

Global Waves, Local Actors: What the Young Turks Knew about Other Revolutions and Why It Mattered

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Do revolutions affect one another? Certainly, in light of the “velvet revolutions” of the past decade, the contagious effect of revolutions cannot be denied. Less remembered is the wave of constitutional revolutions of the early twentieth century that swept across Russia (1905), Iran (1906), the Ottoman Empire (1908), Mexico (1910), and China (1911). This short-term wave was couched within a long-term one that began with the American, Polish, and French Revolutions and included such other exemplary cases as the European revolutions of 1848 and the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Both waves, long and short, ended with the Russian Revolution of 1917 that initiated a new and different model of revolution (Sohrabi 1995).

Here I concentrate on one event within the early twentieth-century wave—the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 in the Ottoman Empire—to investigate the following questions: How is a global wave constructed at the local level, and how do actors link their local upheavals to global waves ideologically, in action, and in timing? Simultaneous commitment of revolutionary elites to a single grand doctrine across an array of countries is certainly puzzling. After all, problems are by nature local, and they vary tremendously from one national context to another. How can a single solution satisfy all? A careful answer would require identifying principal problems from the point of view of actors, and taking note of the linkages they make to global models as a way of solving those problems. Furthermore, it requires taking note of the language they use to legitimate their proposed solutions in light of local traditions. Finally, an argument that global waves affect the form and timing of revolutions requires a demonstration that actors intentionally modify their strategies to make them

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more effective and hasten the upheaval in light of contemporary examples. These are tasks that I turn to in what follows. I show that the Young Turks linked all major problems within the Empire to the constitutional solution, and justified this doctrine by drawing on the language of religion and the “invented” constitutional “tradition” of Islam. Furthermore, I demonstrate that in light of contemporary upheavals they modified their original strategy of “revolution from above” in favor of a more populist uprising to lead a revolution that made them part of the early twentieth-century constitutional wave.¹

To explore the interaction of global models with local settings, I descend to the level of actors and view the revolutionary wave from the vantage point of participants caught within its currents. The actors I approach in this manner are members of the Committee of Union and Progress (hereafter CUP). This group overshadowed all others within what was informally known as the Young Turk opposition; it led the revolution almost single-handedly, and was its prime beneficiary. The CUP’s views are investigated here by privileging its main political journal, *Şura-yi Ümmet*, published in Cairo and Paris between 1902–1908. It was the most widely circulated and influential opposition tract inside or outside the Empire.

In their search for the best political system and a viable strategy of revolution, the Young Turks looked to historical and contemporary events. After analyzing the French Revolution of 1789, the Meiji Restoration of 1868, and the Young Ottoman movement that resulted in a constitution in 1876, they reached two significant conclusions: a constitutional administration was the best political system in existence, and an elitist, bloodless revolution from above was the best way to implement it. Needless to say, their interpretation was highly partisan with a strong interest in molding the past and present to fit their vision of the future. Yet, this did not mean they could interpret history as they pleased, or remain unmoved by contemporary developments. Indeed, the success of contemporary foreign and domestic popular movements so challenged their conclusions as to force them to change their strategy towards greater populism.

The revolutions in 1905 Russia and 1906 Iran, neighbors of the Ottomans, strongly reinforced their ideological commitment to constitutionalism. Yet these revolutions were mass based and they cast doubt on the CUP resolve regarding the strategy of revolution from above. Equally unsettling were successful internal rebellions: the Turkish uprisings in Anatolia (the Asian Turkey of today) and the Christian uprisings in Macedonia (part of the European territories of the Empire). These events forced a critical change of outlook within the CUP and increased their commitment to revolutionary violence and mass participation. In time, a unique strategy developed that propelled the CUP to power: a revolution that was at once popular and from above.

Wave-like social movements certainly challenge state-centered views of revolution that point to slow-changing structures of the long run to explain their occurrence. By emphasizing state-breakdown, organizations, and resources, the

state-centered theories have made important strides in illuminating the necessary causes of revolutions (Skocpol 1979; Goldstone 1991). In agreement with their conclusions, I here contend that revolution would have been impossible without the financial crisis of the Ottoman state during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, more precise accounting of the revolution's form, process, and timing requires that we pay greater attention to culture and ideology, temporal ordering, sensitivity to context, world time, agency, subjectivity, and the emulation of models through deliberate planning, and that we take note of the effect of grand events upon structure (Sewell 1985; 1994; 1996a; 1996b; Baker 1990; Hunt 1984; 1992; Sohrabi 1995; 1999; Foran 1997).

Keeping long-term causes in the background, I will highlight the role of agency in revolution and its world context. Without pretending to provide a general theoretical statement on agency and structure, I insist that macro-structures are poor indicators of the goals and processes of movements, and of the timing of those that appear in clusters. Only with reference to world context and global currents does it become possible to explain why some revolutions are constitutional and others socialist, why some demand parliaments but others demand their abolition, and why some, despite the widely varying circumstances out of which they emerge, come to have very similar demands. Finally, reference to agency may illuminate a good deal about the timing of these events.

Recent elaborations of the concepts of wave (Huntington 1991; Markoff 1994; 1996) and repertoire (Tilly 1978; 1993; 1999; Traugott 1993; Tarrow 1994), help us to better account for simultaneity. Together, they capture the cumulative experience of social movements and their changing form and organization through time as the result of developments within and outside national boundaries. To deal with the somewhat amorphous notions of wave and repertoire more effectively, Markoff (1996:27–29; 1994:50–53) has singled out four elements that movements borrow from one another: broad ideas, symbols or slogans, forms of public action, and organizations. Each element has a global and local dimension. In other words, if imported global doctrines or organizations are to be effective, they have to make sense and be viable locally. On this score, doctrines and symbols exhibit greater flexibility and are more amenable to creative adaptation for use in varied contexts; more, that is, than are initiations of new, illicit, social movement organizations, or forms of public action.

This is not to say that political doctrines can be imported simply by pointing to their efficacy in other national contexts. Imported grand ideas, be they socialism, communism, constitutionalism, parliamentarianism, or revolutionary religious doctrines, must appear meaningful to local audiences. Whether they gather followers and carry force depends at least partly on the skills of movement entrepreneurs—the intelligentsia—and their ability to “translate” the imported doctrines for local use and to bridge their gap with local beliefs, attitudes, indigenous political doctrines, and meaning structures.

Following Goffman (1974), some have labeled this creative act of reinterpretation by movement entrepreneurs “frame extensions” (Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1992; Tarrow 1992; 1994:118–34). In moments of greater creativity, the intelligentsia may even re-interpret an imported doctrine in such a way as to “invent” whole new “traditions” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), and present the new in the guise of the old to make it more palpable to its local audience. A constitutionalist “tradition” was “invented” in just such a manner and for this explicit purpose in the Ottoman Empire and other parts of the Islamic world.²

It is not uncommon for actors in widely varying contexts, with imaginations tinged heavily by models of success at particular historical junctures, to seek solution under a single political system. Calling this shared belief the “prevailing nostrum,” Huntington (1991:33–34) has elaborated it as follows: “Just as six individuals may more or less simultaneously take aspirin to cure six very different physical complaints, so six countries may simultaneously engage in similar regime transitions to cope with very different sets of problems” (1991:33). Constructing this bridge between local problems and global solutions, to repeat, is a matter of creative re-interpretation by the revolutionary elite.

When crossing borders, forms of public action and social movement organizations are under greater constraint and tend to mimic previous national experiences. They have greater inertia toward the national rather than the international, for material and cultural reasons. As such, there is greater possibility for similarity in political doctrines and symbols of protest, even if somewhat superficial, than there is in the organizational models and forms of protest. As Tilly (1993) has remarked, at any moment a far wider range of action is available than what actors actually end up employing, a phenomenon that can be explained by constraints imposed by historical memory, limits of learning, and culture barriers to collective action. These restraints, when combined with the inevitable constraints of material resources at the national level, such as the availability of networks and institutions, bring forms of public action and social movement organizations, especially illicit ones, closer to the national experience.³ It is therefore not surprising that experienced revolutionaries do not advocate adopting wholeheartedly organizational models, strategies, or forms of protest that are entirely foreign to a local setting, even when they have proved effective in another.

Accordingly, the Young Turks found themselves constrained by the traditional repertoire of Ottoman history which called for action through the military alone, and they doggedly attempted to remain within its confines by citing practical, historical, and “scientific” reasons. Yet beginning in 1905 the force of example of contemporary popular upheavals gradually led them to modify their traditional repertoire and organize the public in conjunction with the military. This proved to be a highly appropriate strategy at an opportune moment.

The Historiography of the Young Turk Revolution

The view of the CUP presented here is at odds with the dominant strand of historiography of the Young Turk movement. The latter holds that the CUP was not committed to revolution and violence but became partially open to it only after forging an alliance with a group of action-oriented officers in the European provinces of the Empire late in 1907. Furthermore, it is held that after the alliance the officers took real control of the opposition movement at the expense of factions abroad. Once in power, the officers are depicted as inexperienced, and not guided by a coherent ideology or program for social change (hence as not revolutionary). They are thought to have accomplished very little by way of reform, largely because they lacked direction. Furthermore, the revolution itself is thought to have involved the public in only a highly limited and symbolic fashion. Thus, for conventional historiography this event was at best a somewhat muted social movement, and at worst, a simple military coup and transfer of power. The real revolution, it is widely agreed, had to await the emergence of Atatürk in 1923, five years after the end of CUP rule in 1918.

An accompanying view holds that once in power the CUP deviated drastically from the liberal, constitutional doctrine they had held dearly while in opposition: they refused to disband the CUP as a semi-secret political grouping in favor of forming an open political party, and they meddled in politics incessantly through secretive channels. This deviation is attributed to either the large divide between the returning intelligentsia and officers inside the Empire, or to the fundamental disbelief of both in constitutionalism.

The initial conservatism of the CUP is well known. The first CUP cells were formed in 1889 in the military medical academy in Istanbul, but within a decade the majority of its members had moved abroad. In 1902, when the Young Turks and other opposition groups held their first congress, the CUP faction in Paris emerged as the dominant force in the movement (Hanioglu 1995). At this time the CUP held highly conservative views toward political action; it was elitist, and evolutionist rather than revolutionary. Despite desiring radical transformation of the status quo, it feared that mass participation would flame inter-ethnic feuds, or signal weakness at the center, both of which would invite the Powers to intervene and bring about the collapse of the Empire. The CUP justified its evolutionary stance "scientifically" by drawing upon Comtean positivism, the biological materialism of Büchner, and Le Bon's social-psychological theories of crowd (Hanioglu 1995; 1986; Ramsaur 1957; Bayur 1963; Kuran 1948; Ahmad 1969). Nonetheless, it is widely acknowledged that the CUP changed its stance on violence at the second congress of the Ottoman opposition parties in the closing days of 1907, a change attributed to a critical alliance with action-oriented officers inside the Empire in September 1907.⁴

Here I argue that, contrary to more conventional views, the CUP's stance on revolution began to change independently and prior to contact with the officers.

