

Sebilürreşad, Caliphate, and Islamic Political Thought during the War of Independence, 1918-1923

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Declaration of Originality

The intellectual content of this thesis, which has been written by me and for which I take full responsibility, is my own, original work, and it has not been previously or concurrently submitted elsewhere for any other examination or degree of higher education. The sources of all paraphrased and quoted materials, concepts, and ideas are fully cited, and the admissible contributions and assistance of others with respect to the conception of the work as well as to linguistic expression are explicitly acknowledged herein.

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Abstract

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for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University, 2022

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This study focuses on the role of *Sebilürreşad* in the War of Independence, in general terms. Accordingly, this study unearths the politico-intellectual network around *Sebilürreşad*, and sheds light on how and through which connections they were involved in the national resistance movement and their cooperation with the Ankara Government. Moreover, this study concentrates on the articles and sermons, trying to understand how the politico-intellectual circle of the journal reconceptualized the caliphate in what contexts. This study argues that *Sebilürreşad* was an integral part of the broad coalition formed around the Grand National Assembly, and claims that the activities of the journal's politico-intellectual circle in the War of Independence extended the boundaries of the "spiritual sovereignty" of the Ankara Government. In addition, this study reveals that, under the influence of the global upheaval that took place after the First World War, *Sebilürreşad's* intellectuals defended the alliance with the Bolsheviks and reconceptualized the caliphate in the context of the awakening of the East. Thus, this study both invites a more nuanced and multidimensional understanding of the developments after the First World War and it sheds light on the limits of the idea of caliphate-centered Pan-Islam in the War of Independence.

34,159 words

Özet

Kurtuluş Savaşı’nda Sebilürreşad, Hilafet ve İslam Siyasi Düşüncesi, 1918-1923

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Profesör Cengiz Kırılı, Tez Danışmanı

Bu çalışma, en genel hatlarıyla, Sebilürreşad’ın Kurtuluş Savaşı’nda nasıl bir rol oynadığına odaklanıyor. Bu doğrultuda, çalışmada öncelikle Sebilürreşad’ın etrafındaki politik ve entelektüel çevre görünür kılınıyor ve ulusal direniş hareketine nasıl ve hangi kanallarla dahil olduklarına, Ankara Hükümeti ile aralarındaki işbirliğine ışık tutuluyor. Diğer yandan da bu çalışma, yazılara ve vaazlara yoğunlaşarak, derginin politik ve entelektüel çevresinin hilafeti hangi bağlamlar içinde ne şekilde yeniden kavramsallaştırdıklarını anlamaya çalışıyor. Bu çalışma, Sebilürreşad’ın Büyük Millet Meclisi etrafında kurulan geniş koalisyonun ayrılmaz bir parçası olduğunu ileri sürüyor ve derginin politik ve entelektüel çevresinin Milli Mücadele’deki faaliyetlerinin Ankara Hükümeti’nin “manevi egemenliği”nin sınırlarını genişlettiğini iddia ediyor. Bunun yanı sıra çalışmada, Birinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası vuku bulan küresel altüst oluşun etkisiyle, Sebilürreşad entelektüellerinin Bolşeviklerle ittifakı savunarak hilafeti Doğu’nun uyanışı teması bağlamında yeniden kavramsallaştırdıklarını gün yüzüne çıkarıyor. Böylelikle, bu çalışma bir yandan Birinci Dünya Savaşı sonrasındaki gelişmeleri daha nüanslı ve çok boyutlu olarak anlamaya davet ederken, diğer yandan da Milli Mücadele döneminin hilafet merkezli ittifad-ı İslam siyasetinin sınırlarına ışık tutuyor.

34,159 kelime

In memory of my late grandma, Zemire, and grandpa, Abbas

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Glossary of Non-English Terms

Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-yı Hukuk Cemiyeti	Association for the Defence of the National Rights of Anatolia and Rumelia
Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-İslamiyye	School of Islamic Philosophy
Divan-ı Harb-i Örfi	Martial Law Court
Ehl-i Salib	Crusaders
Heyet-i İrşadiyye	Committee of Public Enlightenment
İstiklal Mahkemesi	Independence Tribunals
Kuva-yı İnzibatiye	Caliphal Army
Kuva-yı Milliye	National Forces
Meclis-i Mebusan	Chamber of Deputies
Mekteb-i Hukuk	School of Law
Müdafaa-yı Milliye Cemiyeti	National Defense Association
Şeyhü'l-İslam	The supreme religious authority
Tedkikat ve Telifat-ı İslamiyye Heyeti	Committee of Islamic Research and Compilation
Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa	Special Organization
Türk Ocağı	Turkish Hearth

Abbreviations and Acronyms

BOA	<i>Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivleri</i>
BCA	<i>Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Cumhuriyet Arşivleri</i>
ZC	<i>Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Zabıt Ceridesi</i>
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress

A Note on Transliteration

In the transliteration of Ottoman Turkish, I chose the simplest form of latinization except for differentiating between “ع” (‘a or ‘i) and “ا” (a) in certain cases to avoid confusion with respect to the meaning. For the sake of simplicity, names and terms that are well known in contemporary English are rendered in conventional form. Names and terms in Ottoman Turkish are generally transliterated in their modern Turkish form.

Acknowledgements

When I had to choose a topic for my master's thesis, I was undecided for a long time. The only thing I was determined to do was my interest in intellectual history. At the beginning of the thesis process, I had in mind to work on the debates among the intelligentsia on religion in the late Ottoman and early Republican periods, especially the Turkification of Islam. However, as time progressed, my interest shifted to the Ottoman Caliphate when I strolled through the Boğaziçi University Aptullah Kuran Library shelves. At first, I wondered how different actors reconceptualized the caliphate and reproduced it as an effective instrument in their struggle for power during the War of Independence. As the research progressed, the number of actors increased, and my interest began to push the limits of the master's thesis. Frankly, I was under the burden of my academic curiosity. I was able to overcome this troubling situation only by deciding to focus on one of the actors such as *Sebilürreşad*'s politico-intellectual circle. By chance, I was reading Mustafa Kemal's famous *Nutuk*, and what he said about targeting Hoca Şükrü during the caliphate debates made me want to investigate this story in depth. This is how the story of my master's thesis began.

Of course, this whole trajectory did not go smoothly without help. I cannot remunerate my thesis advisor Cengiz Kırılı. Every time I got lost in the research process, I could find my way, again and again, thanks to him. I tried his patience hard by not keeping my deadline promises; still, he motivated me every time I lost hope. That is why I cannot thank Cengiz Kırılı enough. Similarly, I have always felt the support of Nadir Özbek behind me. The courses I took from him encouraged me to focus on the question of everyday life. The incredibly kind and eye-opening criticisms of Mehmet Sait Özervarlı made me rethink many points. I want to thank all the committee members.

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tory, Seda Altuğ's modern Middle East history, and Berna Yazıcı's anthropology courses made me look at history in a more nuanced and interdisciplinary manner. In addition, the ongoing research project and in-depth conversations we had with Şevket Pamuk, Kıvanç Karaman, and Pınar Ceylan were very instructive for me. I am grateful to all.

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Finally, I would like to mention my mother and siblings, who had no idea what I was doing. I was born into a working-class family—like millions of teenagers. We have experienced financial difficulties at every moment of our lives. I had to work all the time to continue my education. These difficulties caused me to internalize the idea of equality at an early age. Despite everything, I thank my family for making all these difficulties bearable.

Last but not least, all responsibility rests with me, although I know how much everyone named above has contributed to the thesis process. Put it differently that is all I can do.

NOTE: The in-house editor of the Atatürk Institute has made detailed recommendations with regard to the format, grammar, spelling, usage, syntax, and style of this thesis.

1

Introduction

When Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] read aloud the *Nutuk* at the Grand Congress of the Republican People's Party in the autumn of 1927, the cliques that were in the broad coalition formed around the Grand National Assembly during the War of Independence and turned to the opposition with different objections during the establishment of the Republic were primarily excluded from the power struggle. With the *Nutuk*, Mustafa Kemal was historically overcoming these cliques, strengthening his legitimacy, and declaring the Republic as the inevitable result of the War of Independence. In this context, one of the cliques with which Mustafa Kemal engaged in ideological and political struggle was *Sebilürreşad*, which he implicitly referred to as a "reactionary faction" by mentioning

the name of Karahisar-ı Sahib (Afyonkarahisar) deputy Hoca Şükrü.¹ Referring to the debates about the abolition of the caliphate, Mustafa Kemal accused this clique of hiding behind the Muslim public opinion, continuing the abolished the Ottoman reign, and bringing the caliph to power.²

However, the War of Independence was organized by centered on the discourse of rescuing the caliphate under the captivity of the Allied Powers. In order to mobilize the Muslim people in the post-war period, the political and intellectual circles within the broad coalition that would later be formed around the Grand National Assembly frequently resorted to Islamic discourses and symbols. As Erik Jan Zürcher argues, political and intellectual circles articulated their ideas in Islamic vocabulary as they penetrated the below.³ In addition, the Grand National Assembly, which was established as a result of the power crisis in the post-war period and aimed to gather the nationalist resistance movements under its umbrella, was equipped with Islamic symbols. For example, when the Grand National Assembly was opened on Friday, April 23, 1920, religious ceremonies were organized, and sacrifices were slaughtered.⁴ Just behind the seat of the Assembly's president was one of the famous consultation verses.⁵ Islamic symbols and rhetoric were not limited to these examples. Ankara had almost become a meeting point for transnational pan-Islamic actors. Actors such as Sheikh Ahmed es-Senusi, the leader of the largest sect, Sanusiyya, in North Africa, who took part in the pan-Islamic organizations associated with the Committee of Union and Progress during the First World War, and Sultan Ahmed Khan, the ambassador of Afghanistan, worked in harmony with the Grand National

¹ The pamphlet, published under the signature of Hoca Şükrü, was written by Eşref Edib, the owner of *Sebilürreşad*. See. Kara, *Hilafet Risaleleri*, vol. 6, 14.

² Atatürk, *Nutuk*, 536.

³ Zürcher, *The Vocabulary of Muslim Nationalism*, 90.

⁴ Sarıhan, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Günlüğü*, vol. 3, 1.

⁵ Kara, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi'nde Bir Mesele Olarak İslam*, 14.

Assembly in Ankara.⁶ In fact, the intellectual circle of *Sebilürreşad* was invited to Ankara by Mustafa Kemal as a result of this sensitivity.

This study tries to put *Sebilürreşad* in the context of the War of Independence in a descriptive way by problematizing the description made by Mustafa Kemal in the Speech. The main research question of the study is the context in which the pan-Islamic thought, which centered on the discourse of rescuing the caliphate in the post-war, was handled by *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectual circle and by what means it was organized. My methodology is to make *Sebilürreşad*'s intelligentsia visible by prioritizing primary sources and shedding light on their activities during the War of Independence. In this context, all the issues of *Sebilürreşad* between 1918-1923, as well as the Ottoman Archives and the Republican Archives, were examined in detail.⁷ In order to deal with *Sebilürreşad* in a more dimensional and nuanced way, the present study examines *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, which was the official publication of the Ankara Government, as well as the official documents of the Grand National Assembly. Finally, Zeki Sarıhan's 4-volume *Kurtuluş Savaşı Günlüğü* and Gotthard Jäschke's 2-volume *Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı Kronolojisi*, which made a chronological breakdown by focusing on the newspapers and official statements of the period, were also reviewed in detail during the research process.

The secondary sources of this study are the memoirs and writings of the political and intellectual circle of *Sebilürreşad*. The book titled *Mehmed Akif: Hayatı, Eserleri ve Yetmiş Muharririn Yazıları*, written after the death of Mehmed Akif by the owner of *Sebilürreşad*, Eşref Edib, contains vital clues. In addition to the section written by Eşref Edib in-depth,

⁶ Elemana, "Milli Mücadele Döneminde Anadolu'da Şeyh Ahmed Senusi, 1918-1924"; Sarıhan, *Kurtuluş Savaşımızda Türk-Afgan İlişkileri*.

⁷ One point should be mentioned here. While examining the issues of *Sebilürreşad*, I compared both the original version and the transcribed and translated copies. The digitization of all the issues of *Sebilürreşad* by the Islamist Journals Project provided many conveniences in accessing the research material. In order to avoid any mistranslation, I compared the original copies with the transcribed versions published by Bağcılar Municipality under the editorship of Ertuğrul Düzdağ.

this book includes the writings of *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectual circle. Therefore, it opens a window into how intelligentsia perceived *Sebilürreşad*. Apart from this, Eşref Edib's memoirs, with the re-publication of *Sebilürreşad* in 1948, provide rich material for placing the journal in the context of the War of Independence. Memories of intellectuals such as Hasan Basri [Çantay]⁸, Ömer Rıza [Doğrul]⁹, Midhat Cemal [Kuntay]¹⁰, Mahir İz¹¹ are also very productive in understanding the political and intellectual network of *Sebilürreşad*.

The rich political, social, and cultural atmosphere that emerged after the Constitutional Revolution of 1908 greatly encouraged intellectual historians. *Sıratımüstakim/Sebilürreşad*, which started its publication in this formative period, also got intellectual historians' share of this interest and attempted to be dealt with academically. In this context, studies that can be classified as monographic and descriptive allow us to see the historical trajectory of the journal from a wider perspective and to see its ideological patterns between the late Ottoman and early Republican periods. Selçuk Akşin Somel focuses on a relatively early stage of *Sıratımüstakim*,¹² while Esther Debus sheds light on the period from the establishment of *Sebilürreşad* to its cessation in 1925.¹³ In addition, İsmail Kara's works provide important clues to understand the differences in political nuances among Islamists and to put *Sebilürreşad* in the intellectual context after 1908.¹⁴

⁸ Çantay, *Akıfname*.

⁹ Doğrul, ed. *Safahat*.

¹⁰ Kuntay, *Mehmed Akif, Hayatı, Seciyesi, Sanatı, Eserleri*.

¹¹ İz, *Yılların İzi*.

¹² Somel, Selçuk Akşin. "Sırat-ı Müstakim: Islamic Modernist Thought in the Ottoman Empire (1908-1912)."

¹³ Debus, Esther. *Sebilürreşad: Kemalizm Öncesi ve Sonrası Dönemdeki İslamcı Muhalefete Dair Karşılaştırmalı Bir Araştırma*.

¹⁴ Kara, İsmail. *Müslüman Kalarak Avrupalı Olmak: Çağdaş Türk Düşüncesinde Din Siyaset Tarih Medeniyet*; Kara, İsmail. *Türkiye'de İslâmcılık Düşüncesi I: Metinler, Kişiler*.

In addition, detailed anthological and biographical studies should be mentioned in order to open a window to the social history of intellectuals. İsmail Kara's 2-volume *Türkiye'de İslamcılık Düşüncesi*¹⁵ and *İslamcıların Siyasi Görüşleri*¹⁶ and Ahmet Şeyhun's *Islamist Thinkers in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic*¹⁷ contributes to understanding the cornerstones of the thoughts of the intellectuals. Moreover, Çiğdem Oğuz's *Moral Crisis in the Ottoman Empire*¹⁸ sheds light on the ideological competition of nationalist tendencies and *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectuals. Finally, biographical studies on the journal's writers, especially Mehmed Akif, Eşref Edib, Abdürreşid İbrahim, and Said Halim Paşa, make it easier to reveal the politico-intellectual network.¹⁹

This thesis contains three chapters. The section following the introduction presents the historical background of *Sebilürreşad* in general terms. While examining the conditions under which *Sıratımüstakim*, the predecessor of *Sebilürreşad*, began its publication life, it tries to understand the intellectual encircle of the journal and the political, social, and religious common grounds of the intelligentsia. Then, with Ebülula's withdrawal from the co-ownership, this study discovers the emergence of *Sebilürreşad* and the qualitative and quantitative transformation in the journal's intellectual environment. Herein, this study explores how the idea of caliphate-centered pan-Islam was reflected in the journal and what means *Sebilürreşad* tried to embody pan-Islamism during the war period of more than ten years.

¹⁵ Kara, İsmail. *Türkiye'de İslamcılık Düşüncesi*, vol. 1 & 2.

¹⁶ Kara, İsmail. *İslamcıların Siyasi Görüşleri*, vol. 1 & 2.

¹⁷ Şeyhun, Ahmet. *Islamist Thinkers in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic*.

¹⁸ Oğuz, Çiğdem. *Moral Crisis in the Ottoman Empire: Society, Politics, and Gender during WWI*.

¹⁹ Düzdağ, M. Ertuğrul. Mehmed Âkif Ersoy; Sarıhan, Zeki. Mehmet Akif; Doğan, D. Mehmet. *İslam Şairi İstiklâl Şairi: Mehmed Akif; Doğan, D. Mehmet. Camideki Şair: Mehmed Âkif; Hammond, Andrew. "Muslim Modernism in Turkish: Assessing the Thought of Late Ottoman Intellectual Mehmed Akif"; Arabacı, Caner. "Eşref Edib Fergan ve Sebilürreşad Üzerine"; Polat, Esmâ. "Eşref Edip Fergan'ın Hayatı, Eserleri ve Edebî Kişiliği"; Özbek, Nadir. Abdürreşid İbrahim (1857-1944): The Life and Thought of a Muslim Activist; Şeyhun, Ahmet. Said Halim Paşa: Osmanlı Devlet Adamı ve İslamcı Düşünür (1865-1921).*

The second chapter tries to put *Sebilürreşad* in the context of the War of Independence that broke out after the First World War. The primary purpose of this chapter is to make *Sebilürreşad*'s political and intellectual network visible. First, it focuses on the political choices *Sebilürreşad* made in the atmosphere of the anti-Community of Union and Progress prevailing in the Armistice Istanbul. This is followed by the questioning of *Sebilürreşad*'s position against the oppression and censorship regime of the occupation forces. Secondly, this chapter deals with *Sebilürreşad*'s efforts to be joined with the nationalist movement that broke out in Anatolia. The basic questions that this chapter tries to reveal are as follows: Through which channels did *Sebilürreşad* pass into Anatolia? What kind of political and intellectual cooperation did the journal establish, especially in Ankara?

After mapping the political and intellectual network that *Sebilürreşad* established in Anatolia, the third chapter focuses on the sermons preached by the intellectual circle of *Sebilürreşad* during the War of Independence. These sermons at different stages of the War of Independence are considered signifiers of *Sebilürreşad*'s political and intellectual world. Through these sermons, this study attempts to understand how the *Sebilürreşad* intellectuals strengthened the spiritual front and how they cultivated religious feelings.

2

The Outlines of Sebilürreşad's Historical Trajectory

The chapter aims to shed light on the historical background of *Sebilürreşad*. Therefore, it focuses on how *Sıratımüstakim*, the journal's predecessor, was established and with whom the inner circle and intelligentsia consist. The following pages discuss the political, social, and religious common points of the intelligentsia around *Sıratımüstakim* and shed light on the ties between them and the Committee of Union and Progress that came to power after the Constitutional Revolution of 1908.

The aim is followed by determining the limits of the quantitative and qualitative transformation that took place in the inner circle and the intellectual network while *Sıratımüstakim* replaced by *Sebilürreşad*. This study seeks to understand how the idea of caliphate-centered pan-Islam was reflected on the pages of the journal in the new publication period. In this context, it discovers with which pan-Islamic connections the idea

was tried to be realized during the long war years that started with the Tripolitanian War of 1911.

§ 2.1 The Constitutional Revolution and Sıratımüstakim, 1908-1912

In the early days of July 1908, when the news reached Istanbul that the revolutionaries had acted under the leadership of Kolağası Resneli Niyazi in Macedonia for the re-enactment of the Constitution of 1876, it caused a shock in the Yıldız Palace. Although Sultan Abdülhamid II tried to take immediate measures, his efforts failed. The Committee of Union and Progress had organized the Second Army in Thrace and the Third Army in Macedonia quickly by convincing them to revolt.¹ Under these circumstances, Sultan's power was suddenly compromised. On July 24, he was desperately forced to accept the demands of the revolutionaries; thus, he prevented the radicalization of the rebellion movement. The revolutionaries were surprised and excited when the Sultan declared that he would re-enact the Constitution of 1876 without resistance.²

For a short time, all practices limiting freedom were de facto suspended. The Constitutional Revolution of 1908 brought freedom of thought, expression, and assembly.³ The famous Turkish novelist Halide Edib [Adivar] vividly portrayed the political atmosphere in the first days with the words, "If the newspapers were written in golden letters that day, the nation would pay and take its value."⁴ The ambiance Halide Edib witnessed on the streets of Istanbul and depicted enthusiastically encouraged freedom of expression immediately after Sultan Abdülhamid II's 33-year strict regime. After the revolution, the number of newspapers and journals that started their publication by benefiting from the actual situation soon exceeded 300.⁵

¹ Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 91.

² Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 290.

³ Zürcher, *Turkey*, 91.

⁴ Adivar, *Mor Salkımlı Ev*, 147.

⁵ Toprak, "II. Meşrutiyet'te Fikir Dergileri," 126.

Ebülula Zeynelabidin [Mardin] and Serezli Hafız Eşref Edib [Fergan], who were in their mid-20s, would apply to the official authorities to publish a religious journal named *Sıratımüstakim* in the last days of July, taking advantage of the Constitutional Revolution of 1908.⁶ Ebülula and Eşref Edib's paths crossed in the *Mekteb-i Hukuk* and they had been in close cooperation since 1906. Eşref Edib was writing down in detail the popular sermons of Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı, who was the sheikh of Hagia Sophia Mosque, and gave lessons in fiqh in the *Mekteb-i Hukuk* on Fridays and then, together with Ebülula, they copied the notes out. After revising the notes of sermons, Ebülula and Eşref Edib published them as a pamphlet in the Library of İbrahim Hilmi at the Sublime Porte.⁷ When they decided to publish a religious journal, Ebülula graduated with an honorary degree and was a junior member of the commercial and appeal courts in Istanbul.⁸ Eşref Edib was in the last days of his education in the *Mekteb-i Hukuk*.⁹

While Ebülula was trying to fulfill official procedures for a religious journal they had long dreamed of, Eşref Edib was attempting to form an editorial board. Since Eşref Edib started his publication life at the beginning of his student years in Istanbul, his ties with the reformist ulama and intellectual circles were quite strong.¹⁰ The famous teahouse in Fatih was the spatial center of such an intellectual network in those days. Many intellectuals such as Mehmed Akif [Ersoy], Babanzade Ahmed Naim, Midhat Cemal [Kuntay], and Ispartalı Hakkı often came together there. The fact that Hacı İbrahim Ağa, the owner of the teahouse, did not host

⁶ BOA. DH.MKT. 2905-92-0; BOA. ZB. 324-55-0.

⁷ Eşref Edib, "Ebülula Bey'le Nasıl Çalıştık Sırât-ı Müstakim'i Nasıl Çıkardık," 199.

⁸ Yavuz, "Ebül'ulâ Mardin."

⁹ Albayrak, "Eşref Edip Fergan."

