Chapter II

RESPONSE TO THE YOUNG TURK REVOLUTION

On 23 July 1908 a military revolution, led by the Young Turks, overthrew the personal rule of Sultan Abdul Hamid II in Turkey. The Young Turks compelled him to restore the constitution which he had suspended thirty-two years earlier.

The Young Turk revolution has been studied in a number of well researched works. The Young Turks were men with heterogeneous and conflicting ideologies, but inspired by a common goal to overthrow the tradition of Ottoman absolutism. Largely drawn from the petty bourgeoisie or the middle class, they were the products of the modern secular, military and civilian professional schools. In 1906, a secret society called Hatan had been founded; among its founders was Mustafa Kemal. In 1907, all the secret organisations merged into a Committee of


...52
Union and Progress. The identifiable leaders of the revolution were, Enver Pasha, Talaat Pasha and Jamal Pasha.\footnote{For Biographical Notes see Appendix A.} Mustafa Kemal apparently played a rather lesser role in the revolution of 1908.\footnote{Gwyne Dyer, op.cit., p. 124.}

The Young Turk revolution was a bloodless revolution and throughout Turkey was welcomed with the wildest of enthusiasm.\footnote{Consul Devoy to Sir Gerard Lowther, 1 October, Pro. No. 598, P.D. Sec., E, February 1909, NAI.} Liberty of the press was granted; and the espionage system was abolished.\footnote{There is a very good account of the Young Turk revolution in the Annual Report, 1908, which mentions incidents not recorded elsewhere: Enclosure in Lowther to Grey, No. 105, Constantinople, 17 February 1909, F.O. 371/768/7053, PRO.} The revolutionary slogans were 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.' Enver Pasha triumphantly declared: "Today the tyrant has disappeared. We are no longer Bulgarians, Greeks-Serbs, Romanians, Jews, and Muslims; under the same blue sky we are all equal, we glory in the name of Ottomans."\footnote{Quoted in W.T.P. Castle, Grand Turk (1942), p. 84.} All were to have the same rights and duties. The Young Turks were conservative in outlook and had no definite programme of social change.\footnote{Feroz Ahmed, op.cit., p. 15.} They adopted westernization as a policy but saw it

\footnote{Feroz Ahmed, op.cit., p. 15.}
essentially as a means of modernising and strengthening the army.¹

The press in Constantinople interpreted the restoration of the constitution as a free gift of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, and lauded him for his magnanimous and enlightened gesture. The role of the Young Turks was sought to be concealed from public gaze. The confusion was dispelled only when the revolutionary troops moved in the capital.² Enver Pasha declared: "the world knows that this constitution is not a free gift of the Sultan Abdul Hamid, but was wrung from him by fear."³

The Young Turks were aware that their success depended on the secularization of politics. They succeeded in obtaining the necessary support of Sheikh-ul-Islam the religious head in Turkey. It is interesting to note that the theological arguments about the constitutional government and political equality being compatible with the Islamic religion, that were supposed to have convinced the Sheikh-ul-Islam were those which had been drawn up by Syed Ameer Ali.⁴ Without the Sheikh-ul-Islam's support Young

2. The Pioneer, 5 September 1908.
3. Enver Pasha told this to the correspondent of The Times of India, 31 August 1908.
Turks would have been involved in difficulties with local theological opinion. In order to make the constitution popular he gave instructions to Hojas to preach support for it in the mosques.¹ Tanin, the Young Turk paper, characterised the "constitution as the true embodiment of the modern caliphate."²

The Young Turk revolution contained two dynamic elements, the old liberals and the Young army officers who enjoyed the support of army recruited from the peasantry.³ And behind them was, of course, the general discontent of the masses especially the peasantry.⁴ Yet it was a middle class and a conservative movement, which depended on the character of a few individuals who proceeded with moderation and did not envisage any radical changes. Lenin called the Young Turk success a half-way victory.⁵ Initially, the Committee of Union and Progress remained aloof from the government, and merely thought of guiding its policies.⁶

1. See Encl. 1, to Pro. No. 113, F.D. Extl. B. December, 1908, NAI.
2. Extract from Tanin, in Pro. No. 45, F.D. Sec-E. January, 1910, Part B, NAI.
A counter-revolution occurred on 13 April 1909. A new society named the *Ithihadi-Muhammad* (Society of Muhammad) and the Liberal Union took a leading part in it. Both were opposed to the Committee of Union and Progress and demanded that the constitution be framed strictly in accordance with the *Shariat*. The *Softes* preached in the army barracks against the Committee of Union and Progress in the name of religion. The Committee of Union and Progress was convinced about the complicity of Sultan Abdul Hamid II in the conspiracy since he yielded to most of the counter-revolutionary demand. The Young Turks therefore decided to remove him, and the National Assembly on 27 April 1909 formally deposed Abdul Hamid and replaced him with his brother Muhammad Rashid as Muhammad V, the new Sultan. Once again the Sheikh-ul-Islam issued a *fatwa* satisfying the decision of the National Assembly. Now the Young Turks were firmly placed in power.

The immediate response of the European powers to the Young Turk revolution was favourable. Apparently this attitude on the part of the governments was influenced by the spontaneous sympathies of public opinion, so far fed on denunciations of the

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1. Feroz Ahmad, *op.cit.* p. 41.
   Feroz Ahmad, *op.cit.* pp. 42-3.
authoritarian practices of the Porte. But the precise degree of warmth varied from country to country. It began to be feared that the Revolution might lead to a highly pronounced nationalist attitude in Turkey with consequential assertion of Turkish authority or claims in Crete, Egypt and Macedonia. In commercial spheres the special privileges enjoyed by European nations in the treaties, post offices, and capitulations etc could be endangered by the new nationalism.¹

As far as Great Britain was concerned, the change of government in Turkey was welcomed with some enthusiasm for two reasons, (besides the abstract love of liberty which Liberalism in Britain had so long nurtured) first the traditional friendship of Turkey which began from the time when Russia was thought to have begun threatening British interests in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, and secondly, the belief that the Indian Muslims though essentially loyal could still be further propitiated by British friendliness to Turkey.² The Liberals in England were particularly delighted, for they saw in it an opportunity for weaning over the Turks from Germany.