In late 1905 and early 1906, the group abroad was already demonstrating signs of openness toward revolution, violence, and mass participation, changes that came in response to contemporary popular uprisings both abroad and domestically. Thus, the assumed dichotomy between the supposedly action-oriented officers and the passive, more ideologically sophisticated foreign faction was far less than is usually assumed before their officially forged union.

On the other hand, it is perfectly correct to point out that following the revolution the CUP refused to dissolve itself in favor of an open political party and continued to operate as a semi-secret political association that interfered in government above and beyond parliamentary channels. Yet, as I argue in the following, the idea of keeping a semi-secret body intact was a plan concocted by the ideologues themselves before the revolution. Its persistence was not due to inexperience, a change of mind, or hypocrisy. Rather, after analyzing other revolutions the ideologues had reached an ironic, albeit accurate, conclusion: the Ottoman Chamber's effectiveness, and in fact its very survival, depended on the existence of a secret association that operated as a constant threat to the government.⁵ Again, this approach establishes far greater coherence between the ideologues' plans and the officers' actions.

The discussion brings us to the notion of ideological sea-change and impregnation of global doctrines with new meanings locally. At issue is whether the CUP itself considered its actions to be a gross violation of constitutionalism, and did it indeed break decisively from the constitutional doctrine that it had espoused prior to the revolution. While from a present-day vantage point we may consider constitutionalism a doctrine of political liberalism in all contexts and times, such an approach is insensitive to the meaning actors attach to political doctrines in different times and contexts. For the Young Turks, constitutionalism was more a doctrine of political, administrative, and legal rationality, on which basis the Ottoman state was to rebuild strength, prevent disintegration, and recover lost glory through greater centralization, economic progress, and military advancement. Constitutionalism was also their offered solution against ethnic strife and nationalist separatist movements that were tearing the Empire apart. These issues concerned the CUP far more than did the citizens' rights and liberties, or the correct implementation of every article of the constitution. My focus on the CUP's reading of other revolutions thus has a dual purpose. One is to document a change of strategy in light of other out-breaks; another is to gain better access to the CUP's world-view, to what it imagined constitutionalism to be, and to how it sought to solve local problems by recourse to this doctrine.

This is not to argue that a liberal interpretation of constitutionalism never surfaced. The group formed around Prince Sabahaddin (*Ahrar* or Liberals), the champion of decentralization and private initiative, presented a liberal and anti-state-centered interpretation that was far closer to classical liberalism.⁶ They criticized the French-style centralization model of the CUP and in its place ad-

vocated the British, laissez-faire model. After the revolution, in their semi-official newspaper *İkdam*, they criticized the CUP repeatedly and severely for having created “a government inside the government.” Yet they failed to appeal to a broad audience. Whether this was due to their unskilled interpretation of constitutionalism and their inability to link it to the Empire’s concrete problems is a question worthy of investigation but one that lies beyond the scope of this inquiry.

Finally, an aspect of this revolution that has been grossly neglected is its popular component. New evidence demonstrates that the CUP did indeed have an extensive presence in the European provinces of the Empire and that it organized large numbers of villagers and city residents, primarily Turkish ones, with the help of officers. This shift toward populism did not happen by chance, or spontaneously, but came after conscious decision and concerted effort. The organizational model itself was learned from the rebellious nationalist Christian populations of Macedonia who had much success in wresting away Ottoman territories (Hanioglu 2001). As such, the revolution was far from the disorganized mutiny in the European provinces of the conventional historiography.⁷ In reality it occupied a place between a revolution from above and a popular outbreak, and indeed it could not have succeeded without a highly organized popular component.

A new generation of researchers has begun to question the timing of the Turkish Revolution and to explore the beginnings of the radical changes that led to the creation of modern Turkey. At the center of controversy is the extent of the CUP’s radicalism, the coherence of its ideological outlook, the extent of continuity between its pre- and post-revolutionary visions, the scope and depth of Turkish nationalism within the CUP (as opposed to commitment to Ottomansim), and the magnitude of the changes wrought during its ten-year reign (Hanioglu 1986; 1995; 2001; Zürcher 1984; 1993; Kansu 1997; Toprak 1982; Sohrabi 1996). A closer look at this revolution, aside from its intrinsic value for the students of social movements, may also furnish us important clues regarding the emergence of modern Turkey.

*The Glorious Revolution, the Defective Revolution:
The French Revolution of 1789*

The Young Turks admired the French Revolution and privileged it not only as the first constitutional revolution but also as a harbinger of progress in Europe. But they were critical of its mass character and violence. Living in an empire of diverse religions and ethnicities, they were convinced that a mass uprising against the state would invite foreign intervention in support of autonomy-seeking ethnic groups, a recipe for the Empire’s collapse.

In 1903 they wrote: “some hold that mankind’s greatest step forward after the birth of Christ is the French Revolution.” But to avoid offending the religious sensibilities of their Muslim audience, they were quick to add: “there is

no doubt that it is mankind's greatest step after the emergence of Islam."⁸ Such praise did not stop them from criticizing the French Revolution's bloodshed, believing that it could accomplish its aims without the Terror. To convince readers that deprivations and dark passions of all kinds surfaced during popular upheavals, they offered Robespierre as proof of bloodthirsty masses emerging in revolution. From this followed a conclusion that went a long way in deciphering the Young Turks' inherent mistrust of the public: "As a sure way to progress, walking is not enough, they tell us. Haste, a bloodletting haste, is necessary. In our opinion, bloodshed humanity can do without. One should not show blood to the masses (*avam*) and should not get them used to it. Otherwise no end and limit may be found for the awakened human brutality."⁹ Condemnation of the Terror, positivism, and the current theories of "crowd" (Le Bon in particular),¹⁰ provided theoretical support for their preferred model of revolution: a constitutionalist military take-over from the top.

The Defeat that Paved the Way: The Young Ottoman Constitutional Movement

The Young Turks affinity for revolution from above was not simply a result of theoretical reflection. Their own national repertoire of regime change, the example of Janissaries, and the precedent set by the initial triumph of the Young Ottoman movement in 1876, pointed to this path of action. In the aftermath of the Russian Revolution of 1917, Trotsky referred to the Russian Revolution of 1905 as a "dress rehearsal." The teleological overtones of this assertion notwithstanding, a dress rehearsal is an apt metaphor for describing the relationship between the Young Ottoman movement of 1867–1876 and the Young Turk Revolution of 1908.

In this first constitutional revolution in the Middle East, high-ranking military and civil bureaucrats had dethroned Sultan Abdülaziz, established a parliament, and inaugurated the First Constitutional period in Ottoman history, all without any need for popular intervention. To prepare the ground, the Young Ottoman intellectuals had indigenized Western constitutionalism by rediscovering the purportedly forgotten constitutional, parliamentary lineage of Islamic politics, and by doing so "invented" an entire constitutional "tradition" for Islam. The Young Turks consistently declared that their only goal was to restore the Ottoman constitution of 1876, and that they intended to use the same method as their predecessors. The rhetorical question with which an opposition article ended, "Did the army see a need for bloodshed when it dethroned Sultan Abdülaziz?" thus invoked the Young Ottoman strategy of revolution from above, and invited the army to do the same with the Sultan Abdülhamid II.¹¹

The defeat of the Young Ottomans also provided valuable negative lessons. It demonstrated the need for severe caution against Russia, which had invaded shortly after the revolution. The new Sultan, despite his promises upon assuming the throne, had used that excuse to suspend the parliament in 1878. Thus,

the Young Turks knew that any appearance of chaos could serve as a pretext for a clampdown. Another lesson was the need for the permanent presence of an extra-parliamentary force to guarantee the parliament's survival.

Aside from having the advantage of hindsight, the Young Turks differed from their predecessors in two respects. In contrast to the earlier generation, their belief in the Islamic roots of constitutionalism was not as genuine and their religious rhetoric was toned down substantially. Even more significant were their social differences. They came from more humble backgrounds, and had the advantage of far greater numbers. Furthermore, being products of aggressive Westernist educational policies under Abdülhamid II, they enjoyed substantial support from the disaffected modernist officers and civil bureaucrats, and this made them a much more powerful social force.

*Revolution from Above and the Urgency of a Constitutional Administration:
Meiji Restoration in Japan*

After the French Revolution, the Meiji Restoration of 1868 impressed the Young Turks more than any other revolutionary achievement. For them, the Restoration was an illustrious proof that constitutional administrations were preconditions for progress and that immense "civilizational" strides could be made in a very short time, particularly if directed by an enlightened nationalist leader. Furthermore, it brought to light the absurdity of racial classificatory schemes concocted in nineteenth-century Europe that relegated the Asians to the bottom of a racial hierarchy and marked them unfit for progress. Finally, it showed that constitutional administration could be established by action from the top, without need for a large-scale, drawn out, bloody revolution.

Japan's achievements became all the more palpable when in January 1904 it waged a war against neighboring Russia over disputed territories, and inflicted a humiliating defeat that was concluded with the treaty of Portsmouth in August 1905. That Russia was the Ottoman state's historic arch enemy, that it was the greatest threat to the Empire's territorial integrity, and that Japan had scored a clear victory in spite of its small geographical size, made the Japanese victory all the more astounding, and the need for a constitutional administration all the more urgent.

The Young Turks related to their readers that within thirty-five years after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 Japan had risen from the ashes, achieved grandeur, and entered the ranks of the civilized nations of Europe. The Ottomans and Japan shared Russia as a hostile neighbor, but the tiny Japan was not threatened by this massive landmass to its north and in fact had challenged the far eastern territories of Russia with its army and impressive navy.¹² Under the guidance of an enlightened Emperor, Japan had broken away from the motionless state that characterized its kinsmen in China and had made glorious achievements in the military, schools, science, and industry. For the Young Turks, even more significant than Japan having demonstrated the benefits of an enlightened ruler

was that Japan was a living proof to the world that the Chamber of Deputies and Senate were pre-requisites of progress and virtue, and that achievements such as Japan's could be had in a blink of the eye.¹³

In the flowery language of the modernist Young Turks, Japan's victory over Russia was the triumph of light over darkness, freedom over despotism, and knowledge over ignorance. The Russians, they wrote, were part of the Western world and the principal defenders and propagators of its civilization in the East for centuries, but the despotism of the Tsars had frustrated Russia's progress like a barrier on the highroad of civilization. Consequently, in contemporary Russia governance had been replaced by bribery and embezzlement, justice by oppression, and science by ignorance. The Young Turks compared this to Japan, which had recently resembled a society of the early middle ages but had, thanks to the Japanese natural intelligence, unbound liberties, a handful of enlightened statesmen, and a nationalist emperor, experienced five centuries of progress in a mere forty years. In this short time Japan had joined the ranks of Western nations in its orderly administration, knowledge, civilization, strength, and grandeur; the contrasts with Russia were brought to light on the battlefield.¹⁴

