The Contributions of German émigré Scholars to Turkey's Higher Education Reform in the First Half of the 20th Century

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Abstract: Why were German émigré scholars present in the emerging Turkish Republic and how did they influence its development, given the considerable presence of German scholars in exile during the modernization and reform process at the beginning of the Turkish statehood? This paper seeks to analyze the historical roots of this by discussing the goals and dilemmas of higher education reform in the early years of the Turkish state, as well as the specific work and progress of German émigré scholars in Turkey. It is clear from the analysis that the modernization reforms, represented by the higher education reforms, were the initiative of the emerging Turkish Republic to escape from backwardness and rise as a nation, and that the problem of the lack of higher education talent encountered in the reforms was solved by the forced exile of many German scholars, who were looking for a living. The rapid establishment of higher education institutions, the completion of the reform of higher education and the acceleration of the modernization process in Turkey.

Keywords: Kemal, university education, German Emigre Scholars, Jews

1. Introduction

In 1933, in accordance with his legislative powers under the Enabling Act of March 23, Hitler promulgated the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service on political or racial grounds, declaring the dismissal of all public officials who were incompatible with the principles of Nazism. As a result, a significant number of innovative and dynamic scholars were forced to go into exile in search of new jobs in other countries. Against the backdrop of the international anti-Semitic situation, the Turkish government, uncharacteristically, chose to accept and accommodate these "intellectual refugees" and to treat them equally: offering them suitable jobs, giving them full trust, and, under the guidance of an open and rational policy of admission of talents, removing the influence of feudal education step by step, establishing its own higher education system, which in turn propelled the country's scientific, technological and cultural thought to new heights.

The theme of the development of higher education in Turkey has not been sufficiently studied in the field of history. Because of the popularity of migration history in the last century, most of the articles on this topic have focused on the "plight of German scholars in exile", and the main body of research has focused on the cases of developed countries in Europe and the United States, where the number of exiles is larger and their social influence is more evident. The presentation of exiles in "peripheral" countries such as Turkey focuses on their lives and experiences, and does not systematically analyze the reform of higher education in Turkey. Under such a theme, this paper adheres to the methodology of Marx's historical materialism and the people's view of history. By discussing the educational dilemma of Turkey and the dilemma of German scholars in the era of strife, this paper analyzes how two unrelated subjects, Turkey and German scholars, combined by chance historical events in the inevitable path of Turkey's national modernization and made a remarkable contribution to the development of Turkey's national modernization. The authors also analyze how the two unrelated subjects, Turkish and German scholars, combined in the inevitable path of modernization of the Turkish state due to fortuitous historical events and made remarkable contributions to the development of the Turkish state.

Historical materialism under the guidance of Marxism is the methodology of writing this paper. Under such guidance, this paper adheres to the unity of historical necessity and contingency, arguing that the process of higher education reform and modernization in Turkey is a macro-historical process that is bound to be realized, and that German emigre scholars, as an accidental historical group, accidentally joined the modernization of Turkey and helped it to quickly establish excellent higher education institutions, train talents for the modernization of the country, and develop the science and technology system and cultural system. Without this group, the process of higher education in Turkey, though inevitably successful, might have been even longer, and the bold scenario is that Turkey's contribution to the world war against fascism, and even to human civilization, might have been reduced.

The chronological school of thought has enriched the body of historical research and the way in which sources are sourced. In the age of information technology, scholars have easy access to international studies and national archives, so the documentary research and analysis method has become the research method of this paper. In the selection of data, the author pays more attention to the extraction of the main subjects of the article's analysis. The aforementioned large number of sources indicates that the research on this issue is mostly focused on the perspective of the exiles, extending to the impact on Turkish higher education with their experiences, and this kind of individual and group perspective can help the author to structure the entire passage of this historical event, but its broadness does not help the author to directly extract effective Therefore, the search for information is more focused on articles that focus on Turkey as a research perspective, which is also more in line with the historical materialist focus on the unity of historical necessity and contingency, concentrating on the subject of necessity rather than the subject of contingency.

2. Current Situation of Higher Education in Turkey

2.1. Turkey's Secularization Reform and its Higher Education Dilemma

For Turkey, the beginning of the 20th century was epoch-making. On the one hand, Turkey managed to escape from partition through revolution and war and establish a Turkish nation-state, torn apart by the European powers and the emerging nation-states of Eastern Europe; on the other hand, under the leadership of President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey embarked on political modernization and reform and secularization. However, the Turkish Republic inherited a broken state, a disintegrated administration, and an outdated legal system. All this was totally incompatible with the tenets of the secular state that Kemal and his supporters wanted to establish. Turkey was a tired and poor country at the time, and Kemal knew very well that the country had to change quickly.