The Young Turks themselves expected some moral support from Britain. Sir Gerard Lowther,¹ the new British Ambassador to Turkey was enroute when the revolution broke out; on his arrival he was accorded a friendly reception at the Porte. The new regime approached England for the services of an admiral to reorganize and train the Turkish fleet. They also obtained the services of Crawford of the English Customs-House as Customs Administrator in Turkey. Sir W. Willcocks was engaged as adviser to the Department of Public Works and was sent to make an extensive survey of Mesopotamia for planning large irrigation schemes.² Turkey also sought a loan floated by British financiers, which was however scuttled by the British Government on the ground that confidence in the stability of the new regime at Constantinople had yet to be established.³

The Young Turk leaders desired greater degree of goodwill from Britain and most of its leading members were prepared to be guided by the advice of Great Britain.⁴ Lowther expressed his satisfaction at the fact that the declaration of the constitution had aroused feelings of friendship and respect for Great Britain seen as a model by the Turks.⁵

¹. For Sir Gerard Lowther see Appendix A.
². Annual Report 1908, op.cit.
³. Ibid.
⁴. Ibid.
⁵. Ibid.
Sir Edward Grey wrote to Lowther to say that "our encouragement and support will be very firm, and that we shall deprecate any interference from outside." Furthermore, "our diplomatic attitude will be benevolent, and our influence used to secure, a fair chance for them (the Young Turks.)." Gray advised Lowther to make clear that "our quarrels have been, not with the Turkish people, but with the government of creatures against whom the Turks themselves have now protested." In spite of friendly gestures and assurances there was much scepticism in British official circles about the Young Turk revolution. Grey wrote: "If Turkey really establishes a Constitution and keeps it on its feet, and becomes strong herself, the consequences will reach further than any of us can yet foresee." He surmised that its effect on Egypt would be considerable and it would be felt even in India; and this might not be to British advantage:

Hitherto, wherever we have had Mahometan subjects, we have been able to tell them the subjects in the countries ruled by the head of their religion were under a despotism which was not a benevolent one; while our Mahometan subjects were under a despotism which was benevolent.

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
Grey was conscious of the fact that henceforth "our position (in explaining the lack of constitutional rights to British governed peoples) will be very awkward." He also felt that the effect of strong and reformed Turkey upon the politics of Europe would be very great.

Grey was therefore very inclined towards caution in dealing with the new regime in Turkey. He warned Lowther that he must be careful and give no impression to Russia that Britain was reverting to the old policy of supporting Turkey as a barrier against her; rather the British ought to continue to show willingness to work with Russia whenever possible.

In India Minto was of the view that "the constitutional movement in Turkey is full of meaning" - "to my mind quite one of the most interesting indications of the times with which we have to deal." He seemed to share Grey's concern over "the new forces that are coming into existence all over the world, especially the Eastern world" and that these will put the British in "great straits." Nevertheless Minto hoped that Turkey will be allowed "to grow without outside interference" and that the British sympathy will be with her. He contended that "we have much to

1. Ibid.
2. Grey to Lowther, 11 August 1908, Lowther Papers, F.0. 800/1939, Part II, PRO.
3. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
gain politically by our goodwill to Musalmam enlightenment. We
lost a chance long ago when Ignatieff got round Lord Salisbury
and threw cold water on Midhat's reforms." Minto saw in the
event an opportunity for Britain to win back a valuable friend-
ship. He felt that it had been right to respond in a friendly
fashion to the Young Turks.

However, Morley appears to have been more concerned with
the possible impact of the Young Turks Revolution on Indians:

I think the strange new move in Turkey will put a fresh weapon into the hands
of our Indian opposition? If the
state grants a parliamentary constitu-
tion, to the Grand Turk, and the
Mikado and the Czar s. w'ont they argue
why should India be left alone in the
world without the same luxury? Will
the Turkish move shake the Mahomedans?
If it does our case will be rather
awkward, I should guess."4

1. Ibid.

2. Two years earlier Minto claimed himself to be "a
Turkophile a disease contracted, I suppose, when I
was with the Turkish army on the Danube in 1877. But
seriously I have always doubted the policy of those
days, and believed we could have exerted a beneficial
influence with the Turks which might have been in-
valuable to us in its influence on our Mohammedan sub-
jects. However the chance has gone, ...." Minto to
Morley, 9 May 1906, No. 40, Minto Papers.


4. Morley to Minto, 30 July 1908, No. 41, Minto Papers.

...61
How did Indian and particularly Muslims react to the Young Turk Revolution? The nationalists saw in the success of the Young Turk Revolution the affirmation and fulfilment of their own aspirations. As anticipated by Morley, it afforded them the opportunity to criticize and attack the British policies. They hoped that the "sun which had caught the Sultan's turrets would throw its radiance over India also." An earthquake which had shaken the continent from Tokyo to Monastir, could not leave India unshaken. Indians were asked to emulate Japan and Turkey, to regain their lost honour. To the nationalists it was indeed the most significant event in contemporary history. R.C. Dutt acclaimed the Revolution in these words, "The East is following in the footsteps of the west after a lapse of sixty years, as 1908 will be as memorable in history as 1848."

