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## Young Turk Governance in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War

Erik Jan Zürcher

Institute of Area Studies, Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands

The question that this article tries to answer is a simple one, yet one that has not been posed in the literature: how was the Ottoman Empire governed during the First World War? What was the character of its regime? Over the past decade interest in the First World War period in Ottoman history has grown enormously. A number of important studies of the military, economic and demographic policies of the Committee of Union and Progress have appeared, but the understanding of the nature of the Young Turk regime has not progressed much beyond the way Bernard Lewis described it in 1961:

From then [June, 1913, EJZ] until 1918 Turkey was ruled by a virtual military dictatorship, dominated by three men – Enver, Talât, and Cemal Pashas.

And:

He [Grand Vizier Said Halim Pasha, EJZ] was, however, a captive of the Unionist leaders; finally, in 1917, he retired to the Senate, leaving Talât as Grand Vizier and the triumvirs fully in control.<sup>1</sup>

Both the notion of the military dictatorship and that of the triumvirate have proved extremely enduring, but neither is an adequate description of the wartime regime.

### The starting position on the eve of war

When we endeavour to look at the Ottoman Empire's regime in the comparative context of the major European belligerents in the First World War, three really major differences stand out even before we begin any detailed investigation. Like all belligerent countries with the exception of the French Republic, the Ottoman Empire was a constitutional monarchy. The constitution of 1876 had never been fully rescinded, but it had been disregarded by the 'old regime' of Sultan Abdülhamid II for 30 years between 1878 and 1908. It had been fully restored after the Young Turk revolution of July 1908 and amended in a democratic sense in 1909. The powers of the sultan to appoint ministers, to dissolve parliament and to intervene in military matters had been much reduced or abolished. However, alone among the belligerent states, the Ottoman Empire had undergone a coup d'état before the war. On 13 January 1913 members of the Young Turk Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) had stormed the building of the Sublime Porte while a cabinet session was in progress, forced the Grand Vizier to resign at gunpoint, and installed a cabinet they themselves dominated under the former army inspector and war minister Mahmud Şevket Pasha. After his murder in June 1913, the Committee had appointed one of their own, Said Halim Pasha, as his successor.

**CONTACT** Erik Jan Zürcher  [zurcherej@gmail.com](mailto:zurcherej@gmail.com)

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The second aspect that differentiated the regime in the Ottoman Empire from that of the other belligerent states was that, with the exception of a short period in 1912 (24 July to 17 September), the capital Constantinople had been under martial law since the failed counterrevolution of April 1909. At the time of the mobilisation, on 2 August 1914, martial law was proclaimed throughout the country and it remained in force during the First World War, although in December 1917 it was lifted in a number of inland provinces in Western and Central Anatolia. Martial law was introduced in several other belligerent countries as well, of course, but only after the outbreak of war.

In other words, the system of governance of the Ottoman Empire at the onset of war in 1914 was a legacy, not only of the revolution that restored constitutional and parliamentary government in 1908, but also of the measures taken after the counterrevolution of 1909 (martial law) and of the coup d'état of 1913 (single-party rule).

Thirdly, and also as a result of the 1913 coup, the linkages between the government and the armed forces in the Ottoman Empire were exceptional: Enver Bey, one of the original heroes of the revolution of 1908 and one of the initiators of the 1913 coup, was promoted twice in quick succession (the second promotion also bringing him the title of 'Pasha') and appointed to three key positions in 1914: Vice-commander-in-chief (under the nominal command of the sultan), chief of the general staff AND minister of war. This was a position comparable to that of Erich von Falkenhayn in September 1914 to January 1915, but the latter was soon relieved of his ministerial functions to concentrate on his military ones. Enver continued in all three functions throughout the war. At the same time, he continued to be an influential member of the inner circle of the Committee of Union and Progress.

## The Ottoman triangle

To make sense of the governance of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War I think it is helpful to understand it in terms of the interaction of three different sets of institutions and actors, in other words as a triangle.

First of all, there are the institutions created or circumscribed by the 1876/1908 constitution: the dynasty and the court; the cabinet; the chamber of representatives; and the senate. Secondly, there are the institutions of the Committee of Union and Progress, that were in a sense the legacy of both the 1908 revolution and the 1913 coup: the Central Committee; the General Council; the party; and informal structures of decision-making. Thirdly, there was the army.

On the military side, the unusually central position of Enver has already been pointed out, but apart from this central figure, we obviously have to ask ourselves what was the decision-making role of the War Ministry, the General Staff, and the leading military commanders. And when we look at each of these, we cannot avoid also asking the question to what extent the course of events was influenced by the representatives of the German Empire, who themselves cannot be regarded as a single undivided whole. On the German side, the embassy was one obvious power centre, but so were the German military mission sent in 1914 and headed by General Liman von Sanders and the Germans on the Ottoman General Staff, led by the vice-chief, Friedrich Bronsart von Schellendorf.

We will look at the role of these different elements in the governance of the empire during the war, and do so in two ways: first through a structural analysis of the institutions and then through a case-study based analysis, focused on major political decisions taken during the war.

## The court

The reigning sultan for most of the war was the former Prince Reşad, who had ascended the throne in April 1909, when his elder brother Abdülhamid II was deposed. The Committee of

Union and Progress made an effort to build up Reşad's image as a father of the nation. This started on his ascension, when he was given the official sultanic name Mehmed V. This was an explicit reference to Sultan Mehmed II, the conqueror of Constantinople in 1453. Because Reşad ascended the throne as a consequence of the successful repression of the anti-Unionist insurrection in Istanbul in April 1909 (the '31 Mart' incident) and the capture of the capital by the 'Action Army' (Hareket Ordusu) from Macedonia, he was – as it were – the second conqueror of Constantinople.

In sharp contrast with the practice of his predecessor Abdülhamid, the new sultan, on the initiative of the CUP, tried to connect directly with the population. He was sent on visits to the old Ottoman capitals of Bursa and Edirne and, most notably, on a tour of Macedonia in 1911, which had for its theme unity of the different ethnic elements around the Ottoman throne.<sup>2</sup>

On the outbreak of war, his role, not just as father of the country, but particularly as Caliph was emphasised, culminating in his proclamation of a Jihad on 23 November 1914 (after the Şeyhülislam's *fetva* on the need for all Muslims to support an Ottoman Jihad had already been publicly read out on 14 November).<sup>3</sup> After the defeat of the French-British naval campaign to break through the Dardanelles on 18 March 1915, the sultan was officially awarded the title of 'Gazi' (champion of Islam) by the Ottoman parliament. While building up the persona of the sultan-caliph as a public figure, however, the Unionist government denied him any influence on political or military matters.

