

THINKING "NEW TURKEY": REVOLUTIONARY OTTOMAN GROUPS IN GENEVA BEFORE 1914

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A hundred years ago “New Turkey” was a word between vision, dream and chimera, designating an uncertain future between a reformed Ottoman world and a post-Ottoman entity.

Elite diasporas formed a small but significant arena for what was to happen in the great empires of the Sultan and the Tsar in the 1910s. Cooperation between the Ottoman opposition in Europe and that in Saloniki had made possible the “proclamation of liberty”, or Young Turk Revolution, in July 1908. Mostly students, many diaspora members were absorbed by the future of their big countries. Revolution was their keyword. They believed in their mission as saviors of empires, nation-builders, internationalist revolutionaries or messengers of justice. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and particularly during World War I, the Swiss Confederation appeared as a little island, an asylum and ideal place for agitation in the midst of the global theatre – and all the more so as it had built up an attractive industry of higher education, to which women too had access, in the second half of the 19th century.¹

Before the catastrophe of World War I, before the last Ottoman decade beginning with 1913, in the last years of the Belle Epoque, the future was still open. It is useful to consider that period for a moment beyond the maelstrom that carried away so much afterwards. If coping with loss, coming to term with failures and moving on is an issue, one has to look at the situation before it went wrong. One has to recover as many threads as possible, before they were lost. World War I was a seminal wrong, because deadly, answer to unsolved questions of order and coexistence in the “old world”, in particular to the so-called Eastern question, the question of the future of the Ottoman world and of New Turkey. This short paper concentrates upon the Ottoman diaspora in Geneva before World War I. I begin with a few remarks on the general setting and the state of research. A second section of my paper will be on Geneva in the Fin de siècle, a third section on Geneva after 1908.

What was at stake in Geneva?

La petite Russie - Little Russia – centered on rue de Carouge in Geneva was well known as the center of the Russian diaspora, famed for its revolutionary stance.² Similar places could be found

¹ Paper presented at the Sixth Workshop on Armenian Turkish Scholarship (WATS), on “Revisiting Ideologies and Revolutionary Practice in the Late Ottoman Empire”, at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (GIIDS), Geneva, Switzerland, February 27-March 1, 2008. Most informations in this paper are taken from my book *Vorkämpfer der “Neuen Türkei”. Revolutionäre Bildungseliten am Genfersee (1870–1939)*, Zürich: Chronos, 2005; Turkish version soon to be published (Istanbul: Iletisim). For a more detailed article in English, which includes World War I and its aftermath, see “Turkey's elite diaspora in Switzerland (1860s to 1920s)”, in: Anastassiadou, Meropi (ed.), *Médecins et ingénieurs ottomans à l'âge des nationalismes*, Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2003, p. 349–82.

² Mysyrowicz, Ladislas, “Université et révolution. Les étudiants d'Europe orientale à Genève au temps de Plekhanov et de Lénine”, *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 25 (1975), p. 514-562.

in Zurich and Bern. The Russian Revolution was made in Switzerland, the American historian Alfred Senn stated in his book of 1971.³ Such a statement is partly true too of the Zionist project.

Few people are aware of the fact that in the Fin de siècle the same quarter around the rue de Carouge also housed several Young Turks and the room in rue de Carouge 7, where they met weekly. Interestingly enough, this was also the address of *Kurdistan*, the first Ottoman and Kurdish periodical which, after the terrible pogroms of 1895 and ongoing violence in the Eastern Provinces, called for Kurdish-Armenian friendship. Abdurrahman Bedirhan, from the family of the former emir of Botan, the responsible of *Kurdistan*, peacefully shared the same working room with later Turkists and members of the Ankara parliament like Tunalı Hilmi and Akil Muhtar. An Armenian typesetter made their publications possible.

Inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony nevertheless did not reign. And some ten years later the situation had changed profoundly. The south-eastern European diaspora was deeply divided along ethno-national lines. Bulgarian, Armenian, Greek, Serbian and Zionist clubs already existed at the turn of the century, side-by-side with small Albanian and Egyptian clubs. The newcomer in 1911 was the *Türk Yurdu*, or *Foyer turc*, followed a little later by the Kurdish *Hêvi*. The *Foyer Turc* was among the most seminal clubs.

Within Switzerland, Geneva was the undisputed center for political publication and agitation from the Young Ottomans in the 1860s to the Young Turks before 1908. In 1911 Geneva and Lausanne possessed the first two *Foyer Turcs* in Western Europe. The *Foyer Turc* in Lausanne remained the most important on the continent until 1922. After 1918, the European propaganda center of the early Kemalist movement was established around that *Türk Yurdu*; important protagonists moved to Ankara from Lausanne and Geneva in 1919/20.

The concentration in French-speaking Switzerland was of course a result of the Francocentrism of the Ottoman Reform age and the special place accorded French as the “language of culture and progress”. Unlike the Ottoman Muslims, large numbers of students from Russia and some Ottoman or post-Ottoman Christians also frequented the universities of Zurich and Bern. At that time life for students in Switzerland was cheap compared with Paris.

Thanks to Sükrü Hanioglu we know a lot about the Young Turks in opposition and their activities in Geneva.⁴ We know much less about the *Foyers Turcs* in Switzerland and the role they played for the future of the Ottoman Empire before, during and after World War I. That is why I studied them more closely a few years ago on the basis of both Swiss and Turkish sources.

³ Senn, Alfred Erich, *The Russian revolution in Switzerland 1914-1917*, Madison (Wis.): Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1971.

⁴ Hanioglu, Mehmed Sükrü, *Bir Siyasal Düşünür olarak Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi*, Istanbul, 1982; and *The Young Turks in Opposition*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Despite some research by Anahide and Talin Ter Minassian⁵ we lack a comprehensive study of the Armenian revolutionaries in Geneva.⁶

The revolutionary Armenians had their center in the Chemin de la Roseraie 19, close to the Rue de Carouge, but despite this proximity there was a definite distance between them and the Turks from the beginning.

Geneva at the Fin de siècle

Mainly from the Caucasus and after the 1880s solidly established in the town and university of Geneva, Armenians were familiar with Russian revolutionary theories and movements. They founded the *Hntshak* party in Geneva in 1887. The *Dashnaksoutioun*, or Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) had been founded in Tiflis, but alongside its eastern headquarters in that city, it established its western ones in Geneva in 1898, where they remained until 1913. The Geneva headquarters oversaw the ARF committees in Asia Minor (except Van, Mush, Bitlis, Trabzon), and in Cyprus, Egypt, the Balkans, Germany, France and the USA. From 1891 on the ARF published its monthly *Troshak* in Geneva, and an important number of Armenian books and booklets appeared there. Compared to the Young Turks the Armenians were professionals at that period.

Prominent Young Ottomans like Ziya Pasha, Namık Kemal, Hüseyin Vasfi Pasha and Ali Suavi had already found temporarily exile in Switzerland. *İnkılâp*, *Ulâm* and *Hürriyet* – “Revolution”, “Science”, “Freedom”: all meaningful titles – were among the first opposition newspapers published in Geneva, beginning in 1868. The first diplomatic difficulties began only a decade later when in 1880–81 the Freemason Ali Shefkati published his *İstikbal* (“Future”) in Geneva. *İstikbal* was pored over in secret by the students of the Constantinopolitan Military School for Medicine, where the Committee of Union and Progress, the CUP, was founded in 1889.

Young Ottoman and similar activities in Geneva before 1890 were however the work of individuals. Only after 1895 can we begin to speak of a politically active Muslim Ottoman diaspora group. It was composed mostly of students who fled Sultan Abdulhamid's repression of the Young Turks in Istanbul at that time. In the list of students at the University of Geneva in 1897 we find nine Turkish-speaking Ottoman Muslims, among them seven active Young Turks.