With the emergence of nationalism in the nineteenth century, there was far greater consciousness of the Asian origins of the Ottoman state and its conquest of Europe during its age of glory. The conquest, however, had been progressively reversed by Europe, reaching its apex late in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this context Japan was perceived as an Asian nation that had stopped this negative trend. After centuries, and to everyone's surprise, an Asian nation defeated a European one and reclaimed its lost lands with the force of arms; this made Japan the one nation in Asia that Europe was forced to deal with in a civilized and humanitarian fashion.¹⁵

For the Young Turks, the defeat had proven the might of the so-called "yellow races" and discarded the Asians' stigma as humanity's inferior race. If this ancient race was held back by the tyranny of ignorance, wrote the Young Turks, it was now rising like the sun from the Far East and refuting once and for all the outrageous association of race with progress. The proven foolishness of Europe's racial schemes was reason for joy. Turks had Asian origins as well, and as a racial group, Europe had relegated them to the bottom of the racial hierarchy along with the yellow races. Japan's victory had shown that Russia, the nation vested with the duty to defend the civilization of the white race against the wild yellow races was a thousand times inferior in its military prowess. And through the Russian massacre of its own population in 1905, Russia had proven that on humanitarian and civilizational grounds it was a thousand times below the Japanese as well.¹⁶

The official Ottoman press shared the enthusiasm. Nonetheless, the Young Turks blasted its coverage for attributing the Japanese progress to schools and education alone (i.e., military, scientific, engineering, literary, agricultural,

medical, musical, etc.). Although the Young Turks themselves had made, and for years thereafter continued to make, spirited arguments of a similar sort for the Japanese schools, teachers, and students, the official press coverage was dismissed for its deliberate omission of the most important criteria for progress:

To be able to advance civilization in a country, the very first necessary conditions are possession of independence by the press and personal freedoms by the inhabitants. And to perpetuate this [progress], the existence of Chambers of Notables and Deputies is indispensable so that they may guarantee the appropriate implementation of laws and freedom of the press. Because the Chamber of Notables and Deputies will have the right and authority to inquire about state revenues and expenditure of national riches, and to punish those who squander or steal them, it will be possible to protect state interests, and advance and heighten civilization.¹⁷

Japan began its civilizational advance, they concluded, when it replaced its autocratic government with a constitutional administration. It was due to the constitution, the Chamber of Deputies, and principles of consultation that Japan had entered the ranks of Great Powers and conclusively defeated the enormous Russia on land and water. Thus, a more important reason for the Ottoman state's lack of progress, even more than the government's disregard for education and neglect of schools, was the absence of the Chamber of Notables and Deputies.¹⁸

That Japan had achieved these results without bloodshed was particularly appealing to the Young Turks. They wrote in appreciation of the Japanese model as late as February 1906: "Knowledge and progress is transferred from one country to another, and from one nation to the other, gradually. Yet at some times and under some circumstances the law of evolution can be speeded up. The Grand Mikado and the advanced Japanese are the reason for our opinion. We are ceaseless supporters of revolutions in minds, schools, industry, and knowledge, but not in the streets."¹⁹

When the 1907 Hague peace conference failed to consider the Ottoman government a Great Power, the Young Turks took this as a humiliation on the world stage. In contrast, Japan was granted a Great Power status. The infuriated Young Turks lamented their loss under Abdülhamid, during whose reign the Ottoman state was rendered into oblivion after having possessed a Great Power status, a large organized army, a moderate navy, six hundred year-old institutions, and a parliament. In roughly the same time Japan had risen from nowhere to become a Great Power.²⁰

At the beginning of constitutional skirmishes in China in 1906, the Young Turks prematurely reported that even the sleeping China had accepted the constitution. They had identified with China as a grand but troubled empire: "Like the Chinese we are a nation that has also fallen far behind in the highroad of civilization, and like the Chinese we have received many a beating, and suffered Europe's injustice and domineering."²¹ Now, it was predicted that within a few years China, like Japan, would acquire enough strength to resist the

European attempt to divide and dominate it, and like Japan, no country would even think of jeopardizing the independence, rights and national integrity of China.²² In sum, France, the Young Ottomans, and Japan highlighted the advantages of a constitutional revolution from above. But the imagery started to become more complex with the outbreak of Russian, Iranian, and domestic rebellions.

The Revolution Next Door: The Russian Revolution of 1905

If Japan represented a possible future, Russia served to identify the defects of an empire much like their own.²³ More significantly, the Russian upheaval opened the possibility for a more popularly based movement in the Ottoman Empire. Russia suggested concrete protest strategies: public withdrawal of taxes, sending of delegates to the Palace or government centers, and involvement of religious figures in the protest. It highlighted the central role of social movement organizations and a dedicated cadre of revolutionaries, and the importance of the intelligentsia for inciting the masses and for setting the movement's broad goals beyond a mere revolt. Finally, it reinforced the necessity of extra-legal organizations in defense of constitutional administrations.

The European press reported the 1905 Russia Revolution daily, and Russia's proximity, its substantial Turkic minority, and its strategic importance for the Ottomans all aroused great interest in the Russian events. In 1906 a Turkic newspaper in St. Petersburg, *Fikir*, confirmed the Ottoman public's enthusiasm for news from Russia. Its correspondent, a Turkic citizen of Russia residing in Istanbul, reported that despite the strict ban on the Russian news, and the speeches of Duma deputies, Turkish intellectuals kept abreast of the latest details, thanks to the large-volume smuggling of contraband news sources to Istanbul and Anatolia. In particular, the speeches of the Turkic deputies in the Duma had reportedly aroused great enthusiasm for revolutionary ideas. After insisting that revolutionary proclivities were not limited to the intellectuals and that the general public too followed the news with "extra-ordinary interest," the reporter prophesized that revolutionary outbreaks in the Ottoman Empire might soon follow.²⁴

For the Young Turks, Russia was 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. Japan, in contrast, was an ancient, "backward" Asian nation that had beaten all odds and risen to the pinnacles of civilization and progress with the help of a constitution and a nationalist monarch. Russia's war with Japan underscored their differences. In war the world witnessed the incompetence of Russia's military, the selfishness of its commanders and their inability to coordinate action, and the rampant disorder in its army and navy. It proved that the Russian state, like the Ottoman state, was rotten to the core, and that autocratic governments were all disorderly.²⁵

On 9 January 1905, before the conclusion of war with Japan, Russian troops

gunned down a peaceful procession that had intended to deliver a petition to the Tsar. In reaction, Gapon, the popular priest, the petition's author, and the procession's principal organizer, called for the Tsar's removal. The event, known as the Bloody Sunday, was a turning point for the disturbances that ultimately forced the Tsar to grant the Duma (parliament) nine months later on 17 October 1905.²⁶ The brutal clamp-down was a perfect occasion to compare the two despots: "Like Abdülhamid, [the Tsar] does not step outside the palace and does not think of anything but his own self, his property and his life." The Tsar reckoned, "If I accept peace, I lose Tsardom (*Çarlık*) [and] if I grant the constitution to the inhabitants, my influence and grandeur will diminish." To protect his own privileges, the Young Turks concluded, the Tsar was willing to sacrifice hundreds of thousands of soldiers and witness destruction of many cities. In the wake of Gapon's reaction to the clampdown, the Young Turks called upon the Islamic clergy to issue a decree deposing the Sultan.²⁷

Disturbances in Russia created ambivalence among the Young Turks about the model of a limited revolution from above. One reason was the extent of success of the popular uprising next-door—successful at least initially. Another reason for uncertainty was the opportunity created by Russia's receding threat and the unlikely possibility that it would repeat its 1877 march on Istanbul; it had suffered defeat, was engulfed in a full-fledged revolutionary upheaval of its own, and was too pre-occupied to initiate a dangerous military adventure abroad. These developments gave rise to conflicting interpretations about what should be done.

Fearing an unruly ethnic conflict, the Young Turks' initial reaction was to cast the Russian events in the mold of an elite revolution and underplay the importance of popular participation: The Russian freedom fighters had shown that a skilled martyr-assassin (*fedai*) was more effective than 10,000 revolutionaries; their bombs that killed and injured top officials forced the resignation of government functionaries who feared the same fate, and with the disappearance of the appointees of the tyrant injustice vanished as well. Thus, in place of a mass revolution that shed the blood of the innocent and invited foreign intervention, argued *Şura-yi Ümmet*, Russian revolutionaries demonstrated that elimination of tyrants was a more effective tactic.²⁸

But signs of ambivalence began to surface in mid-1905. Citing the Ottomans' failure to wage an uprising against tyranny, an author criticized them from the eyes of imaginary Western observers: "O God what are the Ottomans doing? These Orientals who could not take lessons from the [Western] nations' historical experience, will they once again fail to benefit from the current events in Russia?"²⁹ Another offered quite contradictory recommendations about violence and passivity, a mass based revolt and one limited to the military. He faulted the Turkish public for indolence toward the seditious uprisings of the Greek, Armenian and Bulgarian committees whose designs for independence and breakup of the fatherland threatened the sovereignty of the Ottoman govern-

ment, and advised the Turks to learn from the bloody sacrifices of these nationalities in fighting tyranny. Yet, in a sudden turn of rhetoric he asked them to do so peacefully: unlike independent France or Russia, Ottomans were not secure from foreign intervention, and an uprising served as an invitation to Powers to send ships and occupy territory under the pretext of restoring peace and tranquility. In imitation of Russians, he encouraged the Ottomans to send unarmed delegates of clerics, military leaders, and notables to the Palace in Istanbul, and to the governors' mansions in the provinces. These were to make peaceful but stern requests for the implementation of the constitution. Yet in line with his inconsistent recommendations he was quick to add that if Abdülhamid rejected their request, as the Tsar had done against his nation, the public was obliged to restore its rights with the force of arms as commanded by logic and religion. By the end he tempered his own conclusion once more by noting that in place of imitating France or Russia and resorting to a general uprising it was better to learn from their own history, a code word for military intervention without mass participation.³⁰

One of the last defenses of pure revolution from above appeared early in February 1906. Despite admiring the freedom-loving uprising in Russia, an author argued that a popular uprising in the Ottoman lands was certain to lead to the disintegration of the multiethnic Empire, where each ethnic leader jockeyed for advantage against another and imagined independence the solution to its own groups' problems. Instead he expected the army to lead a bloodless revolution (*inkılab*).³¹ Yet, by this time, the notion of revolution from above was no longer uniformly accepted within the Young Turk ranks.

