CHAPTER IV
THE YOUNG OTTOMANS
(IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION)
The Young Ottoman ideology was the manifestation of a serious reaction and deep protest against, the traditional as well as the western extremes. The Young Ottomans were the first ideologists in the Empire who tried to take the “best” of the west and graft it onto Islamic traditions. They tried to maintain the balance as they thought that if the extreme conservative ideas were detrimental to the progress of the Ottoman society, the Tanzimatists too undermined or ignored the richness of traditional culture. The major components of the ideology of the Young Ottomans were patriotism, constitutionalism, nationalism (with Islamic orientation), liberalism, freedom and separation of state from religion.

The ideas of the Young Ottomans often differed, especially on political matters, and the group was not a very cohesive body. What united such very different personalities, as the sequel will show, was the desire to define a patriotic Ottoman identity. Divided as they were over the most basic questions of a common programme and inconsistent as was their political theory, the Young Ottomans were of one mind in regarding Islam as the essential framework within which reform must take place. When they proposed that the form of government should be a participatory constitutional liberalism, they made it clear that they were not taking this from European Enlightenment but they sought to root it within Islam and they forcefully emphasized the continuing and essential validity of Islam as the basis of Ottoman political culture.
According to Şerif Mardin, the Young Ottomans represented four main ideological streams:

i) Mehmed Bey, Halil Şerif, and Mustafa Fazıl Paşa represented the liberal ideal of progress through emancipation from all remnants of a bygone age. They were absolutely universal in orientation and started from the basic demands of the brotherhood of humanity. Mustafa Fazıl Paşa’s proposals were an attempt at “unification” which sought to take its strength from an appeal to the “people”, the latter in reality consisting of an ideal, limited electorate.

ii) Namık Kemal was the other ideologist of the Young Ottomans, who made the first attempt to expound liberal doctrine on the basis of the theory of natural rights, according to which the normal condition of a state was to be based on the consent of its citizens, who were endowed by nature with certain basic rights. The function of the state was to provide the authority to the preservation of these rights. The right of sovereignty naturally belonged to all. This theory gave rise to the idea of constitutional regime based on the fundamental rights of the people in accordance with the Islamic Shari’ah, and later became the basis for framing Turkey’s first constitution promulgated in 1876. Kemal was too immersed in the stream of western liberal ideas, but for him “liberty” and “the nation” were the key ideals. Observing the decline of Ottoman Empire and the supremacy of the west, he opted for a programme of “conscious change” through modern technological advances. He desired
that Turkey should acquire without any hesitation all that was superior
and useful in the western civilization. Wherever Namık Kemal used the
term “civilization” he referred to the western industry, technology,
economy, press and education. But, at the same time, he opposed the
subservience of the Ottoman Empire to the European economic
interests, and upheld the Islamic-Ottoman ideals. Even his ideal of
patriotism was Pan-Ottomanist with Islamic nationalism at its roots. He
took liberty and progress as the articles of faith for the survival of the
Empire and Islam. In reality, his ideals were primarily the means to
realise two important objectives in that historical situation: the
unification of the Ottoman individuals and millets and to meet the
challenge of the political and economic supremacy of the west by a
modernised and unified Ottoman Empire.

Namık Kemal was nearer to “the people” than Mustafa Fazıl and
Halil Şerif. He was in close touch with the great social ferment silently
working in the Ottoman Empire as a result of the disintegration of the
traditional frame-work of the ottoman society.

iii) Ali Suavi, was considered the only real representative of the Young
Ottomans. He expressed the hostility of the middle-lower class of the
society towards a type of westernisation which gave them only marginal
benefits. So, he promoted a new ideological trend which emphasised the
eagerness among the lower class to share the material blessings of the
progress as a result of the introduction of westernization in the Empire.
iv) Ziya Paşa, was a man of the palace whose primary dispute or disagreement was with the ministers of the Porte. He believed that the realization of our aims would depend upon gaining power by reconciliation with the Sultan. His ideological contribution to the Young Ottoman Movement was not very great, he was afflicted by an ideological sickness.

Mustafa Fazıl Paşa's Ideological Reflection:

In the year 1867, a lengthy letter was written by Mustafa Fazıl Paşa which was addressed to the then ruler, sultan Abdul Aziz, informing that he had already established a group of Young Ottomans in Paris. This letter was the first manifesto of the liberals. This letter was written in French and was translated into Turkish by one Sadullah Paşa. Over 50,000 copies were printed in the shop of the French printer Cayol, and distributed throughout the Empire by the Young Ottomans. The letter is as follows:

Religion rules over the spirit, and promises other worldly benefits to us. But that which determines and delimits the laws of the nation is not religion. If religion does not remain in the position of eternal truths, in other words, if it descends into interference with worldly affairs, it becomes a destroyer of all as well as of its own self.