⁵ Ter Minassian, Anahide, “Elites arméniennes en Suisse. Le rôle de Genève dans la formation des élites arméniennes au début du XXe siècle”, in: Kieser, Hans-Lukas (ed.), *Die armenische Frage und die Schweiz / La question arménienne et la Suisse (1896–1923)*, Zürich: Chronos, 1999, p. 29–52.

Ter Minassian, Taline, “Genève: ‘capitale’ de l’édition arménienne? La presse et les éditions arméniennes en Suisse avant la première guerre mondiale”, in: Kieser, *Armenische Frage*, p. 53–65.

Beside these students, there were about twenty other active Young Turks then in the town, among them İshak Sükûti and Abdullah Cevdet, founders of the CUP, Midhat Şükrü Bleda, later CUP secretary, and Mizancı Murad.

The Young Turk diaspora in Geneva of the second half of the 1890s was young, vulnerable, and open. It won the sympathy of the Geneva public and press, and enjoyed the support of some Swiss personalities. The socialist member of the Geneva cantonal parliament Jean Albert Karlen helped them produce their papers and gave his name for the official press register. So from 1896 to 1900 we find Karlen officially responsible for *Meşveret (The Council)*, *Mizan (The Balance)*, *Beberuhi (The Funny Dwarf)* and *Osmanlı (The Ottoman)*. Another collaborator in those years was Dr Edmond Lardy. Surgeon-in-chief of the French Hospital in Istanbul from 1889 to 1897, this young doctor from Neuchâtel then returned to Switzerland and opened a practice in Geneva in 1898. Alongside writing pro-Young Turkish articles for the Swiss press, he devoted himself to the *Osmanlı* by supervising its French edition and by translating articles from Turkish into French.

The young men hurriedly leaving their country for Geneva often had no clear perspective even not for a short time. They had set their hopes on universal compassion and enlightened sympathy in Europe. But they often felt emotionally and spiritually unwelcome and thus disillusioned,⁷ estranged because they were Muslims, or else thrown back on a religious identity – all the more as they did not feel at ease among professed atheists of the left wing. Not all, however, shared the same feeling of despair and need for political deliverance. Some went to Europe for fun, out of curiosity and because it was *à la mode*. Not a few, by the way, called themselves revolutionaries in order to extort money or posts from the Palace. The Genevans saw these young Muslims as quiet and well behaved. Of course they could not read what they published for the Ottoman public. In a report to the federal prosecutor in April 1899, the Genevan police described the Armenian committee as more militant and, because of the pogroms, more inclined to take revenge.

Despite various attempts, cordial Turkish-Armenian relationships only existed on an individual basis, not collectively and politically. The opportunity to find a confident consensus between Armenian and Young Turk opposition figures in the small Swiss arena was missed for several reasons. One was mistrust and contempt on the part of the Armenians. But this was linked to what was probably the main reason: the lack of a clear political program of the Young Turks and thus the impossibility of a solid agreement on principles. Defending himself against the accusation of non-cooperation, an Armenian, probably of the *Troshag* staff, stated in the *Gazette*

⁶ Hervé Georgelin, a French scholar now in Bern, has begun a small study on *Troshag*, an Armenian journal published there. We plan to bring together our findings in a common study later on, perhaps together with additional scholars.

⁷ Cf. letters reproduced in Göçmen, Muammer, *İsviçre'de Jöntürk Basını ve Türk Siyasal Hayatına Etkileri (1889-1902)*, Istanbul, 1995, and İbrahim Temo, *İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin kurucusu ve 1/1 no'lu İbrahim Temo'nun İttihad ve Terakki Anıları*, Istanbul: Arba yay., 1987 (1939).

de Lausanne in May 1901 that the Young Turks had no credible program of how to change the state in order to attain social justice and security. He argued that their main aim was to deprive Abdulhamid of power, reconsolidate the state and ensure their own places in it.

