahmed Rıza counters claims that the problem lay in the Sultan's role as Caliph and its impact on the Sultan's non-Muslim subjects by pointing out that the English King Edward VII ruled as a Christian monarch over India.<sup>249</sup> In this way Ahmed Rıza has moved from an attempt to legitimize the Caliphate in Classical or Western terms towards a strategy of contemporary comparison. He instead is acknowledging that the Caliphate is no better or worse than comparable rulers across Europe.

A defense rooted in contemporary comparison and pragmatic realities continues in the second chapter of Ahmed Rıza's discussion of the Caliphate. This chapter,

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<sup>247</sup> Rıza, Ahmed. *La Crise de l'Orient: Ses Causes et ses Remèdes*, 19-20.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid*, 20.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid*.

*Les deux pouvoirs du Sultan*, focuses more explicitly on the contemporary situation and the function of the Caliphate as an Islamic institution within the Ottoman Empire. Discussion of the role of the Caliphate in the contemporary Ottoman context is underpinned, as in his previous article, by the assertion that Islam is not merely a supernatural (*supraterrestre*) religion.<sup>250</sup> Ahmed Rıza repeats the historical conception of the Caliph as a balancing force and that his power is technically limited by the fundamental laws of Islam and the Ulema. As he writes: “*Son pouvoir a des bornes comme celui d’un empereur constitutionnel...*” (His power has limits like those of a constitutional emperor...) <sup>251</sup> However this comparison is not intended to imbue the Ottoman Caliphate in its current form with a set of Classical or liberal-democratic qualities.

In this section Ahmed Rıza is much more concerned with addressing European concerns over the Ottoman Caliphate, in so far as it represents an office combined with that of the Sultan, as an example of Islamic absolutism. He writes that:

*J’examinerai dans la seconde partie de cette étude comment ces principes ont été violés et comment la confusion des deux genres de pouvoir en une même personnalité fut un instant plutôt nuisible qu’utile au progrès.*

(I will discuss in the second part of this study how these principles have been violated and how the confusion of two kinds of power in the same personality was more harmful to progress than it was useful.)<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> Ibid, 21. See also Ahmed Rıza, *Le Calife et ses Devoirs*, 98.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid, 23.

Ahmed Rıza seeks in this section to acknowledge the deficiencies of the Ottoman Caliphate in its current form while maintaining that these deficiencies are not the result of Islam as an organizing principle. His goal is to separate the original principles of the Caliphate, which he sees as ultimately beneficial, from the way that the institution has evolved within the Ottoman context. In his mind it is wrong to confuse these two aspects of the Caliphate and to use this as a justification for its abolition.<sup>253</sup> As shall be demonstrated in Chapter 4 Ahmed Rıza's discussion of the Caliphate is rooted firmly in the context of reform, reflecting the consolidation and growing activism of the Young Turk movement during this period. The Caliph and the concern that it aroused in the minds of Europeans was of course inextricably linked to another source of anxiety for Europeans *vis-à-vis* the Ottoman Empire: the ideology of pan-Islamism.

In the beginning of his discussion of pan-Islamism Ahmed Rıza attempts to assuage European fears of Muslim political unity against Europe. He offers a quote from the Quran describing the common goal for Muslims of the creation of a fraternal society, but frames this in universal and humanistic terms. For Ahmed Rıza the unity promoted by Islam amongst believers is simply an aspect of a broader unity amongst mankind. The promotion of unity is, for this reason, a common feature of all religions.<sup>254</sup> The nature of Islam, in his mind, is simply more suited to the extension and maintenance of these links and connections than other faiths. Ahmed Rıza mentions that the unity between Muslims is not

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid, 28.

merely theological, but also signifies social obligation.<sup>255</sup> In this way he is emphasizing the diffuse and communal nature of these obligations while at the same time attempting to lessen the role of any central politico-religious authority, such as the Caliph, in directing or encouraging them.

Ahmed Rıza's discussion of pan-Islamism in this case displays a reluctance to engage overtly with the actual substance of European fears of Muslims acting as a united political bloc under the direction of the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph. He mentions that while it is technically the duty of the Caliph to rally the believers under the sacred flag (*drapeau sacerdotal*), it was rare for any Caliph to perform this task in a sensible or practical way.<sup>256</sup> He addresses pan-Islamism largely in doctrinal and social terms and not as a political ideology. He seeks in this way to reframe the debate, which gives his defense a much greater strength by avoiding engagement with any of pan-Islamism's more challenging criticisms.

Ahmed Rıza sets the terms of his discussion by framing pan-Islamism in relatively benign terms as merely the spread of Islam in places such as Africa and East Asia. He points to Islam's decentralized nature as evidence that the religion's spread in these regions is not underpinned by any nefarious political aims. He writes:

*En réalité, les Turcs n'ont jamais cherché à faire de la propagande religieuse, ni à organiser une lutte contre la Chrétienté. L'Islamisme se propage de bouche en bouche, par simple contact individuel.*

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid, 29.

(In reality the Turks have never sought to spread religious propaganda or to organize a struggle against Christianity. Islam is spread from mouth to mouth, by simple individual contact.)<sup>257</sup>

Rather than address criticisms of pan-Islamism as an overt political issue, Ahmed Rıza works instead to portray the spread of Islam and any links to the Ottoman Empire as ultimately beneficial for Europe. To arrive at this conclusion he makes the argument that Islam provides the ideal transition state for those *fétichistes* under French or British control in Africa. He attempts to assuage European concerns that the spread of Islam and the strengthening of Islamic networks in Africa will result in colonial subjects becoming haughty, proud or rebellious (*hautain, fier, insoumis*).<sup>258</sup> Ahmed Rıza makes the argument that the conversion of polytheistic indigenous colonial populations to Islam would in many ways be preferable to direct conversion to Christianity. He uses the example of both the indigenous populations of North America and those Sub-Saharan Africans who had converted to Christianity and claims that had they converted to Islam they might have avoided the alcoholism and abject poverty to which many succumbed.<sup>259</sup> He argues that moving from a rudimentary society to an advanced society requires caution. In Ahmed Rıza's opinion Islam alone lay the ground for this transition to modern civilization.<sup>260</sup> In fact, he asks, if the principles of fraternity and solidarity are inscribed on the base of all modern civilization then surely we must esteem a doctrine that loudly proclaims them as a social necessity.<sup>261</sup> Finally he makes the argument that practiced properly and with

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid, 31-32.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

tolerance the spread of Islam will in fact bind the diverse groups of these territories together and:

*...aplanir les différends qui existent parmi eux, contribuant ainsi à assurer l'ordre – base de tout progrès.*

(...smooth out the differences that exist between them, thus contributing to assuring order – the foundation of all progress.)<sup>262</sup>

In this section Ahmed Rıza offers an uncharacteristically pragmatic defense of Islam and one that seems to be at odds with his professed anti-Imperialism. Like Ismael Hamet, Ahmed Rıza desired to educate his French audience about the realities of Islam. He writes:

*Le Musulman, quel qu'il soit, passe, malgré l'histoire, malgré les faits, pour fanatique, intolérant et intransigent.*

(The Muslim, whatever happens, despite history, despite the facts, is passed off as fanatic, intolerant and intransigent.)<sup>263</sup>

As we have seen, Ismael Hamet had been an interpreter in the French army while pursuing a parallel career as a scholar of North Africa. In addition to his 1906 book he also contributed extensively to French journals such as *La Revue du Monde Musulman* and *L'Islam*. Hamet's defense of Islam is rooted in his desire to further the integration of Muslim Algerians into French society. In this he was typical of the French-speaking Algerian elite that was emerging in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>264</sup> While ostensibly a purely academic work dealing with both the history and current social, political and economic situation in

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<sup>262</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>263</sup> Hamet, Ismael. *Les Musulmans français du Nord de l'Afrique*, 267.

<sup>264</sup> Saadallah, 69-77, 70.

North Africa, Hamet's work also had an overt political function. As seen in Chapter 1, the way in which Ismael Hamet presents the material in his book strongly reflects his position as a member of the Muslim Algerian assimilationist elite. His interpretation of the region's history and contemporary situation was aligned with his belief in the ability of Muslim Algerians to be successfully integrated into French society without renouncing their status as Muslims.

The purpose of his publication is made clear in the introduction by A. Le Chatelier, a professor at the College de France, who writes:

*Puisse tout votre appel être entendu tel qu'il est – avec sa signification entière, et notre "politique indigène" d'Algérie et de Tunisie devenir une politique d'instruction, de progrès social et d'émancipation, qui, de nos "sujets" musulmans d'hier, fasse, demain, des concitoyens.*

(May your call be understood as it is - with its full meaning, and our "native policy" for Algeria and Tunisia become a policy of education, social progress and emancipation, in which in our Muslim "subjects" of yesterday do tomorrow become our fellow citizens.)<sup>265</sup>

The work is expressly intended to function as a source of propaganda despite being presented in the language of scholarly neutrality. Like his Ottoman counterparts Ismael Hamet uses his French language platform to engage in a defense of Islam from the perspective of an insider. Ismael Hamet constructs his defense by balancing the ideals of Islam and its founding principles with what he perceives to be the realities on the ground. Like Murad Bey and Ahmed Rıza, Hamet is unwilling to concede that Islam is in any way inherently incompatible with modern civilization.

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid, IV.

Unlike the majority of his Ottoman counterparts Ismael Hamet was not attempting to justify the ability of Islam to underpin an independent state that could be seen as on par with the Great Powers of Europe. Rather he sought to make clear that Islam was not an insurmountable barrier to full Muslim Algerian participation in French society and politics. In this way Hamet's work was, somewhat convolutedly making a much more direct appeal to the French than were his Ottoman counterparts. He is much less concerned with highlighting the qualities that make Islam particularly amenable to modern civilization or even liberal politics. In his discussions of Islam there are none of the classical comparisons found in the writings of Murad Bey and Ahmed Rıza. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the way in which Ismael Hamet presents the history of North Africa is inextricably linked to his political position as one in favour of assimilation not independence. Likewise his defense of Islam can be read in the same way. It can be argued that the classical comparisons found in many Ottoman defenses of Islam were unnecessary given the political and intellectual context in which Hamet was operating. The French administration saw Islam as a fundamental barrier to full integration so Ismael Hamet, like his Algerian and Tunisian contemporaries, sought to portray religion as a matter of conscience as opposed to a set of rules and regulations that underpinned Muslim Algerian society.<sup>266</sup>

This position is made clear early in *Les Musulmans français du Nord de l'Afrique* through attempts to downplay the significance of religion as the primary focus of identity or the primary means of assimilation in modern society.

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<sup>266</sup> Saadallah, 74.

Rather than seeing Islam as a barrier to integration with the French Hamet

writes:

*La religion qui, aux siècles passés, était le seul moyen d'assimiler les peuples, s'efface aujourd'hui et cède le pas au jeu des lois sociologiques et économiques.*

(Religion, which for centuries past was the only way to assimilate people, today disappears and gives way to the game of sociological and economic laws.)<sup>267</sup>

This position drives Hamet to locate his defense of Islam primarily in an analysis of Islam as it exists in contemporary Algeria and not by appealing to the virtues of Islam's founding principles.

Hamet defines his aims in discussing Islam as being about refuting the anti-Islamic beliefs held by the French both in France and in Algeria which are rooted, as Ahmed Rıza also believed, in arguments recycled from the Middle Ages.<sup>268</sup>

Like Ahmed Rıza, this tactic also allowed Ismael Hamet to construct a defense of Islam that required only a refutation of prejudice rather than anything more intellectually rigorous. Hamet claims that he will bring a more modern and rational approach to his investigation of Islam in Algeria and states that one should not judge men by the morals that are taught in their books, but by their practices.<sup>269</sup> In this dual role as the dispassionate, rational and modern scholar and the native informant he exemplifies the internal contradiction of the Young Algerian as one caught between France and Algeria. This approach underpins

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<sup>267</sup> Hamet, *Les Musulmans français du Nord de l'Afrique*, 13.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid*, 268.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid*.

nearly all of Hamet's work on Islam and reflects his position as an intermediary between a colonial power and its subjects.

In his role as intermediary Ismael Hamet sought to explain the reality of Islam and Islamic practice to his French audience. Like many of his Young Turk and other Ottoman counterparts, Hamet held strongly elitist views concerning the role of the elite in shaping the masses.<sup>270</sup> Therefore he was not in any way opposed to decrying what he saw as the destructive and anti-modern attitudes of the religious brotherhoods in Algeria writing that:

*...par leur zèle fanatique, entretiennent chez leurs adeptes la haine des Chrétiens, l'espoir de la revanche, le rêve d'un mouvement panislamique reconstituant la nationalité arabe.*

(...by their fanatic zeal, maintain among their followers a hatred of Christians, the hope of revenge, the dream of a pan-Islamic movement to revive the Arab race.)<sup>271</sup>

Ismael Hamet is quick to separate the opinions of these religious leaders, whom those belonging to this French-educated class considered superstitious and reactionary<sup>272</sup>, from the way in which Islam governs the daily life of the average Algerian. It is an attack on the religious leadership class, especially the Marabouts, that forms the basis for his defense of Islam. Hamet traces the history of Islam in the Maghreb to make his case that the domination of these groups in religious matters and the beliefs and practices they espoused did not necessarily reflect Islam's compatibility with French society.

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<sup>270</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908*, 309.

<sup>271</sup> Hamet, *Les Musulmans français du Nord de l'Afrique*, 267-8.

<sup>272</sup> Saadallah, 70.

In many ways this was a decidedly different approach to defending Islam from many of the earlier Ottoman efforts. Whereas earlier Ottoman writings tended to highlight the universal and theoretical elements of Islam and often attempted to portray them in liberal-democratic or classical terms to mount their defense, Ismael Hamet puts far less emphasis on Islam's original principles. Like his Ottoman counterparts he includes the obligatory summary of the essential elements of Islamic belief and it is clear that he views its simplicity, in comparison to Christianity, as a positive aspect. He writes that:

*La simplicité de ces principes et des obligations qui en découlent, la constitution essentiellement laïque de la société musulmane, devaient la mettre, plus que toute autre, à l'abri d'une domination cléricale. Il fallut donc des circonstances d'un caractère particulier, pour permettre à une caste religieuse, d'exercer sur le Maghreb un pouvoir Presque absolu.*

(The simplicity of these principles and obligations, the essentially secular constitution of the Muslim society should have kept it, more than any other, sheltered from clerical domination. It was therefore necessary to have circumstances of a particular character, to allow a religious caste to exercise in the Maghreb almost absolute power.)<sup>273</sup>

It is a summary of these circumstances that Ismael Hamet uses to construct his defense of Islam. It is within the specific context of the history of Islam in the Maghreb that a justification for the integration of Algerian Muslims into French society will be made. Ismael Hamet maintains that it is crucial to know the character, from a religious point of view, of the Muslim inhabitants of the Maghreb.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Hamet, *Les Musulmans français du Nord de l'Afrique*, 269.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*

The importance for Ismael Hamet of the current practice and the specific context of Algerian Islam is further demonstrated by the fact that he was intensely dismissive of those French, and other European, intellectuals who would claim to find in the Qur'an the reasons for the behaviour or psychology of Muslims. He states that it is most commonly through translations of the Qur'an or the Hadiths that these individuals make their analysis of the "Muslim soul". Their conclusions are reached, he claims, by:

*...en invoquant tel ou tel verset, en dehors des lumières de l'Histoire et des Commentaires, on aboutit à une psychologie arbitraire, puisqu'on admet que tous les actes des Musulmans s'inspirent, à la lettre, des versets du Livre.*

(...citing this or that verse, outside the light of history or the commentary, leading to an arbitrary religious psychology, since it is possible that all actions made by Muslims are inspired, to the letter, by the verses of the Book.)<sup>275</sup>

Hamet largely wishes to refute the idea that Islam can be viewed as a monolithic or universal, especially as regards current practice in Algeria. He writes that the influence of particular Islamic practices has historically been varied and that Islam must be seen as an evolutionary faith and not a static one.<sup>276</sup> This position is also what underpinned Hamet's discussions of the history of North Africa, and Algeria in particular, where he emphasized a cyclical process of migration and cultural transfer.

*C'est ainsi que le régime maraboutique a été une phase de l'évolution du Maghreb musulman et que le régime de la domination française qui lui a succédé en est une autre.*

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid, 268.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid, 269.

(Thus the Marabout regime was a phase in the evolution of the Islamic Maghreb and the regime of French domination, which succeeded it, is another.)<sup>277</sup>

Thus in walking his reader through the history of Islam in the Maghreb, and Algeria in particular, from its beginnings up to the present, Ismael Hamet intended to accomplish three things: the first was to show the particular historical circumstances that led to the domination of the marabouts in religious matters. The second was to indicate by way of his historical narrative the flexible and evolutionary nature of Islam, and finally to provide evidence of the realities of Islamic practice as it exists in contemporary Algeria. For the purposes of this chapter it is useful to look at only Ismael Hamet's third goal as it best represents his approach in contradistinction to his Ottoman contemporaries.

Despite references to the historic virtues of Islam Ismael Hamet's defense fundamentally rests on the argument that Islamic society is amenable to French secularization. He writes that European skepticism has certainly had an influence on Muslim Algerians, but that they still retain an attachment to many of the outward displays involved in Islam. He is very clear that these Muslims have not renounced their beliefs. He writes:

*...ce n'est pas de l'incroyance, ce n'est pas encore de la libre pensée, mais c'est de la tiédeur.*

(...it is not disbelief, nor is it yet free thought, but it is lukewarm.)<sup>278</sup>

This goes to the heart of Ismael Hamet's argument that, far from presenting a barrier to progress, modernization and ultimately full integration and equality,

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<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid, 285.

Islam, in the face of modernizing influence would slowly fade in intensity. He disputes the beliefs of Henri de Castries, a French scholar whose work was influential in the period, that while some Islamic practices may be declining the Muslim is still incapable of free thought.<sup>279</sup> Interestingly Ahmed Rıza would use the work of this, in his words, distinguished writer (*écrivain distingué*) to support his argument in his article *La Tolérance Musulmane*.<sup>280</sup> Ismael Hamet's defense of Islam is inherently optimistic. He does not desire to argue merely that Islam, and by extension Muslim Algerians, can be integrated into French society, but that they are perfectly able, as Muslims, to achieve full social, cultural and intellectual equality with the French.

The period from 1909-1914 saw a growth in the number of Algerian writers contributing to French journals such as *La Revue du Monde Musulman*. In the pages of these journals the authors found a space to address issues ranging from French colonial policy to Islamic law to questions of fanaticism and backwardness in Algerian society. In a sense the Algerians picked up where the Ottomans left off. As the Young Turks and other Ottoman writers began to focus more exclusively on contemporary politics in their French language publications these Young Algerians were using their printed platform, much as the Ottomans did in the period before 1902, to engage in the same reasoned debates about the compatibility of Islam and modern civilization.

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<sup>279</sup> Ibid, 286.

<sup>280</sup> Ahmed Rıza, "La Tolérance Musulmane", 305.

Ismael Hamet's criticism lay in the practitioners, not in the religion itself. He preferred that Islam be separated from secular society and stated that: "...the confusion of religious and civil law condemns the Muslim to a place outside of modern civilization."<sup>281</sup> Hamet urged the French to see Islam stripped down to its fundamental principles and to judge the Algerian Muslim not by his beliefs but by his actions. In his conclusion Hamet stated that: "This unification (of Algerian society) that was formerly undertaken by the Muslim religious castes, on the basis of Islamic civilization, will be made on the basis of French civilization."<sup>282</sup> For Hamet Islam must be pushed into the private realm, stripped of all superstitious elements and made compatible with French society.

Hamet used his position as an academic authority in the pages of French journals to advance this belief and lobby on behalf of his countrymen and against their perceived unsuitability, on religious grounds, for civilization. In an article on the practice of polygamy in Algeria Hamet emphasizes the practice's links to nomadism.<sup>283</sup> This was also a clear indication of his debt to Ibn Khaldun and his theories regarding the division of society into sedentary and nomadic groups. For Hamet much of what Europeans considered the negative practices of Islam were merely the result of social, cultural and environmental conditions that, if altered, would result in the rapid decrease and eventual disappearance of these practices. This was one of the key themes of Hamet's writings and it underpinned nearly all of his articles. It was in this way that he presented himself as the

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<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid, 313.

<sup>283</sup> Hamet, Ismael. "Des Conditions sociales de la vie nomade chez les Musulmans africains – Les causes déterminantes de la Polygamie" *L'Islam* July-August, 1909.

insider authority, speaking almost from the position of the anthropologist, countering abstract and textual European assumptions about Islam with the reality on the ground.

He advanced this theory vis-à-vis polygamy without straying into the dangerous territory of claiming that any of the proscriptions or regulations in the Qur'an were incorrect by reminding his readers that polygamy was always an optional practice, strictly regulated, which, by his reasoning, meant that under different circumstances the choice or need to practice polygamy would no longer, or very rarely, be made. He writes that: "It follows that where it is no longer necessary, the plurality of wives decreases or disappears naturally."<sup>284</sup> He reiterates this same point in a later article in the *Revue du Monde Musulman* from 1913 where he wrote that polygamy was allowed but not recommended precisely because it imposed a societal form that was only appropriate under certain circumstances, specifically nomadic ones.<sup>285</sup> According to Hamet the very fact that polygamy was more widely practiced by nomadic groups in North Africa was proof that it was not an inherent and eternal part of Islamic society.