This letter contains two ideas:
i) that constitutional rule was the only legitimate form for the government of Turkey; and

ii) that it was universally valid and, therefore, had nothing to do with religion.

The inevitable implication was the recognition of the separation of the state from religion. It was this implication that led the liberals of this period into confusion both in their intellectual attitudes and in the field of political action.10

In the letter Mustafa Fazıl Paşa took up an idea from the “Hatti Sharif of Gülhane,” the idea that by structural changes one could work for the arrest of the process of decay in the Empire. This time, however, the earlier attempt to create a more efficient administrative procedure had given way to the idea that this machinery should be controlled. According to Mustafa Fazıl Paşa, effectiveness in the machinery of the state could not be obtained by a mere increase in control, as was attempted in the centralizing moves of Mahmud II, but, instead by decreasing the grip of the state over the citizens. Mustafa contended that the truth of the matter was that the first mentor of the people was liberty itself. Liberty was the “original schoolmaster which gave rise to all others”. People could make use of their knowledge, only when their rights were guaranteed by the government.

Mustafa Fazıl Paşa spoke of a “revolution” which was to be undertaken by the ruler himself. He cited the example of the king of Italy who led the movement of liberalization in his own country. This idea was completely new
and therein laid its explosive quality. Mustafa’s ideas can be pinpointed in the light of his respect toward the sovereign and his desire to see the supreme power within a constitutional state. It was the sovereign (sultan) who was to guide the Turkish nation on the road to progress, and there was no question in his scheme of a government responsible to the people. This idea had become fashionable in Europe toward the middle of the nineteenth century.

Mustafa Fazıl Paşa summed up his programme as “seeking to base the Ottoman Empire upon constitutional liberty which would establish equality and harmony between Muslims and Christians and which, in waiting for better things, would give to Turkey the moral superiority over such and such one of its neighbours.”

Namık Kemal:

Namık Kemal was born in the town of Tekirdağ in December 1840. He was the best intellectual, thinker and writer of the Young Ottomans. At the age of seventeen he came to Istanbul and entered the Translation Bureau of the customs and then of the Porte. He came under the influence of the poet, Leskofçalı Galib. At the same time Kemal met Şinasi, and became a member of the poetic circle known as the council, whose members included both Şinasi and Galib.

Namık Kemal’s philosophy can be understood by studying his activities from 1865 onward, by understanding his political conceptions which run throughout his works and productions. He wrote articles for the Hürriyet and
the Ibret. It is from these articles that we have to recapture his political philosophy may be looked at from two viewpoints:

i) In relation to his attempted synthesis between Islamic and western political conceptions and therefore in terms of purpose, origin, and internal consistency; and

ii) In terms of having introduced into Turkey certain key political concepts which affected subsequent generations of Turkish thinkers.\(^\text{12}\)

Namik Kemal was credited with having used the words “fatherland” and millet, “nation” in their modern sense.\(^\text{13}\)

**Nature of the Political System:**

Namik Kemal’s interest in “the people” (which has often been incorrectly interpreted as a belief in the value of universal right) originally had religious and probably mystical bases. Later when he became acquainted with European liberalism, his focus was the idea of the participation of the people in the political system.\(^\text{14}\)

While discussing the nature of the political system, he made the first attempt to expound liberal doctrine on the basis of the theory of natural rights. The normal condition of a state was to be based upon the consent of its citizens, who were endowed by nature with certain rights. The function of the state was to provide the authority necessary for the preservation of these rights. The right of sovereignty lay with group from amongst them was invested with the duty of exercising sovereignty. The people delegated their sovereignty in different
ways, but the best form of government was the one that least threatened the liberties of the individuals.