For the Armenians, but also for an important part of the Swiss and international public, a touchstone was the Young Turk position vis-à-vis the Armenian massacres in 1895. People from different religious backgrounds, liberals, socialists and freemasons, had participated in the humanitarian protest movements of 1896. Those in Switzerland who supported the Young Turkish opposition, for instance when the question of their being expelled was raised, were the same who had been at the forefront of the humanitarian mobilization for the Armenians. One example is Albert Gobat, member of the Swiss Parliament, secretary of the international inter-parliamentary Peace Union, and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1902 (together with Elie Ducommun). He had stayed in Istanbul in September 1896, shortly after the shocking anti-Armenian pogrom in the center of the Ottoman capital, and had written a caustic article critical of both the sultan and the system of the European powers (*Le Genevois*, September 31, 1896). Five years later, on 19 June 1901, he pleaded in the Parliament against the expulsion of Young Turks and Swiss collaboration with the Ottoman secret services.

Against this background, the statements the Young Turks in exile made on the Armenian topic carried moral and political weight, but remained ambivalent insofar as they lacked an analysis of the social dysfunctioning of the Ottoman system. Their scapegoat, their *Diabolus ex machina* was Abdulhamid. Again and again in texts and caricatures they imagined his violent removal that they supposed would make everything better. The Young Turk caricatures published in Geneva (and elsewhere) were obsessed by the *idée fixe* of a sultan-devil, a mentally ill sexual pervert, responsible for all Ottoman despair. An article of *Osmanlı* in June 1898 for instance called the sultan “a pathogen, poison and bacillus of the Ottoman social organism”. The preoccupation with the Empire’s diminishing power and territory was another recurrent theme in the caricatures. They all documented the authentic feelings of a generation and cultivated resentments against the “establishment”, above all against Abdulhamid, but they did not put forward a convincing way out.

If we sum up the “thinking of New Turkey” in Geneva up to 1900, we can say that:

- the Young Ottomans introduced the notion of revolution, *inkılâb*, especially in their review *İnkılâb*, a “review of Muslim democracy”, according to its subtitle. In an article in 1870, it had opposed a corrupt Ottoman capital to purer people in the countryside. It had also, interestingly, called on the Armenians in Van and Mush to unite against corrupt government and tribal attacks, and described the Armenians as compatriots whom the Muslims loved more than any other group;⁸

⁸ Quoted in Bilgelil, M. Kaya, *Yakın çağ Türk kültür ve edebiyatı üzerinde araştırmalar*, vol. 1: Yeni Osmanlılar, Ankara: Baylan Matbaası, 1976, p. 169

- the Hntshag then had the vision of an independent, democratic and socialist post-Ottoman Armenia;
- the Dashnaksoutioun, which began to prevail at the end of the 1890s, fought for a reformed Ottoman state, especially since it cooperated with Prince Sabahaddin who arrived in Geneva in March 1900;
- around 1900 the Genevan Young Turks' vision of Turkey's future was very vague; they shared notions with the Young Ottomans, but were (emotionally, not yet conceptually) eager to make a clean sweep of the whole system. They lacked a project for the future; Abdulhamid and his elimination stood in the center of their political thinking. All the groups mentioned approved of using violence against a despotic sultan.
- On the whole Ottoman Muslims tended to turn to a right-wing paradigm of modernization, Eastern Christian and Jews more to a left-wing one. ARF and Hntshag [to be checked], like the Labor Zionists, Ben Gurion's Poale Zion, were early on member of the Socialist International.
- Compared to their Swiss fellow students, these young educational elites from the East were highly politicised, focussing on power, politics and state and strongly influenced by images of contemporary Europe and its trendy doctrines. With a few exceptions, they were remarkably uninterested in the Swiss society where they lived.