The successes of the Russian Revolution gave greater credibility to a more broadly based movement. Its advocates, in line with the Young Turks' elitism, argued for the central role of intelligentsia in any such movement. If Russians had risen against tyranny, they asked, why have not the Turks? Impatient with current notions about the extraordinary passivity of Turkish masses, they placed the blame instead on the failure of the Turkish intellectuals. In their judgment, the masses (*avam-i nas*) were incapable of independent thought in all times and places, and without the active, enlightening participation of intellectuals, they remained passive as ever. Intellectuals were thus necessary to ignite the masses against tyranny and injustice, as electricity and heat were required in chemical reactions.³²

The French Revolution itself was not a product of the masses (*halk*), they concluded, but an outgrowth of philosophy and science, and if the latter had not been its guide, it would have suffered the same fate as the legions of uprisings marking Ottoman history. Uprisings without the guidance of intelligentsia only expressed the masses' hatred of despotism and injustice, and failed to achieve anything of value for the nation.³³ Contemporary Russia set another example for the essential role of this class. Had it not been for the intellectuals, including a large number of trained professional men and women who had gone

abroad for education, the Russian masses would have continued to look upon the Tsar as their father, rather than the real source of injustice that he was, and was finally understood to be. Large uprisings and revolutions, the conclusion went, came about through the writings of the educated who awakened the masses to truth.³⁴

An equally important lesson from Russia was the centrality of revolutionary organizations. European newspapers, despite disagreement on a variety of issues, consistently agreed on one theme: it was the revolutionary organizations that brought a state as enormous as Russia to its knees. By late February 1906, the Ottomans were encouraged to pay attention, more than anything, to this factor and to learn from the Russians the material and moral means for creating and operating a tight secret organization. A secret organization with the help of publications, the readers were advised, united and mobilized the public; it emboldened them and provided the means to expel spies rather than being fearful of the lowliest of them; it allowed resistance to illegitimate taxes, or the expression of demands to highest places, even to the Palace. The Young Turks even demonstrated intense familiarity with the cadre of devoted revolutionaries in Russia, composed of both educated and uneducated ranks, immersed in the business of revolution and dedicated to instilling in the public the hatred of tyranny. "If we strive like Russians," they concluded optimistically, "it won't be long before we see even the Sultan's aides-de-camp among our supporters."³⁵

Another astute observation was of the role of the extra-parliamentary organizations after the establishment of infant parliaments. The Duma's authority and its deputies' ability to attack the government publicly did not derive from the people, the Young Turks concluded. Rather, the real source of its power was the extra-parliamentary secret organization that instilled terror in the heart of the Tsar despite his command over millions of soldiers.³⁶ When the Autocracy unleashed a counter-revolution to shut down the young Duma in early July 1906, after less than eleven weeks of operation, it became a bitter reminder of an episode in their own history: the closing of the infant Young Ottoman parliament by Abdülhamid. The shut down of the Duma lent greater credibility to their assessment of the critical role of this organization. Readers were advised that the Russian upheaval demonstrated that tyrants, even the most seemingly innocent, were not to be trusted. At first, rulers and their promises appeared sincere, but they struck without warning at the first opportunity. Had not Louis XVI, the most innocent of all tyrants, taken a public oath of loyalty to protect the constitution while he was scheming with other European governments against the Nation? Did not Napoleon III declare himself the emperor against his oath of presidency? Did not Abdülhamid, in spite of decrees and assurance to the contrary, destroy the Chamber of Deputies, banish its members, and suffocate its founders in jail? For the Young Turks, the shutting of the Duma was a declaration of war by the Tsar against the Russian nation and leaders of free-

dom. For them, Russia's (read the Ottomans') fate now lay in the hands of the army and its conscience.³⁷

Immediately after the shutdown in early July of 1906, the Duma deputies issued their famous Manifesto from a secret meeting place in Vyborg, Finland. *Şura-yi Ümmet* summarized the Vyborg Manifesto in accurate detail: it was an appeal to the Russian people to withhold taxes and military registration until the Duma was restored. Yet, interestingly, instead of reporting the rather moderate Vyborg appeal in detail, the Young Turks presented their readers with verbatim translations of the far more radical appeals by the socialist, workers', and peasants' representatives. The latter's condemnation of tyranny, appeals to the army, and warnings against foreign invasion mirrored the Young Turk language far more closely, with the notable exception that the radical Russian representatives had invited the public to a popular uprising directly.³⁸

Within less than two months the Young Turks had a change of heart and issued their own direct appeal on the front page of their political journal. In a style of a public declaration addressed to all Ottomans, they invited Muslims and Christians to unite for a general uprising against Abdülhamid, who was rumored to be dying.³⁹ The Young Turks had never invited the public to a general uprising in so direct a fashion. Encouraged by the successful tax rebellions in Erzurum and Kastamonu, and by the example of Russian opposition, they renewed their call against paying taxes.⁴⁰

Populism and Islam: The Constitutional Revolution of 1906 in Iran

If Russia propelled the Young Turks toward a populist revolution, the revolution in Iran was the ideal proof that a constitutional revolution could be at once popular and bloodless. That Iran was an Islamic country, and one that was by all measures more "backward," was further proof that the Ottoman public too was prepared for this "advanced" political system.

In departure from the Young Ottomans, the Young Turks had toned down substantially the earlier attempts to indigenize constitutionalism based on Islam. The success of this rhetoric in Iran, however, demonstrated the continued relevance of this strategy for a Muslim audience and encouraged a more systematic return to that language. Furthermore, participation of the Iranian clerics at the forefront of the movement raised hopes that use of this language could mobilize the Ottoman clerics behind the constitutional cause.

The Young Turks rightly assessed the critical inspiration of Russia and Japan for the Iranians. The tyrannical shah's promise to establish a Chamber of Deputies was not due to his kindness, the Young Turks argued, but rather was the outcome of the Iranians' sacrifices and their fortunate circumstance, namely the revolutionary wave that spread like wildfire from Russia and engulfed them.⁴¹ Japan on the other hand, they argued, breathed new life into ancient nations of the world such as China and Iran; the latter in turn were awakening all Asians who lived and suffered under tyrannical states, making them aware of

the fate of regimes and rulers that did not grant their publics their deserved rights. Iranians were congratulated for accepting the constitution and the Chamber of Deputies, for leaving behind the despotic government and the legacy of previous centuries, and for having entered the highroad of progress and civilization in the company of other civilized nations. In a regretful voice, they added, it was only the Ottomans who had not awakened to their rights.⁴² Eyewitness accounts from Tehran confirmed the impact of Russia and Japan on the Iranians, especially Russia, news of which was propagated by the Iranians in Baku.⁴³

Success of the Iranian revolution encouraged the Young Turks to make better use of the rhetoric of religion. Articles on Iran, for example, departed from the customary non-religious tone of the Young Turks, and made unusually frequent references to the rights of the Muslim community (*ümmet*), religious laws (*şeriat*), and the Islamic principle of consultation (*şura*). Iranians were congratulated for establishing the second Consultative Assembly in the Islamic lands (here referred to as *şura-yi ümmet*),⁴⁴ the first having been the 1877 Chamber of Deputies.⁴⁵ Similarly, they argued in another instance, when Abdülhamid suspended traditional customs and religious institutions, the administration fell into utter chaos, and foreign governments lost all respect for the Ottoman state and began interfering in its affairs. This was contrasted with the past, when neither the Sultanate nor administrations were undermined, even during the most chaotic and tyrannical periods. At the time, the fundamental state laws rested on religious foundations (*şeriat*), and the Muslim clerics had a far greater role within the state and supervised the correct implementation of religious laws.⁴⁶ Uncharacteristic concessions were being made here to the clerics, in hopes that they could play a role analogous to the Iranian clerics.

Indeed, the Young Turks, who had earlier blasted Şeyhülislam (the highest ranking cleric) for his pro-Abdülhamid leanings and quietism,⁴⁷ called on the Ottoman clerics to end their silence and invite the population to the “true path,” and encouraged them to learn from the examples of the clerics in Iran and Najaf.⁴⁸ The same language was used to exhort the Ottoman soldiers to unite and force the traitor Sultan to accept the meaning of the sublime Qur’anic verse “*wa shawirhum fi al-amr*” (and seek their counsel in all affairs). They were exhorted not to fall behind Iran, to save the fatherland from disintegration, and to safeguard Ottoman independence.⁴⁹

A major venue for intimate news about the Iranian revolution was the pro-constitutionalist newspapers of the Caucasus. The Young Turks cited long passages from these political journals to show the intimate connection between Islam and constitutionalism, a clever strategy that avoided the risk of committing them fully to a rhetoric that was by then simply too old-fashioned. Excerpts from *Vakit*, a publication in the Caucasus, are a case in point: “The esteemed prophet of Islam gathered the masses in mosque for consultation about all public affairs and frequently abandoned his [own] opinion and abided by the opin-

ion of the public. After him, the first [four] Islamic Caliphs acted accordingly . . . If the successor Caliphs resorted to oppression and tyranny, its guilt is theirs alone and is not to be attributed to Islam, its founder the Prophet Muhammad, or the holy Qur'an."⁵⁰ The easy, initial success of the Iranian constitutionalists was attributed to Islam as well: "The religion of Islam, from its inception, declared liberty, justice and equality. Yet gradually the value of such exalted principles declined and for this reason Muslims were weakened. Although in Europe and Russia so much blood was shed to acquire freedom, today in the government of Iran, in response to its ulama's request, freedom is granted customarily without any bloodshed, for Islam is built upon freedom and justice."⁵¹

Although Russia and Iran provided a good case for popular mobilization, the inertia of the repertoire of past centuries—one that called for military action alone—could not be overcome before it could be proven that public participation was a viable possibility locally. It was in this light that Turkish and Christian uprisings in Anatolia and Rumelia, respectively, gained overwhelming significance.

The "National" Awakening: Uprisings in the (Turkish) Heartland

Between 1906 and 1907, the Turkish population of Anatolia resorted to a series of tax rebellions. These outbreaks, most notably in Erzurum, Kastamonu, and Bitlis, despite their small number of participants, sparseness, short duration, and the trivial political content of their demands, bore enormous symbolic value. According to the Young Turks, previous instigators of anti-state rebellions in this region, for the most part, the Armenians and occasionally the Kurds, had harbored autonomy-seeking or separatist motives. With the rise of Turkish nationalism in the late nineteenth century, this region was progressively defined as the Turkish "heartland"⁵² (*kalb-i vatan*) and the Young Turks were elated that this time around the Turks—the only ethnic group whose loyalty to the integrity of the Ottoman state could not be questioned—had initiated this anti-state rebellion. Furthermore, the rebellions had proven to detractors that the Turkish masses, despite the meager history of their anti-state activity, were not passive. Finally, the rebellions lacked any hint of ethnic strife and were directed against the government alone. Taken together, they solidified the Young Turks' resolve to move toward a more wide-ranging uprising. Hence it was not surprising that their most definitive revolutionary statements in support of a general uprising was issued in the midst of these rebellions.