Similarly in a 1910 issue of *L'Islam* Ismael Hamet was a member of a panel discussion on the rarity of human figures in Islamic art. In discussing this topic Hamet begins, like many of his co-panelists, by discussing the Qur'anic, and ultimately Mosaic, roots of the prohibition against the representations of human figures in Islamic art. He then moves to point out that despite these prohibitions

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<sup>284</sup> Ibid. 184.

<sup>285</sup> Hamet, Ismael. "Les Musulmanes de l'Afrique du Nord", *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 1913, 286.

there was great variation in their interpretation and points out the common appearance of human and animal figures in the art of Muslim India, Persia and Spain. As with his discussions of polygamy Hamet takes great pains to remind his readers that there is often a gap in the Qur'an between the letter and the spirit of the law. Hamet writes that: "It is necessary here, as with everything related to religious requirements, to consider the text and how it is observed in practice."<sup>286</sup>

This is essentially the same argument that Hamet makes with regards to polygamy. Islamic practice cannot be viewed in absolute terms and certain practices that are common in the Islamic world should not be viewed as inherently or universally Islamic. To bolster this argument he gives the example of modern Morocco where, despite clear Qur'anic prohibitions against it, the distilling and consumption of alcohol was widely tolerated but portrait painting and photography were seen as suspect.<sup>287</sup> Hamet attributed this apparent contradiction to ignorance and superstition not religion. The young and the ignorant were opposed to painting and photography not because they were Muslim but because they were ignorant. Again, as with polygamy the unstated but clearly implied point is that it is only a lack of education that holds these people back and determines their behaviour, not Islam. To close the article and round off his point he cited the newly opened Egyptian School of Fine Arts as an example of the triumph of civilization and liberalism.<sup>288</sup> These treatments of

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<sup>286</sup> Hamet, Ismael. "A quelles causes faut-il attribuer la rareté des figurations humaines dans l'art musulman?" *L'Islam* – Feb-Mar, 1910, 103.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid. 105.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid. 106.

aspects of Islamic culture served to reinforce its flexibility and adaptability and ultimately its ability to form part of a common French-Algerian identity.

Many of these same ideas concerning the practice and influence of Islam were reflected in Abdelaziz Thaalbi's work *L'Esprit Libéral du Coran*. Like Ismael Hamet, Abdelaziz Thaalbi was focused on presenting a view of Islam that showed it to be compatible with modernization and that it should not be viewed as an impediment to progress. Like his Algerian and Ottoman counterparts this work was published in Paris and intended for consumption by a European audience.

Abdelaziz Thaalbi chooses to begin his work by pointing to the advancements made by Egypt in the nineteenth century as evidence of Islam's compatibility with modernization.<sup>289</sup> This example is meant to convey the ability of the state to influence the way in which the Qur'an is interpreted. For Thaalbi, a liberal and enlightened ruler or state can ensure a liberal and correct interpretation of the Qur'an.

Thaalbi focuses much of his work on explaining that the various ways in which the original conception of Islam has been corrupted. Unlike his contemporaries in Egypt, such as Muhamamd Abduh, he does this not to suggest a return to a classical Islamic lifestyle, but, like Ahmed Rıza, to show how this originalist Islam is perfectly compatible with Western society. He writes in favour of the suppression of the veil and declares it akin to the spread of progress and

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<sup>289</sup> Thaalbi, Abdelaziz. *L'Esprit Libéral du Coran*. Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1905, 9.

civilization as well as “...the reconstitution of Muslim society as it was in the times of the Prophet and his companions, that is to say, as European society.”<sup>290</sup>

The comparison between first Caliphs and modern elected leaders as well as the role of Islamic society in spreading classical thought to the West is also emphasized.<sup>291</sup> In this sense Abdelaziz Thaalbi’s work treads much the same ground as Ismael Hamet and Ahmed Rıza’s. It places nearly all the blame for the current negative perceptions of Islam on the various Muslim brotherhoods and holy men who are responsible for spreading ignorance, superstition, and fanaticism among the Muslim populations of North Africa.<sup>292</sup> He also locates the solution to this problem in education and the creation of an elite that will encourage intermingling and the breaking down of confessional and class barriers.<sup>293</sup>

But in many ways Abdelaziz Thaalbi’s is a more sophisticated analysis and explanation of Islam’s virtues. Unlike either Ismael Hamet or Ahmed Rıza, he makes a clear distinction between the spiritual and the political in his discussion of Islamic culture. For Thaalbi it is wrong to consider Islam as a faith that specifically condones or requires violence. He stresses that the wars of the early Islamic period were political in nature and not driven by faith alone.<sup>294</sup> Islam, for him, is highly susceptible to misinterpretation and exploitation by rulers who would seek to use it to justify their own aims. He claims that the verses in the

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid, 28-35.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid, 67.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid, 83.

Qur'an directed against Jews and pagans are not directed against followers of those beliefs in general, but against specific political enemies of the early Muslims, rooted in a particular historical context.<sup>295</sup> For Abdelaziz Thaalbi ensuring the correct interpretation of the Qur'an is part of the project of modernization in North Africa. Like Ismael Hamet and Ahmed Rıza this analysis seeks to ensure equal participation in the modernization project and to integrate Islamic beliefs into its achievement.

Islam remained one of most seemingly insurmountable differences between the societies of the Ottoman Empire and North Africa and their European neighbors. Throughout their works these writers sought to refute claims that Islam was inherently antithetical to progress and development as defined by the West. In the pages of their French-language writings they provided evidence of early and medieval Islam's accomplishments and worked to trace continuities with a classical past that was revered. This defense was a matter of self-assertion and reflected a declaration of intent in the face of often overwhelming criticism. By feeling the need to defend Islam to their readers they made it part of their identity. Both Muslim and non-Muslim alike found himself where Islam as something inextricably linked to grappling with the question of what makes an Algerian, Tunisian or an Ottoman became essential.

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<sup>295</sup> Ibid, 84.

## Chapter 3

### **Making Ottomans and Frenchmen: Forms and Constructions of Identity**

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ottoman and North African writers and intellectuals struggled to conceptualize and articulate their present and future within the modern European state system.

A large part of this future was the changing *loci* of power and loyalty that needed to be addressed in the wake of European nationalism. Ottomans and French North African writers enmeshed in a French journalistic and intellectual milieu frequently dealt with issues of identity, equality and the desire for a workable shared patriotism that could overcome differences in race and religion. At the same time these individuals occupied themselves with talk of how this could be accomplished and the changes that would be required to bring their respective territories in line with European states in a manner that suited their unique origins and composition.

In this chapter I intend to explore the relationship between the conceptualization of a shared Ottoman identity that included both Muslims and non-Muslims and that of a common French identity expanded to include Muslim Algeria in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These ideas will be examined in the context of the shared cultural, political and linguistic space of

French-language publishing. This chapter will trace the development and diversity of conceptions of Ottomanism and link it to parallel ideas of French identity being advanced from Algeria. While the case of Algeria is obviously substantively different from that of the Ottoman Empire in terms of the power dynamics between colonizer and colonist, both groups of writers used their French language publications to try and engage European public opinion in what they considered to be crucial debates over national identity.

I will try to avoid overemphasis on the particular political affiliation of particular writers. One reason for this is that unnecessary focus on certain figures' affiliation as 'Young Turks' or members of the Committee for Union and Progress would create a lopsided analysis as no similarly defined opposition groups existed for many of the Algerian writers at the time. While the Young Turks can be considered a clearly defined faction within the exile opposition to Sultan Abdülhamid, the term 'Young Algerians', while in use, was a much more vague term that technically applied to any member of the Muslim Algerian elite who was French-educated.<sup>296</sup> Additionally I want to avoid essentializing certain ideologies as 'Young Turk' or otherwise. The intent of this chapter is to analyze ideas as they emerged within the common space of Ottoman and Algerian French-language publishing and not necessarily as the positions of particular political factions.

This chapter will begin with a discussion of Ottomanism as it emerged in the French language publications of the 1890's. From there I will integrate the

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<sup>296</sup> Saadallah, 69-70.

writings of Algerian intellectuals as they emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century. I argue that the discussion of an inclusive Ottoman and French identity were much more diverse and long lasting than is often stated. Rather than being an early step that faded into intellectual obscurity as part of a chain leading to a 'pan' identity (either pan-Islamist or pan-Turkist) and finally to ethnic (Turkish, Arab) or territorial (Algerian) nationalism, Ottomanism and Frenchness developed in parallel to these competing identities, reacting and developing in relation to them and maintaining real intellectual strength until the start of the First World War.

### **Ottomans and Frenchmen**

The intellectual elites of the Ottoman Empire and Algeria sought to engage with the press culture of France, and Europe more broadly, to put forward and refine their ideas about identity and reform. A great part of their concern was how to fashion a durable national identity that would transcend the enormous ethnic and religious diversity of the Ottoman Empire on the one hand and the colonial realities of French North Africa on the other.<sup>297</sup> During the period under discussion (1890-1914) Ottomanism has often been approached as a failed identity along with pan-Islamism that was inevitably replaced by fragmented nationalisms (Arab, Turkish, Armenian etc...). As mentioned above much of this secondary work focuses on Ottoman Levantines and Egyptians, often non-Muslim and their attempts to come to grips with a sense of loyalty to the Ottoman State in a period of burgeoning Arab nationalism.

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<sup>297</sup> Hanioglu, Şükrü. *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008, 142.

Conceptualizations of Ottomanism varied with the individuals articulating them. Turkish Muslims, non-Turkish Muslims, Greek and Armenian Christians, Jews and others all approached the idea of Ottoman identity slightly differently based on their relationship to the centre of power. What is most interesting, however, is how slight these variations actually were. For those willing to embrace, at least journalistically, the idea of Ottomanism there seemed to be a fairly broad consensus as to what this would entail. A reason for this may be rooted in the fact that among the myriad journals and pamphlets that expressed some form of Ottomanism very few provided any sort of blueprint as to how this new identity would precisely function and be sustained in practice.

Ottomanism as a political ideology is difficult to clearly and consistently define. Throughout the late Ottoman period it developed and evolved and was voiced from numerous vantage points within the Empire: from Muslim and non-Muslim, Arab and Turk, Greek and Armenian. This being the case the source material for much of the work done on Ottomanism comes in the form of published material, such as newspapers, books and pamphlets through which a wide variety of Ottoman intellectuals, politicians and activists attempted to articulate what they believed Ottomanism entailed. Studies rarely rely heavily on official political documents to define Ottomanism, in part because so few provide any sort of satisfactory definition of Ottomanism that transcends the time they were written. In this sense Ottomanism is a much more difficult concept to profile than other types of nationalism or ideologies such as Communism. In fact it is debatable as to whether Ottomanism can even be described as a form of nationalism in the modern sense. There was never any generally agreed upon

vision of what Ottomanism would entail, no manifesto or widely accepted official doctrine. This being said there are certain broad characteristics that can be applied. It is possible to agree that those individuals who claimed to subscribe to the ideal of Ottomanism felt some sense of general 'Ottoman patriotism' and believed strongly in maintaining the territorial integrity of the Empire. Beyond this the intellectual content of Ottomanism remains as varied as the individuals who espoused it.

Ottomanism as it appears in the historiography can be divided roughly into two sections: the first is the study of Ottomanism as it appeared in the First Constitutional Period and the earlier Tanzimat policies of Ali and Fuad Paşa, with special attention paid to the *Islahat Fermanı* (Reform Edict) of 1856, which granted full equality to Muslims and non-Muslims with respect to civil and political rights.<sup>298</sup> The concept of Ottoman equality as an officially enshrined legal policy during the period from 1856-1876 has been thoroughly studied in numerous works on Ottoman reform.<sup>299</sup> The second is the study of Ottomanism in the context of emerging Arab and Turkish nationalism, both during the Hamidian and Second Constitutional periods, until the end of the First World War. These are obviously very broad-brush categories, however, as dominant

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<sup>298</sup> Çiçek, *Young Ottomans: Turkish Critics of the Eastern Question in the Late Nineteenth Century*, 110.

<sup>299</sup> See Carter Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980, Roderick H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963, Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, London: Oxford University Press, 1961 and Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey Vol. 2: Reform, Revolution and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

historiographical trends they will be useful in making sense of in what contexts Ottomanism is analyzed as a historical phenomenon.

As a specific ideology and aspect of Ottoman intellectual thought, however, Ottomanism during this period is generally approached through the lens of a group of Muslim intellectuals known as the Young Ottomans. This group of intellectuals was active in the 1860s and 1870s and many were products of the Ottoman bureaucracy, especially the Translation Bureau, and shared a common knowledge of European civilization.<sup>300</sup> The intellectual and political reactions of this group of individuals, through their newspapers, pamphlets and even novels and plays, to the changes brought on by the Tanzimat statesmen forms the basis for an analysis of Ottomanism.

Şerif Mardin's *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* still remains one of the definitive works on the subject. In this work the concept of Ottomanism is approached as both a policy of the government of Fuad and Ali Paşa and as an ideology conceptualized and articulated by the Young Ottomans as a reaction to this policy. Mardin portrays the Ottomanism of the government as largely a pragmatic gesture to appease the European powers, who were becoming more and more involved in the affairs of the Empire's Christian populations, and therefore remove one of the most common justifications for European interference in Ottoman domestic affairs.<sup>301</sup> What emerges in Mardin's discussion is the creation of an Ottoman nationality out of necessity and not

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<sup>300</sup> Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 11.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.* 15.

desire. This is echoed in the work of Nazan Çiçek's, which stresses the importance of the creation of a universal Ottoman legal status as a prerequisite for the Empire's entrance into the 'Concert of Europe' following the end of the Crimean War.<sup>302</sup> It is largely for this reason that the official, government-sanctioned concept of Ottomanism is not studied in any real depth as an ideology in these works. There appeared to be very little intellectual substance behind the official policy of Ottoman equality beyond pressure from the powers and nearly wholesale adoption of European political documents.<sup>303</sup>

In contrast, analysis of the Young Ottoman reaction and response to Tanzimat reforms, particularly the *Islahat fermanı* of 1856, offers valuable insight into articulations of Ottoman identity. Like the Ottomanism of Fuad and Ali Paşa, the Ottomanism of the Young Ottomans was also underpinned by the pragmatic belief that creating a strong Ottoman identity was necessary to ensure the continued integrity of the empire. The Young Ottomans were motivated by an intense patriotism that, as Mardin says: "...made them think of reform for Ottomans, by Ottomans and along Islamic lines."<sup>304</sup> This Islamic aspect to the Young Ottoman conception of Ottomanism is crucial, as Mardin and Çiçek make clear, for understanding the roots of their opposition to the European-led and seemingly un-Islamic reforms of the Tanzimat statesmen. The Ottomanism of the Young Ottomans emerges as fundamentally Islamic in character. It is a patriotism linked to the figure of the Sultan and the House of Osman in their capacity as symbols of Islamic power. The Young Ottoman Namık Kemal emphasized the

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<sup>302</sup> Çiçek, 109.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid. 118.

<sup>304</sup> Mardin, 21.

importance of the fatherland, but as Şerif Mardin points out, was never exactly clear as to what the fatherland consisted of.<sup>305</sup> Carter Findley also points out that while the Young Ottomans spoke often of “the people” they were rarely certain exactly who “the people” were.<sup>306</sup>

In the second historiographical period, roughly 1876-1918, Ottomanism began to be approached largely as an intellectual current within nascent Arab or Turkish nationalist movements, or, alternatively, as an aspect of both the *nahda* or the Young Turks. Analysis of Ottomanism in the context of Arab intellectual history and the rise of Arab nationalism is exemplified in the works of Ernest C. Dawn and Albert Hourani<sup>307</sup>, who profile the importance of Ottomanism as an ideology among the Arab intellectuals in Egypt and the Levant. In these works Ottomanism is presented as a doomed ideology, one whose influence would inevitably be subsumed under the pull of Arab nationalism.

In his important early work on Ottomanism and Arab nationalism, Dawn focuses on particularly Islamic character to Ottomanism as it was articulated in Egypt and the Levant during the late nineteenth century. He cites the work of Muhammad Abduh and Muhammad Rashid Rida, whose Ottomanism is defined by loyalty to the Ottoman Sultan as Caliph and as leader of the strongest

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<sup>305</sup> Ibid. 328.

<sup>306</sup> Findley, Carter. “The Advent of Ideology in the Islamic Middle East (Part II), *Studia Islamica*, 56 (1982), 155.

<sup>307</sup> See Ernest C. Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism*, (Urbana IL: University of Illinois Press, 1973) and Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1789-1939*, 1962.

remaining Islamic state.<sup>308</sup> For Dawn the Ottomanism of these Arab intellectuals was primarily pragmatic as they saw loyalty to the Ottoman State as necessary to preserve the integrity of the empire, which in turn would allow for an Arab revival.<sup>309</sup> Dawn distinguishes between the conservative Ottomanism of Abdülhamid II and the modernist Ottomanism of the Young Turks, but sees them both as having ideological similarities to Arab Ottomanism. Dawn identifies a second strain of Ottomanism within the Arab Christian intellectuals of the time that was more secular in its outlook and envisioned a shared Arab identity as sitting comfortably within a larger shared Ottoman identity.<sup>310</sup> Dawn concludes by stating that: “Islam was as much at the center of Arabism as it was of Ottomanism.”<sup>311</sup>

In a later work Dawn defines Ottomanism as one of two ideologies (the other being Arabism) competing for the loyalty of the Arab subjects of the Ottoman Empire in the decades leading up to the First World War.<sup>312</sup> Dawn claims, as he did before, that the central concern of both Arabism and Ottomanism before 1914 was a defence of Islam and the East in the face of the overwhelming domination of the Christian West. This is as close as Dawn gets to a coherent definition of Ottomanism: an ideology that was largely reactionary and defensive and that had a decidedly Islamic character. He again stresses as well the relative pragmatism of Ottomanism by stating that those elites in Syria who had more of

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<sup>308</sup> Dawn, Ernest C. “From Ottomanism to Arabism: The Origin of an Ideology”, *The Review of Politics*, 23/3 (1961), 389-391.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid. 392.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid. 395.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid. 399.

<sup>312</sup> Dawn, Ernest C. “The Rise of Arabism in Syria”, *Middle East Journal*, 16/2 (1962), 145.

a vested interest in the Ottoman State were Ottomanists and those who didn't were Arabists.<sup>313</sup> This particular thesis has recently been challenged by scholars such as Mahmoud Haddad who critiques the fact that Ottomanism is too often analyzed as merely an ideological pragmatism for non-Turkish, generally Arab, elements of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>314</sup> Rather, he believed that a sincere commitment to an over-arching Ottoman nationality drove many Arabs to support the idea after 1908.

Like Dawn, Butrus Abu-Maneh approaches Ottomanism as an ideology both entwined with and competing against Arabism or Arab nationalism. He defines the goal of the Ottomanism as enshrined in the policies of Fuad and Ali Paşa as the desire to: "...transfer the loyalty of the non-Muslims from the local community and the Ottoman dynasty to the fatherland and the state."<sup>315</sup> Abu-Maneh locates the failure of the Ottomanism to become a viable ideology in the latter part of the nineteenth century to the policies of Abdülhamid II after 1876.<sup>316</sup> Ottomanism as he defines it as a strain of Arab thought in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is inextricably linked to the concept of decentralization and regional autonomy. According to Abu-Maneh Syrian Arab Christians such as Butrus Al-Bustani found Ottomanism appealing because of its ability to: "...establish the identity and the legal status of the subjects upon

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<sup>313</sup> Ibid. 163.

<sup>314</sup> See Mahmoud Haddad, "The Rise of Arab Nationalism Reconsidered", in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 26/2 (1994). For a more detailed look at Ottomanism in the Arab provinces see

<sup>315</sup> Abu-Maneh, 287.

<sup>316</sup> Abu-Maneh, Butrus. "Arab-Ottomanists' Reactions to the Young Turk Revolution, in *Late Ottoman Palestine: The Period of Young Turk Rule*. Yuval Ben-Bassat and Eyal Ginio eds. London: I.B. Tauris, 2011, 148.

secular ideals, rather than upon religious belief.”<sup>317</sup> This is in contrast to the Ottomanism of another Levantine Christian Farid Kassab as mentioned by Stephen Wild in his article *Ottomanism versus Arabism: The Case of Farid Kassab (1884-1970)*. Kassab’s Ottomanism is not defined by opposition to Abdülhamid II or by the principle of total civic equality.<sup>318</sup> Another element that emerges in the Ottomanism of many of the figures that Abu-Maneh is their conviction that a common language was needed to sustain a workable Ottoman identity.<sup>319</sup> This became especially important to smaller ethnic and religious groups in the Ottoman Empire, such as the Empire’s Jewish population.