Technically, the sultan was the commander-in-chief, as well as the head of state, but in reality he wielded almost no influence, either in civilian or in military matters. This was partly an institutional matter: constitutional changes after the re-establishment of the pro-Unionist regime in 1909 severely limited the sultan's freedom to appoint and dismiss, interfere in military matters, and to dissolve parliament. The civil list was curtailed and many imperial possessions sold off, and the palace itself was put under strict control through the appointment of palace secretaries by the cabinet. During the First World War the incumbent was Ali Fuat [Türkgeldi], who had succeeded Halid Ziya [Uşaklıgil] in 1912. The palace secretary sometimes conveyed the wishes of the sultan to the cabinet, but ultimately acted according to orders from the interior minister, and later grand-vizier, Talât, as Ali Fuat's memoirs make abundantly clear.

Partly Reşad's lack of political or military influence was also the result of his personality. Ali Fuat's well-known published memoirs, *Görüp İsttiklerim*, give a clear insight into his personality. Although he was relatively old when he ascended the throne, and in 1914 was seventy years of age, he was not a doddering fool. Rather, he was a civilised and kindly old gentleman, without any political experience, whose main interest was mystical Islam. Physically, he was weak and by 1917–18 barely able even to fulfil his ceremonial tasks. He never confronted the leading politicians of the day (whether Unionist or anti-Unionist) and even on issues that were of particular interest to him, like the appointment of palace dignitaries or religious authorities such as the Şeyhülislam, invariably yielded to those in power. During the war years this meant primarily to Talât and Enver.<sup>4</sup>

On Mehmed Reşad's death on 3 July 1918, his younger brother Prince Vahdettin ascended the throne as Sultan Mehmed VI. The moment of his ascension coincided with the last period in the war when the Central Powers could still seriously contemplate victory. Russia had been defeated and the Brest-Litovsk Treaty of March 1918 had secured the eastern borders of the Central Powers. The gigantic German offensives on the western front that had started in March had brought spectacular tactical successes, but by July they had almost run out of steam: the failed German attempt to conquer Reims in mid-July was the final phase. From 8 August (Ludendorff's 'Black Day for the German Army') the rollback on the western front started and the war was irretrievably lost. By late September both the Bulgarian front in Macedonia and the Ottoman one in Palestine had been breached, and the Ottoman Empire had become indefensible.

It is clear that Vahdettin looked for a more active role than his brother had had, and in particular wanted to emancipate himself from the tutelage of the Unionist leaders. The negotiations on the text of his accession proclamation show this<sup>5</sup> and, ironically, the constitutional changes pushed through by the Unionists during the war (about which more anon) theoretically gave him the means to intervene. Yet, he avoided any confrontation with the Unionists during the period (August to October) in which it became clear that the war was lost and only appointed a grand vizier of his own choice months after the armistice, in January 1919.

So, where the war years are concerned, it can be safely said that the court played no role of significance in the way the Ottoman Empire was governed: Mehmed V Reşad did not seek a political role. Mehmed VI Vahdettin did, but lacked the courage to openly oppose the Unionist leaders even after it had become clear that the war was lost.

### The Cabinets and parliament

Alone among the European powers, the Ottoman Empire, at least its capital city, had been under martial law already before the outbreak of the First World War. Martial Law (*idare-i Örfiye*) had been in place since the suppression of the counter-revolution in Istanbul in April 1909, with a two-month interruption in 1912. Since the Unionist coup d'état of January 1913, and particularly after the murder of Grand Vizier Mahmud Şevket Pasha on 11 June 1913, martial law was strictly applied and many people were arrested. Martial law, or a state of emergency, was not something, therefore, that marked the outbreak of war – it was already standing practice. The war meant that this practice was now also applied in the rest of the country.

For the Unionist government that had wielded power since the coup the main advantage of the state of emergency (apart from the way it allowed it to deal with political opponents) is that it made it possible to rule through 'temporary laws' (*kanun-i muvakkat*), laws that were approved by the cabinet and immediately put into operation, but that were only passed by parliament later, when it was in session. In practice this made parliamentary scrutiny a hollow phrase. In the single session starting 3 December 1915, for instance, 249 laws were retrospectively passed by the chamber of deputies, 177 of them without discussion.<sup>6</sup>

The wartime cabinets of the Ottoman Empire were relatively small as, throughout the war, some ministers acted as caretakers over other ministries besides their own: Talât combined the interior ministry with that of finance until 1917; Şükrü was in charge of the ministry of education and that of telephone and telegraph until September 1917; İbrahim Hayrullah combined the ministry of justice with the presidency of the council of state until February 1917, after which Halil [Menteşe] continued in the same set of functions. There was nothing comparable to a separate 'war cabinet' of key ministers such as Great Britain had under Lloyd George.

In the first few years after the constitutional revolution of July 1908, the CUP, consisting as it did of military officers and civil servants in their late twenties and early thirties, had not felt capable of taking over the most senior positions in government itself. It had been represented in the cabinets of the years 1908–1911, but not in a dominant way and had tried to influence politics as a pressure group, relying on its influence in the army and its ability to mobilise the street. In the first three years of the war, and following its takeover through the coup d'état of January 1913, the CUP had become the dominant force in the cabinet with leading Unionists like Talât, Enver, Cemal and Şükrü holding cabinet posts, but the Committee still preferred the most prestigious posts of Grand Vizier and Şeyhülislam (a member of the cabinet until 1916) to be held by relative outsiders. The Grand Vizier since the murder of Mahmut Şevket Pasha in June 1913 was Said Halim Pasha, an urbane, Swiss-educated member of the khedivial family of Egypt. He was 51 years old in 1914 and, though a member of the CUP, not part of the inner circle of the committee dominated by the Macedonian revolutionaries of 1908. Şeyhülislam was Ürgüplü Hayri

Efendi, 47 years old in 1914, who was not a member of the CUP but a respected doctor of Islamic law. He was the man who pronounced the Jihad *fetva* in November 1914.

As the war wore on, we see a process unfold through which the CUP strengthened its hold on the cabinet and had less and less use for people like Said Halim and Hayri, who were not from the inner circle. In October 1915, Said Halim was forced to choose between the foreign ministry and the grand vizierate. When he chose the latter, Talât's trusted companion Halil [Menteşe] was brought in as foreign minister. When Hayri resisted the transfer of the şeriat courts to the secular ministry of justice, he was replaced by Musa Kâzım Efendi, a religious scholar and Nakşibendi derwish, who was, however, at the same time also a freemason and a committee member.

The Unionist takeover was completed in February 1917, when the committee decided to replace Said Halim as Grand Vizier with Talât, thus ending the situation in which real power and titular authority rested with different persons. This was the occasion for a substantial cabinet reshuffle, in which Halil took over the portfolios of Justice and the Council of State, Ahmed Nesimi became the new Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ali Münif [Yeğenağa] took over as Minister of Public Works from Abbas Halim Pasha, Said Halim's younger brother. He combined this position for eight months in 1918 with that of Minister of Education, while Talât continued to serve as Minister of Interior alongside his Grand Vizierate.