The doctrine of natural rights, as developed by European philosophers, political scientists and jurists, may not have its counterpart in Islamic philosophical and legal thinking (although some European natural law philosophers like Saint Thomas Aquinas are said to have been influenced by Muslim thinkers). Namik Kemal is credited as being the first Ottoman Muslim to understand the real essence of liberalism and the meaning of the sovereignty of the people.¹⁵

All his life Kemal tried to integrate the ideas of the Enlightenment with the Islamic traditions. He was the first thinker to discuss the problems faced by the Muslims according to a coherent intellectual system. He also talked about the importance of the Shari'ah and the observance of the basic principles of Islam.¹⁶

On the basis of his perception of Islamic culture, Kemal evolved a system which had the distinction of fitting rather closely the prerequisites of the type of liberalism that was current in Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century.¹⁷ According to him the constitution which was to serve as model for the Turks was the constitution of the France. He arrived at this conclusion after comparing the British, French, and American systems. Namik Kemal ruled out the unwritten constitution of England because it was based on the representation of an aristocracy; he ruled out the constitution of the United States because it was republican. According to Namik Kemal, the French
constitution appeared to include the most suitable combination of checks and balances for Turkey.\textsuperscript{18} He proposed the three following assemblies:

i) A Council of State \textit{(Sura - yi - Devlet)}, composed of forty or fifty members, to draft bills and regulations and to decide upon the execution of the administrative laws;

ii) A Senate \textit{(Mejlis - i - Ayan)} to act as a moderating power between the legislative body and the executive power by keeping alive the aspirations of the people, and to ratify for promulgation of all laws; and

iii) A National Assembly \textit{(Sura - yi - Ummat)} to legislate the bills prepared by the first body and to control the budget.

His project became the basis for framing Turkey’s first constitution. He brought two ideas:

i) A legitimate government based upon the consent and control of the people, and

ii) Legislature separate from the executive power

In this way Namik Kemal was far in advance of the Tanzimat’s conception of constitutionalism. He became the central figure and the victim of the struggles arising from the incompatibility of these two ideas, the views held by others and those enshrined in the \textit{Shari’ah}.\textsuperscript{19}

Namik Kemal developed certain ideas of progress and of the nature and limits of westernization, and, finally, the idea of Islamic nationalism.
Namık Kemal’s Idea of Progress and Westernization:

Namık Kemal’s ideas that can be traced back to the influence of Europe are mainly those relating to progress and westernization. This influence can also be noticed in the articles that he wrote and composed during his stay in England. In his articles, he stressed the importance of modern technological advances in creating a new civilization in Europe.

Kemal’s studies and research led him to conclude:

i) That the west’s achievements were possible only through the victory of the ideas of liberty and progress over those of fatalism and resignation which characterised the East; and

ii) That, for Turkey and Islam to survive, the people had to take liberty and progress as their articles of faith.

Namık Kemal believed that this type of progress was part of the dynamic move of every society and reflected the natural ability of individuals to progress. He also believed that this type of progress was irreversible, like the hands of a clock which could not be turned back. This progress was advancing at an increasingly fast pace and its most important characteristic was that it had brought “lasting order” in the society.

Namık Kemal warned against the dangers arising from the widening gulf between the traditionalist conservatives and the imitative westernists. This led him to search both for those elements of the culture that were obstacles to
progress and for those aspects of western civilization that should not be taken over.

Namik Kemal was the first Turkish writer to see clearly the importance of the economic penetration of the west. His descriptions of the evils of the existing economic, financial, administrative, and educational conditions were accurate and pioneering. He exhorted Turkey to acquire everything without any hesitation that was superior and useful in western civilization. However, when Kemal used the term "civilization" (medeniyat), he referred only to industry, technology, economy, the press, and education. He did not seem to realise when he insisted upon differentiating between the "good" and "bad" aspects of western civilization that those rational, technical, scientific, and material aspects of the west which he admired did not come into existence. A Muslim, while appreciating the technological advancement of the West may ask: where is the moral progress which would have been able to prevent the misuse of science and technology (e.g., atomic holocaust of Hiroshima)? Why the spiritual energy which could have brought the risks of technology under control has not been developed to the same extent as technological development? If Kemal would have anticipated the evils of unrestrained technological advancement, he would have qualified his call for technological development within the framework of morality and ethics. In an Islamic system, technology would be subject to the moral norms of Islam.

Namik Kemal conceived that the future development of the Empire depended on intense effort, hard work and accompanied by education. He
believed that literature should be used as a means of inspiring the Ottomans to lift themselves for their own profit. His criticism of the ulema’s assuming a double function as “professors” in traditional Ottoman institutions of higher learning and judges in Ottoman courts amounted to a desire to see both of these functions performed with the efficiency that was required by a modern society. His articles on economics repeat the themes first encountered in the writings of Sadik Rifat Paşa.24

Namık Kemal’s Idea of Law:

Namık Kemal calls for the implementation of the religious law, the Shari’ah. He believed that the Shari’ah provided the surest guide and was comprehensive enough to include all that the constitution and the fundamental rights of the subjects will secure. This belief of Namık Kemal may be considered orthodox and it emphasised the role of the Ulema.