2.2. Educational Reform and Talent Acquisition Programs in Turkey

Prior to the establishment of the Turkish Republic, religious education was the backbone of the Ottoman theocracy and was aimed at transmitting Islamic values to the youth in order to "generate consent for the sultan-caliph power structure" [1]. The Turkish government was willing to assume responsibility for basic social education until 1869, but the responsibility for carrying out this task remained under the control of the madrassas, and the government's education of the young Turkish generation never left the scope of religious theology. The Turkish nation was under the ideology of theology for a long time, and the basic cultural quality was so low that it could not contribute to the modern development of the country with a well-cultured group of workers.

The Kemal government carried out many precise educational reforms after coming to power, and the results were quite effective, but these reforms were mainly in the field of basic education, while the reform of higher education, which reflects the scientific and cultural level of a country, was delayed. At that time, if a country wanted to catch up with the western powers quickly, it needed not only to establish a suitable political system to guarantee its development, but also to fundamentally improve the ideological and cultural quality of all citizens of the country, to establish a set of modern higher education system, and then to produce the educational philosophy, national spirit, and science and technology that would influence the whole country, only through a stable system and highly qualified citizens as well as a large number of scientific and technical personnel can a weak state ensure independent development and prosperity in politics, culture and economy.

Obviously, Turkey did not have such a system of higher education at that time. The schools inherited from the Ottoman Empire were immersed in the study of religious theories and the training of outdated military equipment and tactics, and there were no universities that could be called "modern". Until the early 19th century, the Ottoman Empire had never planned to train any modern academic or research personnel, and the state was only willing to train military and bureaucratic officials suited to its development, so that until 1933, the country had only a handful of official schools in the true sense of the word. When the new Turkish Republic was born in 1923, the educational system inherited from the weak Ottoman Empire consisted of about "400 Islamic madrassas", and there "included three military academies", one "civil engineering school", and four "secondary school-level trade schools" [2], as well as a "quasi" university, Darülfunun, which was designed and established was designed for the rigorous training of civil servants. However, "the Darülfunun was almost a medieval institution where sinecure teachers repeated year after year the same lectures from their worn-out notebooks. They hardly carried out research or published scientific books" [3].

At the same time, Turkey had few educational personnel suitable for modern universities, and the schools were previously filled with religious prophets, "clergy", and "military officers", and even the few "importing experts and scientists" with scientific knowledge had fled long ago due to the turbulent situation in Turkey [4]. These were the basic conditions in the educational system of the new republic, and the majority of schools not only did not contribute to the modernization of the country's society, but could even become a resistance to this modernization, so they were soon closed down in their entirety. The rigid system inherited by the new republic was clearly not equipped to support the ambitious founders of the republic in realizing the ideals of higher education, and it became clear that "modernization of universities" was necessary, and the first step in this modernization was the recruitment of educational personnel.

In order to realize the plan to establish a modern higher education system, the Turkish Minister of Education Resit Galip invited Albert Malche, a Swiss professor of pedagogy, to Turkey in 1932 and

asked Malche to submit a report on the reform of Turkish education after his visit. Malche started his work immediately after his arrival in Turkey on January 18, 1932 and wrote the Rapport sur l'universite' d'Istanbul on May 29 [5].

It was on the basis of this document that the Turkish government formed the idea of establishing a fully modernized higher education system on the model of Western European universities. Marci also stated that the planned new university system would not yet be able to hire a sufficient number of national scholars to support normal teaching operations, and suggested sending a new generation of students abroad for training and hiring foreign scholars to temporarily fill the vacant teaching positions. In this regard, Marci went on to propose that, in order to accommodate the development of higher education in Turkey, the Turkish government invite scholars who have lost their jobs in Germany as a result of the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service to take up positions in Turkey in order to meet the need for teaching personnel.

3. The Exile of German Scholars and Turkish Appointments

3.1. The "Cultural Exile" in Germany

As a result of the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, the status of all scientists of Jewish origin with democratic and progressive ideas in German universities, research institutes and medical schools was questioned, which soon "led to the dismissal of thousands of people" [6]. The frenzied "dismissal fiasco" not only affected Germany, but also, due to the expansion of the Nazis, the Austrian and Czechoslovakian academic communities in 1938.