In an article on Ottoman Sephardim in Palestine Michelle U. Campos highlights their embrace of Ottomanism in terms of its ability to create an equal citizenship and tear down communal boundaries, but also in so far as it would allow for a degree of federalization.<sup>320</sup> She also defines the Ottomanism of the Sephardi Jews as concerned with self-preservation, and that embracing this ideology as a method of preserving life under an “Ottoman umbrella” was preferable to any of the alternatives.<sup>321</sup> Again she stresses the hybrid nature of Ottomanism: an overarching ideology that would co-exist comfortably with smaller, more localized or particular ideologies. In the case of the Sephardim this other

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<sup>317</sup> Abu-Maneh, *The Christians Between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism*, 296.

<sup>318</sup> Wild, Stephen, “Ottomanism versus Arabism: The Case of Farid Kassab (1884-1970)”, *Die Welt des Islams* 28/1/4 (1988), 622.

<sup>319</sup> Abu-Maneh, *Arab-Ottomanists Reactions*, 155.

<sup>320</sup> Campos, Michelle U. “Between “Beloved Ottomania” and “The Land of Israel”: The Struggle over Ottomanism and Zionism among Palestine’s Sephardi Jews, 1908-13”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 37/4 (2005), 462. See also Cohen, Julia Phillips. *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.* 479.

ideology was Zionism. What Dawn, Abu-Maneh and others reflect in their work is an Ottomanism that is highly contextual. As investigations of Ottomanism these studies are often limited by their need to define Ottomanism in the context of the group or individuals. They rarely allow for comparison and thus it is difficult to grasp diversity and particularity of how Ottomanism was defined in the period.

In the second, but related, half of this historiographical period are works that deal with Ottomanism as part of the ideology of the Young Turks. Prior to the Young Turk revolution of 1908 the ideology of Ottomanism existed more as an intellectual exercise rather than a concrete policy. In his authoritative works on the Young Turks before 1908 Şükrü Hanioglu explores the diversity of Ottomanism as a doctrine of equality through the writings of the Young Turks.<sup>322</sup> Similarly Wajda Sendesni, in her study of Ottomanism as it appeared in the Young Turk publications in Cairo before 1908, shows that the relation of the author(s) to the dominant ethnic and religious group impacted their conception of Ottomanism. Newspapers published by multi-ethnic committees, such as *Şurayî Osmanî*, tended to support the widest and most secular definition of Ottomanism.<sup>323</sup> Conversely others were only concerned with the fate of Anatolian Muslims or, like the Egyptian reformer Mustafa Kamil, saw Ottomanism as a strategy against British occupation.<sup>324</sup> Like the Arabs the Young

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<sup>322</sup> See Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition and Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908*.

<sup>323</sup> Sendesni, Wajda. "The Young Turks and the Arabs in Egypt between Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism and Nationalism", in *Penser, agir et vivre dans l'Empire ottoman et en Turquie*. Nathalie Clayer and François Georgeon eds. Paris: Peeters, 2013, 34.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.* 36.

Turks, especially once in power, are portrayed as embracing Ottomanism only in so far as it was politically advantageous to them.

In his analysis of the major Young Turk journals in the post-1908 period Masami Arai highlights the distinction made by many intellectual at the times between pre-Tanzimat Ottomanism, which was strictly Islamic (*umma* Ottomanism) and the post-Tanzimat Ottomanism that included all the ethnic groups of the Empire.<sup>325</sup> Arai portrays Ottomanism as a vehicle for Turkish primacy, especially after the defeats of the Balkan Wars. However, like many of their Arab and non-Muslim counterparts the many Young Turks, such as Ziya Gökalp believed that any durable national identity must be created top-down and disseminated through education and a shared language.<sup>326</sup> The Ottomanism of the Young Turks at this point was decidedly anti-federalist again reflecting the importance of one's relationship to the centre of power in determining one's conception of Ottomanism. The historiography of Ottomanism is complex and the multitude of angles from which it is approached makes it difficult to profile. This chapter therefore hopes to contribute to the field by analyzing Ottomanism through a common cultural and linguistic lens that overlaps with particular ethnic, religious or political ones.

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<sup>325</sup> Arai, Masami. *Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era*. Leiden: Brill, 1992, 60.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.* 62.

### **Early Ottoman Engagement with the Question of Identity 1888-1905**

The late 1880s and early 1890s saw the first Ottoman publications in our period emerge in Paris that addressed issues of identity. One of the earlier Ottoman publications published by a non-Muslim from this period was *L'Orient* (1888-1912), which was edited by one N. Nicholaides, who also edited two other journals, *Le Yildiz* and *La Turquie Contemporaine*, under the pseudonym of Demetrius Georgiades.<sup>327</sup> Hanioglu mentions Nicholaides as an example of an émigré publisher who was inaccurately considered a Young Turk by observers in Europe.<sup>328</sup> In many ways Nicholaides exemplified Ottoman engagement with French press culture, as he was, above all, concerned with perception and polemic in his publications. Following a reconciliation with Sultan Abdülhamid II<sup>329</sup> *L'Orient* reflected a shift away from openly declaring itself to be in favour of Greek interests to a more overtly Ottomanist position. This shift to a more Ottomanist outlook can most easily be seen in the changing subtitles of *L'Orient* from 1888 until 1902. When it first emerged in 1888 the paper was termed a *Revue Franco-Hellenique* and its subtitle was *Organe Spécial des Intérêts Grecs*.<sup>330</sup> Following his reconciliation with the Sultan the subtitle was changed to *Organe spécial des Intérêts Grecs et Orientaux*<sup>331</sup>, and finally in 1902 it became *Journal de défense des Intérêts de l'Empire Ottoman*.<sup>332</sup> Here we can see the progression from a journal committed to the interests of Greeks, albeit ostensibly within an

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<sup>327</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 68. Nicholaides also published two other papers under his own name, *Les Paillasses Orientaux* (January-April 1893) and *L'Abeille du Bosphore* (May-August 1893) that dealt with similar topics to *L'Orient*.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>330</sup> *L'Orient*, 14 October 1888.

<sup>331</sup> *L'Orient*, 5 January 1890.

<sup>332</sup> *L'Orient*, 15 February 1902.

Ottoman framework, to a journal that presented clear loyalty to the Ottoman state.

In the first issue of *L'Orient* Nicholaides declares that the Greeks, as much as the other peoples on both sides of the Balkans, should have a special publication (*un organe spécial*) devoted to their interests in Europe.<sup>333</sup> Nicholaides goes on to dismiss claims that the journal promotes Greek nationalism or revolution and proclaims its disposition to be 'essentially pacifistic'.<sup>334</sup> A noticeable Francophilia is present in the early issues of *L'Orient*. Nicholaides speaks glowingly of France's role as the cultural and intellectual cornerstone of Europe<sup>335</sup> and it is clear that he believes that a French-style secular identity should form the basis for any future Ottoman identity. As the journal progressed there clearly remained some confusion over its position *vis-à-vis* Greek nationalism. In a message to subscribers Nicholaides offers assurances that the paper in no way supports Greek separatism, which he believes offers little benefit to Greece and would cause significant damage to the situation in Europe.<sup>336</sup>

He qualifies these statements, however, by saying that his paper is:

"...certainly happy to balance the needs of Hellenism with its respectful attachment to the Sovereign reigning now and with wise moderation over the people of the Turkish East."<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> N. Nicholaides, "A Nos Lecteurs", *L'Orient*, 14 October 1888.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid.

<sup>336</sup> N. Nicholaides, "Avis aux Abonnés de l'Orient", *L'Orient*, 5 January 1890.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid.

Nicholiades' position as it develops through his paper in its first years of publication is one of an Ottomanism that still holds the *millet*, that is, a defined ethno-religious community, as the basic unit of Ottoman society. Identification and political action in the pursuit of rights on purely ethno-religious or confessional grounds is acceptable as long as it is done within the existing Ottoman framework. Nicholaides makes no appeal to a shared 'Ottoman' identity or focal point for loyalty and patriotism beyond the figure of the Sultan. Interestingly, and a possible reason for their publication under a pseudonym, the other papers published by Nicholaides at this time present a much more familiar Ottomanist position. *La Turquie Contemporaine*, which appeared in April of 1891 carries the subtitle *Organe de la Jeune Turquie*, which immediately gives it a more adversarial flavour than *L'Orient*. This paper, published under Nicholaides pseudonym of Demetrius Georgiades was meant largely as a provocation to the Sultan who clearly recognized the importance of public opinion in Europe.<sup>338</sup> Digging deeper into the introductory article, however, reveals that the main focus of the paper are the political and economic questions of the Ottoman Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>339</sup> Like *L'Orient* the paper's avowed Ottomanism is largely reactionary and a response to accusations of separatist goals. It claims that the interests that the paper represents, that is Ottoman Greeks, have never demanded that Europe work to banish the Muslims that reside in its territory and like many others they appeal to the shared roots in Asia Minor of Turks and Greeks.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 70.

<sup>339</sup> "Au Lecteur", *La Turquie Contemporaine*, 20 April 1891.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*

A workable Ottomanism here emerges as necessary for the advancement of the Empire. The paper claims that they call on all enlightened men regardless of race or creed to form a powerful league that will lift out of *décrépitude* so brave and hardworking a population.<sup>341</sup> There is a belief implicit here that any sort of effective Ottoman unity must come from above. Like many of his Young Turk counterparts Nicholaides is well aware that this Ottomanism must be created. As a template for Ottoman solidarity Nicholaides mentions the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires as examples and insists that in the face of aggressive and ambitious neighbours the diverse citizens of the Ottoman Empire cannot afford to splinter along national lines.<sup>342</sup> Ottomanism here becomes not merely a means to progress but necessary for survival.

Very little appears in this first issue of *La Turquie Contemporaine* regarding how an Ottoman identity could be implemented or sustained. Much of the discussion centres on the tyranny of the Sultan and the corruption of the Ottoman state, which is hardly surprising given the paper's ultimate purpose as a tool to extort money from the Ottoman State. However, later issues at least attempt to offer more concrete solutions to the problem of Ottoman nationality. One of the main barriers to an effective Ottoman nationality according to Nicholaides, in this paper of course writing under his pseudonym, is the political power of the Sultan as Caliph. In his article he calls for the separation of political authority from the office of Caliph.<sup>343</sup> Nicholaides calls for a secularization of political power and

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<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid.

<sup>343</sup> N. Nicholaides, "La Turquie Contemporaine II", *La Turquie Contemporaine*, 1 May 1891.

sees this as essential for the creation of a political system that would benefit all Ottoman citizens.<sup>344</sup> The role of the Sultan as a politico-religious ruler was preventing the creation of an effective national assembly. In a rare instance of clear policy Nicholaides states that such an assembly would have to be based on proportional representation by ethnic and religious group. Finally he warned that this situation allowed Abdülhamid to sacrifice the interests of the state in order to re-establish the “theocratic and barbarous power of the Caliphate” (*pouvoir théocratique et barbare du califat*).<sup>345</sup>

At the same time that these articles were being published in the *L'Orient* another Ottoman, Abdul Halim Memdouh (Abdülhalim Memduh) attempted to speak in favour of Ottoman solidarity in his journal *Le Libéral Ottoman*. Abdul Halim was not officially aligned with any of the major Young Turk factions and the subtitle of his newspaper, *Organe des Revendications du Peuple Ottoman*, reflected his desire to present his paper as a universally ‘Ottoman’ publication.

The first issue appeals to the narrative of communal suffering as a basis for Ottoman unity. Memduh wrote: “all Ottomans regardless of race or religion have suffered under the yoke of this nefarious government.”<sup>346</sup> However apart from claiming to defend all oppressed Ottomans Memduh offers little in the way of concrete ideas.

One of the few writers to offer something approaching a manifesto in their French language publications prior to 1908 was Yusuf Fehmi. A self-proclaimed

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<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

<sup>346</sup> Abdul Halim Memdouh, *Le Libéral Ottoman*, 15 January 1901.

Young Turk, Yusuf Fehmi had moved to Paris in 1897 and remained there until his death, publishing multiple works criticizing the Sultan and, after 1908 wrote an account of the revolution that was highly critical of the CUP government.<sup>347</sup> He had actually split with Ahmed Rıza over the issue of foreign involvement in precipitating a revolution to overthrow the Sultan.<sup>348</sup> In his book *Tablettes Révolutionnaires d'un Jeune Turc*, published in 1903, Fehmi lays out at the beginning a list of reforms for the Ottoman state. He begins quite generally with a demand for Liberty and equal Justice for all Ottomans. Additionally he calls for the release of all political prisoners regardless of race or religion.<sup>349</sup> This is important as it shows that he believes that even those non-Muslim Ottomans that rebelled against the government should be able to participate in the creation of a new Ottoman identity. Additionally he calls for all the major groups or millets within the Ottoman Empire to band together to form a national assembly that would include, most importantly, universal suffrage. It is probable that Fehmi's rational positivist sympathies led him to support direct elections rather than some sort of quota system represented the different millets. While he doesn't go into a great amount of detail Yusuf Fehmi is notable for presenting something of a political program. This list would be repeated in subsequent books suggesting that his ideas failed to evolve.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> Fehmi, Yusuf. *La Révolution Ottomane*. Paris: V. Girard & E. Brière, 1911.

<sup>348</sup> Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 91.

<sup>349</sup> Fehmi, Yusuf. *Tablettes Révolutionnaires d'un Jeune Turc*. Paris: A. Michalon, 1903, 68.

<sup>350</sup> See Yusuf Fehmi, *Les Coulisses Hamidiennes Dévoilées par un Jeune Turc*, Paris: A Michalon, 1904.

### **Arab, Berber, Turk? The Limits of Race in Identity**

The Young Algerians at this time also grappled with the pressing question of identity. For figures such as Ismael Hamet and Cherif Benhabilés the articulation of a common, or at least communal identity was crucial to their vision for the future of French Algeria. Unlike the term Young Turk, Young Algerian possessed very little of the former term's association with a clearly defined political or intellectual movement.<sup>351</sup> "Young Algerians" were usually defined as those Muslim Algerians who were French-educated and most often belonged to one of the liberal professions, such as law or medicine.<sup>352</sup> The activities of those who could be called 'Young Algerians' were far more individually driven and lacked an overarching organisational direction. A consequence of this was that discussions of Algerian identity in the émigré context tended to also be highly individualised. They were rarely produced, especially in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, under the direction of a particular party or movement.

There was a general agreement among those who called themselves, or were called, Young Algerians that they were capable of becoming fully integrated into French society. The main difference lay in how they envisioned this integration unfolding. All Young Algerians admitted that colonialism had brought certain benefits to Algeria and the more assimilationist among them were willing to renounce their status as Muslims in order to receive French citizenship.<sup>353</sup> For the majority of the Young Algerians, however, there was a firm belief that their

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<sup>351</sup> Saadallah, 69-70.

<sup>352</sup> There is a certain amount of disagreement among scholars as to the exact characteristics of Young Algerian identity.

<sup>353</sup> Saleh el Din el Zein el Tayeb, "The Europeanized Algerians and the Emancipation of Algeria", 206.

identity as Muslims was not incompatible with a second French or even a new 'Algerian' identity. Like many of their Ottoman counterparts these individuals believed that a common identity could be created and underpinned by secular political institutions and a constitution and in which religion would be relegated to the private sphere.<sup>354</sup> However, unlike in the case of the Ottoman Empire the majority of the discourse surrounding identity and citizenship was conducted by French intellectuals and politicians and not by Muslim Algerians themselves. The activities of the Young Algerians prior to the First World War were in many ways intended to create a space for discussion of these issues within this intellectual sphere.<sup>355</sup> Those Young Algerians that contributed to journals or published their own works used the platform provided to them by their education and use of the French language to make their case to a European audience.

Ismael Hamet's 1906 publication, "Les Musulmans du Nord de l'Afrique", represented one of the first major attempts to deal with the question of Algerian identity in a French metropolitan context. In his role as an intellectual Hamet sought to engage with a specific French-metropolitan intellectual sphere, effectively bypassing the debates going on in the *colon* press in Algeria itself. Through the latter half of the nineteenth century the assimilationist efforts of the French government had the unintended consequence of further emphasizing differences between the various groups in Algeria.<sup>356</sup> Hamet used his French-language writings to counter the apparent *colon* monopoly on defining identity in Algeria. His position sat uneasily between the abstract universalism of elite

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<sup>354</sup> Ageron, Charles, "Le Mouvement jeune-algerien", 230.

<sup>355</sup> Dunwoodie, 56.

<sup>356</sup> Zack, Lisbeth, "French and Algerian Identity Formation in 1890s Algiers", 120.

republican theory and the importance of a territory-based idea of citizenship<sup>357</sup> and the more cosmopolitan understanding of Algerian identity that existed during the reign of Napoleon III.<sup>358</sup>

As was explored in Chapter 1 this work dealt extensively with the history of North Africa along with the impact of the French occupation of the region, but with a specific focus on Algeria. A further focus of the work, however, was to present and promote his conception of a civic identity in Algeria to his French audience. Hamet saw the notion of legal and political equality as being crucial for the creation of workable Franco-Algerian identity. An important aspect of Hamet's defence of the ability of Muslim Algerians to be fully integrated into French society was his rejection of immutable racial categories that determined a group's cultural, intellectual or political potential. As with the Ottomanism expressed by many non-Turkish and non-Muslim Ottomans, the identity conceived of by Hamet can be seen as embodying a desire for self-preservation. It was not, as many in France believed, a question of "preserving the name of their race and the mark of their nature as a form of protest."<sup>359</sup>

Both the Ottoman and Algerian writers placed a strong emphasis on inter-ethnic, inter-cultural and inter-religious harmony when discussing Ottoman or Algerian/Franco-Algerian identity. Attached to this was a complementary emphasis on adaptation and evolution. Identity was conceived of and presented

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<sup>357</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>358</sup> Murray-Miller, Gavin, "A Conflicted Sense of Nationality: Napoleon III's Arab Kingdom and the Paradoxes of French Multiculturalism", *French Colonial History* Vol. 15 (2014), 3.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid, 9.

as a process and a progression. It was not something necessarily innate, but something to work towards.

In Chapter, 1 Hamet used his discussion of the history of North Africa to make a calculated political point to his French audience. The long sweep of migration and ethnic, linguistic and cultural mixing that characterised the history of North Africa, Hamid argued, rendered European theories of racial superiority untenable. He rejected the idea that one could speak confidently of “pure ethnic groups” in Algeria, or even in France for that matter.<sup>360</sup> Hamid’s interpretation of the history of North Africa is crucial for one aspect of his interpretation of Algerian identity: that the apparent backwardness of Muslim Algerians is the result of changeable factors such as culture and weak political institutions and not due to inherent racial characteristics.<sup>361</sup> Like certain interpretations of Ottomanism, such as that articulated by Yusuf Fehmi, Hamet’s ‘Franco-Algerianism’ rested on the belief that a non-racial or religious identity can be created by providing an effective cultural and intellectual underpinning.

The emphasis on the cycle of invasion, migration and cultural transfer and the ultimate creation of a new civilization allowed Hamet to position Muslim Algerians as historically prepared to absorb elements of French civilization and out of it create a new Algerian identity.

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<sup>360</sup> Hamet, Ismael. *Les Musulmans français du Nord de l’Afrique*, 98.

<sup>361</sup> Ismael Hamet would carry this interpretation of North African and Algerian history through his later writings up until 1914.

He writes:

*Nous venons de voir, dans les grandes lignes, l'histoire séparée des Berbères et des Arabes; nous allons essayer de démontrer comment les deux peuples se sont mélangés assez complètement en Afrique, pour former une race métisse qui n'est pas sans avoir, dans la région maritime, quelques affinités avec les Latins.* (We have just seen, in outline, the separate history of the Berbers and the Arabs; we will try to demonstrate how the two peoples mingled completely in Africa to form a mixed race that is not without, in the Maritime region, some similarities with the Latins.)<sup>362</sup>

This view of the flexibility and essential arbitrary nature of fixed racial identities was crucial to Ismael Hamet's conception of the future of Algerian identity and their integration with the French. In his French language writings he sought to use a set of European and Islamic authors to buttress his ideas about the primacy of culture over race in determining the potential of a people to modernise. Ismael Hamet was keen to stress the Khaldunian historical pattern of rise and decline. He then combined this with the works of several European writers such as Boissier, d'Avezac, Mercier and Le Bon to provide evidence of the historical adaptability of the population of North Africa throughout history.<sup>363</sup> One can see the clear influence of Le Bon's ideas on the utility of nationalism to control the masses and overcome any apparent differences in race or identity.<sup>364</sup> In this way Hamet aimed to refute certain European racial theories and present an alternative blueprint for progress to his European audience.

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<sup>362</sup> Hamet, *Les Musulmans français du Nord de l'Afrique*, 84.

<sup>363</sup> These were largely works of history such as d'Avezac's *L'Afrique ancienne*, Boissier's *L'Afrique romaine*, and Le Bon's *La Civilisation des Arabes*.

<sup>364</sup> Nye, Robert A. *The Origins of Crowd Psychology: Gustave Le Bon and the Crisis of Democracy in the Third Republic*. London: Sage Publications, 1975, 35.