The first tax rebellion originated in Kastamonu, where crowds forced out the governor and some officials and requested honest administrators from the Sultan.⁵³ The protesters prevailed apparently after a ten-day occupation of the telegraph office and unmediated correspondence with Istanbul (Kansu 1997:34).⁵⁴ This was soon followed by another rebellion in the city of Erzurum, started when local administrators banished demonstrators protesting tax increases and the public convened outside the governor's mansion to demand

their return. After an armed confrontation that led to the death and injury of a few policemen, the governor was captured. With continued public protest and refusal to open shops, the government finally backed down, recalled the governor, and ordered the return of the banished who were received amid public celebrations.⁵⁵ The event was significant for the Young Turks; the uprising in Erzurum, previously a major site of ethnic clashes, had avoided confrontation with Christians and had targeted taxes and government injustice alone. As such, it served as an example for other Muslim Ottomans.⁵⁶ To pre-empt a probable crackdown, the Young Turks warned the government not to imitate Russia's brutal methods in dealing with disturbances since that would only precipitate a nation-wide armed rebellion. Such an outcome, they reiterated, was not desirable, but in the end, they were quick to add, it might be the only solution.⁵⁷

The uprisings initially prompted the Young Turks to appeal for tax withholding only.⁵⁸ Before long, however, calls for a general uprising overshadowed those for peaceful resistance. Even Ahmed Rıza, the CUP's arch positivist leader, found many reasons to celebrate the success of violent uprisings in Erzurum and Kastamonu. In his own words, what marked these uprisings from others was that this time Muslims (read Turks) were responsible for them. Yet, when his compatriots called for a general united uprising of various ethnicities in response to these events,⁵⁹ he tried to tone down the outbreaks by portraying them as an elite movement.⁶⁰ Notwithstanding their leader, the CUP had already moved in a more radical direction. For them, the uprisings in Kastamonu and Erzurum were proof that Turks could endure oppression no longer:

A little while ago, the inhabitants of Kastamonu removed from office a governor who considered injustice and wrongdoing to be a requirement of rule, and they sent a telegram to the Yıldız Palace that said: "We dismissed the governor! Send an honest person in his place!" The inhabitants of Kastamonu are the voice of the masses and the cry of truth . . . The Palace, being compelled to carry out this Sublime Decree [issued] by the public, dismissed the governor immediately. Recently, with a peculiarly unyielding Turkish quest for justice, the inhabitants of Erzurum also forced the return of their banished *muftis* from exile. After removing the governor from his mansion and jailing him in the mosque, they expelled him [and] brought upon the police their [deserved] punishment. This is how justice is gotten. The entire world congratulates the inhabitants of Kastamonu and Erzurum.⁶¹

The CUP journal, *Şura-yi Ümmet*, resorted to the familiar device of citing Turkic newspapers of Russia to advocate controversial views without running the risk of overt commitment. For example, cited passages from *İrşad* innocuously congratulated the Muslim public in Erzurum and Kastamonu for selecting the best method of ridding themselves of thirty years of Hamidian injustice and tyranny, but ended on a poignant remark that the Young Turks had as yet refused to verbalize openly: "Blood is the foundation of freedom. Turks should also accept this prescription. Period."⁶²

When Bitlis, another region of the heartland⁶³ (*kalb-i vatan*), followed suit, it solidified the Young Turks' conclusion that Anatolia had awakened at last. On

26 June 1907 five thousand Muslim Turks, the report claimed, surrounded the governor's mansion and after accusing him of stealing public funds over the previous three years demanded his resignation. The governor managed to escape the agitated crowds, but only after killing a protest leader and suffering injuries himself. The crowds retaliated by publicly executing the chief of police, punishing the governor's more notorious appointees, and occupying the telegraph office for the next twenty-four hours. In reaction, the government placed the military in full command of the region. Now, the Young Turks concluded, their compatriots could no longer submit to oppression of murderous criminals.⁶⁴

If the Young Turks had so far only hinted at mass violence, the Turkish uprisings in Anatolia emboldened them to openly declare their change of attitude. After the events in Bitlis, a commentator referred his readers to an earlier article in *Şura-yi Ümmet* at the inception of the Russian upheaval. There they had exhorted the Ottoman clerics, military leaders, and notables to send unarmed delegates to the Palace and to the governor's mansions to request the reinstatement of the constitution. At that time they had argued that guns should be used on one condition alone: if the Sultan rejected their request and acted like the Tsar against the public. Now, they asserted, the Anatolian events had demonstrated that the Sultan had done precisely that, and now logic and religion prescribed armed confrontation as the only remaining option.⁶⁵

Learning from the Enemy Within: The Christian Uprisings in Macedonia

Another significant internal development was the separatist, nationalist uprising of Christian bands in Macedonia, particularly among the Bulgarians. The Ottoman state's waning influence over its European possessions and its forced retreat back into Asia under Abdülhamid was a dramatic contrast to the Empire's age of glory, when it had advanced from Asia into Europe. In the colorful words of nationalists, the Ottoman Sultans—who had emerged from Transoxania and reached as far as Vienna—were now, under Abdülhamid's leadership, wretched and mourning; a nation that once protected France against Spain could no longer stand up to a few savage Bulgarians in a handful of provinces. After having lost all hope and aspirations in Europe, they were now returning to the dark Asia, to a frightening past, to the burial place of time where the sun of civilization and knowledge had not yet arisen on its horizons. An end they considered truly inauspicious and terrible.⁶⁶ Similar dramatizations of Ottoman decline abounded:

Serbia, Bulgaria, Motenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Crete were lost. Right now the grand [dear] Rumelia is about to be lost and in one or two years Istanbul will be gone as well. The holy Islam and the esteemed Ottomanism will be moved to Kayseri. Kayseri will become our capital, Mersin our port, Armenia and Kurdistan our neighbors, and Muscovites our masters. We will become their slaves. Oh! Is it not shameful for us! How can the Ottomans who once ruled the world become servants to their own shepherds, slaves, and servants?⁶⁷

Serious dislike for the nationalist bands in the European provinces notwithstanding, the Young Turks were forthcoming about the appeal of their strategy. An article that appeared under the name of the arch-positivist CUP leader, Ahmed Rıza, still expressed distaste for a general uprising out of fear that it could either strengthen Abdülhamid's tyranny by providing a pretext for a clampdown, or open the way to foreign intervention. He continued to cling to the notion that a single palace assassin could set all matters aright. Yet, confronted with pressure from within the CUP, Ahmed Rıza made a surprising and uncharacteristic appeal to the military officers to organize villagers into rebellious units of ten to fifteen members each. This model, he stated explicitly, was inspired by Greek and Bulgarian bands that had succeeded in wresting away Ottoman territories. He surmised that if every province possessed eight or ten bands under the command of an officer, that protected villages against government intrusion, the loyalty of additional villages could easily be won. In this manner, the bands could begin liberating territories. It is interesting that he presented this plan without admitting openly any shift in CUP strategy. It seemed that Ahmed Rıza had found himself at an impasse where, in the face of pressure for greater mass participation from within the CUP, it was becoming harder to remain consistent with the doctrine of limited revolution from above.⁶⁸ Mobilization of Muslim-Turkish villagers in Macedonia and hence a more broadly based movement was now openly advocated. Yet, the emphasis on officers' leadership made these bands significantly different from their Christian counterparts, and here the CUP was working out a compromise between mass mobilization and military action. There was a need for change in the traditional repertoire of action.

BLOODLESS REVOLUTION FROM ABOVE TO REVOLUTIONARY POPULISM: THE SECOND YOUNG TURK CONGRESS

Late in December 1907, in the second congress of Ottoman opposition parties, the CUP officially sanctioned the use of revolutionary, popular methods. The congress convened under the leadership of the three principal opposition groups: the League of Private Initiative and Decentralization, the CUP, and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation. After a typically long-winded condemnation of Abdülhamid as the major source for a long list of problems besetting the Empire, from ethnic conflict to poor agricultural performance, the Congress agreed on three broad goals: (1) to force Abdülhamid to abdicate the throne; (2) to fundamentally transform the administration; and (3) to establish consultative principles and the constitutional system, that is, to create Deputy and Upper Chambers.

The declaration stated regretfully but explicitly that non-violent methods had proven insufficient and now was time to resort to revolutionary, violent means. Accordingly, a variety of violent and passive methods were recommended: armed resistance, inviting the public to a general uprising, propagandizing

within the army, strikes, and refusing to pay taxes. The joint announcement ended with an assortment of calls of “long live” that celebrated the unity of various ethnicities, religions, and the entire opposition in general, now hailed as revolutionary forces.⁶⁹

Even the CUP old guard conceded to greater commitment to violence, a decision that had purportedly come after contentious meetings during which other parties had accused them of “not being revolutionary enough.” Their insistence that as children of enlightenment they can never be “too red,” was an indirect admission that now they were in fact “red,” though of a lighter shade than the Russian opposition.⁷⁰

It may be argued that the decision for popular mobilization simply resulted from alliance of the CUP abroad with the radical, action-oriented officers inside the Empire in September 1907. From this perspective, the shift in strategy came about not because of the wave, but rather when the marginal CUP abroad accepted the terms demanded by the powerful and effective organization on the scene of action. Without a doubt the alliance was a critical turning point for the movement as a whole. But let us consider two issues before we accept this argument. First, a major faction of the CUP abroad, as argued above, had already changed its position prior to contact with officers inside the Empire, and at the time of the alliance, the two groups held similar views. Furthermore, as a recent and truly exhaustive treatment of the CUP has shown, before the alliance the officers were a highly disorganized group thanks to the effective spy network of the Hamidian regime. It was the CUP abroad that provided the crucial organizational link that allowed the nascent cells of officers to contact each other and establish organizational coherence (Hanioğlu 2001). In one sense, the CUP abroad, by providing an organizational umbrella for officers, did what the latter was to do for the disparate bands of Turkish villagers in Macedonia. The CUP abroad did not compromise its non-revolutionary stance or antipathy for mass movements from a position of weakness. The wave had already swayed the majority in that direction and the alliance was an organizational opportunity that solidified their resolve.

The global wave, by setting the broad agenda of revolution, constrained and enabled at the same time; it channeled revolutionary fervor toward the goal of constructing a constitutional government, and suggested violence and mass participation as viable strategies for accomplishing that goal. Agency in revolution, contrary to caricatures of it by critics, did not magically create organizations and resources out of will power. But by giving direction to what was at hand and by making crucial linkages among disparate elements, it realized potentials that would otherwise have remained dormant. Finally, the local repertoire of action and the weight of Ottoman history interfered to make this event distinct from other constitutional revolutions. The military not only assumed the leadership of this movement, it also became the prime organizer of its civilian participants.

The Young Turk Victory

In its final form, the revolution turned out to be from above and below simultaneously; it was organized by military officers, but joined and assisted by the public, especially Turkish villagers in Macedonia. Although it was not an Empire-wide mass movement, it came close to a popular outbreak in Macedonia, yet one that was, it should be emphasized, highly organized and tightly controlled by officers. As such, it was far from a haphazard undertaking of a few officers who stumbled into power by luck.