¹⁰ Debus, *Sebilürreşâd: Kemalizm Öncesi ve Sonrası Dönemdeki İslamcı Muhalefete Dair Karşılaştırmalı Bir Araştırma*, 32.

police informants allowed intellectuals to discuss many issues safely, especially politics.¹¹ Eşref Edib told Mehmed Akif that they intended to publish a religious journal of their own in such a meeting.¹² Mehmed Akif greeted Eşref Edib's good news with enthusiasm and promised to publish his poems in every issue of the journal. He also said he would translate works by well-known modernist Islamic thinkers such as Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, Sheikh Muhammad' Abduh, and Ferid Vecdi.¹³

In addition to meeting with Mehmet Akif, Eşref Edib gathered other intellectuals with whom he was in close contact. Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı said that he would write articles on tafsir every week and approved the publication of Hagia Sophia sermons, which Eşref Edib wrote down. Ebülula's older brother, Mardinizade Arif, also reported that he would contribute by writing religious articles. Musa Kazım, who would later become *Şeyhülislam*, promised to write on social issues and kalam. Babanzade Ahmed Naim said that he would write about his religious lessons in the *Mekteb-i Sultani*, while Bereketzade İsmail Hakkı, who was a member of the Court of Appeal in those days, promised that he would write about tafsir under the title of "*Necaib-i Kuraniyye*."¹⁴

After the editorial board was established, *Sıratımüstakim* started its publication on August 28, 1908, with the subtitle, "it is a weekly journal about religion, philosophy, literature, law, and religious studies." The journal attracted much attention in a short time. *Sıratımüstakim* was sent

¹¹ Fergan, *Mehmed Âkif: Hayatı, Eserleri ve Yetmiş Muharririn Yazıları*, 229-230; Kuntay, *Mehmed Akif: Hayatı, Seciyesi, Sanatı, Eserleri*, 14-20.

¹² The acquaintance of Eşref Edib and Mehmed Akif was still considered new; however, Eşref Edib was very impressed with Mehmed Akif. They met in the house of Bosnalı Ali Şevki Efendi, who lived in Fatih in 1906-1907. Ali Şevki Efendi was one of the scholars and was known for his rich library: it was possible to find unpublished books due to Hamidian censorship. Islamist intellectuals, who were opponents of Sultan Abdülhamid II, also frequented his house, so Ali Şevki Efendi introduced Eşref Edib and Mehmed Akif. They called the meetings, which were often held on Tuesday nights, *ihya gecesi*, among themselves. Fergan, *Mehmed Âkif*, 63.

¹³ Eşref Edib, "Ebülula Bey'le Nasıl Çalıştık Sırât-ı Müstakim'i Nasıl Çıkardık," 200.

¹⁴ Ibid., 200.

to the provinces of Istanbul and Anatolia initially.¹⁵ In the following period, the journal's scope expanded and was sent by mail to the Arab and Balkan regions of the Empire as well as to countries where Muslims lived intensively, such as Russia, India, and Egypt. The letters of Mushir Hosain Kidwai, one of the prominent intellectuals of Indian Muslims, and Mahmud Tarzi, who would later become Afghanistan's foreign minister, to *Sıratımüstakim*, were the most vivid examples of the expansion of the journal's scope.¹⁶ In addition to these examples, the journal's interest among Russian Muslims worried the Tsarist regime. Although Tsarist Russia tried to stop the entry of the journal into its borders, it could not prevent the sympathy of Russian Muslims for *Sıratımüstakim*. Muslim intellectuals from Crimea and Azerbaijan frequently visited the bureau of *Sıratımüstakim* in Istanbul and established ties with Eşref Edib and Mehmed Akif; thus, the intellectuals, as will be seen later, would later participate in the editorial board.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ali Fuat Başgil's memoirs provide essential clues in terms of both spreading and showing the practice of reading *Sıratımüstakim*. He states that in the first year of the Constitutional Revolution of 1908, *Sıratımüstakim* was followed with interest in the town of Çarşamba, Samsun. When he was still in his mid-teens, he witnessed the magazine being discussed among the young and old after it was read aloud in the Great Mosque's coffeehouse, a public space. Başgil emphasizes that the writings of İzmirli İsmail Hakkı, Babanzade Ahmed Naim, Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı, and Musa Kazım and the poems of Mehmed Akif deeply affected the community. Başgil, "Sebilürreşad'ın Ellinci Yıldönümü," 14.

¹⁶ For example, Mushir Hosain Kidwai came to Istanbul in September 1910 to observe on the spot the rumors spread among Indian Muslims that the Constitutional regime was against Islam. During his visitation, he met with the leaders of the CUP and Şeyhülislam Musa Kazım and visited the Ottoman parliament. He also called on the *Sıratımüstakim*'s bureau and met writers, especially Mehmed Akif. Convinced that the rumors in question did not reflect the truth, he published his article in *Sıratımüstakim*, in Urdu and Ottoman Turkish, inculcating Indian Muslims, emphasizing that the CUP was the defender of Islam and that the Constitutional regime was built on the principles of Islam. Kidvay, "Mîrâ Dübâre Sefer-cây-ı Hilâfet hitaplı Urduca Mektup," 434-436. Kidvay, "Dârü'l-Hilâfet-i İslâmiyye'ye Vukû' Bulan İkinci Ziyâretim," 458.

¹⁷ Fergan, *Mehmed Âkif*, 68-70.

After the Constitutional Revolution of 1908, *Sıratımüstakim* became the center of attraction among the Ottoman intelligentsia in a phase where ideological differences were not yet evident. Ebülula, Eşref Edib, and Mehmed Akif, who constituted the inner circle, as well as Abdürreşid İbrahim, Ahmed Agayef [Ağaoğlu], Aksekili Ahmed Hamdi, Şehbenderzade Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi, Babanzade Ahmed Naim, Akçuraoğlu Yusuf [Akçura], Ali Şeyhül Arab, Kazanlı Ayaz İshaki [İdilli], Edhem Nejat, Ferid [Kam], Ispartalı Hakkı, Çerkeşşeyhizade Halil Halid, Kazanlı Halim Sabit [Şibay], Haydarizade İbrahim, İsmail Gasprinski [Gaspıralı], Bereketzade İsmail Hakkı, İzmirli İsmail Hakkı, Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı, Tepedelenizade Kamil, Mehmed Fahreddin, Mehmed Şemseddin [Günaltay], Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, Midhat Cemal [Kuntay], Musa Kazım, Selimefendizade Mustafa Taki [Doğruiyol], Sadreddin Maksud [Arsal], Salih eş-Şerif et-Tunusi, M. Şerefeddin [Yaltkaya], Tahirül Mevlevi [Olgun], and Tunalı Hilmi were among the contributors of *Sıratımüstakim*.¹⁸

Although it was widely labeled as an Islamic journal, *Sıratımüstakim* had a relatively heterogeneous appearance regarding its contributors' backgrounds. Most of the writers, such as Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı, who taught fiqh and tafsir in *Mekteb-i Hukuk* and *Darülfünun*, Musa Kazım from *Meclis-i Ayan* and *Meclis-i Meşayih*, and Babanzade Ahmed Naim, an officer in the Ministry of Education, belonged to the reformist wing of the ulama. In addition, intellectuals such as Ahmed Agayef, Akçuraoğlu Yusuf, and Halim Sabit contributed with their writings, whose nationalist and secular tendencies would become increasingly evident in the following years. Edhem Nejat, the director of *Darülmualim* in Manastır, who was among the founders of the Communist Party of Turkey later, wrote on education. The internationally reputable Çerkeşşeyhizade Halil Halid, a professor at Cambridge University, was also among *Sıratımüstakim*'s intellectual circle.

Although the intelligentsia gathered around *Sıratımüstakim* differed in the environments they grew up in and their social status, they shared

¹⁸ Ceyhan, *Sırat-ı Müstakîm ve Sebîlürreşad Mecmuaları Fihristi*, 97-149.

several common political, social, and religious grounds. They were deeply influenced by the constitutionalist movement of the Young Ottomans, led by Ali Suavi, Namık Kemal, and Ziya Pasha. The Young Ottomans defended constitutionalism against arbitrary rule, consultation against despotism, freedom against tyranny, and struggled to establish a constitutional political and social regime based on sharia.¹⁹ The intellectual circle of *Sıratı müstakim* was also opposed to Sultan Abdülhamid II's despotic rule. They thought with the constellation of concepts, including the constitution, consultation, liberty, equality, solidarity, and justice, and were critical of the caliphate and sultanate intertwined with absolutism. By actively using verses and hadiths, they interpreted the conformity of the constitutional regime with Islam based on the Qur'an.²⁰

The commonalities of the intellectual circle of *Sıratı müstakim* were not limited to using the concepts of the constitutionalist movement. The intelligentsia had close ties with the Committee of Union and Progress, the leading actor in the Constitutional Revolution of 1908. To be more precise, *Sıratı müstakim* acted as the Islamist wing of the CUP.²¹ The declarations of the CUP, which was seen as the savior, were frequently published in the pages of the journal. The leading intellectuals of *Sıratı müstakim* such as Mehmed Akif, Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı, Musa Kazım, Abdürreşid İbrahim, İzmirli İsmail Hakkı, Babanzade Ahmed Naim, Bereketzade İsmail Hakkı and Şemseddin were in close cooperation with the CUP.²² They also contributed to the work of the *Şehzadebaşı Kulübü Heyet-i İlmiyyesi*. They preached in the branch of the CUP and trained the madrasa disciples who would go to the countryside in the sacred for three

¹⁹ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 208-222; Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasî Fikirleri 1895-1908*, 31; Topal, *Sürgünde Muhalefet: Namık Kemal'in Hürriyet Gazetesi*, 17, 30-31.

²⁰ Kara, *Müslüman Kalarak Avrupalı Olmak*, 26.

²¹ Somel, "Sırat-ı Müstakim: Islamic Modernist Thought in the Ottoman Empire (1908-1912)," 6.

²² After the Constitutional Revolution of 1908, Mehmed Akif sent word to Fatin Hoca that he and some of his friends wanted to join the CUP. Fatin Hoca had joined the CUP before 1908 and actively participated in the organization of the revolution, so it was pretty decent. Especially the intellectuals in Istanbul, including the ulama, were joining the CUP on his sign. After the meeting, which took place in Direklerarası, Mehmed Akif officially became a member of the CUP. Fergan, *Mehmed Âkif*, 248; Çantay, *Akıfname*, 243.

months due to their religious duty to eliminate the conservative reactions against the constitutional regime. These sermons were also published as booklets and distributed to other parts of the Ottoman Empire through the organs of the CUP.²³

Sıratı müstakim was strongly opposed to *Volkan* and *İttihad-ı Muhammedî Cemiyeti*, which represented the conservative wing of the ulama. In this context, *Sıratı müstakim*'s attitude towards the March 31 Incident contained essential clues. The armed uprising erupted in the Sublime Port on the night of March 30 in collaboration with the *Ahrar Fırkası* and the *İttihad-ı Muhammedi Cemiyeti* demanding the return of principles of Islam and sharia. The Unionists, who could not predict counter-revolution limits, either hid or fled from Istanbul. The turmoil lasted almost a month. In the middle of April, the Action Army, established under the leadership of the 3rd Army Commander Mahmud Şevket Pasha, took action to suppress the uprising and declared martial law in Istanbul on the morning of April 24. Many rebels, especially Dervish Vahdeti, were tried in military courts and executed. On April 27, Sultan Abdülhamid II, who was seen as responsible for the Incident, was deposed, and Sultan Mehmed V Reşad was replaced on the throne.²⁴

During the March 31 Incident in which the Unionist cadres provided their safety by hiding or escaping from Istanbul, *Sıratı müstakim* had to suspend its publication life temporarily. After ensuring public order in Istanbul, *Sıratı müstakim* started to be published again. On the cover of the first issue after the March 31 Incident, the fatwa given by *Şeyhülislam* regarding the overthrow of Sultan Abdülhamid II by "*erbâb-ı hall ü akd ve evliya-ı umûr*" was published.²⁵ The fatwa was followed by a long article,

²³ The sermons were published in two books under the name of *Mevaiz-i Diniyye*. The sermons of İzmirli İsmail Hakkı, Musa Kazım, Mehmed Akif, Abdürreşid İbrahim, Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı, and Aksekili Ahmed Hamdi were published in the books published with the subtitle "organized by the *Şehzadebaşı Kulübü Heyet-i İlmiyyesi* of the Committee of Union and Progress." Kara, *İslamcılarının Siyasi Görüşleri* 1, 85-87.

²⁴ Zürcher, *Turkey*, 144-146.

²⁵ "Abdülhamid-i Sani'nin Hal'ine Dair Taraf-ı Meşihat-ı Celileden Verilen Fetva-yı Şerifenin Suretidir," 113.

which evaluated the March 31 Incident in detail, signed by *Sıratımüstakim*.²⁶ It emphasized that the Incident was organized by pseudo-Muslims hidden behind the name of the Prophet Muhammad, who wanted to revive the cruel regime of Sultan Abdülhamid II. Therefore, according to *Sıratımüstakim*, it was more accurate to call the association not the *İttihad-ı Muhammedî* but the *İttihad-ı Hamidî*. The reactionaries served Sultan Abdülhamid II, not Islam. However, the Action Army, under Mahmud Şevket Pasha, who was seen as a mujaddid, came to the rescue, suppressed the Incident, and saved the constitutional regime. In the last part of the article, it was reminded that *Sıratımüstakim* was born with the Constitutional Revolution of 1908 and underlined that the journal was loyal to the *Kanun-ı Esasi* and would fight to protect it.²⁷

Another common ground shared by the intelligentsia around *Sıratımüstakim* was modernist Islamic thought. They were not opposed to the idea of modernization; they were searching for a modest path in harmony with modernity by adhering to the basic principles of Islam. They believed wholeheartedly that partial Westernization and a return to Islamic sources and the *Asr-ı Saadet* would bring about the revival of Islam. They associated the backwardness of Muslim societies against Western societies with the dominance of bid'ah and superstition. They tried to establish a dialogue between Islamic sciences and modern sciences. They fought to open the door of ijtihad, which represented the dynamism of Islam. They were harshly critical of the current status quo in the ulama and madrasas. For this reason, reforming the institutions was

²⁶ "Sıratımüstakim," 113-116.

²⁷ *Sıratımüstakim* would soon need to change the journal's founding date. The date of establishment was updated as July 10, 1324 (July 23, 1908) as of issue 43. The main reason for this change was the anger toward Sultan Abdülhamid II, who was believed to be behind the March 31 Incident. While the rebels embraced the date of July 10 as a revolution, July 11 was referred to as Sultan Abdülhamid II's re-enactment of the Kanun-ı Esasi. With the change, *Sıratımüstakim* thus reinforced its loyalty to the Constitutional Revolution of 1908.

one of the main themes they constantly worked on.²⁸ In this context, translations from the leading writers of modernist Islamic thought, such as Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh, and Ferid Vecdi, were frequently featured in *Sıratımüstakim*. For example, the articles of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh, and Ferid Vecdi, translated by Mehmed Akif, were published, which were against inertia and bigotry, scrutinized the causes of decline in the Muslim societies, supported the idea of tawhid, and touched upon the relationship between the West and civilization.²⁹

From the very beginning of its publication life, *Sıratımüstakim* was the mouthpiece of the idea of modernist Islam.³⁰ For instance, Ahmed Agayef, who would later gradually shift to a nationalist and secular line, stated that there were three main movements in Muslim societies: Wahhabism, modernist Islam, and Westernization. According to him, Wahhabism fanatically treated Islam and was anti-progress. In the face of Wahhabism, he located the Westernization movement that completely cut off the relationship with the past. Apart from these two movements, he emphasized that modernist Islam tried to establish a dialogue between Islam and modernity in a sensible way. The tendency, led by Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani and Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh, argued that Islam was misunderstood. The modernist Islamists weakened the influence of fanatical scholars on religion and sought reconciliation between Islam and Western civilization. In other words, modernist Islamist intellectuals aimed to revive Islam. Ahmed Agayef located *Sıratımüstakim* within the revivalist trend.³¹ In parallel with Ahmed Agayef, Aksekili Ahmed Hamdi

²⁸ Kara, *Din ile Modernleşme Arasında Çağdaş Türk Düşüncesinin Temel Meseleleri*, 204; Kurzman, *Modernist Islam 1840-1940*, 6-14; Bein, *Ottoman Ulama, Turkish Republic: Agents of Change and Guardians of Tradition*, 27-29.

²⁹ For a few of these articles, see. Ferid Vecdi, "Müslüman Kadını," issue 3-19; Cemaleddin Ef-gani, "Dinin Fevaid-i Medeniyyesi," issue 55-58; Muhammed Abduh, "Atalet Geçici Bir Hastalıktır," issue 29; Muhammed Abduh, "Taassub," issue 55; Muhammed Abduh, "Müslümanların Esbab-ı İnhitad ve Meskeneti," issue 39; Muhammed Abduh, "Garb, Medeniyeti Nasıl Bulmuş?" issue 38.

³⁰ Şeyhun, *Islamist Thinkers in the Late Ottoman and Early Turkish Republic*, 11.

³¹ Ağaoğlu, "İnkılap Saflarından Değerli Adamları Çıkarmaya Çalışmalıyım!" 1.

made a similar classification and underlined the modernist Islamic influence. Aksekili Ahmed Hamdi, who equated the modernist understanding of Islam with the new Salafism, emphasized that they were influenced by the works of Afghani and 'Abduh, who aimed to purify Islam from the clerics who made Islam inactive and to process the pure essence of Islam. According to him, Mehmed Akif, the driving force of *Sıratımüstakim*, read all the works of Afghani and 'Abduh thoroughly and translated them into Turkish.³²

§ 2.2 Sebilürreşad and Embodying the Idea of Caliphate-Centered Pan-Islam, 1912-1918

By 1912, according to Eşref Edib, when Mardinizade Ebülula, the co-owner of *Sıratımüstakim*, became a deputy and professor, he ended his partnership by saying that he did not fulfill his obligations because he had a time problem.³³ After Ebülula left, Eşref Edib and Mehmed Akif decided to continue *Sıratımüstakim*'s publication under a different name and negotiated their decision with Abbas Halim Pasha, brother of Said Halim Pasha, the head of the *Şura-yı Devlet*.³⁴ At the meeting held in Abbas Halim Pasha's

³² Çantay, *Akifname*, 252.

³³ Debus, *Sebilürreşad*, 35. Tahirülmevlevi shares other anecdotes about Ebülula's ending his partnership in *Sıratımüstakim*. Although Eşref Edib states that there was no problem with Ebülula, Tahirülmevlevi claims otherwise. According to him, Ebülula decided to withdraw from the co-owner of the journal because of an unknown problem with Eşref Edib. As a result, he transferred *Sebilürreşad*, for which he had the concession, to Eşref Edib at the request of Mehmed Akif. Olgun, *Matbuat Alemindeki Hayatım ve İstiklal Mahkemeleri*, 34-35.

³⁴ Arabacı, "Eşref Edib Fergan ve Sebilürreşad Üzerine," 101. The bond between the inner circle of *Sıratımüstakim* and the Khedive family was strong. They considered Prince Said Halim Pasha very respected in the Committee of Union and Progress. After *Sebilürreşad* began publication, they would often publish the works of Prince Said Halim Pasha. There was also a special relationship between Abbas Halim Pasha and Mehmed Akif. Abbas Halim Pasha, who hosted Mehmed Akif in his mansion in Egypt during the summer months, was at the forefront of *Sebilürreşad*'s financial resources in the new period. Abbas Halim Pasha promised to contribute materially to the journal in the new period

summerhouse in Heybeliada, they agreed on the name of *Sebilürreşad*, which means the same as *Sıratımüstakim*.³⁵

The concession of *Sebilürreşad* had previously been taken by Tahirülmevlevi, who was also in the intellectual circle of *Sıratımüstakim*. Eşref Edib and Mehmed Akif met with Tahirülmevlevi and requested him to hand over the concession for the conversion of *Sıratımüstakim* to *Sebilürreşad*. After Tahirülmevlevi accepted the request, the change was announced at the end of the 182nd issue of *Sıratımüstakim*, that the journal would continue its publication life under the name of *Sebilürreşad* to follow the same profession in more detail. In addition to the announcement, a campaign was launched to increase the number of subscribers by sending a statement to its readers in the Ottoman provinces.³⁶

On March 8, 1912, *Sebilürreşad* began its new publication life with its 183-1rd issue.³⁷ In the issue, the aims of the journal were shared in detail and formulated as follows: To help the 300 million Muslims who were supposed to be affiliated with the Caliphate to know each other, to strengthen the bonds of solidarity among them, and to awaken Muslims against ignorance and inertia, which were among the main reasons for the decline of the Muslim societies. *Sebilürreşad* called all these goals jihad and emphasized that the journal, which was noted to be an Islamic journal, should be owned and disseminated by Muslims. *Sebilürreşad* called all the goals as jihad and emphasized that the journal should be owned and disseminated by Muslim readers.³⁸

in this meeting. *Sebilürreşad* would open a school in Heybeliada in 1913 under the auspices of Abbas Halim Pasha. See Debus, *Sebilürreşad*, 127-128.

³⁵ According to Eşref Edib, Abbas Halim Pasha suggested Eşref Edib and Mehmed Akif: Let us open a random page from the Qur'an and put the name that comes up. After this idea was accepted, the Qur'an was brought from the harem room of the summerhouse, and the Pasha coincidentally opened the surah 40/38 of al-Mu'minun. Thus, they decided on the name *Sebilürreşad*. Fergan, "Ebülulâ Beyle Beraber Nasıl Çalıştık? Sıratı Müstakim Nasıl Çıkardık?," 200.

³⁶ "Sıratımüstakim-Sebilürreşad," vol 7, issue 182.

³⁷ This choice was to emphasize that *Sebilürreşad* was the continuation of *Sıratımüstakim*.

³⁸ *Sebilürreşad*, issue 183-1.

The new editorial board was also introduced in the first issue of *Sebilürreşad*. As *Sıratımüstakim* turned into *Sebilürreşad*, Eşref Edib and Mehmed Akif, who were at the center of the journal, met with the writers one by one, explained the goals of the new publication period, and invited them to the editorial board. Among the writers shared in the first issue of the journal were the following names: Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı, Bereketzade İsmail Hakkı, Ömer Ferid, Abdürreşid İbrahim, Babanzade Ahmed Naim, Mehmed Akif, Mehmed Fahreddin, Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, Kazanlı Halim Sabit, M. Şemseddin, Ali Şeyhül Arab, Ispartalı Hakkı, Tahirülmevlevi, Edhem Nejad, Selim Efendizade Mustafa Takî, Aksekili Ahmed Hamdi, Hocazade Ahmed, Alimcan el-İdrisi, Halil Halid, Ahmed Agayef, Ali Rıza Seyfi, Tevfik, and Hafız Eşref Edib. Almost all of these writers were also included in *Sıratımüstakim* with their articles. In addition to these names, intellectuals such as Ömer Rıza [Doğrul],³⁹ Said Halim Pasha, Sayyid Muhammed Tevfik, and Elmalılı Hamdi [Yazır] were among the regular writers of the journal.

In the new period, *Sebilürreşad* aimed to be more diverse and in-depth in terms of the content, in line with its political goals, and the journal was divided into two sections. In the first section, there were mainly sub-sections dealing with religious issues such as tafsir, hadith, fiqh and fatwa, morality, jihad, and sermon. Intellectuals such as Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı, Musa Kazım, Babanzade Ahmed Naim, Ömer Ferid, and Kazanlı

³⁹ When Sebilürreşad started publication, the inner circle of the journal consisted of Eşref Edib and Mehmed Akif. About two years later, Ömer Rıza would also participate. Ömer Rıza studied law in Egypt, wrote columns in the local newspaper, and sent some of his articles to *Sebilürreşad*. When Mehmet Akif went to Egypt at the invitation of Abbas Halim Pasha in 1914, he had the opportunity to meet Ömer Rıza face to face. They would even meet the famous Egyptian modernist Islamist Ferid Vecdi together. After Mehmed Akif visited Egypt, Ömer Rıza not only became one of the regular writers of *Sebilürreşad* but also joined the inner circle. Ömer Rıza, who had a high level of English skills, mostly wrote on foreign policy while translating articles from English-language newspapers for *Sebilürreşad*. Ömer Rıza, who settled in Istanbul with the outbreak of World War I, would gain the trust of Mehmed Akif in those days, so he married Mehmed Akif's daughter, Cemile. Kuntay, *Mehmed Akif*, 198.