As a Muslim Algerian Ismael Hamet wanted to both engage with and subvert the work of French Orientalist scholars. It is insufficient to see his conception of Algerian identity as one that was unabashedly assimilationist. Ismael Hamet sought to apply his ideas about the transfer of culture, language and learning that had been a staple of early North African history to Algeria's current colonial context. He accomplished this by emphasising the contemporary manifestations of this cycle. This expressed to his European audience the viability of an Algerian identity within the French-colonial context. Hamet writes that:

L'histoire nous montre les peuplades berbères s'infusant le sang de tous leurs vainqueurs: Carthaginois, Romains, Vandales et Byzantins, changeant avec eux de religion, de civilisation et de moeurs, mais persistantes comme élément dominant de population. Pénétrés et influencés plus largement qu'ils ne le furent jamais, par les Arabes qui leur imposent partout leur religion, leur langue et leurs moeurs, les Berbères se composent avec eux comme avec les autres conquérants.

(History shows us the Berber tribes are infused with the blood of all their conquerors: Carthaginians, Romans, Vandals and Byzantines, changing with them their religion, culture and morals, but persisted as the dominant element of the population. Penetrated and influenced more widely than ever by the Arabs who imposed everywhere their religion, their language and their customs, the Berbers mixed with them as with other conquerors.)<sup>365</sup>

What Hamet attempts to communicate to his European audience is the malleability and illusory nature of race as a meaningful category in Algeria. Other Young Algerians, such as Chérif Benhabilès, also emphasized the "essential Berberism of all Algerians."<sup>366</sup> John Ruedy points to the desire to reflect certain themes in French colonial scholarship along with Benhabilès' personal status as

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<sup>365</sup> Hamet, *Les Musulmans français du Nord de l'Afrique*, 291.

<sup>366</sup> Ruedy, John. "Cherif Benhabyles and the Young Algerians", in *Franco Arab Encounters*. Carl L. Brown & Matthew S. Gordon eds. Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1996, 356.

Berber as driving this opinion. It would seem, however, that in the context of engagement in the French sphere that this explanation is insufficient.<sup>367</sup> It is more useful to look at this approach as one designed to highlight the ability of Muslim Algerians to absorb and reflect the values of their conquerors while maintaining control of the levers of government and society in Algeria. This is why Ismael Hamet, for instance, makes sure to emphasize the impact of Roman and Byzantine influence on the Berbers. He continues to make this point through his discussion of the Arab conquest and subsequent Islamicization of Algeria.

Hamet aims to impress on his audience that a cultural and ethnic affinity with Latin culture. Additionally Hamet's emphasis on the coastal areas goes to the heart of the particular elitism at the heart of his vision for a future Algerian national identity. He accepts that the modern Algerian identity that he envisions is not something that can be applied to the entire population. Through his French-language writings he sought to assure his French audience of this fact. It was an indirect declaration of loyalty, an indication of mutual understanding within a distinctly European intellectual space. Just as the Berbers were Latinized and Arabized yet retained ultimate numerical superiority, so in the same manner they could be Gallicized:

*Tout se mêlent et se confondent, sous le titre de sujets français, dans les villes anciennes et nouvelles, dans les villages de colonisation, dans les tribes autrefois errantes, aujourd'hui fixées au sol cultivé; et dans cet ensemble, un seul élément demeure dominant, comme race, ainsi qu'il le fut toujours, c'est l'élément berbère.*

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<sup>367</sup> Ibid.

(All mix and mingle under the title of French subjects in the old cities and the new, in the villages of colonization, in the tribes that once wandered, now attached to the cultivated land; and in this set, a single element remains dominant, as a race, as it was always, the Berber element.)<sup>368</sup>

It appears that despite his continued insistence on the historical realities that render the division of humanity along strict racial lines meaningless, the category of 'Berber' holds a certain importance for Hamet. His writings on this subject were later reprinted in an issue of the pro-association newspaper *La France Islamique* in 1913 in order to reinforce the paper's argument that Muslim Algerians were indeed capable of being integrated into French society. The paper was founded in 1913 by two French *indigèneophiles*, Paul Bruzon and Numa Leal, and included contributions from both French and Algerian figures. Hamet's article, originally published in 1913 in the *Revue Indigène*, made several of the same arguments that were covered in his 1906 work. The emphasis was again on the fact that since the pre-modern period the Berbers have never ceased incorporating foreign elements and influences while still remaining the dominant group.<sup>369</sup> The article closes by asking why, in the face of such a long history of migration and intermingling, do Europeans still focus on the "inanity of race."<sup>370</sup> Race for Hamet is minimized as a useful way of grouping populations in his writings, yet there is a clear sense that he wishes to convey to his French audience that while race shouldn't be used to ascribe a set of inherent, immutable characteristics to a population group, it still had meaning when talking about questions of political control.

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<sup>368</sup> Ibid, 293.

<sup>369</sup> Hamet, Ismail, "Sur Les Affinités Entre Français et Arabo-Berbères", *La France Islamique*, 30 January 1913.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

## Ahmed Rıza and Questions of Turkishness

Many Ottoman writers also addressed the question of racial superiority in their French-language publications. The Young Turks, for instance, while supportive of European authors who endorsed the existence of racial hierarchies, found themselves unable to effectively invoke those theories in their writings due to the relatively low rank of Turks, Arabs and others in those hierarchies.<sup>371</sup> Thus, in their engagement with a European audience many Ottoman writers found themselves in the position of having to overlook or refute the racial theories espoused by the thinkers they so admired.<sup>372</sup> However, as a more open embrace of explicitly race-based theories of nationalism became more common among Ottoman groups including the Young Turks, especially in the wake of the Japanese defeat of Russia in 1904, their presentation within the French linguistic and cultural sphere was markedly more measured.<sup>373</sup>

In his book *La Crise de l'Orient* Ahmed Rıza criticizes the inability of Europeans to comprehend the true causes of the current crisis in the Ottoman Empire. He mentions the fact that:

*...les Européens se rabattent ainsi sur la singulière théorie des races avec laquelle ils croient expliquer tout...*

(...the Europeans fall back thus on the singular theory of races with which they believe they can explain everything...)<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, 298.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid.

<sup>373</sup> Worringer, Renée. "'Sick Man of Europe' or 'Japan of the Near East'?: Constructing Ottoman Modernity in the Hamidian and Young Turk Eras", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 36 (2004), 207-230.

<sup>374</sup> Ahmed Rıza. *La Crise de l'Orient: Ses Causes et ses remèdes*. Paris: Comité Ottoman d'Union et de Progres, 1907, 123.

Ahmed Rıza, like Ismael Hamet, rejects the European idea of a fixed racial hierarchy. This statement reflects the particularities of émigré engagement with the intellectual space of the host society. Racial distinctions are dismissed as meaningful categories for explaining the decline or relative backwardness of a particular group or civilization. Just as Ismael Hamet rejects the idea that one can speak in any useful way of a division between racially pure Berbers and Arabs, Ahmed Rıza questions the validity of talking about Turks as a meaningful racial category.

There is a similar desire in Ahmed Rıza's book to counter European perceptions of racial difference by highlighting the historical realities that render such concepts invalid and shift the focus of identity from ethnicity to language and culture. Ahmed Rıza points out that:

*On ne peut, certes, nier l'influence de climat - l'homme est fils de la terre qu'il habite -; ni celle des traditions, des institutions, politiques et religieuses, sur le caractère d'une nation.*

(We cannot, of course, deny the influence of climate - man is the son of the land he inhabits -; nor that of the traditions, the political and religious institutions, on the character of a nation.)<sup>375</sup>

This is essentially the line of reasoning that Ismael Hamet takes when addressing his conception of Muslim Algerian identity to a European audience. The importance of the factors listed above for both Ismael Hamet and Ahmed Rıza is the fact that they are all malleable. The specific direction of engagement that these French-language writings embody creates a discussion that is as much about repurposing as refutation.

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<sup>375</sup> Ibid, 124.

Şükrü Hanioglu emphasizes the shift toward a more Turkist and even Turkish nationalist line in Young Turk writings between 1902 and 1907.<sup>376</sup> For Ahmed Rıza an appeal to the relative irrelevance of race was balanced with an explicit acknowledgement of Turk as a useful category for analysis. He worked to de-emphasize the racial character of Turk as a category of identity in much the same way as Ismael Hamet. Ahmed Rıza asks if Europeans can actually point to anyone who is a pure ‘Turk’ and highlights the long history of racial mixing, especially in Istanbul between Turks and Greeks and Circassians.<sup>377</sup> He then goes further stating that:

*Toute une population de Turquie d’Europe, de races différentes, une fois convertie à l’Islamisme, s’est également mêlée à la race turque.*

(An entire population of European Turkey, of different races, once converted to Islam, also mixed with the Turkish race.)<sup>378</sup>

This conception of racial mixing was very similar to that proposed by Ismael Hamet in his works. Like his Ottoman counterparts Hamet’s vision of this new Algerians identity was highly elitist. Just as the Ottomanism envisioned by Ottoman writers was largely concerned with those in the urban and elite sections of society, so too was Ismael Hamet’s Algerian identity a limited one. Hamet uses his historical model to demonstrate how this new Algerian identity is being formed and the shape that it would take. For Hamet this new identity involves the integration of French practices, but not the wholesale suppression of the pre-existing Arabo-Berber identity. A people’s identity was something

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<sup>376</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, 295.

<sup>377</sup> Ahmed Rıza. *La Crise de l’Orient*, 123.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*

malleable that could be augmented by French influence without being wholly subsumed. Once Ismael Hamet had laid out the historical justification for the ability of Muslim Algerians to both absorb and augment French culture he then set about explaining to his European audience how exactly this would be achieved.<sup>379</sup>

Ismael Hamet saw a specific class of *indigène* as responsible for the creation of an integrated Franco-Algerian identity. This class was formed of those Muslim Algerians who lived in close proximity to and had regular contact with Europeans and came largely from the merchant and professional classes.<sup>380</sup> It was this class, coastal and educated, that was instrumental in creating this new identity. Belief in the importance of an elite as the natural drivers of creating a new Algerian identity was bound up with Hamet's conception of North African history. For Hamet the history of the region provided a template for the creation of this new identity. Just as the Romans had spread their civilization among a "semi-barbarous" elite the French, with their superior methods of penetration would effect a similar change among a far greater segment of the population.<sup>381</sup> Crucial for Hamet was the tendency, as he saw it, for this class to engage in mixed marriages and some of the youngest among them who were even born to European mothers.<sup>382</sup> For Hamet it is necessary to express to his European audience the accomplishments of this class of Muslim Algerians as an indication of the shape that the new Algerian identity would take.

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<sup>379</sup> Hamet, *Les Musulmans français dans le Nord de l'Afrique*, 246.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid*, 247.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid*, 293.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid*, 247-8.

Like many of his Ottoman counterparts, Ismael Hamet used his French-language writings to stress that religious diversity was not an impediment to a workable communal identity. Hamet, as we saw in Chapter 2, believed that Islam was not inherently antithetical to progress. He praised those in the elite who maintained a strong affinity for Islam as a personal faith “...*sans rapport avec les liens des anciennes groupements indigènes...*”<sup>383</sup> A new Algerian identity needed to embrace an Islam stripped of its overt political content. Hamid needed to stress to his European audience that religion pushed into the private sphere would not represent an impediment to the formation of a modern Algerian identity. Rather Hamet blamed the reactionary, institutionalized religion in the form of the inquisition and the marabout caste for breaking the natural links and affinity between the northern and southern coasts of the Mediterranean.<sup>384</sup>

What is clear, however, is that the formation of this new identity is contingent upon the continued dominance of the Berber element in Algeria. Hamet concludes his 1906 study by writing:

*En résumé les éléments divers dont se compose la société africaine de l'Algérie sont appelés à s'unifier, en s'incorporant des éléments européens, mais au bénéfice de la prédominance croissante de la race berbère.*

(In summary, the various elements that make up the African society of Algeria are called to unite, by incorporating European elements, but for the benefit of the growing dominance of the Berber race.)<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>383</sup> Ibid, 248.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid, 312.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid, 313.

### **Duties of Empire, Duties of Citizens: 1908-1914**

For both Ottoman and Algerian émigrés the concepts of identity and citizenship were often closely linked with questions of duty and obligation between the state and its subjects. The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 brought with it renewed hopes for the future among many groups in the Ottoman Empire. Those intellectuals and writers outside of the Committee of Union and Progress, the central organization behind the revolution, were encouraged by the claims of individual liberty, press freedom and other liberalizations promised by the new government.

The Ottomanism of the post-1908 period was driven largely by initial expectations that the restoration of the constitution and the parliament would work to buttress a workable Ottoman identity and later by reaction to the increasingly Turkist stance and policies of the CUP. The success of the CUP in restoring the constitution and the parliament breathed new life into the desire of many of those both inside and outside the movement to create a workable Ottoman citizenship. As one author put it:

*Aussitôt après la proclamation du régime libéral et constitutionnel, Turcs, Arméniens, Grecs, délivrés du joug qui les opprima si longtemps, s'embrassaient dans les rues de Constantinople et musulmans, chrétiens et juifs se visitaient réciproquement dans les synagogues, églises et mosques.* (Immediately after the proclamation of the liberal and constitutional regime, Turks, Armenians, Greeks, delivered from the yoke that oppressed them so long, embraced in the streets of Constantinople and Muslims, Christians and Jews visited each other in their synagogues, churches and mosques.)<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> Chérif, "La Constitution en Turquie et les Agissements du Comité", *Méchroutiette*, 15 October 1909.

For the Young Algerians the introduction in 1912 of mandatory conscription for the territory's Muslim subjects provoked considerable resistance and reassessment from many of these ostensibly pro-French figures. Service in the French army prompted renewed discussion over identity and belonging among many Young Algerians. The failure of the French government to effectively integrate the Muslim Algerian population into French society was seen by many of the Young Algerians as simply a failure to understand the racial, cultural and religious realities of Algeria.

By 1909 many Ottoman publications began to express concern over the policies of the Committee of Union and Progress government. The perceived abuses of power and increasing Turco-centric policies of the CUP forced writers to engage with renewed vigour questions of identity and citizenship.<sup>387</sup> The shape that this identity was to take and how was it was to be maintained and developed took on a much more pressing importance in light of the rapid changes and reforms being carried by the CUP government.

Some of these Ottoman writers, such as Nicholas Nicolaides, never returned to the Ottoman Empire and continued to publish *L'Orient* through the 1908 revolution and its aftermath until 1912. Others, such as those involved in the publication of *Méchroutiette* (1909-1914), the organ of the opposition *Parti Radical Ottoman*, relocated, or, in some cases, returned, to Paris in order to raise their questions and concerns about the new regime for a European audience. *Méchroutiette* became, in the post-1908 period one of the more stable anti-

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<sup>387</sup> Arai, 46.

regime newspapers to still maintain an avowedly Ottomanist line. The *Parti Radical Ottoman* or *Islahat-i Esasiye-i Osmaniye Fırkası* was based in Paris and was headed by the former Ottoman Ambassador to Stockholm Şerif Paşa.<sup>388</sup> This party ostensibly contained Ottoman of multiple nationalities, but was largely dominated by Şerif Paşa and Mevlanzade Rifat who were both Kurdish.<sup>389</sup> Both would go on to lobby for Kurdish interests following the end of the First World War and this identity coloured their approach to Ottomanism and Ottoman identity as it was expressed in the pages of their journal.<sup>390</sup>

It is useful to contrast these two publications, *Méchroutiette* and *L'Orient*, for their assessments and interpretations of Ottoman identity following the Young Turk Revolution. Both papers ran for approximately the same length of time following the revolution and both were, at least on paper, strongly committed to the preservation of the Ottoman state and the idea of equality expressed through a common Ottoman citizenship and identity and both were headed by non-Turks. These publications offer a glimpse of the flexibility and diversity of Ottomanism as it was to be presented to the intellectual community in France in the aftermath of the 1908.

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<sup>388</sup> Tunaya, Tarık Zafer. *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler: Cilt 1 İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi 1908-1918*. Istanbul: Huriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1984, 219.

<sup>389</sup> Alakom, Rohat. *Şerif Paşa: bir Kürt diplomatının fırtınalı yılları, 1865- 1951*. Istanbul: Avesta, 1998, 59. Members of the party also included the journalist Ali Kemal and the former Jewish Young Turk and contributor to the *Mechveret*, Albert Fua.

<sup>390</sup> Özoğlu, Hakan. *Kurdish Notables and Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties and Shifting Boundaries*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2004, 16.

Other 'Young Turk' authors, such as Yusuf Fehmi, remained in Paris and continued to publish books offering additional insights into identity and belonging in the Ottoman Empire. These works, while by no means exhaustive, will hopefully provide an indication of the ways in which a diverse collection of the Empire's subjects hoped to present their vision for an Ottoman identity to Europe.

Non-Muslim Ottomans were especially occupied with the shape that the new constitutional regime in the Ottoman Empire was taking. This section is only concerned with those writers who expressed in their publications a clear desire to maintain the territorial and political integrity of the Ottoman Empire. It will not look at the many non-Muslim writers who were advocating for political independence based on a common ethno-religious identity.

In the wake of the 1908 revolution Nicolas Nicolaidis through his long-running publication *L'Orient*, sought to articulate a renewed allegiance to the Ottoman Sultan, at this point still Abdülhamid II, as the basis for the successful construction and maintenance of Ottomanism. He writes:

*Oui, l'Autorité Souverain doit etre tenue au-dessus de nos différends politiques, comme de nos différends de nationalités, elle doit être le trait-d'union indispensable pour rendre possible et maintenir l'union des races et des nationalités de l'Empire.*

(Yes, the Sovereign Authority must be held above our political differences, our differences of nationality, it must be the special bond necessary to enable and maintain the union of races and nationalities of Empire.)<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>391</sup> N. Nicolaidis, "Travaille a l'Union de Tous!", *L'Orient*, 15 February, 1909.

Even at this early stage there is a clear reluctance to acknowledge the CUP or even the newly reconstituted Ottoman Parliament as a focal point for Ottoman unity. The Sultan remained, in Nicolaidès opinion, the best source for communal loyalty and sees the work of creating a *union de tous* as something only he has the moral authority to accomplish.<sup>392</sup>

Nicolaidès too praised the apparent goal of the CUP, although he doesn't mention them by name, to "proclaim all Ottomans brothers united without any distinction of race or religion", but was well aware of the discrepancy between the claims of the CUP and the reality:

*Nous sommes absolument du même avis, et il ne vient à notre esprit, d'exclure qui se soit de cette union.*

(We are absolutely of the same view, and it does not occur to us, to exclude anyone from this union.)<sup>393</sup>

In this case Nicolaidès was referring to the Ottoman Bulgarians whom he was confident would choose to retain their Ottoman nationality if given the choice. Like his contemporaries at *Méchroutiète*, Nicolaidès sought to fill in the gaps between rhetoric and reality in the new constitutional regime of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomanism of Nicolaidès was, like that of *Méchroutiète*, one contingent on a degree of decentralization and the continuation of distinct communities with the Sultan as a communal focal point for loyalty and patriotism. In his position as an Ottoman Greek Nicolaidès was focused primarily

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<sup>392</sup> Ibid.

<sup>393</sup> N. Nicolaidès, "La Situation Extérieure de l'Empire Ottoman", *L'Orient*, 15 April 1909.

on the role and place of Ottoman Christians in the empire. He views Ottoman Christians as partners in the Ottoman state but implicitly acknowledges the particularity of their position vis-à-vis the governing ideology. He insists on the need for equality and the ability of Ottoman Christians to be loyal and effective Ottoman citizens, but does not necessarily see them as having an active role in determining the criteria of Ottoman identity. In this sense Nicolaides takes a much more classical and confessional view of Ottomanism in which the Sultan provides the locus for loyalty and citizenship and confessional differences and privileges form an integral part of the imperial citizenry.

This was a position taken by other Ottoman Christian émigrés such as Farid Kassab. Kassab was Greek Orthodox Christian from Palestine who spent time studying in Paris and also published a pamphlet refuting the proto-Arab nationalist and anti-Turkish 1905 work *La Réveil De La Nation Arabe* by Negib Azoury.<sup>394</sup> Like Nicolaides Kassab envisioned a communal Ottoman identity rooted in loyalty to the Sultan and the maintenance of the territorial integrity of the empire.<sup>395</sup> This refutation took place in a French-language context and was addressed not so much to Azoury himself, but to a European reading public. Both Nicolaides and Kassab were concerned with legitimizing the Sultan as the head of state to their European audience.

Nicolaides writes that it is the sincere wish of all Ottoman patriots to work according to the beliefs and wishes of the Sultan and that within the framework

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<sup>394</sup> Wild, Stefan, "Ottomanism versus Arabism. The Case of Farid Kassab (1884-1970)", 613.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid, 614.

of the constitution Ottoman citizens are able to do good and useful work under the Sultan's direction.<sup>396</sup> In Nicolaides writings in 1909 the CUP was not even mentioned as a potential source of or focus for loyalty or devotion to the Ottoman nation. The new government was only mentioned obliquely and Nicolaides takes great care to emphasize the connection between the Sultan and the CUP. The CUP is framed as willing agent and collaborator of the Sultan rather than a reactionary or revolutionary force:

*Par le choix de ses mandataires, la Nation Ottomane a montré qu'elle entend poursuivre avec le Souverain, l'oeuvre si bien commencée par Lui. Ainsi l'Empire Ottoman continuera de se développer et de s'avancer dans la voie du Progres.*

(By the choice of its representatives, the Ottoman Nation has shown it intends to pursue with the Sovereign, the work so well begun by him. Thus will the Ottoman Empire continue to grow and advance on the path of Progress.)<sup>397</sup>

The Sultan-led process of Ottomanization favoured by Nicolaides was tested in April of 1909 following the deposition of Abdülhamid by the CUP and his replacement by Mehmed V.<sup>398</sup> This action was seen as unacceptable by Nicolaides and pushed *L'Orient* towards a more explicitly anti-CUP and anti-Turkish (as opposed to anti-Ottoman) position.<sup>399</sup> Nicolaides was well aware of the other post-1908 émigré publications that had emerged and sought to measure the impact of these publications based on their approach to Ottoman identity. In the May/June 1909 issue of *L'Orient* he discusses the founding of the

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<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid.