Despite ongoing activities after 1901, Geneva was no longer the decisive CUP-center in Europe. Elitist pragmatists of power like Dr. Bahaeddin Şakir and Dr. Nazım reorganized the CUP via Paris, where they sealed a tactical alliance with the Dashnaksoutioun at the congress of Ottoman opposition parties at the end of 1907. Not Geneva, but Paris and Saloniki were the centers of activity, when the members of the diaspora opposition in alliance with those in Saloniki partly took power in the Empire in July 1908.⁹

Geneva after 1908

We lack relevant research, but it seems safe to say that the Young Turk Revolution was enthusiastically welcomed in the Ottoman diaspora in Geneva. *Troshag* of January 1908 had already praised the alliance with the Young Turks. For the ARF headquarters in Geneva a turbulent, but hopeful period of four years of open political cooperation with the CUP began. The authors of *Troshag* were evidently well-educated people with an internationalist attitude that

⁹ Hanioglu, Mehmed Şükrü, *Preparation for a revolution. The Young Turks, 1902–1908*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

appears sincere.¹⁰ They never signed with their names and gave scarcely any information about what went on in Geneva and on possible interactions on the spot, e.g. in the newly founded *Clubs ottomans*. A few months after the Revolution, *Clubs ottomans* and *Bibliothèques ottomanes* were founded in Geneva and Lausanne. But they were short lived. Instead of them *Foyer Turcs*, Turkist - Turkish ethno-nationalist - clubs were established in 1911.

Before and at the beginning of World War I, many opponents of the CUP also reached Switzerland, among them Prince Sabahaddin, Ahmed Reşid [Rey], former minister of the interior, Lütü Fikri, member of parliament from the Dersim, Gabriel Noradunghian, foreign minister in 1912, Süleyman Nazif, the governor of Bagdad in 1914, Dr. Cemil Pasha, former prefect of the capital, and Kemal Midhat, the nephew of Midhat Pasha. In the following pages, I will however concentrate upon the *Foyers Turcs* that proved to be both seminal for the thinking of an ethno-nationalist New Turkey and integrative in terms of networking and nationalist consensus during and after World War I.

The Young Turks in Geneva at the Fin de siècle had been seekers. Some twelve years later, and after a short intermezzo of common Ottoman enthusiasm, the picture was different. They had found their goal. In the *Foyers Turcs* they proudly declared that they knew who they were, Turks, and how they should make New Turkey. Turkism, Turkish ethnic nationalism, was the new key. The ensuing project was a Turkist social revolution (*inkılâb-ı içtimâî*) and a Turkist appropriation of Anatolia, culturally and through education, but also politically. Tunalı Hilmi and Akil Muhtar exemplify this shift. In Geneva in the 1890s they were Young Turks, with Hilmi married to a Swiss wife, but they were openly declared Turkists after 1910 and members of Parliament after 1923. Abdullah Cevdet on the other side took another, more liberal, at times Kurdist, course.

From the turn of the century, the number of Ottoman students had successively grown in Geneva as well as in Lausanne, to a lesser extent also in other Swiss universities. Medicine and science remained their preferred fields of study. On the eve of World War I, there were about 250 university students in total from the Ottoman Empire (excluding Egypt), among them 31 state scholarship holders. Roughly half of these 250 were organized in the *Foyer Turcs*, where they lived in a closed circle and had little interaction with other non-Muslim groups from the East or with the Swiss. A prominent exception was the Genevan professor of anthropology and later friend of Atatürk Eugène Pittard, whom the Ottoman students called their godfather. In the 1930s, he was the supervisor of Atatürk's adopted daughter Ayşe Afetinan's doctoral thesis at the University of Geneva.¹¹

Limits and rules in the *Foyers Turcs* were clear. Membership depended on a Turkish father. The so called *Yurdcular Yasası*, regulations of the Foyer members, established in Petit-

¹⁰ I thank Hervé Georgelin for this information.

Lancy near Geneva in March 1913, stated that exceptionally membership was also open to those, “whose feelings, opinions, ideas and wishes did not permit any doubt that they were Turks.” The rules imposed a strict discipline concerning the regularity of meetings, participation in them, the members’ behavior and their contributions to the *Foyer*.