Halim Sabit would actively write in these sub-sections. The second section focused on everyday life and included writings, letters, and news about politics and the Muslim world. The section was vital to rationalizing the politics of the caliphate-centered pan-Islam. The writings published in the sub-section about politics developed the vision of pan-Islam, while letters, press, and affairs shed light on everyday life to complement each other. Abdürreşid İbrahim, Ömer Rıza, Halil Halid, Ahmed Agayef, and Sayyid Muhammed Tevfik were among the prominent writers of the section.

In the first issue of *Sebilürreşad*, all the sub-sections were introduced in detail. The primary purpose of *siyasiyat* was to examine the relations between Western and Muslim societies and to show how to solve the question of backwardness.⁴⁰ In the sub-section of *Hayat-ı Akvam-ı İslamiyye*, it was emphasized that to make the policy of pan-Islam feasible, firstly, it was necessary to get information about the Muslim societies living in different parts of the world. The essential questions to be addressed in this sub-section were as follows: How many Muslims lived worldwide? What ethnic groups did the Muslim societies consist of? Where did these ethnic groups live, and what languages did they speak? What were their political, social, and economic situations? Which sects and religious orders were common among them? What were the differences in Islamic understandings, beliefs, and religious rituals? Finally, in line with *Sebilürreşad's* Islamic activism, what should be done to enlighten and mobilize the great mass against the backwardness of Muslim societies?⁴¹

The following sub-section was *mekatib*, where letters sent by readers living in different geographies would be published. The sub-section was created not only to mirror the lives of Muslim communities but also to interact between the journal and its readers. Special correspondents, privately funded, were expected to establish the journal's transnational connections. At the center of the transnational network established so far

⁴⁰ "Siyasiyat," 12.

⁴¹ "Hayat-ı Akvam-ı İslamiyye," 13.

was Halil Halid, writing from London, and the traveler Abdürreşid İbrahim⁴², who was presented as having acquaintances all over the East.⁴³ In its new publication period, *Sebilürreşad* intended to strengthen and expand its transnational connections, especially in the East. The journal reached its goal in a short time. While letters were received from Russia, Japan, and China through Abdürreşid İbrahim and his son Münir, Sayyid Muhammed Tevfik established political contacts in India. Thanks to correspondents such as Aksekili Ahmed Hamdi, Ahmed Fuad, and Hidayet Kolinovic, the journal shared information from Muslim societies living in different geographies from the Balkans to Central Europe.⁴⁴

What followed were the sub-sections of *matbuat* and *şuûn*. *Matbuat*, introduced as the most effective means of getting to know each other in the world at that time, aimed to mirror the lives of local Muslim communities. In addition to sharing the summaries of the news, which was suitable for *Sebilürreşad's* political orientation, published in the Istanbul press, the main objectives of the sub-section were to bring information from newspapers and journals prepared by Muslims living in different parts of the world to the pages of *Sebilürreşad* and to show the loyalty of these communities to the Ottoman caliphate. Emphasizing that everyone could not follow the newspapers and journals published in the Ottoman Empire due to the inadequacy of transportation and communication networks, *Sebilürreşad* set itself the mission of connecting various temporalities and spaces.⁴⁵ In addition, it was aimed to compile the events that took place in the daily lives of Muslims, especially by using foreign newspapers and journals in the *şuûn* sub-section.⁴⁶

⁴² See. Özbek, *Abdürreşid İbrahim (1857-1944): The Life and Thought of a Muslim Activist*.

⁴³ "Mekatib," 13.

⁴⁴ It should be emphasized that the contacts established by the journal, which had writers and correspondents in Egypt, North Africa, Syria, Hejaz, Caucasus, India, and the Balkans, and the connections of the CUP overlap. In other words, the politico-intellectual connections of *Sebilürreşad* were also the network of the CUP. Kara, *Din ile Modernleşme Arasında Çağdaş Türk Düşüncesinin Meseleleri*, 204.

⁴⁵ "Matbuat," 15.

⁴⁶ "Şuûn," 15.

2.2.1 *Propagating Pan-Islamism and Jihad during the Long Holy War*

The beginning of *Sebilürreşad*'s publication life coincided with the outset of a long war period. This period, which started with the Tripolitanian War, which broke out on September 29, 1911, included the Balkan Wars, World War I, and the War of Independence, although there were interruptions, and lasted until August 30, 1922. Despite the intense ideological competition within the Committee of Union and Progress during the war period of more than ten years, *Sebilürreşad* was primarily involved in the pan-Islamic network organized by the CUP. The primary motivation of the politics of pan-Islam during wartime, called the new Crusades, was to cultivate religious feelings with the discourse of the liberation of the nation, to motivate the soldiers, to provide financial support to the Ottoman army, to organize a mass mobilization behind the front line, and to strengthen the emotional bond between Muslim societies. These goals were tried to be achieved in various ways during the long war between "the Crescent and the Cross."

2.2.1.1 The Tripolitanian War, 1911-1912

Most of the African lands bordering the Mediterranean were shared by Britain and France, leaving only Tripoli. The Ottoman sovereignty on the coastline was fragile, and the inner regions where mostly Bedouins lived were under the control of the Sanusis. Italy wanted to establish its dominance in the region by taking advantage of the scattered situation in Tripoli. France, Austria, and Russia supported the ambitions of Italy. After the French invasion of Morocco, the Italian press ignited anti-Ottoman propaganda by frequently covering the news that Italian traders were maltreated in Tripoli. This situation would result in the decision of the Italian government to war against the Ottoman Empire on September 29, 1911.⁴⁷

In the war in which Britain remained neutral, the Italian navy sealed Tripoli. The Italian army, which landed on October 4, would announce the annexation of Tripoli and Benghazi in November. The Ottoman army was

⁴⁷ Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 289.

able to send a limited number of forces led by Enver Bey and Mustafa Kemal Bey due to the Albanian Revolt. About fifty officers went to Tripoli as fedai using Egypt and Tunisia lines. The fedais united with the Sanusis and started the guerrilla war against the Italians in the inner parts of Tripoli. In a short time, Muslim forces consisting of Ottoman soldiers and armed militants of the Sanusis managed to unsettle the Italians with their raids and ensured that they remained in the coastal region.⁴⁸

During the Tripolitanian War, *Sebilürreşad* shared the letters on its pages, Abdürreşid İbrahim and Nazmi sent from Tripoli, on the one hand, and the news from the front, on the other.⁴⁹ The incoming letters and information mostly depicted the Italian army as deceitful and cruel, while Muslim soldiers were portrayed as brave. After returning from the front, Abdürreşid İbrahim described the Tripolitanian War as a matter of life or death for the Muslim world at a conference organized by *Sebilürreşad* in Istanbul. According to Abdürreşid İbrahim, Muslims living in various parts of the world, such as Java and India, were not indifferent to the jihad call of Sayyid Ahmed, the sheikh of the Sanusiyya, and they sent aid to mujahids fighting against the Crusaders and showed a great example of solidarity. For *Sebilürreşad*, this anecdote proved the feasibility of the idea of Pan-Islam.⁵⁰

2.2.1.2 Balkan Wars, 1912-1913

The Balkan Wars followed the Tripolitanian War. On October 2, 1912, the Balkan states consisting of Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, and Bulgaria sent an ultimatum to the Sublime Porte for large-scale reform in Macedonia. The ultimatum was withdrawn to prepare the ground for future war, as it was known that the Ottoman government would not accept it. While Austria's annexation of Bosnia revealed the weakness of the Ottomans, it also aroused the aggression of the Balkan states. As a matter of fact, on October 8, 1912, the Balkan Wars officially started with Montenegro's entry

⁴⁸ Zürcher, *Turkey*, 102-103.

⁴⁹ Debus, *Sebilürreşad*, 99.

⁵⁰ Abdürreşid İbrahim, "Konferans: Afrika'da Muahedin-i İslamiyesinin Ahvaline ve Müslümanlığın İstikbaline Dair", 28-30, 42-50.

into northern Albania and the Yenipazar sanjak. In a short time, many places, including Crete, Aegean Islands, Macedonia, and Eastern Thrace, were occupied by Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian armies; Ottoman armies were defeated on all fronts. The Bulgarian army besieged Edirne and advanced as far as Istanbul. Although an armistice was signed on January 3, 1913, with the intervention of England, the situation only lasted for a month. When the armistice ended on February 3, the Bulgarian army continued to bombard Edirne and tried to break the resistance by killing Turkish villagers in the region and forcing them to migrate to Istanbul. Edirne, the scene of military conflict since October, surrendered to the Bulgarian army on March 26.⁵¹

During the Balkan Wars, *Sebilürreşad* published poems raising religious feelings and reminding the bravery and glorious history of the Ottomans, as well as news from the war zones. Like the Tripolitanian War, the journal portrayed the Balkan Wars as the new Crusade. According to *Sebilürreşad*, the Balkan states were fighting to overthrow the 600-year-old Ottoman Empire and eliminate the religion of Islam. They brutally murdered the Muslim civilian population to achieve this goal and forced them to migrate. *Sebilürreşad* aimed to reveal the true faces of the Balkan states and to strengthen the sense of solidarity by carrying the letters sent by the persecuted Muslims to its pages.⁵²

The activities of *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectual circle in the years of the Balkan Wars were not only limited to publishing, but they also actively supported the pan-Islamic mobilization organized by the CUP. Towards the end of the war, the *Müdafaâ-yı Milliye Cemiyeti*, whose founders included the Caliph-Sultan Mehmed V Reşad and Talat Pasha, one of the leaders of the CUP, was an example of the pan-Islamic activism. First of all, the manifesto was published on January 31, 1913, emphasizing that the homeland was in danger and that intellectuals should stay away from daily politics and come together. Following the manifesto, Ottoman intellectuals were invited to the meeting. At the meeting held the next day at

⁵¹ Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 293-296; Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 37-39; Zürcher, *Turkey*, 103-105.

⁵² Debus, *Sebilürreşad*, 101-102.

Darülfünun, it was announced that the *Müdafaa-yı Milliye Cemiyeti*—which would play an essential role in the organization of the War of Independence in the coming years—was officially established. The primary purpose of the *Müdafaa-yı Milliye Cemiyeti*, headquartered in Istanbul, was to organize a total mobilization behind the front. In this respect, a broad division of tasks was made. In addition to encouraging military service and the establishment of volunteer regiments, delegations were established to act for specific purposes, such as collecting financial aid for the Ottoman army and soldiers' families and improving the health infrastructure in war zones by working with the *Hilal-i Ahmer*.⁵³

To mobilize the Ottoman society, the *Heyet-i İrşadiyye* was formed to awaken the Muslims, raise awareness, give sermons, and publish. Among the delegation members were famous intellectuals, politicians, and journalists. In addition to Rezaizade Mahmud Ekrem, who was the head of the delegation, Sheikh Abdelaziz Shawish,⁵⁴ Abdülhak Hamid [Tarhan], Cenab Şahabettin, Falih Rıfkı [Atay], Halide Edib [Adivar], Hüseyin Kazım Kadri, Hüseyin Cahid [Yalçın], Mehmed Emin [Yurdakul], Ömer Naci, Süleyman Nazif were among the members. The general secretary of the delegation was Mehmed Akif, the driving force of *Sebilürreşad*.⁵⁵

The first activities of the *Heyet-i İrşadiyye* were the sermons that Mehmed Akif gave in the Bayezid, Fatih, and Süleymaniye mosques on the following days of February. The sermons were later disseminated and circulated within the borders of the Ottoman Empire and among transnational Muslim societies. The main themes of the sermons were to unite around the Ottoman caliphate, avoid discord in order not to fall into pessimism, and save the homeland. Mehmed Akif frequently referred to verses and hadiths in sermons, reinforcing these themes.⁵⁶

⁵³ See Polat, *Müdafaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti*.

⁵⁴ After this date, Sheikh Abdelaziz Shawish would cooperate closely with the inner circle of *Sebilürreşad*.

⁵⁵ Süleyman Nazif, *Mehmed Âkif*, 120-129.

⁵⁶ Doğan, *Camideki Şair: Mehmed Âkif*, 30-35.

While the Ottomans engaged in the destruction of the war, the partition problem between the Balkan states broke out and caused a new conflict. Bearing the heavy burden of the war, Bulgaria was not satisfied with the division and entered Macedonia on June 30, 1913, and attacked its former allies, Serbia and Greece. Against the onslaught of the Bulgarian army, a new alliance was formed between Romania, Montenegro, Serbia, and Greece. In the new conjuncture, when Bulgaria fell into a difficult situation, the Ottoman press began to hope for the liberation of Edirne. The Bulgarian army had wholly withdrawn its troops from Edirne, as it was in hot conflict with its former allies. Taking advantage of the opportunity, the Ottoman army entered Edirne on July 21 without resistance and recaptured the city.⁵⁷

The reconquest of Edirne, the former capital of the Empire, was greeted with great enthusiasm not only by the Ottoman press but also by the Muslim societies. Celebrations were organized in various parts of the Empire. Muslims in different parts of the world shared enthusiasm by sending telegrams to Istanbul. According to *Sebilürreşad*, the biggest of the celebrations was held in Selimiye Mosque in Edirne. Muslims from various countries such as India, Russia, Tunisia, and Egypt also participated in the celebration. Abdürreşid İbrahim, who was in the intellectual circle of *Sebilürreşad*, gave speeches on behalf of the Muslims of Asia, and Sheikh Abdelaziz Shawish on behalf of the Muslims of Africa, praised the reconquest of Edirne and aimed to strengthen the solidarity in the Muslim world.⁵⁸

2.2.1.3 World War I, 1914-1918

Only a year after the Balkan Wars, the Ottoman Empire was dragged into World War I. As the rivalries and frictions between the polarized European countries gradually increased, the murder of the Austro-Hungarian crown prince Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, by a Serbian nationalist would ignite a global war. The Vienna government claimed

⁵⁷ Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 297-298.

⁵⁸ Debus, *Sebilürreşad*, 94-95.

that the assassination was based on the cooperation of Russia and Serbia due to Pan-Slavist policies and declared war on Serbia on July 28, exactly one month later. European countries officially announced their alliances quickly and got involved in World War I. When the alliance negotiations with England and France failed, the pro-German tendency in the Committee of Union and Progress strengthened. A secret treaty was signed on August 2, 1914, between the German ambassador Baron von Wangenheim in Istanbul and the Grand Vizier Said Halim Pasha, just one day after Germany declared war on Russia. Thus, the Ottoman government announced its alliance with Germany, hoping to regain the territories it lost in the Tripolitanian War and Balkan Wars.

Following the Treaty, total mobilization was declared, and compulsory mass conscription began. Heavy war taxes were again imposed. Non-Muslims were obliged to pay taxes to be exempt from military service. Parliament was adjourned so that the state apparatus could work more quickly. By October 29, 1914, the Ottoman Empire was officially involved in World War I. The Ottomans, part of the Central Powers led by Germany, declared war on the Allies and bombarded two Russian beaches in the Black Sea. As a result of the attack, Russia on November 2, England and France on November 5 declared war against the Ottoman Empire.

When the Ottoman Empire officially declared war, Şeyhülislam Mustafa Hayri Efendi issued a fatwa calling on all Muslims worldwide to jihad against the Allied Powers on November 7. Şeyhülislam pointed to the danger of the Muslim countries being captured and the Muslims being taken prisoner. Therefore, it was religiously obligatory for Muslims to participate in this holy war, which meant a matter of life or death. The Muslims, the subjects of the Allied Powers, were obliged to gaza against the enemies of Islam in their countries. They would be cursed if they acted oppositely and fought against the Ottoman army. The jihad fatwa of Şeyhülislam Mustafa Hayri Efendi was followed by the Caliph-Sultan Mehmed V Reşad's *Hatt-ı Hümayun* on November 11. By depicting England, France, and Russia as the pioneers of all kinds of disasters and evils, the Caliph Sultan invited millions of Muslims affiliated with the Ottoman

caliphate to take action against the cruel administrations and underlined that he did not doubt that the Ottoman army, representing Islam, would emerge victorious from the holy war.⁵⁹

Sebilürreşad continued to support the Committee of Union and Progress these days. The journal carried the declared great jihad to its pages,⁶⁰ and both published articles for the massification of jihad and took part in the established pan-Islamic organizations. Towards the end of 1914, the leader writer Mehmed Akif⁶¹ was appointed by the *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* and went to Berlin with a delegation that included Sheikh Abdelaziz Shawish, Abdürreşid İbrahim, Ahmed Agayef, Halim Sabit, and Salih eş-Şerif et-Tunusi. The trip's primary purpose, organized jointly by the Ottoman and German authorities, was to observe the current situation of the Muslim soldiers captured in World War I. In other words, Germany wanted to make its good treatment of the Muslim soldiers in the prison camps visible in the Muslim world and gain support among Muslim societies due to the propaganda.

During the Berlin trip, which lasted for about three months, the delegation visited the prison camps, which included tens of thousands of Arab, Indian, and Russian Muslims. They witnessed that Germany built mosques and schools for Muslims and appointed imams. The declarations included the delegation's observation and were distributed on the Allied fronts using German communication and transportation vehicles. According to Eşref Edib, the pan-Islamic declarations were written by Mehmed Akif. Mehmed Akif also serialized his observations in *Sebilürreşad* titled with Berlin memories. These poems not only covered Germany's behavior towards Muslim soldiers but also dealt with the constantly repeated narrative of backwardness.

⁵⁹ The expectation of the impact of the jihad declaration on the Muslims living in the Allied colonies was very high among the Germans, but despite the propaganda effort of the Ottoman government, especially the *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*, the jihad declaration had little effect. See. Zürcher, ed. *Jihad and Islam in the World War I*.

⁶⁰ "Kaffe-yi Müslimin Üzerine Cihadın Farziyeti Hakkında Fetva-yı Şerife," 12-13.

⁶¹ As of issue 309 (September 2, 1914), Mehmed Akif was introduced as the lead writer of *Sebilürreşad*.

Shortly after Mehmed Akif returned to Istanbul in March 1915, he was commissioned again by the *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* to go to Nejd. In the delegation led by Kuşçubaşı Eşref, the head of the *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*, there were Salih eş-Şerif et-Tunusi and Enver Pasha's chief aide-de-camp in addition to Mehmed Akif. The purpose of the mission was to strengthen the ties between the local tribes led by the Emir of Nejd, Ibn Rashid, who was against Sharif Hussein.

While *Sebilürreşad* cooperated with the Committee of Union and Progress in foreign policy during World War I, the intellectual circle of the journal was in competition with the nationalist and secular clique within the CUP in the same period.⁶² The clique, championed by Ziya Gökalp, attempted to reorganize the public sphere with secular reforms, taking advantage of wartime. The debates between *Sebilürreşad* and the nationalist and secular clique focused on morality. Competition gradually took on the dimension of liquidation. *Sebilürreşad* was closed in November 1915 because it did not comply with government policy. The journal started its publication life again in May 1916, but was closed in October by martial law and remained closed for 20 months.⁶³

§ 2.3 Concluding Remarks

The chapter examined *Sebilürreşad's* historical trajectory in two chronological stages. First, it placed the establishment of *Sıratı müstakim* in the libertarian political atmosphere that followed the Constitutional Revolution of 1908 and made its social and intellectual network visible. Since the journal started its publication at a stage where ideological divisions were not yet mature, its intellectual circle had a rather heterogeneous appearance. However, the heterogeneity did not prevent the sharing of some common grounds. The intellectual world of the writers around *Sıratı müstakim* was formed by the concept sets of the constitutionalist

⁶² Oğuz, *Moral Crisis on the Ottoman Homefront during the World War I*, 23-65.

⁶³ Düzdağ, *Mehmed Âkif Ersoy*, 143.

opposition, which vigorously existed since the Young Ottoman movement. In this context, *Sıratımüstakim*'s intellectuals came together with the Committee of Union and Progress, the leading actor of the Constitutional Revolution of 1908, and constituted the Islamist clique of the CUP. In addition, it is necessary to emphasize the influence of Modernist Islamic thought. The intellectual circle of *Sıratımüstakim* represented the reformist wing of the ulama, influenced by prominent modernist Islamists such as Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, Sheikh Muhammad' Abduh, and Ferid Vecdi.

This was followed by the second part examining the conversion of *Sıratımüstakim* to *Sebilürreşad*. With the new period, significant changes occurred in both the intellectual circle and the ideological trajectory of the journal. First of all, the intelligentsia around *Sıratımüstakim* continued to contribute significantly in the new period. Thanks to the pan-Islamic organizations to be established under the control of the Committee of Union and Progress, influential intellectuals and political actors such as Ömer Rıza, Said Halim Pasha, Elmalılı Hamdi, Salih eş-Şerif et-Tunisi, and Sheikh Abdelaziz Shawish participated in the *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectual circle. This was accompanied by the reorganization of the journal's content to support the caliphate-centered of Pan-Islam. Awareness of Muslim societies living in different parts of the world was indispensable for pan-Islamic politics. By sending special correspondents to the Balkans and Near and Far Asia, the transnational connections of the *Sebilürreşad* were established, and the politics of Pan-Islam were tried to be embodied.

Finally, the chapter shed light on the pan-Islamic activism of *Sebilürreşad* during the long war period of more than ten years, which started with the Tripolitanian War in 1911. During the long war years, called the new Crusade, the intellectual circle of the *Sebilürreşad* was an active part of pan-Islamic organizations under the Committee of Union and Progress leadership. In this period, on the one hand, *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectuals were actively propagating the pan-Islamic mobilization, with the discourse of saving the homeland and religion; on the other, they were in

ideological competition with the nationalist and secular clique led by Ziya Gökalp in the CUP.

3

Mapping the Politico-Intellectual Network of Sebilür-reşad

The chapter generally examines the politico-intellectual connections that *Sebilürreşad* established in its historical trajectory starting after World War I from Istanbul and extending to Balıkesir, Kastamonu, Ankara, and Kayseri. First, the chapter contextualizes *Sebilürreşad's* choices by describing the political atmosphere in post-war Istanbul. In the following part, the chapter reveals how and by whom *Sebilürreşad* was associated with the burgeoning national resistance movements in Anatolia.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the collaborations that *Sebilürreşad* involved in Anatolia after leaving Istanbul. It sheds light on the limits of cooperation between the intellectual circle of *Sebilürreşad* and the government of the Grand National Assembly within the scope of pan-Islamic mobilization. In the last part of the chapter, the question of why

and due to which discussions the coalition around the Grand National Assembly broke up with the victory of the War of Independence, organized with the discourse of rescuing the caliphate, follows.

§ 3.1 The Anti-CUP Atmosphere and Allied Occupations in the Post-War Istanbul, 1918-1920

Mehmed VI Vahideddin became the new sultan when Mehmed V Reşad died on July 3, 1918. Vahideddin's relations with the Committee of Union and Progress were not very good, and the leadership of the CUP was not sympathetic to the new sultan.¹ The reign of Vahideddin would consequently bring a new era in domestic politics. In the following days, with the signing of the Armistice of Mudros, World War I ended for the Ottoman Empire. The end of World War I coincided with the enthronement of the new sultan.

