
Competing Ideologies in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic: Writings of Islamist, Turkist, and Westernist Intellectuals

By Ahmet Şeyhun

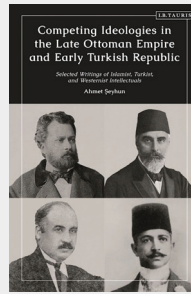
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Reviewed by Mustafa İlter, Independent Researcher

Notwithstanding the recent upsurge in micro-level individual intellectual histories of the late Ottoman period, Ahmet Şeyhun's *Competing Ideologies in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic* attempts to consider the broader scope of the intellectual trends of the era. It brings together the writings of the major intellectual figures of the period and highlights their major contributions to the intellectual milieu of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Şeyhun's work sheds light on the ideological processes into which the given intellectual thoughts were poured, especially the ideologies that had a significant impact on the formation of the Young Turks and the nascent Turkish Republic.

The historiographical trend in late Ottoman intellectual history since the 1980s has been based on biographies of individual persons and their specific contributions to intellectual trends.¹ Şeyhun himself has written a monograph detailing the intellectual positioning of Said Halim Pasha. In the current book, he shifts the axis of this trend to concentrate on twelve different intellectuals' writings and six major ideological movements, illustrating the multilevel structure of intellectual currents in play in the late Ottoman period.

In *Competing Ideologies*, Şeyhun first explores the conflicting nature of the ideologies trumpeted by "various intellectual and political



figures who represented diverse political currents that competed in the political arena of the late Ottoman Empire" (p. 14). For Şeyhun, Tanzimat and the reform attempts of the 19th century had significant effects on the emergence of the "conflicting ideologies" of the times (pp. 2-3). The author stresses that

it was not only a matter of competing but of collaborating; while the Islamist writers and their Westernist counterparts did engage in ideological conflict, the liberals, Young Ottomans, and Islamists in many cases influenced each other positively. Şeyhun also mentions interactions through which Ottoman intellectuals were influenced by European intellectuals. Remarking upon these points of intersection and interaction could be considered a strength of the book as a whole, as Seyhun presents a detailed yet comprehensible background of the late Ottoman, and Early Republican periods.

The book's structure follows the model of the individual biographies mentioned above. At the beginning of each chapter, Şeyhun provides a brief biography of an intellectual; the remainder of the chapter concentrates on specific selections from their writings. The introductory part of the book presents a brief overview of each intellectual current addressed in the book, along with its well-known individual personalities. Six intellectual currents, namely the Young Ottomans, the Turkists,

the Westernists, the Liberals, the Positivists and the Islamists are taken into consideration with examples from selected writings. Part I focuses on Young Ottoman thinkers with a specific focus on Namık Kemal and Tunuslu Hayreddin Pasha. Part II concentrates the famous Turkist intellectuals Ziya Gökalp, Yusuf Akçura and Ahmet Ağaoğlu. The Westernist intellectuals attract Part III's attention, with selections from the writings of Celal Nuri İleri and Abdullah Cevdet. To exemplify the liberals, the ideas of the most famous intellectual, Prince Sabahaddin, are explored in Part IV. Ahmet Rıza Bey and Lütü Fikri are considered positivist intellectuals in Part V. Lastly, aligning with Şeyhun's original area of specialization, Islamist intellectuals, including Said Halim Pasha and Ahmed Naim Baban, are considered in Part VI.

Although Seyhun sets out to compare how the given intellectuals' ideas intersect with and differ from those of their counterparts, it may mislead readers in its execution. The author makes very few attempts to answer the fundamental questions posed in the introduction or to flesh out his arguments when he does offer a reflection. In other words, although the book first gives the early impression that it will open a fundamental discussion regarding late Ottoman intellectual history, specifically the nature of its competing intellectual currents, the author deliberately avoids making further remarks in the remainder of the book. It must be stressed that the main deficiency of the book stems from this lack. This is unfortunate, as it would have been feasible to discuss late Ottoman intellectual trends, at least by adding a conclusion, especially on the scope and extent to which these trends compete, by providing examples from the twelve intellectual's writings. Indeed, given the selections that were already included, a comprehensive analysis of the in-