Members from *Foyers Turcs* in Europe and Istanbul, among them Hamdullah Suphi [Tanrıöver], participated at the international Turkist congress in Geneva/ Petit-Lancy in March 1913. At this meeting the need for “creating a homogeneous and concentrated unit of the Ottoman Turks in Anatolia” was expressed, stating that “Anatolia was the homeland [anayurt] which would guarantee the political existence of Ottoman Turkdom.” The proceedings were published the same year in Istanbul. The minutes of the relevant 8th session of March 30 1913 read as follow:

“During this session [8th session on Sunday, 30 March 1913, from 2.30 pm] all congress participants were able to profit significantly from the remarks made by Rasimoğlu from Vidin [Bulgaria] and better understand this important part of Turkdom. He gave a general overview of the demographic and economic situation of the Turks in Rumeli [Balkans], and said how beneficial in political and economic terms it would be to create a homogeneous and concentrated unit of the Ottoman Turks in Anatolia. Tevfikoğlu Niyazi for his part stressed that, sadly and contrary to this vital perspective of national salvation, refugees from the lost countries and regions [of the Balkans] being continually lost were very badly received in Anatolia. In this context, a letter of Halide Edip was read out at the congress recommending that the *Yurdcu* build up an organization. In order to emphasize this issue Hacı Nasuhoğlu Cevdet proposed a discussion on the topic of ‘tribal solidarity’ [kafilecilik], during which all congress participants unanimously declared that ‘Anatolia was the homeland [anayurt] which would guarantee the political existence of Ottoman Turkdom’. And the *Yurdcu* planned with full conviction to make the Turks the owners of Anatolia and, supported by established men of various trades, to lead the way on behalf of the Turks who were as yet unaware of the salutary works aimed at guaranteeing their existence. They also swore solemnly that, being on the road towards the great national ideal, they would make Anatolia their national home.”¹²

At the beginning of 1913, for Turkists New Turkey was a quite clear concept in terms of territory, economy and national identity. “While yesterday we answered the question ‘What is your nationality’ by saying ‘I am Muslim’, today we do not hesitate to respond by proudly saying ‘I am a Turk’”, we read in the minutes of the *Foyer Turc* in Lausanne. And Turks now knew, according to the congress in 1913, where was to be their national home and who was their enemy

¹¹ Kieser, Hans-Lukas, “Türkische Nationalrevolution, anthropologisch gekrönt. Kemal Atatürk und Eugène Pittard”, *Historische Anthropologie* 1/2006, p. 105–118.

¹² *Yurdcular Yasası. İsviçre’de Cenevre şehrine yakın Petit-Lancy Köyünde Pension Racine’de kurulan İkinci Yurdcular Derneği’nin müzakerat ve mukerreratı*, Istanbul: Yeni Turan Matbaası, n.d. (1913), p. 69 f.

there, both in terms of a class struggle and of an ethno-religious struggle.¹³ The Turkist project was a revolutionary right-wing project insofar as it lacked universalist references, an unambiguous acceptance of the modern period and a class analysis of society beyond ethno-religious boundaries. “It is the Turkist's first duty to resurrect our famous and sublime past in modern form,” Nasuhoğlu stated.¹⁴ Accordingly, favorite topics of discussions and conferences in the *Foyers Turcs* were pre-modern national heroes, nationalism, Turkism, national progress, national organization or the “great Namık Kemal”. Mahmut Esat [Bozkurt], president of the Lausanne *Türk Yurdu* during World War I, got worked up about a Western historiography that, in his eyes, did not duly honor Turkish heroes like Chingiz Khan, Tamerlane and Sultan Selim. In the session of 11 June 1916 Mahmut Esat got the task of translating Léon Cahun's work on Turkish pre-Ottoman history.¹⁵