The expulsion of these German academics led to a worldwide exchange of academic talent. While the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service was still being conceived by the Nazi German government in March 1933, many of the more politically sensitive scholars already had a sense of the terrible things to come and were thus able to leave Germany earlier. Among them was Philipp Schwartz, a Jewish scholar of Hungarian origin and a renowned professor of pathology at the University of Frankfurt, who fled to Switzerland with his family. Since he could not find a job in Switzerland, Schwartz, together with other exiled scientists, founded the "Norgemeinschaf Deutscher Wissenschafiler im Ausland" in Zurich in March 1933, with the aim of "to help persecuted German scholars secure employment in countries prepared to receive them" [7]. When Marches of Switzerland was invited to study the Turkish educational system and give advice on hiring foreign scholars, Marches, a close friend of Schwartz's father-in-law, Professor Sinai Tschulok, "recognized the double opportunity of saving lives while helping Turkey and contacted Schwartz" [3]. It was in this historical context of serendipity that the Turkish government heeded Professor Marchi's advice and invited Schwartz to Ankara on July 5, 1933, to discuss the recruitment of emigre scholars.

3.2. The Turkish appointment

Although the Nazi acts were a disgrace for Germany, they were an important opportunity for Turkey. As mentioned earlier, the key problem that Turkey faced in promoting educational reform was the severe lack of education for senior personnel. So, after learning about Prof. Marci's report, Turkish Education Minister Galip communicated with Kemal, and after a quick needs assessment, the Turkish government decided to start a formal communication with those German scholars who were willing to come to Turkey.

At the suggestion of Professor Marci, upholding a good feeling for German science and culture and recognizing the opportunity that presented itself, Turkey invited Schwarz to Ankara on July 6, 1933 to discuss the recruitment of scholars in exile. After nine hours of negotiations, a list of

immigrant professors was agreed upon and a total of 35 professors were hired. On behalf of the Association of German Scientists Abroad, Schwarz drew up a five-year induction contract with the Turkish government, which required professors coming to Turkey to teach in Turkish, to translate or publish appropriate textbooks in Turkish, and to serve as director of various disciplines during the five years of their employment until they had trained outstanding successors.

Minister of Education Galip stated in the consultation meeting, "we hope that you will bring innovation to our homeland so that we can keep up with the modern order and show the new generation the path of modern scientific development, and we express our gratitude and respect as a nation" [8]. After the meeting, the Turkish Ministry of Public Education announced that as guests invited by the state, German scientists who travel to Turkey do not contract with universities but with the Turkish Ministry of Public Education. "Turkish government signed contracts with a number of professors and accepted to pay them a salary well exceeding that of professors of Turkish origin" [9]. As a result of this meeting, Turkey received a coveted professorship in higher education, and many scholars in exile are no longer suffering from displacement and can maintain their passion to continue the academic research to which they have devoted their lives.

In total, "Turkey invited and provided safe haven for close to 100 intellectuals and professionals fleeing Austria, Germany, Czechoslovakia, and France" between 1933 and 1945, making it the third most accepted country for exiled scientists, just behind the United States and the United Kingdom [10]. The arrival of so many German-speaking scholars in exile had a great impact on the educational system. They brought not only high-level scientific knowledge, but also advanced educational concepts and methods of German universities since the Humboldt era, which directly contributed to the reform and restructuring of the old Turkish university system, thus making a decisive step forward in the modernization of university education in this country.

4. Impact of German émigré Scholars on the Reform of Higher Education in Turkey

The Turkish government's policy of overhauling the higher education system was bound to materialize, and these German scholars who came to Turkey by chance made it possible to advance this policy rapidly. Within 15 years, Turkey had established a relatively sophisticated higher education system, with exiled scholars from various fields serving in different colleges and institutions, teaching the new nation advanced knowledge, skills and ideas in backward classrooms. After the departure of these scholars, Turkey will carry forward the knowledge inherited from those outstanding scholars and will develop new technologies and knowledge independently.

4.1. Reform of the Higher Education System

On July 31, 1933, the Turkish government officially abolished the old Academy of Sciences and canceled the contracts of all current teachers, and on August 1, 1933, the new "University" (Istanbul University) was officially established and opened to students in November 1933, based on the proposal of Professor Marci. From that day on, Turkey had a higher education system that met modern standards. "The new university, which was fashioned on the prevailing German university model, was heralded in all the existing media of the country, not only in big cities but even in a small town like Yozgat, in the center of Anatolia, whose weekly newspaper carried in its front page the title Darülfunun Assigned to History, New University Founded" [11].