It had long been argued that India being a country of diverse people, creeds, sects and religions was unfit for representative institutions. This was said about oriental peoples in


2. Indian People (Allahabad), 3 September 1908, RGNPP-UP; The Muhammadan (Madras), 19 October 1908, RGNPP, Madras.

3. G.V. Joshi, the nationalist leader, published a signed leading article, 'Thoughts on the Revolution in Turkey', in Mahatma (Poona), 30 August 1908.


5. Indian People, (Allahabad), 27 September 1908, RGNPP-UP. For R.C. Dutt, see Appendix A.
general. But in the early years of the present century all these myths were shattered by the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905, and the Young Turk Revolution. These events released minds in India from the self-deprecating belief so far fostered by the British rulers.\(^1\) The events disproved the contention of those who danced against myths.\(^2\) The Gujrat\(^i\) of Bombay remarked: "Several English statesmen seem to think with Lord Curzon that the regeneration of India lies in their hands."\(^3\) The paper argued that "Even if England had not imparted education on Western lines to the Indians, the latter would not have escaped the wave of awakening which is now passing over them" ... No such education has been imported to the people either of Japan, China, Persia or Turkey; and yet in all of them an awakening has now taken place.\(^3\)

Syed Haider Raza, editor of the Aftab of Delhi, underlined the same point where he wrote: "We would have undoubtedly carried on the same agitation were our rulers Hindu Kings or Muhammedan Sultans" All agitations for a democratic government and constitution are not directed against any particular

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1. Ibid. 31 December 1908.

2. Ibid., 30 July 1908.

3. 23 August 1908, RGNIP - Bombay.
government. He argued that "the very fact that the Caliph of the Muhammadans is elected shows clearly that the Muhammadans are familiar with representative institutions from times immemorial." The people of Turkey by forcing their ruler to establish a parliament in their country had shown themselves capable of establishing representative institutions.

It was expected that the Turkish example would influence Indian Muslims also. The Panjabea of Lahore felt disgusted with those Indians who echoed the arguments of Anglo-Indians against Indian aspiration for self rule. The paper argued that the Indians were much more enlightened compared with the Turks. They had known the institution of Panchayat. Yet, should they go through centuries of training before they can be entrusted with the management of their own affairs? It was argued that history records no instance where the rulers voluntarily recognized that their subjects have reached a stage

1. Dnyan Prakash, 10 September, 1908, RONNP - Bombay. Syed Haider Raza had earlier argued that Islam favours democracy and patriotism; that these ideas dominated Persia and in fact the entire Asiatic continent with the only exception of Indian Muslims. (Aftab (Delhi) 1907), RONNP - Punjab.

2. Ibid.


4. Akhbar-e-Saudagar, 11 August 1908, RONNP-Bombay; Swadesmitran (Madras), 15 September 1908, RONNP-Madras; Indian Patriot (Madras), 24 September 1908.

5. Panjabee, 12 September 1908, RONNP - Punjab, also Kesari Ponna), 8 September 1908.
when they can be entrusted with self-government. Such fallacies have been exploded and no inherent incapacity could be ascribed to Eastern people for constitutional government.\(^2\)

The Bengalee of Calcutta, wrote:

"What has happened in Turkey will be repeated on the banks of the Ganges for it has been established that self-government when introduced amongst heterogenous populations with divergent creeds and interests has acted as the most potent dis-solvent of all racial and sectarian hatreds and jealousies."\(^3\)

The Aligarh Institute Gazette once again reflected loyalist anxieties. It expressed its doubts over the proper working of the constitutional government in Turkey. In its view friction would arise in a country inhabited by races widely differing in habits, religions and languages.\(^4\) In its opinion the 'Young Turks' are little better than the Indian extremists; and "that a parliamentary government is not the best form of government."\(^5\) Even if the Young Turk regime did in fact work, the paper argued that "there is a vast difference between the

\(1.\) Bhala (Bombay), 21 December 1908 - RONNP - Bombay.

\(2.\) Praja Bandhu (Bombay), 25 April 1909, Rashtramat (Bombay), 6 May 1909, RONNP-Bombay.

\(3.\) Bengalee (Calcutta), 16 October 1908.

\(4.\) Aligarh Institute Gazette, 2 September 1908.

\(5.\) Ibid.
conditions obtaining in Turkey and those in India; though Turkey is peopled by various races, they are nearly of the same character and temperament, and their gradual fusion is possible, while the large majority will be able to keep in check all troublesome minorities. In India the case is entirely different — the Hindus far out number the Musalmans." It therefore, contended that it is necessary that a third power should rule over them. For Indians, self-government was not at all desirable.¹

Abbas S. Tyabji, a Judge of the Baroda High Court, sought to persuade Indian Muslims to join the Congress movement which was non-sectarian and has the interest of the country at heart. The Muslims had not joined the Congress so far because of mistaken notions of loyalty to the British. Tyabji observed that the western representative system is a good system; and now, with the Young Turks revolution, Indian Muslims could see that "Turkish Muslims no longer consider that loyalty means unqualified submission to the powers that be."² The Advocate of Lucknow similarly observed that "our Muhammadan friends have also something to learn in this connection."³ The "strong wind from

1. **Aligarh Institute Gazette**, 11 November 1908.

2. Abbas Tyabji, 'Indian Musalmans and the Indian National Congress' Hindustan Review, December 1908, p. 1007. For Abbas S. Tyabji see Appendix A.

3. **Advocate** (Lucknow), 13 August 1908, RONNP-UP.
the headquarters of the Caliphate affects them too. They were reminded that the "Sultan has not granted the constitution on account of loyalty meetings". The Young Turks who were dubbed as the "disloyal agitator", "mischiefous" had become leaders of the people and torch-bearers of liberty.  