I would suggest that the *Foyers* served to train prospective elites in a modernist, secular Turkish nationalism that, a decade later, was to be adopted in Asia Minor. In my view this seems to be specially true for important political figures of Republican Turkey like Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, president of the Lausanne *Türk Yurdu*, and Şükrü Saraçoğlu, president of the Geneva *Türk Yurdu* during World War I, later Prime Minister. Both were from Izmir and linked to the CUP. Both left Switzerland in 1919 for Ankara via Izmir. One could add Cemal Hüsnü [Taray] from the *Foyer Turc* in Lausanne, later a minister. The author Moiz Cohen Tekinalp wrote in 1914-15 that the *Türk Yurdu* movement in Europe had “no impact on the masses”, but “made hundreds of Turkish students in Europe”, the prospective elite, “convinced nationalists”.¹⁶ One sign of their wanting to represent post-Ottoman modernity was that they refused to wear a *fez*, because it looked too Ottoman to them, as states a report of the German secret services in Switzerland.¹⁷

Educational elites believed in a secular Turkism that after 1923 was to be implemented in Anatolia. A most significant secular act in this sense was the adoption of the unchanged Swiss Civil Code in Turkey in 1926 by the minister of Justice Mahmut Esat Bey. Let us come back with Mahmut Esat to the beginning of the 1910s. He was then, just before leaving for Switzerland, a student of law in Istanbul. It seems that he had among his teachers there Hatchérian Effendi. Hatchérian had translated the new Swiss Civil Law of Eugen Huber into Ottoman and published it in 1912 in the juridical review *Adliye Ceridesi*. The Ottoman Armenian jurist Hatchérian, who is completely forgotten today, has to be counted among the spiritual fathers of the Turkish “Legal Revolution”.

¹³ *Lozan Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti'nin Muharrerat ve Zabıt-ı Sabık Defteri*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Y 653, Ankara.

¹⁴ *Yurdcular Yasası*, p. 20.

¹⁵ Cahun, Léon, *Introduction à l'histoire de l'Asie. Turcs et Mongols des origines à 1405*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1896.

¹⁶ Alp, Tekin (Moiz Kohen Tekinalp), *Türkismus und Pantürkismus*, Weimar: Verlag Gustav Kiepenheuer, 1915, p. 31.

¹⁷ Heinrich Jacoby, Bern 22 July 1916, PAAA R 21270, p. 79 f.

After 1908 some serious attempts were made at thinking out elements of a new, modern Turkey. Many constructive interactions transcending ethno-religious boundaries took place, most important among them the cooperation between the ARF and the CUP, and many personal connections were established; reforms and laws were reflected on, and tasks were begun on to rise to the challenge of a new Turkey.¹⁸ The thrills of decadence towards the end of the Belle Époque, the attraction of action, men of action, and related fashionable doctrines did not contribute to perseverance in negotiating compromises or resisting hate, resentment and Darwinist ideas of human society. The catastrophe of 1914/15 was something of a self-fulfilling prophecy, in Turkey as well as in Europe.

At the Turkist congress in Petit Lancy Dr Cevdet Nasuhoğlu, then the president of the *Foyer* in Geneva, appealed to the audience saying: “our nationalism will not be filled with hostile feelings towards the people that live on the same territory with us and that we love.” He insisted that “the great national ideal” was to be achieved by education and faith, not by violence. At the same congress however, held during the Balkan War, thoughts of revenge occupied an important place. Young elites and revolutionaries of that time, left-wing and right-wing, saw violence as a necessary component of their struggle aimed at sacred goals. Later Member of Parliament and minister Yusuf Kemal Tengirşek attended the congress in Petit-Lancy and wrote in his memoirs *Vatan hizmetinde*: “[In Petit-Lancy] we made different agreements which enforced our sentiment of Turkishness. We said that we would not marry a non-Turkish girl [–what a difference to the 1890s! –] and that, if necessary, we would kill those hampering our work for progress or hindering Turkish girls from going to school.”¹⁹