In post-war Istanbul, the opposition press began criticizing the CUP because of its decisions during wartime. The criticisms gave way to a showdown over time. The prosecution of war criminals and prominent CUP members, whose names were associated with corruption, became the most important topic on the agenda of the newspapers. In public opinion, prejudices against the CUP arose. Sultan Vahideddin did not hesitate to gain legitimacy and power by using the anti-CUP atmosphere that occurred after World War I. First, the censorship put into effect by the CUP was abolished due to the enthronement (cülus) of the new sultan,² and then the *Divan-ı Harb-i Örfi* was established, and war criminals were arrested and judged.³

Although *Sebilürreşad* tried to stay away from the criticisms,⁴ the journal supported the policies and organizations against the clique

¹ Zürcher, *Turkey*, 136.

² In this way, *Sebilürreşad* started publication life again. Düzdağ, *Mehmet Âkif Ersoy*, 77.

³ Shaw, *History of Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 324.

⁴ For example, *Sebilürreşad* openly emphasized that it did not consider the accusations against the CUP, such as the Armenian massacre and corruption of food supplies, to be provable and that the allegations were just gossip. *Sebilürreşad*, vol. 15, issue 386.

championed by Ziya Gökalp, which *Sebilürreşad* entered into an ideological competition within the CUP. The establishment of *Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-İslamiyye*, which would become a censorship mechanism against secular tendencies during the post-war period, was a typical example of the situation.⁵ *Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-İslamiyye* was officially established on August 12, 1918, by Şeyhülislam Musa Kazım. Besides Şeyhülislam Musa Kazım, among the members were Arapkirli Hüseyin Avni, Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi, Sheikh Beşir, Sheikh Bedreddin, Haydarizade Ibrahim, Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, Mustafa Sabri, İzmir İsmail Hakkı and Ömer Ferid.⁶

Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-İslamiyye, established as a high Islamic advisory, communiqué, and preaching delegation, had three main objectives. These were to make publications that would provide solutions to the problems faced by Muslims in daily life on religious issues, to officially answer the questions asked by foreigners about Islam by discussing the questions in the relevant commissions, and to fight against the formations that harm the morality of the society. The institution had three sub-commissions to serve the three primary purposes: fiqh, kalam, and morality. The commissions published their perspectives after discussing the issues referred to them. However, it should be noted that the commissions did not have the power of legal sanction. The commissions reported their decisions to Şeyhülislam, the Ministry of Justice, and the police directorate and demanded that the necessary action should be taken.⁷

As seen above, the intellectual circles of *Sebilürreşad* took an active part in *Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-İslamiyye*. Mehmed Akif, the leader writer of *Sebilürreşad*, was appointed as the chief clerk of the institution while he was in Lebanon and started to work when he returned to Istanbul.⁸ *Sebilürreşad's* publishing policy also coordinated with the institution's work and frequently displayed its ideological competition on the jour-

⁵ Oğuz, *Moral Crisis in the Ottoman Empire*, 9, 45.

⁶ BEO. 4551-341323-0.

⁷ Albayrak, "Darülhikme."

⁸ Erişirgil, *Mehmet Âkif: İslamcı Bir Şairin Romanı*, 266-269.

nal's pages due to its "non-moral" publications. For instance, the participation of women and men in an event held in the *Türk Ocağı* was put on the target practice.⁹ In another example, the legal sanction of the Ministry of the Interior was demanded because *İleri* attacked religion "unethically."¹⁰

The occupation of Istanbul by the Allied Powers began to change the political atmosphere. On December 1, 1918, the Istanbul Government declared a new censorship regime. The censorship was led by a delegation, including representatives of the occupation forces, and the board prevented hostile publications against the Istanbul Government and the Allied Powers. The Istanbul press, in general, and *Sebilürreşad*, in particular, became the target of strict censorship.¹¹ *Sebilürreşad*, which had been warned by the government not to "go forward" with unofficial intermediaries,¹² experienced strict censorship as of issue 384. Due to the censorship of the occupation forces, the journal pages were completely blank and sometimes could not be published. The daily political interpretations in the *şuun* and *icmal-i hadisat* sections of the journal and, significantly, the articles criticizing Britain's foreign policy were censored.¹³

Rumors that the Allied Powers would establish a mandate in Istanbul after the occupation triggered discussions about the future of the Ottoman caliphate. The intellectual circle of *Sebilürreşad* saw the Ottoman Empire as the continuation of the caliphate that started with the four caliphs and then continued with the Abbasids. During World War I, the intellectuals fiercely defended the Ottoman caliphate, whose legitimacy was discussed mainly by Britain, France, and their Arab allies. The intel-

⁹ "Türk Ocağındaki Münasebetsizlikler Hakkında," 452.

¹⁰ "İleri Gazetesinin Muhalif-i Edeb Neşriyatı," 455.

¹¹ In addition to the censorship regime, *Sebilürreşad* also struggled with financial problems. Due to paper costs, two issues were first printed together. However, this measure did not solve the financial problems; the journal price was increased. When this situation caused the readers to complain, a middle ground was found by reducing the number of pages. *Sebilürreşad*, issue 394-395; *Sebilürreşad*, issue 439.

¹² Düzdağ, *Mehmed Âkif Ersoy*, 74-76.

¹³ As examples, see *Sebilürreşad*'s 456, 457, and 458th issues.

lectual circle of *Sebilürreşad* treated the Ottoman Caliphate as intertwined with religious and political meanings while viewing the Muslim world's unifying force. However, the issue, which was closely related to the Muslims, was being manipulated by the Allied Powers.¹⁴

Sebilürreşad published news, articles, and passages from the European press such as Times, Reuters, Daily Telegraph, The Morning Post, L'Humanite, Le Matin, and L'Information to comprehend the plans of the Allied Powers for the Ottoman Empire and to convey the debates about the future status of Istanbul to its readers. The news that the Ottoman caliphate would be purged of its political powers and limited to spiritual authority was carried to the pages of the journal. If it happened, there would be a caliphate under the control of the Allied Powers. For them, a caliphate limited by the spiritual authority would mean interference in the religious duties of Muslims, and the situation would inevitably lead to the danger of the Ottoman caliphate ending.¹⁵

The uncertainty about the Ottoman Empire's sovereignty and the Ottoman caliphate's future, especially the Izmir's invasion on May 15, 1919, shocked the Istanbul press. The pages of the newspapers were filled with news of the persecution of Muslims living in the occupied Izmir region by the Greek army. The occupation news was reflected in *Sebilürreşad*'s issue dated May 22, 1919. The unsigned article on the cover, supported by verses titled "*Milletin Hayat ve Mematı*," suggested not to be afraid of the enemy and to ensure national unity. This article was followed by another article titled "*İzmir'in İşgali ve Alem-i İslam*," written by Ömer Rıza. He emphasized that the Islamic world shared the same feelings with the Turks in the face of the occupation of Izmir.¹⁶

After the Greek army occupied Izmir, it soon advanced to the Büyük and Küçük Menderes rivers. Rumors that the Greek army would invade Anatolia sparked nationalist resistance movements.¹⁷ Resistance movements, which emerged under the name of *Müdafaa-yı Hukuk Cemiyeti* in

¹⁴ Ardıç, *Islam and the Politics of Secularism*, 145-154; Debus, *Sebilürreşad*, 57-65.

¹⁵ Fatin, "Hilafet ve Vesayet," 421-422.

¹⁶ Ömer Rıza, "*İzmir'in İşgali ve Alem-i İslam*," 416.

¹⁷ Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 342.

regions that were in danger of foreign occupation, started to organize congresses.¹⁸ The *Şarkî Anadolu Müdafaa-yı Hukuk Cemiyeti* organized the first of the congresses in Erzurum on July 23, 1919. The Erzurum Congress had gathered against a possible Armenian occupation in Eastern Anatolia. The Congress, which ended on August 7, published a 10-point result report. The common point of the report was the strengthening of the resistance movements for the rescue of the caliph-sultan in Istanbul and the protection of the occupied Eastern provinces.¹⁹ In another congress convened in Sivas on September 4, the decisions taken in Erzurum were transformed into a national call, and the *Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-yı Hukuk Cemiyeti*, chaired by Mustafa Kemal Pasha, was established to gather regional resistance movements under a single umbrella.²⁰

In the face of the outbreak of resistance movements, the authority of the Istanbul Government gradually weakened, and a power crisis emerged. The re-opening of the *Meclis-i Mebusan*, which was suspended by the decision of Sultan Vahideddin, was among the main demands of the resistance movements.²¹ The Sultan, whose legitimacy was increasingly questioned, could not resist the nationalist reactions anymore and took Damat Ferid Pasha from the Grand Vizier position. Following the brief cabinet of Ali Rıza Pasha, Sultan Vahideddin issued a declaration and announced that elections would be held, reminding that the only authority was the *Meclis-i Mebusan*. The Sultan also underlined that Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points would be used for the future of the caliphate and the empire.²²

After the election decision was announced, *Sebilürreşad* published an article explaining both its views on the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire and its attitude towards the election.²³ The journal stated that the

¹⁸ See Tanör, *Anadolu'da Kongre İktidarları*.

¹⁹ Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 344-346.

²⁰ Zürcher, *Turkey*, 150.

²¹ Ibid.

²² "Beyanname," 443.

²³ "İntihabat Münasebetiyle Müslümanlara Vesaya," 444.

Fourteen Points recognized the Turks' right to life on paper. However, in reality, there was a Greek occupation in the Aegean, the Muslims were destroyed, and Trabzon and Edirne were approached with similar intentions.²⁴ In the continuation of the article, it was emphasized the *Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-yı Hukuk Cemiyeti* was born in response to all these negativities and defended Muslims' right to life. Then, while calling for the immediate gathering of deputies to determine his own fate, he was called for unification without worrying about the faction. It was also underlined that Muslims should vote for the right deputies to decide on their own destinies and be united without falling into party competition.²⁵

The representatives of the *Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-yı Hukuk Cemiyeti*, which was organized in most regions of Anatolia and Thrace for the elections, gained an overwhelming advantage. In the new era, the majority of the *Meclis-i Mebusan* would be composed of representatives of the nationalist resistance movement. The parliament convened in Istanbul on January 12, 1920. Following the opening speech of Sultan Vahideddin, the telegram of Mustafa Kemal Pasha, elected as the Erzurum deputy, was read on behalf of the *Heyet-i Temsiliyye*. Istanbul, under the occupation of the Allied Powers, was the scene of a show of force for the nationalist resistance movements that broke out in Anatolia.²⁶

Hasan Basri [Çantay], who was among *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectual circle, the owner of *Ses*, and who would be Karesi deputy in the Grand National Assembly, invited Mehmed Akif to Balıkesir to encourage the local resistance movement.²⁷ Mehmed Akif went to the *Sebilürreşad* bureau and told Eşref Edib that they were called from Balıkesir and that they

²⁴ "Sebilürreşad Mecmua-i İslamiyyesine, Harekat-ı Milliyye ve Redd-i İlhak Heyeti Aydın ve Havalisi Heyet-i Merkeziye Reisi Ömer Lütfi," 448.

²⁵ "Hukuk-ı Milliyyenin Müdafaa ve Muhafazası İçin Milletin Kelime-yi Vahide Etrafında Toplanması," 444.

²⁶ Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 347-348.

²⁷ Çantay, *Akifname*, 23.

should leave immediately. Mehmed Akif and Eşref Edib, who quickly completed their preparations, finally set off for Balıkesir in early February 1920.²⁸

The arrival of Mehmed Akif and Eşref Edib in Balıkesir had a significant impact on the local press. For instance, *İzmir'e Doğru* announced that Mehmed Akif, the lead writer of the Islamic journal *Sebilürreşad* and a member of *Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-İslamiyye*, had arrived in the city.²⁹ Mehmed Akif and Eşref Edib stayed at the house of Hasan Basri, who invited them. They held talks with the resistance movement's representatives, the notables of Balıkesir, and armed mujahids.³⁰ *Sebilürreşad*'s inner circle received significant attention in Balıkesir; their hopes for the future were renewed in the face of the interest. At the request of Mustafa Necati and Vasıf Çınar, the owners of *İzmir'e Doğru*, Mehmed Akif gave his famous sermon in which he called for unity in a crowded community in the Zağnos Pasha Mosque.³¹ After the address, he also visited Darülmualimin and gave a speech there.³²

The sermon, which Mehmed Akif gave at the Zağnos Pasha Mosque and which Eşref Edib took notes simultaneously, was first published in the 24th issue of *İzmir'e Doğru*, dated February 1, 1920, and then in *Sebilürreşad*, dated February 12, 1920. *İzmir'e Doğru* carried the sermon to its pages writing that Mehmed Akif's sermon made the Muslims very emotional, excited, and enchanted.³³ In addition to *İzmir'e Doğru*, Mehmed Akif's poem, which he read at the beginning of his sermon, was published in *Yeni Gün*, under the direction of Yunus Nadi [Abalıoğlu], published in Istanbul on February 14, 1920.³⁴ The whole sermon took place in

²⁸ Edib, *Milli Mücadele Yılları*, 103-104; Erişirgil, *Mehmet Akif: İslamcı Bir Şairin Romanı*, 27.

²⁹ Sarıhan, *Mehmet Akif*, 102.

³⁰ Eşref Edip, *Milli Mücadele Yılları*, 27-33; Çantay, *Akifname*, 20-22.

³¹ "Mev'iza," 458.

³² Sarıhan, *Mehmet Akif*, 103; Çantay, *Akifname*, 51.

³³ Sarıhan, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Günlüğü*, vol 2, 355.

³⁴ Ibid., 375.

the March 4, 1920 issue of *İrade-yi Milliye*, which was the official publication of the *Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-yı Hukuk Cemiyeti* and published in Sivas, and entered circulation in the rest of Anatolia.³⁵

Shortly after the inner circle of *Sebilürreşad* returned from Balıkesir, Istanbul was reoccupied by Allied Powers on March 16, 1920, and this time the occupation completely shook the political atmosphere. *Meclis-i Mebusan*, dominated by the *Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-yı Hukuk Cemiyeti*, was dissolved. Representatives of the nationalist movement were arrested and deported to Malta. The current censorship on the Istanbul press was further tightened. Damat Ferit Pasha was reinstated as the grand vizier, thinking that he would work in harmony with the occupation forces, followed by the publication of the new Şeyhülislam Dürriyade Abdullah's fatwa on April 11, 1920, stating that it was permissible to murder the supporters of the *Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-yı Hukuk Cemiyeti*.³⁶

In those days, Mehmed Akif's enthusiastic sermon to the people of Balıkesir also attracted the attention of Mustafa Kemal Pasha. When the nationalist movement in Anatolia began to expand and gather in Ankara, Mustafa Kemal Pasha asked Ali Şükrü to persuade Mehmed Akif to publish *Sebilürreşad* in Ankara to strengthen the spiritual front, awaken the people and prepare them for resistance against the enemy.³⁷ Then, in the first days of April, Ali Şükrü came to the bureau of *Sebilürreşad* and conveyed the request with the words, "Mustafa Kemal Pasha invited you to Ankara. He thinks that publishing *Sebilürreşad* in Ankara will strengthen the spiritual front of *Kuva-yı Milliye*." Upon the astonishment of Mehmed Akif and Eşref Edib, Ali Şükrü insisted in strong language, "Do not think about it, we will go, we will go anyway."³⁸ Mehmed Akif, who decided to go to Ankara at the insistence of Ali Şükrü, distributed tasks with the inner circle. Accordingly, Mehmed Akif would pass to Ankara with Ali Şükrü, and Eşref Edib would set things right in Istanbul and take the *Sebilürreşad* cliché and go after Mehmed Akif. Mehmed Akif also met with

³⁵ Ibid., 408.

³⁶ Kuntay, *Mehmed Akif*, 130.

³⁷ Edib, *Milli Mücadele Yılları*, 35.

³⁸ Ibid.

Ömer Rıza and informed him that he was going to Anatolia and entrusted his family to him.³⁹

After Mehmed Akif moved to Ankara with Ali Şükrü, Eşref Edib and Ömer Rıza continued their work in Istanbul.⁴⁰ The inner circle of *Sebilürreşad* started to work in contact with underground nationalist resistance organizations in Istanbul. On the one hand, they helped the Indian Muslim soldiers in the British army to smuggle those who had crossed over to the nationalist resistance movement, to Anatolia⁴¹; on the other hand, they used the bureau of *Sebilürreşad* as the private and secret post office of the Grand National Assembly. In this regard, the letters of those who passed from Istanbul to Anatolia were distributed to their families, and Ankara's publications and newspapers were given to the relevant people.⁴²

In addition, they secretly sent the book of Mushir Hosain Kidwai, who was defending the 'Turks' right to life, titled *The Sword Against Islam or Defence of Islam's Standard Bearers*, to Anatolia by translating it from English. According to Eşref Edib, the invaluable help of Ahmed Efendi, the owner of the *Necmi Istikbal Matbaası*, was significant. The emergence of the attempt, which was kept very secret, could cause serious problems. Although the officials of the occupation forces investigated who translated the book, where it was published, and who distributed it, they could not conclude.⁴³

§ 3.2 The Heyday of Pan-Islamism, 1920-1922

Mehmed Akif, his son Emin, and Ali Şükrü met at Karacaahmet Cemetery in Üsküdar. They passed to Anatolia through the Uzbek Lodge on the

³⁹ Doğrul, *Mehmed Akif*, 446.

⁴⁰ After Mehmed Akif moved to Ankara, Istanbul's political and intellectual circles were cutting ties with the *Sebilürreşad*. Ömer Rıza describes these days as "we could only find shelter in the nationalist circle of *Tevhid-i Efkar*." Edib, *Mehmed Akif*, 446.

⁴¹ Düzdağ, *Mehmed Akif*, 87.

⁴² Edib, *Milli Mücadele Yılları*, 34.

⁴³ Fergan, *Milli Mücadele Yılları*, 33; Arabacı, "Eşref Edib Fergan ve Sebilürreşad Üzerine," 107.

morning of April 10, 1920.⁴⁴ The Naqshbandi sheikh of the Lodge, Ata Efendi, was a member of the *Karakol Cemiyeti*, and also the Uzbeks Lodge secretly served as a base for the shipment of arms and ammunition to Anatolia. İsmet [İnönü], Fevzi [Çakmak], Halide Edib [Adıvar], and Dr. Adnan [Adıvar] also passed through the Lodge to Anatolia.⁴⁵ Mehmed Akif, his son Emin and Ali Şükrü went to Eskişehir by using the way of İzmit, Adapazarı, and Bilecik, and from there, they reached Ankara on April 24 by train.⁴⁶

The Grand National Assembly, established in Ankara, was opened after the Friday prayers held at the Hacıbayram Mosque on April 23. A day later, when Mehmed Akif, his son Emin, and Ali Şükrü arrived in Ankara at noon, they were greeted by Mustafa Kemal Pasha and Erzurum deputy Gözübüyükzade Ziya Hoca.⁴⁷ *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, the official newspaper of the Ankara Government, reported the arrival of Mehmet Akif under the title "*İslam Şairi Akif Bey Ankara'da*."⁴⁸ On April 29, Mustafa Kemal Pasha sent a telegram to Fahreddin [Altay] Pasha and ordered him to assist in the election of Mehmed Akif instead of the deceased Burdur deputy Miralay İsmail Bey, and thus Mehmed Akif joined the Grand National Assembly as Burdur deputy.⁴⁹

By Mehmed Akif's arrival in Ankara, the regular army had not yet been established. The forces, mainly militia, were fighting on different fronts. The Istanbul Government did not consider the Anzavur's forces

⁴⁴ Ersoy, *Babam Mehmed Akif*, 42.

⁴⁵ Sarıhan, *Mehmet Akif*, 112.

⁴⁶ Düzdağ, *Mehmed Akif Ersoy*, 78-80.

⁴⁷ Ersoy, *Babam Mehmed Akif*, 45-46.

⁴⁸ "İslam Şairi Âkif Bey", 4. "Pek hassas ve ulvi İslam şairi Mehmed Akif Bey dahi İstanbul'dan çıkarak birkaç gün evvel Ankara'ya muvassalat eylemiştir. İlhamat-ı şairanesinin menba-ı asîli bilhassa hakimiyet-i diniyye ve gayret-i vataniyyesinde olan bu güzide İslam şairi, aynı zamanda erbab-ı ilim ve hikmetin en ileri gelenlerinden bir şahsiyet-i mümtazdırlar da. Milletin giriştiği mücadeleyi vatanperverâne İslam şairi Mehmed Akif Bey'in himmet-i hamiiyetkârından pek çok feyz ve kuvvet alacaktır. Şair-i hakim-i İslam'ın önümüzdeki Cuma günü halka bir mev'ıza irad buyuracağını memnuniyetle haber aldık."

⁴⁹ ZC, vol.2, 74; ZC, vol.2, 361.

sufficient. It established an army called the *Kuva-yı İnzibatiye*, and revolts broke out against the Ankara government in many Anatolian regions. In this context, in parallel with his experiences under the *Müdafaa-yı Milliye Cemiyeti*, which was established during the Balkan Wars, Akif actively took part in the *Heyet-i İrşadiyye* since May 1920. Besides Mehmed Akif, there were his friends in the delegation, Trabzon deputy Ali Şükrü, Antalya deputy Hamdullah Subhi, and Konya deputy Refik.⁵⁰

At that time, the pressure on *Sebilürreşad* increased in Istanbul because Mehmed Akif and Eşref Edib went to Balıkesir and connected with the resistance movement's representatives there.⁵¹ Moreover, the news that Mehmed Akif reached Ankara was also reflected in the Istanbul press.⁵² Under these circumstances, Mehmed Akif sent word to Eşref Edib to come to Ankara as soon as possible.⁵³ After Eşref Edib settled his affairs in Istanbul, he said farewell to Ömer Rıza. Taking the *Sebilürreşad* cliché, he went to Inebolu via the Black Sea route and from there to Kastamonu, where his father-in-law resided.⁵⁴ Ömer Rıza would stay in Istanbul, write regularly in *Tevhid-i Efkar* and *Akşam*, and take care of Mehmed Akif's family.⁵⁵

When Eşref Edib arrived in Kastamonu in mid-July 1920, he encountered a profound silence. In those days, when the British-backed Greek army was advancing in Western Anatolia, there were riots and opposition in the rest of Anatolia. Resistance movements had not yet massed in Kastamonu. Moreover, Kastamonu was a transition point in terms of location, and those who escaped from Anatolia and crossed to Istanbul and the regions under the control of the Greek army frequently used the Kastamonu-Inebolu road. According to Eşref Edib, the conversations between these people returning to Istanbul and the local people in

⁵⁰ Erişirgil, *Mehmet Akif*, 341.

⁵¹ Arabacı, "Eşref Edib Fergan ve Sebilürreşad Üzerine," 104.

⁵² Sarıhan, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Günlüğü*, vol 3, 56.

⁵³ Eşref Edib, *Milli Mücadele Yılları*, 43-44.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 45.

⁵⁵ Doğrul, ed. Safahat. 24.

Kastamonu led to pessimism about the Ankara-based resistance movement and hopelessness about the future.