Various commendatory descriptions of the Turkish Revolution were published: An epoch making event where autocracy was transformed into a constitutional government. A novel phenomenon of shaking of dry bones, the "Turkish Renaissance". The Panjabee, observed: "It has suddenly swung the old world into line with the new, yet there is in the rapid transition all the elements of a careful preparation". The tide of swaraj seemed coming through the East as well as the West. The Kesari of Poona owned by Tilak wrote: "the candle is burning at both ends and therefore it is just possible that we also may obtain swaraj at an early date."  

1. *Zamana* (Kanpur), undated August 1908, RONNP-UP.  
2. Ibid.  
3. *Awaz-i-Khalq* (Benaras), 16 October 1908, RONNP-UP.  
5. *Panjabee* (Lahore), 9 September 1908.  
6. Ibid., 12 September 1908.  
7. *Kesari* (Poona), 8 September 1908.
To many it remained a riddle how the Young Turks succeeded against Sultan Abdul Hamid. It was seen as an indication that everywhere bureaucracy would go on yielding place to popular representative system of governments. The forces of democracy were becoming strong and opening up new paths of national progress. Turkey had obtained both the representative institutions and the liberty of the press; the too indispensable accessories of progress. "There is in the history" wrote the *Panjabee*, "of the Young Turk movement lessons alike for the people and the Government of India."

"The former should see that a constitutional form of government may be won without bloodshed and seismic convulsions in the body politic, of the process of education and organization be kept up steadily, even if slowly --- how the Young Turks educated in western style kept up their propaganda with immense pluck and resourcefulness, until they brought over to their side everyone in the country who could think --- no effort had been spared to familiarise the Army and its officers with the principles of constitutionism ---. It is true that the Army

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2. *Nadeegannadi* (Banglore), 15 August 1908, RONNP-Madras; also *Daily Hita Vada* (Calcutta), 2 August 1908, RONNP-Bengal.

being in the hands of the Reformers meant an element of force, pregnant with possibilities of bloodshed if any resistance had been offered."

Continuing further the paper remarked that for the Government of India:

--- there is a lesson in the Turkish Revolution as to how men who have been brought up under theocratic and autocratic influences, and surrounded by the corruption supposed to be inseparable from the Oriental life, may develop an aptitude for democratic associations and a fitness for profiting by whatever is good in modern civilization."

The apparently impracticable was exemplified by the Young Turk Revolution, and would exercise its beneficial effect on India. Indians could demand the same security for their progress.

1. *Panjabee* (Lahore), 12 September 1908.
2. Ibid.
Recalling how the British press, parliament and ministers welcomed the Turkish constitution, Britain was reminded that "India is also an Eastern country and she also desired the same thing that Turkey had obtained. England should resolve what she has to do."\(^1\) It was argued that the people who have been encouraged to share British intellectual heritage, must also aspire for the same liberties.\(^2\) "If that is realized, everything else is plain."\(^3\) Contradictions in British policies and attitude were apparent. How could Britain resist the popular demand when others could not resist it? Morley was being advised to take lessons in practical politics from the "Sickman of Europe." The demand for elective and representative system gathered momentum, with renewed vigour now that the myth of Oriental (especially Muslim) incapacity for change had been thoroughly exploded.

III

All Indians did not naturally share a common view of Turkish developments and the Young Turk Revolution. The

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1. *Indian Patriot* (Madras), 24 September 1908.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
nationalist press greeted the constitution as a victory of the Turkish people, where the despotic ruler had yielded to popular opinion. On the other hand the Muslim press called it a gift of the Sultan, and congratulated Abdul Hamid II for his act of generosity. Obviously, this attitude was in tune with pro-Caliphal sentiments of the past. The Indian Muslim press appears to have taken its cue from the Constantinople press, which, as we have seen, similarly under-played the role of the Young Turks. The nationalists, however, did not view it as the gift of the Sultan. The Ingilab of Lahore, remarked: "Anyone who thinks that the Sultan has granted the constitution of his own accord is mistaken; an autocratic ruler could never do so, more so as an act of generosity." The Swadesmitran of

1. Phoenix (Karachi), 5 August 1908, RONNP - Bombay; Ingilab (Lahore), 1 October 1908, RONNP - Punjab; Muhammedan (Madras), 14 September 1908; Swadesmitran (Madras), 3 August 1908, RONNP - Madras; Sipahi (Kanpur), July 1908, RONNP - UP.

2. Mushir Husain Kidwai, expressed this view in a letter dated 31 July 1908, in the Indian Daily Telegraph (Lucknow), 2 August 1908. See Pro. No. 54, F.D. Extl. A. August 1908, NAI. See also, Solton (Chittagong), 7 August 1908, RONNP-Bengal. Mihar-o-Sudhakar (Calcutta), 21 August 1908, RONNP-Bengal.

3. Kidwai, in his letter, Pro No. 54, F.D. Extl. A. August 1908, NAI.

4. For a cautious attitude to the Young Turks see Naikar-i-Azem (Moradabad), 19 August 1908, RONNP-UP.

5. Ingilab (Lahore), 10 October 1908, RONNP-Punjab; also, Zemana, (Kanpur), August 1908, RONNP-UP; Indian Social Reformer (Bombay), 2 May 1909, RONNP-Bombay.

...71
Madras asserted, that the Caliph "would have surely tried to suppress it, as the British Government is now doing in India."  