<sup>398</sup> Hanioglu, Şükrü. *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008, 162.

<sup>399</sup> Arai, Masami. "Citizen, Liberty and equality in Late Ottoman Discourse", in Nathalie Clayer and Erdal Kaynar eds. *Penser, agir et vivre dans l'Empire ottoman et en Turquie*. Paris: Peeters, 2013.

Ottomanist opposition paper *La Turquie Nouvelle*, founded in 1909, and published in Paris. Nicolaides admires the paper's mission and says that they share the same goal of grouping together all those who have an interest in the preservation and advancement of the Ottoman Empire for the benefit of all of its subjects.<sup>400</sup> He writes then that the sole difference between *L'Orient* and *La Turquie Nouvelle* is the latter's lack of respect for the recently deposed Sultan, Abdulhamid. Nicolaides still very much links the Sultanate to the stability of the empire and the possibility for any sort of acceptable Ottomanism.

The deposition of the Sultan by the CUP also allowed Nicolaides to take a more explicitly anti-government line and to change the focus of his paper once again.

On the front page of the July 1909 issue of *L'Orient* he writes:

*Jusqu'à présent "L'Orient" s'était consacré à la défense des intérêts généraux de l'Empire Ottoman. En le faisant, il accomplissait son devoir patriotique envers l'Empire, dont son Directeur est citoyen, et envers la nation grecque, dont il se flatte d'être un des fils les plus sincèrement dévoués.*

(Until now *L'Orient* was dedicated to the defense of the general interests of the Ottoman Empire. In doing so, it fulfilled its patriotic duty to the Empire, of which its Director is a citizen, and to the Greek nation, which he boasts of being one of its most sincerely devoted sons.)<sup>401</sup>

It is clear from this change that Nicolaides' conception of Ottomanism and Ottoman Christian identity is firmly rooted in the historical tradition of loyal and tolerated minority. Loyalty to the Ottoman state must, as he declares, be demonstrated and is not taken as a given. It is important for Nicolaides, however, that this sacrifice and communal effort take a particular shape. In many ways he is communicating to his European audience that Ottoman identity and allegiance

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<sup>400</sup> N. Nicolaides, "Les Fetes de "L'Orient"", *L'Orient*, May/June 1909.

<sup>401</sup> N. Nicolaides, "Ce que nous voulons faire", *L'Orient*, 15 July 1909.

to *La Patrie Ottomane* or *La Nation Ottomane*, as he calls it, should not be viewed as similar to that of French or German nationalism. Despite using the language of French republicanism Nicolaidis is clear that the future he envisions for the Ottoman Empire is not that of France:

*Mais, pour que l'union de tous éléments composant l'Empire Ottoman, qu'ils soient Musulmans, ou Chrétiens, soit réelle et profonde, il faut bien se rendre compte qu'elle ne doit pas devenir synonyme d'absorption de tel ou tel élément par tel autre.*

(But, for the union of all components of the Ottoman Empire, whether Muslims or Christians, to be real and profound, we must realize that it should not become synonymous with absorption of such and such an element by another.<sup>402</sup>

Nicolaidis is clear that his version of Ottoman patriotism is one that exists as an amalgam of the various individual patriotisms of the Empire:

*Or, il ne faut pas oublier que les droits et caractère sont à la base du patriotisme de chaque élément, et que c'est la réunion, l'agrégat de ces patriotismes divers, qui constituent le patriotisme Ottoman.*

(However, we must not forget that rights and character are the basis of each element of patriotism, and that it is the meeting, the aggregate of these various patriotisms, which constitute Ottoman patriotism.)<sup>403</sup>

As this conception of Ottoman identity began to give way to the growing Turkism of the CUP after 1908 new publications emerged to counter this trend and present their vision of Ottomanism to a European audience.

The desire to explain the realities of the Ottoman Empire to a European audience was a driving motivation behind French-language Ottoman publications from the

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<sup>402</sup> N. Nicolaidis, "Travaille a l'Union de Tous!", *L'Orient*, 15 February, 1909.

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*

beginning. The Young Turk revolution of 1908, however, created a new immediacy for many émigrés in an attempt to provide a counter-narrative to the one being offered by the CUP. Like Nicolaides, the contributors to the Paris-based paper *Méchroutiette* understood the pressing need to provide what they saw as accurate information to Europe. For *Méchroutiette* it was precisely because of the Ottoman Empire's immense diversity that European commentators were unable to effectively analyze the situation. The different groups are so separated by manners, culture and religion that any European writer finds himself unable to understand them.<sup>404</sup> They accuse European writers of being constantly misled, through no fault of their own, by those in the Ottoman Empire with their own "premeditated purposes" and "interests".<sup>405</sup> In this instance *Méchroutiette* emphasizes the immense heterogeneity of the Ottoman Empire in order to affirm to their European audience their position as insiders uniquely positioned to present the truth. Thus the paper seeks to outline the realities of Ottomanism for its European audience. To this end the paper proclaimed that:

*...c'est uniquement pour élever la voix en faveur de tous ceux qui n'ont ni la liberté d'exprimer chez eux leur mécontentement, ni les moyens de se faire entendre ailleurs.*

(...it is only to raise the voice in favour of all those who have neither the freedom to express their discontent at home, nor the means to be heard elsewhere.)<sup>406</sup>

*Méchroutiette* provides the most direct claim to act as a conduit between the people of the Ottoman Empire and Europe. This perceived role is inextricably linked to their conception and promotion of an Ottoman identity. A firmly

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<sup>404</sup> Chérif, "Plus de Constitution en Turquie", *Méchroutiette*, 15 November 1909.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Chérif, "La Constitution en Turquie et les Agissements du Comité", *Méchroutiette*, 15 October 1909.

Ottomanist stance can be immediately seen in the subtitle of *Méchroutiette*, which declared that it was “dedicated to the defence of the political and economic interests and equal rights of all Ottomans regardless of race or religion.”<sup>407</sup> While *Méchroutiette* decried the current policies of the CUP government in Istanbul in the aftermath of the revolution they saw its main events as positive and indeed absolutely necessary preconditions for the creation of a durable Ottomanism. The paper’s editor was very optimistic about the potential for all Ottomans to be united under a single Ottoman identity and uses the term *Patrie Ottoman*. He declared that the Ottoman Empire was a respectable and viable state whose diverse population would respond favourably to the political program of his constitutional league. For the key to Ottomanism was inextricably linked to constitutionalism. For an Ottoman Turkish paper *Méchroutiette* is noteworthy for their promotion of a certain amount of decentralization. This may be because they were already seeing the negative effects of increased Turkish nationalism on the non-Turkish populations of the Empire. *Méchroutiette* continued to promote its vision of Ottomanism until 1912, but to no avail. The disappointment was echoed by Nicholaides in *L’Orient* when he stated that the hopes and ideals of the Empire’s Christian populations had been shattered by the Turkification policies of the CUP.<sup>408</sup>

At this point *Méchroutiette* was firmly opposed to the nationalism of the CUP and the its detrimental impact on Ottoman unity. The paper’s editor blamed the

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<sup>407</sup> *Mécheroutiette*, 15 October 1909.

<sup>408</sup> N. Nicholaides, “L’Effondrement du Kalifat de Constantinople”, *L’Orient*, 15 January 1912.

policies of the CUP government for fuelling inter-ethnic hatred in Anatolia.<sup>409</sup>

Like Nicolaidis and *L'Orient*, *Méchroutiette* praises the 1908 revolution and the bravery of the soldiers involved. Unlike *L'Orient*, however, the Sultan is viewed as an unambiguously negative figure and one of the primary obstacles to the equality of all Ottomans.<sup>410</sup>

The paper conceived of an Ottomanism that conforms to the principles of the *Parti Radical Ottoman*. The paper writes that:

*Pour faire aujourd'hui de l'Empire ottoman un état respecté et viable, il ne suffit pas de secouer le joug de l'absolutisme et de dissiper le terreur qu'inspire le régime de la dictature occulte, il faut aussi assurer sincèrement et loyalement l'entente entre tous les éléments musulmans et non-musulmans, ce qui répond entièrement au programme politique de notre ligue constitutionnelle.* (To make the Ottoman Empire today a respected and viable state, it is not enough to shake off the yoke of absolutism and dispel the terror the rule of this secretive dictatorship inspires, there must also be sincere and honest agreement between all the Muslim and non-Muslim elements, which fully meets the political agenda of our constitutional league.)<sup>411</sup>

In its initial issues *Méchroutiette* is fairly vague as to how exactly it hopes to create and sustain a common Ottoman identity. While it claims that harmony between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire can be achieved through adherence to the political program of the *Parti Radical Ottoman* there is little indication of what this program entails. What emerges in the early issues of *Méchroutiette* is a firm belief in the existing constitutional basis for equality. Like *L'Orient* the paper supports, at least conditionally, the continuation of the religious privileges historically enjoyed by the empire's non-Muslim subjects.

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<sup>409</sup> Ibid. See also "Pour le Pouvoir et l'Argent", *Méchroutiette*, 10 January 1910.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid.

In response to the CUP government's apparent disregard for article 11 of the Ottoman constitution the paper writes:

*Etait-il opportun de créer des incidents de nature à nous aliéner inutilement la confiance de nos compatriotes non musulmans, alors que nous avons un besoin si urgent de nous unir?*

(Was it appropriate to create incidents of a nature unnecessarily alienating the trust of our fellow non-Muslims, when we so urgently need to unite?)<sup>412</sup>

It is clear that at this point *Méchroutiette* is taking a fairly pragmatic approach to the question of Ottoman identity and citizenship. It is also clear that the question of equality for all Ottomans is one that is conditional and not inherent. Not unlike Nicolaides, *Méchroutiette* appears to conceive of an Ottoman identity that largely rests with the empire's Muslim population. Ottoman Christians must subscribe to this Ottoman identity and Ottoman patriotism that they themselves are not responsible for creating. In this sense non-Muslims must become Ottomans. This approach can be seen in the way in which differences are reinforced through the constant reiteration of the empire's diversity. It is telling that Austria-Hungary is mentioned as an example of a diverse and multi-ethnic empire that takes a favourable approach to managing this fact. *Méchroutiette* openly favours the type of balancing act that they seem to believe the Austro-Hungarians have managed:

*L'amalgame dont se compose notre pays, amalgame de races si différentes par la religion, les mœurs et le langage, impose aux gouvernants le devoir impérial d'établir une base d'entente qui concilie, au lieu de les exclure, les intérêts de chaque partie constitutive.*

(The amalgam which makes up our country, an amalgam of races so different by religion, customs and language, requires of the rulers the imperial duty to establish a basic agreement that balances rather than excludes the interests of each constituent part.)<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>412</sup> Chérif, "Plus de Constitution en Turquie", *Méchroutiette*, 15 November 1909.

<sup>413</sup> Chérif, "L'égalité des races", *Méchroutiette*, 1 October 1910.

What is revealed by the comparison with Austria-Hungary here is that it seems to offer a conception of the many non-Muslim elements of the Ottoman Empire as a clear minority to be granted and guaranteed equal rights rather than a group with an inherent equal share in the Ottoman state.

*Méchroutiette* claims in an article from January 1910 entitled *Notre Programme* that in their view the application of an *education sociale appropriée* was necessary to create a workable *fraternité* between all Ottomans.<sup>414</sup> However it is clear that this education program was to be more specifically aimed at non-Muslims and those non-Turkish Muslims, such as the Kurds. In this way while *Méchroutiette* seeks to offer a more egalitarian view of Ottoman citizenship and identity than the CUP it is clear that there is at least the implicit acknowledgement that certain groups more than others are responsible for determining and setting out the parameters of Ottoman identity. This position was more openly embraced by members of the CUP government themselves who, in the pages of French publications, sought to assure their European audiences that the new Ottoman government was not in fact anti-Christian. Engagement with the French-language press was just as important for members of the government as it was for members of the opposition in the all-important battle for public opinion. In an article for the French journal *L'Islam* an Ottoman deputy named Selim Bey outlines his view of the future of parliamentarianism in Turkey.

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<sup>414</sup> La Direction, "Notre Programme", *Méchroutiette*, 1 January 1910.

He claims that they, meaning in this case the CUP, respect:

*...la personne du souverain, la tradition du peuple et la liberté de conscience, dans cet amalgame de nationalités et de religions qu'est la Turquie.*

(...the person of the sovereign, the traditions of the people and the freedom of conscience, in this mix of nationalities and religions that is Turkey.)<sup>415</sup>

Despite these claims, however, it is clear that this respect is conditional. The liberties and equality granted to all Ottomans require an exhibition of loyalty from the non-Muslim, specifically Christian, subjects of the empire. For Selim Bey Ottoman Christians must demonstrate that they are willing to work hand in hand with their Muslim brothers for the prosperity of their country.<sup>416</sup> In this case the new Ottoman government continued to find utility in engagement with the French-language press. These “official” texts functioned not so much as propaganda for the new regime as a dialogue with the French reading public. The journals *L'Islam* and *Revue du Monde Musulman* provided an ideal space for Ottoman and Algerian writers to participate in a conversation about identity and their role in society.

It is possible to see the conception of non-Muslim Ottomans as minority partners expressed in several of the articles of the manifesto of the *Parti Radical Ottoman*, which appears for the first time in the June 1910 issue of *Méchroutiette*. It is an essentially liberal manifesto, calling for, among other things, free trade, a free press, equal taxation, mandatory secular primary education and the abolition of

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<sup>415</sup> Selime Bey, “L’avenir du parlementarisme en Turquie”, *L'Islam*, December 1909, 77.

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid*, 79.

cruel and unusual punishment. The office of the Sultan remains very much a part of the political future envisioned by the party, but he is to take the form of constitutional monarch.<sup>417</sup> Islam is to remain very clearly the religion of State, but Article 1 acknowledges religious freedom and equality before the law.

There is a clear emphasis on the adaptation of the constitutionalism on “the most civilized nations” with a respect for the specific national traditions of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>418</sup> It is clearly important to the writers of *Méchroutiette* to provide assurances to its European audience that equality would be maintained without the elimination of existing privileges for the Empire’s non-Muslim subjects. The newspaper was, at this time, sharing a discursive space with a variety of French-language publications put out by specific ethnic and religious groups from the Ottoman Empire. Arabs, Greeks and Armenians all competed for sympathy and engagement within the French political and intellectual sphere. *Méchroutiette* needed to insure that its positions were not seen as disadvantaging non-Muslims. This can be seen in the party manifesto’s emphasis on equal taxation and also its position on education. *Méchroutiette*, and by extension, the *Parti Radical Ottoman* saw, like many of their contemporaries, national education as being an integral part of the process of forging a new identity or patriotism. Yet in their position as a French-language publication they are intently aware of expressing any position that would seem to advocate for the assimilation of the empire’s non-Muslim subjects. Thus their position emphasizes the need for primary education to be mandatory but makes no

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<sup>417</sup> *Méchroutiette*, 1 June 1910.

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*

mention of the language of instruction or questions of religious affiliation. This can be contrasted with many Algerian writers who clearly stated that while Arabic would continue to be taught in certain contexts secular education in the French language would form the backbone of assimilationist efforts.<sup>419</sup>

*Méchroutiette* in a later issue also provides the party manifesto for *L'Entente Libérale*, the primary opposition party in the Ottoman Empire after 1908. The party also promoted a strongly Ottomanist agenda and put an enormous amount of faith in both the constitution and the Ottoman parliament as the primary means of ensuring and promoting equality among all Ottoman subjects.<sup>420</sup> The party, however, also conceives of Ottomanism in majority/minority terms. Again the view of Ottomanism being presented is one in which the non-Muslim and especially non-Turkish elements of the empire are minority partners in a communal state.

One of the primary concerns of *Méchroutiette* during this period was the growing ethno-nationalism of the Turkish-led CUP. For them the move towards equality among all Ottomans was an integral aspect of a teleological progression that had been long interrupted by Abdulhamid, but restored by the 1908 revolution.<sup>421</sup>

*Méchroutiette* calls the CUP *nationaliste par essence* and claims that they are in danger of once again interrupting this natural progression. The paper claims that the nationalism of the CUP is especially dangerous as it exploits a general anti-

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<sup>419</sup> Both Ismael Hamet and Chérif Benhabilés held this belief.

<sup>420</sup> "Le programme de l'Entente Libérale", *Méchroutiette*, 1912.

<sup>421</sup> Chérif, "Les dangers du nationalisme en Turquie", *Méchroutiette*, 1 March 1910.

European feeling to create the illusion of Ottoman solidarity.<sup>422</sup> *Méchroutiette* also attacks the idea of Turkish supremacy by appealing to the realities of racial mixing and intermarriage in the Ottoman Empire. Here the paper attempts to counter the concept that one can speak of a definitively ‘Turkish’ race in the Ottoman Empire and counters that there can only be a very small portion of the population that could be considered in any way purely Turkish.<sup>423</sup> Additionally the author questions the idea of the inseparability of religion from nationality among many of the Empire’s non-Muslim subjects.

In many ways this approach to race reflects the position outlined by the Turkish sociologist, poet and political activist Ziya Gokalp in his 1923 work *The Principles of Turkism*. In this work Gokalp argued against the ethno-nationalist Turks who claimed racial supremacy over the other groups in the empire.<sup>424</sup> He criticized these individuals for both assuming a relationship between racial and social characteristics and for confusing the idea of ‘nation’ with that of ‘kinship’.<sup>425</sup>

What *Méchroutiette* and others, including many Algerian émigrés, did not believe was the inability of cosmopolitanism and nationalism to co-exist. Neither did they believe, as Gokalp did, that total cultural and linguistic unity was necessary to maintain a functioning national state.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>422</sup> Ibid.

<sup>423</sup> “Tableau des éléments constitutifs de l’Empire ottomane”, *Méchroutiette*, 1 December 1910.

<sup>424</sup> Parla, Taha, “The Social of Political Thought of Ziya Gokalp”, in *Social, Economic and Political Studies of the Middle East Volume XXXV*. Leiden: Brill, 1985, 34.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid, 35.

This is echoed in an article entitled *Les Nationalites Musulmanes en Turquie* the author looks to the peculiar ethno-confessional situation of many Ottoman Christian groups and contrasts it with that of the Kurds, which he refers to as a *nationalité*. The author mentions that while the various Christian populations of the empire are able to appeal to their religious leaders in order to redress their grievances whereas the Kurds are afforded no such option.<sup>427</sup> The conception of Ottoman identity reflected in this article is one that is heavily cosmopolitan. It is clear that a grouping of ethno-linguistic identities were meant to form the basis of a shared Ottoman identity. For this reason *Méchroutiette* took great care to present the diversity of the Ottoman population in its pages to its European audience as a means of countering the CUP's apparent monopoly on Ottoman identity.

The restoration of the constitution was meant to provide an avenue for the recognition of Kurdish national identity as a component of a greater Ottoman identity.<sup>428</sup> He criticizes the attempts by the CUP to Turkicize the Kurds with appeals to a shared Sunni Muslim religious identity and states that a people can change their religion but they cannot change their nationality.<sup>429</sup> For the author there is a clear emphasis and acknowledgement of nationalities within the Ottoman Empire and a very deliberate opposition to any sort of assimilationist concept of shared citizenship. The author blames the promotion of this idea on the fact that many of the leaders of the CUP had studied in Paris, where they came under the belief that they could substitute the idea of nationality for that of

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<sup>427</sup> "Les Nationalites Musulmanes en Turquie", *Méchroutiette*, 1913.

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*

religion.<sup>430</sup> This point is also made by Nicolaides in *L'Orient*, when he says that: “while the desire for union among all Ottomans is real and profound it must not occur with the absorption of one element by another.”<sup>431</sup> It is important for both of these publications to convey to their European audience that the common Ottoman identity and citizenship they envision is different from that in France. It is possible to see this as a thinly veiled criticism of France’s attempts to integrate her Muslim subjects into a common French identity.

For many Ottoman writers grappling with the topics of loyalty and citizenship during the Second Constitutional Period the question of who belonged to the Ottoman nation were frequently raised. *Méchroutiette* tended to approach this question, as stated above, by including exhaustive lists of all of the constitutive elements of the Ottoman Empire. However, both *L'Orient* and *Méchroutiette* struggled with the question of the role that the Ottoman Empire’s Jewish subjects would play in the creation of a new communal Ottoman identity.<sup>432</sup>

The role that Ottoman Jews played in the 1908 revolution and the subsequent CUP government was one that caused a great deal of speculation and suspicion. Both Ottoman figures themselves and foreign governments questioned the position and influence that Jews played in the new governments and the policies that it was pursuing. This was driven in large part by the prominence of the Jewish population in Salonika, which was a major centre for revolutionary

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<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

<sup>431</sup> N. Nicolaides, “Travaille a l’Union de Tous!”, *L'Orient*, 15 February, 1909.