Eşref Edib met with the governor and the commander and stated that it was necessary to organize the people of Kastamonu against the Greek forces advancing in Western Anatolia.⁵⁶ After the meeting, they notified all neighborhoods through the police department. They agreed to hold a meeting in the Yılanlı Lodge. After the announcement, a very crowded community gathered in the Lodge. Eşref Edib took the stand and gave a speech explaining the emergency, that the Greek army was about to land in İnebolu and Kastamonu might be in a difficult situation. With the influence of the speech, it was decided to establish military units and organize a resistance movement around the *Müdafaa-yı Hukuk Cemiyeti*.⁵⁷

In those days, besides the propaganda work in Kastamonu, there was also close contact between *Sebilürreşad* and the Ankara Government about the kidnapping of the crown caliph-sultan Abdülmecid II to Anatolia. Eşref Edib shared the special initiative by meeting with the governor of Kastamonu and the army commander. He said the Ankara Government was waiting for news and asked for help to send a telegram to Ankara. After the meeting, when a telegram was sent stating that there was a need for a special officer to invite Abdülmecid II to Ankara formally. The approval came the next day, and the necessary preparations were started. Accordingly, on behalf of the Ankara Government, Mustafa Kemal Pasha appointed Yümnü Bey and sent him to Kastamonu.⁵⁸

Yümnü Bey secretly came to Kastamonu in mid-July 1920, receiving a letter of invitation specially prepared by Mustafa Kemal Pasha and another letter signed by the Council of Ministers. An identity card written in the name of Kastamonulu merchant Hatipzade Mehmed Cemil was prepared for him. He was symbolically given a sample of cannabis taken from the Kendir Han so that he could receive orders from the merchants of Istanbul. After a short while, Yümnü Bey went to Istanbul by ferry from İnebolu and met with the crown caliph-sultan Abdülmecid II. However,

⁵⁶ Eşref Edib, *Milli Mücadele Yılları*, 44.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 47.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 45-50.

when the attempt was revealed, Abdülmecid II gave up and said he would not pass to Anatolia. The plan kidnapping the crown caliph-sultan to Anatolia thus failed.⁵⁹

Things were not going well anymore. Eşref Edib's propaganda and organizational efforts made the Governor of Kastamonu suspicious. The governor arrested Eşref Edib by spreading rumors that he engaged in anti-governmental activities. When Mehmed Akif heard about the incident, he left the *Heyet-i İrşadiyye* duty in Konya and took a month and a half leave of absence from the Grand National Assembly and immediately went to Kastamonu to break out of his comrade.⁶⁰ Mehmed Akif arrived in Kastamonu on October 19, 1920, and solved the problem with the governor of Kastamonu and ensured the release of Eşref Edib.⁶¹

Sebilürreşad had the opportunity to develop close relations with the local people and the city's notables with Mehmed Akif's arrival in Kastamonu. The co-owners of *Açıksöz*, published in Kastamonu, Hamdi [Çelen] and Hüsnü [Açıksöz] cooperated closely with Mehmed Akif and Eşref Edib.⁶² During the time the journal was published in Kastamonu, *Sebilürreşad* used the *Açıksöz* bureau as an administrative office. Mehmed Akif's poems and Eşref Edib's articles were published in *Açıksöz*. So much so that after the national anthem, *İstiklal Marşı*, written by Mehmed Akif, was accepted by the Grand National Assembly, it would be published on the pages of *Sebilürreşad* and *Açıksöz*.⁶³

With the proposal of Hamdi, the co-owner of *Açıksöz*, Mehmed Akif gave his famous sermon at Nasrullah Mosque in Kastamonu. The sermon revealed the seriousness of the Treaty of Sèvres and encouraged the nationalist resistance movement. The Nasrullah Mosque Sermon, meticulously noted by Eşref Edib, was published in the 464th issue of *Sebilürreşad*. The issue was circulated in thousands of copies and sent to governors, mutasarrıfs, and muftis in all regions of Anatolia to be read

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ ZC, vol.5, 4.

⁶¹ Peker, *İstiklal Savaşında Kastamonu ve Havalisindeki Harekat*, 33.

⁶² Eşref Edib, *Milli Mücadele Yılları*, 51.

⁶³ Sarıhan, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Günlüğü*, vol.3, 413.

aloud in public spheres, mainly mosques and coffee houses. The current edition of the issue was soon depleted, and its printing was repeated several times. In fact, in cases where the issue of *Sebilürreşad* was insufficient, local administrators affiliated with the Ankara Government ensured that the issue was copied in the provincial printing houses.⁶⁴

Mehmed Akif left Kastamonu with Eşref Edib towards the end of December 1920, when the permission he received from the Grand National Assembly expired and went to Ankara. When they arrived in Ankara, Mustafa Kemal Pasha welcomed the inner circle of *Sebilürreşad*. During the meeting held in his private room in Ankara Station Building, Mustafa Kemal Pasha apologized to Eşref Edib for the incident caused by the personal concerns of the governor of Kastamonu and congratulated him by saying that *Sebilürreşad* had a great service in fortifying the spiritual front due to his pan-Islamic activities in Kastamonu. Mustafa Kemal Pasha said that he was delighted with what they met and that he hoped to work together, and Mehmed Akif and Eşref Edib also expressed that they shared the same feelings.⁶⁵

In those days, there was a housing crisis in Ankara. When Mehmed Akif first came to Ankara in April 1920 with Ali Şükrü, he stayed in the Teachers' College allocated to the deputies, and very shortly after, he rented a house with the deputies of Balıkesir, Hasan Basri, and Abdülgafur Efendi. On the second visit of Mehmed Akif to Ankara, Nureddin Efendi, the sheikh of *Taceddin Dergahı*, allocated the Lodge, which was very close to the Grand National Assembly, to him. The sheikh of the *Taceddin Dergahı* was fond of politics and wanted to expand his sphere of influence by making a connection with Mehmed Akif.⁶⁶

After Mehmed Akif and Eşref Edib moved, *Taceddin Dergahı* became the meeting point of *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectual circle.⁶⁷ The delegation, consisting of former grand vizier İzzet Pasha, Hüseyin Kazım Kadri, Fatin

⁶⁴ For example: "Elcezîre Cebhesi Kumandanı Nihad Paşa tarafından başmuharririmiz Âkif Beyefendi'ye çekilen telgrafnâme ve Âkif Beyefendi'nin cevâbî telgrafnâmesi," 315.

⁶⁵ Edib, *Mehmed Akif*, 94-95.

⁶⁶ Düздаğ, *Mehmed Akif Ersoy*, 115.

⁶⁷ Çantay, *Akifname*, 83; Eşref Edib, *Mehmed Akif*, 124-125.

Gökmen, who came to Ankara from Istanbul in those days and was introduced by *Sebilürreşad* as "*Heyet-i Muazzama*," stayed the Lodge.⁶⁸ Among the regulars of the *Taceddin Dergahı* were Ömer Ferid, Münir [Ertegün], who worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Çopur Hilmi, who was the director of the Ministry of Agriculture, and Mahir Bey, who was the secretary of the Grand National Assembly. In addition to these names, deputies also visited the Lodge; Ankara deputy Beynamlı Hacı Mustafa, Balıkesir deputies Hasan Basri, Abdülgafur and Mehmed Vehbi, İstanbul deputy Hüseyin Hüsnü, Karahisar-ı Sahib deputy Hoca İsmail Şükrü, Kırşehir deputy Müfid, Konya deputy Mehmed Vehbi, Sivas deputy Mustafa Taki and Trabzon deputy Ali Şükrü were the most frequent.⁶⁹

Taceddin Dergahı was also home to close contacts between *Sebilürreşad* and the Ankara Government. Dr. Adnan, Hamdullah Subhi [Tanrıöver], Yusuf Hikmet [Bayur], and Yusuf Akçura, who were close colleagues of Mustafa Kemal Pasha, frequently came to the Lodge and exchanged ideas with Mehmed Akif and Eşref Edib. One of the conversations reflected on the *Sebilürreşad* pages contains essential clues. Yusuf Akçura visited *Taceddin Dergahı* on May 3, 1921, with "a packet of tea and the book titled *Tarih-i Siyasi Notları* in his hand." In the in-depth meeting that lasted for hours with Mehmed Akif and Eşref Edib, they had the opportunity to talk about many issues, from the First World War to the occupation of Istanbul, from the Eastern Question to the National Struggle. They underlined that it was necessary to be hopeful in the days when "the wreckage of the collapsed Ottoman society was collected and tried to be recovered." According to them, all the fault was not in the people but in the intellectuals. By self-criticizing, Mehmed Akif emphasized that the Ottoman intelligentsia in Istanbul did not extend their hands to Anatolia, but neglected the people. Akif continued in his speech, "whenever we show unity between us and invite the Muslims to the path of truth, they immediately make every sacrifice. The achievements you see are always the result of unity. I have no doubt that God Almighty will succeed us in

⁶⁸ "Bir Heyet-i Muazzamanın Anadolumuza Kudûmu," 466.

⁶⁹ Eşref Edib, *Mehmed Akif*, 142-148; Çantay, *Akifname*, 80; Sarihan, *Mehmet Akif*, 179-180.

securing our nation's independence if we can fall into excess and depravity, fall into old madness and passions, and offend our souls."⁷⁰

As emphasized in the example above, Ankara during the War of Independence was a period when different political tendencies and competition between cliques faded.⁷¹ *Sebilürreşad* began to be published in Ankara with its 467th issue on February 3, 1921, and was printed in the *Matbuat ve İstihbarat Matbaası* operating under the Grand National Assembly. In addition, the journal was distributed through local and military administrators affiliated with the Ankara Government. The Grand National Assembly not only helped with the printing and distribution processes, but also provided financial support to the journal. In other words, the Ankara Government supported only *Sebilürreşad*, apart from the official newspaper, *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*.⁷²

Sebilürreşad took care to work in harmony with the Ankara Government in the days when it continued its publication life in Ankara. The close cooperation between the intellectual circle of *Sebilürreşad* and the Ankara Government, in general, was not just about facilitating the printing and distribution of the journal. The preparation of the national anthem, *İstiklal Marşı*, was one of the first examples of cooperation. On November 7, 1920, at the request of *Erkan-ı Harbiye*, it was announced in the official newspaper of the Ankara Government, *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, that a national anthem competition would be held by the Ministry of Education, in which the winner would be awarded. However, the national anthem samples were not encouraging. After nearly three months, Minister of Education Hamdullah Subhi met with Mehmet Akif's close friend Balıkesir deputy Hasan Basri and stated that the competition would end with great

⁷⁰ Eşref Edib, "*Muhasebe*," 479.

⁷¹ Considering the War of Independence as a life-or-death war, ideological debates between political and intellectual circles were put into the background. See. Kara, *İstiklal Marşı*, 77-78.

⁷² This situation caused controversy in the last stage of the War of Independence. After the successful completion of the liberation struggle militarily, the ideological differences began to become clear again as the establishment discussions began to sprout. This situation, as expected, brought with it the questioning of the financial support that *Sebilürreşad* received from the Ankara government. ZC, vol.8, 517-519, 533.

disappointment. According to Hamdullah Subhi —and Mustafa Kemal—the only poet in Ankara who could write the national anthem competing for the glory of the War of Independence was Mehmed Akif. Hamdullah Subhi asked Hasan Basri to persuade Mehmed Akif to write the national anthem. As a result of Hasan Basri's insistence, Mehmed Akif was convinced and wrote the national anthem. *İstiklal Marşı*, published on the pages of *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* and *Sebilürreşad* on February 17, 1921, was accepted on March 1 by Hamdullah Subhi reading it from the stand of the Grand National Assembly.⁷³

Another example of the cooperation between the inner circle of *Sebilürreşad* and the clique led by Mustafa Kemal was the capture of the Indian spy Mustafa Sagir, who was working in favor of the British Secret Intelligence Service. Mustafa Sagir, who came to Kastamonu from İnebolu in the last days of November 1920 and stayed there for a short time, went to Ankara in the first week of December.⁷⁴ Mustafa Sagir, who met with the deputies of the Grand National Assembly, often visited the *Taceddin Dergahı*, where the inner circle of *Sebilürreşad* was accommodated. Mustafa Sagir used *Taceddin Dergahı* as his postal address. For this reason, many letters came to the Lodge from India, Egypt, and Istanbul.⁷⁵ He also gave a letter to Eşref Edib to use his personal connections to be sent to Istanbul, saying it would be lost in the postal service. When Eşref Edib and Mehmed Akif, who suspected the situation, opened the letter secretly, they saw that only two lines were written. In the following days, the suspicion increased when Mustafa Sagir thought the letter was sent, and he gave Eşref Edib his other letters. Eşref Edib and Mehmed Akif shared the interesting situation with their close friends Münir, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs advisor, and Fatin. In their examination using chemical water, invisible writings on the blank part of the letters were revealed. They immediately reported the situation to the Minister of the

⁷³ ZC, vol.23, 296, 309, 311.

⁷⁴ "Hind Hilafet Cemiyeti Murahhasıyla Mülakat," 466.

⁷⁵ Eşref Edib, *Milli Mücadele Yılları*, 110-111.

Interior, Dr. Adnan.⁷⁶ As a result of the investigation, when it was understood that Mustafa Sagir prepared to assassinate Mustafa Kemal Pasha, he was tried in the *İstiklal Mahkemesi* and executed on May 24, 1921.⁷⁷

Another example of harmony between *Sebilürreşad* and the Ankara Government developed against the alternative caliphate congress that the British missions planned to undermine the legitimacy of the Ottoman caliphate with their Arab allies in those days. On March 11, 1921, the editorial titled "An Islamic Congress in Ankara" was published in *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* with the signature of *Matbuat Umum Müdürü* Hüseyin Ragıp.⁷⁸ In the editorial, Ankara was portrayed as the center of the Muslim uprising against the imperialist West. Following the editorial, a week later, the article, signed by Eşref Edib, titled "Islamic Congress in Anatolia" was published in the March 17 issue of the *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*.⁷⁹ Eşref Edib appreciated the Ankara government's attempt at such a sacred work. In the *Sebilürreşad*'s next issue, Kırşehir deputy Müfid, who was in the intellectual circle of the journal, gave open support to Hüseyin Ragıp's article and emphasized that the call was important for Islamic solidarity.⁸⁰

The support did not stay on the pages of *Sebilürreşad*; it was soon embodied. Hüseyin Ragıp, appointed by the Ankara Government, met with Eşref Edib and offered to establish a commission affiliated with the Ministry of Sharia for the Great Islamic Congress. According to the plan, Recep [Peker], Eşref Edib, and Mehmed Akif would take part as members, and Hasan Basri as the secretary in the commission headed by the Ministry of the Sharia, Mustafa Fehmi Efendi. With the commission's establishment, at the first meeting held on March 19, 1921, it was decided that Mehmed Akif and Eşref Edib would write the declaration in which the commission would invite the representatives of the Muslim world to Ankara. When completed, the declaration, which emphasized that the Muslim world had to wake up and unite for liberation, was approved by the

⁷⁶ İz, *Yılların İzi*, 134-138.

⁷⁷ "Anadolu: İngiliz Casusu Hindli Mustafa Sagir Ankara'da İdam Olunuyor," 482.

⁷⁸ Hüseyin Ragıp, "Ankara'da Bir İslam Kongresi," 1.

⁷⁹ Eşref Edib, "Anadolu'da İslam Kongresi," 1.

⁸⁰ Müfid, "Anadolu'da Büyük İslam Şurası," 473.

commission, and it was decided to be forwarded to Mustafa Kemal Pasha and handed over to Hüseyin Ragıb.⁸¹

Although the necessary preparedness was completed, the advance of the Greek army towards the east of Anatolia interrupted all plans. In the Battles of Kütahya-Eskişehir that broke out at the beginning of July 1921, the Turkish army suffered heavy losses and had to withdraw to Sakarya. After the defeat, Ankara's security also became a matter of debate, and the idea of moving the Grand National Assembly to Kayseri was started to be voiced loudly. When the focus of the Ankara Government shifted to the Battle of Sakarya, the Islamic Congress initiative, which was planned to gather in Ankara, was postponed indefinitely.⁸²

The advance of the Greek army in front of Sakarya, which attacked on March 23, caused great concern about the future of the national struggle in Ankara. After heated discussions, it was decided to evacuate Ankara partially and move to Kayseri as a mandatory measure.⁸³ Consequently, the special papers of the Grand National Assembly were moved, and a significant part of the deputies went to Kayseri. The inner circle of *Sebilürreşad* also distributed tasks. It was decided that Eşref Edib would go to Kayseri to continue to publish the journal there so that the Muslims would not fall into despair. Mehmed Akif would stay in Ankara and participate in pan-Islamic propaganda activities behind the front with the delegation of the Grand National Assembly.⁸⁴

Eşref Edib moved to Kayseri with Trabzon deputy Ali Şükrü. There was chaos in Kayseri due to the uncertainty caused by the Battle of Sakarya. According to Eşref Edib, the belief among the local people that the Turkish army could resist the Greek army was extremely low. Eşref Edib, together with Ali Şükrü, met with the notables of Kayseri, just as he did

⁸¹ Sarıhan, *Mehmet Akif*, 171-172.

⁸² The declaration written by Eşref Edib and Mehmed Akif for this failed attempt was published in the following issues of *Sebilürreşad*, the call was repeated, but it did not receive the old support at a stage when the Ankara government's priorities in foreign policy began to change. See Fergan, *Mehmed Akif*, 149; Fergan, *Milli Mücadele Yılları*, 100-101.

⁸³ Sarıhan, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Günlüğü*, vol.3, 621.

⁸⁴ ZC, vol.22, 170; Fergan, *Mehmed Akif*, 150.

in Kastamonu. *Mutasarrıf* Kemal [Gedeleş] emphasized that the Muslims in Kayseri had confidence in *Sebilürreşad* and offered to publish a declaration in order to dispel the pessimistic atmosphere and contribute to the formation of an organized force behind the front. Eşref Edib and Ali Şükrü welcomed the proposal with great pleasure and immediately wrote a declaration. The declaration signed by *Sebilürreşad* was printed in the *Kayseri Vilayet Matbaası* and distributed through the military in Kayseri and the surrounding regions. The declaration, which was also read in the local government square, invited the Muslims to the sermon to be given by the Trabzon deputy at the Kayseri Great Mosque.⁸⁵

After the declaration signed by *Sebilürreşad* went into circulation, more than expected, people gathered at the Kayseri Great Mosque on the announced day. Ali Şükrü stood on the podium of the mosque and gave his famous sermon. Ali Şükrü, in the sermon, dealt with many issues, from the reasons for the Ottoman Empire's entry into World War I to the Treaty of Sèvres to the dangers awaiting Muslims. Ali Şükrü advised Muslims to be united to get out of the dark days, and he emphasized that this was a divine order by frequently referring to the verses from the Qur'an. The sermon in the Great Mosque was published in the 490th issue of *Sebilürreşad* with the title "Great and Holy Jihad of Anatolia." The issue was sent to various provinces, districts, and army units in Anatolia through local administrators affiliated with the Grand National Assembly.⁸⁶

The pessimistic atmosphere dissipated in a short time, and it was followed by the victory of the Turkish army in the Battle of Sakarya. When the Greek army started to withdraw, and the danger was eliminated, the civil servants and deputies who went to Kayseri started to return to Ankara again. Eşref Edib and Trabzon deputy Ali Şükrü also ended their propaganda activities in Kayseri and set out for Ankara to meet with the journal's leader writer, Mehmed Akif.⁸⁷

When *Sebilürreşad* started to publish again in Ankara after two and a half months of break, the political and intellectual circles around the

⁸⁵ Fergan, *Milli Mücadele Yılları*, 104-109.

⁸⁶ "Anadolu'nun Büyük ve Mukaddes Cihadı," 490.

⁸⁷ Eşref Edib, *Mehmed Akif*, 151.

Grand National Assembly were busy thinking about the great offensive that would lead the War of Independence to final victory. As part of the preparations for the great offensive, the intellectual circle of *Sebilürreşad* took active duties behind the front to raise and encourage the religious feelings of the Turkish army. With the decision of the Grand National Assembly, the delegation was formed, headed by Ali Fuat [Cebesoy], to visit all the army units on the Western Front. Mehmet Akif and Abdülğafur [İştin], the deputy of Karesi, who was in the intellectual circle of *Sebilürreşad*, were also in the delegation.⁸⁸ The delegation fulfilled its duty by visiting the army units on the Western Front for about a week.⁸⁹

The cooperation between *Sebilürreşad* and the Ankara Government also had institutional dimensions. The most striking example of the collaboration coincided with the Great Offensive. On August 28, 1922, with the proposal of the deputies who were known for their loyalty to Mustafa Kemal, the *Tedkikat ve Telifat-ı İslamiyye Heyeti* affiliated with the Ministry of Sharia was established in order to compare the wisdom of Islam with Western science and philosophy, and to examine the works of the faith, science and economic life of Muslim peoples and to publish their results.⁹⁰ The members of the *Tedkikat ve Telifat-ı İslamiyye Heyeti* consisted of *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectual circle, such as Ömer Ferid, İzmirli İsmail Hakkı, Mehmed Şemseddin, and Mehmed Akif. Also, Egyptian pan-Islamic activist Sheikh Abdelaziz Shawish, whose articles were published in *Sebilürreşad*'s section titled "*Esrar-ı Kuran*," was appointed as the head of the committee.⁹¹ Considerable opportunities were provided for the *Tedkikat ve Telifat-ı İslamiyye Heyeti* to prepare original works by the Grand National Assembly. In this context, books were brought from Istanbul, Egypt, and European cities, and a library belonging to the delegation working as an Islamic academy was established. The works prepared by the members of the delegation were published by the printing houses of

⁸⁸ ZC, vol.21, 437; ZC, vol.22, 170.

⁸⁹ Cebesoy, *Siyasi Hatıralar*, 45-46.

⁹⁰ ZC, vol.22, 395.

⁹¹ BCA. 30-18-1-1 / 6-48-15.

the Ankara Government. The works prepared by the members of the delegation were as follows: Mehmed Şemseddin [Günaltay] 's *İslam Tarihi ve Felsefe-yi Ula*, İzmirli İsmail Hakkı's *Yeni İlm-i Kelam, İçkinin Hayat-ı Beşerde Açtığı Rahneler* written by Sheikh Abdelaziz Shawish and translated by Mehmed Akif, Ömer Ferid's *Mebadi-yi Felsefeden İlm-i Ahlak*.

§ 3.3 Shattered Dreams and Returning to Istanbul, 1923

After the Great Offensive, different visions of the future began to sprout among the intelligentsia. The Allied Powers were about to abandon the Treaty of Sèvres, and the Ankara Government was now beginning to be recognized as an independent and sovereign power. In the new conjuncture, what kind of political, economic, and social order would the Turks establish by taking lessons from the recent past? These were the fundamental questions in the minds of the political and intellectual circles around the Grand National Assembly.

In the new era, *Sebilürreşad* began to publish its thoughts about the future directly and indirectly. In addition to articles written by Eşref Edib, the manuscript "İslam'da *Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye*" written in Malta by Said Halim Pasha, who was murdered by an Armenian militant in Rome a short time ago, and translated by Mehmed Akif was published.⁹² Said Halim Pasha, who rejected the assumptions that Islam was fanatical, argued in this manuscript that the political and social structure should be based on sharia, and interpreted *hakimiyet-i milliye*, which was the central discourse of the War of Independence in Anatolia, as the rule of sharia. While examining in detail the class struggles that shook European states, Said Halim Pasha proposed a new model of state and society, taking into account the political and historical experiences of Islam.⁹³

By 1923, the political divide between the cliques within the Grand National Assembly had grown. The coalition that organized the War of In-

⁹² Said Halim Paşa, "İslam'da Teşkilat-ı Siyasiyye," 493.