The changes not only signified the final takeover of the imperial government by the inner circle of the CUP, they also served to strengthen Talât's position vis-à-vis his main competitor within the CUP, Enver Pasha. It is clear that it was people from Talât's network within the CUP that were moved into key cabinet posts in 1915 and 1917, to counteract the growing influence of the army that was a natural result of the war. Except for Enver the only other *military* figure to serve on the cabinet during the war was Cemal Pasha, the Navy Minister. As he was simultaneously governor-general and military commander in Syria and, in fact, absent from the capital for almost three years, his cabinet position was a recognition of his seniority within the CUP rather than a position of real influence. It can therefore safely be said that we do not see a militarisation of the Ottoman government as such.

The Unionist cabinets, whether that of Said Halim or of Talât had little to fear from parliament. Both chambers of parliament continued to sit throughout the war, but the duration of the yearly sessions was shortened from six months to four in February 1915, something which made the frequent use of 'temporary laws' described above pretty much inevitable.

Elections for the chamber of deputies should originally have taken place in 1912, after the dissolution of the previous parliament, but due to the Balkan War, the elections had had to be postponed. When they took place in 1914, it was in the post-coup environment and the CUP was able to score a crushing victory. In the new parliament the CUP held 192 seats, with 11 members of the liberal opposition and 87 independents or people whose allegiance is unknown.<sup>7</sup> Throughout the war, the chamber of deputies supported the cabinet and its policies without any serious debate.

The same cannot be said for the senate, even if there the critical questioning of government policy was almost wholly the work of one man. From early 1915 onwards Ahmet Rıza openly criticised the government for its Turkish nationalist policies, including the deportation of the Armenians and the imposition of Turkish as the official business language. He also drew attention to corruption, economic mismanagement and price rises, and demanded (unsuccessfully) that temporary laws be debated in detail before being approved. Although he lacked the power to really influence government policy, Ahmet Rıza's status as veteran leader of the Young Turk movement and hero of the constitution made his open criticism politically damaging to the CUP. At the same time, his status as public figure also protected him, so this 'one-man opposition' (to quote Tunaya) was something the CUP just had to take in its stride.

To make even more sure that parliament would remain docile, the Unionists undid some of the most important constitutional changes that had been carried through after the 1909

counterrevolution. Those changes had made it much more difficult for the sultan to dissolve parliament. A constitutional amendment of 15 May 1914 had already made it somewhat easier and an amendment of 16 March 1916 gave the sultan absolute freedom to dissolve parliament, with the sole condition that new elections be held within four months. With the sultan a puppet the CUP, originally founded to combat Abdülhamid's 'tyranny' (*istibdad*) now felt safe to use the sultan as an instrument to control parliament.

With full control of the court, the cabinet and both houses of parliament, Talât and his circle had little to fear from any political opposition. The forces that could endanger their control of the state, came from elsewhere: on the one hand, from the membership, and particularly the inner circle, of the Committee of Union and Progress, and on the other from the leading echelons of the army. To a certain extent these two overlapped.

### The Committee and its different organs

At the time of the constitutional revolution the CUP had been a secret society with 2–3000 members, almost all of them from Rumeli (the European provinces) and the Aegean.<sup>8</sup> At its 1909 congress the committee announced that it would give up secrecy and split into two independent institutions: the society, with members organised in local clubs, and a party consisting of the elected Unionist members of parliament. The society would continue to be run by an elected Central Committee (Merkez-i Umumi) of, first, three, then seven and ultimately twelve members, which was charged with maintaining the links between society and party. It answered to the yearly Congress, which was often a lively affair where major issues were openly debated. Coordination between society and party remained a problem throughout and that is why the 1912 Congress decided to create a 'General Council' (Meclis-i Umumi) which was to consist of representatives of the Central Committee, of the parliamentary party and of the congress.<sup>9</sup>

In spite of these elaborate measures designed to create a balance as well as a degree of transparency, there is little doubt that the Central Committee, which controlled Unionist networks in the capital as well as in the provincial centres through appointed 'responsible secretaries' (*kâtib-i mesul*), 'inspectors' (*müfettiş*) and 'delegates' (*murahhas*), was the real centre of power. Although the composition of the Central Committee changed over time, Talât remained its most influential member throughout. He had been the founder, in the summer of 1906, of the Ottoman Liberty Society (*Osmanlı Hürriyet Cemiyeti*) in Salonica, out of which grew the new CUP that brought about the constitutional revolution. His network was the strongest and he made sure his trusted followers, people like the Istanbul party boss Kara Kemal, Celâl [Bayar] the party secretary in Izmir or Abdülhalik [Renda] as governor-general in Bitlis and later in Aleppo, Halil, Ahmed Nesimi and – later – İsmail Canbolat in the cabinet, held key positions.

Throughout the war years Talât managed to keep his grip on the Central Committee, while at the same time increasing his influence in the cabinet. The way he did this was through effective management of the factionalism within the CUP. Talât played the different factions against each other and exerted his influence by taking up a position of arbiter, often speaking one-on-one with different key figures and giving each the impression that he shared their concerns and that they were being taken seriously. In meetings of the Central Committee, of the Unionist parliamentary party or at the yearly congresses he seems to have been able to convince his audience, even when this was very critical and dissatisfied.<sup>10</sup> Talât's combination of excellent 'people skills' with tactical awareness and utter ruthlessness made him the most consummate Ottoman politician of his era.

### The army

After the shattering defeat of the Ottoman armies in the Balkan War, a far-reaching organisation of the Ottoman army was undertaken with the assistance of the new German military mission

under General Otto Liman von Sanders. This involved the forced retirement of a large number of older officers, who were held responsible for the Balkan War debacle. This allowed a younger generation of officers, many of whom had been core members of the CUP before the constitutional revolution, to take over command positions and key positions on the general staff. In 1914, İsmet [İnönü] was chief of operations, with Ali İhsan [Şâbis] as assistant; Kâzım [Karabekir] was chief of intelligence, with Seyfi [Düzgören] as second man. Kâzım [Orbay] was adjutant to the vice-commander-in-chief, and Hafız Hakkı was assistant Chief of the General Staff – all of them among the best and the brightest of the ‘generation of 1880’, with a background in the CUP.<sup>11</sup> Those among them who survived the war would play crucial roles in the post-war independence movement and, indeed, in the Turkish Republic.

The central figure in the military leadership without any doubt was Enver, one of the most prominent ‘heroes of freedom’ of the 1908 revolution. After the January 1913 coup, of which he was one of the organisers, and his well-publicised (but in fact unopposed) reconquest of Edirne in July, he was promoted twice in quick succession to the rank of brigadier-general (with the title of pasha) and appointed as minister of war and vice-commander-in-chief (under the nominal command of the sultan). He also held the position of chief of the general staff, although in practice the first vice-chief, General Bronsart von Schellendorf, did the day-to-day work as chief of staff. One could safely say, therefore, that Enver commanded the weakest of the major European armies in the war, but did so with a degree of authority unrivalled elsewhere.