The documentary evidence from the heart of action in Macedonia reveals that nearly all of the military force present there sided with the uprising and commanded the loyalty of many regiments beyond the region. In addition, it shows that soldiers were in command of almost all public gatherings, and the nearly identical wording of demands (less than a dozen versions) bespoke of their high degree of organization. The extent of coordinated action in disparate localities was indicated by the gradual change in demands on 23 July, when in the majority of locations references to a forty-eight-hour ultimatum earlier in the day was changed to a demand for adoption of the constitution on that very day. Furthermore, the pattern of action followed a highly similar route, whether that was “announcing liberty” through precocious celebrations, occupying telegraph offices, or surrounding government buildings and sending community and military leaders to coax administrators into oaths of loyalty. Finally, the rebellion consistently claimed to demand nothing more than restoring the constitution of 1876, and in continuity with the invented tradition of the Young Ottomans, its language drew heavily from the Islamic rhetoric of that movement.⁷¹

Public participation became possible after the CUP officers decided to provide an organizational umbrella for the already existing, but unstructured, Turkish self-defense bands modeled after the Christian rebellious bands (Greek and Bulgarian in particular) in Macedonia. They went further than organizing existing bands and set up new Turkish bands of their own, even attracting some Christian and Muslim Albanian bands to their cause (Hanioglu 2001). Without these bands, military action from the top would not have succeeded at all, or at the least, would not have been as remarkably bloodless and swift.

Below, in the interest of brevity, I provide a few illustrative examples from the final and most active days of revolution simply to highlight the extent of public and military participation in Macedonia. I leave the full presentation of documentary evidence in support of this claim to another context.

Two days prior to the grant of constitution, on 21 July 1908, the Rumelia Inspector reported to the Sultan that in Salonica, Manastir, and Üsküp, the capitals of the three Macedonian provinces of Salonica, Manastir, and Kosovo, large scale rebellions were in the making and increasing numbers of officers, soldiers, and gendarmes were leaving their posts to join the “seditious” committee. Increasing also were the number of the ordinary public joining them,

and the threats and assassination attempts against officials and military personnel who remained loyal to the government.⁷²

Later reports from Üsküp, the capital of Kosovo, indicated that soldiers there had joined the uprising “without exception,” had assumed the leadership of the popular gathering, and had put forward “the known” demands (i.e. for the constitution and constitutional administration). An official sent to admonish the soldiers reported the following reply, which he had heard from officers: “We are loyal to His Highness, our benevolent Sultan, and will sacrifice our lives for the sake of the Sultan, but we will not use [our] swords against the legitimate (*meşru’ a*) demands of the inhabitants.”⁷³

Alarming reports from various locations at Kosovo confirmed that large crowds were moving toward Üsküp to join the gathering there. During various negotiations with the crowd leaders the government intermediaries succeeded in bringing the march to a temporary halt but they were unable to convince them to return to their villages. The leaders who left for Üsküp agreed to order the crowds to return only if their demands were met within forty-eight hours; after this deadline they would allow the crowds, awaiting instruction in nearby locations, to enter the city. The government report estimated their numbers at 8,000 to 10,000, and increasing by the minute. After admitting that they did not command enough forces to threaten the crowds, the officials pleaded with the Sultan to attend to the demands as soon as possible since the situation was worsening and leaders were unable to contain the crowd.⁷⁴

In Manastir, two renegade military commanders had the following to say to the Ministry of War about a gathering that precociously celebrated the announcement of liberty (*ilan-i hürriyet*):

Today, at four o’clock, the following crowd convened in the square of the Imperial barracks: the entire army in Manastir composed of the infantry, artillery, cavalry, and all other military units, together with battalions that had come from Ohri and Resne, and the seven battalions of soldiers that constitute the inactive reserve brigades (*redif livası*) of Izmir, and students from the Imperial War Academy and Secondary School, and gendarmes, and police, and inhabitants from both the center and provinces, constituting hundreds of thousands of Ottoman citizens composed of Muslims, Bulgarians, Greeks, Jews, Wallachians, and the governor, Field Marshals and Commandant Pashas, the entirety of the civil administrative and military officials, the ulama and religious clerics, influential personalities, and priests; in short the common folk, and the grantees, the small and the great. While the streets were filled, and the banners of liberty and flags of regiments and battalions were raised, and the leaders and students of various religious communities delivered speeches about liberty, justice, and equality, and recited prayers, with a special ceremony conducted in the name of the CUP, liberty was announced and celebration commenced. At the end of the ceremony the celebration was completed with the firing of twenty-one canons.⁷⁵

The public was equally active in Salonica. A telegram signed in the name of all military leaders, officers, and soldiers in the sub-province of Drama and environs, reported that tens of thousands of inhabitants, Muslim and non-Muslim, together with their religious leaders, had joined the celebrations by the military

at the government mansion, and amid music and raised flags, had announced liberty. The soldiers claimed that their aim—to institute liberty, equality, justice, and the constitution for eternity—was the wish of all the fatherland’s children. After announcing their readiness to sacrifice the last drop of their blood for this purpose, they ended their note with calls of “Long live the nation (*millet*), long live the fatherland (*vatan*) and long live liberty.”⁷⁶

In the district of Gevgili, the military commanders and district governor who had sided with the rebellion sent almost identically worded letters to the Ministry of War, the Prime Minister, and the Sultan in the name of all inhabitants and the entire military in the region.⁷⁷ When the same letter was presented to the officials in the district center of Ustrumca who had remained loyal to the center, they reported the following to the Palace about the circumstances in which the letter was received:

Today, in the morning, while declarations in the name of the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress were being affixed in the streets, thousands of Muslims and Christians inhabitants came to the district center from villages in group upon group, and together with all the town inhabitants who had closed their shops and trades, assembled in the meadows adjoining the town. The officers and soldiers of the Imperial army, the nobles, and the majority of notables, together with Islamic clerics, and priests, entered the government [center] while carrying banners adorned with the words equality, liberty, and fraternity, and chanting “long live the nation and liberty.” From among these a body came to us, your humble servants, and with threats demanded what is recorded in the following telegram.⁷⁸

One may quite logically suspect that the rebels’ declarations of their strength and public support were overstated, but the government’s own reports show that their claims were only mildly exaggerated. The most consequential of these reports came from the commander of the Third Army. On 23 July, General İbrahim Pasha wrote to the Sultan that Manastir, like Salonica (where he was stationed), was in the throes of a widespread rebellion and in his “humble opinion, the time for advice and admonition, or force and compulsion had passed”; further prolonging the crisis was certain to lead to foreign intervention, greater spread of internal rebellion, and outbreaks of unfortunate incidents in Salonica and other provinces. Even though some associates might prescribe the use of force, stated the General, from what he had witnessed in Salonica and judging from the reports from Manastir, such a course would only increase the dangers confronting the Sultanate, or even threaten its very survival. He thus concluded that the only solution to the crisis was the Sultan’s decree.⁷⁹

On the night of 23 July 1908 (10 Temmuz 1324), the Sultan acceded to demands from Macedonia. The commission set up at his behest to review the state of rebellion, in the preamble to the Sultan’s decree, admitted candidly that the Sultan’s response was occasioned by the popular rebellion and the mutiny in the Third Army in Manastir, Kosovo, and Salonica, which had requested the re-institution of the constitution. The commission elaborated that, according to numerous reports, the rebellion had extended to most locations in the three

provinces and that in the majority of these cases the public had acted in concert with officers and soldiers. Furthermore, it admitted that the revolt was spreading and the public was dismissive of the government's advice, and that in some locations gun and ammunition depots were being attacked and seized and large numbers of arms distributed among the public. Thus, to prevent bloodshed among the public and to avoid an excuse for foreign interventions, the Chamber of Deputies was invited to convene.⁸⁰

CONCLUSION

How is a global wave constructed at the local level? How do actors imagine revolution and translate it into action, or more generally, what is the connection between agency and material and ideal structures? How is revolutionary imagination shaped by global possibilities on the one hand, and practical, historical, and cultural constraints at the local level on the other? Do revolutions affect one another in the ideological framing of their demands, forms of action, and timing, and if so, how?

I have argued here that global models significantly affected the course of the Young Turk revolution. To frame local grievances in terms of a general demand for a constitution—the principal reason behind the political, economic, and “civilizational” advances in Europe—was the single most important global influence on the Young Turks. This thinking took the French Revolution as the principal event of modern history—the first “constitutional” revolution. Impressed with the progress it had ushered in, as early as 1876 the Ottomans grappled with their first constitutional experiment that resulted, though only briefly, in a Chamber of Deputies. It was under the shadow of this earlier movement that in 1908 the Young Turks inaugurated the second constitutional era in Ottoman history. In the period between, especially in the first decade of the twentieth century, a great deal happened to provide greater credibility for the Young Turk ideal. Japan's astonishing defeat of Russia brought to light Japan's immense progress since its supposed constitutional revolution, and the contemporary constitutional agitations in neighboring Russia and Iran, and more distant China all served to confirm that history was on their side.

If they needed no further convincing themselves, the general Ottoman public still needed to be persuaded that constitutionalism, this abstract, global (Western) political ideal, solved their concrete, day-to-day, local problems, and did not violate local (Islamic) traditions. To accomplish the latter, the Young Turks built upon the Young Ottoman movement, and sided with the invented tradition of their predecessors to find the roots of constitutionalism within the Islamic tradition. The 1906 revolution in Iran, an event that drew upon the same invented tradition, came at the right moment to make their argument more persuasive. Additionally, the constitutional cure-all provided answers for pressing issues such as ethnic strife, nationalist separatist movements, economic and military backwardness, lack of administrative accountability, and disregard for

legal-rational norms. In this process of adaptation to local exigencies, constitutionalism took on a local coloring: its liberal dimensions emphasizing individual rights and local autonomy were weakened at the expense of newly added developmental (economical and military) and integrative (of various ethnicities) dimensions. Furthermore, the state was identified as the sole body responsible for effecting change. These adaptations of global doctrine to local exigencies exerted a profound influence on the type of regime that came into being under the Young Turks, and the later Republic.

As for how to establish the new regime, the previous constitutional movements pointed to divergent strategies. The national repertoire for regime change had close affinity with the Japanese revolution from above. The traditional Ottoman military elite, the Janissaries, had until they were abolished in 1826 a long history of revolt leading to replacement of Sultans. In 1876, the Young Ottomans followed the same tradition to depose the Sultan and establish the first Ottoman constitutional regime. In addition to the inertia of this national repertoire, what made the strategy even more attractive was the ever-present danger of Great Powers intervention. A prolonged mass revolution, it was feared, would end in ethnic feuds or at least signal weakness at the center, and either would provide sufficient excuse for outside intervention. Hence, the Young Turks upheld the Meiji Restoration's swift, efficient, and bloodless strategy as an example, and found many reasons—supported by latest “scientific” thinking—to repudiate the methods of the French Revolution and the horrors of mass participation that accompanied it.

Under the wave's shadow, however, this thinking changed and the Young Turks became more committed to violent revolutionary action and mass participation. Of the external influences, 1905 Russia and 1906 Iran stood out most clearly. Yet, it is hard to imagine they would have been convinced of the need for popular participation before witnessing the Turkish uprisings in Anatolia, or without learning concrete organizational strategies from discontented Bulgarian and Greek separatist nationalists in Macedonia. Thus, lessons and opportunities provided by movements abroad, the domestic upheavals, and the long-established national repertoire of action, came together to form a new revolutionary strategy that now had room for popular participation. Based on this new strategy, the CUP exerted its agency and went ahead and first organized the officers inside the Empire, and then through them the villagers in Macedonia to wage a military and popular uprising. The new repertoire of action was unique: revolution from above, assisted by mass action from below. The results came swiftly with astonishingly little bloodshed.