<sup>432</sup> Cohen, Julia Phillips. *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, 156.

activity prior to 1908. Additionally the role played by Masonic lodges, most of which had sizable Jewish membership, in providing meeting space for revolutionaries in Macedonia further aroused concern. For Ottoman writers, to engage with the European intellectual sphere provided the possibility for engaging with European anti-Semitism, which had grown more intellectually sophisticated throughout the nineteenth century. The common themes of divided loyalty, profiteering and political manipulation all emerged in these publications as they sought to reckon with the place of the Jews in *La Patrie Ottomane*.<sup>433</sup>

The established connection between Freemasonry and the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 helped to further fuel the narratives of anti-Semitic conspiracy that were swirling around this event. The question of Freemasonry and anti-Semitism in the Ottoman Empire and the wider Muslim world has been studied extensively.<sup>434</sup> European involvement in the foundation and expansion of Masonic lodges in the Ottoman Empire made them inherently suspect in the eyes

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<sup>433</sup> In many ways this mirrored the backlash against those elite Levantine families that had enjoyed political and economic power during the Hamidian period. Both groups represented something was seen as essentially 'foreign' and potentially unpatriotic in the eyes of many Ottoman Muslims. This inherent mistrust of 'cosmopolitanism' would be reflected back at the CUP by opposition groups after 1908. See Hanssen, Jens. "Malhamé-Malfamé: Levantine Elites And Transimperial Networks on the Eve of the Young Turk Revolution", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 43 (2011), 25-48.

<sup>434</sup> See Kedourie, Ellie, "Young Turks, Freemasons and Jews", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 7/1 (1971), 89-104, Hanioğlu, Şükrü. *The Young Turks in Opposition*, and Ozan Arslan and Cinar Ozen, "The Rebirth of the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress in Macedonia Through the Italian Freemasonry", *Oriente Moderno*, 24/1 (2005) 93-115.

those outside their membership.<sup>435</sup> The role of Masonic lodges as meeting spaces and was in many ways an integral part of the success of the revolution and after the revolution the Committee of Union and Progress began to establish its own lodges separate from the main European obediences.<sup>436</sup>

This expansion of Freemasonry, however, came increasingly to color the opinion of the CUP and of the revolution itself. While Freemasonry had been present in the Ottoman Empire since the late eighteenth century, focused awareness of it and opposition to it increased markedly in post-1908 period.<sup>437</sup> One of the key elements of this opposition to Freemasonry was the outsized role that Jews, both foreign and Ottoman, were seen to have played, through this Masonic network, in both the revolution and the subsequent government. Foreign governments and Ottoman opposition groups

Anti-Semitism had gripped France thoroughly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the wake of the Dreyfus Affair, which lasted from 1894 until its resolution in 1906. Dreyfus was a French-Jewish army officer from Alsace and was accused of passing French military secrets to the German embassy in Paris and arrested in December of 1894. His arrest and the subsequent revelations that the real culprit was a Catholic major in the army named Ferdinand Walsin Esterhazy, divided French society into Dreyfusard and anti-Dreyfusard camps.<sup>438</sup>

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<sup>435</sup> Dumont, Paul, "Freemasonry in Turkey: a by-product of Western penetration", *European Review*, 13/3 (2005), 481-493, 482-83.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid, 489.

<sup>437</sup> Landau, Jacob M., "Muslim Opposition to Freemasonry", *Die Welt des Islams*, 36/2 (1996), 186-203, 193.

<sup>438</sup> Johnson, Martin P. *The Dreyfus Affair*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999.

During this period there were multiple works published in France that sought to address the question of anti-Semitism. These tended to mirror the broader rift in the population and included pamphlets, essays and articles. It was within this literary and journalistic space that ideas about Judaism and the place of Jews in Western, and especially French, society were debated. From Emile Zola's famous *J'Accuse*<sup>439</sup> to the virulently anti-Semitic writings of figures like Ferdinand Brunetiere, competing viewpoints saturated print media in France during this period.

It was in this context that Emile Durkheim published his *Antisémitisme et crise sociale* in 1899 as part of a larger collection on anti-Semitism compiled by Henri Dagan. This work laid out the general contours of French anti-Semitism and to distinguish it from its Russian and German counterparts. For Durkheim French anti-Semitism was the result of particular events and the passions they provoked, in contrast to the more stable and traditional anti-Semitism that pervaded German and Russian society.<sup>440</sup> Durkheim in part blamed social malaise and the decay caused by the economic restructuring and specific historical crises of the nineteenth century, such as the events of 1848 and the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870.<sup>441</sup> Anti-Semitism emerged in response to these crises and served a social function by unifying a population around a perceived enemy. It was in this environment that opposition writers from the Ottoman Empire published their journals in the wake of the 1908

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<sup>439</sup> Zola, Emile, "J'Accuse", *L'Aurore*, January 13, 1898.

<sup>440</sup> Goldberg, Chad Allen, "Introduction to Emile Durkheim's "Anti-Semitism and Social Crisis", *Sociological Theory* 26/4 (2008), 299-321, 301.

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid*, 302.

revolution. And it was this environment that they took advantage of and spoke to through their French language writings.

For the Ottoman writers of the period the revolution of 1908 represented one of these historical crises to which Durkheim was referring and which resulted in an acute flare-up of anti-Semitism. The newspaper *Mechroutiette* provides one of the most sustained examples of an anti-Semitic response to the CUP government and its actions. Despite having Jewish contributors, *Mechroutiette* continued to present anti-Semitic narratives about the elite of the new government.

In an article entitled *Un avertissement* from August 1911, *Méchroutiette* sought to address what it saw as a gap in its analysis of the Ottoman Empire:

*Aux nombreuses questions d'actualité dans l'Empire Ottoman, questions albanaise, arabe, grecque, arménienne, etc., pour ne citer que celles qui se rapportent aux races, il faut encore en ajouter une autre, la question juive.*

(To the many current questions in the Ottoman Empire, the Albanian, Arabic, Greek, Armenian questions, etc., to mention only those that relate to race, it is still necessary to add another, the Jewish question.)<sup>442</sup>

The paper is very quick to point out that what they write does not arise out of hatred and they reaffirm their commitment to equality for all Ottomans.

*Méchroutiette's* discussion of the Jewish question begins by noting that the Jews have historically been treated very liberally by the Ottoman Empire. For *Méchroutiette* the concern is that certain Ottoman Jews are committed to taking revenge on the empire for humiliations visited against their co-religionists in

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<sup>442</sup> "Un avertissement", *Méchroutiette*, August 1911.

other countries.<sup>443</sup> There is a clear sense that Ottoman Jews do not necessarily fit with the idea of Ottoman nation expressed by *Méchroutiette*.

Much of this had to do with the question of Zionism and the role of the Empire's Jewish population in that particular enterprise. In another article from October 1911 entitled *Les dangers des virtus negatives*, the author states that it would be foolish and irresponsible to close ones eyes to the Jewish question in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>444</sup> The article begins by laying out the contours of the Jewish population in the Empire and dividing it into Sephardim, Ashkenazim and the Dönme.<sup>445</sup> This inclusion of the Dönme in the Jewish population was very strategic and no doubt was calculated to appeal to Western European fears of crypto-Jews and the popular narrative of Jews as a fifth column within Christian societies.

Again the article stresses the fact that the Jews in the Ottoman had always been treated very well, especially as compared to their co-religionists in Christian countries.<sup>446</sup> The article follows the standard anti-Semitic tropes that were common in France at the times and accuses those Jews and Dönme who now

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<sup>443</sup> Ibid.

<sup>444</sup> "Les dangers des virtus negatives", *Méchroutiette*, October 1911.

<sup>445</sup> The Dönme were Jews who had converted to Islam at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century at the behest of their leader Sabbatai Zevi. They were officially considered Muslims by the Ottoman State, but retained their own particular customs and religious practices and remained a relatively closed community. Popular mistrust and suspicion of this community increased markedly in the post-1908 period due to the participation of many Dönme in the revolution and their subsequent role in the CUP government. See Baer, Marc David. *The Dönme: Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries and Secular Turks*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid.

occupy positions in the government of acquiring them dishonestly. These tactics would seem to conform to Durkheim's idea of anti-Semitism creating unity though the creation of a common enemy, and that is precisely what the contributors to *Méchroutiette* sought to do.

Ultimately, however, *Méchroutiette* was forced to respond to perceived accusations of anti-Semitism and address its readership directly on the subject. In a March 1914 article entitled *Le Comité Union et Progre Contre Les Juifs*, the author informs his readers that they are sincerely committed to the principle of total equality among all Ottomans and in fact attempts to specifically distance their use of the term *Juif* as a negative term to describe members of the CUP with the way it is used in French anti-Semitic publications.<sup>447</sup> It goes on to differentiate again between Jews and the Dönme, who are the real object of the paper's antipathy. When they use the term *Juif* they are referring to the Dönme and not to Ottoman Jews. It is the Dönme who, according to the article, seek to quickly enrich themselves before the collapse of the Empire.<sup>448</sup>

These articles touch on many of the more common themes associated with anti-Semitism, including questions of loyalty and a belief in racial supremacy. The influence of Jews outside the Ottoman Empire is also raised and the paper asks if there can be any greater humiliation for the other races of the empire to have their future decided by negotiations between foreign Jews and Ottoman Jews.<sup>449</sup>

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<sup>447</sup> "Le Comité Union et Progres Contre Les Juifs", *Méchroutiette*, March 1914.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid.

*L'Orient* also raised the idea that Ottoman Jews were an obstacle to the stability and progress of the empire. In a 1912 article Nicolaidis writes that:

*A tort ou à raison – nous ne voulons pas entamer ici une discussion sur ce point – l'élément Juif apparait à beaucoup, dans nombre de pays, comme un ferment de division et de désagregation.*  
(Rightly or wrongly - we do not want to start a discussion here on this point - the Jewish element appears to many, in many countries, as a source of division and disintegration.)<sup>450</sup>

Like *Méchroutiette*, *L'Orient* attempts to protect itself from accusations of anti-Semitism by trying to focus on a specific case. One of the Ottoman Jews mentioned by name in both articles is Emmanuel Carasso, the deputy for Salonika and an important figure in the lead up to the revolution. He is described in *L'Orient* as being responsible for the current disunion and discord in the empire. Nicolaidis also accuses him of actively diminishing the role and dignity of the office of Caliph and Sultan.<sup>451</sup> Likewise *Méchroutiette* accuses Carasso of viewing himself as a successor to the power of Abdülhamid and asks if he now believes that his race should have absolute power.<sup>452</sup> This view of Carasso was also shared by the British consul in Salonika, who, in his 1910 report, portrayed Carasso as an ardent Freemason intent on “exercising Jewish influence over the new dispensation in Turkey.”<sup>453</sup> For both *L'Orient* and *Méchroutiette* it is clear that there were limits and boundaries to Ottoman identity. From both the Christian and Muslim perspective Ottoman Jews still represented something outside their conception of a common Ottoman identity.

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<sup>450</sup> N. Nicolaidis, “La succession est ouverte au Trône ou Califat, à l'Empire”, *L'Orient*, 7 September 1912.

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>452</sup> “Un avertissement”, *Méchroutiette*, August 1911.

<sup>453</sup> Kedourie, 93.

Following the Young Turk revolution of 1908 there was a great deal of excitement and anticipation that the restoration of the Ottoman constitution and parliament would result in political unity in the Empire under a vigorous and inclusive Ottoman identity. This, sadly, was not to be and it led to new publications emerging to attempt to speak on behalf of all Ottomans or to lobby on behalf of their own group. These included papers that identified with specific ethnic groups as well as collaborative papers involving Ottomans of multiple ethnicities.

This chapter has shown that the question of identity was a common thread that ran through the writings of both Ottoman and Algerian writers. Ottoman writers, both Muslim and non-Muslim strove to define and catalogue the various groups that made up the empire in an effort to give legitimacy to concept of Ottomanism as the basis for the citizenship with the empire. Ethnic identity for many of them remained inherent, but the hope that an overarching source of loyalty and belonging could be created was a regular feature of their writings. For the Algerians like Ismael Hamet, identity was largely subjective. This fit with his overall goal of working to convince his readers that 'Muslim' and 'Algerian' were not fixed or immovable categories that were opposed to 'French' or 'European'. What both of these groups did through their writings on the subject of identity was to be part of a dialogue, one that combined theories of migration, citizenship and loyalty to achieve their goals.

## Chapter 4

### Reshaping the State: Questions of Reform and Development

In June of 1911 the former Young Turk and now member of the *Parti Radical Ottoman* wrote in the pages of that party's journal *Mechroutiette*:

Pour conserver la Constitution, on ne peut, on ne doit *éternellement compter sur la seule force de l'armée pourra, pendant un certain temps, monter la garde autour de la Constitution; mais il faudra bien qu'un jour ou l'autre, son action passe au second plan et qu'elle cède la place à un gouvernement civil, indépendant d'elle.*

(To preserve the Constitution, we cannot, we must not ever rely solely on the strength of the army. The real guarantee of maintaining the Charter is popular force. The army may, for a time stand guard around the Constitution, but it will someday or other, as it's action is secondary, give way to a civilian government, independent of it.)<sup>454</sup>

On one level this statement reflects the growing disillusionment among former supporters of the Committee of Union and Progress and the restoration of the Constitution of 1876, but it is also indicative of the way that the production of discourse on reform continued within the linguistic and intellectual space of France through the 1890s up until the outbreak of the First World War. Within this space the idea of the constitution, as a central plank of the reform program of many Ottoman writers, was discussed, debated and reflected to a European audience. In many ways this reflected the continuing importance and relevance of the practice of involvement within this cultural and linguistic space. The

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<sup>454</sup> Fua, Albert. "Vers la Dictature et les Coups d'Etat", *Mechroutiette*, June 1911.

success of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 reinforced the idea, however misguided, that the press had a vital role to play in fomenting change and reform in the Empire. On a more general level, however, and one more relevant to the aims of this chapter, it reflected the relevance of the practice itself, of being part of this particular process of intellectual engagement that had defined these groups since the nineteenth century. To continue this practice was to continue to be part of a particular group that was larger than the narrowly factional or ideological. This group was part of a press culture that was both oppositional and cooperative. What the discussions of reform in these texts show is that, while part of the broader process of Ottoman-Algerian reform discourse, the writers who published primarily in French wanted their readers to see them as uniquely positioned to interpret and reflect the realities of the Ottoman Empire and Algeria.

### **Intellectuals and Reform in the Ottoman Empire and Algeria**

Reform and, as importantly, the perceived need for reform, that occupied conversation within and about the Ottoman Empire and French Algeria in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was, as could be expected, a central feature of this type of writing both in France and elsewhere. In France and Geneva French language publications across the political spectrum of the Ottoman Empire and Algeria grappled with specific questions of authority, social and political organization, assimilation and others, as well as the more general question of what, if anything, was required to improve the position of their

respective countries.<sup>455</sup> This was a preoccupation of intellectuals and writers from both the Ottoman Empire and Algeria throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>456</sup> The question of how to improve the position of their own societies was a pressing weight that filled the pages of newspapers, books and official reports. The previous chapters of this dissertation have dealt largely with the less practical and pragmatic topics of these writings. Discussions of history, religion and identity could of course be extrapolated to encompass more concrete policy changes and prescriptions, but in the cultural and linguistic context of this thesis I have argued that they were more concerned with implanting themselves into a particular debate than with creating a necessarily coherent political or ideological program.

It is with the question of reform that we see perhaps the widest gulf appearing between Ottoman and Algerian participation in this French-language intellectual space. Algerian writers sought largely to address the question of reform as it

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<sup>455</sup> All of the publications discussed in this thesis dealt on some level with the question of reform. Its radicalism and level of specificity often depended on how the particular individual or newspaper positioned themselves vis-à-vis the government of their homeland. Thus Nicolas Nicolaides wrote extensively on the state of foreign investment, agriculture and finance in the Ottoman Empire in *L'Orient*. Likewise, Ismael Hamet and others wrote in much more detail about these topics than many of their more openly activist contemporaries. Yusuf Fehmi, Ahmed Riza, and Albert Fua, and others for instance favoured the manifesto and the numerated party program and their discussions of reform tended toward the more polemical side.

<sup>456</sup> See for example Çiçek, Nazan. *The Young Ottomans: Turkish Critics of the Eastern Question in the Late Nineteenth Century*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2010, Ageron, Charles. *Les Algériens Musulmans et la France (1871-1919)*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968 and Grant, Jonathan. "Rethinking the Ottoman "Decline": Military Technology Diffusion in the Ottoman Empire, Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries", *Journal of World History*, 10/1 (1999), 179-201.

related to specific issues within the pre-existing colonial political context.<sup>457</sup> For the purposes of this chapter it is important to stress the continuity of intellectual production on the topic of reform. This phenomenon was one of relative consistency. Although the exigencies of certain events necessitated a degree of specificity when it came to the question of reform, the basic shape of the debates remained more or less the same. While the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 undoubtedly altered the way in which power was concentrated and exercised in the Ottoman Empire, it did not, as we shall see, drastically alter the practice of writing and engaging within a French-language environment.

The growth of indigenous proponents of reform in the model of the Young Ottomans, Young Turks and others among the Algerian elite was a much slower process. However they shared a similar professional origin and elitist worldview with their Ottoman counterparts. Both of these groups were convinced that reform needed to be something that was articulated and enacted by an educated elite. For these writers the press was seen as the most logical vehicle for disseminating these ideas.<sup>458</sup> Likewise this belief in the utility of the press and the written word transcended the boundaries of opposition groups and parties. The French-language allowed access into larger discussions and debates that encompassed both East and West. Ottomans and Algerians shared the pages of French language publications such as *L'Islam*, *Revue du Monde Musulman* and the

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<sup>457</sup> Ruedy, John. "Cherif Benhabyles and the Young Algerians", in *Franco Arab Encounters*. Carl L. Brown & Matthew S. Gordon eds. Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1996, 350.

<sup>458</sup> Ayalon, 67.

*Revue Occidentale*.<sup>459</sup> This breadth of interaction allowed these writers to frame their reform discussions to suit their needs. They stretched from the party platform to the academic analysis offering a range of possibilities for influence and discourse.

### **Sources of Power, Sources of Change: Theories and Models**

The question of where authority was to be located and how it was to be exercised as explored by Ottoman and Algerian intellectuals is by no means one that was unique to the time period under investigation. These questions had been under consideration in the Ottoman Empire since at least the seventeenth century.<sup>460</sup> Many Algerian writers for the most part accepted the legitimacy of the French state, at least as far as it could be conceived of as a legal-constitutional entity.<sup>461</sup> In this section I will focus on how change and reform outside of the Ottoman Empire and Algeria were presented within their writings. It will include both the historical and the contemporary and place them in the context of a more general conversation about political development in both the East and the West. In many cases Ottoman and Algerian writers looked to examples closer to home in order to bring home their points on ruler-ship and statecraft.

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<sup>459</sup> *L'Islam* especially offered a forum for both Ottoman and Algerian writers to engage with both the French and each other.

<sup>460</sup> See for instance: Sariyannis, Marinos. "Ruler and state, state and society in Ottoman political thought", *Turkish Historical Review*, 4 (2013), 83-117.

<sup>461</sup> See *L'Anticolonialisme en France de 1871a 1914*. Paris: Presses Universitaires Francaise, 1973.

Pro-palace newspapers such as Nicolas Nicolaides' *L'Orient* frequently looked to Russia as a model for the structure of the Ottoman State and how executive power should be conceived of and exercised. Russia had also provided inspiration for opposition groups in the wake of the 1905 revolution. This revolution, along with the constitutional revolution in Iran the following year, reaffirmed these groups' commitment to constitutionalism as a political goal.<sup>462</sup> The events of 1905 demonstrated the viability of constitutional reform within an autocratic and multiethnic power not unlike the Ottoman Empire and was thus of great interest to writers across the political spectrum. Assessments of the revolution appeared across the Turkish language Young Turk journals *Şura-yı Ümmet* and *Türk*, which took information largely gathered from the foreign press; both western European, Russian and non-Ottoman Turkic, and, using clandestine means, transferred it back to an Ottoman reading public.<sup>463</sup> These journals focused on the similarities between the Ottoman and Russian states and the ability of the people to force the Tsar to make liberal reforms.<sup>464</sup> The revolution also reinforced the Young Turk's contention that intellectuals were the key to any successful revolutionary movement.<sup>465</sup> Russia's success in the face of Ottoman failure, or inaction at least, was interpreted as a failure of Ottoman

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<sup>462</sup> Sohrabi, Nader. "Global Waves, Local Actors: What the Young Turks Knew about Other Revolutions and Why It Mattered", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44/1 (2002), 45-79, 46. See also Berberian, Hourii. "Connected Revolutions: Armenians and the Russian, Ottoman, and Iranian Revolutions in the early Twentieth Century", in Georgeon, François ed. "*Livresse de la liberté*" *La révolution de 1908 dans l'Empire ottoman*. Paris: Peeters, 2012 for a discussion of how these alternative revolutions influenced Armenian émigrés and intellectuals.