Enver had been a key military figure in the CUP because he had been one of the founders of the CUP cell in Manastır/Bitola (the most important military garrison in Macedonia) in 1906 and the go-between between the Salonica leadership and that cell (he was even called ‘Salonica’s advocate’ within the Manastır committee).<sup>12</sup> His prominent role in the July 1908 rebellion that led to the constitutional revolution made him a national figure, but even so, within the military wing of the CUP Enver was certainly not without competition. He was lucky, however. The other main public ‘hero of freedom’ of 1908, Resneli Niyazi Bey was famous, but he had no political ambition and no real influence within the CUP and he was anyway killed in an internal Albanian feud in 1912. Fethi [Okyar] was widely seen as a rival to Enver, particularly after he and his close friend Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] had fallen out with the former, first during the time they led the resistance against the Italian invasion in Cyrenaica, and then over the failed amphibious operation against the Bulgarians at Şarköy in February 1913.<sup>13</sup> Fethi had opposed the preparations for the January 1913 coup d’état, so when it was successful and propelled Enver to political power and control of the army, he clearly had no military future. On the advice of Ahmed Cemal he let himself be appointed ambassador to Sofia, taking Mustafa Kemal with him as military attaché. In 1913–14 Cemal clearly was Enver’s most important military rival and, as military commander of the capital, Cemal held a key position. When war broke out, he was navy minister but accepted to take on the twin positions of commander of the armies in Syria and governor-general of Syria, tasked with the conquest of Egypt. This removed him from the capital and the centre of power for three years and, although Enver and Talât took great care to keep him on board through consultations, promotions and honours, his political influence was greatly diminished. Finally, there was Hafız Hakkı Pasha. Hakkı was perhaps academically the most brilliant of the ‘generation of 1880’, having graduated from the general staff college first in his class (with Enver second). He was also one of the ‘heroes of freedom’ of 1908, and had married into the imperial family like Enver. Apart from Enver’s politically motivated double promotion in 1913, Hakkı was the first of his generation to reach the rank of brigadier and become a pasha, but – perhaps fortunately for Enver – he died of typhus on the eastern front in February 1915. In spite of the way the relationship is portrayed in Kemalist Turkish historiography, Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] was never a serious rival of Enver before the end of the First World War.

Each of the leading Unionist military officers had his network of followers and allies (Fethi and Mustafa Kemal seem to have belonged to Cemal’s network, while İsmet, Kazım Orbay and Kazım Karabekir were close to Enver), and factionalism continued to be a problem within the



army as it was within the CUP, but at least Enver's appointment as war minister and effective commander-in-chief solved a problem that had plagued the Ottoman army in the years 1908–1913. During that period the fact that some Unionist captains and majors wielded great political influence and had direct access to the government had deeply undermined the chain of command and army discipline. With Enver at the top, formal and informal power were no longer at odds with each other.

Enver's hold over the army as well as his influence in the cabinet and the central committee were greatly strengthened by the way the Germans promoted him as the exemplary leader of the 'new' Turkey, as their man in the Ottoman Empire and the best guarantee of the continuation of the Ottoman-German alliance.<sup>14</sup> Under the influence of people like Enver's close personal friend Hans Humann, the naval attaché at the German embassy in Constantinople, Berlin came to see the maintenance of Enver at the head of the Ottoman army as an essential precondition for maintenance of the alliance (even though the conclusion of that alliance had been as much the work of Talât as that of Enver).<sup>15</sup> This remained true throughout the war, even if Enver's own personal and professional relations with some of the leading German officers, like the head of the German military mission Liman von Sanders and later the commander of the Yıldırım army group Erich von Falkenhayn were often difficult. Conversely, the way the Germans built up Enver as the linchpin of the alliance also seems to have convinced the other Unionist leaders, and in the first place Talât, that maintaining (and thus humouring) Enver was necessary to ensure German support.

It is clear from the work of Ulrich Trumpener and Mustafa Aksakal that the Unionists rather than the German government were the driving force behind the alliance concluded on 2 August 1914, even if German pressure was a deciding factor in the actual outbreak of hostilities three months later. There is no indication that Germany was able to dictate the policies of the Ottoman military high command. The early offensives in the Caucasus and against the Suez Canal did serve the German strategic agenda at a time when hopes of arousing the Muslim world against the Entente powers were still high, but they were enthusiastically endorsed by Enver and Cemal, not forced on them. German officers at times had a high degree of control over particular fronts – as Liman von Sanders had at Gallipoli in 1915, von der Goltz in Mesopotamia in 1916 or von Falkenhayn and again Liman in Palestine in 1917–18 – but they were not in a position to dictate overall military policy to Enver. This was partly due to the continuous infighting among the members of the German military mission and between them and the German embassy. The hybrid status of the German officers as members of a German military mission in the Ottoman Empire and as officers holding positions within the Ottoman military hierarchy constantly caused friction, in particular between Bronsart, who worked closely and well with Enver within the *Ottoman* general staff and Liman, who was technically Bronsart's superior but regarded himself as the head of an autonomous *German* mission. The structural nature of the problem is shown by the fact that it continued more or less unchanged after Bronsart had been recalled in 1917 and replaced with General Hans von Seeckt.<sup>16</sup>

The Germans, therefore, were in no position to force Enver's hand. Nor was Enver's position under threat from within the military hierarchy. Both the officers of the Young Turk generation discussed earlier, who held many command and staff positions during the war, and the older generals like Esad [Bülkat], Cevat [Çobanlı] or Ahmed İzzet [Furgaç] (who had become disenchanted with Enver and strongly opposed the entry into the war)<sup>17</sup> seem to have remained loyal and refrained from any interference in politics. The single exception was Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk], who interfered openly and repeatedly. After his return to Istanbul on sick leave in November 1915 he contacted a cabinet minister (either Ahmed Nesimi [Sayman] or Halil [Menteşe]) to voice his criticism of the German military mission. In 1916, while serving on the Eastern Front, he circulated a cipher telegram criticising the conduct of the war and calling for joint action. On 20 September 1917 he finally sent a long report, again criticising the conduct of the war and the role of the Germans, not just to Enver as commander-in-chief but also to the

cabinet. Amazingly, this continuous insubordination did not lead to sanctions, but only to his resignation and subsequent absence from the front for almost a year (October 1917 to August 1918). Mustafa Kemal Pasha's agitation does not seem to have worried Enver unduly, as it did not gain any traction among his fellow generals.