I have questioned some of the claims of traditional historiography. One of these is the assumed division between the action-oriented officers and the CUP abroad and another is that the conflict in Macedonia was almost purely military, and highly limited in nature. I have argued here that major factions within the CUP had advocated violence and embraced a more broadly based strat-

egy of revolution even before forging a union with the activist officers inside the Empire, and there was greater affinity between the two factions at the time of union. Furthermore, I argued that violations of democratic, parliamentary principles were not simply the result of the officers' unsophisticated grasp of constitutionalism or a lack of concern for ideological issues. Indeed, the ideologically more sophisticated CUP shared their views. A critical assessment of the CUP's perspective on other revolutions provided an invaluable window into its thinking about constitutionalism, its overt concerns with catching up with the West and with holding the Empire together at all costs, the central role it advocated for the state in these processes, and its comparatively lesser concern for liberal ideals. Not to be forgotten is their critical conclusion after observing the fate of the Young Ottomans and contemporary Russia: after revolution the representative assemblies should be supported through semi-secret organizations that interfere in politics above and beyond parliamentary channels. Finally, new research has brought to light the far more extensive and organized character of this movement in Macedonia, both militarily and at a popular level.

That the late Ottoman state was experiencing severe financial difficulties is consistent with the findings of macro-structural theories: weakness at the center opens space for public expression of grievances and creates opportunity for subversive activities. I have argued here, however, that the timing of the revolution and the political system it instituted cannot be explained by macro-structural theories alone. There are simply no logical connections between collapsing states and the constitutional administrations that replaced them unless one takes into account the historical and international context of the conflict and the global doctrines that are in vogue and are used to frame local conflicts. Nor is there any reason why a series of revolutions should happen at the same time, unless one takes note of agency in revolution. Rather than looking for answers in long-term structural causes alone, here I have turned to the nexus of interaction between structures of meaning, ideologies, and cultures on the one hand, and long-term macro-structural forces on the other. This approach promises more plausible explanations for the timing, form, process, and outcome of revolutions.

In conclusion, what the Young Turks knew about other revolutions mattered. Keeping one eye on global revolutions and another on local outbreaks and repertoires, they devised a unique strategy of action that made them part of the wave of constitutional movements at the beginning of twentieth century. Their action transformed the Empire, and with it, the course of modern Turkish history.

NOTES

1. The term belongs to Trimberger (1978) in connection to reforms of Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey.

2. It should be noted that while the intelligentsia is responsible for the initial task of “translation,” the public may contribute to this task and create syncretic outcomes not originally intended by the intelligentsia. See for example Sohrabi 1999.

3. The notion of repertoire (Tilly 1993; Traugott 1993) has greater affinity to the third and fourth categories, rather than the first two. Commenting on Tilly, Markoff writes “Repertoires . . . are not bounded by national frontiers. General ideas about social justice, models of organization for engaging in conflict, reflection on strategies and tactics—these can all cross national frontiers through the movement of information and people” (1999:236). While such an assessment may be principally correct, in the short-run new repertoires of action are under greater constraint from local conditions than are the movement of ideas or symbols. Obviously they do cross boundaries, but not as easily.

4. Originally called the Ottoman Freedom Society, this group changed its name to CUP in 1907 after merging with the CUP abroad.

5. After the revolution the support of extra-parliamentary forces was precisely the reason for the Ottoman Chamber’s greater clout in comparison to the contemporary Russian and Iranian parliaments. See Sohrabi (1995).

6. See Sabahaddin (1908a; 1908b).

7. Yet, in my judgment, neither was it the mass revolutionary outbreak organized by a populist CUP, as portrayed in a more recent study (Kansu 1997).

8. Despite its praise, the article was still highly critical of that revolution’s violence. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 25, 30 Mar. 1903/1 Muharram 1321, “Abdülhamidin Hal’i,” 2–3 (quote from p. 3).

9. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 55, 14 July 1904/1 Jumada I 1322, “İhtilal,” 3.

10. For explicit reference to Le Bon see *Şura-yi Ümmet* 75, 20 May 1905/15 Rabi` I 1323, “Küstahlık,” 1–2. See also Hanioglu (1995).

11. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 55, 14 July 1904/1 Jumada I 1322, “İhtilal,” 2–3. For other examples of invented traditions within the Ottoman Empire see Deringil (1993). For the Young Ottomans see Mardin (1962) and Berkes (1988:201–50, 261–62).

12. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 29, 28 May 1903/1 Rabi` I 1321, “Çinden İbret Alalım,” 3–4.

13. Even though they wished to overthrow the “blood sucking” Abdülhamid, they professed loyalty to the Ottoman dynasty by expressing hope that an enlightened ruler could be found within the Ottoman household, thus avoiding the issue of dynastic overthrow. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 46, 2 Feb. 1904/15 Dhu al-Qa`da 1321, “Aksa-yi Şark,” 1–2.

14. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 64, 23 Nov. 1904/15 Ramazan 1322, “Liao-yang Muharebesi ve Rus Ordusu,” 4.

15. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 69, 20 Feb. 1905/15 Dhu al-Hajja 1322, “Port-Arturun Sukutu,” 1–2. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 72, 7 Apr. 1905/1 Safar 1323, “Muharebe ve İhtilal,” 1–2.

16. Europe, they wrote, expressed this threat in epithets such as the “yellow danger,” or “yellow plague,” racial slurs that expressed concern not only over the Japanese success but wariness that China too, with its vast population, might soon follow suit. Europeans asked themselves what would happen if China and its 400 million inhabitants experienced the same growth as Japan. How would Europe protect itself? *Şura-yi Ümmet* 69, 20 Feb. 1905/15 Dhu al-Hajja 1322, “Port-Arturun Sukutu,” 1–2. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 72, 7 Apr. 1905/1 Safar 1323, “Muharebe ve İhtilal,” 1–2. For consistent reference to the Turkish race (as opposed to the Ottomans in general) who worked the Anatolian fields, pastures and mountains see *Şura-yi Ümmet* 62, 25 Oct. 1904/15 Sha`ban 1322, “Me`yus Olmalı Mı?” p. 1. In 1904 a CUP member and a central figure for the emergence of Pan-Turkish ideology, Yusuf Akçura, made significant analogies between the political role that the Japanese intended to play for the “yellow” race, and the possible future role of Ottoman Turks for the Turkish race beyond Ottoman territories. The arti-

cles initially appeared in the journal *Türk* in 1904 and subsequently republished as a pamphlet (Akçuraoglu 1909).

17. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 85, 30 Oct. 1905/1 Ramazan 1323, "İstanbul Gazetelerini Okurken," 3.

18. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 85, 30 Oct. 1905/1 Ramazan 1323, "İstanbul Gazetelerini Okurken," 2–3. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 104, 30 Nov. 1906 "İran," 3.

19. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 88, 25 Feb. 1906/1 Muharram 1324, "Fas," 1–2 (quote from p. 1).

20. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 123, 15 Oct. 1907, "Şaşmazmısınız?," 1–2. As Deringil has quite aptly noted, attending international conferences was a crucial aspect of the project of "image management" by the late Ottoman government (1998:1–15, 135–49, 153–54).

21. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 29, 28 May 1903/1 Rabi' I 1321, "Çinden İbret Alalım," 3–4 (quote from p. 3).

22. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 104, 30 Nov. 1906 "İran," 3.

23. "It is obvious that in Europe two governments resemble one another with regard to their administrative methods: Turkey and Russia," began an opposition article. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 75, 20 May 1905/15 Rabi' I 1323, "Küstahlık," 1.

24. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 99, 31 Aug. 1906, "Muktatafat," 4.

25. According to the CUP, the same favorable pre-conditions existed in the Ottoman Empire, and it too could emulate the experience of Japan if affairs were handed to nationalist military and civil bureaucrats and if a nationalist Sultan from the Ottoman household was placed on the throne. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 52, 1 May 1904/15 Safar 1322, "Hü kümet-i Mutlakanın Mazarratı," 3–4. On Japanese success at Port Arthur see *Şura-yi Ümmet* 52, 1 May 1904/15 Safar 1322, "*Hubb al-watan min al-iman ve Japonya ve Rus Seferi*," 3. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 54, 30 May 1904/15 Rabi' I 1322, "Ahval-i Harbiye," 2–3, and "Ahval-i Bahriye," 3–4. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 57, 13 Aug. 1904/1 Jumada II 1322, "Japon ve Rus Orduları," 3–4. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 64, 23 Nov. 1904/15 Ramazan 1322, "Liao-yang Muharebesi ve Rus Ordusu," p. 4. These criticisms came close to those of the Russian constitutionalist opposition. As Abraham Ascher notes, "The catastrophic defeats suffered by the Imperial army and navy seemed to justify every criticism that the political opposition had leveled at the autocratic regime: that it was irresponsible, incompetent, and reckless" (1988:43). While this criticism served the Young Turk opposition well, from a comparative perspective the Russian state was far more "rational" than the Ottoman state. See Findley (1980; 1989) and Pintner and Rowney (1980).

26. For an analysis of Bloody Sunday and the content of the petition see Ascher (1988:74–101). Russian events are dated according to the Julian calendar.

27. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 71, 22 Mar. 1905/15 Muharram 1323, "Rusyâda Fikir ve Asker," 1–2. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 71, 22 Mar. 1905/15 Muharram 1323, "Gorki'nin Rus Zabitanına Bir Mektubu," 3. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 73, 21 Apr. 1905/15 Safar 1323, "Şundan Bundan," 4.

28. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 73, 21 Apr. 1905/15 Safar 1323, "Şundan Bundan," 4.

29. The author made it amply clear that by the "Ottomans" he really meant the Turks. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 75, 20 May 1905/15 Rabi' I 1323, "Küstahlık," 1–2 (quote from p.1.)

30. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 86, 13 Nov. 1905/16 Ramazan 1323, "*fa-tabiru ya uli al-absar*," 1–2.

31. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 87, 10 Feb. 1906 [9 Feb. 1906]/15 Dhu al-Hajja 1323, "Rusya'da İhtilal Hala Ne İçin Muvaffak Olamıyor?," 1–2. Bayur uses this article, along with a previously discussed one (no. 55, 14 July 1904/1 Jumada I 1322, "İhtilal," 2–3) to show the CUP's lack of revolutionary intent up until their union with the officers of the Ottoman Freedom Society in 1907 (1963:267).

32. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 75, 20 May 1905/15 Rabi' I 1323, "Küstahlık," 1–2.

33. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 73, 21 Apr. 1905/15 Safar 1323, "İkdam Gazetesi Lisana Gelmiş," 1–2.

34. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 75, 20 May 1905/15 Rabi` I 1323, "Küstahlık," 1–2. Even more notable than the case of the Russians was the sacrifice of Japanese students who went abroad—only 70,000 to America according to the newspaper *Le Temps*—to receive Western education. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 76, 5 June 1905/1 Rabi` II 1323, "Vazife-i Şahsiye," 2–3.