⁹³ Şeyhun, *Said Halim Paşa*; Düzdağ, *Said Halim Paşa*.

dependence began to disintegrate with the victory of the Great Offensive.⁹⁴ The effect of the pamphlet titled *Hilafet-i İslamiye ve Büyük Millet Meclisi*, which was published with the signature of Karahisar-ı Sahib deputy Hoca Şükrü, who was in *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectual circle, in the first days of January, was one of the most vivid examples of the situation. The 28-page short pamphlet, published in *Ali Şükrü Matbaası*, was actually written by Eşref Edib.⁹⁵ While questioning the relationship between the caliphate and the Grand National Assembly in general terms, the pamphlet expressed some concerns. In this context, the pamphlet underlined the political and religious authority of the caliph and objected to its limitation with spiritual powers, just as *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectuals had expressed in Istanbul during the Armistice Period. In addition, it emphasized that the Grand National Assembly should be under the control of the caliph.⁹⁶

The pamphlet, published with the signature of Hoca Şükrü, was handed out in the Grand National Assembly by the political and intellectual circle of *Sebilürreşad*. Interestingly, the pamphlet was circulated the day after Mustafa Kemal left Ankara for his trip to Western Anatolia. The situation was naturally met with suspicion by the Ankara Government. Mustafa Kemal Pasha reacted harshly to the case at the press conference he held with Istanbul journalists in İzmit and criticized the efforts of Hoca Şükrü and his friends to put the Grand National Assembly under the hierarchical control of the caliph. He emphasized that now an independent and new Turkish state was established and that the only representative of the nation and country was the Grand National Assembly. He also underlined that the Turkish state did not recognize any will through the Assembly, and it included the caliphate.⁹⁷

The pamphlet titled *Hilafet-i İslamiye ve Büyük Millet Meclisi*, published with the signature of Hoca Şükrü, was responded to with two pam-

⁹⁴ Zürcher, *Turkey*, 167.

⁹⁵ Kara, ed. *Hilafet Risaleleri*, vol. 6, 14.

⁹⁶ Hoca Şükrü, *Hilafet-i İslamiye ve Büyük Millet Meclisi*.

⁹⁷ İnan, ed. *Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün 1923 Eskişehir-İzmit Konuşmaları*.

phlets by the political and intellectual circles around the Ankara Government. The first was a compilation titled *Hilafet ve Hakimiyet-i Milliye*,⁹⁸ which included thirty articles. The articles in the pamphlet written by Ziya Gökalp, Falih Rıfkı [Atay], Celal Nuri [İleri], Ahmet Emin, Hoca Rasif Efendi, Ahmed Ağaoğlu and Yunus Nadi [Abalıoğlu]. The articles tried to clarify the caliphate's legal status by explaining Islam's principles from their own perspective. The second was the pamphlet titled *Hakimiyet-i Milliye ve Hilafet-i İslamiyye*,⁹⁹ signed by Antalya deputy Rasih, Muş deputy İlyas Sami, and Siirt deputy Halil Hulki, who also were members of the ulama. Based on the concept of *ijtihād*, the pamphlet attempted to prove that there was harmony between the institution of the caliphate and national sovereignty. In this context, it claimed that the separation of the caliphate from the sultanate by the decision of the Grand National Assembly on November 1, 1922, was in accordance with Islam.

Other political competitions also deepened the divergence. The debates in the Grand National Assembly on the details of the Lausanne Peace Conference with the Allied Powers further inflamed the rivalry between the cliques. The atmosphere was tense when Trabzon deputy Ali Şükrü, the leading name of the Second Group,¹⁰⁰ said in the secret session of the Assembly on March 5, 1923, that the victory won by the Turkish army was wasted in Lausanne. Ali Şükrü, blaming the official delegation sent to Lausanne Peace Conference, claimed that their duties were over, and his harsh words from the Grand National Assembly stand caused the bridges between the Ankara Government and the opposition to be thrown.¹⁰¹

The heated debates now gave way to violence. The disappearance of Trabzon deputy Ali Şükrü on March 27, 1923, created a shock effect in Ankara. After a very short time, it was revealed that Topal Osman killed Ali Şükrü; however, no one believed that it was an accidental murder.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ "Hilafet ve Hakimiyet-i Milliye," in *Hilafet Risaleleri*, vol. 6.

⁹⁹ "Hakimiyet-i Milliye ve Hilafet-i İslamiyye," in *Hilafet Risaleleri*, vol. 6.

¹⁰⁰ Demirel, *Birinci Meclis'te İkinci Grup*.

¹⁰¹ GCZ, vol.4, 36-40.

¹⁰² Demirel, *Ali Şükrü Bey'in Tan Gazetesi*.

When the Grand National Assembly went into crisis after the tragic news, the election decision was made urgently. The inner circle of *Sebilürreşad* also understood the message given by the murder of their close colleagues Ali Şükrü. The era was now over, and Eşref Edib and Mehmed Akif negotiated among themselves and agreed to leave Ankara.¹⁰³

In the last days of April 1923, the inner circle of *Sebilürreşad* left Ankara. The journal continued its publication life in Istanbul in May. In the new era, the topics covered in the journal criticized the social reforms that started to be implemented with the proclamation of the Turkish Republic. In a sense, the secular reform debates in the Second Constitutional Era were returned. The sides were also the same. On the one hand, there were *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectuals, who struggled against "immorality," and on the other, there were secular intellectuals led by Ziya Gökalp. Rather than targeting Mustafa Kemal directly, *Sebilürreşad* was in a polemic with Ziya Gökalp and the intellectuals accompanying him.¹⁰⁴

§ 3.4 Concluding Remarks

The chapter made visible the political and intellectual network that *Sebilürreşad* established during the War of Independence. First, it located the intellectual circle of *Sebilürreşad* within the anti-CUP political atmosphere after World War I. On the one hand, *Sebilürreşad* kept its distance from the criticisms directed at the CUP; on the other hand, the journal continued to fight against the nationalist and secular intellectuals within the CUP, championed by Ziya Gökalp. However, the ideological competition did not last long. With the occupation of Istanbul, the chief concerns of *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectual circle changed. The main agendas were concerns about the future of the Ottoman Empire —and of course, the caliphate.

¹⁰³ Eşref Edib, *Milli Mücadele Yılları*, 112; Ersoy, *Babam Mehmed Akif*, 84.

¹⁰⁴ "Ankara Haberleri: Ziya Gökalp ve Kafadarları," 222.

After the occupation of Istanbul and especially Izmir, national resistance movements broke out in various parts of Anatolia. The movements, which were generally affiliated with the CUP, soon began to flourish, giving up hope from the Istanbul Government. *Sebilürreşad* did not hesitate to engage with the local resistance movements that would gather under the umbrella of the *Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-yı Hukuk Cemiyeti*. The second occupation of Istanbul by the Allied Powers paved the way for *Sebilürreşad* to embark on a new path. The inner circle of the journal became an active part of the Grand National Assembly established in Ankara with the special invitation of Mustafa Kemal Pasha. *Sebilürreşad* endeavored to expand the influence of the Ankara Government with its pan-Islamist activism since then.

When the War of Independence, organized with the discourse of rescuing the caliphate, achieved victory with the Great Offensive and the Lausanne Peace Treaty, the broad and flexible coalition around the Grand National Assembly began to disintegrate. The main reason for the disintegration was different visions of the future. *Sebilürreşad's* intellectuals tried to detail their perspectives with signed and unsigned articles. However, first, the harsh reaction to the pamphlet signed by Hoca Şükrü, in which the unrest about the future of the caliphate was clearly expressed, and then the murder of Ali Şükrü, one of the leaders of the Second Group caused *Sebilürreşad* to leave Ankara and move to Istanbul. In the new era, the journal turned into opposition and began to criticize implicitly the secular reforms that were put into effect by targeting Ziya Gökalp.

4

Sermons as the Fortification of Spiritual Front and the Cultivation of Religious Feelings

This chapter will examine three sermons given by *Sebilürreşad's* intellectual circle at different stages of the War of Independence. The chapter focuses on how the nationalist movement organized to rescue the caliphate was fortified through sermons and how religious feelings were cultivated. The sermons also reflect the limits of the discourses of *Sebilürreşad's* political and intellectual circle, which are made visible in the second chapter. For this reason, the sermons will be considered as signifiers, and the concepts of the pan-Islamic mobilization in the War of Independence will be shed light on.

First of all, the chapter focuses on the sermon given by Mehmed Akif, the leader writer of *Sebilürreşad*, at Balıkesir Zağnos Pasha Mosque in January 1920. It attempts to understand in which historical contexts Mehmed Akif dealt with the political crisis that the Ottoman Empire was

dragged into after World War I. In addition, this sermon will examine how the link between the transnational Muslim mobilization that defended the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire and its caliphate and the nationalist resistance movement in Anatolia within the framework of Wilsonianism and how the idea of jihad was reconceptualized in the context of the War of Independence.

Second of all, the sermon given by Mehmed Akif in Kastamonu Nasrullah Mosque at the end of 1920 will be discussed. The chapter questions at what points this sermon, which was given at a time when the Grand National Assembly was established in Ankara, differs from the sermon given in Balıkesir Zağnos Pasha Mosque at the beginning of the same year. While the chapter explores how Mehmed Akif interpreted the dangers that awaited Ottoman society with the Treaty of Sevres, it shows how the daily experiences of Muslim societies living in the British and French colonies were presented. In addition, it attempts to understand what kind of alliance Mehmed Akif proposed with the Bolsheviks.

Finally, the sermon given in Kayseri Great Mosque in September 1921 by Trabzon deputy Ali Şükrü, who was in the politico-intellectual network of *Sebilürreşad*, will be focused on. This sermon coincided with a period when the Turkish forces affiliated with the Ankara Government retreated against the Greek army. The sermon will be handled in this context, and how Ali Şükrü evaluated the post-WWI developments will be discussed. This chapter explores the contexts in which the political, economic, and social problems thought to be caused by the Treaty of Sèvres were addressed. Moreover, it sheds light on the relationship between transnational pan-Islamic mobilization, Bolshevism, and the current resistance movement in Anatolia.

§ 4.1 Balıkesir Zağnos Pasha Mosque: The Fear of Being Colonized

The inner circle of *Sebilürreşad* came to Balıkesir in January 1920. Together with the leaders of the resistance movement in the city, they issued a statement and announced that Mehmed Akif would preach to the

Muslims at the Zağnos Pasha Mosque on Friday. The call was very popular. During the Friday prayer, the Zağnos Pasha Mosque was filled up and even the congregation overflowed outside the Mosque.

After the Friday prayer, Sebilürreşad's leader writer, Mehmed Akif, went up to the stand and read his poem titled "*Ey Müslüman!*"¹ before starting his sermon. In its most general lines, Mehmed Akif's poem emphasized that the success of the developed countries lay under their unity. At the same time, he argued that the backward countries were dragged into a disaster due to inertia and the inability to unite. According to Mehmed Akif, the age they lived in was the age of society, and Muslims could only achieve salvation with a society model fortified by ties of solidarity.² In the continuation of the poem, the phenomenon was formulated with the words "to move away from the community, to get away from God." For Mehmed Akif, societies with weak ties could not have a future either; in fact, the societies were almost indistinguishable from animals. In the last part of the poem, he invited all Muslims to claim their freedom and to strive for it in a monolithic and harmonious way.

Mehmed Akif started his sermon and explained the poem in detail using historical anecdotes as well as verses and hadiths. In the first part of the sermon, the past was harshly questioned, and a great admiration for the progress of the West was accompanied by sadness at the backwardness of the Muslims. Mehmed Akif first raised the question of why Muslims ended up in this situation. While Western societies entered an age of progress and revolution, Muslims were only passive spectators to all these developments. Mehmed Akif complained that Muslims were indifferent to worldly affairs as well as religious affairs. While the Muslim

¹ This poem would later be included in Safahat's 7th book, *Gölgeler*, with the title "*Alınlar Terlemeli.*"

² This theme was one of the topics that Mehmed Akif frequently dealt with. According to Mehmed Akif, individualism had collapsed, causing society frustration. The popular value of the era was collectivism. Only societies that acted collectively could develop. Collectivism was not only necessary for development but also for collaboration for liberation. Mehmed Akif's poem titled "*Cemaatten Uzaklaşma*," pointed to this matter with the lines "*Uzaklaşsan da imandan, cemaatten uzaklaşma.*" Mehmed Akif, "*Cemaatten Uzaklaşma*," 471.

world was in a deep sleep, Westerners were crossing the so-called impassable oceans and flying in the sky. There was a hidden admiration in the examples given by Mehmed Akif regarding the West; it was impossible not to be fascinated by human's domination of nature. How had the West achieved such impressive progress? According to Mehmed Akif, the secret of the success of the Europeans, as he stated in his poem, lay in their unity. Success was inevitable, as thousands and millions of people worked day and night for the same goals. The monolith of the Western world was due to their will to eliminate the necessities they were in. However, Muslims living in different parts of the world were either unable to form unity against the necessities they faced or they were lazily indifferent.³

Later in the sermon, Mehmed Akif sought to prove that the inertia of Muslims was not permanent by resorting to historical anecdotes. It was also present in the history of the Muslims when they were more advanced than the rest of the world. At this point, Mehmed Akif cited the Islamic Golden Age as an example of great longing. According to him, the religion of Islam shone like an oil lamp in the darkest corners of the world almost thousand three hundred years ago and had achieved twenty-five thousand years of progress in twenty-five years. The success of the Muslims, like that of the Westerners, resulted from their collaborative work. Mehmed Akif described the claim with an example from the history of Islam. Referring to the Prophet Muhammad's constant advice to tighten the ranks, he underlined that the first Muslims' clothes were mainly worn on their shoulders because the community that stood in line to pray was as tight as possible. Mehmed Akif envied that even water did not leak among the Muslims of that period and emphasized that the advice was made to ensure unity among Muslims.⁴

³ "Mev'ize: Üstad-ı Muhterem Mehmed Akif Beyefendi'nin Karesi'de Zağnos Paşa Cami-i Şerifi'nde İrad Buyurdukları Mev'izenin Hulasası." 183-187.

⁴ Mehmed Akif's example of the Islamic Golden Age as a way to overcome the narrative of backwardness was a sample frequently preferred by the *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectuals. For instance, Abdülaziz Mecdi, among the journal's authors, also resorted to a similar path. By

In Mehmed Akif's narrative of backwardness, the feeling of sadness was often accompanied by anger against the older generations. "From the day we were born, our fathers, mothers, teachers, politicians, poets, intellectuals did not tell us anything that would give us hope for the future," he openly accused them. According to Mehmed Akif, saying that "Children, work day and night so that this country can be saved. Work in a way to close the distance between Europeans and Muslims," the older generations should have encouraged the youth to strive and struggle. However, the opposite happened, and they raised the younger generations by constantly sowing seeds of hopelessness. In doing so, they did not conform to scripture either; because many verses in the Qur'an advised Muslims to avoid hopelessness and laziness.⁵

After questioning the past with the perspective of backwardness, Mehmed Akif focused on current problems and dealt with the danger of colonization of Muslims after World War I with a sense of fear. The occupation forces had reached the door of the Muslims and were ready to violate their honor and dignity. Mehmed Akif directly expressed his fear of colonization by saying, "God forbid, the day we lose our right to life, we will fall into such a disaster that under the domination of oppressors, we are no different from animals, and they will treat us the same way we treat our animals." A free life was everyone's right, but being right and being justified were two different things. According to Mehmed Akif, if Muslims thought they could attain a just life by relying on the humanity of tyrannical states, they were wrong; unfortunately, this effort would bring nothing but frustration.

After dealing with the fear of being colonized, Mehmed Akif said that Muslims now entered a period of awakening and opened their eyes completely. The future was, therefore, full of hope. According to Mehmed Akif,

abstracting the early stages of Islam, he put forward the concepts of coexistence and solidarity, in parallel with collectivism, for salvation and progress. Abdülaziz Mecdi, "İnneme'l-Mü'minune İhvetün 3," 452.

⁵ "Mev'ize: Üstad-ı Muhterem Mehmed Akif Beyefendi'nin Karesi'de Zağnos Paşa Cami-i Şerifi'nde İrad Buyurdukları Mev'izenin Hulasası."

Muslims struggled worldwide for their right to live. Because they understood that if they could not gain their freedom, they would be in disgrace and helpless until doomsday. They experienced that it was futile to beg for mercy and justice from Europeans and to expect humanity.⁶

When Mehmed Akif said that Muslims entered a period of awakening, he mainly referred to the Muslim mobilization in India that broke out after World War I. Before the WWI, Britain had calmed the discontent of its Muslim subjects in India by saying that it was not fighting against the Ottoman Caliphate. However, against the Ottoman Government under the control of the Committee of Union and Progress.⁷ Indian Muslims, relying on these words, fought against the Ottoman Empire in the British army.⁸ However, World War I was over, and Britain contradicted the promises made. The spread of various speculations about the Ottoman caliphate and reign worried Indian Muslims. Leading Indian Muslims such as Aga Khan, Sayyid Emir Ali, and Mushir Hosain Kidwai went to Paris and London to express their concerns. The delegation met with British Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon and presented their memorandum defending the vitality of the Ottoman Empire within the framework of the Wilson Principles.⁹

The occupation of Izmir was a turning point for the Indian Khilafat Movement. In this period, when the belief in Wilsonianism was damaged, they pointed out the inconsistencies between the promises of the Fourteen Articles and the occupations.¹⁰ Indian Muslims emphasized their religious devotion and loyalty to the Ottoman Caliphate, underlining that their religious feelings were offended. When the Muslim unrest in India peaked, British Secretary of State for India Edwin Montagu stepped in. He warned the British missions not to provoke the Muslims and stated that

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Aydın, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History*, 116.

⁸ "Mukadderatımız Hakkında İtilaf Matbuatı: Post Republic," 417-418.

⁹ "Pek Mühim Muhtıra-yı Siyasiyye – Hindistan Müslümanları Tarafından İngiltere Hükümetine Takdim Olunan Muhtıra," 392.

¹⁰ "L'Humanite: Türk Milletine Hür Yaşamak Hakkı Verilmelidir," 417-418.

otherwise, there was a possibility of repeating the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857.¹¹

As a result of the efforts, the pro-Ottoman Khilafat Movement of Indian Muslims was successful, and the Ottoman Government was formally invited to the Paris Peace Conference. This news, met with enthusiasm, aroused hope among the intellectual circle of *Sebilürreşad*. In the articles published anonymously due to the pressure of censorship, it was emphasized that an Islam-centered policy was followed at the Conference, often relying on the support of the Muslim world and especially the Khilafat Movement.¹² In these days when the belief in Wilsonianism was revived, it was believed that both the United States within the framework of Fourteen Points and Britain under the pressure of Indian Muslims would make an effort on the side of the Ottomans.¹³

Nevertheless, it did not turn out as expected. Expectations for the Paris Peace Conference came soon to nothing. Both the members of the Indian Khilafat Movement and British Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu, made statements emphasizing that the peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire was vital for the future of India.¹⁴ For example, in an interview with the Times newspaper, Sayyid Emir Ali emphasized the need for Britain to take into account its one hundred million Muslim subjects.¹⁵

Moreover, as rumors spread that the Ottoman Caliphate would come under the control of the Allied powers, the statements of Muslims living in different parts of the world, such as Afghanistan, India, Iran, Serbia, England, and Africa, declared their loyalty to the Ottoman Caliphate, which started in the post-WWI, increased.¹⁶ Not only transnational intel-

¹¹ "New Journal: Devlet-i Aliyye ve Alem-i İslam," 419-420.

¹² "Sulh Konferansında Ne Yapacağız?," 419-420; "Heyet-i Murahhasanın Vazifesi," 421-422.

¹³ "İngiltere'nin Vaadleri," 423-424.

¹⁴ "Seyyid Emir Ali Hazretlerinin Bir Cevabı," 455; "Mister Edwin Montagu'nun Beyanâtı," 455.

¹⁵ "Seyyid Emir Ali Hazretlerinin Times'a Cevabı," 456.

¹⁶ "Asya-yı Merkezi'de İslam Hükûmat-ı Müttehidesi," 396-397; "Müslümanlık Vahdeti," 417-418; "Londra'da İslam Kongresi," 447; "Sırbistan Müslümanlarının Mutelabatı," 451; "Haydarabad Konferansı," 456.

lectuals, but also Muslims living in Anatolia had similar concerns. For example, leading Kurdish ulama and notables telegraphed to *Sebilürreşad*, declaring their loyalty to the Ottoman Caliph in Istanbul, who was in danger of captivity.¹⁷

The news that the religious and political powers of the caliph would be limited and the Turks would be expelled from Istanbul triggered the concern that the Ottoman Caliphate would end. Both *Sebilürreşad* intelligentsia and transnational Muslim intellectuals did not remain indifferent to these rumors. It was often reminded that there could be no caliphate without a sultanate and that the caliph had not only spiritual but also political powers.¹⁸ India's leading Muslim intellectuals and British rulers gave a memorandum to Prime Minister Lloyd George and demanded that "the ruler with the largest number of Muslim subjects" prevent interference with Ottoman rule and the caliphate.¹⁹

In light of these developments, Mehmed Akif underlined in the sermon that there was no point in Muslims falling into despair. Mehmed Akif emphasized that hopelessness in Islam was not only forbidden but also meant not believing in God. According to him, at a time when Anatolia was in danger of being invaded, no Muslim had the right to take a back seat. Against the invasion, men, women, children, young and old, everyone had to join the jihad, which was also a religious obligation.²⁰

In the last part of the sermon, Mehmed Akif glorified the nationalist resistance movement in Balıkesir and made important recommendations for its development. First of all, he underlined that jihad was only to defend Islam and homeland. He emphasized that it was necessary to elimi-

¹⁷ "Kürdistan Meşayih, Ulema, Ümera, ve Rüesasının Mühim Bir Telgrafı – Sebilürreşad Mecmua-yı İslamiyesine," 457.

¹⁸ "Kuvve-i Siyasiyyeden Mahrum Hilafet Olmaz," 455; "Şimali Afrika Müslümanları ve Merkez-i Hilafet," 456; "Süleyman el-Baruni Hazretlerinin Düvel-i İtilafıyye Mümessilerine Muhtırası," 457.

¹⁹ "Mukadderatımız Hakkında Mühim Bir Muhtıra," 457; "İki Mühim Mektub," 457.