Rather than from the Germans or from the high-ranking officers, the potential threat came from the ranks of lower-ranking Unionist officers. Since the very beginning, in 1906, the CUP had relied on a group of young officers who had registered as *fedai*, an epithet that denoted their readiness to risk their lives for the cause. Unlike the leading Unionist officers – people like Enver, Fethi, Mustafa Kemal or Kazım Karabekir, they were not graduates from the general staff college. Their geographical and ethnic background was also different: where the large majority of the leading officers hailed from the Balkans or the Aegean, the *fedais* or – with a more negative connotation 'silâhşorlar' (gunslingers) – were disproportionately of Caucasian descent (Çerkes, Çeçen, Laz, Dagistani, Abkhaz). These youngsters, the most prominent among whom were Sapançalı Hakkı, İzmitli Mümtaz, Yakup Cemil, Topçu İhsan, Atıf [Kamçıl], Yenibağçeli Şükrü and Nail, Süleyman Askeri, Kuşçubaşızade Eşref, Hüsrev Sami [Kızıldoğan] and Ali [Çetinkaya], had all gained their spurs in the ferocious counter-insurgency warfare in the Balkans before 1908 and they had come to the fore in moments of crisis. Atıf's killing of General Şemsi Paşa on 7 July 1908 was the turning point in the constitutional revolution; they had fought in the suppression of the counterrevolution of April 1909 and in the guerrilla war against the Italians in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica in 1911–12. Some had been involved in the coup of 13 January 1913 (in which Yakup Cemil had shot and killed War Minister Nazım Pasha) and a number had been involved in the short-lived 'Republic of Western Thrace' in 1913. After the mobilisation in August 1914 they became part of a more formal organisation, the Teşkilât-i Mahsusa ('Special Organisation'), about which our information is still anecdotal and fragmentary,<sup>18</sup> but essentially this was yet another informal network within the CUP. Its members had direct access to the Unionist leaders on the basis of their shared past and many seem to have been particularly close to Enver who owed his appointment as war minister at least partly to the pressure they had exerted within the CUP after the 1913 coup. The potential danger of this network was demonstrated by Yakup Cemil's abortive attempt at a coup d'état in July 1916. Although a repeat of the January 1913 coup was easily prevented, it was enough of a warning sign for drastic action to be taken: Yakup Cemil was executed, while a number of other important *fedais* were exiled to Anatolia.<sup>19</sup>

### Military-civilian relations

Having looked at both the civilian institutions of government and at the army, we should also ask questions about the relationship between the two, and particularly about the way these developed during the war years. Civil-military relations changed in the belligerent countries under the impact of war, but in different ways.

It is debateable whether the First World War was the first industrial war (the American civil war fifty years earlier was, after all, decided by the industrial strength of the North) but it was certainly the first total war, in which all human and material resources of the belligerent countries were mobilised and ultimately exhausted. In this sense, it was the ultimate vindication of the ideas of influential military theorists like Colmar von der Goltz, who had made this the central thesis of his 1883 *Das Volk in Waffen* (The Nation in Arms). The total nature of the war effort changed the balance within the governing systems of the belligerent states, and particularly the relationship between the civilian institutions (parliament and cabinet) and the military leadership. On the one hand it led to the militarisation of society and an enhanced role of the military leadership, but on the other, the need for mass mobilisation and production for the war effort also meant that the military were dependent on the ability of the political institutions to deliver what they needed. To give but one example: arguably, the three measures that made Britain

ultimately successful in the war – military conscription, efficient production of munitions and the convoy system for shipping across the Atlantic – were taken by the civilian leadership.

The way in which the balance between civilian governing institutions and the military leadership was affected, differed considerably from country to country.<sup>20</sup> Germany and Austria-Hungary undoubtedly were at one end of the scale. In Austria-Hungary the situation came close to a military dictatorship. The government of Karl von Stürgkh introduced martial law at the beginning of the war and placed the civilian bureaucracy under the control of the army, led by the Chief of Staff Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf. Until his dismissal after repeated failures in March 1917, Austria was under a virtual military dictatorship. In Germany, the General Staff under Erich von Ludendorff and Paul von Hindenburg became the centre of political decision-making from early 1917 onwards, after the Bethman-Hollweg proposals for a negotiated peace had been rejected by the Entente and the decision for unrestricted submarine warfare had been taken by the Germans. The conclusion of the vindictive Brest-Litovsk Treaty in March 1918 by a military delegation headed by General Max Hoffman is perhaps the high water mark of this military ascendancy.

At the other end of the scale was France. There, the civilian-military balance worked out very differently. At the outbreak of war, parliament and cabinet alike defined their role as enabling the military leadership to wage war under the best possible circumstances during the national emergency. Martial law was introduced on 6 September but after the fall of the Union Sacrée ('Holy Union') cabinet of Viviani in October 1915, parliament reasserted its role and civilian control over the army, whose leadership by then had been discredited by failed offensives, was firmly re-established.

Within the civilian wing of government, balances also changed. In all of the continental monarchies sessions of parliament were interrupted for long periods and their role restricted mostly to voting additional war credits at regular intervals. In Britain, parliament continued to sit, but its influence was much reduced with the introduction of all-party cabinets, which removed the opportunity for debate between both sides of the house. In France, on the other hand, parliament, and particularly the parliamentary committees overseeing different aspects of the war effort, enhanced its position. Georges Clémenceau built his dominant position in politics on his chairmanship of the armed forces committee before becoming prime minister in 1917.

Relations between the military and the civilian leadership were often far from harmonious, but civilian politicians – even ministers – often found it very difficult to impose their will. The main military figures were built up in the media as national heroes as part of the propaganda effort and consequently held high (even if often undeserved) status in the eyes of the population. That made it very difficult for cabinets to impose anything on figures like Lord Kitchener (who attended the meetings of the war cabinet in his field marshal's uniform), Hindenburg, Joffre or Foch. Military leaders were not above using their status as national heroes and mobilising public opinion against their political masters, as in the case of the infamous 'shell scandal' in which Sir John French connived with journalists and politicians to put pressure on the cabinet and the Minister of War, Kitchener. The introduction of conscription in Britain in 1916 also was the result of a coordinated campaign by the top military leaders, who profited from the fact that civilian interference in military matters had been discredited by the disastrous Gallipoli Campaign, which had been pushed through by Winston Churchill, a civilian, however much he liked to pose as a military strategist.

Although Carl von Clausewitz had already established the principle that war was 'the continuation of politics by [the addition of] other means' and that therefore ultimately the waging of war served political aims, in military eyes the immediate needs of the war effort often weighed more heavily than broader political considerations. Examples of this phenomenon abound in the run up to the war and in the war itself. Alfred von Schlieffen's 1905 memorandum *Krieg gegen Frankreich* ('War against France'), which would form the basis of the German war-planning in the west, with its wilful violation of the neutrality of Belgium, Luxemburg, and, as originally envisaged, also the Netherlands, was perhaps the most crucial example of military logic trumping political considerations. After all, the Germans knew full well that it was likely to bring Great Britain

into the war against them, but turning the flank of the French army by sweeping in from the north was considered the only road to a quick victory. The decision to unleash unrestricted submarine warfare in January 1917 similarly constituted a victory of military thinking over foreign policy. The risk that it would cause the United States to give up its formally neutral stance was there for all to see (and it had been the reason why the introduction of unrestricted submarine warfare had been postponed twice before at the insistence of Chancellor Theobald von Bethman-Hollweg), but the military claim that unrestricted warfare would bring Britain to its knees within months won the day.