35. According to the Young Turks, these secret organizations were supported by *zemstvo* members (provincial governing bodies), lawyers, literary figures, medical doctors, workers and students. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 88, 25 Feb. 1906/1 Muharram 1324, "Küçü klerden Başlamalı," 3. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 95, 23 June 1906, 1 Jumada 1324, "Teşkilat ve Neşriyatın Lüzum ve Faydası," 2–3.

36. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 95, 23 June 1906, 1 Jumada 1324, "Teşkilat ve Neşriyatın Lüzum ve Faydası," 2–3. A comparative analysis with Russia and Iran shows that they were correct, not in their assessment of the power of extra-parliamentary organizations in Russia, but in realizing the necessity of such organizations for the survival of new parliaments. See Sohrabi (1995).

37. Despite the Duma's troubles they noted the great advantage that the Russian constitutionalists enjoyed by having European public opinion and European states behind them, something the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies lacked when it was abolished in 1878. Not only did European public opinion ignore the entire incident, but France, the birthplace of the Great Revolution, handed over to the Sultan the Chamber's founder who had taken refuge in its consulate. Yet, the Young Turks did not place the entire blame on the Sultan or the Europeans, but found all Ottomans guilty: The Turks had not risen up in defense of their freedoms because they had not reached the same degree of evolution as Russians and were still unaware of their rights. Also important was their entanglement in a war for the defense of the fatherland against an opportunist Russia. Just as deserving of blame were the Empire's Christians—the Greeks and Armenians in particular—who did not desire a constitution because of their own separatist agenda. *Şura-yi Ümmet* nos. 96–97, 1 Aug. 1906, "Çar ve Duma," 1–2.

38. *Şura-yi Ümmet* nos. 96–97, 1 Aug. 1906, "İcmal-i Siyasi - Harici," 7–8. Although I can not confirm with certainty that reported appeals were actually issued by any of the Russian deputies, the Young Turks, correctly, did not attribute them to the momentous Vyborg Manifesto, a more general appeal issued collectively by a large number (230) of Duma deputies. As Ascher notes, although the text of the Vyborg Manifesto did not make a direct appeal for a general uprising, it clearly implied just that. For the text of the Manifesto see Ascher (1992:205–6).

39. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 99, 31 Aug. 1906, "Osmanlılar!," 1. Rumors of Abdülhamid's fatal sickness began circulating when in August of 1906 he missed the Friday ceremonies for the first time in his rule. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 99, 31 Aug. 1906, "Maraz-i Şahane," 1–2.

40. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 99, 31 Aug. 1906, "Ne Yapmalı?" 2–3. For an earlier call to the public to withhold taxes as a method of passive resistance, but not as part of a strategy of general uprising, see *Şura-yi Ümmet* 94, 25 May 1906/1 Rabi` II 1324, "İslah-i Ahvale Bir Çare," 1–2.

41. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 100, 15 Sept. 1906, "Harici-İran," 4. More accurate reporting of the Iranian events based on British press reports followed in the next issue. See *Şura-yi Ümmet* 101, "Harici-Acemistan," 4.

42. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 104, 30 Nov. 1906 "İran," 3.

43. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 108, 30 Jan. 1907, "Tahran'da Bulunan Bir Ecnebi Dostumuzdan . . .," 2–3 (quote from p. 3).

44. Although this was the title of the CUP journal, a parliament was hardly ever referred to as such. The preferred appellation was *meclis-i mebusan*.

45. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 100, 15 Sept. 1906, "Harici-İran," 4.

46. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 101, 1 Oct. 1906, "Kim Hükümet Ediyor?" 1–2. At a time when

their views toward mass uprisings were changing, they responded to pessimists who predicted doom and disintegration after the fall of Abdülhamid with a new, optimistic tone that predicted there would be no bloody conflicts like those in Europe. First, they noted, because of Islam's egalitarianism, the level of inequality was far less and they had not developed unequal social classes as such. Thus, they would not experience the European class conflicts between workers and capitalists. Second, they lacked the problems associated with socialism, and anarchism. And finally, as Islam lacked a religious hierarchy analogous to Christianity, they would not experience conflict with the clerics, like those France had been grappling with since the Great French Revolution. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 102, 15 Oct. 1906, "Yarın," 2–3

47. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 115, 1 June 1907, "Temenni-i Hamidi," 2.

48. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 118, 15 July 1907, "Ulemamızın Nazar-i Dikkat ve Hamiyetine," 1–2.

49. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 124, 31 Oct. 1907, "Asker Kardeşlerimize," 3–4.

50. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 106, 15 Dec. 1906, "Matbuat-i İslamiye," 3.

51. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 106, 15 Dec. 1906, "Matbuat-i İslamiye," 3.

52. Kushner (1977:50–55).

53. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 89, 11 Mar. 1906/15 Muharram 1324, "Mekاتب," 4. Although the Young Turks portrayed the incident as a confrontation with the Sultan, other accounts failed to validate this claim, indicating hostility toward the administrators only.

54. For a detailed account see Kansu (1997:29–72). By relying on the British sources, Kansu has painted a picture of these uprisings as being far more extensive than they are described in the principal CUP journal. For example, in one instance the crowd surrounding the telegraph office in Erzurum is estimated at 20,000 (1997:54). Also, he maintains that major demonstrations took place in almost all of the most important towns, with close connection to the CUP (1997:58–66, 71). Furthermore, due to the influence he attributes to the CUP, the public's political demands appear to have been more broad than the simple repeal of taxes. This contrasts with the view put forward here that emphasizes the symbolic significance of these revolts for the CUP, rather than the import of direct connection between the two, or the revolutionary nature of the public's demands beyond simple tax repeal. The CUP would have been elated to take credit for these revolts, or short of that, for the influence of its political ideology on the rebellion. But the absence of such claims in the otherwise highly inflated language of the CUP casts doubt on these conclusions.

55. Regretting the sparseness of such political incidents among the Muslims (read Turkish population) of the Empire, the report ended on an optimistic note: a revolutionary group had been established in the region. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 104, 30 Nov. 1906, "Erzurum'da İhtilal," 4. Later reports indicated that the protests against the Erzurum governor had set an example for other administrators in the region since no one dared to violate the law. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 123, 15 Oct. 1907, "İstanbul 9 Teşrin-i Evvel 1907," 4.

56. The latest report, however, indicated that the government had returned only a few of the banished. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 108, 30 Jan. 1907, "Tan Gazetesi İstanbul Muhabirinden . . .," 3–4.

57. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 89, 11 Mar. 1906/15 Muharram 1324, "Şüunat," 3–4.

58. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 94, 25 May 1906/1 Rabi' II 1324, "İslah-i Ahvale Bir Çare," 1–2.

59. See the already discussed article in *Şura-yi Ümmet* 99, 31 Aug. 1906, "Osmanlılar!" 1.

60. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 99, 31 Aug. 1906, "Ne Yapmalı?" 2–3.

61. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 106, 15 Dec. 1906, "Bir Nümune-i İmtisal," 1.

62. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 106, 15 Dec. 1906, "Matbuat-i İslamiye-İrşad," 4.

63. Late in the nineteenth century, eastern Anatolia was progressively defined as not

simply the nation's heartland, but as the Turkish heartland, and emotional references to it evoked a more powerful imagery than as simply the heartland of Ottomans. Until late in the nineteenth century Anatolia had far less significance for the Ottomans than did the European regions. For the changing attitude toward Anatolia in the nineteenth century and its increasing sentimental importance see Kushner (1977:50–55).

64. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 118, 15 July 1907, "Telgraf," 1.
65. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 118, 15 July 1907, "Telgraf," 1.
66. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 41, 21 Nov. 1903/1 Ramadan 1321, "Millet-i Osmaniyyeye," 1.
67. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 46, 2 Feb. 1904/15 Dhu al-Qa`da 1321, "Halimiz," 2.
68. *Şura-yi Ümmet* 123, 15 Oct. 1907, "Çete Teşkilî Lüzumuna Dair Mektub," 3–4.
69. *Şura-yi Ümmet* nos. 128–129, 1 Feb. 1908, "Kongre," 1-2. *Şura-yi Ümmet* nos. 128–129, 1 Feb. 1908, "Osmanlı Muhalifin Firkaları Tarafından Avrupa'da İnikad eden Kongrenin Beyanamesi," 2–3. *Şura-yi Ümmet* nos. 128–129, 1 Feb. 1908, "Kongrenin Kabul Etdiği Tekalif-i Mütenevvia," 3.
70. The color "red" was in obvious reference to the Russian socialists who advocated violence. Indirectly, it also referred to the Armenian socialists who were heavily influenced by the Russian opposition. The text of the speeches appeared in *Şura-yi Ümmet* nos. 128–129, 1 Feb. 1908, 3–5.
71. For examples of the Islamic rhetoric and reference to the 1876 constitution see Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Yıldız Esas Evrakı (hereafter BBA-Y.EE) 71–78, 23 July 1908/10 Temmuz 1324/[24 Jumada II 1326]. BBA-Y.EE 71-50, 23 July 1908/10 Temmuz 1324/[24 Jumada II 1326].
72. BBA-Y.EE 71–79, 21 July 1908/8 Temmuz 1324/[22 Jumada II 1326].
73. BBA-Y.EE 71–47, 22 July 1908/9 Temmuz 1324/[23 Jumada II 1326]. Quote in the original.
74. BBA-Y.EE 71–81, 22 July 1908/9 Temmuz 1325/[23 Jumada II 1326]. Most disturbing reports from Kosovo came from the districts of Preşova, Yakova, Geylan, Koçana, and Frizovik. The majority of reports to the Palace were written by the governor of Kosovo, First Field Marshal Mahmud Şevket, and the Rumelia Inspector, Hilmi Pasha, both of whom were to play important roles in the future.
75. BBA-Y.EE 71–68, 23 July 1908/10 Temmuz 1324/[24 Jumada II 1326].
76. BBA-Y.EE 71–70, 23 July 1908/10 Temmuz 1324/[24 Jumada II 1326].
77. BBA-Y.EE 71–76, 23 July 1908/10 Temmuz 1324/[24 Jumada II 1326].
78. BBA-Y.EE 71–72, 23 July 1908/10 Temmuz 1324/[24 Jumada II 1326]. As this event took place early in the morning, it included the forty-eight hour ultimatum for the announcement of the constitution.
79. BBA-Y.EE 71–69, 23 July 1908/10 Temmuz 1324/[24 Jumada II 1326].
80. The commission mentioned that the Chamber was delayed only temporarily and was to be summoned in the future. *Düstur* 23 July 1908/24 Jumada II 1324, 1–2. The quick government approval was partly due to the ambiguities in the nature of constitutionalism which allowed for great flexibility on the part of not only the Ottoman government, but those of Iran and Russia as well. To abate the immediate crisis and to buy time, the government quickly complied with the demand of the opposition, but only to begin a new fight over the powers of government and the parliament, that is, over the meaning of constitutionalism, at a more appropriate moment after regaining strength.

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