Sheikh Mushir Husain Kidwai wrote that when a friend of his heard the news about the restoration of the constitution in Turkey, he said, "that it was too good to be true." Kidwai seemed concerned that "Now the question is, will this generosity of the Sultan be lasting?" He answered the question himself: "The constitution now given to Turkey is irrevocable", he felt sure that "the great sagacious sovereign has taken this step after mature deliberation." Kidwai had visited Turkey before the revolution. He claimed "to be the only man who foresaw this sudden change in the constitution of Turkey", and characterized it as the "crowning achievement of Pan-Islam." He desired that the Turkish constitution be developed on "Islamic lines", and thought that its success depended on the long life of the Sultan, Abdul Hamid II. Kidwai appears to have set the trend for the Muslim press in ignoring the role of the Young Turks. When he himself visited Turkey again, he wrote from Constantinople in August 1910:

The Musalmans of India viewed one aspect of the new revolution with

2. Letter of Kidwai, 31 July 1908, published in the *Indian Daily Telegraph*, (Lucknow), 2 August 1908. See Pro. No. 54, F.D. Extl. A. August 1908, NAI.
3. Ibid.
extreme disfavour, and I perceived that the Musalmans elsewhere also did not approve of it. That aspect is that of religious equality.¹

The *Alicarh Institute Gazette*, found a vast difference between the conditions obtaining in Turkey and India. The paper contended that the majority in Turkey would keep in check the minorities, whereas in India a third party must rule to maintain the balance between the two communities; the self-government in India was not desirable.²

Muslim press indeed saw the progressive trends in Turkey and Persia with some concern and hoped that these would pass; Islam could not countenance such degree of reforms.³ In fact some praised the monarchical system as against the representative constitutional system.⁴

In spite of these forebodings, it was generally believed that the Young Turk Revolution would undoubtedly

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1. Kidwai had earlier visited Turkey in 1906 (See above Chapter 2), his second visit took place in August 1910 as the delegate of the Committee of Subscription for the Ottoman Navy. Lowther passed on his letter to the India Office. See Kidwai's letter (translated in English), Constantinople, 13 August. Encl. to Pro. No. 129, F.D. Extl. B. February 1911, Nos. 127-130, NAI.


3. Muhammadan (Madras), 22 October 1908, RONNP-Madras; Naiyar-i Azam (Moradabad), 19 August 1908, RONNP-UP.

exercise far reaching influence upon Muslims. They would feel proud of it, inasmuch as a great and glorious future was being promised for the entire Muslim race. The example of Turkey would enlighten them; some expected that they would at last join the forces of nationalism and work for its success, more so when the Sheikh-ul-Islam in Turkey approved of the measures of the Young Turks.

On the other hand, the Phoenix found no real impact on Indian Muslims:

Do we find our Muslim friends at all impressed with Young Turkey's fight for a constitution? Has the granting of a Parliament by Sultan Abdul Hamid created any impression upon Muslims of India? Far from it.

Instead, the Muslim leadership was more intent on pressing for communal privileges in the proposed reforms in India, though nationalists argued that such a step would wreck the progress of

1. The West Coast Spectator (Calicut), 24 October 1908, RONNP-Madras; Awaz-i Khalq (Benaras), 16 October, 1908, RONNP-UP.
2. Sultani (Chittagong), 31 July 1908, RONNP-Bengal.
3. Mihir-o-Sudhakar (Calcutta), 21 August 1908, RONNP-Bengal; Gujrat (Kaira), 9 August 1908, RONNP-Bombay.
4. The West Coast Spectator (Calicut), 24 October 1908, RONNP-Madras; Ghaz Akhbar (Lucknow), 8 September 1908, RONNP-UP.
5. Phoenix (Karachi), 14 October 1908, RONNP-Bombay. The same argument was put forward by the West Coast Spectator (Calicut), 24 October 1908, RONNP-Madras.
India.¹ The example of Turkey was cited where no such
privileges and special rights of communal representation were
being demanded or conceded.² The Indian Muslims were invited
to secure their rights "similar to those won by the Turks" in
'Union' and cooperation with their compatriots.³

The educated Indian Muslims welcomed the constitutions in
Turkey and Persia; and yet adopted a different attitude in
India. Explaining the reasons, it was surmised by the Praja
Bandhu that they seem to fear "that in a general welding and a
homogenous mass of Indian people they would lose their special
characteristics and advantages of past positions. This is at
the bottom of the attitude of educated Muslims."⁴ However, it
was hoped that they would imbibe the Young Turk's spirit when
they would come in contact with them through the Hejaz railway
and commercial dealings.⁵

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad⁶ acknowledges how the
ideals and aspirations of the Young Turks influenced him. In

¹. Ibid.
². Advocate (Lucknow), 13 August 1908, RONNP-UP.
³. Shakti (Surat), 15 September 1908, RONNP-Bombay.
⁴. Praja Bandhu (Bombay), 20 September 1908, RONNP-Bombay.
⁵. Indian Patriot (Madras), 1 October and 20 November 1908.
⁶. For Abul Kalam Azad see Appendix A.
1908 just before the revolution he had visited a number of Middle Eastern countries and met the revolutionaries of those countries. He met a group of Young Turks at Cairo. In Turkey he came in contact with the leaders of the Young Turk Movement, with whom he remained in regular correspondence for several years. Azad writes that the Arab and Turkish revolutionaries confirmed him in his own political beliefs. These revolutionaries expressed their surprise as to why Indian Muslims were either indifferent to or against the Indian Nationalist demands. Instead, they should have led the national struggle for freedom. They failed to understand why the Muslims were mere camp followers of the British in India. Azad became convinced that Indian Muslims must cooperate with their compatriots for the liberation of India. He planned to launch a new movement among Indian Muslims. On his return to India, he thought over his future programme, and one of the major steps taken up by him was the launching of an Urdu journal the 'Al-Hilal' in 1912, to propagate his views.