Of course, there are also instances of the opposite; of foreign policy considerations formulated by civilian governments overriding purely military demands, as was the case when the Habsburg emperor Franz Josef, on the advice of his cabinet, refused Conrad von Hötzendorff's demands for a preventive war against Serbia before the First World War. Another example was the German decision to respect Dutch neutrality and not to deploy through Dutch territory, which created big problems for the army in the first week of the war, as it had to squeeze through a much narrower corridor east of Liège. For the Entente, hanging on to the Ypres salient did not make much sense militarily, but it was hugely important politically to keep a small part of Belgian territory free from German occupation. Maintaining an expeditionary force in Salonica – against the opposition of the British Chief of the General Staff, William Robertson – likewise was an essentially political decision, and the same can be said for the Ottoman decision to hang on to Medina and the long and vulnerable Hejaz Railway during the whole war.

### How does the Ottoman Empire fit into this picture?

With Talât and his network fully in control of the government and dominant in the Central Committee, and Enver having unchallenged control of the army, the axis Enver-Talât determined the balance of power in the country. Essentially, and in spite of irritations and differences of opinion, this axis held firm throughout the war. Both men seem to have accepted the other's vital role in the war effort. When one or the other was out of the capital, the one who remained took over his duties in cabinet.

As in every other belligerent country, in this 'total war', much of government policy consisted of mobilising all human, financial and economic resources to support the military – in the form of requisitioning, imposition of taxes and forced labour and contracting of loans, both internal and with the German allies. The military authorities were given control over transport, including the railways, and communications. Maintaining order in the countryside was the task of the *gendarmérie*, which in wartime fell largely under the War Ministry, and whose size was increased eightfold during the war.<sup>21</sup>

From August 1914 to December 1917 martial law was in force throughout the country and after that in most provinces and the capital, and the military authorities interpreted the jurisdiction of the military tribunals under martial law very broadly. As a result the military tribunals became completely overburdened and the Ministry of Justice complained that the military authorities were trespassing on its jurisdiction. In July 1916, the jurisdiction of the military tribunals was restricted to homicide and crimes involving the army or state security.<sup>22</sup>

So, there is no denying that, as in other countries, the war tilted the balance of power towards the army, but the leaders of the civilian wing of the CUP never abdicated authority to the extent that the civilian authorities did in Austro-Hungary right at the start of the war, or the German ones from early 1917 onwards. It would be going too far to compare the situation in the Ottoman Empire with that in the UK or France, where civilian control remained intact (in the British case) or increased during the war (as in France). In the Ottoman Empire, the situation was not one of military dominance over the entire state or one of civilian control over the military, but rather one of segmented authority with Enver and Talât recognising each other's sphere of influence.

Strategic decisions involving the allocation of army units seem to have been the exclusive preserve of Enver and the General Staff. They were taken in consultation with the German high command, but not dictated by it (as was often assumed by the Entente during the war). This is true even in those cases when these decisions had important political implications. Using seven of the twenty-two divisions that remained in the Marmara region after the successful defence of the Dardanelles to strengthen the Austro-Hungarian front in Galicia, to support the German-Bulgarian invasion of Romania and to contain the French/British/Serbian expeditionary force in Macedonia at a time (1916–17) when the Russian army had already taken Trabzon, Van and Erzurum and the British were massing troops on the fronts in Palestine and Mesopotamia meant a clear prioritisation of the interests of the alliance over the defence of Ottoman territory. It met with protest from Liman von Sanders but not from the Ottoman cabinet or parliament, nor from the Central Committee of the CUP.

The decision to send troops into the Southern Caucasus region after the peace treaty of Brest Litovsk, both in the form of regular units under Vehip Pasha [Kaç] and militias under his own brother Nuri [Killigil], seems to have been Enver's. It was another military decision with important political implications, as it led to a direct armed confrontation with the German ally, which aimed to occupy the Baku oilfields and the Georgian railway connecting them to the Black Sea itself.

On the other hand, the Unionist government with the support of the Central Committee used the conditions of war to push through a whole range of important legislation without interference from the military: secularising measures like the transfer of the Islamic law courts and the pious foundations to secular ministries, and the changes in the family law; legislation aimed at nationalising and Turkifying the economy, such as the imposition of Turkish as the sole business language or the Law on the Encouragement of Industry (already adopted as a 'Temporary Law' in December 1913); and, of course, the deportation of the Armenians to the Syrian desert. While the original deportations from the battle zones occurred at the request of commanders in the field and were designed as a temporary measure, the massive deportation of the vast majority of Anatolian Armenians that followed was rooted in the political agenda of changing the country's demographics. It was directed by Talât and carried out by trusted members of his network like Bahaettin Şakır, Abdülhalik [Renda], Cemal Azmi and Şükrü [Kaya] and it could well be argued that it actually created big problems for the military leadership: it disrupted transport and communications and endangered the food supply of the army in the east.

Although at the top, Enver and Talât seem to have developed a *modus vivendi*; further down there were frequent frictions and territorial conflicts between networks attached to these two men. An excellent example is the bitter struggle between Istanbul party boss Kara Kemal on the one hand and the quartermaster-general, İsmail Hakkı Pasha on the other. The former, a close collaborator of Talât, controlled the porters of the capital and played a leading role in the organisation of 'national' companies that controlled the provisioning of the civilian population and that were explicitly intended to be profitable, in order to accumulate capital for the desired new Muslim business class. The other was close to Enver, and of course, in charge of the provisioning of the armed forces in a situation where the army was deemed to have automatic priority and controlled transport, and in particular the railways. Both men and their networks were engaged in intense competition over the spoils of the very lucrative trade in foodstuffs. When the army proved incapable of solving the food shortages in the country, in the summer of 1918 a Ministry of Provisioning was created and Kemal was put in charge.<sup>23</sup>

## Decision-making during the war – Case Studies

Even though from the 1913 party congress onwards, the 'Committee' (Cemiyet) was supposed not to be involved in politics (leaving that to the 'Party' (Fırka)), it is clear that the Central Committee was in fact a crucial political decision-making organ. The removal of Hayri Efendi as

well as that of Said Halim Pasha and Talât's takeover as Grand Vizier were first discussed there, for instance, but the Central Committee was dominated by the civilian wing and, within that, by Talât's network. The military were underrepresented. Enver was himself only a member until 1910. Yet, ever since its foundation in 1906 the new CUP had relied on its members in the military to get things done. Military officers had unleashed the constitutional revolution by 'going into the mountains' on the orders of the leadership in Salonika;<sup>24</sup> they had come to the rescue after the counterrevolution of April 1909; they had played a key role in the coup d'état of 1913 and in the decision to go on the offensive during the Second Balkan War and recover Edirne.