"The new university will be composed of the Faculties [schools] of medicine, law, science, and humanities", and eight other research institutes: "the Research Institute on Islam", "institutions of

Turkish revolution, national economy and sociology, Turkish geography, morphology, chemistry and electromechanics" [11].

In the following years, hundreds of German scholars in exile came to Turkey, belonging to different disciplines, to meet the demand of the Turkish government "to raise the academic level of Istanbul University to that of Western European universities", so much so that Istanbul University was generally regarded as "the best German university in the world" at that time [4].

Most of them work in two universities, Istanbul University and Ankara University, while the rest of them are scattered in various research institutes and even government departments. Regardless of where they are and what they do, they all contribute to the modernization of Turkish education with their professional skills, and some of them are employed as government officials for their outstanding professional abilities and are directly responsible for certain modernization tasks in Turkey, and these scholars are more willing to live and work in Turkey because of this trust and attention. For Turkey, the availability of a large number of excellent educational personnel has not only provided the most basic guarantee for the construction of its higher education, but also accelerated the path of modernization and prosperity of Turkey in the last century.

4.2. Work of German émigré Scholars

The exiled scholars who came to Turkey were assigned to various positions depending on their specialties, and most of them worked in various institutions of higher education and research, while a few of them worked as advisors and staff members of the government or on a part-time basis. Working together with the Turks, they quickly established a higher education system, introduced a new education, and trained many academic and research personnel. In Turkey, "Germany's exiled professors served as directors in 8 of 12 basic science institutes, as well as six directors of Istanbul's 17 clinics at the Faculty of Medicine", and their teaching methods and educational philosophy were modeled on those of German universities, which represented the world's leading academic standards at the time [4].

The first problem that German scholars need to solve for the sake of their work is the language barrier. In the classroom, both students and professors had to constantly learn new languages and switch between languages: "from the old Turkish into the new Turkish, and from a European language into Turkish" [12]. These scholars from a foreign land almost always took on the job of translators, who translated languages that did not belong to the country more closely into Turkish so that these students could learn more effectively. The contribution of German scholars to education in Turkey is first and foremost reflected in this, as they established a scientific language for Turkey that was in line with the times and allowed for the smooth dissemination of all knowledge from all over the world in Turkey.

In the course of teaching, although not stipulated in the contract, about 80% of professors working at Istanbul University have "published at least one book", while "60% of the professors published at least 2 books", and professors of the Faculty of Medicine have published the highest number of books, three or four per capita, for better teaching [13]. In addition to this, also for teaching purposes, some German scholars translated many specialized books, for example, Professor Arndt, who laid the foundation for the subject of chemistry in Turkey, "some 70 years later, retired professor and chair of Istanbul University's Chemical Engineering Department, Prof. Dr. Ismet Gürgey", pointed out that among the immigrant scholars who made important contributions to science education in Turkey should be included "Ord. Prof. Dr. Fritz Arndt… perhaps cited as the foremost of all… He brought the foundations and the principles of contemporary chemistry to Turkey" [14]. Because at the end of each book, Arndt lists all chemical terms and concepts in Modern Turkish, Ottoman Turkish, German

and English, which have greatly refined the Turkish perception of modern education. In addition to Professor Arndt's refinement of the Turkish language in the field of chemistry, "disciplines of physical and social science, mathematics, and the humanities were represented and so were the arts and the professions" [14].

Also for teaching and working purposes, libraries and academic journals in Turkey have developed rapidly. Out of the need for research, German professors list the books and journals they need and often write reports and articles for these publications from Europe. In turn, the Turkish government and university administrators went out of their way to meet their requests. Within a short period of time, the library gathered a large number of books in German, English and French, and Prof. Ernst Hirsch, with his assistant as librarian, registered and organized the books.

The purpose of academic research is to give back to society, and the progress of academic research cannot be achieved without the exchange and review of peers, so every summer, open "university conferences" and "university criticism" seminars are held in different places. A number of academic journals, such as the Journal of Law and the Journal of the Academy of Sciences (1935), the Journal of Roman Studies (1937), the Journal of the Academy of Medicine (1938), the Journal of the Academy of Economics (1939), and the Journal of Psychology and Education (1940), were also founded [8].