IV

It was inevitable that the attempted counter-revolution of 13 April 1909 and the subsequent deposition of

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
Abdul Hamid II was differently seen and interpreted by the nationalists and Muslims in India. The interpretation of the Sheikh-ul-Islam empowered the Turkish National Assembly to claim the inherent right of deposing the sovereign and the Khalifa. The Qudh Akhbar of Lucknow questioned the authority of the Sheikh-ul-Islam, and remarked that people outside Turkey would hesitate in accepting Muhammad V as the new Khalifa. 1

In general Indian Muslims expressed their sympathy for the deposed Sultan, 2 and justified his attempts to overthrow the constitution. 3 At the same time it was also asserted that he had no hand in the Counter-Revolution. 4 Meetings were held by the Muslims at Delhi, Madras, Bombay and Bareilly expressing sympathy for the deposed Sultan, and yet congratulating the new Sultan of Turkey.

A meeting was held at the Triplicane mosque on 23 April 1909, presided over by Maulvi Khudrath Halim; it resolved to send a telegram to the Sheikh-ul-Islam through the Turkish Consul-General at Bombay. This read: "The Muslims view with great

1. Qudh Akhbar (Lucknow), 12 May 1909, RONNP-UP; also, Mashriq (Gorakhpur), 11 May 1909, RONNP-UP.
3. Shahna-i-Hind (Meerut), 24 May 1909, RONNP-UP.
4. Paisa Akhbar (Lahore), 30 April 1909, RONNP-Punjab.
regret the internecine struggle amongst brethren of the faith and rely on the wise policy of His Majesty the Sultan in the hope that the Ulema will safeguard peace, tranquility and the law.¹ Others saw in it a conflict between the old and new forces in Turkey.² Some doubted whether the supporters of the deposed Sultan would raise another rebellion.³

The Mushir-i-Dakhan of Hyderabad, saw erroneously in the deposition of Abdul Hamid the hand of the Christian subjects of the Turkish empire. The paper suspected that European gold and silver had been used for this purpose.⁴ Taking advantage of the internal dissensions, the European powers appeared to be creating difficulties for Turkey. The change of Sultan in Turkey might involve it in a war.⁵ There was anxiety over the news that the deposed Sultan Abdul Hamid II might be compelled to return the property held by him. Fearing this, resolutions were passed urging upon the Committee of Union and Progress to spare his life and sanction a sufficient allowances for his maintenance.⁶

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2. Hitavarta (Calcutta), 29 April 1909, RONNP-Bengal.
5. Akhbar-i-Am (Lahore), 1 June 1909, RONNP-Punjab.
The deposition of Abdul Hamid II by Young Turks was also seen as a blow to pan-Islam and the prestige of the Khilafat. Mushir Husain Kidwai apprehended that such developments might result in the separation of the Khilafat from the Government. Kidwai wrote that the way the Turkish army had treated the Khalifa and the Ulema, caused indignation among Muslims in India. He observed: "that fact that the sovereign of this place (Turkey) is the Caliph of the Muslims, and the guardian of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. If this religious capacity of the sovereign be injured, and if he remains merely as the Turkish monarch, the Muslims of the world will take no interest in him." Kidwai, during his stay in Constantinople, on his second visit, witnessed the opening of the Turkish National Assembly, and met the Sheikh-ul-Islam, Musa Kazim Effendi, Mahmud Shaukat Pasha, and Ahmad Riza, President of the Deputies to ascertain their views on the


3. Ibid.
question of Khilafat. He professed to be impressed by the fact that "they know that to weaken the seat of the Caliphate would be a ruinous innovation, not only from a religious but also from the constitutional point of view." Kidwai was, like many other Indian Muslims, sceptical about Ahmad Riza Bey, who was known for his republican views. However, Kidwai felt that Ahmad Riza Bey was well informed about Indian affairs and the strength of the pro-Khilafat sentiment in India. Indeed, Kidwai urged that "It is the duty of us Muslims to turn towards the Caliph with such ardour that it may become impossible for any earthly power, whether it be of the Muslims or not, to bring about any injury to the Caliphate."

The deposition of Abdul Hamid II undoubtedly alienated the sympathies of a number of Indian Muslims from the Young Turks. By the loyalist Aligarh group they were considered little better than the Indian extremists. Others condemned as an intriguing party under the influence of some European

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid. For Ahmad Haza Bey see Appendix A.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Aligarh Institute Gazette, 2 September 1908.
powers.\(^1\) By the more indignant, the Young Turks were dubbed as crafty and inexperienced youths guilty of regicide and ingratitude.\(^2\)

Muslims felt considerable reserve in recognizing the new Turkish Sultan Muhammad V, whom they considered a titular head, and a puppet in the hands of military, the Young Turks and the National Assembly.\(^3\) Strange as it may appear, Indian Muslims had come to regard Abdul Hamid II as one of the greatest Khalifas. The Young Turks were accordingly regarded, by force of rumour, as atheists, free-thinkers or freemasons. Kidwai through his letter intended to remove such unfavourable impressions; but he too feared that the way the Young Turks had acted, "at the present time the character of the rule of Islam might become altogether European and Christian." He went on to say that even the goals of the Young Turks were unrealistic:

"... the enthusiasm for Liberty, Equality and Fraternity cannot be brought about in any nation by the mere declaration of those terms."\(^4\)

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1. Shams-ul-Akhbar (Madras), 10 May 1909, RONNP-Madras; Shan-i-Hind (Meerut), 24 May 1909, RONNP-UP.
2. Mushir-i-Dekhan (Hyderabad), 5 and 29 May, 1909, RONNP-Madras. Riyazul Akhbar (Gorakhpur), 4 and 8 May 1909, RONNP-UP.
3. Watan (Lahore), 30 April 1909, RONNP-Punjab; Mashriq (Gorakhpur), 1 May 1909, RONNP-UP; also, Akhbar-i-Am (Lahore), 1 June 1909, RONNP-Punjab and Paisa Akhbar (Lahore), 30 April 1909, RONNP-Punjab.