It is because he believed in the ‘common law” that he attacked the continental European conception of a public law which, in the form it took during the nineteenth century, started from the basic tenet of the superiority of the moral personality of the state. From there, Namık Kemal went to attack the conception of the general will.

According to Namık Kemal, not only did the religious foundation of law solve the problem of a fixed standard of good and bad, but, it had great practical advantages. Since Allah Almighty revealed the Qur’ân so that, the Muslims can understand its general principles, which are embodied in it. If
laws were passed in accordance with these general principles, it meant that every true believer would automatically have a sufficient knowledge of the laws of the country. In a country like France, where law was not drafted in accordance with such basic standards, it was of course impossible for the citizen to know the law.

The comparison between Coke and Kemal may be carried further to the points on which Namık Kemal and Sir Edward differed that Coke had spoken about the particular reason of law which the king, who was not a lawyer, could not therefore measure. On the other hand, the Shari’at is a God’s law could have no secular inner logic. This was the reason Kemal did not believe law could be based on ethics (system of Moral principles). According to him, “the science of what is just and what is unjust” was based on religion; it was the Shariat.25

Namık Kemal’s Patriotic Romanticism:

Namık Kemal’s romantic ideology of patriotism was born during his fight against the Tanzimat secularism. He was in favour of Islamist constitutionalism and he conveyed his message through his poetry, romantic historic novels, and plays.26

Namık Kemal mentioned those western political thinkers whose works, as well as names had great importance. Kemal derived the theory of popular sovereignty from Rousseau. He obtained his ideas about the double contract from Locke’s theory of social contract; he owed his theory of the separation of
powers to Montesquieu; he was indebted to Volney for his analysis of the decadence of the Ottoman Empire and to the romantic writers for his emphasis on feeling and emotion as well as for his conception of culture.

Namık Kemal derived the theory of popular sovereignty from Rousseau may be seen in the fashion in which he described the creation of the first “normative force” to be “invented” in the society.

When Kemal exposed the European ideas, he was impressed by that of the separation of powers almost as much as that of popular sovereignty. According to him, it was quite clear that as long as legislation was enacted and executed by the same body, the system of government would be absolutistic.  

Before 1872, Namık Kemal developed his ideas, during the decline of the Muslims and the influence or supremacy of the west, when Muslims needed change and development of a new sense of solidarity or patriotism. He thought that Islam should be the basis of this patriotism and that reforms could succeed only if they were carried on in accordance with Islam rather than by imitating European institutions. Finally, his belief that Islam essentially is compatible with a constitutional form of government appears to anticipate similar ideas in almost all Muslim countries during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. For example: Jamal al – Din Afghani was the best international representative of these similar ideas. Afghani said that, the Tanzimat experiment served as a testing ground for the problems of modernization of all Muslim societies. Kemal’s ideas were evolved as reactions, on the one hand, to the problems of adaptation which this experiment raised before the Muslims and forced them to
ask where were the bases or the power exercises for change, and, on the other hand, to the western assertion that the Muslims were doomed as their religion or civilization was essentially incapable of reform and modern progress.²⁸

Ali Suavi:

Ali Suavi was born in Istanbul in 1839. He was the son of a paper merchant. He received his primary education at a Rüşdiye. After his graduation he studied religious sciences and went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Then he entered the service of the state in a governmental bureau. Three years later he got the job of teacher in Rüşdiye. When he was dismissed, he returned to the capital. Suavi began writing for Filip Efendi’s Muhbir; when the Muhbir was closed, he was sent into exile to the Black Sea. Some time later he was joined in Italy by Namık Kemal and Ziya Paşa on his way to Paris. The three members of the Young Ottomans arrived in Paris together.

Ali Suavi was the real representative of the Young Ottomans. He promoted a new ideological trend among the lower classes and at the same time, his real attachment was with the monarchy. This new emphasis placed by Suavi on the Sultan’s leadership of his community was an important aspect of Ali Suavi’s philosophy.

There are three fundamental disagreements between Namık Kemal and Ali Suavi’s theories:

i) Namık Kemal’s political theory consists of a determined effort to introduce into Ottoman political thinking the concept of popular
sovereignty; Ali Suavi finds the term to be meaningless from the point of view of Islamic political theology regardless of its place in European political philosophy.

ii) Kemal attempted to work into his own scheme, the principle of the separation of powers, and Suavi replaces this scheme by his own principle of the “unity of the imamate”.

iii) Namik Kemal was opposed to any act of civil disobedience that would go beyond verbal protests; Ali Suavi was ready to go much farther.