<sup>463</sup> Yaşar, Murat. "Learning the Ropes: The Young Turk Perception of the 1905 Russian Revolution", *Middle Eastern Studies* 50/1 (2014), 114-128, 115.

<sup>464</sup> *Ibid*, 116.

<sup>465</sup> Sohrabi, 58.

intellectuals to effectively inspire the masses.<sup>466</sup> The Young Turk journals drew great inspiration from the 1905 revolution, but it is unclear how much impact, if any, it had on actual policy or the unrest that erupted in Eastern Anatolia in 1905-07.<sup>467</sup>

Much of this analysis focuses only on the articles appearing in Ottoman Turkish journals, primarily *Şura-yı Ümmet*, published by the Young Turks. Thus, they inevitably are concerned with locating specific ideological influences and positions that can be found in Young Turk and CUP programs and policies, especially after 1908. For the purposes of this chapter, however, I am more interested in how the revolution appeared across the spectrum of French-language publications. For these writers' largely European audience the Russian revolution of 1905 offered an opportunity to discuss political authority and the nature of revolutionary change. They were not much interested in using their journals to stir up the masses or to rally the populace on behalf of the Sultan. Neither, however, can the flurry of commentary on the events of 1905 be dismissed as just a case of propaganda spreading amongst their European readership, whether on behalf of opposition groups or the palace. Unlike as was often the case in their Ottoman language counterparts, the discussion of Russia in their French language writings was about reflecting a particular conception of authority back to their European reading public.

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<sup>466</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>467</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908*, 123.

One of the important things about the use of the Russian Revolution of 1905 as an example for reform within Ottoman Empire, as Sohrabi makes clear, is its proximity to the Russo-Japanese War. Here we had a constitutional revolution in, “...an old, civilized, Western empire thrown into disorder and decay under the weight of a despotic monarch opposed to the constitutionalist yearnings of his own people”, coming right on the heels of an “ancient, backward Asian nation” that had used a combination of constitutionalism and nationalism to defeat that same European power.<sup>468</sup> The implications of this defeat on European notions of racial hierarchy and what this meant for the Ottoman elite were immense.

We can trace the contours of this progression within commentary given in the French-language Ottoman press as well. In *L'Orient* Nicolas Nicolaides was able to use the Russo-Japanese War, not as an opportunity to demonstrate the absurdity of Western theories of racial hierarchy as most of his contemporaries did, but rather to reaffirm the position of the Sultan as a leader who possessed great emotional power and importance. Nicolaides emphasises that the Russian war dead are to be pitied, but their patriotism and devotion to their sovereign is to be greatly admired.<sup>469</sup> He strives to link the figure of the Sultan directly to the army as mutually reinforcing symbols of the strength of the Ottoman State. It is interesting to note that praise for Japan is completely absent from this article, despite Abdülhamid II's admiration for the non-Western nation's success in its modernization and reform program. The Sultan was especially interested in the way that the Japanese Emperor has managed to assimilate a modernist reform

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<sup>468</sup> Sohrabi, 56.

<sup>469</sup> Nicolaides, N. “Le Souverain et le Peuple”, *L'Orient*, May 1, 1904.

program into the state without sacrificing his own status as ruler or ignoring indigenous tradition.<sup>470</sup> This aspect of the conflict, however, is suppressed in favor of the relationship between ruler and army.

It is possible that Nicolaidis focuses on this particular relationship as a way of engaging within a larger European conversation about the role of the military as a means of legitimating the authority of the state and a source of patriotism and national feeling. He disputes the notion that solidarity and brotherhood are, as he says: "...the prerogative of democracies."<sup>471</sup> By linking the Ottoman and Russian Empires through the solidarity of the army Nicolaidis is both comparing the two states and also attaching, in his mind, a somewhat more inclusive source of loyalty to the Ottoman state, the army, to the figure of Abdülhamid II. In view of his intended audience this effort is not a foolish as it might seem and to drive home the point he writes:

*Le Padichah récompensant, comme ils le méritent, les serviteurs du pays et compatissant à la douleur des plus humbles de Ses sujets, fait plus pour le bien-être des populations que tous les règlements qu'élaborent pendant des décades les assemblées prétendûment démocratiques.*

(The Padishah rewarding, as they deserve, servants of the country and compassionate to the pain of the humblest of His subjects did more for the welfare of the people that all regulations being elaborated for decades in the allegedly democratic assemblies.)<sup>472</sup>

In the wake of the actual revolution of 1905 Nicolaidis took the opportunity to shift the focus from those involved in orchestrating the revolution itself to again the figure of the Tsar. While the Ottoman language Young Turk journals in Cairo

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<sup>470</sup> Worringer, 214.

<sup>471</sup> Nicolaidis, "Le Souverain et le Peuple".

<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

engaged in endless hyperbole about the impact and significance of the 1905 revolution<sup>473</sup>, in French the reaction was decidedly more muted. The Young Turks interpreted the revolution as a violent change in the structure of Russian society. They saw it as indicative of their own passivity and, therefore, as a call to action.<sup>474</sup> What Nicolaides was able to do, however, in the pages of *L'Orient* was to shift the events of the revolution away from the antagonistic and toward the cooperative. The revolution and, more importantly, its aftermath became less an example of the will of the people and more an example of the benevolence of the sovereign.

In an article entitled *Le pouvoir absolu et le peuple* Nicolaides stresses the Tsar's active role in the reform document that emerged as a result of the revolution. He mentions that some of the promised improvements were already under investigation by the Tsar prior to the revolution.<sup>475</sup> He focuses on the fact of the Tsar's generosity rather than the will of the people. This obviously reflected Nicolaides' pro-palace stance with his newspaper and reaffirmed to his French audience the mantra of caution when dealing with Eastern states. Nicolaides counsels against giving a people too much power when they are not ready for it and points to the difficulties being faced by the Greeks and the Bulgarians in this respect.<sup>476</sup> As with many other comparisons with the Russian Empire he emphasizes its vast and diverse nature as being a barrier to the type of democratic reform that the people were seeking and he blames this fact for the

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<sup>473</sup> Yaşar, 123.

<sup>474</sup> Sohrabi, 58.

<sup>475</sup> Nicolaides, Nicolas. "Le pouvoir absolu et le peuple", *L'Orient*, February 25, 1905.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*

harsh response to the crisis, especially among the minority populations such as the Armenians.<sup>477</sup>

In Nicolaides' view it is the sovereign who must determine the course of reform. This viewpoint is exactly in line with that of Abdülhamid II and he states that it is the sovereign alone who is able to judge when the best opportunity to implement these reforms so as to not disrupt or shock the population. For Nicolaides it is important to emphasize the stability of regimes and styles of ruler-ship. States become tied to their inherent characteristics and he compares advocating for the separation of church and state in Russia to the creation of a republic in England or a monarchy in Switzerland.<sup>478</sup> The lesson that he takes away from the Russian revolution of 1905 and the one that he aims to impart to his French audience is that the application of reforms which will produce sustainable results are best when they come from the supreme power. This is in quite clear contrast to the lessons gleaned and reproduced in the Ottoman language newspapers of the Young Turks in Cairo and elsewhere.<sup>479</sup> They were far more concerned with the power of revolutionary organizations and the power of the press and how to spread their message of reform. The question of how these ideas and concepts were to be disseminated among the general population and those that were to be

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<sup>477</sup> Ibid.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid.

<sup>479</sup> Following the Young Turk revolution of 1908 another less common comparison was made between the Ottoman and the Portuguese Revolution in *Mechroutiette*. In it the author, one Osman Fetret, stressed that, unlike in 1908, the Portuguese had actually managed to replace the monarchy with a true republican government. And in perhaps a nod to the futility of mere intellectual engagement with revolutionary ideas he states that they Portuguese revolutionaries have proven their intellectual value through their writings and their moral value through their actions. See "La Révolution Portugaise et la Révolution Turque", *Mechroutiette*, 1 November 1901.

at the forefront of this new society would also prove to be an important aspect of the émigré dialogue. For this we need to turn to the question of education

### **Education and the Health of the Body Politic**

*Par contre, les avantages que le pays retirerait de la réforme de l'éducation de ses princes sont incalculables: Détruire toute tendance au despotisme et à l'arbitraire, éviter les révolutions, supprimer les complots, améliorer les institutions en y introduisant un principe de liberté, diminuer les abus, transformer et métamorphoser le régime actuel, réformer l'éducation du peuple en faisant disparaître jusqu'aux dernière traces du fanatisme, fortifier l'autorité morale du gouvernement en y ajoutant toutes les acquisitions de la science, etc., etc.*

(By contrast, the benefits that the country would draw from the reform of the education of its princes are incalculable: Destroy any tendency to despotism and arbitrariness, avoid revolutions, remove plots, improve institutions by introducing a concept of freedom, reduce abuse, transform and alter the current system, reform the education of the people by removing the last traces of fanaticism, strengthen the moral authority of the government by adding all the achievements of science, etc., etc.)<sup>480</sup>

Education reform had been at the forefront of the reform movement in the Ottoman Empire from the start of the nineteenth century.<sup>481</sup> It was through the gradual introduction and integration with Western-style education that the majority of new scientific, philosophical and political concepts were introduced into the Empire.<sup>482</sup> Education reform had been the gateway to modernization and westernization within the Ottoman Empire from the end of the eighteenth

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<sup>480</sup> Ganem, *Education des Princes Ottomans*, 21.

<sup>481</sup> See Zürcher, Erik-Jan. *Turkey: A Modern History*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1993, Mardin, Şerif. *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* and Hanioglu, Şükrü. *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*.

<sup>482</sup> See Fortna, Ben. *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the state and education in the late Ottoman Empire*.

century.<sup>483</sup> For the Algerian writers as well education was seen as the primary driver of cultural renewal.<sup>484</sup> As we saw in Chapter 3, a clear linguistic hierarchy was understood as underpinning Algerian society and that education would ease the transfer through Berber to Arabic and then ultimately to French. Ismael Hamet took education as a fundamental element of Algerian reform. In his book, *Les Musulmans français dans le Nord de l'Afrique*, he takes several pages to outline the inadequacies of education during the pre-colonial period.<sup>485</sup> He framed education not only as something that could raise a sizable Muslim Algerian middle class to something approaching parity with their European counterparts. He also saw schools as vital to ensure the security of France's Algerian possessions.

Hamet firmly believed in the progression of development, both cultural and linguistic, that represented for him the timeline of Algerian development. Thus he is keen to point out the role that the opening of Arab schools had had on the unruly Berber populations in the pre-colonial and early colonial periods. For Hamet the spread of the Arabic language through schooling was the first step in the intellectual development of the Berbers and provided a necessary preparation for the introduction of French schools in the later nineteenth century.<sup>486</sup> He acknowledges the need for mixed Arabic-French schools but mentions that their system of handing out scholarships was haphazard and executed without the

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<sup>483</sup> See for instance Shaw, Stanford. *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire Under Sultan Selim III, 1789-1807*. Cambridge MS: Harvard University Press, 1971.

<sup>484</sup> Ruedy, John. "Cherif Benhabyles and the Young Algerians", 364.

<sup>485</sup> Hamet, Ismael. *Les Musulmans français dans le Nord de l'Afrique*, 182.

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid*, 183.

proper consideration of the stage of development or natural ability of the recipients.<sup>487</sup> This represents clearly Hamet's affinity for elite-led reform efforts. In his mind the best option would be for the French state would be to focus their efforts on only the most prepared students in order to create the necessary indigenous educated class that could then work to improve the position of the remainder of the population.

One institution that Ismael Hamet believed would complement the spread of French education and indeed had, in his mind, always been aware of this fact was the army.<sup>488</sup> Its need for properly educated recruits provided a useful template for the more general organization approach to the organization of Algerian society. The emphasis on the benefits and utility of education may also have been an attempt to gloss over some of the more negative aspects that surrounded Muslim Algerian service in the French military. Connected to the army's need for well-educated recruits who were fluent in French was their need for soldiers who could understand the basics of ballistics and artillery usage. In Hamet's opinion this represented part of the natural evolution of Algerian society from Berber to Arabic to French, with each language unlocking a new tier knowledge and ability. He writes:

*Nous avons exposé, plus haut, comment la langue arabe et les méthodes scientifiques des Musulmans se trouvent dans un état d'infériorité manifeste vis-à-vis des méthodes et des langues modernes.*

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<sup>487</sup> Ibid, 184.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid, 185.

(We explained earlier how the Arabic language and the scientific methods of the Muslims were found to be in a state of inferiority when compared to modern methods and languages.)<sup>489</sup>

Education as a centrally directed state institution would be able to move both Arab and Berber-speaking Algerians to a level comparable to their European counterparts. However, Hamet doesn't completely dismiss the utility of Arabic instruction. Related to his theories of how various conquering elements enriched Algerian society and culture before being largely absorbed into it was his belief that language learning in general is a hallmark of progress. He mentions efforts to reform and modernize the Arabic script led to an increased interest in the French language among the natives.<sup>490</sup> He also points out that even if formal instruction in Arabic may be decreasing among certain indigenous groups, its increase among Europeans is beneficial as it works to bring both populations closer together. However, he still feels that it is more important for Algerian Muslims to learn French due to the difficulty of effectively assimilating modern scientific concepts into Arabic.<sup>491</sup>

The question of women's education was also of vital importance to Ismael Hamet when it came to the issue of reform in Algeria and North Africa more broadly. As we saw in Chapter 2, it was the corruption of Islam with superstition that led to its role in suffocating the potential of France's Algerian subjects. In an article in the *Revue du Monde Musulman* he stresses the point that a society cannot

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<sup>489</sup> Ibid, 187.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid. And also see Benrabah, Mohamed. *Language Conflict in Algeria: From Colonialism to Post-Independence*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2013.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid.

advance without the development of women.<sup>492</sup> This thinking mirrored in many ways the debates that had been held in France throughout the nineteenth century and represented a clear attempt to engage with those ideas through the French-language press.<sup>493</sup> Hamet makes clear that he regards the policies of *education* and *association* as being inextricably linked. As we saw in Chapter 1 much of the blame for the backwardness of Algerian society can be laid at the feet of the long periods of tyrannical and anarchic rule that the North Africa suffered. Education, for Hamet, is the key to erasing the negative consequences of this history. For Hamet it was crucial that education be extended and promoted to both sexes equally and he points to similar reform efforts in the Ottoman Empire and Qajar Iran and even Russia as recognizing this fact.<sup>494</sup>

The achievements of that nation were also emphasized in the wake of the Young Turk revolution of 1908.<sup>495</sup> Discussion of education thus became an integral part of the practice of engagement because it reflected a more broadly held belief in the role that intellectuals and the state played in shaping society. For these writers education was a means to propel reform efforts forwards by instituting the necessary cultural and social changes. In many ways a faith in the utility of education to reshape society was vital to the *raison d'être* of nearly all reformers during this period.<sup>496</sup> Both Algerian and Ottoman writers dealt with education

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<sup>492</sup> Hamet, Ismael, "Les Musulmanes de l'Afrique du Nord", *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 1913, 281.

<sup>493</sup> See for instance: Margandant, Jo Burr. *Madame le Professeur: Women Educators in the Third Republic*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990.

<sup>494</sup> Hamet, "Les Musulmanes de l'Afrique du Nord", 291.

<sup>495</sup> See for instance *Mechroutiette* February 1910 and March 1912.

<sup>496</sup> See for instance Ayadi (Taoufik). *Mouvements Reformiste et Mouvements Populaires a Tunis (1906-1912)*. Tunis: Publications de l'Universite de Tunis,

both as a pragmatic issue of institutional and policy reform and as a more abstract question of progress and rulership. This reflected the balance between formal declarations of political positions and a desire to be part of a French intellectual space.

In 1895 Halil Ganem published a book concerning the education of Ottoman Sultans that was meant to outline a program of educational reform for princes within the Ottoman royal family.<sup>497</sup> In this work Ganem goes over the primary reasons for Ottoman decline and how a radical reworking of the way in which Ottoman princes were educated was a vital part of the reform and renewal process. He dismisses claims that an overhaul of the education system would result in a lessening of respect for religion. He states philosophical teaching, properly understood and managed is not at all harmful to religion and points to the fact that the ulema are considered one of the most educated groups in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>498</sup> He goes on to point to specific examples of Western-educated Ottomans, such as Abbas Pasha, who received a Western education in Vienna from Christian teachers and remained loyal to the Caliphate and a good Muslim.<sup>499</sup>

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1986, Cabanel, Patrick. "L'école laïque française en Tunisie (1881-1914): la double utopie", in *La Tunisie mosaïque*. Alexandropoulos, Jacques & Patrick Cabanel eds. Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2000, and Evered, Emine Ö. *Empire and Education Under the Ottomans: Politics, Reform, and the Resistance from the Tanzimat to the Young Turks*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2012.

<sup>497</sup> Ganem, Halil. *Education Des Princes Ottomans*. Bulle: Impr. Émile Lenz, 1895.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid, 6.

For Ganem the question of education reform is restricted solely to the Ottoman royal family. This is largely because as an Ottoman Christian he would have had access to a modern education already through the missionary schools and other educational institutions available to non-Muslims during this period. He also uses this approach to educational reform to acknowledge to his French audience the limitations to his reform ideas. He talks about the worry that Western education could cause liberal ideas to enter the palace by pointing to Peter the Great, whose desire to know everything in no way lessened his despotic tendencies.<sup>500</sup> For Ganem it is the moral aspect of education that will be the best defense against the growth of despotism.<sup>501</sup> The rise of Japan also provided a strong educational example for the Ottoman Empire under both Abdülhamid and the CUP.<sup>502</sup> Ganem locates one of the main reasons for Japan's superiority in the modern education of its princes.<sup>503</sup> Here again Halil Ganem chooses to focus on the education of the ruling classes as opposed to the masses as the best avenue for progress and advancement.

Halil Ganem and Ismael Hamet both provide differing but ultimately elitist views of education in their French-language writings. For Hamet educational reform would provide the necessary enlightened class that will be able to speed a more general integration of Muslim Algerians into the larger French body politic.<sup>504</sup> Ganem on the other hand saw educational reform as means to improve Sultanatic

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<sup>500</sup> Ganem, 7.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

<sup>502</sup> See Worringer, 214.

<sup>503</sup> Ganem, 16.

<sup>504</sup> Hamet, Ismael, "Les Musulmanes de l'Afrique du Nord", 295.

governance that will then lead to broader reforms. Both of these figures largely accepted the status quo and both looked abroad to bolster their proposals.

### **External Examples: Ismael Hamet and the Universal Muslim Congress**

In January of 1908 Ismael Hamet published an in-depth analysis of the Universal Muslim Congress that had been recently held in Cairo under the direction of the Russian Turkic Muslim reformer Ismail Bey Gasprinskii.<sup>505</sup> In it Hamet outlined the major goals of the conference, both practical and unrealistic, and worked in his role as authentic observer to offer a detached analysis of the proceedings.

This analysis functioned both as a piece of rather traditional reporting, but also as part of the network of journalistic dissemination that moved information from Arabic and Turkish language sources into the a French-language environment.

Hamet begins his analysis by stressing the role of the conference in facilitating the movement of ideas among the educated classes in the Muslim world.<sup>506</sup> He also recognizes the importance of the congress for non-Muslims and positions himself as an ideal intermediary between his French audience and the reform conversations of the Muslim world. Hamet was also clearly conscious of the parallels to the growing Young Algerian movement and its emphasis on the importance of an educated elite and the press as a vehicle for the movement of

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<sup>505</sup> Gasprinskii published a newspaper called *Tercüman* in that dealt with the question of reform in Central Asia and the Muslim world more broadly. See Ortayli, Ilber. "Reports and Considerations of Ismail Bey Gasprinskii in "Tercüman" on central asia", *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 32/1 (1991), 43-46.

<sup>506</sup> Hamet, Ismael. "Le Congrès musulman universel", *Revue du Monde Musulman* 4/1 January 1908, 100.

ideas.<sup>507</sup> In fact the press, in both French and Arabic, forms the introduction to his discussion of the congress. For Hamet the reporting on the congress that appeared in various Cairo newspapers, including *al-Liwa*, founded by the Egyptian nationalist Mustafa Kamil Pasha, was worth transmitting to his French readers.<sup>508</sup> This reflected Hamet's overall approach to reform, which was rooted in intellectual and journalistic engagement rather than direct action.

Hamet did not frame Gasprinskii's discussion of reform in overtly oppositional terms as he did for many of his Ottoman counterparts. He was, for instance, not openly opposed to Sultan Abdülhamid II and found much to admire in his educational reforms.<sup>509</sup> He was however opposed to direct Russian rule over the populations of Central Asia, a point that Hamet chose to largely conceal from his interpretation due to the fact that it conflicted with his own ideas of how Algerian Muslims would function within the French state system. Like his Ottoman and Algerian counterparts, however, Gasprinskii believed firmly in the role that state institutions, especially education, needed to play in any advancement that was to occur in the Islamic world.<sup>510</sup> Gasprinskii was also committed to using journalism as the primary means of spreading his ideas throughout the Turkic speaking world. His ideas, as outlined in his Turkic-

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<sup>507</sup> Gasprinskii was also a keen commenter on the outcome of the Russo-Japanese War and its implications for racial theory. See Worringer, Renée, *Rising Sun Over Bear*, 461-62.