...81
It is significant that Kidwal should have said this despite the assurances he had received from the Turkish statesmen.

Others, however, were less rigid in their approach. The Paise Akhbar of Lahore, though critical of the deposition of Abdul Hamid II, observed that it was difficult for Indians, so far away from Constantinople to pass judgement on the wisdom of the Committee of Union and Progress in deciding to depose a statesman like him.1

The Anjuman-i-Ahbab organized a meeting on 16 May 1909, at the Zakaria mosque, Bombay, to resolve the prevailing differences of opinion among Indian Muslims about the second revolution Turkey. At the meeting Sultan Abdul Hamid II was praised and an attempt was made to pass a resolution in his support. Abul Kalam Azad who was present opposed this and advised Muslims to let Turkey take care of itself and its affairs, many of the misdeeds of Abul Hamid II, he said, were not known to Indian Muslims. The meeting ended in confusion.2

1. Paise Akhbar (Lahore), 30 April 1909, RONNP-Punjab. Also somewhat similar were the views of the Aligarh Institute Gazette, 7 July 1909, RONNP-UP.

Some Bombay papers also criticized the convening of the meeting by the Anjuman-i-Ahbab, as the affairs of Turkey lay beyond the control of Indian Muslims.  

It is interesting to note that the *Paisa Akhbar* published a communication from its Bombay correspondent, reporting about his meeting with a Turk who remarked that Indian Muslims did not value liberty; that Abdul Hamid II was deposed because he proved false to his oath to the constitution.

Quite naturally the nationalist press had no such qualms in welcoming the Turkish events. The Committee of Union and Progress and its policies won admiration, and the deposition of Abdul Hamid II was denounced as an end of a "malignant despotism." The Young Turks stood for freedom while Abdul Hamid II was for oppression. The *Tribune* of Lahore remarked that though they were being challenged by the reactionaries, much depended on the courage and capacity of the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress and its rank and file.

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The success of the Young Turks against Abdul Hamid II signified that the sovereign will of the people could get rid of a ruler who had not served them well.¹ The Tribune of Lahore observed:

... a patriotic Parliament has deposed him. The change is fraught with remarkable potentialities to the cause of constitutional government in Turkey.²

The National Assembly had taken a necessary step in proclaiming itself the supreme body in Turkey and reducing the Sultan to "an ornamental figurehead" under the constitution.³ The Nationalists were thus acclamining and echoing the republican views of the Young Turks.

The two papers of Balgangaadhar Tilak, the Kesari and the Maharatta, made significant observations on this relationship. The Kesari commented:

Swarajya in Turkey has a good deal to do with Swarajya in India. For more than five hundred years, the principles that were in vogue

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1. Akash (Delhi), 20 May 1909. RONNP – Punjab.
2. Tribune (Lahore), 29 April 1909.
at I stamboul were followed by the rest of the Moslem world. I stamboul set the law to Delhi and through it to the whole of India --- in short --- ruled the ideas of Moslems all over the world.\textsuperscript{1}

While the \textit{Mahratta} wrote:

\begin{quote}
The Muhammadan religion is a democratic religion; but as the mild, philanthropic and saintly teachings of Christ are now welded into a great political instrument of conquest and self-aggrandisement --- so the democratic nature of the teachings of Muhammad was set aside --- and the Sultanate of Turkey served for the last two centuries the purpose of a Chinese wall checking the onward march of constitutionalism towards the East and the Middle East.\textsuperscript{2}
\end{quote}

Further

The absolute and autocratic rule of the old Sultans is responsible not only for the backward condition of the Muhammadan countries

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1. Ibid.

2. \textit{Mahratta} (Bombay), 2 May 1909, ROHN\textsuperscript{P} - Bombay.
in and around the Turkish Empire, but to a certain extent for the present political stagnation in India. ... the Sultanate of the Khalifa of Constantinople, has been a great hindrance to the assimilation of constitutionalism by both the Hindus and Muhammadan masses of India.¹

The Kesari argued rather naively that "In provinces in which the Mahrattas had broken the Muhammadan power, there was a difficulty in overcoming the influence of the Turkish ideas over the minds of the people."² Thus the "seeds of the present political agitation could easily be sown in Bengal, Mahrashtra and Madras. But Delhi and Lucknow offered resistance to the spread of the new ideas, as they were dominated by the influence of Istanbul."³ The British recruited soldiers mainly from the Punjab and the United Provinces, therefore, the people there were not favourable to 'Swarajya', as they were familiar with "autocratic Imperial methods of Isambouli" for generations.⁴ As a consequence so long as Turkey was governed by despotic Sultans, "it was difficult to win over the Muhammadans and Hindus of Delhi and Agra to Swarajya movement."⁵ It was expected that the more

¹ Ibid.
² Kesari (Poona), 4 May 1909, RONNP-Bombay.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid.
the Indian Muslim came into contact with the Turks the more
they would be familiar with the democratic ideas and self-rule,
and in about ten years from now "Indian Muhammadans will come to
lead the Swarajya movement."\(^1\) In another respect also, it was
believed the Young Turk revolution was likely to have its
impact on India, namely the Hindu-Muslim relationship. The
*Kesari* observed:

Sir Syed Ahmad could separate the
Hindus and the Muhammadans, when
Turkey lay on its death bed and
was in imminent danger of being
partitioned by the European Nations.
But the prosperity of Turkey under
the new constitution will unite
them together \(^2\)