According to Ali Suavi, the sovereignty that man possessed was of a relative nature, he was sovereign over his own self with regard to his fellow humans in that none of them had the right to interfere with his activities as long as he observed the remarks of divine law.

His arguments on the “natural” philosophers (the philosophers of the Enlightenment) were obliged to admit, ultimately, the presence of an all-pervasive ordering force. According to Ali Suavi this was a poor substitute for God.

About separation of power, Ali Suavi’s reaction was characteristic. He though that first of all the separation of powers existed in Islam, as could be gathered from the division of labour between the müftü (the interpreter of the Shari’at), the kadi (the judge sitting on the Islamic Court), and the vali (the governor acting as the arm of the executive). This was a point that had already been made by Namik Kemal. But while Kemal went on to accept the concept
of checks and balances, Suavi claimed that this was impossible. Ali Suavi made the point that the principle of the “unity of the imamate” required that though these forces carry out different tasks they be linked to one another in a hierarchical chain reminiscent of Kinalizâde’s “circle”. This he described as follows: “the i‘lmera rule over the people and the Ulema rule over the emirs and divine law rules over the Ulema”.

Ali Suavi’s ideas converge at three points which are:

i) His desire to infuse a new energy into the veins of the Ottomans and his own readiness to take active measures so as to bring the recovery of the Ottoman Empire;

ii) His self-identification with the underprivileged;

iii) His willingness to resist constituted authority.

This latter factor is often extremely uncertain as it is accompanied by a search for the right type of ruler to which is surrendered the administration of the affairs of the state.

Ali Suavi in the first issue of the Muhbir conceived that the Ottomans should begin to do things for themselves. Muslims should devote themselves to the development of industry, and should study mathematics, physics and other physical sciences. He thought that economic and commercial enterprises should be taken out of foreigners’ hands.

Ali Suavi thought that Islamic law was quite sufficient; to keep up with the pace of modern social and economic life. It has within itself built in
mechanism for change and growth. Only one thing was necessary: preparation of an “excellent book of fiqh (Islamic law) in a language that everyone would understand”.

Ali Suavi attempted to uplift the people and made programmes of modernization. This aspect of his activism may be called his “populism”. This stand had two aspects:

i) A positive aspect which expressed itself in new educational ideas, and

ii) A negative aspect in which he revolted against the privileges of those in power.

Ali Suavi was completely against the traditional methods of teaching. He was convinced that a simplification of the language was necessary to provide for the intellectual development of “the people”. He placed considerable faith in the political wisdom of “the people”.

His fundamental political theory consisted of a few fundamental principles which may be stated as follows:

i) God was the seat of political sovereignty;

ii) The Shari‘at was the instrument whereby this sovereignty was translated from the divine to the human plane;

iii) The ulema were the interpreters of this incarnation of God’s sovereignty on earth; and

iv) Kings and viziers were only the executors of the interpretive decisions (fetvas) of the ulema as to the suitableness of basic political acts.
These views of Ali Suavi were inspired by the fundamental statements contained in the Qur‘ān and by early Islam than by the political theory of the later jurists.

In other words, Suavi used three types of Islamic arguments to this end:

i) The Qur’ānic obligation imposed by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) on his community to conform to the good and to avoid evil ways;

ii) Traditions attributed to the earliest caliphs.

iii) Arguments taken from later jurists which have to be traced to their source to establish their full significance.

Ali Suavi’s theory of revolt, an attitude at odds with all Islamic traditions, would normally be brought under this category. His ideas of social justice and resistance to oppression were family inheritances. His first clash with administrative authorities at the age of seventeen anticipates by far his contact with western ideas. The idea of social justice was taught to him (Suavi) by his father, who was a member of a merchant guild. There is no doubt that it is in the certain (folk) traditions transmitted through Ottoman guilds that the origin of this aspect of Suavi’s thought will have to be traced.  

Ziya Paşa:

Ziya Paşa was born in 1825. He received his primary education in local Qur’ānic school, and then he was admitted to Mekteb -i Maarif -i Adliyye. After graduating, Ziya Paşa entered the Translation Bureau. There he came under the
influence of the poet Fatin Efendi under Efendi’s guidance he acquired a vast store of classical Ottoman Islamic culture.