Hence, the leading military figures needed to be on board for the most important decisions and their support could not be secured within the Central Committee. What we see, therefore, is that the really crucial life-and-death decisions were taken, not in the Central Committee or the General Council, let alone in the cabinet or in parliament, but in informal gatherings of select groups of leading civilian and military Unionists. This is the pattern that we see repeating itself between 1913 and 1918.<sup>25</sup>

The initiative for the coup d'état against the Kâmil Pasha cabinet of 23 January 1913 seems to have come from Talât, but the actual decision to go ahead was taken during two secret meetings of a mixed civilian-military group of leading Unionists. The first one was attended by eleven, the second one by seven men. During the first meeting, no decision could be reached as Enver was held up by his military duties in İzmit and could not attend, while his rival Fethi, who did attend, opposed the idea of a coup. A few days later, however, with Fethi back at his post on the Gallipoli peninsula and Enver in attendance, the decision to go ahead was taken. When we look at the names of the people involved, we see the leading Unionist officers (Enver, Cemal, Fethi, Hafız Hakkı) and key members of Talât's civilian wing: Hacı Adil [Arda], Kara Kemal, Dr. Nazım, Halil [Menteşe] and Midhat Şükrü [Bleda].

An even smaller informal group was involved in the fateful decision to conclude an alliance with Germany in 1914. Thanks to the work of Ulrich Trümpener and Mustafa Aksakal we now know that the German alliance was actively sought by the Unionists and that the German side was reactive rather than active. First overtures had been made by Grand Vizier Said Halim on 15 July. When the German ambassador Hans, Freiherr von Wangenheim was authorised to proceed by Berlin on 24 July, the actual negotiations started. They were conducted on the Ottoman side in total secrecy by a very small circle, consisting of Talât, Said Halim, Halil and Enver. Other leading Unionists in the cabinet, like Navy Minister Cemal, Finance Minister Cavit and Şeyhülislam Hayri Efendi were only informed after the conclusion of the treaty on 2 August. The other cabinet members were not informed at all.

A similar pattern is visible in the decision to actually go to war in October. As Aksakal has shown, the Ottomans, and in particular Enver Pasha had been delaying the Ottoman entry into the war in the hope that it would end in a quick German victory. When that was not the case, the Ottoman government argued that it needed generous financial assistance to pay for the mobilisation. By early October all Ottoman demands had been met and they were faced with a stark choice: either fight or lose the alliance. The decision to go to war was then taken during a lunch meeting with ambassador Wangenheim, attended by Said Halim, Talât, Halil, Enver and Cemal, at the German ambassador's summer residence in Tarabya.

As is well-known, 16 ships of the Ottoman fleet under the command of Admiral Wilhelm Souchon, armed with orders from Enver and Cemal to seek out and attack the Russian fleet, put out to sea on 27 October and attacked Russian ports on 29 October.

Cabinet met in the afternoon of 30 October. It was briefed on the events of the previous day by Cemal, who gave a completely falsified account according to which the Ottoman fleet had been attacked by the Russians while on exercises. Cabinet was divided on the question of whether this meant war with Russia was inevitable or could still be avoided by a form of reconciliation with Russia. In the evening of the same day a second meeting was held, this time of the cabinet, the Central Committee and a number of prominent Unionists who were not a member

of either, such as Halil. In total, 27 people attended and – at least according to what Enver reported to Wangenheim – 17 approved the decision to go to war if need be. A conciliatory note was sent to the Russian government, but the fleet was not recalled and the alliance with Germany not abrogated. As a result, four cabinet ministers (Cavit Bey from the CUP and three non-Unionist ministers) resigned.

As in the case of the coup d'état and the conclusion of the German alliance, a handful of people took the most important decision and the composition of that small group seems to have been entirely *ad hoc*. The cabinet was essentially confronted with an accomplished fact, as was the Central Committee. When we look at the decision-making process that led to the deportation and mass killing of Armenians in 1915–16, there are some indications that similar processes were at work.

The question of how to deal with the danger of Armenian resistance gained urgency after the defeats of Sarıkamış in the east in January and that at the Suez Canal in February 1915. The French-British naval attack on the Dardanelles that started on 5 March of course increased the anxiety. In February, a military campaign was started against Armenian rebels and deserters in the Zeytun area, while Enver ordered all Armenian soldiers to be disarmed and transferred to labour battalions.

At the end of February, Dr Bahaettin Şakır, a Central Committee member who had been sent to Erzurum when war broke out to mobilise the Muslim population against the Russians, returned to Istanbul for discussions with the CUP leadership. What he discussed, when and with whom he met exactly is unknown, but according to his assistant Arif Cemil (who had stayed behind in Erzurum) he returned in mid-April with new powers to fight the 'internal enemies' of the country.

In March, there were local deportations both on the eastern front and in Cilicia (where Armenians were removed from the vicinity of the railway lines). These seem to have been the result primarily of local initiatives. Regional agents of the CUP were clamouring for action throughout March. The first major deportation was that of the Armenian population of Dörtüyl on the Mediterranean coast, followed by a decision on 8 April to deport the whole Armenian community of Zeytun. The routes of both of these deportations were to the northwest, in the direction of Konya province, rather than in the direction of the Syrian desert. Halfway through April *muhacirs*, refugees from the Balkans and Italian-occupied Tripolitania, were resettled in these locations. It was around this time that Talât told ambassador Morgenthau that the deportations were the result of 'extensive deliberations within the committee'.<sup>26</sup> This seems to be confirmed by the reports that Enver, Talât and Cemal had an intensive exchange of cables on the issue all through April.<sup>27</sup>

On 24 April, the day most widely remembered for the mass arrests among the Armenian elite in Istanbul, the columns of deportees heading for Konya were suddenly redirected towards the Syrian desert. Two days later a temporary law on the confiscation of weapons was passed. Weapons searches, either out of true concern or as a pretext, would play an important role in the early phase of the persecution of Armenians in places like Diyarbakır.

On 2 May 1915, Colonel İsmet [İnönü] of the Third Army headquarters sent a request to Istanbul, in which he pointed out that there were widespread insurrections in the rear of the army and in which he requested that the Armenian population be either extradited to Russia or deported to inner Anatolia. İsmet expressed a preference for the former option. This advice was acted upon, albeit not according to his preference. One week later the deportation of the Armenians from Van, Bitlis and Erzurum provinces to the south was ordered.<sup>28</sup> Two weeks after that, on 23 May, the deportation of all Armenians from the eastern border areas and the shores of Lake Van was ordered by the government.

The final stages of the decision-making process on the deportations are just concerned with providing formal legal cover for the operation: on 26 May Talât, as interior minister, submitted a draft decision to the cabinet that approved the removal of the Armenians on account of their

collaboration with the enemy and earmarked their 'deserted' homes and villages for the settlement of Muslim refugees. This decision was then officially adopted by the cabinet on 31 May 1915.