These developments will break the ice of Muslim "conservatism
in India"\(^3\) The Young Turks, wrote the *Kesari* "have removed a
great difficulty from our path."\(^4\) Now "the waves of constitut-
ionalism will roll merrily from Europe towards India through
Turkey"\(^5\)

\[\text{References}\]

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., also Kal. 7 May 1909, RCONP - Bombay.
5. Mahratta, 2 May 1909, See also, Rashtramât (Bombay),
30 April 1909, RCONP-Bombay.
On a larger canvas the papers took pride in the Young Turk revolution as an Asian phenomenon. It symbolised that Oriental nations are suitable for democratic and representative form of government. Equally it was expected that the Young Turks would be sympathetic to a movement which aims at establishing a democratic self-rule in India. Above all, "apart from this selfish consideration, Indians should congratulate the Turks on the new revolution in Turkey. For the victory is not of an individual or a party, but of a principle viz., of democracy over autocracy." 1

V

The two successive revolutions in Turkey strengthened the nationalist convictions. The myth had been demolished, which had been for so long been the mainstay of British imperialists in India, to throw water on the Indian aspirations for democracy and self-rule. Young Turk revolution gave a fresh meaning and new impetus to the proposed reforms in India. We have discussed above the wider implications of these developments as viewed by the imperialists and the nationalist as well as the conservative Muslims. Nationalist ideology made significant strides and external events like the Young Turk revolution proved conducive to its growth and development. Morley, the Secretary of State for India, was aware that the awakened educated Indian "armed

with modern ideas, was thoroughly dissatisfied with the old order of things. ¹ Now they saw changes are taking place everywhere, but in India their demand for "a voice in the administration of their country" was being met with suppression and deportation. Ramsay MacDonald writes of his meetings with Indians at the time: "What I asked nearly everybody I met whose opinion was of importance, is your conception of the end which is being worked out by our Indian administration? "A free and independent India" replied Arabindo Ghosh; 'self-government within the British empire' said Mr Gokhale."²

Muslim League politics still pivoted round the belief of the permanence of British rule in India.³ Acting on this belief the leaders of the Muslim league tried to set their community firmly on the path of cooperation with the British government. The ground was thus prepared for a fresh initiative.

3. See Presidential Address of Syed Ali Imam, All India Muslim League, Amritsar, 1908.

Also the address presented to the Lt. Governor John H Hewett, by the Secretary of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh: "beg the Government to believe that the fundamental idea on which the Aligarh Movement is based, is the belief that for a steady and unchecked advance of our country and for our existence here as a progressive community in India the presence of British rule is an absolute necessity. --- an unshakable faith in the benign nature of the British rule in India is the corner stone of our policy" Aligarh Institute Gazette, 23 August 1909.

...89
from the British Government to rally the conservative Muslim leaders.

"You cannot sit", said Minto, while addressing the Imperial Council, "forever on a safety valve". He, therefore, aimed at weakening of the nationalist forces. Seeing the mass of "smothered discontent" and new possibilities emerging before Indians, Minto decided to follow the footsteps of Curzon. He planned to act, believing that "the initiative should emanate from us". Both Morley and Minto ruled out the possibility of representative institutions for India - "a western importation unnatural to Eastern tastes." The Muslim leadership represented by persons like the Aga Khan, held British suzerainty in the Government of India to be extremely necessary.

Syed Ameer Ali was against devolution of power to any kind of representative assembly. He led a deputation of the Muslim League, London branch, to Morley and emphasized that any injustice to Muslims of India would have serious and injurious reaction at Constantinople.

1. Summary of the Legislative Department, during the Viceroyalty of Minto, p. 12.
2. Mary Countess of Minto, India Minto and Morley, p. 110.
3. Aga Khan's speech at Poona, reported in Naiyar-i-Azam (Moradabad), 5 September 1908, RONMP-UP.
The great British "initiative" came in the shape of establishing a separate electorate for Muslims, under the Indian Council Act of 1909. The Anglo-Indian bureaucracy was given the right to formulate regulations; so as to push the "Trojan horse of communalism" into the ranks of Indian nationalism.¹

The Muslim Herald of Bombay published a letter from Mahmood Husain who argued: "Is the Muslim League prepared to give the Shias, Ismailis, Wahabis and other sections separate electorate --- will these sections of Islam be content with the predominant Sunni electorate having their own way. ... Most of the right thinking Muslims consider the demand unreasonable."²

In spite of such protests by liberal or nationalist Muslim opinion, the Reforms of 1909 did undermine the influence of Congress (both Extremists and Moderates) among the Muslims.³

The Mahratta remarked: "What a strange contrast between the constitutional regime in Turkey granting full rights of citizenship to the people, and the new reforms --- have only resulted in keeping real public opinion as far as away as possible from the enlarged councils."⁴ Imperial considerations had influenced

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2. Muslim Herald (Bombay), 28 August and 3 September 1909, RNNP - Bombay.
the reform measures: the Young Turk Revolution, the demands of Muslim League had assumed signal importance for the British government. Although the Turkish constitution did not provide for class representation, nor was religion made the basis for representation and election to its National Assembly, yet imperialism had sabotaged the composite national unity by introducing these elements in India in the name of concessions to Muslims. The result would be Muslim separatism. The Kesari observed: "If the Muhammadans are separated from the Hindus in all public bodies, they will have to accept the ideal of pan-Islamism."  

1. Akasah (Delhi), 25 March 1909, RONNP-Punjab.
2. Indian Spectator (Bombay), 30 January 1909, RONNP-Bombay.
3. Tribune (Lahore), 30 January 1909; also, Army News, 20 March 1909, RONNP-Punjab.