tellectual dispositions of the different intellectuals would have made sense. Şeyhun could have successfully maintained a discussion as to whether the so-called modern ideologies could be approached as synchronously interactive with each other or not. Although the author seems to adumbrate these matters in the very beginning of the book, he ultimately avoids taking the inquiry further. There is not even a conclusion part discussing the main findings derived from analyzing the conceptual outcomes of the thought trajectories. It would have been better if Şeyhun provided further conceptual discussions regarding the materials. However, he skillfully pointed out that this book serves "the field of Islamic and Ottoman studies in particular by making available important primary sources to scholars and students who are unable to read the Ottoman and Turkish languages" (p. 14). In this respect, *Competing Ideologies in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic* represents a highly valuable contribution to the literature.

Competing Ideologies in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic should be on the reading list of students and academics interested in the intellectual history of the Middle East, especially non-Turkish speaking readers. All in all, despite its deficiencies mentioned above, the book makes a handy contribution for those who would like to see an introductory comparison between the ideologies of the period through the lens of the selected and translated writings of the late Ottoman intellectuals.

Endnotes

1. Prominent studies following this trend emerged especially after the 1980s; see M. Şükrü Hanoğlu, *Bir Siyasal Düşünür Olarak Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi*, (İstanbul: Üçdal Neşriyat, 1981); Taha Parla, *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985); Holly Shissler,

Between the Two Empires: Ahmet Ağaoğlu and the New Turkey, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003); Ahmet Şeyhun, *Said Halim Pasha: Ottoman Statesman and Islamist Thinker, 1865-1921*, (İstanbul: ISIS Press, 2003); Ozan Özvavcı, *Intellectual Origins of*

the Republic, Ahmet Ağaoğlu and the Genealogy of the Liberalism in Turkey, (Leiden: Brill, 2015); York Norman, *Celal Nuri: Young Turk Modernizer and Muslim Nationalist*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2021).

The New Map: Energy, Climate, and the Clash of Nations

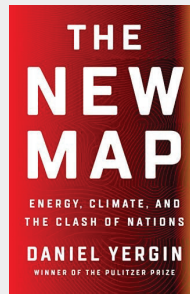
By Daniel Yergin

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Daniel Yergin is a preeminent author on energy, geopolitics, and global economy studies. He is the 1992 winner of the Pulitzer Prize for his book, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power*, which presents the history of oil and the struggle for wealth and power that has always surrounded it. In two of his previous books, *The Prize* (1990) and *The Quest* (2011), Yergin identifies oil and environmental concerns as the main driving forces of international politics. In his most recent book, *The New Map: Energy, Climate, and the Clash of Nations* (2020), he focuses on shifts in the energy market and geopolitics and explores the likely winners and losers in the coming era. *The New Map* is about the new world order shaped by the dramatic shifts in energy and geopolitics, which Yergin calls the new global map. In it, he seeks answers to the question of where the globe is heading with these changes.

The New Map consists of six main chapters. The first chapter, “America’s New Map,” concentrates on a single question: how has the shale revolution changed America’s position in the world? The most significant energy innovations of the 21st century, shale oil and



gas, have positioned the U.S. as the world’s major exporter. Yergin states that these developments have not only improved the U.S.’ competitiveness in the world economy but are also significant for geopolitics. Yergin argues that the geopolitical consequences of the shale revolution have led to a change in the concept of energy security and new flexibility in foreign policy for the U.S. However, these new dimensions are limited because the energy industry remains globally interconnected.

The next chapter, “Russia’s Map,” focuses on the developments generated by geopolitical energy competition and Putin’s quest to revive Russia as a Great Power. Oil and gas are key drivers of Russia’s rebound and its nation’s economy. Yet this makes the country economically dependent on these resources. Yergin situates Russia’s natural gas supply to Europe at the center of a geopolitical clash. The conflict in Ukraine and unresolved issues originating from the breakup of the Soviet Union are the most important factors in the new antagonism between Russia and the West. Yergin points out that the concept of energy security means different things for Western, Eastern, and Central European