<sup>508</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>510</sup> *Ibid.*

language newspaper *Tercüman* had great resonance throughout Central Asia, but also among Turkic populations in Southeastern Europe, particularly Bulgaria.<sup>511</sup>

Hamet begins by outlining the main aims of the congress, the first of which is to rescue and heal the Muslim world from the damage that has been done to it over the years. Importantly the first part of this assessment stresses that many of the harmful developments that have been brought into the Islamic world were done so under the false cover of religion.<sup>512</sup> The second goal, as stated by Hamet, is to then root out and remove or reform these harmful elements. For Gasprinskii the problem lies with a lack of access to the tools of progress. This is something that would have resonated deeply with Hamet, along with Gasprinskii's faith in education and other state institutions to enable this access.<sup>513</sup> Hamet concurs with Gasprinskii's belief that the blindness and selfishness of the ruling classes throughout the Islamic world is responsible for their current state of decline. He mentions that the Russian Muslims understand the importance of "the diffusion of knowledge" and its role in the recovery of the Islamic world.<sup>514</sup>

He writes:

*Il faut, à l'ensemble de ces peuples, qui poursuivent un même idéal, un centre d'attraction et une force impulsive capables d'agir à la fois sur toutes les masses, de resserrer leurs rangs et d'éveiller fortement, parmi elles, le sentiment de l'union.*

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<sup>511</sup> Evered, Kyle T. and Ömer Turan. "Jadidism in South-eastern Europe: The Influence of Ismail Bey Gaspıralı Among Bulgarian Turks", *Middle Eastern Studies* 41/4 (2005), 481-502, 482.

<sup>512</sup> Hamet, 100.

<sup>513</sup> Ortaylı, 43.

<sup>514</sup> Hamet, 100.

(It is necessary for all of these people who pursue the same ideal, a center of attraction and an impulsive force capable of acting both on all masses to tighten their ranks and greatly arouse among them the feeling of union.)<sup>515</sup>

This point is important for Hamet because, as in much of his other works, unity within certain social and political structures is a major plank of his own philosophy of reform. The necessity of working within the framework provided by the existing state and of using the institutions of the state to create an educated class that would be able to integrate effectively into French society was something that could be obliquely referenced in his commentary on the Congress. He goes on to say that both the ruling and educated classes have a duty to address the concerns of the larger population.<sup>516</sup> As an ostensible member of this ruling class Hamet understand clearly the role that he is to play as both a Muslim reformer and one who will influence the French to support him.

### **Party Politics, Reform Platforms and the Young Turk Revolution**

The success of the Young Turk Revolution in 1908 had a substantial impact on the questions of reform that were circulating within Ottoman and Algerian intellectual circles. The aftermath of this reorganization of the Ottoman political sphere created new motivations and material for those in the community to make use of and, most importantly, a renewed opportunity to act as intermediaries and interpreters between Ottoman or Algerian society and their European readers. New Ottoman opposition newspapers and political organizations emerged in the wake of the revolution as the promise of real

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<sup>515</sup> Ibid, 101.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid.

political reform was broken by the increasing authoritarianism of the C.U.P. government after 1909.

Journalistic reactions to the Young Turk Revolution came quickly, as European commentators strove to understand and explain the nature of the political changes occurring in the Ottoman Empire. More substantial reflections on the aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution came in the wake of the counterrevolution of 1909 and the increasing authoritarianism of the Committee of Union and Progress government.<sup>517</sup>

One of the first and most important Ottoman émigré opposition newspapers to appear in the post-1908 period was the journal *Mechroutiette* (*Meşrutiyet*), or *Constitution*, founded by former Ottoman Ambassador to Stockholm Şerif Paşa.<sup>518</sup> This paper was also the French language companion to *Serbest*, published in Istanbul, and, as was mentioned, the official publication of the *Parti Radical Ottoman*.<sup>519</sup> As the Ottoman community increasingly became or remained divided along ethnic lines<sup>520</sup>, *Mechroutiette* remained committed, at

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<sup>517</sup> See for instance Cobb, Stanwood. "The Difficulties of the Young Turk Party", *The North American Review* 195/674 (1912), 103-107.

<sup>518</sup> The paper was published in Paris and ran from October 1909 until April 1914.

<sup>519</sup> This party remained committed, at least on paper, to Ottomanism as the basis for any future workable Ottoman State and saw full equality as absolutely vital to the Empire's survival.

<sup>520</sup> For example see the post-1908 Europe-based publications *L'Orient* (Greek), *La Jeune Turquie* (Armenian) and *Pour les Peuples d'Orient* (Armenian). Both of the Armenian publications mentioned above were produced with the active participation of European journalists, which allowed for greater integration into the European intellectual milieu.

least on paper, to the ideal of Ottomanism and Ottoman equality.<sup>521</sup> In contrast to many of the earlier Young Turk opposition papers *Mechroutiette* offered a much more detailed critique of the policies of the Committee of Union and Progress. This can perhaps be partially explained by the sense of urgency created among those new members of the opposition to provide commentary about the current state of affairs in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>522</sup>

The events of the Young Turk Revolution provided a clear case study for many Algerian writers to integrate into their own writings. In the pages of French journals Algerian authors pursued the question of reform with renewed vigor following the events of 1908. Many of these later works by Western commentators had replaced the initial enthusiasm for the Ottoman experiment in parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy with a much clearer understanding of the revolution's militaristic and nationalistic underpinnings.<sup>523</sup>

In the wake of the revolution, however, Ottoman and Algerian writers were given a new impetus to react to, explain and critique the changes that were occurring in the Ottoman Empire and, in the Algerian case, approach these

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<sup>521</sup> As discussed in Chapter 3 the journal's subtitle proclaimed that it was a journal *consacré à la Défense des Intérêts Politiques et Économique et des Droits égalitaires de tous les Ottomans, sans distinction de race et de religion* and would retain this stance throughout its publication run.

<sup>522</sup> See for instance "L'évolution de la Jeune Turquie Gouvernementale" in the June 1911 issue and also "Le Comité Union et Progrès contre la Constitution" by Albert Fua, in which he urges all Ottomans to return to the principles of 1908 and to create a general amnesty for all Hamidian civil servants.

<sup>523</sup> See for instance Pinon, René. *L'Europe et le Jeune Turquie: Les Aspects Nouveau de la Question d'Orient*. Paris: Perrin et Co., 1913 and also Cobb, Stanwood. "The Difficulties of the Young Turk Party", *The North American Review* 195/674 (1912), 103-107.

changes in terms of their own experience and dialogue surrounding the question of reform. There can be no doubt that those Algerian reformers attempting to engage through the medium of the French language press were encouraged by the success of the Young Turk Revolution. To many Algerian writers, the success of the CUP in 1908 further validated this practice of engagement with the West via the French language press. For these individuals one of the most visible aspects of the Young Turk Revolution had been the press. With the success of the revolution the possibility of creating a “liberal public opinion” through the French language press

In 1911 the self-proclaimed<sup>524</sup> Young Turk Yusuf Fehmi published a work on the Young Turk Revolution entitled *La Révolution Ottomane*. This work was intended to offer an analysis of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 and to offer an insider’s viewpoint of the failings of the revolutionary government. It is commonplace nowadays in the current scholarship to see the Young Turk Revolution as more of a coup than an actual revolution.<sup>525</sup> It did not represent a massive re-ordering of society nor did it result in the removal of the head of state, Sultan Abdülhamid II. Constitutionalism of the Young Turks was more of a romantic fascination than a concrete political ideology and this continued into

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<sup>524</sup> While Yusuf Fehmi consistently referred to himself in his writings as a ‘Young Turk’ he was never formally involved in the Young Turk opposition movements of Ahmed Riza or Prince Sabahaddin.

<sup>525</sup> See *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* and Zürcher, Erik-Jan. “Ottoman Sources of Kemalist Thought”, in *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*. Elisabeth Özdalga ed. London: Routledge, 2005.

the post-1908 period amongst the remaining and returning Ottoman émigrés in Paris.<sup>526</sup>

In his assessment of the post-1908 period and the government of the CUP Yusuf Fehmi is unflinching. He moves away from his earlier position as an ardent constitutionalist who worked to sustain many orientalist fantasies about the Ottoman Royal House in the years leading up to 1908.<sup>527</sup> His fundamental problem with the CUP government is one that would crop up among a variety of post-1908 publications. This was that the CUP represented a secret society with possible Masonic connections and was an affront to both the Sultan and the parliament.<sup>528</sup> Fehmi is very concerned that the revolution has resulted in nothing less than the complete destruction of the institutional hierarchy of the Ottoman state. He compares the Sultan to Louis XVI and states that he is forced to submit to “the whims of our metaphysicians.”<sup>529</sup> Like Nioclaides he takes a very Sultan-centric view of power in the Ottoman state and acknowledges that the Caliphate is the foundation of Turkish power.<sup>530</sup> This position represents a marked change from many of his earlier publications in which he stressed his

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<sup>526</sup> *The Young Turks in Opposition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, 31.

<sup>527</sup> See for instance *Le Coulisses Hamidiennes Dévoilées Par Un Jeune Turc*. Paris: A Michalon, 1904. In this work Fehmi spends a great deal of time outlining the sexual deviancy that apparently plagued the harem.

<sup>528</sup> As we have seen accusations of Masonic and Jewish influence among the CUP was a very common trope among Europeans as well as Ottomans at the time. See Hanioglu, Şükrü. *The Young Turks in Opposition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, 33-41 for a discussion of Masonic groups and their involvement with the Young Turks and also Kedourie, Elie. “Young Turks, Freemasons and Jews”, *Middle Eastern Studies* 7/1 (1971), 89-104.

<sup>529</sup> Fehmi, Yusuf. *La Révolution Ottomane*. Paris: V. Girard & E. Brière, 1911, 21-22.

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

hated of the Sultan, his desire for equality and the restoration of the constitution.<sup>531</sup>

Fehmi isn't opposed to constitutionalism. Rather he simply feels that the methods used to achieve it are not ideal. He accuses the Young Turks of wanting to establish a sovereign bourgeoisie of the type that "Europe gave us around 1830" and he criticizes them for rashly discarding tradition.<sup>532</sup> Yusuf Fehmi was in no way a supporter of Abdülhamid II and he had a close relationship with the editor of *Mechrouitette*, but yet he felt compelled not only to criticize the aftermath of the revolution, but also to question the utility of the constitution, parliament and the idea of Ottomanism.<sup>533</sup>

What drove Yusuf Fehmi's fears surrounding the reforms of the post-1908 period were much the same as those entertained by those in the *Parti Radical Ottoman* and the Liberal Party of Prince Sabahaddine. It seemed to them that one dictatorship had been replaced by another, and that the foundations of the state had been ripped away and replaced with something unsustainable. This was characteristic of much of the writings on reform in this period. Caution took precedence over radicalism and subjects were discussed with a deliberateness that suggested a fundamental conservatism. Reform was central to the Ottoman and Algerian experience during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It held enormous potential as a topic that could be translated into

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<sup>531</sup> See for example: *Tablettes Révolutionnaires d'un Jeune Turc*. Paris: A Michalon, 1903 and *Le Coulisses Hamidiennes Dévoilées Par Un Jeune Turc*. Paris: A Michalon, 1904.

<sup>532</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

<sup>533</sup> *Ibid*, 219-220.

practical transformation in both the Ottoman Empire and Algeria. Yet it seemed to stay within the same sphere as the other topics that this thesis has dealt with. Writing for an audience that was largely removed from the concerns of these writers, words became more important than deeds and reform became an exercise in abstraction or polemic.

## Conclusion

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the growth of popular press throughout the Ottoman Empire and the wider Arab world. During this period, the press became the preferred medium through which individuals and political groups from the Ottoman Empire and North Africa conveyed their messages, created and expanded networks across the region and beyond, and, ideally, tried to create change within their own societies.

This thesis has examined the parallel growth of printing and publishing by members of these societies in the French language. This phenomenon overlapped, complemented and, in many ways, was inextricably linked to publishing in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish. My research has shown that by stepping away from specific movements, organizations or even regional or linguistic groups as a category for analysis, one can trace the role of French-language publishing as a means of engagement that went beyond specific ideologies or political programs.

Albert Hourani gave a prominent place to the press in his work on intellectual production in the Arab Middle East. The expansion of the popular press allowed Arab intellectuals from various different backgrounds to disseminate their ideas amongst their countrymen both at home and in the diaspora.<sup>534</sup> For Hourani, the popular press was instrumental in creating a space for the discussion of new

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<sup>534</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 132.

political ideas and the creation of proto-national and ethno-linguistic consciousness in much of the Arab world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The press was the means through which the normalization of certain ideas about modernization and scientific knowledge was achieved among the segments of the population that consumed these publications.<sup>535</sup> The prevailing belief among those figures that made up the bulk of the intelligentsia in the Arab world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was that both were necessary preconditions to the advancement of their nations. For Hourani the emergence of the independent political newspapers in the Arabic language in the 1870s were instrumental in creating a substantial audience for the popular press and the new ideas it spread in the Arabic language.<sup>536</sup>

An emphasis on the role of the press is echoed in the treatment of the emergence and evolution of the *indigène* press in Algeria and Tunisia as it is often framed as an integral part of the development of national movements after the First World War.<sup>537</sup> In Algeria and Tunisia, however, the French language was in many ways a requirement to interact with the colonial powers. But this thesis has shown that participation in this French-language intellectual environment was an act of whose particular significance they were well aware. For figures like Ismael Hamet, his role as a scholar and interpreter of Algerian realities was, like many of his Ottoman contemporaries, a fundamental part of his own identity as an intellectual. Writing in the French language, I have argued, created another spatial layer of intellectual activity for these individuals that could, and

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<sup>535</sup> Ibid, 246.

<sup>536</sup> Hourani, 245.

<sup>537</sup> Zassin, "Presse et journalistes <indigènes> en Algérie coloniale", 37.

frequently did, overlap with the spread of new ideas, but was also often an end in itself.

Across the Middle East in this period, the press, and the printed word more broadly, provided a space that was also highly transnational. Both Stacy Farenthold and Andrew Arsan have emphasized that populations from the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire used the press as a means of connecting various diaspora communities and extending these networks beyond Beirut, Cairo and Alexandria to cities such as Paris, New York and Sao Paulo.<sup>538</sup> These press networks allowed material to circulate between geographically diverse, but ethnically and linguistically linked communities.<sup>539</sup> I have argued that the French language texts of these writers functioned in a similar way. While there may not have always been direct communication between all of the individuals covered in this thesis, they shared a specific space and their output reflects a definable phenomenon of the period.

Şerif Mardin explored the role of the press among Young Ottoman intellectuals in the nineteenth century and the continuity between the Young Ottomans and the Young Turks of the use of press as a vehicle for criticizing the Sultan and advocating for change.<sup>540</sup> Scholars such as Palmira Brummet and Masami Arai have pointed to the importance of the relaxation of censorship in the Ottoman

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<sup>538</sup> Farenthold, "Transnational Modes and Media, 32, Arsan, "This age is the age of associations': committees, petitions, and the roots of interwar Middle Eastern internationalism", 167. See also Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East*, 21.

<sup>539</sup> Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism*, 10.

<sup>540</sup> Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 403-404.

Empire after 1908 for allowing new and hitherto subversive ideas to reach a much larger audience through the press.<sup>541</sup> By focusing on specific actors, I could show that there was substantial continuity between the pre and post-1908 periods: figures such as Albert Fua bridged the gap between the Hamidian period and the Young Turk period and maintained their commitment to involvement in a French-language intellectual sphere.

Thus there is a broad and deeply researched body of work that positions the press as a key component of the spread of new ideas and the development of networks and social and political movements throughout the Middle East and among its diaspora communities. My work, however, has shown that French-language publishing demands analysis as its own category of intellectual production in the Middle East and in its diaspora centers. Topics were raised and discussed in the French language not only as a means of familiarizing audiences with them, but also as a deliberate act of participation in a particular *milieu*. Like Mardin and Hourani, this thesis acknowledges the frequent lack of consistency among many of the writers it covers, but frames this as largely secondary to their aims. The ideas of many of the writers covered in this thesis can be considered a part of a broader corpus of Ottoman and Algerian liberal thought, but what bound all of them together was an enduring faith in the publishing in the French language as a means of engagement and an expression of modernity. From the newspaper interview to the pamphlet to the manifesto, the act of

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<sup>541</sup> Brummet, Palmira. *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908-1911*. Albany NY: SUNY Press, 2000.

publishing in French held specific significance for these individuals as a modern or liberal act.

In his work on the Young Turks, Stefano Taglia rightly pointed out that exile to Paris was not simply an attempt to escape persecution at home, but rather provided an opportunity to fully participate in a European intellectual environment.<sup>542</sup> Through a wider analysis of French-language material I have demonstrated that this phenomenon transcended the physical space of France and that this intellectual environment could be accessed from a variety of locations and by a variety of different actors. Algerian writers such as Ismaël Hamet showed that a balance, albeit at times precarious, could be struck between insider and outsider through his work for the *Revue du Monde Musulman*. The topics that were raised in the French language by the Ottoman and North African intellectuals covered in this thesis reflected their sincere interests. History, Islam, identity and reform were representative of the preoccupations of both these writers and much of their readership. This is made clear by the topic addressed in their work and the spaces that they were afforded in European publications.

For Albert Hourani, one of the main tasks of the generation of Arab intellectuals writing at the end of the nineteenth century was reconciling Islam with ideas that were absorbed from Europe.<sup>543</sup> This was inextricably linked with the question of reform and these debates about Islam took place primarily in Arabic

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<sup>542</sup> Taglia, *Intellectuals and Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 264.

<sup>543</sup> Hourani, 265.

and in the context of the specific societies in which these writers lived. Şerif Mardin too highlighted the centrality of Islam and its role in Ottoman society for Young Ottoman thinkers such as Ali Suavi and Namık Kemal.<sup>544</sup> I have argued that a shift in focus to a European audience and a French-language space adds additional depth to the analysis of this topic.

For the figures addressed in this thesis, Islam too represented, in their eyes, a fundamental difference between their societies and Europe. But in French the discussion largely sought to muster a defense of their societies for their European audience. As this thesis has demonstrated, the structure and purpose of this defense was remarkably similar among the religious and secular and among Christian, Muslim and Jew. Unlike much of the Arabic writing on Islam coming out of Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, they possessed a certain level of abstractness. These defenses were not, like those of Abduh and Lutfi al-Sayyid, primarily concerned with a practical reconciliation of Islam with European modernity in the context of their own countries, but with a strong defense of an aspect of identity to a European audience.<sup>545</sup> These Ottoman and Algerian writers positioned themselves as insiders and experts who could accurately present their faith to a European audience. Participation as authorities on multiple topics in this French-language intellectual space gave their writings their own significance.

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<sup>544</sup> Mardin, 286, 367.

<sup>545</sup> Hourani, 162.

In their discussions of history and identity these Ottoman and Algerian intellectuals sought to reflect ideas back to their European audience as they saw fit. Discussions of Ottomanism and a broader Algerian identity emphasized the unity of an Empire that Europe was seen as constantly trying to divide and the absurdity of racial difference in a colonial environment with strict hierarchies of power. From *Mechveret* to *Mécheroutiette* and in the pages of *Le Revue du Monde Musulman*, these writers demanded the space to discuss their societies on an equal footing with Europe. Stefano Taglio has referred to the importance of the 'intellectual phase' (1896-1902) of the Young Turk movement and the freedom of its members to engage fully with European intellectual currents.<sup>546</sup> This thesis makes clear that once the frame of analysis is expanded, this intellectual phase continued and represented a specific mode of intellectual participation that would attract individuals from across the Ottoman Empire and North Africa.

This particular form of political and intellectual engagement would soon be overshadowed by the growth of nationalism in the Ottoman Empire and the wider Arab world. The impact of the First World War accelerated the consolidation of national movements, both in newly created nation-states and those in areas still under European control. In Algeria, Turkey, and the mandate territories, newspapers and journals became even more strongly associated with political movements and were crucial mouthpieces for the leaders of those movements. The impact of many of the figures addressed in this thesis was, in many ways, focused on a very specific audience. Some, like Ahmed Rıza, and Chérif Benhabilés, went on to play political roles in both France and the Ottoman

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<sup>546</sup> Taglia, 266.

Empire, but most remained relative obscure; known primarily through the written material they produced.

But these writers and intellectuals represented a meaningful and useful snapshot of a mode of intellectual engagement. The output of these Ottoman and Algerian writers coexisted with, and formed part of, their various identities as opposition activists, intellectuals, colonial apologists, Ottomans, Algerians, and Muslims. In tracing this phenomenon, this thesis has shown that it is an important aspect of the intellectual history of the modern Middle East that transcends, but also reevaluates the religious, national and linguistic boundaries that frequently characterise the field.

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*La Jeune Turquie*

*Le Liberal Ottoman*

*Mécheroutiette : constitutionnel ottoman*

*Mechveret Supplément Français*

*L'Orient*

*Osmanli Français (Geneva)*  
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*Pour Les Peuples Ottoman*  
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