So, once more, the key decisions seem to have been taken within a relatively small circle of top Unionist leaders, some of them military, some civilians. It is not clear whether the Central Committee as such was involved, or just select members of it. According to Hüseyin Cahid [Yalçın] who, as editor of the CUP-friendly *Tanin* newspaper, was very much in the inner circle, the decision on the fate of the Armenians was never openly discussed even within that circle.

What is clear, is that neither cabinet nor the two chambers of parliament played a role in the decision-making. By the time the official cabinet decisions were taken, the deportations had been going on for over a month.

A final case of political decision-making that gives us an insight into the way the empire was governed during the war years, is that of the overtures for a separate peace that were made between March and June 1917 by a British agent to the Ottoman ambassador in Berne. According to Yusuf Hikmet Bayur, who has studied the incident meticulously, the ambassador, Fuat Selim, reported to the Foreign Ministry, which informed Grand Vizier Talât. He, however, rather than putting this on the agenda of the cabinet, discussed it in the circle of the Central Committee. At the meeting Enver (who attended though he was not actually a member of the Central Committee at the time) dismissed the British approach as a sign of weakness. It was decided that the ambassador could engage in talks, but that the German government would be notified in advance. Apparently no further action was taken and the affair fizzled out, a fate it shared with several other indirect initiatives by the Entente in these months.<sup>29</sup>

## Conclusion

Both the structural analysis and the case studies of important political decisions show that during the First World War the Ottoman Empire was neither a military dictatorship nor a state in which final authority rested with a cabinet controlled by parliament. On paper it was a constitutional-parliamentary monarchy ruled under the provisions of martial law foreseen in the constitution. This allowed the cabinet to rule through temporary laws, to all intents and purposes decrees, that were passed post-factum by parliament.

In reality the cabinet was not the main decision-making centre either. The central decision-making organ of the Committee of Union and Progress was at least as important. It is there, rather than in parliament or in the cabinet that decisions on key appointments or dismissals were reached. The essential element in decision-making, however, was that the main factions – the civilian wing led by Talât and the military one under Enver – reached consensus. To achieve this, entirely informal caucuses were formed for the really important decisions, where even important Unionists were included (like Halil [Menteşe] in 1914 or Enver in 1917) or excluded (like Fethi in 1913 and Cemal and Cavid in 1914) on the basis of the degree to which they were trusted and held influence, not on the basis of their formal membership of CUP organs.

The empire was not run by a triumvirate. That image, which is as old as the war itself (Ernst Jäckh, for instance, already uses it in 1916) does not stand up to scrutiny. It was a reality during the two-year period between the Bab-i Ali coup of January 1913 and late 1914, but not thereafter. Cemal's decision to let himself be appointed commander in Syria with a brief to reconquer Egypt removed him from the capital for almost three years and, although he remained important enough to be consulted on major policy decisions (mostly by cable) and Enver and Talât took great care to honour and flatter him, his actual influence at the centre was very limited. By late 1914, however, the triumvirate image was firmly established and it remained the prism through which observers (from inside and outside the empire) understood the Unionist regime.



Rather than as a triumvirate, the group that ruled the empire during the war years can better be understood as a complex of different factions and networks that all operated in a bipolar environment. The poles were Talât and Enver and, although there certainly was a lot of rivalry between their followers, each of these two men, who could not be more different from each other in background and personality, recognised that the other was indispensable in the war effort. This recognition produced a degree of coherence that formed the basis for the Unionist regime in 1914–18.

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## Notes

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9. Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler 1859-1952* [Political Parties in Turkey 1859-1952] (Istanbul: Private Publication, 1952), pp.195–200.
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13. For an analysis of this intriguing event, see Erik-Jan Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), pp.129–130.
14. The 1916 edition of Ernst Jäckh's rather breathlessly enthusiastic *Der aufsteigende Halbmond: Auf dem Weg zum deutsch-türkischen Bündnis* [Rising Crescent: On the Road to the German-Turkish Alliance] (Stuttgart and Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1916) is a good example. It opens with a signed portrait of Enver, who is also introduced as honorary member of the 'German-Turkish Society'.
15. Jürgen Gottschlich, *Beihilfe zur Völkermord: Deutschlands Rolle bei der Vernichtung der Armenier* [Complicity in Genocide: Germany's Role in the Destruction of the Armenians] (Berlin: Christoph Links, 2015), p.114. Gottschlich gives a detailed analysis of the Humann-Enver relationship.

16. The complicated relations within the German mission and between it and the Ottoman military are analysed in great detail in Jehuda L. Wallach's *Anatomie einer Militärhilfe: Die preussisch-deutschen Militärmissionen in der Türkei 1835-1919* [Anatomy of a Military Aid Programme: The Russian/German Military Missions in Turkey 1835-1919] (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1976), pp.1165–240.
17. On İzzet's disenchantment with Enver and anti-war position, see Karl Klinghardt (ed.), *Denkwürdichkeiten des Marschalls İzzet Pascha* [Memoirs of Fieldmarshal İzzet Pasha] (Leipzig: Koehler, 1927), pp.264–94.
18. See Polat Safi, 'History in the Trench: the Ottoman Special Organization – Teşkilât-ı Mahsusa Literature', *Middle Eastern Studies* 48/1 (2012), pp.89–106.
19. Sina Akşin, *Jön Türkler ve İttihat ve Terakki* [The Young Turks and Union and Progress] (Istanbul: Remzi, 1987), pp.292–4 for a summary largely based on the story related by Galip Vardar in Samih Nafiz Tansu (ed.), *İttihat ve Terakki İçinde Dönenler* [The Inner Workings of the Union and Progress] (Istanbul: İnkılâp, 1960). Vardar's father was a close associate of a number of the *fedais*.
20. Stig Förster, 'Civil-Military Relations', in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War. Vol 2. The State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp.91–125. Unlike other chapters in this volume, that by Förster also treats the Ottoman Empire.
20. Mehmet Beşikçi, *The Ottoman Mobilization of Manpower in the First World War* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), p.298.
22. Çiğdem Oğuz has studied this aspect extensively in her unpublished PhD thesis 'The Struggle Within: "Moral Crisis" on the Ottoman Home Front during World War I', (Leiden, 2018).
23. Zafer Toprak, *İttihat ve Terakki ve Devletçilik* [Union and Progress and Etatism], (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı/Yurt, 1995), p.125.
24. The degree of control exercised by the CUP on the officers who started the rebellion has sometimes been doubted, but Niyazi Bey emphatically depicts himself as taking orders from the Committee in the introduction to his memoirs.
25. The following is adapted from Erik-Jan Zürcher, 'Jungtürkische Entscheidungsmuster, 1913-1915' [Patterns of Young Turk Decision-Making 1913-1915] in Rolf Hosfeld and Christin Pschichholz, *Das Deutsche Reich und die Völkermord and den Armeniern* [The German Empire and the Armenian Genocide] (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2017), pp.81–105.
26. Bloxham, p.84.
27. Dündar, p.270.
28. Bloxham, p.84, Dündar, p.280.
29. Bayur, pp.149–58.