In the list of members of the Lausanne *Türk Yurdu* we find six women out of a total of 87 persons, three of them described as holders of a state scholarship.²⁰ This is less than in contemporary socialist, Zionist and Armenian revolutionary diaspora groups, but more than among the Young Turks. The *Foyer* members in Geneva and Lausanne aimed at achieving the revolution towards New Turkey primarily through education and secularization. In contrast to the Young Turks of the 1890s, they had understood that Turkey needed thorough social reforms, not only a change of regime; these included women’s education and women’s rights. But both social and gender reforms were strictly subjected to the priorities of the ethno-nationalist transformation. In contradiction to the *Foyer* regulations, the very first session of the *Foyer Turc* in Lausanne on 2 December 1911 was already marked by the struggle between Ittihadists and Liberals: The then *Foyer* president İlyas Ragib Bey polemized against the liberal party *Hürriyet*

¹⁸ Cf. Kévorkian, Raymond, *Le génocide des Arméniens*, Paris: Odile Jacob, 2006, p. 17-211; Kaligian, Dikran Mesrop, *The Armenian Revolutionary Federation under Ottoman constitutional rule, 1908-1914*, doctoral thesis, Boston College, 2003.

¹⁹ Tengirşek, Yusuf Kemal, *Vatan Hizmetinde*, Istanbul: Bahar Matbaası, 1967, p. 124.

²⁰ *Türk Yurtları Üye Kayıt Defteri*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Y 654.

ve İtilaf. The pluralist stance of paragraph 17 of its new party regulations in his eyes threatened the hegemony of Turckdom (*Türklük*) at home.²¹

Despite Nasuhoğlu's words at the Petit-Lancy congress, the feeling among the Foyer members was militant and included readiness to violence against perceived enemies of the revolution, be they so-called reactionary Muslims or so-called exploitative and treacherous non-Muslim compatriots. "Throw off the foreigners' economic yoke" had become a key slogan. Decided to fight "Armenian profiteers" and "*Rum* [Orthodox Ottoman] swindlers", the Turkists in Petit-Lancy began to put the Ottoman non-Muslims in the category of internal and foreign aliens.²² The sweeping Young Turkish hatred, directed at the Fin de siècle against Abdulhamid and despotism, began to concentrate upon them. In his inaugural speech in Petit-Lancy on March 13, 1913, Nasuhoğlu himself had put it this way already: "It is our duty to ensure a prosperous future for the Turkish race, it is our duty to take revenge for the losses our nation has suffered."²³

Conclusion

Elite diasporas were microcosms firmly linked to macrocosms in transition; they were a decisive factor in the modern remodeling of the East and Near East. Dynamics in closed diaspora circles anticipated processes which in the society on the ground would have taken much longer and perhaps have taken another, more evolutionary course. Beside their political relevance, the *Foyers Turcs* were in the first place an educational movement, a late cultural renaissance linked to an educational boom, as had been the case among non-Muslims much earlier. But this Turkism was personally, financially, and ideologically linked to the CUP, which played the leading role in a single party régime from 1913 on. Moreover Turkism was exclusivist. Its rise coincided disturbingly with the end of the serious-minded ARF-CUP alliance. Turkism acquired the status of an *Ersatzreligion*, permitting the Turkists to abandon Muslim-Ottoman imperial thinking without renouncing the primordial traditional claim to be the *millet-i hâkime*, the ruling "nation". What *Foyer* members projected as New Turkey in Geneva, Istanbul and elsewhere in 1913 was not the official policy of the CUP regime, established in January of that same year. But it very soon proved to be a crucial element in the ideological mix of CUP politics until 1918. Subsequently, the *Foyer* members' legacy definitely dominated Turkish nationalism.

²¹ Lozan Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti'nin muharrerat ve zabt-ı sabık defteri.

²² "Anadolu'da Ermeni muhtekirlerine esir, Rum hilekârlarına medyun, Türk mütegalibelerine zebun, iktisaden mahv u helak uğramış Türk köylüsünden, Türk işçisinden bahsetti. Anadolu'daki Türklüğü yerli ve yabancı ecnebilerin, ruhi kinlilerin iktisadî esaretinden kurtarmak için hiç bir gayreti diriğ etmemek lüzumuna bütün dernek kâni ve mutmain oldu." *Yurddular Yasası*, p. 61.

²³ *Yurddular Yasası*, p. 20.