The outstanding characteristic of Ziya Paşa was his experience as an administrator. Ziya Paşa differed from Namık Kemal in both personality and career. Kemal was a theorist. His (Kemal) articles on general principles of politics, Ziya Paşa’s are, in the majority, concerned with bettering administrative practice in the Ottoman Empire. With regard to their respective personalities, Ziya Paşa was much more cautious man than Kemal.

In 1855 Ziya was appointed secretary to the Imperial Palace. Edhem Paşa advised Ziya to learn a foreign language. It was as a result of his influence that Ziya concentrated on French and started translations from this language.

When Ziya, return from exile along with Kemal and Suavi, Ziya, was permitted to resume his administrative posts, during Abdülhamid II period. He lived a miserable life in various provinces until 1880. He was died in 1881. Ziya Paşa’s ideas concerning the state are quite similar to these of Namık Kemal, but there are three aspects of his contributions which distinguish them from the latter. These were:

i) Ziya was a man intimately acquainted with the Palace and this fixed with the idea of the imperial function. A special facet of this approach was Ziya’s study of the decline of this function, which according to him paralleled and was the cause of the decline of the Empire.
Ziya was a culture traditionalist in more ways than Kemal. This accounts for his violence against the adoption of "Frankish customs" and his fear that the Ottoman culture was to disappear.

He was not so much interested in freedom as he was in the elimination of the new bureaucrats.

About the establishment of government, Ziya’s theory, in giving some power to a judge so that he can adjudicate disputes arising in the community. Ziya also thought the judge to be the first person to whom authority had been delegated in the name of the community.

Ziya’s system reflects an aspect of Islamic theory, namely, the precedence of law over the state. It points to the fact that to Ziya just as to Kemal, government meant the dispensation of justice rather than the presence of a machinery of the state.

In Ziya’s writings, the Shari’at seems to lose entirely its characteristic of a fundamental statement of political obligation and becomes no more than a perfect statement of law, the best available means for keeping the ruler from against the people.

Ziya’s ultimate explanation for "freedom" was that God had congenitally endowed man with freedom. He also expands the idea that freedom without law could not be conceived. He said that “Perfect laws were made according to the particular composition of every nation and according to its characteristics. There has never existed at any time of a tribe which lived in
society without regular system of laws. Thus liberty is found with the attachment to laws”.

Ziya stated that these laws were part of a system which was related with the people and that whenever the changes were brought to the system, these people began to decline. In reality, he wanted to express his idea that the Shari’at could not be abandoned without the danger of degeneration and loss of cultural identity for the Ottomans.

It is very difficult to trace the origin of this idea, but it is quite probable that Ziya’s ideas originated from Montesquieu’s theories as that “there is in every nation a general spirit upon which power itself is founded. When it shocks this spirit, power settles its own foundation and thus necessarily checks itself”.

Ziya Paşa saw the speciousness of this argument: “The equality which was proclaimed with the Hatt-ı Hümâyûn of Gülhane was restricted to private law that is to everybody being afforded judicial remedy. Consequently to say that the Porte proclaimed complete (political) equality in the first place by passing the Rescript of Gülhane is a statement of ignorance which is contrary to fact and merits being laughed at”. Ziya objected to conception of “equality in honours”, the provisions of the Firman Rescript of 1856 according to which employment was forcibly opened up to the minorities on a proportional basis. Ziya pointed out that the “equality” was a meaningless term as long as the “upper class people” are there. He also demands of the Great Powers for the establishment of “political rights”. These, however, would not be obtained by
employing Christians in the highest state functions but by providing them with an opportunity to control the government. The previous analysis has shown the extent to which Namık Kemal’s ideas were more radical than Ziya Paşa’s ideas. Yet the libertarian content of Ziya’s writings cannot be denied. “Popular sovereignty” was not a concept as widely used by Ziya as by Kemal. Ziya Paşa believed that the realization of our aims would depend upon gaining power by reconciliation with the Sultan. An outstanding aspect of Ziya’s theory was that government meant justice for the people. Ziya Paşa’s ideological contribution to the Young Ottoman was less significant.

Although the Young Turks lacked cohesion, yet it was a great intellectual exercise. Their influence on Turkish thought and literature is immense. Modern Turkish Republic is greatly indebted to them and it is fair enough that it looks back to Young Turks as its spiritual ancestors. However, despite the shift from the Tanzimat reforms and despite the fact that the Young Ottomans sought to emphasize the Islamic ‘core’ at the heart of Ottoman culture, the dilemma still remained: How much westernisation, and of what sort?
Notes and References:

8. Mardin, *op. cit. p. 79.