²⁰ "Mev'ize: Üstad-ı Muhterem Mehmed Akif Beyefendi'nin Karesi'de Zağnos Paşa Cami-i Şerifi'nde İrad Buyurdukları Mev'izenin Hulasası."

nate separatist ideas such as sectarianism, utilitarianism, and party politics.²¹ He advised the community not to cause events that could harm the unity among Muslims. If Muslims wanted to live freely, they had to avoid even the smallest words or even the most trivial acts that could cause division. Mehmed Akif concluded the sermon by emphasizing that Muslims should work hand in hand and that unity was necessary not only for the world but also for the hereafter.²²

§ 4.2 Kastamonu Nasrullah Mosque: Bolshevik & Islamic Alliance Against the Imperialist-Capitalist West

With Mehmed Akif's arrival in Kastamonu, the inner circle of Sebilürreşad held meetings with the public and the city's notables. Thanks to these meetings, Hamdi [Çelen] and Hüsnü [Açıksöz], the co-owners of the *Açıksöz* published in Kastamonu, established close cooperation with Mehmed Akif and Eşref Edib. Upon Hamdi Bey's proposal, Mehmed Akif agreed to preach at the Nasrullah Mosque. Just like in Balıkesir, the announcement was published in local newspapers. It was popularized by

²¹ While underlining the concept of tawhid in the sermon, Mehmed Akif called on Muslims to act in solidarity and together. The response to this call was the *Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-yı Hukuk Cemiyeti*. Therefore, Mehmed Akif was promoting the public to come together under the umbrella of Society. "Hukuk-ı Milliyyenin Müdafaa ve Muhafazası için Milletin Kelime-yi Vahide Etrafında Toplanması!," 444.

²² Mehmed Akif's sermon at the Zağnos Pasha Mosque became popular after it was circulated. The issue of *Sebilürreşad* was soon sold out. A reader's letter sent to the journal two years later, in February 1921, described the impact of the sermon in Balıkesir and the surrounding regions. The sermon created a hopeful atmosphere in Balıkesir at the beginning of 1920 and cemented the Muslims' faith in salvation. However, the Greek occupation dispersed the atmosphere. In his letter, the reader conveyed the experience of the Greek occupation in Balıkesir to other readers in Anatolia through the journal, describing the violence and looting. Criticizing the Muslims' lack of resistance, the reader complained that they were treated like animals under the Greek occupation. Finally, the reader, who stated that they were watching the way of the forces sent by Mustafa Kemal Pasha, ended the letter by praying for the salvation of the Muslims in Anatolia. "Pek Mühassiri Bulduğumuz Sebilürreşad Ceride-i Mübarekesine", 469.

reading aloud in public spheres such as mosques and coffee houses. However, all these propaganda efforts did not create the expected interest, and the situation would even cause Mehmed Akif to lament the indifference of the Muslims on the day of the sermon.

Unlike his famous sermon at the Balıkesir Zağnos Pasha Mosque about nine months ago, Mehmed Akif started his sermon this time with great anger against the European states. Undoubtedly, the underlying reason for this was the absolute occupation of Istanbul and the capture of the Ottoman Caliphate. Mehmed Akif first started by making self-criticism. He stated that he was skeptical of the verses in the Qur'an advising not to trust foreigners by saying, "I wonder if foreign nations were not treated a bit harshly, was it not necessary to be more merciful about non-Muslim societies?" However, he confessed that he came to his senses when he witnessed the helpless people that the Europeans had enslaved and dominated. Westerners had a great grudge and hatred toward all backward people, especially Muslims. In short, the Western world, unfortunately, could not show the progress it showed in civilization and industry in humanity. From the self-criticism, Akif concluded that Muslims should be cautious in their mutual relations with Europeans and that Muslims should use the Europeans' sciences, but they should not believe them.²³

Mehmed Akif began to exemplify his anger towards the Europeans with what he witnessed in Berlin, where he went on the assignment of the *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*. During World War I, German intellectuals asked with displeasure their political rulers, how did a civilized nation like the Germans allied with savages like the Muslims? Through the Ottoman counterpart, the German Government asked transnational Muslim intellectuals, including Mehmed Akif, to remove this prejudice. The work of Muslim intellectuals did not yield any benefit, unfortunately. According to Mehmed Akif, the reason for the failure was the deep-rooted bigotry of

²³ Mehmed Akif, "Nasrullah Kürsüsünde," 249-261.

the Germans. In summary, Akif generalized this example, emphasizing that the West was bigoted and the Muslim world was more tolerant.²⁴

Explaining the backwardness of Muslims with laziness in the following parts of the sermon, Mehmed Akif argued that backwardness drags Muslim societies into inertia, fanaticism, and immorality. He expressed without hesitation that he felt great shame and guilt from the situation as a Muslim intellectual. The Ottomans once dominated three large continents, even turning the Mediterranean and the Black Sea into an inland lake. They gathered the subjects from different societies around the Ottoman Caliphate and provided a strong unity. According to Mehmed Akif, Europeans disrupted the social harmony of the Ottoman Empire by supporting separatist nationalists. The Ottoman Empire, which could not respond to these interventions from the European states and could not protect its imperial integrity, inevitably became weaker.²⁵

According to Mehmed Akif, the story of backwardness lay behind the destruction experienced after World War I. At this point, the Europeans prevented the Ottomans from living in even the smallest part of Asia. Later in his sermon, Akif emphasized that the Westerners, especially Britain Empire, wished the Ottomans to be destroyed. Before World War I, the British did not keep their promises to their Muslim subjects in various parts of the world, which triggered unrest in Muslim societies.²⁶ For example, revolts broke out one after another in Egypt and India. According to Mehmed Akif, the reason for this unrest was the future problem faced by the Ottoman Caliphate. Mehmed Akif emphasized that the Ottomans were the last independent Muslim country and underlined that the Ottoman Caliphate was a source of assurance against the *ehl-i Salib*.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ This was often criticized by transnational Muslim intellectuals and British Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu. Reminding the objections of the Indians, Montagu asked the British Government if you were determined to take Istanbul from the Turks, then why did you bring the Indians into the War? "Türkler Aleyhinde Heyecan," 461.

Therefore, the main enmity of the British was against the Ottoman Empire, which held the caliphate and was the center of attraction for Muslim societies.²⁷

At this point, Mehmed Akif placed the Treaty of Sèvres in the context he described above. According to him, the Treaty of Sèvres was the final stage of the historical Crusades. The leading intellectuals of Ottoman society knew very well that the situation was dire; however, Ottoman subjects were unaware of anything. The idea was that after losing a piece of land that could be considered insignificant in society, everything would return to normal. It was widely believed that Rumelia, Istanbul, Anatolia, and Syria would still be under Ottoman rule. According to Akif's description, that is, after some insignificant concessions, daily life would eventually return to normal, farmers would deal with their farms, ulama return to the madrasah, and merchants would engage in trade.²⁸

Mehmed Akif devoted a more significant part of the sermon to describing, in general terms, how the Treaty of Sèvres would affect the Ottoman Empire and society if implemented. First of all, the peace conditions offered by the *ehl-i Salib* gave neither the right to life nor the opportunity to live in the world for the Ottomans. The powers of the Ottoman Caliphate would be limited, and the Ottoman Empire would lose a large part of its lands and would not be able to host soldiers in Anatolia.²⁹

The effects of the Treaty of Sèvres would not only be observed at the state level but would also profoundly affect the everyday life of the society. Mehmed Akif detailed the articles of the Treaty and explained the fundamental changes that will be experienced in economic life in an everyday language. First of all, he emphasized that since the Ottoman budget would be prepared by a commission consisting of these states, the taxes to be paid by the Muslim subjects would be used for the development of the Armenian, Greek, and Jewish communities. He underlined that the children of non-Muslims will be educated in modern schools that will be opened with the money of Muslims. In other words, while the children of

²⁷ Mehmed Akif, "Nasrullah Kürsüsünde."

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

non-Muslims would be qualified professionals, Muslim children would only be laborers. According to Akif, this was not unrealistic because that is how the British acted in Egypt and India. Muslims faced inhumane practices and were deprived of fundamental rights such as education, health, and shelter. Mehmed Akif was worried that Muslims in Anatolia would be treated similarly.³⁰

Mehmed Akif claimed that Armenians, Greeks, and Jews would also benefit from the privileges given to the citizens of European states within the scope of the capitulations with the implementation of the Treaty of Sèvres. Put differently, Muslims would work themselves to death, but non-Muslims would end up with all the money.³¹ In addition, since a commission consisting of representatives of the Allied Powers would determine the customs policies of the Ottoman Empire, the Muslim merchants in Anatolia would inevitably be adversely affected. Mehmed Akif tried to embody foresight. For instance, since the products coming from abroad would cost less than the agricultural goods produced within the country, domestic agriculture would not be encouraged, and Muslim farmers would go bankrupt. However, just like the Europeans did, it was necessary to stand behind the domestic manufacturer by imposing high customs duties on imported products. Similarly, the local producers would be miserable and devastated, as the Ottomans had no savings on customs duty.³²

Mehmed Akif continued the sermon by stating that the British had applied two important powers to implement the Treaty of Sèvres, which had such harsh conditions. The first of these was the Greek army and the

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ *Sebilürreşad* intellectuals frequently dealt with the portrait drawn above, emphasizing that Muslims were in danger of enslavement. In this depiction, non-Muslims living in Anatolia were portrayed as masters and Muslims as slaves. Undoubtedly, this depiction was made to encourage Muslims to participate in pan-Islamic mobilization. "Ey Müslümanlar, Uyanınız, Harekete Geliniz!," 471.

³² Mehmed Akif, "Nasrullah Kürsüsünde."

gangs.³³ Emphasizing that these forces, which strengthened with the help of money and weapons, would carry out massacres among Muslims, Mehmed Akif underlined that as a form of defense, it was a religious requirement for Muslims not to show kindness towards those who were not from their religion. The second supported by the British was the separatist forces among the Muslims. He stated that the British intended to massacre Muslims, thanks to the local people they found by giving money or deceiving them. Mehmed Akif, feeling a great shame, warned the community to be vigilant.³⁴

In the continuation of the sermon, Mehmed Akif detailed the gloomy future that awaited Muslims if they remained indifferent to the occupation by giving examples from the everyday lives of societies living under the captivity of Europeans. Mehmed Akif asked the community, did you know what poor Asia suffered at the hands of that enemy, and began to talk at length about the inequalities that Indian Muslims faced in everyday life. He stated that the natives and the British lived in different neighborhoods in India, were treated in different hospitals, traveled in different trains, and underlined that the taxes paid by the Indians living in hunger and misery were used for the benefit of the British. Mehmed Akif emphasized that the British treated Indians like animals.³⁵

The French did to Muslims in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, similar to the inhuman treatment of the British towards the Indians. Mehmed Akif said that while the French did not take any tax from Jews and Christians, they took heavy taxes from Muslims. Under the tax burden, Muslims were desperately forced to sell their lands and animals to non-Muslims. Although Muslims paid their taxes despite hardship, they were not allowed to participate in local governments and were not even voting in

³³ In this context, the news of the occupied regions by the Greek army were frequently carried over to the pages of *Sebilürreşad*. The journal attached great importance to the news that the Greeks were planning to burn down the villages where the Muslims lived and to the readers' letters from occupied regions. "Garb Cebhesi'nde Vaziyet-i Harbiyye," 465; "Ehl-i Salib Mezalimi," 472.

³⁴ Mehmed Akif, "Nasrullah Kürsüsünde."

³⁵ Ibid.

many places. Mehmed Akif stated that there was no justice mechanism to protect themselves against the injustices faced by Muslims. After describing in detail the inequalities that societies living under the captivity of Europeans face in everyday life, Mehmed Akif warned the community by saying, "Here we must open our eyes in order to come to the aid of our poor co-religionists, or at least not fall into the same disaster."³⁶

After describing in detail how the Treaty of Sèvres would change the lives of Muslims in a pessimistic way, Mehmed Akif talked about promising developments for the future and tried to arouse the religious feelings of the Muslims. He cited the resistance in Kars as an example, saying, "Our mujahids began to tear the 'rag' of the Treaty of Sèvres, which was arranged to destroy us, in Eastern Anatolia." The Muslims in Kars had witnessed what an enemy invasion meant. First of all, they prevented the separation between them, then they managed to plant the Islamic flag in the fortified Kars Castle by fighting in an organized manner and defeated the Armenian forces supported by Britain.³⁷ Therefore, it was inevitable that a similar result would be achieved when similar perseverance and persistence were demonstrated in Western Anatolia.³⁸

According to Mehmed Akif, the conditions changed, and the gloomy days were about to pass. Mehmed Akif said that today's world was not the old world anymore and emphasized two serious dangers facing the Allied Powers. The first was the "Islamic danger." There was great dissatisfaction, especially among the Muslims living under British domination. The promises made by the British to the Muslims during World War I turned out to be empty. Discussions about the Ottoman Caliphate and the occupation of Anatolia, as well as Istanbul, triggered great unrest, especially in India. Mehmed Akif underlined that there was a great awakening in almost every part of the East.³⁹

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ "İslam'a Büyük Bir Müjde – O Zalim Sulh Muahedesi Allah'ın İnayetiyle Şark Tarafından Yırtıldı," 465.

³⁸ Mehmed Akif, "Nasrullah Kürsüsünde."

³⁹ Ibid.

By the "Islamic danger," Mehmed Akif meant the Muslim mobilization in India, which defended the Ottoman sovereignty and right to life within the framework of Wilsonianism but became increasingly radical because their demands were not met. The European press was also aware of the danger. For example, according to what *Sebilürreşad* quoted from Daily Telegraph, it was emphasized that unrest would increase in India unless Ottoman sovereignty was ensured.⁴⁰ In addition, it was pointed out that Britain's dominance in the Muslim world, as "the largest Islamic empire in the world," was in jeopardy.⁴¹

The danger was not limited to the concerns of Indian Muslims. The Ankara Government, on the one hand, wanted to take precautions against the Islamic Congress to be held in Mecca⁴² by Britain's Arab allies to neutralize the Ottoman Caliphate. It, on the other, sought to consolidate its legitimacy by gathering representatives of transnational Muslim mobilization in Ankara. As explained in detail in the second chapter, when the idea of organizing an Islamic Congress in Anatolia came to the fore, Eşref Edib, the owner of *Sebilürreşad*, and Kırşehir deputy Müfid, one of the authors of the journal, supported the idea of convening an Islamic Congress with the words that nearly half a billion great Muslim nation was devoted to Anatolia with all their heart and soul.⁴³

Mehmed Akif continued the sermon by emphasizing that the second danger was a "Bolshevik danger" against the *ehl-i Salib*. Mehmet Akif defined Bolshevism as a weapon aimed directly at the heart of Europe. The class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat peaked, especially during World War I. When the Bolshevik movement targeted the

⁴⁰ "Daily Telegraph: Türk Mesele-yi Mudılası," 459.

⁴¹ "Daily Telegraph: İstanbul Meselesinde İngiltere'nin Mesuliyeti," 459.

⁴² Eşref Edib, "Mekke'de İngiliz Kongresi," 481.

⁴³ In the same issue, the speech on the Islamic world written by Mustafa Kemal a year ago was reprinted. Mustafa Kemal drew attention to the fact that the Ottoman Caliphate, which had been standing in Istanbul for 1300 years, was under occupation and underlined that the nationalist movement in Anatolia was also fighting for the liberation of the Islamic world. "Alem-i İslam'a Beyanname," 472; Eşref Edib, "Anadolu'da İslam Kongresi – Hüseyin Ragıp Beyefendi'ye," 472; Kırşehir mebusu Müfid, "Anadolu'da Büyük İslam Şurası," 473.

wealth of the Tsarist regime and the Russian bourgeoisie, it created a domino effect and spread to Europe. Now, many people in the Western world began to question the legitimacy of their governments, which made them fight by pushing them to the front, and the legitimacy of the rich classes that increased their wealth. Mehmed Akif stated that European socialists were saying for years that European civilization began to rot from within and would be destroyed soon.⁴⁴

Mehmed Akif, while considering Bolshevism as a threat to the future of European governments, saw it as an opportunity to be taken advantage of the Muslim world.⁴⁵ According to him, there were no reasons for the emergence of Bolshevism in the Ottoman Empire, as finance capital had not developed. The distinction between capitalists and working classes had not yet become apparent. Moreover, the highest degree of the maxims that the Bolsheviks and all socialists adopted were already present in Islam. Therefore, Muslims did not need to be afraid of Bolshevism, nor did they need to be Bolsheviks. Mehmed Akif argued that an alliance based on mutual interest with the Bolsheviks was possible with the strategy of becoming friends with the enemy of the enemy. The oppressed nations, especially the Muslims subjected to inhumane treatment, had to act

⁴⁴ Mehmed Akif, "Nasrullah Kürsüsünde."

⁴⁵ *Sebilürreşad* intellectuals considered Bolshevism for a long time as a sedition that divided Muslims. "Rusya'da Harekat-ı İslamiyye," 396-397. They even stated that Lenin saw pan-Islamism as the only obstacle to the spread of Bolshevism to India. Ömer Rıza, "İnkılabat-ı Hazıra Karşısında Alem-i İslam," 414-415. At times, they accused Lenin of unjustly spilling the blood of the rich. Abdülaziz Mecdi, "İnneme'l-Mü'minune İhvetün," 450. However, when the Peace Conference in Paris ended in great disappointment, Muslim intellectuals gave up hope in Wilsonianism and began to sympathize with Bolshevism. First, they distanced themselves from prejudices about Bolshevism. "Bolşevizm ve İslamiyet," 459; "Bolşeviklik ve İslamiyet," 461. They defended the alliance with the Bolsheviks in the following period for the victory. They considered the Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku as an opportunity in this sense. Eşref Edib, "Şark İlleri Kurultayı Murahhaslarıyla Mülakat," 464, 465.

together with the Bolsheviks to overthrow the damned institutions of oppression. According to him, the benefits such an alliance would bring to the oppressed Muslim societies around the world were undeniable.⁴⁶

At the end of the sermon, Mehmed Akif once again drew attention to the current danger by telling the community that what they wanted from Muslims today was directly their life, their religion, and their caliphate. He emphasized that the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the caliphate would deeply shake the entire Muslim world. He underlined the necessity of unity by referring to some verses and hadiths.⁴⁷ Otherwise, he said, referring to the Qur'an, that all the opportunities that Muslims had would be taken away from them. Emphasizing that perseverance was essential for victory, he said it was a divine order for societies to be united for their independence and liberation from condemnation. Finally, he concluded the sermon by inviting the entire community to jihad in the way of God to rescue the Ottoman Caliphate.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Mehmed Akif, "Nasrullah Kürsüsünde."

⁴⁷ Mehmed Akif, in the sermon at the Zağnos Pasha Mosque, called on the community to unite under the umbrella of the *Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-yı Hukuk Cemiyeti*. In Kastamonu, he directly pointed to the Grand National Assembly established in Ankara. In their writings, *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectual circle pointed to the Grand National Assembly as the only power center for tawhid. Karahisar-ı Sahib Mebusu Hoca Şükrü Efendi, "Nur-ı İlahi Söner mi?," 476. Considering the Grand National Assembly and the early periods of Islamic history, they described it as the assembly that most valued Islam in the Ottoman constitutional experience. Nasuhi Dede [Hasan Basri], "Ey Müslümanlar, Esir Kardeşlerinizi Düşününüz!," 472; Pir-i Fani [Hüseyin Kazım Kadri], "Büyük Millet Meclisi'nde: İnşaallah!," 475. They even described the Grand National Assembly as an assembly determined to revive Islam. Eşref Edib, "Şer'iyye Vekaletinin Beyannamesi Münasebetiyle," 480.

⁴⁸ Mehmed Akif's sermon at the Nasrullah Mosque made quite an impression in Anatolia. For example, when *Sebilürreşad* moved to Ankara, two hodja from Maraş, who came to the bureau of the *Sebilürreşad* across from the *Hürriyet Oteli*, reported that in Maraş and Ayıntab, the issue containing the sermon was circulated from hand to hand and it was read in mosques. They were impressed by the sermon and stated that they had joined the jihad. Eşref Edib, "Maraş ve Ayıntablıların Kahramanlıkları," 467. The issue was sold out in a very short time, and *Sebilürreşad* was reprinted three times and put into circu-

§ 4.3 Kayseri Great Mosque: The Holy Jihad of Anatolia

The advance of the Greek army to the front of Sakarya brought the idea of moving the Grand National Assembly to Kayseri among the deputies in Ankara. After heated debates, most deputies desperately moved to Kayseri. During the period, the inner circle of *Sebilürreşad* also undertook tasks within themselves. Accordingly, Eşref Edib would go to Kayseri with Ali Şükrü Bey, and Mehmed Akif would stay in Ankara and participate in the propaganda work of the *Heyet-i İrşadiyye* behind the front.

Eşref Edib moved towards Kayseri with Trabzon deputy Ali Şükrü. When they arrived in Kayseri, they encountered a rather pessimistic view. The belief that the Turkish army could resist the Greek army in Sakarya was extremely low. Eşref Edib and Ali Şükrü, just like Eşref Edib did in Kastamonu, met with the notables of the city and convinced them that it was necessary to both disperse the hopeless atmosphere and encourage the Muslims to organize. After these meetings, they issued a statement and invited Muslims to the Kayseri Great Mosque.

When Friday came, a larger-than-expected congregation gathered at the Kayseri Great Mosque. After the prayer, Ali Şükrü Bey took the pulpit and started to give his famous sermon. First, he explained under which conditions the Ottoman Government signed the Armistice of Mudros. The Ottoman Empire, defeated in World War I, had not yet exhausted its last bullet and was convinced to sign the Armistice after Woodrow Wilson and Lloyd George's public statements and commitments that left no room for doubt. In his declaration, known as the Fourteen Points, American President Woodrow Wilson declared that every nation had the right to life. Accordingly, the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire in the regions inhabited by the Turks was officially recognized. Likewise, British Prime

lation. Şükür, "Rica ve İhtarât," 467. In some regions, local administrators and army commanders affiliated with the Ankara Government took the initiative and reprinted it with their own means. For example, Al Jazeera Commander Nihad Pasha telegraphed Mehmed Akif that he had multiplied and circulated the sermon in Diyarbakır Printing House. Eşref Edib, "Ümmet-i İslamiyyenin Takip Edeceği Tarik-i İctimai, Ancak Kendi Medeniyet-i İslamiyyemizdir," 468.