The German scholars in exile as a group left behind outstanding results of their teaching experience in Turkey during these 10 years, namely: a large number of highly educated people. "There were 221 lecturers and 2462 students" in the field of higher education when the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923, "after 15 years, these numbers rose to 855 lecturers (287% increase) and 10,213 (314% increase) students. A total of 3437 students were admitted to Istanbul University in the year 1933. Of these, 884 were admitted to the Faculty of Medicine", and "41 doctoral degrees were given" between 1933 and 1946 [13, 15].

After the departure of the German scholars, they produced Turkish students who became the mainstay of Turkey's later socio-economic development and scientific and technological progress. For example, Refii Şükrü Suvla, who studied economics, "advised the Central Bank and other state banks"; "Muhlis Ete became Minister of Commerce; Osman Okyar taught at Middle Eatern Technical University and subsequently became the Chancellor of the University of Erzurum", and so on [3]. These students still add to the modernization of Turkey in the field of higher education and in the government of Turkey.

The legacy of German scholars is not only in the talents they trained directly, but also in the higher education system they helped to establish and improve, which continues to produce talents for Turkey. Istanbul University, as the institution of higher education that the Turkish government was committed to building, was also the university that employed the largest number of German scholars in exile; for more than a decade, it was the most influential in the field of Turkish science, and also led the Enlightenment and modernization movements in Turkey. Ankara University was established in 1946 by officially merging several faculties, including the Faculty of History and Geography in 1935 and the Faculty of Science in 1943, where many German exile scholars worked during World War II. Istanbul University of Technology, formerly the Public Engineering Institute established in 1773 and renamed Istanbul University of Technology in 1924, had a strong focus on engineering, where many German experts in the field of engineering worked and made great progress in related disciplines and produced a large number of people in the fields of architecture and industry for Turkey.

The arrival of German scholars directly helped Turkish universities to establish a set of modern university disciplines, and many of the best scholars in the world at that time brought to Turkey such sciences as economics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, physics, and library science, which had never existed on Turkish soil before, but with the support of German scholars, they took root in the Turkish higher education system and continued to train people in various disciplines for the modernization of the Turkish state.

5. Conclusion

Faced with the dilemma of backward feudal education at the beginning of the state, the Turkish Republic embarked on a radical reform, abolishing a series of Ottoman-era schools and building a more excellent basic education system on the existing foundation, which ensured the steady progress of secularization. In order to fundamentally change the ideological and cultural level of the country and build an independent scientific and cultural system, the founders of Turkey took advantage of the anti-Semitic and anti-socialist wave that followed the intensification of German nationalism and brought in a large number of outstanding scholars to enrich the higher education system, building many institutions of higher education that imitated German education within a short period of time and training many outstanding higher education personnel. By the end of World War II in 1945, about 190 scholars had helped Turkey to establish a university system comparable to that of Western Europe in the fields of teaching, books, translation, and research. Most of these scholars left their temporary residence in Turkey after the war, but their contributions will always be recorded in the centuries-old history of Turkey.

Turkey's university reform movement was an inevitable choice on the road to development. A new country that wants to modernize and prosper must go through the process of learning and imitation to development and innovation, which may be a long process, but it is a crucial step. The arrival of the German émigré scholars was accidental, and without their contribution the modernization of Turkey might have been postponed for a longer time.

However, while historical inevitability and contingency are united in opposition at the macro level, and historical materialism can easily explain the unexpected experience at this time, it selectively ignores the urgent situation faced by the Turkish government and the German émigré scholars in the context of the times. Any leader faced with such a situation would have been inclined to consider realist demands and focus on the key question of whether to prioritize education or the industrial economy. The Turkish leaders more confidently chose to build culture and develop science and technology because Turkey, as a backward agrarian country with large remnants of feudalism, did not have a more developed working class and intellectual community like the Soviet Union and could not immediately adapt to the industrial economy model. This realistic planning was aided by chance - the exodus of a large number of German talents. And for German scholars, the international community of the early 20th century did not hold out any promise; the entire world was steeped in conservative and anti-Semitic ideology, and talented people with nowhere else to go had no choice but to agree without hesitation in the face of available job opportunities. This compromise of reality on both sides created a fortuitous miracle in history, free from the macroscopic perspective of an event of immigration flow and cultural exchange under the influence of realism that only turned out to be more beautiful than expected.

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