Minister Lloyd George committed to his Muslim subjects, especially in India and Egypt, that they were at war with the Ottoman Government, allied with Germany, and had no intention of removing the Ottoman Caliphate and Sultanate from Istanbul. The Ottoman Government agreed to sign the Armistice of Mudros based on the hope and confidence given by these and many similar open statements.⁴⁹

Ali Şükrü made a self-criticism and sadly said that it was later understood that this was a deception. He stated that after the signing of the Armistice of Mudros, the Allied Powers and especially Britain started a big lie campaign. On the one hand, it was discussed whether the Ottoman Empire's participation in World War I was justified; on the other, the legitimacy of many institutions, especially the Ottoman Caliphate, was questioned. At this point, Ali Şükrü mentioned that the Ottoman Government, which signed the Armistice of Mudros, forced the Allied Powers to comply with the terms of the Treaty and even achieved a partial success. This effort did not extend the life of the Government in Istanbul. The Allied Powers had put into effect a comprehensive extermination plan against the Turks and overthrew the Government. Instead of the overthrown Government, politicians who were not initially under the control of the Allied Powers but with weak character were brought to power. Ali Şükrü emphasized that in this period full of disappointment and uncertainty, Istanbul was occupied, Mosul was separated from the Ottoman Empire, and the explicit provisions of the Armistice of Mudros began to be violated.⁵⁰

Ali Şükrü stated that in this period, which he described as an infamous interregnum, two major currents emerged in Istanbul and Anatolia. The first advocated complete surrender to the Allied Powers. Ali Şükrü portrayed the representatives of this tendency by cursing them as extremist Westerners who regretted their birth as Muslims and Turks and politicians who sold their consciences to the enemy. The second, however, did not compromise on their right to life and stated that they would

⁴⁹ Ali Şükrü, "Anadolu'nun Büyük ve Mukaddes Cihadı," 233-247.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

risk death if necessary for a free and independent life. Ali Şükrü honored the latter, which insisted on the right to life and Turks' independence and portrayed it as genuine and brave Muslims. According to Ali Şükrü, the second tendency was the majority of the nation.⁵¹

Nevertheless, the material and moral destruction brought by the long war years and the confusion created by the post-war political atmosphere made society immobile. The representatives of the first tendency, which turned this conjuncture into an opportunity, had come to power in Istanbul and tried to get the nation to accept the Treaty of Sèvres, which Ali Şükrü described as a death sentence, and which the Allied Powers organized under the name of a so-called peace treaty. In the continuation of the sermon, Ali Şükrü began to expose the representatives of the former inclination, which he described as soulless, dishonorable, and devoid of national feeling. He stated that they were organized under the name of the *İngiliz Muhipleri Cemiyeti* and that they were trying to expand their sphere of influence by opening branches of the society in various parts of Anatolia. Ali Şükrü read a newspaper clipping from *Alemdar* and targeted an event held in Istanbul. He read the speeches of Said Molla and Mehmet Ali, who were the leading members of the *İngiliz Muhipleri Cemiyeti*. Ali Şükrü emphasized that these speeches were warmly and sincerely applauded and underlined that they were aware of every detail of the Treaty of Sèvres, which was denominated as the death sentence.⁵²

In the continuation of the sermon, Ali Şükrü stated that the Treaty of Sèvres was prepared under the hegemony of Britain. Therefore it was also known as the "Lord Curzon Treaty." He emphasized that even the right to a humane life was not left to the Turks after their homeland and independence were taken from them with the Treaty. Ali Şükrü questioned why the right to life of the Ottomans was not recognized. However, many states' right to life and independence, which had entered World War I with the Ottoman Empire and were defeated, were recognized. Ac-

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

According to Ali Şükrü, British policy's goal was to destroy the Ottoman Empire since it was a center of attraction for the hundreds of millions of Muslims who lived under the British colony. However, Britain did not rule the Muslim people fairly, and some tricks kept them in captivity. Ali Şükrü emphasized that the Ottoman Caliphate threatened Britain's imperial policy for this reason.⁵³

Ali Şükrü began to explain one by one how the Treaty of Sèvres, which he persistently described as a death sentence, would affect the Ottomans. First of all, he underlined that if the Treaty were implemented, a very small piece of land in Anatolia would be left to the Ottomans, but that they would not be allowed to live as a free nation, an independent state, or even to form a government. In other words, the Ottomans were clearly prohibited from being an independent Islamic state. According to Ali Şükrü, Islam's future was impossible unless an independent Islamic government was established. In addition, he stated that in reforming the legal system and making laws, all the authority would be in the hands of an international commission, which did not include the Ottomans. Put differently, the Ottoman courts would not work according to sharia principles but according to the laws that foreigners deem appropriate. In addition, the political and spiritual authority of the Ottoman Caliphate over the Muslim world would be ended. Ali Şükrü turned to the community and asked, "Is the future of Islam and the Ottoman Caliphate possible under these conditions?"⁵⁴

Immediately after, Ali Şükrü began to interpret how everyday life would be affected by the implementation of the Treaty of Sèvres. He stated that since the Ottoman finances would be under the control of foreigners, the Turks would work like slaves. He emphasized that the foreigners would receive the reward for the efforts of the Turks and spend

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ The intellectual circle of *Sebilürreşad* often emphasized in their writings that the caliphate and Islam were in danger. They underlined that the primary purpose of the nationalist movement in Anatolia was to rescue the Ottoman Caliphate, under the captivity of the Allied Powers, and not to hang bells on the minarets and not to let the Qur'an crawl on the ground. Hoca Şükrü Efendi, "Ve'l-Akıbetü'l-Müttekin," 489.

it as they wished. Ali Şükrü warned the congregation and said that if they lost the War of Independence, they would be the slave of Peter and Christo. Thanks to the Treaty, the capitulations previously enjoyed only by Europeans would now benefit the Greeks and the subjects of the newly formed Armenian Government. Saying that Muslims would work and non-Muslims would live effortlessly and become rich, Ali Şükrü emphasized that the Greeks and Armenians would-be masters and Turks would be servants.⁵⁵

Ali Şükrü stated that Afghanistan also went through similar phases, but regardless of the lack of ammunition, they immediately took up arms and declared war on Britain. Although Britain fought with thousands of soldiers equipped with the latest technology, they were unsuccessful against the Afghan mujahids. Britain ultimately recognized Afghanistan's independence and was compelled to make a peace treaty. However, the ongoing peace negotiations were not concluded yet. As Ali Şükrü emphasized, Britain was not willing to sign a peace treaty because the Afghan mujahids did not step back on many issues, such as strengthening ties with Turks and the Ottoman Caliphate and reaching a free port on the Indian coast.⁵⁶

The example of Afghanistan was quite striking and inspiring for the political and intellectual circles in Ankara in general and *Sebilürreşad* intellectuals in particular. For this reason, the delegation that came from Afghanistan to Ankara was met with great interest.⁵⁷ The interest was not one-sided; the Afghan delegation was also motivated by the nationalist movement in Anatolia. Sultan Ahmed Khan, who would serve as the Afghanistan ambassador in Ankara, described the Turkish military forces in Anatolia as the western army of Islam and called the Second İnönü Victory as conquest.⁵⁸ In another statement, Sultan Ahmed Khan advised all

⁵⁵ Ali Şükrü, "Anadolu'nun Büyük ve Mukaddes Cihadı."

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ See. Sarıhan, Kurtuluş Savaşımızda Türk-Afgan İlişkileri.

⁵⁸ "Vahdet ve Uhuvvet-i İslamiyye Tezahüratı," 476.

Muslims and eastern peoples to support the Ankara Government. He underlined that the Turkish War of Independence against the occupation forces, especially Britain, caused the awakening of the Muslim world.⁵⁹

After the ambassador of Afghanistan, Sultan Ahmed Khan, came to Ankara, the inner circle of *Sebilürreşad* visited him. Eşref Edib wrote down the highlights of the meeting and presented the alliance between the Ankara Government and Afghanistan as an example for other Muslim societies. In the visit, Sultan Ahmed Khan underlined the unity and solidarity in the Muslim world against imperialist-capitalist states and claimed that all these developments were signs of a great revolution in the East.⁶⁰ Another point underlined both in this meeting and in other statements of the Afghan delegation was the insistence on the importance of the alliance established between Turks, Afghans, and Bolsheviks against Western imperialism.⁶¹

In the continuation of the sermon, Ali Şükrü claimed that capturing the Ottoman Caliphate was inevitable for Britain to continue its imperial policy. Muslims living in Afghanistan, India, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Palestine started revolting and shaking the imperialist status quo. Uncertainties arising in turmoil troubled Britain and weakened its power. As a result, it was vital for Britain to keep the strongest bond between the Muslim world under control. Only in this way would Britain be able to quickly rule the Muslims under its colonial administration.⁶²

Ali Şükrü evaluated the post-war developments in Istanbul and Anatolia within the context drawn above and stated that the policy of exterminating the Turks was implemented. In the continuation of the sermon, Ali Şükrü explained in detail such an essential and dangerous policy of destruction by Britain. First of all, Istanbul was occupied, and the Turks were disarmed by confiscating their ammunition. This was followed by the occupation of Istanbul and the capture of the Ottoman Caliphate. Subsequently, the Parliament was closed, the deputies were arrested, and the

⁵⁹ "Şuun," 476.

⁶⁰ Eşref Edib, "Sebilürreşad Heyetinin Afgan Sefirini Ziyareti," 478.

⁶¹ "Sefir Hazretlerinin Nutku," 484.

⁶² Ali Şükrü, "Anadolu'nun Büyük ve Mukaddes Cihadı."

Damat Ferid Pasha cabinet was brought to power with the support of the Allied Powers.⁶³

While Ali Şükrü's narration about the past and current events was full of pessimism, the sermon's last part focused on promising future developments. In Anatolia, national resistance movements against the implementation of the Treaty of Sèvres, which Ali Şükrü described as a death sentence, had begun to sprout. The resistance to the policy of extermination eventually led to the invitation of Ottoman delegates to London to reconsider the Treaty of Sèvres, which the Allied Powers insisted on. Ali Şükrü saw the retreat of the Allied Powers as the first step in the success of the Anatolian mujahids, who worked for the right to life and independence.⁶⁴

At this point, Ali Şükrü felt the need to remind how the *Kuva-yı Milliye* movement was formed. According to Ali Şükrü, the start of the invasion of Anatolia by the Allied Powers led by Britain and the Greek army and Armenian gangs acting together with them played a vital role.⁶⁵ He underlined that the stories of persecution from the occupied areas spread by word of mouth, laying the groundwork for the formation of the nationalist resistance movement. The movement was led by the organizations affiliated with the Committee of Union and Progress, which Ali Şükrü called the second tendency. The primary motto of the movement, which was organized by secret talks and meetings⁶⁶ at the beginning, was either to have the right to life or to die. Ali Şükrü described the supporters of this tendency as genuine and brave Muslims and underlined that they represented the majority of the nation.⁶⁷

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ "Yüz Bin Müslümanın Hayatı Tehlikededir," 449; "Garb Cephesinde Vaziyet-i Harbiyye," 465; "Ehl-i Salib Mezalimi," 472; "Memalik-i Meşgulede Yunan Mezalimi," 482.

⁶⁶ Ali Şükrü underlined that the meetings were very secret. Secrecy was vital to the initial organization of the nationalist movement. *Sebilürreşad* reminded this situation from time to time and emphasized that sharing secret information with the enemy was betrayal and one of the biggest sins. Müfti Abdullah Esad, "İfşa-yı Esrar: Suduru'l-Ahrar, Kuburu'l-Esrar," 470.

⁶⁷ Ali Şükrü, "Anadolu'nun Büyük ve Mukaddes Cihadı."

Kuva-yı Milliye, which started to be organized in Anatolia, and the transnational Muslim societies taking action by being worried about the future of the Ottoman Caliphate came together. Ali Şükrü tried to exemplify how Muslim societies living thousands of miles away from Anatolia felt in the face of the persecution called the Treaty of Sèvres and what sacrifices they made. Ali Şükrü, saying that Muslims in India organized mass protests after they became aware of the Treaty of Sèvres imposed on the Ottoman Empire by Britain, read two news from the Times newspaper. The first concerned the murder of the British governor in the Geri region of India. The defense of the murderer who was caught was quite interesting because he confessed that he killed the governor to avenge Britain's violent behavior against Turks and the Ottoman Caliphate. In the last part of the news, the Times shared the warning that the increasing threats and violence against the British Government, civil servants, and Europeans harbor the possibility of such cases increasing soon. The other news reported that Muslims living in Karachi protested the Treaty of Sèvres, which they described as an attack on Islam and the Ottoman Caliphate. They declared India as *dar-ü'l harp*, a territory of war, and started to migrate to Afghanistan. The Times emphasized at the end of the news that the unrest in India could only be alleviated by making fundamental changes to the Treaty of Sèvres, taking into account the religious sensitivities of the Indian Muslims.⁶⁸

After sharing the Times' news with the congregation, Ali Şükrü drew attention to one point. These news, which leaked through an intense censorship filter, were only fragments of the Muslim awakening in the world. Ali Şükrü underlined that the excitement and agitation among Muslims was not limited to Indian Muslims and that similar protests were also experienced in Muslim societies in many places from Africa to the Far East. He emphasized that Muslims saw Turks as the color bearer and Anatolia as the last castle of Islam.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

In the continuation of the sermon, Ali Şükrü claimed that the social order of Europe was decaying. The situation was caused by Bolshevism, which broke out in Russia with the awakening of Muslims living under the bondage of the Westerners. The revolution led by the Bolsheviks was threatening Europe's status quo, especially Britain. In addition to the unrest in the Muslim world, the threat posed by the Bolshevik Revolution forced the Allied Powers to revise the Treaty of Sèvres. Ali Şükrü considered the developments as signs of retreat.⁷⁰

Sebilürreşad intellectuals' sympathy for Bolshevism was also evident in Mehmed Akif's sermon in Kastamonu Nasrullah Mosque. While trying to understand Bolshevism, on the one hand, *Sebilürreşad* attempted to prove the harmony between socialism and Islam on the other. In this context, the book titled *Islam and Socialism* by Mushir Hosain Kidwai, one of the leading intellectuals of Indian Muslims was published in *Sebilürreşad*. In his book, Kidwai claimed that the values represented by socialism existed in Islam, and in this sense, the Prophet Muhammad could be considered the first socialist.⁷¹ So much so that Kidwai's claims confused *Sebilürreşad* readers' minds that some readers wrote to the journal and asked Mehmed Akif whether Islam and Bolshevism were the same.⁷²

At the end of the sermon, Ali Şükrü, after emphasizing that the Turkish army, which he called Anatolian mujahids, fulfilled its duty, explained to the congregation the necessity of jihad. Ali Şükrü recited the verse pointing out jihad to save men, women, and children under the captivity of the enemies and shared the persecution of Muslims in Western Anatolia under Greek occupation. Stating that oppressed Muslims were waiting for mujahids to save them from oppression, torture, and captivity, Ali Şükrü returned to the question at the beginning of the sermon and asked the community if the time came for jihad, one of the commands of God. Ali Şükrü stated that the time was already over and underlined that it was

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Şeyh Müşir Hüseyin Kıdvay, "Mebahis-i İlmiyye ve İctimaiyye: İslam ve Sosyalizm," 459, 460, 462, 481.

⁷² Trabzonlu Ahmed Hilmi, "Bolşeviklik Müslümanlığın Aynı mıdır? – Sebilürreşad Ceride-yi İslamiyyesi Başmuharriri Faziletli Mehmed Akif Beyefendi'ye," 481.

God's command to make jihad against the enemy by mobilizing all available means and to save their co-religionists who were groaning in captivity and invited all Muslims to jihad.⁷³

§ 4.4 Concluding Remarks

This chapter focused on three sermons given by *Sebilürreşad's* leader writer, Mehmed Akif, and Trabzon deputy Ali Şükrü, who was in the political and intellectual circle of the journal, in three different stages of the War of Independence. These sermons, whose primary purpose was to raise religious feelings behind the front and lead Muslims to jihad, also contained essential clues showing *Sebilürreşad's* historical narrative and future visions. In addition, they showed how *Sebilürreşad* responded to the changing political atmosphere, from the initial phase of the nationalist resistance movement to the Battle of Sakarya, one of the most vital turning points of the War of Independence. Thus, these three sermons were investigated as signifiers and placed in their historical context.

First, the sermon that Mehmed Akif gave in Balıkesir Zağnos Pasha Mosque in January 1920 was examined. This sermon was shaped around a repetitive dichotomy. Based on the narrative of backwardness, this sermon treated Western civilization as the most advanced. It linked the development of the West to the concepts of collectivism, solidarity, and social harmony. Mehmed Akif positioned the Islamic civilization, on the contrary, claiming that the main reason for backwardness was inertia. For this reason, Mehmed Akif did not hide his anger toward older generations. An analysis of post-World War I followed Mehmed Akif's historical narrative. Mehmed Akif, who frequently emphasized that the Ottoman Empire was in danger of being colonized, also underlined the emergence of a global Muslim awakening. The central dynamic of transnational Muslim mobilization, which defended the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire and its caliphate within the framework of Wilsonianism, was the Indian Khilafat Movement. Mehmed Akif ended his sermon by addressing the

⁷³ Ali Şükrü, "Anadolu'nun Büyük ve Mukaddes Cihadı."

transnational pan-Islamic mobilization and the nationalist resistance movement that emerged in Anatolia, inviting the Muslim people to jihad.

This chapter secondly concentrated on the sermon Mehmed Akif gave in the Kastamonu Nasrullah Mosque at the end of 1920. This sermon, which later had a significant impact in Anatolia, involved critical political changes in various aspects. Mehmed Akif's sermon, unlike the sermon at the Balıkesir Zağnos Pasha Mosque, was based on anger against Western civilization. Undoubtedly, the occupation of Istanbul and Izmir and the Treaty of Sèvres lay behind this situation. Another key point in Mehmed Akif's sermon was the selection of striking examples from everyday life on how the Treaty of Sèvres would affect Ottoman society at political, economic, and social levels. These examples depicted a future in which Muslims would be subordinated. In other words, it was often emphasized that Muslims would be slaves and non-Muslims would be masters. Mehmed Akif defended the Muslims' alliance with the Bolsheviks against the implementation of the Treaty of Sèvres. He supported this idea by pointing out being friends with the enemy of the enemy. Mehmed Akif's proposal was compatible with the Eastern People's Congress held in Baku and the narrative of the East's struggle against the imperialist-capitalist West. Mehmed Akif placed the idea of jihad in this context, arguing that an alliance of Muslims and Bolsheviks was inevitable for rescuing the Ottoman Caliphate.

What followed was an examination of the sermon given by Trabzon deputy Ali Şükrü in Kayseri Ulu Mosque towards the end of 1921. In the days of the Battle of Sakarya, the Turkish forces were in a difficult situation against the Greek army. For this reason, even the relocation of the Grand National Assembly from Ankara to Kayseri came to the fore. In this context, the sermon given by Ali Şükrü in Kayseri was critical to strengthen the home front by raising religious feelings. In his sermon, Ali Şükrü summarized the political developments from World War I to the post-war period and argued that especially Britain and the United States did not keep their promises. Handling the Treaty of Sèvres as a death sentence, he argued that the main aim was the destruction of the Ottoman Caliphate, which threatened British imperial policy. In addition, Ali Şükrü

described in detailed examples of how the Treaty of Sèvres would change the daily life of Ottoman society, just like Mehmed Akif. Ali Şükrü saw the victory of Afghanistan against Britain as a prototype for the Turks. The Treaty of Sèvres could only be torn apart by a total jihad. At this point, Ali Şükrü underlined the necessity of an Islamic and Bolshevik alliance and emphasized that Turkey and the Muslim world would be saved only by this means.

5

Conclusion

This thesis primarily took the historical background of *Sebilürreşad*. The journal's predecessor, *Sıratımüstakim*, which started its publication with the Constitutional Revolution of 1908, became a center of attraction for the intelligentsia at a time when ideological divisions had not yet sharpened. The reasons that held a highly heterogeneous intellectual circle together were the closeness to the constitutional opposition movement that had been going on since the Young Ottomans, active cooperation with the Committee of Union and Progress, and being influenced by modernist Islamic thought. In 1912, *Sıratımüstakim* decided to continue publishing under the name *Sebilürreşad*. This change also coincided with a more than ten-year war period, which started with the Tripolitanian War of 1911 and ended with the War of Independence. While the intellectual circle of *Sebilürreşad* actively involved in the pan-Islamic organizations established under the leadership of the Committee of Union and

Progress, on the other hand, they tried to cultivate the caliphate-centered pan-Islamic thought in the renewed content of the journal. In this way, while trying to unite Muslims living in different parts of the world around a common identity and temporality, the journal also gathered transnational Muslim intellectuals.

Secondly, this thesis mapped *Sebilürreşad*'s political and intellectual network in post-World War I. While *Sebilürreşad* kept its distance from discussions against the Committee of Union and Progress in Armistice Istanbul, the journal did not hesitate to fight against the nationalist and secular clique championed by Ziya Gökalp, with whom it was ideologically competing in the CUP. In this context, *Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-İslamiyye* played a key role. However, this situation was short-lived due to the strict censorship regime of the occupation forces in Istanbul. *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectual circle quickly became involved in the resistance movement that broke out in Anatolia. The connections that *Sebilürreşad* established with the Committee of Union and Progress since 1908 paved the way for the involvement. *Sebilürreşad*'s departure from Istanbul also meant that the journal escaped from censorship and continued its publication life in a free and radical way. In this new period, *Sebilürreşad*'s intellectual circle actively participated in the pan-Islamic mobilization by giving sermons in various parts of Anatolia and working in harmony with the Grand National Assembly.

After *Sebilürreşad*'s political and intellectual network was made visible, this thesis opened a window to the journal's world of thought via sermons. In the most general terms, these sermons given in three different stages of the War of Independence aimed to fortify the home front, which was called the spiritual front, by cultivating religious feelings. These sermons show both the discourse of rescuing the Ottoman Caliphate in the organization of the War of Independence and the limits of pan-Islamic mobilization. The main problem area of these sermons was the Treaty of Sèvres and the political, economic, and social dangers that awaited the Ottoman Empire if the Treaty was implemented. The common anxiety of the sermons was the fear of being a slave. The sermons were full of concerns that Muslims living within the borders of the Ottoman Empire with

the Treaty of Sèvres would be subordinated by non-Muslims. In contrast, transnational Muslim mobilization and Bolshevism meant an opportunity for the Ottomans. The model of liberation these sermons formulated was based on an alliance with Bolshevism, reconceptualizing the idea of jihad to rescue the Ottoman Caliphate from captivity.

The thesis opened with an anecdote from the *Nutuk*, which Mustafa Kemal claimed at the Grand Congress of the Republican People's Party in 1927. Mustafa Kemal, so to speak, was historically overcoming the political and intellectual circles that opposed him. In this context, Mustafa Kemal put Hoca Şükrü, who was the deputy of Karahisar-ı Sahib in the First Grand National Assembly, which continued its activities from 1920 to 1923, on the target board. Mustafa Kemal emphasized that during the debates on the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate, Hoca Şükrü and his friends tried to get the support of the Muslim world and struggled to bring the Grand National Assembly back under the authority of the caliph-sultan. He even described Hoca Şükrü and his friends, whom he placed on the target for this reason, as a "reactionary faction." He concluded the discussions of monarchism by emphasizing that their futile efforts only accelerated the elimination of the "caliphate tool."

However, Mustafa Kemal's depiction in the *Nutuk* was quite incomplete. The War of Independence, which started with the Armistice of Mudros and ended with the Treaty of Lausanne, was a lively period in which different strategies and possibilities often occupied the agenda of the political actors gathered around the Grand National Assembly in Ankara. Especially since the Second Constitutional Era, ideas that tried to reconceptualize the caliphate in dialogue with the constitution and national sovereignty and aimed to strengthen the harmony between them were pretty popular among intellectuals and ulama. This intellectual baggage was also carried to the post-World War I period, and the slogan of rescuing the Ottoman Caliphate under the captivity of the Allied Powers in Istanbul became intertwined with the discourse of sovereignty and became the primary motivation source of the War of Independence. While the nationalist resistance movement was being organized, the policy of

caliphate-centered pan-Islam was the common ideology of the broad coalition formed in Ankara when political and intellectual separations were blurred.

This thesis shows that Mustafa Kemal had privately invited *Sebilürreşad*, whom he implicitly referred to as a "reactionary faction," through Trabzon deputy Ali Şükrü before the Grand National Assembly convened in Ankara. They even worked together on many topics, such as the abduction of the last caliph Abdülmecid II to Anatolia, the *Heyet-i İrşadiyye*, the National Anthem, and the Islamic Congress in Anatolia. Moreover, *Sebilürreşad* was printed in *Ankara İstihbarat ve Matbuat Matbaası* and distributed in Anatolia through local administrators and army units under the command of the Ankara Government. Therefore, while Mustafa Kemal isolated himself from this "reactionary faction" with which he had a close collaboration in the recent past, he consciously covered up all the intellectual and political partnerships and the search for an alternative order that came to the fore at different moments of the War of Independence.

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